

Université de Montréal

Le citoyen et sa circonscription

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Résumé

Dans cette thèse par articles, j'analyse les attitudes et les comportements politiques des citoyens par rapport au niveau local de la politique, c'est-à-dire la circonscription. Que vous estimiez que le niveau local soit plus important que le niveau national ou vice-versa dans l'étude de la science politique, ma thèse vous est utile. D'une part, pour les chercheurs qui croient déjà en l'importance d'étudier la politique au niveau de la circonscription, ma thèse vient empiriquement fonder leur postulat à l'effet que les citoyens considèrent ce niveau comme étant important, ce qui n'était pas démontré auparavant. D'autre part, pour les chercheurs qui n'intègrent pas la dimension locale dans leurs analyses, mes résultats démontrent qu'ils passent à côté d'une dynamique relativement importante aux yeux des citoyens.

Le Chapitre 1 pose la question suivante : à quel point les électeurs attribuent de l'importance aux résultats électoraux dans leur circonscription? Les résultats basés sur des enquêtes électorales du project Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) dans plusieurs pays indiquent que par rapport au niveau national, les résultats électoraux au niveau de la circonscription sont moins importants. Toutefois, l'écart est modeste et beaucoup moins important que ce que veut la croyance populaire. Le Chapitre 2 s'intéresse aux électeurs canadiens qui ont une préférence pour un candidat local (dans leur circonscription) qui est affilié à un autre parti que leur parti préféré. Ce groupe d'électeurs, qui constitue 9% de la population, vote-t-il davantage pour le parti ou le candidat préféré? Cela dépend des préférences partisans et de la province, mais somme toute, 40% de ces électeurs appuie le candidat tandis que 60% opte pour le parti.

Le Chapitre 3 démontre dans une première partie que les résultats électoraux au niveau de la circonscription n'ont pas d'influence sur le niveau de satisfaction envers la démocratie. La deuxième partie de l'analyse se tourne vers les résultats nationaux et remet en question le fait qu'une victoire nationale vient nécessairement avec une augmentation de la satisfaction envers la démocratie. L'argument est le suivant : dans un système pluralitaire comme le Canada, une victoire minoritaire ne serait pas satisfaisante et ne serait pas suffisante (contrairement à une victoire majoritaire). Or, les résultats indiquent que peu importe le contexte, les citoyens qui votent pour le gagnant au niveau national présentent une augmentation de satisfaction envers la démocratie très semblable.

Le Chapitre 4 est centré sur une question novatrice inclut dans le projet MEDW qui demande directement aux électeurs si, *selon eux*, le parti pour lequel ils ont voté a gagné ou perdu les élections. Clairement, le fait de voter pour un parti qui forme le gouvernement ou fait partie d'une coalition gouvernementale est le déterminant le plus fort. Mais une victoire au niveau local peut-elle compenser pour une défaite nationale et procurer un sentiment de victoire aux électeurs? Les résultats suggèrent une certaine pertinence d'une victoire locale dans la perception subjective que les citoyens ont d'avoir gagné ou non l'élection puisque les électeurs qui ont gagné au niveau local mais perdu au niveau national sont significativement plus susceptibles de répondre qu'ils ont gagné l'élection par rapport à ceux qui ont perdu aux deux niveaux.

Le Chapitre 5 s'intéresse à l'impact de la polarisation perçue sur le vote stratégique. La polarisation entre les partis viables devrait avoir un impact important sur la propension des électeurs à voter

stratégiquement. D'une part, une plus grande polarisation entre les partis viables augmente la distance idéologique entre le parti le plus éloigné et l'option stratégique et, d'autre part, réduit la distance idéologique entre le parti préféré et l'option stratégique. Les résultats confirment ces hypothèses. Finalement, le Chapitre 6 examine s'il existe des considérations nationales qui influencent le vote stratégique lors de l'élection canadienne fédérale de 2015 en me concentrant sur les préférences envers les gouvernements majoritaires et minoritaires. Les résultats démontrent que les préférences envers la taille du gouvernement (majoritaire ou minoritaire) a un impact indépendant sur la propension à voter stratégiquement ou non, bien que cet effet soit plus petit que les considérations locales telles que les chances de l'emporter des candidats.

Mots-clés : Politique locale, circonscription, identification territoriale, candidats, winner-loser gap, satisfaction envers la démocratie, vote stratégique, polarisation, gouvernement majoritaire, gouvernement minoritaire.

Abstract

In this dissertation, I analyze citizen attitudes and political behaviour toward politics at the local level, that is, the constituency (or ‘district’). Whether you believe that politics at the local level is more important than the national level or vice-versa in political science, my contribution is an important one. On the one hand, I confirm empirically what scholars who already believe in the importance of analysing politics at the constituency level simply assumed, that is, the local level is important. On the other hand, my results show that academics who do not study local politics are missing a relatively important dynamic according to citizens themselves.

Chapter 1 asks: To what extent voters attribute importance to electoral outcomes in their district? Using the Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) datasets for several countries, I find that electoral outcomes at the local level are viewed as less important compared to the national level. However, the gap is modest and much less important than what the conventional wisdom stipulates. Chapter 2 focuses on Canadian voters who like a local candidate from another party than their preferred one. This group of voters makes up 9% of the population. Do they follow the local candidate or the party? It depends on partisan affiliation and provinces but overall, 40% of the respondents support the candidate while 60% vote for the party.

Chapter 3 demonstrates that electoral outcomes at the local level do not have an influence on voters’ level of satisfaction with democracy. In a second step, I turn to the national level and challenge the assumption that a national victory always increases one’s level of satisfaction with democracy. The argument is that in a majoritarian electoral system such as in Canada, a minority

victory would not be sufficient (contrary to a majority victory). However, my results indicate that no matter the size of the victory, winners enjoy a very similar boost of satisfaction with democracy.

Chapter 4 focuses on a never-seen-before question included in the MEDW project which asks voters if, according to them, the party they voted for won or lost the election. Clearly, voting for a party that forms the government or that is party of a coalition is the most important determinant. But can a victory at the district level compensate for a defeat at the national level? My results suggest a certain impact of a victory at the local level since voters who won at the local, but lost at the national level are significantly more likely to say that their party won compared to someone who voted for a party that lost at both levels.

Chapter 5 examines the impact of the perceived polarization on strategic voting. Polarization between viable parties should have an important impact on voters' proclivity to vote strategically. First, an increase of polarization between viable parties increases ideological distance between the most distant party and the strategic option for the voter. Second, an increase of polarization between viable parties decreases ideological distance between the preferred party and the strategic option. My results confirm these hypotheses. Finally, Chapter 6 examines if national considerations can influence strategic voting during the Canadian 2015 election. I focus on preferences toward majority and minority governments. I demonstrate that preferences over minority government have an independent impact on voting strategically although this effect is smaller than local considerations such as a candidates chance of winning in the district.

Keywords : local politics, constituency, territorial identification candidates, winner-loser gap, satisfaction with democracy, strategic voting, polarization, majority government, minority government.

Table des matières

Résumé	i
Abstract	iv
Liste des tableaux.....	ix
Liste des figures.....	xi
Remerciements	xiii
Introduction	1
1. Recension des écrits.....	6
1.1. La politique au niveau de la circonscription.....	6
1.2. Le vote stratégique.....	14
1.3. La satisfaction avec le fonctionnement démocratique	21
2. Questions de recherche	27
3. Méthodologie.....	30
Chapitre 1. How much do voters care about the electoral outcome in their district?	35
1. Local attachment and the local electoral district.....	39
2. Hypotheses	42
3. Data and indicators	45
4. How much does the local matter?.....	47
5. Who thinks local?	49
6. Conclusion.....	53
Chapitre 2. What do voters do when they like a local candidate from another party?	55
Chapitre 3. What does winning mean? Electoral outcomes and satisfaction with democracy	63
1. Satisfaction with democracy, the local level and minority government.....	65

1. Data and indicators	67
2. Results.....	69
3. Conclusion.....	74
Chapitre 4. What makes people believe that their party won the election?	76
1. What makes people think that ‘their’ party won or lost an election?.....	79
2. Electoral performance at the local and the national level	81
3. Data and indicators	82
4. Results.....	85
4.1. Canada.....	85
4.2. Spain	90
4.3. Germany.....	93
5. Electoral performance in the district versus nationally	98
6. Conclusion	101
Chapitre 5. Polarisation, perceived ideological distance and strategic voting	105
1. Polarisation and strategic voting	108
2. Three Canadian elections.....	115
3. Measuring strategic voting.....	117
4. Independent variables	121
5. Results.....	124
6. Conclusion	131
Chapitre 6. Support for minority government and strategic voting.....	133
1. National determinants of strategic voting.....	136
2. Data and case study	140

3. Strategic voting in the 2015 Canadian election.....	141
4. The impact of attitudes toward minority government and coalition	144
5. Conclusion	149
Conclusion.....	150
Bibliographie.....	173
Annexe A. Chapitre 1.....	186
Annexe B. Chapitre 2.....	188
Annexe C. Chapitre 3.....	189
Annexe D. Chapitre 5.....	191
Annexe E. Chapitre 6.....	200

Liste des tableaux

Table 1.1. Descriptive statistics for attachment and importance of electoral outcome	41
Table 1.2. Attachment to the local community and importance of the local electoral outcome... 50	
Table 2.1. Party and local candidate preferences	59
Table 2.2. Vote choice among non-strategic voters with incongruent preferences.....	61
Table 3.1. The impact of winning at the local and the national level.....	70
Table 3.2. Majority versus minority government	72
Table 4.1. Perceptions of winning and losing in Canada.....	87
Table 4.2. Logistic regression models predicting perceptions of winning in Canada.....	88
Table 4.3. Perceptions of winning and losing in Spain.....	91
Table 4.4. Logistic regression models predicting perceptions of winning in Spain.....	92
Table 4.5. Perceptions of winning and losing in Germany	95
Table 4.6. Logistic regression models predicting perceptions of winning in Germany	97
Table 4.7. Feelings of winning in four groups of voters in Canada	99
Table 4.8. Logistic regression models predicting feelings of winning and losing for different group of voters in Canada	100
Table 5.1. Strategic voting in Canada.....	120
Table 5.2. Description of independent variables	123
Table 5.3. The effect of polarisation on perceived distances	125
Table 5.4. The effect of polarisation on strategic voting among potential strategic voters	126
Table 6.1. Votes and seats share, 2015	140
Table 6.2. Strategic voters.....	142
Table 6.3. Preferred party and vote choice among strategic voters.....	143

Table 6.4. The impact of national considerations on strategic voting 145

Table 6.5. National (minority government) considerations among strategic considerations..... 146

Liste des figures

Figure 5.1. Strategic voting in the ideological space	111
Figure 5.2. Predicted probabilities of voting strategically and polarisation.....	128
Figure 5.3. Predicted probabilities of voting strategically as distances vary (left-right).....	129
Figure 5.4. Predicted probabilities of voting strategically as distances vary (like-dislikes).....	130
Figure 6.1. Polls results and the decline of the NDP	136

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Introduction

Le titre de ma thèse, « Le citoyen et sa circonscription », tient en seulement cinq mots. J'ai choisi ce titre non pas car les études au titre plus court sont plus souvent citées (Letchford et al., 2015), mais plutôt parce qu'il reflète fidèlement l'orientation de mes travaux. D'une part, « Le citoyen » donne le ton à une perspective qui se concentre sur les attitudes et les comportements politiques des citoyens et qui se définit en opposition à une perspective qui s'attarderait aux élus ou encore aux partis politiques. D'autre part, « sa circonscription » implique une attention dirigée vers le niveau local de la politique, en opposition à l'échelle nationale. Je ne prétends pas être le premier à adopter une perspective citoyenne et à porter mon attention sur le niveau local de la politique, mais j'ai espoir que ma thèse contribue à renforcer la place qu'on accorde à ces deux dimensions en science politique.

Dans la Constitution canadienne, il n'y a littéralement aucune référence aux partis politiques. Il y a un représentant élu par circonscription, qui représente les intérêts de ses citoyens. Au Canada, ces circonscriptions sont délimitées en fonction de lignes directrices qui incluent notamment l'égalité relative du vote des électeurs, mais aussi la communauté d'intérêts et le patrimoine culturel et historique (Commission de la représentation électorale du Québec, 2017). L'idée générale étant que les citoyens d'une circonscription puissent faire entendre leur voix à la Chambre basse par le biais de leur représentant qui leur est géographiquement lié – c'est l'idée même d'une démocratie représentative. Mais les élus ont rapidement formé des groupes de coalition qui se sont avérés devenir des partis politiques (Godbout et Hoyland, 2013; Godbout et Hoyland, 2017). Leur importance est devenue très forte, au point où au Canada, comme dans plusieurs démocraties d'héritage britannique, l'élu individuel se trouve parfois absorbé par le groupe qu'est son parti politique.

Le meilleur indicateur de cette suprématie du parti politique face à l'individu consiste au fait que les représentants vont voter en bloc dans le sens de leur parti, peu importe l'intérêt de la circonscription qu'ils représentent. C'est ce qu'on appelle la « ligne de parti », présente particulièrement dans les démocraties parlementaires (Kam, 2009). Bien sûr, il existe des élus qui vont parfois franchir cette ligne et voter contre leur parti pour différentes raisons, mais il s'agit de cas particuliers et non de la norme. En somme, la discipline de parti est un élément central dans la représentation politique, surtout au Canada (Savoie, 1999; Docherty, 1997; Carty et al., 2000).

Cette situation fait en sorte que l'attention est dirigée vers les partis politiques, notamment par les médias, qui sont la principale courroie de transmission d'information politique pour les citoyens. Les médias accordent beaucoup plus d'importance aux partis politiques qu'aux députés des circonscriptions et ils vont même jusqu'à se concentrer sur les leaders de partis (Karvonen, 2010; Marland et al., ed. 2012; Marland et al., ed. 2014). Cela est moins clair dans le cas des électeurs. Alors qu'il n'y avait que des candidats individuels sans parti politique dans l'esprit de la Constitution, découvrir quelle est maintenant la place de la circonscription et des candidats locaux *aux yeux des citoyens* apparaît extrêmement fécond. Les résultats pourront être comparés avec la croyance populaire voulant que le niveau national laisse très peu de place à ce qui se passe au niveau de la circonscription. Un programme de recherche complètement novateur pourrait se former s'il s'avérait que l'aspect local des élections est relativement important pour les citoyens.

La démocratie représentative repose bien sûr sur la tenue d'élections libres et justes (Dahl, 1956; Lijphart, 1999). Mais au-delà de cet élément central, plusieurs autres aspects qui y sont liés sont tout aussi fondamentaux. Ce que j'appellerais « l'intuition démocratique » suppose que les citoyens expriment sincèrement leurs préférences, en opposition à des calculs dits « stratégiques ». Autrement, les résultats électoraux ne reflèteraient pas l'agrégation *réelle* (i.e. sincère) des préférences des citoyens. D'ailleurs, la littérature sur le 'vote correct' présente un vote idéal comme étant "based on the values and beliefs of the individual voter" (Lau et Redlawsk, 1997 : 586). En ce sens, l'ampleur du vote stratégique, qui est en partie fondé sur les perceptions des chances de l'emporter des candidats, a des répercussions importantes du point de vue de la théorie démocratique. S'il s'avère que la proportion d'électeurs adoptant un tel comportement

électoral est élevée, alors ces résultats ouvriraient la porte à toute sorte de questions sur l'efficacité du système de représentation politique.

De plus, la présence d'un vote stratégique peut avoir des conséquences majeures sur l'offre politique. Plus particulièrement, c'est parce qu'il avantage les plus grands partis et désavantage les plus petits que le vote stratégique devient un phénomène préoccupant. Le système électoral canadien pluralitaire (ou uninominal majoritaire à un tour) ne fait pas exception – ce sont les partis les plus importants qui bénéficient des votes stratégiques qui iraient, si les électeurs votaient sincèrement, à des plus petits partis. Autrement dit, les conservateurs et les libéraux ont traditionnellement eu un avantage « artificiel » en bénéficiant de plusieurs votes que le NPD ou encore le Parti Vert obtiendraient (Gidengil et al. 2012 : 121). Qui plus est, dans un monde où la partisanerie négative semble être importante (Caruana et al., 2015; McGregor et al., 2015), le vote stratégique peut être une option d'autant plus tentante pour les électeurs qui désapprouvent fortement une option politique. L'idée de voter pour un candidat ou un parti « moins pire » plutôt que pour son premier choix deviendrait un incontournable dans le calcul électoral. Ce comportement intimement local (puisque le vote se fait au niveau de la circonscription) pourrait par ailleurs être le fruit d'un calcul électoral qui englobe des considérations nationales. En ce sens, des études plus poussées sur le vote stratégique pourraient démontrer l'importance d'inclure une dimension nationale afin d'en arriver à un portrait plus complet et précis sur les motivations des électeurs, ce que la littérature occulte complètement jusqu'à présent.

Outre les élections libres et justes qui caractérisent une démocratie saine, les perdants des élections doivent accepter les résultats électoraux même si ce n'est pas leur choix qui est porté au pouvoir (Anderson et al., 2005; Nadeau et Blais, 1993). Car même si les élections procurent une égalité des moyens de s'exprimer aux citoyens, elles sont également destinées à créer un résultat inégal en créant des gagnants et des perdants. Les perdants doivent maintenir un niveau de satisfaction envers la démocratie suffisamment élevé pour accepter les règles du jeu démocratique. Sans le consentement des perdants, la démocratie est impraticable. Il apparaît donc crucial d'étudier la satisfaction avec la démocratie, qui est conceptuellement très proche du consentement démocratique. Nous savons par ailleurs que le fait de gagner au niveau national est un important déterminant de la satisfaction avec la démocratie, c'est-à-dire que les gagnants sont plus satisfaits que les perdants. C'est un résultat canonique en science politique (Blais et Géliveau, 2007; Curini et al., 2012; Hooghe et Stiers, 2016; Ferland, 2015; Han et Chang, 2016; Howell et Justwan, 2013; Singh et al., 2011; Singh et Thorton, 2016). Or, la relation entre le fait de gagner ses élections au niveau de la circonscription et la satisfaction avec la démocratie est loin d'être claire dans la littérature et fait l'objet de conclusions contradictoires. La présente thèse comble cette lacune dans la littérature et propose une interprétation claire quant aux conséquences des résultats électoraux locaux.

Dans cette thèse par articles, je m'intéresse à plusieurs objets d'étude qui se recoupent sous le thème général du citoyen et sa circonscription. La section suivante introduit le lecteur à la littérature sur la politique locale, c'est-à-dire au niveau de la circonscription, par rapport à ce que l'on connaît du niveau national. Par la suite, je recense les écrits sur la satisfaction avec le fonctionnement démocratique et le vote stratégique. L'objectif de cette section est de dresser un

portrait de ce qui est bien établi pour ensuite mieux cerner les lacunes de la littérature. Cette revue de la littérature débouche sur six questions de recherche qui donnent le ton à un format de thèse par articles. Chaque article se veut une réponse à une question claire. Finalement, un survol de la démarche méthodologie clôt cette introduction. Bien que cette thèse mobilise aussi des données allemandes, suisses, et françaises, elle se concentre surtout sur le Canada. En ce sens, les problématiques étudiées sont surtout liées à l'étude d'un système parlementaire avec un mode de scrutin pluralitaire et la revue des écrits est principalement ancrée sur le Canada.

1. Recension des écrits

Cette section se décline en trois temps qui correspondent aux trois grands thèmes analysés dans cette thèse, c'est-à-dire la politique au niveau de la circonscription, le vote stratégique et la satisfaction à l'égard du fonctionnement démocratique. Je propose de faire un survol des connaissances sur ces trois thèmes et d'identifier ensuite les lacunes de la littérature scientifique, ce qui m'amènera à la formulation de questions de recherche.

1.1. La politique au niveau de la circonscription

La politique au niveau de la circonscription est beaucoup moins étudiée que la politique au niveau national. La littérature à cet effet s'est surtout concentrée sur l'impact des candidats, l'avantage électoral des candidats sortants (*incumbents*) et l'impact des dépenses électorales dans la circonscription.

Premièrement, quelques recherches examinent l'impact des candidats locaux sur le choix électoral des électeurs. Avant les années 2000, il n'y avait pratiquement aucune étude empirique qui étudie l'impact des candidats locaux en contexte canadien, la croyance populaire étant que les candidats locaux n'ont pratiquement pas d'influence sur le choix électoral des électeurs (Clarke et al., 1979; Irvine, 1982). L'étude de Cunningham (1971) constitue cependant une exception. L'auteur se concentre sur les trois circonscriptions de la ville de Hamilton lors de l'élection fédérale de 1968. À la question "What will be the most important factor" in determining how you will vote on June 25? [Leader, Party, Issues, Local candidate, Other/no issue]", 26% des 832 électeurs interviewés ont opté pour le candidat local – à égalité avec les leaders et tout juste derrière les partis politiques qui ont récolté 1 point de plus. L'impact des candidats serait donc plus important que ce que le suggère la croyance populaire. Toutefois, Cunningham reconnaît qu'il faut contrôler pour l'identité partisane des électeurs. En retirant les électeurs qui s'identifient à des partis politiques, sa principale conclusion est qu'environ 10% des électeurs ont fait un choix électoral en fonction du candidat local. Cette étude reste très modeste et n'a pas suscité un grand enthousiasme quant à la possibilité d'élaborer un nouveau champ de recherche qui s'attarderait de plein front à la dynamique locale de la politique canadienne. D'ailleurs, l'article qui a plus de 50 ans d'existence ne récolte que 9 citations seulement selon Crossref.

Un peu plus de 30 ans plus tard, Blais et al. (2003) viennent confirmer empiriquement l'idée que les candidats locaux peuvent influencer le vote en analysant l'élection de 2000 avec les données de l'Étude Électorale Canadienne. Dans un premier temps, les auteurs constatent que 44% des citoyens qui votent ont une préférence pour un candidat local. Ensuite, ils examinent si la variable « avoir une préférence locale » est un déterminant significatif du choix électoral même si on

contrôle pour les préférences envers les leaders et les partis. Leur réponse est positive et en faisant une simulation, les auteurs estiment qu'avoir une préférence pour un candidat local serait décisif dans le choix électoral de 5% des Canadiens (mais seulement 2% des Québécois). Toutefois, lorsqu'on regarde les coefficients standardisés au Tableau 1 et 2, on remarque que ceux des préférences envers les partis et les chefs sont beaucoup plus élevés que celui des préférences envers un candidat local, ce qui indique clairement que les préférences locales sont moins importantes dans le choix électoral. Finalement, cette étude indique que ce sont les plus ruraux et les plus sophistiqués politiquement pour qui les considérations locales jouent le plus fortement.

Blais et al. (2003) ont établi l'idée que les électeurs ont des préférences pour des candidats locaux et qu'elles peuvent être décisives. Toutefois, les auteurs ne s'intéressent pas aux caractéristiques des candidats qui font en sorte que les citoyens préfèrent une telle candidature plutôt qu'un autre. La croyance populaire veut que le fait de provenir du milieu même de la circonscription est une caractéristique qui plairait aux électeurs. D'ailleurs, cela semble être accepté par les partis puisqu'on note un nombre croissant de candidats provenant du milieu local entre 1979 et 2005 (Childs et Cowley, 2011). Pour ce qui est des citoyens, ils disent bel et bien apprécier le fait qu'un candidat provienne de leur milieu : Johnson et Rosenblatt (2007) notent qu'en 2005 54% des Britanniques considèrent le fait de provenir de la circonscription comme étant une qualité importante, ce qui représente une augmentation de 6 points par rapport à 1983. Mais qu'en est-il des analyses qui évaluent l'ampleur de cet effet sur le choix électoral des électeurs? Campbell et Cowley (2013) répondent à cette question. À l'aide d'une expérience par sondage, ils manipulent le fait qu'un candidat soit local ou non, c'est-à-dire le fait de vivre dans la circonscription ou non. Lorsque le candidat fictif devient non résidant de la circonscription, il perd environ 30 points

d'appui (Campbell et Cowley, 2013 : 10). Comme test de robustesse, les auteurs introduisent l'identité partisane : un conservateur peut voter pour son parti qui propose un candidat non-local ou le parti adverse qui propose un candidat local. Évidemment, l'identité partisane impose une certaine loyauté, mais l'effet de la résidence fait bouger néanmoins une partie significative des répondants. Le fait que cette caractéristique locale puisse faire bouger des partisans est assez impressionnant. De manière cohérente avec Campbell et Cowley (2013), Evans (2017 : 661) présente les données d'un sondage anglais qui illustre que, sur une échelle de 0 à 10 (où 10 signifie « très important »), 60% des citoyens du Royaume-Uni indiquent qu'il est important à 8, 9 ou 10 sur dix qu'un représentant habite dans la circonscription.

Deuxièmement, l'avantage électoral d'être un candidat sortant (*incumbent effect*) fait partie des éléments étudiés au niveau de la circonscription. La littérature est très développée aux États-Unis, mais plusieurs études ont aussi inclus ou exclusivement étudié le Canada (Krasinsky et Milne, 1983; 1985; 1986). Néanmoins, une étude plus récente, de Kendall et Rekkas (2012), présente un devis de recherche différent qui est plus à même d'estimer l'effet spécifique d'être un candidat sortant. L'idée centrale est de ne pas simplement utiliser une variable dichotomique identifiant le fait d'être un candidat sortant ou non comme le font les recherches antérieures. Il faut plutôt appliquer un *regression discontinuity design* où le seuil « 0 » est la marge de victoire. Les auteurs utilisent toutes les données électorales depuis la création du Canada de 1867 et 2008. Le résultat principal est illustré par la montée subite de la droite au seuil de 0. Cette montée illustre l'effet causal d'être candidat sortant sur la probabilité de gagner l'élection. Cet effet est d'environ 10 points (9,4%-11,2% à 95% d'intervalle de confiance). Il y a toutefois lieu de noter que ce résultat ne tient que pour les libéraux et les conservateurs. Le Bloc québécois et le NPD ne sont pas inclus

par manque d'observations (Kendall et Rekkas, 2012 : 1572). Finalement, les auteurs veulent distinguer le rôle des partis et des candidats dans ce gain. Pour se faire, ils mènent des analyses au niveau des circonscriptions avec des candidats et partis sortants pour mesurer l'avantage combiné (du parti et de l'individu) puis, dans un second temps, ils mènent des analyses sur toutes les circonscriptions. En soustrayant, ils concluent que c'est essentiellement grâce aux individus qu'il y a un avantage aux candidats sortants et non à cause du parti. Ce bonus n'est pas clairement expliqué dans la littérature, mais il y a plusieurs hypothèses, notamment le fait que le candidat sortant bénéficie d'au moins un mandat de plus que les candidats non-sortants, ce qui confère une certaine notoriété. De plus, il est possible que les candidats sortants aient davantage de ressources (financières, mais également un réseau, notamment de militants, plus actif).

Plus récemment, une étude de Blais-Lacombe et Bodet (2017) étudie l'effet des candidats et partis sortants au Québec. Ils utilisent les données des élections provinciales depuis 1973 en se concentrant sur les circonscriptions dont les limites géographiques ne changent pas entre une élection et l'élection précédente. De plus, ils ne considèrent que les candidats effectifs, i.e. compétitif, afin d'éliminer le bruit causé par les candidats marginaux. En somme, il y a bel et bien un effet d'être candidat sortant, mais celui-ci est plus important (presque le double) chez les députés de l'opposition – 17 points de pourcentage versus 9 points chez les députés du gouvernement. Même les ministres, qui ont un avantage de 12 points de pourcentage, ont un avantage d'être candidat sortant de taille inférieure aux simples députés de l'opposition (Blais-Lacombe et Bodet, 2017 : 737). Pour expliquer cet effet, les auteurs vont plus loin en essayant de distinguer les effets des partis et des candidats. Ils concluent que "les partis politiques bénéficient d'un avantage électoral à la suite de leur victoire dans une circonscription. En moyenne, sans

distinguer les partis gouvernementaux des partis d'opposition, les députés n'ajoutent rien à cet avantage" (Blais-Lacombe et Bodet, 2017 : 742). En ce sens, un député sortant doit rester affilié à son parti pour bénéficier d'un avantage. Cette information utilisée par les électeurs provient à la fois de données 'objectives' telles que les sondages, mais également d'effets partisans ou de 'projections' (Blais et Bodet, 2006). Cela suggère qu'il n'y ait pas de vote personnel et sur ce point, les résultats au Québec détonnent du reste de la littérature. De plus, Blais-Lacombe et Bodet (2017) infirment l'idée que l'avantage soit croissant en fonction de l'expérience d'un député : peu importe le nombre d'élections qu'il a expérimenté, l'avantage n'est pas plus important. Finalement, la retraite d'un député ne nuit pas non plus à l'avantage électoral dont le parti bénéficiera.

Troisièmement, l'étude de la dimension locale intègre les dépenses électorales au niveau de la circonscription. Il est clairement établi qu'aux États-Unis, plus les candidats dépensent en publicités et en méthodes de sorties de votes, plus le taux de participation électorale est élevé (Gilliam, 1985; Green et Krasno, 1988; Cox et Munger, 1989; Gerber et Green, 2000; Herrera et al., 2008). Toutefois, Hogan (2013) amène une nuance importante. En analysant les élections des Chambres de 20 États américains de 1996 à 1998, ce qui comprend près de 3 000 contestations électorales, l'auteur démontre que les dépenses de campagnes n'ont pas le même effet en fonction de qui dépense. C'est-à-dire que même si le candidat sortant augmente ses dépenses électorales, l'effet sera nul (le coefficient est même négatif – voir le Tableau 4), contrairement aux dépenses du challenger, qui font augmenter la participation électorale. Sans distinguer les effets du candidat sortant versus les challengers, la conclusion voulant que les dépenses électorales soient positivement liées à la participation électorale s'applique également au Royaume-Uni (Pattie et Johnston, 1998), au Canada (Rekkas, 2007) et en France (Palda et Palda, 1998), trois autres

systèmes pluralitaires. Toutefois, bien peu d'études ont été faites sur des pays européens qui ont des systèmes de partis plus éclatés dus à un mode de scrutin plus proportionnel (Albert et La Raja, 2017).

Il y a également un important champ d'étude sur les dépenses électorales et l'impact de ces dernières sur le choix électoral des citoyens et les chances de l'emporter d'un candidat. Selon la littérature aux États-Unis, les dépenses électorales augmentent la probabilité d'un candidat sortant d'être réélu, mais comme dans le cas de la participation électorale, l'effet marginal de chaque dollar serait plus important chez un challenger. Pour un débat sur cette question dont l'issue n'est pas clairement réglée, voir Green et Krasno (1988), la réponse de Jacobson (1990) et la défense de Green et Krasno (1990). Ce débat s'est d'ailleurs transposé au Canada, alors que Milligan et Rekkas (2008), utilisant les données des élections fédérales de 1997 et de 2000, illustrent que l'effet des dépenses électorales des candidats sortants sur le choix électoral est plus important. Il semble toutefois que le débat ne soit pas non plus réglé au Canada, puisque cette relation se fragilise avec la publication de Foucault et Godbout (2013). Les auteurs démontrent (lors de l'élection provinciale québécoise de 2012) que l'argent influence positivement les résultats électoraux pour les candidats non-sortants alors que ce n'est pas le cas pour les candidats sortants.

Dans un ordre d'idée général, on pourrait penser qu'avec la « personnalisation » et la « présidentialisation » de la politique l'importance du niveau local diminue à travers le temps. En effet, partant du fait que les électeurs sont davantage volatiles et moins loyaux (Dalton et Wattenberg, 2002), les facteurs court-terme comme les leaders seraient plus importants. En ce

sens, les élus locaux seraient de moins en moins pertinents. Si tel est le cas, mes études porteraient sur un phénomène en voie de disparition.

Cet argument est tout à fait légitime, mais très difficile à considérer dans ma thèse, notamment parce que mes données sont toutes récentes. Par contre, bien que les thèses de la personnalisation et présidentialisation soient la croyance populaire et suscitent beaucoup d'adhésion, il y a plusieurs études qui les remettent en question, entre autres au Canada qui est mon principal cas d'étude. Par exemple, Gidengil et Blais (2007) et Bittner (2018) démontrent qu'il n'y a aucune tendance dans le temps quant à l'importance des leaders sur le choix de vote des électeurs au Canada. Dans une perspective plus comparée, Aardal et Binder (2011 : 122) analysent la variance expliquée par l'évaluation des leaders en Australie, Allemagne, Canada, Pays-Bas, Norvège, Espagne, Suède, UK et États-Unis, et concluent que « The effect of leader evaluations on the vote is actually weaker than before. »

Malgré cette revue des écrits concernant la dynamique locale de la politique qui fait ressortir cette littérature comme étant assez riche, un énorme débalancement entre les études consacrées au niveau national par rapport au niveau local persiste. Il n'est donc pas étonnant qu'il existe encore plusieurs lacunes dans la littérature et que plusieurs questions restent sans réponse. Par exemple, s'il est clair que plusieurs électeurs votant aux élections fédérales canadiennes ont une préférence pour un candidat local et que ce facteur a un impact indépendant (Blais et al., 2003), nous ne savons rien sur les caractéristiques des citoyens indiquant avoir une préférence personnelle pour un candidat. De plus, même si des ouvrages au titre évocateur comme *Politics Is Local* de Carty et Eagles (2005) sont convaincants dans leur thèse voulant que le local soit important, ils ne le font

que dans une perspective des élites et non des citoyens. Autrement dit, ils démontrent que la politique à l'échelle de la circonscription est importante aux yeux des politiciens, mais ils ont peu à dire sur la perspective des citoyens.

Mais quelle est l'opinion du citoyen? Les élections dans la circonscription sont-elles perçues comme étant aussi importantes que les résultats nationaux? Il n'y a aucune recherche qui permet de comparer l'importance que les gens attribuent aux résultats au niveau local *relativement* aux résultats nationaux. Pourtant, s'il s'avère que les résultats électoraux de la circonscription sont capitaux aux yeux des citoyens, alors il faudrait accorder davantage d'intérêt aux recherches sur le local en science politique et il n'y aurait pas de justification pour le débalancement actuel dans l'état de la recherche. La prochaine section se concentre sur un comportement politique qui a été abordé par la littérature sous un angle très majoritairement local, c'est-à-dire le vote stratégique.

1.2. Le vote stratégique

L'idée d'un vote stratégique est loin d'être récente. Elle remonte au moins à Duverger (1954), qui examine les effets (mécaniques et psychologiques) du mode de scrutin sur le nombre de partis. Duverger propose la loi qui porte son nom et qui stipule qu'un système pluralitaire a tendance à mener au bipartisme : les électeurs de plus petits partis et sans chance réelle de l'emporter se rangeraient derrière l'une des deux grandes options viables. Ceci constitue l'esprit du vote stratégique dans un scrutin pluralitaire. De plus, la notion de vote stratégique est intimement liée à l'école des choix rationnels (Downs, 1957), et plus particulièrement à l'idée que l'électeur vote dans l'optique d'influencer le résultat de l'élection et ultimement les politiques qui le toucheront.

Cette perspective vient de pair avec la conception d'un vote dit « instrumental », qui se distingue du vote « expressif » où les citoyens se rendent aux urnes dans le seul but d'exprimer une préférence politique (Brennan et Buchanan 1984; Brennan et Lomasky 1993; Brennan et Hamlin 1998; Aldrich et al. 2018).

Blais et Nadeau (1996) n'ont pas été les premiers à travailler sur le vote stratégique, mais leur recherche a permis d'établir clairement une définition qui fait, jusqu'à aujourd'hui, l'objet d'un consensus relatif. Ils définissent le vote stratégique, dans un contexte de mode de scrutin pluralitaire, "as a vote for a second-preferred party (candidate) rather than for the first-preferred one, motivated by the perception that the former has a better chance of winning the election" (Blais et Nadeau 1996 : 40). Il y a donc deux conditions pour qu'un vote soit qualifié de stratégique. Premièrement, l'électeur ne vote pas pour son premier choix. Deuxièmement, il vote pour son parti préféré parmi ceux qui ont une meilleure chance de l'emporter. La seule modification mineure amenée à leur définition consiste au fait que l'option stratégique n'est pas nécessairement le deuxième choix. En effet, dans un système multipartite, il n'est pas impossible que le troisième parti préféré soit l'option stratégique (Daoust, 2015).¹

Cette définition dicte la manière de procéder empiriquement pour déterminer quelle est la proportion d'électeurs stratégiques. Premièrement, il faut cibler ceux dont le premier choix ne fait pas partie des partis qui sont perçus comme étant dans la course dans la circonscription dans

¹ Dans un contexte autre qu'en système pluralitaire comme le Canada, il faudrait modifier la définition en fonction d'autres types de vote stratégique. Par exemple, le *coalition insurance strategic voting* élaboré par Gschwend (2007) consiste à voter pour un petit parti qui permet à notre option préférée de former une coalition (avec le partenaire junior d'une coalition qu'on aide) et gouverner.

laquelle le citoyen vote.² Ce n'est que ce sous-groupe dans l'électorat qui a des incitatifs à voter stratégiquement — les autres voient leur parti préféré être en tête ou deuxième, alors ils n'ont aucun intérêt à le désertier. Parmi ces électeurs stratégiques potentiels, ceux qui voteront de manière stratégique sont ceux qui voteront pour un parti viable mais qui n'est pas le premier choix.

En utilisant cette méthode, Blais et Nadeau (1996), Blais et al. (2001), ainsi que Gidengil et al. (2012) ont estimé, dans le contexte canadien, qu'il y avait entre 3% et 6% de votes stratégiques. Néanmoins, tel qu'expliqué par Gidengil et al. (2012 : 130), leur méthode n'inclut que les trois partis principaux et pourrait donc sous-estimer la proportion de votes stratégiques : tous les votes stratégiques des supporteurs des Verts et du Bloc québécois au Québec passent sous le radar de ces études. En incluant tous les partis (ayant reçu au moins 1% lors de l'élection précédente), Daoust (2015) obtient des proportions plus élevées en analysant l'élection québécoise provinciale de 2012 : il y aurait près de 9% des électeurs qui votent stratégiquement.

Les déterminants du vote stratégique, c'est-à-dire ce qui influence la probabilité de voter stratégiquement ou non, sont également centraux dans la littérature. On peut distinguer deux types de facteurs qui viennent influencer la décision de voter stratégiquement. D'une part, des éléments *individuels* sont en jeu, et d'autre part, des facteurs *contextuels* ont une influence.

² Certains auteurs utilisent des mesures objectives des chances de l'emporter des candidats, par exemple en utilisant le pourcentage de vote réel obtenu à l'élection précédente (Alvarez et al., 2006). Néanmoins, au niveau théorique et suivant l'individualisme méthodologique de l'école des choix rationnels (Downs, 1957), la perception subjective individuelle des chances de l'emporter doit primer sur les conditions objectives.

La caractéristique individuelle la plus souvent étudiée concerne le niveau de sophistication politique. Comme une coordination stratégique nécessite un certain niveau de sophistication, ceux qui comprennent bien la logique, de même que ceux qui ont l'information nécessaire (pour estimer les chances de l'emporter des différents partis/candidats), voteraient davantage stratégiquement (Black, 1978; Blais et Turgeon, 2004; Merolla et Stephenson, 2007).³ Les mesures de sophistication diffèrent toutefois. Certains utilisent le niveau d'éducation comme proxy d'une certaine sophistication politique, alors que d'autres se concentrent davantage sur la notion d'information politique en utilisation des questions objectives pour la mesurer. Néanmoins, d'autres auteurs qui utilisent ces mêmes indicateurs ont obtenu des résultats nuls. C'est notamment le cas de Duch et Palmer (2002), qui s'intéressent au vote stratégique en Europe de l'est, mais également de Blais et Gschwend (2011) et Daoust (2015) qui analysent respectivement les cas des élections disponibles dans le module 2 du CSES (plus d'une vingtaine d'élections) et de l'élection provinciale québécoise de 2012. En somme, le lien entre la sophistication ou l'information politique et la propension à voter stratégiquement est l'objet de plusieurs études mais n'est pas clairement établi, contrairement à, par exemple, la partisanerie.

La partisanerie affecte la propension à voter stratégiquement. En effet, un partisan (i.e. quelqu'un qui se sent proche d'un parti politique) est beaucoup moins susceptible de désertir son premier choix par rapport à un non-partisan (Gschwend 2007), car il doit assumer un coût psychologique à voter pour un « adversaire » politique, mais également parce que les partisans surestiment les chances de leur parti préféré de l'emporter — élément connu sous l'expression de *wishful thinking*

³ Cette information utilisée par les électeurs provient à la fois de données 'objectives' telles que les sondages, mais également d'effets partisans ou de 'projections' (Blais et Bodet, 2006).

(Blais, 2002; Blais et Turgeon, 2004; Guinjoan et al., 2014; Meffert et al. 2011; Stiers et Dassonneville, 2018). En ce sens, ils estiment que ce n'est tout simplement pas nécessaire de voter stratégiquement puisque leur premier choix est perçu comme étant dans la course.

Enfin, un troisième déterminant individuel concerne l'intensité des préférences de l'électeur. Plus l'écart des préférences entre le parti préféré et l'option stratégique est grand, moins l'électeur est susceptible de voter stratégiquement (Gschwend 2007). Ce concept est corrélé avec l'identification partisane : des partisans risquent d'avoir un écart de préférences avec les autres partis qui est plus marqué. Néanmoins, l'intensité des préférences fait appel à un *continuum*, entre le premier et le deuxième choix dans le cas de Gschwend (2007), contrairement à la partisanerie, qui est une dichotomie entre le fait de se sentir proche d'un parti ou non.⁴ Il s'agit d'une notion théoriquement et empiriquement distincte.

Quant aux déterminants contextuels, il y a essentiellement deux facteurs qui pourraient influencer la propension à voter stratégiquement.⁵ Premièrement, la course au niveau local a un effet déterminant. Si un électeur est dans une circonscription où son parti préféré est une option viable (i.e. parmi les options susceptibles de l'emporter), alors l'option stratégique ne se pose même plus puisqu'il n'y aurait aucun motif à une désertion (Cox 1997). Deuxièmement, lorsque l'électeur est dans une circonscription où son parti préféré n'est pas une option viable, le degré de compétition

⁴ Il y a toutefois lieu de noter qu'on peut également parler d'intensité de l'identification partisane (Campbell et al., 1960).

⁵ Ces déterminants contextuels renvoient, tel que prescrit par la théorie, aux perceptions individuelles du contexte et pourraient donc être classés avec les déterminants individuels. Néanmoins, la séparation entre les deux amène une distinction féconde qui est maintenue même si les indicateurs reliés à ces facteurs sont subjectifs.

de la course locale aura un impact. En effet, si la course entre les principaux candidats est très serrée, le vote stratégique est plus probable que lorsque la course est moins serrée (Blais et Degan, 2017).

Jusqu'à présent, la recension s'est concentrée sur des analyses fondées sur des enquêtes par sondage. Or, il existe une littérature sur le vote stratégique qui utilise un devis expérimental en laboratoire. Ces écrits confirment la présence d'un vote stratégique et permettent de l'analyser en situation manipulée. Entre autres choses, le niveau d'information influence la propension à voter stratégique ou non. Bouton et Gratton (2015) ont comparé la proportion de votes stratégiques lorsque l'information quant aux chances de l'emporter des candidats était connue dans un groupe, et dans un second groupe où l'information était imparfaite. En situation d'information parfaite, 28% des participants ont voté sincèrement, tandis que cette proportion s'élève à 63% lorsqu'il y a de l'incertitude (Bouton et al., 2015). Outre le niveau d'information, l'effet du mode de scrutin a été analysé. D'une part, Blais et al. (2011) comparent la proportion de votes stratégiques entre les élections à un tour par rapport aux élections à deux tours. Les résultats indiquent que ces proportions sont très similaires. D'autre part, Blais et al. (2014) analysent le vote stratégique en système proportionnel et trouvent une proportion « substantielle » d'électeurs stratégiques dans ce mode de répartition des sièges; le vote stratégique ne se confine donc pas seulement aux systèmes pluralitaires, corroborant les résultats par sondage d'Abramson et al. (2010).

Il existe toutefois plusieurs lacunes dans la littérature sur le vote stratégique et ma thèse remédie à quelques-unes d'entre elles. D'emblée, aucune information sur le vote stratégique lors de la

dernière élection fédérale canadienne de 2015 n'est connue. Des questions classiques telles que « Quelle est la proportion d'électeurs stratégiques lors de cette élection? Est-elle en hausse? Quels sont les déterminants du vote stratégique? » sont sans réponse. Mais l'élection canadienne de 2015 permet d'aller plus loin que de répondre à des questions classiques : elle peut être l'objet d'une théorisation novatrice puisque le Canada constitue un terrain analytique particulièrement fécond pour l'analyse du vote stratégique. Entre autres choses, la diversité du pays offre différents systèmes de partis avec des caractéristiques qui leur sont propres (Blake, 1972; Daoust et Dassonneville, 2018).

Avant de proposer une nouvelle conception théorique quant aux sources du vote stratégique, il y a lieu de mentionner qu'un concept brille par son absence dans les études sur le vote stratégique : la polarisation, qui réfère à la distance idéologique et/ou affective entre les partis politiques dans (Dalton, 2008; Sigelman et Yough, 1978). Ce concept s'avère fécond dans l'analyse du vote stratégique puisque la polarisation affecte l'intensité des préférences des électeurs, qui est connue pour avoir un impact fort sur la propension à voter stratégiquement (Blais, 2002; Gschwend, 2007).

De plus, le vote stratégique est conçu et étudié comme étant un comportement lié à la politique au niveau de la circonscription puisque le vote, dans le système électoral canadien, a lieu au niveau de la circonscription. Il semble irrationnel pour un électeur de voter en fonction des chances de l'emporter des partis au niveau national, puisque le vote du citoyen est comptabilisé au niveau local. Or, on peut également penser qu'un électeur puisse faire un calcul stratégique en intégrant des considérations nationales puisque la sélection locale participe à la sélection nationale,

notamment du premier ministre (Aldrich et al., 2018). Par exemple, si un partisan d'un petit parti aime mieux un gouvernement minoritaire qu'un gouvernement majoritaire, il pourrait voter pour son deuxième choix dans l'optique que celui-ci empêche un parti d'obtenir une majorité des sièges. Je teste cette possibilité dans cette thèse et je démontre que des considérations nationales semblent également affecter le calcul des électeurs.

1.3. La satisfaction avec le fonctionnement démocratique

Le système démocratique produit des gagnants et des perdants. Néanmoins, le système fonctionne, grâce au consentement des perdants qui acceptent d'être dirigés par des élus qu'ils n'ont pas choisis. Cette acceptation n'est toutefois pas garante d'un niveau de satisfaction qui serait distribué de manière homogène parmi les gagnants et les perdants. Il apparaît intuitif que les gagnants d'une élection soient plus satisfaits du processus et que les perdants le soient moins (Anderson et al., 2005). Cette inégalité dans la satisfaction fait office de point de départ, et les spécifications de cette variation sont l'objet de plusieurs analyses (Blais et Gélinau, 2007; Blais et al., 2017; Curini et al., 2012; Hooghe et Stiers, 2016; Ferland, 2015; Han et Chang, 2016; Howell et Justwan, 2013; Singh et al., 2011; Singh et Thorton, 2016). C'est ce qu'on appelle le *winner-loser gap*.

Cet écart entre les gagnants et les perdants prend toutefois une forme différente en fonction du type de démocratie. Anderson et Guillory (1997) reprennent la distinction classique de Lijphart (1984) entre les démocraties majoritaires versus consensuelles et argumentent que si la moyenne de satisfaction avec la démocratie devrait être la même, l'écart entre les gagnants et perdants devrait être plus important dans le premier type de démocratie et moins prononcé dans le deuxième.

Il faudrait toutefois concevoir leur argument théorique comme un continuum (puisqu'ils utilisent des indicateurs continus) plutôt qu'une dichotomie. En utilisant l'index de Lijphart qui mesure le niveau de « consensualité » d'une démocratie et les données de l'Eurobaromètre de 1990, ils peuvent produire une relation nette : plus une démocratie est consensuelle, moins l'écart entre les gagnants et les perdants est élevé. Cette distinction est importante, car ma thèse met l'accent sur le cas canadien, une démocratie typiquement majoritaire où on s'attend, suivant Anderson et Guillory (1997), à ce que l'écart entre les gagnants et les perdants soit important.

Outre le fait de gagner ou de perdre l'élection, certains facteurs individuels ont un impact indépendant sur le niveau de satisfaction avec la démocratie. Almond et Verba (1963) ont démontré dans *Civic Culture* que les plus scolarisés et que ceux avec les compétences de travail les plus élevées étaient les plus fiers de leurs institutions politiques. Ce n'est pas directement la satisfaction à l'égard du fonctionnement démocratique qui est analysée, mais la fierté des institutions politiques, qui en est conceptuellement très proche. Néanmoins, l'éducation ne fait plus consensus dans la littérature. En effet, d'autres recherches, notamment celle de Singh et al. (2012), ont démontré qu'il y avait en fait une relation négative et significative entre l'éducation et la satisfaction envers la démocratie. Dalton (2004) proposait la logique suivante qui pourrait expliquer de tels résultats : les plus scolarisés auraient des attitudes plus critiques, et donc, ils seraient moins satisfaits de la démocratie.

Les facteurs économiques influencent également le niveau de satisfaction rapporté : plus une personne est économiquement aisée, plus elle se dit satisfaite du fonctionnement démocratique

(Kornberg et Clarke, 1994; Weatherford, 1984). Cela s'explique par le fait que ceux qui disent que leurs finances personnelles et/ou celles de l'État vont bien sont plus enclins à évaluer positivement le fonctionnement démocratique (Blais et Gélinau 2007 : 429). Cette relation se maintient, peu importe que l'on utilise des indicateurs sociotropiques, égotropiques, ou une combinaison des deux. La projection de sa propre situation économique est également à prendre en compte, puisque plus un individu est confiant quant à son avenir, plus il se dit satisfait avec le fonctionnement de la démocratie. En fait, Nadeau et al. (forthcoming) illustrent avec les données du CSES (module 4) qu'un citoyen pauvre mais entretenant l'espoir que sa situation économique s'améliorera serait presque aussi satisfait qu'un citoyen riche. Leurs résultats leur font conclure que la satisfaction repose surtout sur la richesse des citoyens ou tout au moins sur l'espoir de pouvoir améliorer sa condition matérielle dans l'avenir.

Il existe un autre modérateur important dans la relation entre les perceptions de l'économie et le niveau de satisfaction avec la démocratie. Magalhaes (2016) propose que la perception des citoyens envers les procédures démocratiques a un impact important sur la satisfaction avec la démocratie et que plus on est positif face à ces procédures, moins l'effet de l'économie est important. L'auteur utilise les données du European Social Survey, vague 6 (2012) pour faire interagir les perceptions de l'économie et les attitudes envers les procédures (*procedural fairness*). Les résultats confirment cette interaction et suggèrent un effet de modération assez important : l'effet de l'économie est plus grand lorsqu'un individu se trouve au minimum de la variable *procedural fairness*.

Finalement, l'inégalité économique est au cœur de l'analyse de la satisfaction envers la démocratie de Schäfer (2012). Entre autres choses, l'analyse de 17 pays européens démontre que les sociétés

économiquement plus inégalitaires (mesurées par le coefficient Gini) présentent une satisfaction envers la démocratie moins élevée que les sociétés plus égalitaires (Schäfer 2012). Il y a cependant lieu de noter que les analyses sont menées au niveau agrégé et non au niveau individuel.

Quant au fait de participer au processus électoral, cela aurait l'effet de renforcer le niveau de satisfaction du fonctionnement démocratique (Ginsberg et Weisberg 1978; Kornberg et Clarke 1994). L'explication typique veut que la participation électorale vienne de pair avec l'acquisition de certaines compétences politiques qui, en retour, confèreraient un sentiment de confiance envers le système. Kostelka et Blais (2018) montrent avec des données de panel du projet Making Electoral Democracy Work qui incluent 24 élections que cet effet de légitimation de l'élection s'explique par le fait que la plupart du temps, les citoyens qui votent deviennent plus satisfaits du fonctionnement de la démocratie et non l'inverse.

Il existe toutefois une lacune importante dans la littérature sur la satisfaction envers la démocratie en lien avec la politique au niveau local. Au Canada et dans plusieurs pays, il est possible d'être un gagnant/perdant à deux niveaux : au niveau de la circonscription et au niveau national. Cette distinction ne fait que très rarement surface, car la littérature qui s'est demandé comment définir un gagnant se concentre de manière quasi-exclusive sur le niveau national (Anderson et al., 2005). Mais en intégrant les deux niveaux, on peut créer, suivant Blais et Gélinau (2007), quatre catégories d'électeurs, à savoir des gagnants au niveau local mais perdants au national, des gagnants/gagnants, des perdants/gagnants et, finalement, des perdants aux deux niveaux. En

distinguant ces catégories, on peut déterminer si les deux niveaux ont un impact indépendant et comparer l'ampleur de leur effet sur la satisfaction envers le fonctionnement démocratique.

Toutefois, les trois seules études qui se sont attaquées à cette question ont obtenu des résultats contradictoires. Dans la première recherche, Anderson et LoTempio (2002) ont analysé les élections américaines de 1972 et 1996. En considérant la présidentielle comme étant le niveau national et le siège du Congrès comme étant le niveau local, ils en concluent que le niveau national a systématiquement un impact important sur la confiance politique (ce qui est l'hypothèse classique), mais que le niveau local n'aurait aucun effet indépendant. Il faut toutefois noter que leur variable dépendante n'est pas exactement la satisfaction envers la démocratie, mais plutôt la confiance envers la politique. Dans la deuxième étude, Blais et Gélinau (2007) ont testé cette relation au Canada en utilisant les données de l'Étude Électorale Canadienne de 1997 et concluent "We also show that the outcome of the election in the local constituency matters *as much as the national outcome*" (page 437, mon accent). En fait, cette relation est étonnamment claire, puisque la plus grande augmentation de la proportion de citoyens satisfaction envers la démocratie se retrouve chez ceux qui ont perdu au national et gagné au local. L'impact du local semble très fort puisqu'il produit une augmentation qui est même plus importante que le fait de gagner aux deux niveaux.

Dans la troisième étude qui analyse l'impact des résultats électoraux au niveau local, Henderson (2008) analyse trois systèmes pluralitaires de type britannique (Canada, Australie et le Royaume-Uni). Les résultats indiquent que gagner au niveau national, c'est-à-dire voter pour le parti qui

forme le gouvernement, augmente la satisfaction avec la démocratie, mais que gagner au niveau local n'a pas d'effet. En fait, si on regarde attentivement les résultats au Tableau 4 (Henderson, 2008 : 15) pour le Canada, on remarque que 64% de ceux qui ont gagné au niveau local *et* perdu au national sont satisfaits alors que cette proportion est de 70% chez les perdants au niveau local *et* au national. Si le local avait un impact positif, la première catégorie devrait contenir plus de citoyens satisfaits que la seconde.

En somme, la littérature sur l'impact des résultats électoraux au niveau de la circonscription est mince, alors que seulement trois études ont examiné cette question dont seulement deux utilisent la satisfaction envers la démocratie comme variable dépendante. De plus, cette littérature ne fait pas l'objet d'un consensus puisque les résultats sont contradictoires. Alors que Blais et Gélneau (2007) ont obtenu des résultats qui démontrent un effet significatif d'une victoire locale, Anderson et Lotempio (2002) et Henderson (2008) soutiennent qu'il n'y a pas d'impact indépendant du niveau local. Dans la présente thèse, je propose de trancher ce débat en incluant un maximum de cas – davantage que les trois études faites à ce sujet.

Cette augmentation du niveau de satisfaction envers la démocratie chez les gagnants serait intimement liée au sentiment des citoyens d'avoir gagné ou perdu l'élection. En fait, la littérature assume que l'augmentation du niveau de satisfaction est due à la victoire électorale, mais aucune étude ne s'est intéressée à la perception subjective des citoyens. Dans cette thèse, j'examine à l'aide d'une question novatrice la perception subjective des réponses quant à savoir s'ils ont gagné

ou perdu leur élection et plus particulièrement si le fait que le candidat pour qui ils ont voté dans la circonscription est élu est suffisant pour avoir un sentiment de victoire.

2. Questions de recherche

Considérant ce que l'on sait et ce que l'on ne sait pas quant à la dimension locale de la politique, au vote stratégique et à la satisfaction envers la démocratie, on peut dégager plusieurs questions de recherche permettant de combler d'importantes lacunes dans la littérature. Dans les deux premiers articles, je m'inscris dans la thématique de la politique au niveau de la circonscription. Premièrement, j'examine à quel point les résultats électoraux au niveau de la circonscription sont importants aux yeux des citoyens. Deuxièmement, je cherche à savoir pour qui les électeurs votent lorsqu'ils préfèrent un candidat local qui provient d'un parti autre que leur parti préféré. Dans les troisième et quatrième articles, je m'intéresse à l'impact des résultats électoraux sur les citoyens. D'une part, j'examine l'impact d'une victoire locale sur la satisfaction envers la démocratie et d'autre part, j'analyse si les résultats au niveau de la circonscription affectent la perception des citoyens quant au fait d'avoir gagné ou perdu leur élection. Dans les cinquième et sixième articles, j'analyse le vote stratégique, comportement intimement local selon la littérature. Le cinquième article mobilise le concept de polarisation en lien avec le vote stratégique au niveau local, tandis que le sixième examine des considérations nationales qui pourraient affecter le vote stratégique et les compare aux considérations locales.

Plus précisément, je pose la question suivante dans le premier article : à quel point les citoyens attribuent-ils de l'importance aux résultats électoraux dans leur circonscription par rapport aux

résultats nationaux? Pour la première fois dans la littérature, j'utilise les données du projet MEDW pour examiner de façon systématique et comparative l'importance relative que les citoyens attribuent aux résultats électoraux locaux et nationaux dans 11 élections tenues dans 4 pays différents. De plus, j'analyse les déterminants de l'importance attribuée aux résultats au niveau de la circonscription afin de dresser un profil des électeurs qui accordent une plus grande importance aux résultats locaux. La relation suivante est testée : plus un individu est intégré dans sa société, plus il considère importants les résultats au niveau local.

Le deuxième article se concentre sur les électeurs qui ont une préférence pour un candidat local au-delà des partis politiques. J'offre d'abord une réponse à savoir quelle est la proportion d'électeurs qui ont une préférence pour un candidat particulier, comme Blais et al. (2003) avait fait, mais je vais plus loin en dressant un portrait de ce type d'électeur. Dans un second temps, j'examine si ces électeurs décident de voter pour leur parti préféré ou plutôt leur candidat préféré lorsque ce dernier n'est pas associé au parti préféré.

Le troisième article propose deux contributions différentes, liées au niveau de satisfaction envers le fonctionnement de la démocratie. Dans un premier temps, j'apporte un éclairage nouveau dans la littérature qui présente des résultats contradictoires en ce qui concerne l'impact des résultats électoraux au niveau de la circonscription. Tel que mentionné, deux études indiquent que les résultats électoraux à ce niveau n'ont aucun impact sur la satisfaction envers la démocratie (Anderson et LoTempio, 2002; Henderson, 2008) alors qu'une étude en vient à des conclusions inverses (Blais et Gélinau, 2007). En me concentrant sur le Canada, mais en intégrant plus

d'élections que toutes les analyses précédentes combinées, j'offre une réponse claire. Dans un second temps, je propose l'argument théorique voulant que les gouvernements minoritaires dans un système pluralitaire se rapprocherait du type de démocratie consensuelle et qu'en ce sens, le winner-loser gap devrait être moins prononcé lorsque le parti élu n'a pas une majorité de sièges.

Le quatrième article analyse les facteurs qui font en sorte que les citoyens ont l'impression d'avoir gagné ou perdu leur élection. Une première partie de l'article s'intéresse à trois composantes qui pourraient influencer ces perceptions : le fait que son parti forme le gouvernement, la proportion de votes reçus et la proportion de sièges remportés. Dans une deuxième partie de l'article, je garde en tête les résultats du Chapitre 1 voulant que les résultats au niveau de la circonscription sont plus importants que l'on pense pour les citoyens et je m'intéresse à savoir si une victoire à ce niveau peut compenser pour une défaite nationale et faire en sorte que les citoyens aient, malgré la défaite nationale, le sentiment d'avoir gagné leur élection.

Dans le cinquième article, je pose la question suivante : quelle est la proportion de votes stratégiques et quels sont leurs déterminants lors de l'élection fédérale canadienne de 2015 et des élections provinciales ontariennes de 2011 et québécoises de 2012? Mais surtout, cette recherche propose un cadre théorique novateur s'attardant au rôle de la polarisation perçue. Elle répond à la question suivante : comment la perception du niveau de polarisation du système de partis affecte-t-elle le vote stratégique? Plus précisément, j'examine si la distance idéologique entre les partis viables, de même que la distance idéologique entre le parti préféré et l'option stratégique, a une

influence sur la propension à voter stratégiquement. La réponse permet de spécifier les déterminants du vote stratégique en y ajoutant une dimension nouvelle.

Le sixième article propose que les récents gouvernements minoritaires au Canada entre 2004 et 2011 pourraient avoir changé le calcul des électeurs et pourraient procurer des incitatifs à voter stratégiquement au niveau de la circonscription dans le but d'influencer les résultats nationaux. Puisque chaque élu de chacune des circonscriptions contribue aux résultats nationaux (par exemple, en décidant qui sera le premier ministre), les électeurs pourraient vouloir influencer la composante nationale avec leur vote au niveau de la circonscription. Plus précisément, les préférences quant à un gouvernement minoritaire (versus majoritaire) pourraient influencer les calculs stratégiques. En étudiant l'élection canadienne de 2015, qui présentait un dilemme de coordination intéressant au niveau national dû à une course à trois entre le Nouveau parti démocratie, le Parti libéral du Canada et le Parti conservateur du Canada, cette analyse teste dans quelle mesure des considérations nationales peuvent influencer la propension à voter stratégiquement dans la circonscription.

3. Méthodologie

Les détails méthodologiques pour chaque article sont évidemment exposés dans les chapitres respectifs. Néanmoins, il y a lieu de dresser un survol de la méthodologie employée dans cette thèse. Il s'agit d'une thèse qui mobilise des données de sondage. Les deux sources sont le projet Making Electoral Democracy Work (Blais, 2010 Stephenson et al., 2017) et l'Étude Électorale

Canadienne. Les données du MEDW sont utilisées dans chacun des six articles, tandis que l'ÉEC est mobilisée dans le cadre du troisième article afin d'analyser le plus d'élections possible.

Le projet Making Electoral Democracy Work a mené des enquêtes électorales dans cinq pays, à savoir le Canada, la France, l'Espagne, la Suisse et l'Allemagne, entre 2011 et 2015. Ces pays ont été choisis car, malgré le fait qu'ils sont tous des démocraties établies, ils diffèrent sur plusieurs plans. Entre autres choses, les modes de scrutin et les contextes économiques sont très différents. De plus, ils offrent plusieurs niveaux d'élections (locales, régionales, nationales et supranationales), ce qui est très utile puisque l'impact de la politique locale pourrait varier en fonction du niveau de l'élection. La base de données canadienne du projet MEDW est la plus mobilisée, mais dans le cadre du premier article, la France, l'Allemagne et la Suisse sont aussi incluses. L'Espagne n'y figure pas pour la simple raison qu'une question cruciale sur l'importance accordée aux résultats au niveau de la circonscription n'a pas été posée.

À l'exception de l'élection canadienne de 2015, chaque enquête comprend un sondage préélectoral d'environ 1000 citoyens qui ont répondu en ligne à un questionnaire d'environ 20 minutes durant les deux semaines qui précédaient le jour de l'élection. Dans la semaine suivant l'élection, environ 750 répondants ont complété une vague postélectorale, un peu plus courte, pour un taux d'attrition autour de 25%. Pour l'élection canadienne de 2015, le projet MEDW a mené trois enquêtes dans les trois provinces les plus importantes du pays, à savoir l'Ontario, le Québec et la Colombie-Britannique. Respectivement 1891, 1879 et 1849 citoyens ont répondu au questionnaire préélectoral, et 1308, 1195 et 1206 à la vague postélectorale.

Le devis à deux vagues est particulièrement crucial lors de l'étude de l'impact des élections sur les attitudes et préférences des citoyens. En effet, contrairement à un sondage *cross-sectional*, le panel avant et après l'élection nous permet d'isoler l'impact des résultats électoraux sur, notamment, la satisfaction envers la démocratie. En contrôlant pour certaines variables clés dont le niveau de satisfaction préélectorale, on peut isoler l'impact indépendant des résultats sur la satisfaction à l'égard de la démocratie lors de la vague postélectorale. De plus, le panel est très utile pour l'étude du vote stratégique puisqu'il permet de mesurer, dans la vague préélectorale, les attentes quant aux chances des partis de l'emporter puis, dans la vague postélectorale, on demande aux répondants pour qui ils ont bel et bien voté. Lorsqu'il n'y a qu'une seule vague et qu'elle est préélectorale, on ne peut pas prendre le vote rapporté mais seulement l'intention de vote, tandis que lorsqu'il n'y a seulement qu'un sondage postélectoral, on ne peut demander les attentes quant aux chances de l'emporter puisque l'élection a déjà eu lieu.

Concernant la mesure de la satisfaction envers la démocratie, elle a fait l'objet d'une expérience dans toutes les enquêtes électorales. À la fois dans le pré et dans le post, environ la moitié des répondants (sélectionnés aléatoirement) se faisait poser les questions sur la satisfaction envers la démocratie au début du questionnaire et l'autre moitié à la fin. La question exacte était "On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means 'not satisfied at all' and 10 means 'very satisfied', how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [PAYS ou RÉGION]?" Même s'il y a lieu de mentionner cette expérience puisque cette mesure est centrale à un article de cette thèse, le traitement n'affecte en rien les résultats. D'une part, les résultats descriptifs ne changent pas : les répondants ne sont pas plus ou moins satisfaits peu importe l'emplacement. D'autre part, les résultats sont les mêmes si on reproduit les analyses parmi chacun des deux groupes séparément.

Toujours concernant la mesure de la satisfaction envers la démocratie, il faut mentionner qu'elle fait l'objet d'un certain débat quant à sa validité. Linde et Ekman (2003) ont publié une étude qui porte exclusivement sur cet indicateur. Une de leur critique consiste à dire que cet indicateur ne mesure pas l'appui aux principes de la démocratie mais bien comment la démocratie fonctionne en pratique à un moment donné dans un contexte donné – puisque la réponse des répondants est influencée par le contexte (notamment le fait d'avoir gagné ou perdu lors d'une élection). Ils concluent leur article en proposant que les chercheurs devraient utiliser plusieurs indicateurs différents.

D'emblée, il faut reconnaître que la mesure utilisée par la plupart des chercheurs et les grandes enquêtes d'envergure mondiale, qui est la même que j'utilise, n'est pas parfaite – comme n'importe quelle question unique par ailleurs. En ce sens, je ne peux pas utiliser cette question comme un indicateur de l'adhésion aux principes démocratiques. Je peux toutefois utiliser cet indicateur comme mesure du niveau de satisfaction envers la démocratie telle que pratiquée à un moment et dans un contexte donné.

La deuxième base de données utilisée est l'Étude Électorale Canadienne. Elle présente plusieurs avantages, notamment le fait qu'elle inclut une vague pré et postélectorale et que la question de la satisfaction envers la démocratie est posée dans les deux vagues. Pour conserver ces avantages, les élections de 1997 à 2008 peuvent être utilisées – après 2008, la question de la satisfaction à l'endroit de la démocratie n'est demandée que dans une seule vague. Contrairement aux enquêtes du projet MEDW, l'ÉEC utilise un devis « rolling cross-sectional » fait par téléphone et a entre 2500 et 3500 individus qui répondent aux deux vagues. Il y a également lieu de mentionner que

dans le cas de l'enquête de 1997, il n'est pas possible de savoir dans quelle circonscription habitaient les répondants. En ce sens, je ne peux pas étudier l'impact des résultats locaux sur les électeurs pour cette élection précise. Dans les enquêtes de 2000 à 2008, j'ai accès à cette information et je peux donc savoir si l'électeur a voté pour un candidat élu ou non dans sa circonscription.

Les prochains chapitres constituent le cœur de la thèse et répondent aux questions soulevées ci-haut. Ils sont intégrés de manière identique à ce qui a été publié ou soumis à des revues ou presses universitaires scientifiques. À la fin des six chapitres suivants, je propose une réflexion d'ensemble et des pistes pour de futures recherches qui apparaissent fécondes à la lumière des résultats obtenus dans cette thèse.

Chapitre 1

How much do voters care about the electoral outcome in their district?

Cet article est publié dans la revue *Representation* : Daoust, Jean-François et André Blais. 2017. How much do voters care about the electoral outcome in their district? *Representation* 53(3-4): 233-246.

The dominant models to explain vote choice implicitly assume that there is one national election rather than a series of concomitant local contests in the various districts. However, a substantial stream of research (Campbell et al. 1960; Clarke et al. 2004; Gidengil et al. 2012; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Miller and Shanks 1996) views elections as being a combination of several local elections instead of one national election. This literature is insightful, but these authors simply assume that citizens care about elections at the local level and which representative is elected in their district. However, we know nothing about the relative importance that voters attribute to the outcome of the election in their district, relative to the outcome at the national level. This is particularly relevant because if citizens do not care about elections at the local level, then why should researchers? On the contrary, if the outcome at the local level matters as much as the national one, then voting specialists might be seen to concentrate extensively on national issues.

In this article, we fill this lacuna in the literature. We use the Making Electoral Democracy Work data covering 11 elections in Germany, Spain, Canada and France to demonstrate that many citizens have strong attachments to their local community and care about the outcome of the election in their local district. Using an original question designed to tap the relative importance that citizens attach to local and national electoral outcomes, we show that the local level is not quite as important as the national level, but the gap is remarkably small. Furthermore, we specify for whom the local level matters the most (and least).

The ‘founders of the field’, Campbell et al. (1960), focused on partisanship as a psycho-logical attachment to a *national* political party. Hence, the national level is at the heart of their approach. The

Michigan model, however, is still the most influential model for the study of elections and voting behaviour. Lewis-Beck et al. (2008: chap. 4), in *The American Voter Revisited*, conclude that their approach, with its emphasis on variables such as national partisanship, is still the right way to understand modern US elections. Other models have been developed since 1960, but national considerations still predominate. For example, Miller and Shanks (1996) have argued in favour of a ‘synthetic model’ that includes blocs of variables which correspond to various determinants of vote choice. These determinants, such as partisanship, policy preferences, perceptions of current economic conditions, retrospective evaluations of government competence and voters’ impressions of the party leaders’ personal qualities, all focus on the national level. Another classic work is that of Clarke et al. (2004), who explain vote choice in the United Kingdom using a ‘valence’ model. The emphasis in this model is on economic conditions, party identification and party leaders, framed in a national perspective.⁶

However, some scholars have argued that the local level needs to be examined more thoroughly (Blidook 2012; Cross 2016) and a stream of research has developed on what happens at the district level. For example, Marsh (2004) shows evidence that contact with a candidate has a significant positive impact on vote choice. Hence, candidates have incentives to maintain close links with their local community. Fisher and Denver (2008) ascertain the impact of local mobilisation such as canvassing, spending and leaders’ tour in targeted strategic districts. Moreover, one of the well-

⁶ Clarke et al. (2004) refer to the local level when they study strategic (or ‘tactical’) voting and when they examine the impact of party and candidate spending at the district level. Canadian scholars who study vote choice also integrate the local level in their analysis of strategic voting (Gidengil et al., 2012). Nevertheless, it is deemed to be a relatively minor factor, as Blais and Nadeau (1996) claim that only 5% of voters cast a strategic vote.

established findings related to the district level is on the advantages the incumbents have and the impact of electoral expenses. The former has been studied substantially in the United States where it appears that the incumbency advantage has increased over time (Carson et al. 2007; Cox and Katz 1996; Gelman and King 1990; Prior 2006; Trounstein 2011).⁷ This has a major impact on descriptive representation as the greater the incumbency effect, the fewer the women are in legislature (Schwindt- Bayer 2005). Albert and La Raja (2017) review the main features of the impact of electoral expenses.

All in all, there are good reasons to believe that elections are both local and national. However, we know nothing about how much voters care about local and national outcomes. We address this issue using the Making Electoral Democracy Work surveys conducted in 11 elections in 4 different countries (Germany, Canada, Spain and Switzerland). The surveys include original questions to tap the extent to which people care about the outcome of the election in their local district versus the outcome at the national level. We find that the local outcome is not quite as meaningful as the national level, but the gap is remarkably small. In a second step, we examine the possibility that the local level matters more for some people. We show that those who are more integrated into the community are more attached to their municipality and attribute greater importance to local electoral outcomes.

⁷ However, Roh (2017) finds an incumbency *disadvantage* in the South Korean National Assembly elections. Using a regression discontinuity design, the author shows that serving a term in office reduces the probability of winning by 20–30 percentage points and vote share by 3–7 percentage points, possibly due to a high level of dissatisfaction with the governing elites.

1. Local attachment and the local electoral district

The literature on territorial identity is related to our project because it is closely related to the importance that people attribute to the local electoral outcome. Territorial identity is a significant issue when there are multiple nations in a single country, especially when some regions within a sovereign state do not share the same symbolic references. The famous ‘Linz-Moreno question’ asks individuals if they feel more attached to their country, to their region or if they feel equally attached to both (Moreno et al. 1998). The result is that in some regions people feel more attached to their region than to their country.⁸ Hence, the contrast is between attachment to the region and attachment to the country. A second stream of research compares attachment to the country and to some supra level entity. The question is whether Europeans are attached to the European Union and whether their attachment to Europe is as strong as their attachment to the country. The findings are clear: attachment to Europe is weaker than attachment to the country (Berg 2007). The emergence of supra level entities coupled with a process of decentralisation whereby regions and even municipalities are given new powers thus raises the possibility that citizens have multiple territorial identities (Keating 2004), and in that case the obvious question becomes which of these identities are strongest and weakest. Unfortunately, there is little systematic research on this question.

A notable exception is the study of Berg (2007). The author analyses multi-level attachment in Europe with a particular focus on Sweden. Using the Swedish National SOM survey of 2004, she examines how strongly voters are attached to different levels using the following question: ‘People may feel different degrees of attachment to different areas. How attached do you feel to [TERRITORIAL

⁸ See Moreno et al. (1998) for Catalonia, Moreno (2006) for Scotland and Medeiros et al. (2015) for an application of the Moreno question in Quebec.

LEVEL]?’ She uses a scale from 0 (not at all attached) to 10 (very attached). She finds that voters identify the most with the national level, followed by the local and the regional level. She then expands these results to 25 European states using Eurobarometer data, which include a different set of response categories (four categories) but with a very similar question. The results are similar, that is, people identify the most with the national level but the local level comes second. In fact, the difference is very small; 65% of the sample feel ‘very attached’ to the country while 61% feel ‘very attached’ to their town.

The other major exception is the research of Jung (2008). This article uses the World Values Surveys from 1981 to 2001 to demonstrate a life-cycle effect in attachment to the global level even though it remains very low. However, the question used to capture citizens’ attachment is very different. Respondents are asked to choose the two levels they identify the most with among the five following options: global, continental, national, regional and local. The results are striking: more than 40% of the sample choose the local level as the first option, while about 30% select the national level. Most of the time, the second choice for those who selected local first is national and the local is ranked second among those who selected national first (Jung 2008; Table 1). However, while Berg (2007) and Jung (2008) examine local identity, they do not examine the characteristics of people who identify most (or least) at the local level.

We now turn to our main variable of interest. To our knowledge, no previous work directly addresses the question of the relative importance that citizens attach to the outcome of an election at the local district versus that in the whole country. However, some research suggests that at least some voters care about the local outcome. Blais et al. (2003) analysed Canadians’ responses to a

question asking them whether there is a local candidate that they particularly like in the 2000 federal election. They found that 39% of the electorate expressed a preference for a local candidate. Furthermore, the authors demonstrate that there is an independent impact of this preference for a local candidate on vote choice, even controlling for party evaluations, party identification and leader evaluations, and that liking a specific local candidate is a decisive factor for 5% of the electorate. Blais et al. (2003) also point out that the effect is greater among more sophisticated voters living in rural districts. These results suggest that the outcome of the election in the local district matters for at least a subset of the electorate. However, there is no overall comparison of the relative attention given to local and national results.

Table 1.1. Descriptive statistics for attachment and importance of electoral outcome

	Mean	Median	Standard deviation
National attachment	7.9 (7.8)	9 (9)	2.5 (2.5)
Regional attachment	7.6 (7.6)	8 (8)	2.5 (2.5)
Local attachment	7.2 (7.2)	8 (8)	2.7 (2.7)
Importance national outcome	7.5 (7.6)	8 (8)	2.6 (2.6)
Importance local outcome	6.4 (6.5)	7 (7)	3 (3)

Note: The number of observations is always 19,377.

Entres are unweighted numbers. Weighted numbers (where each country has an equal weight) appear in parentheses.

Second, research on satisfaction with democracy shows that winning at the national level increases voters' level of satisfaction, but that winning at the local level does not always matter. Anderson and LoTempio (2002) examine US elections held between 1972 and 1996 to show that winning the

national election increases citizens' satisfaction with democracy, but winning at the local (congressional) level has no independent effect. Analysing three Westminster-style democracies (Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom), Henderson (2008) finds that winning at the national level boosts voters' satisfaction, but that winning at the local level is not a significant predictor. However, Blais and Gélinau (2007) report that, contrary to their expectations, winning at the local level had a significant effect on citizens' degree of satisfaction with democracy after the 1997 Canadian election.

Overall, there are good reasons to think that most citizens care more about the outcome of the election at the national level than about the specific outcome in their district, though there are also good reasons to assume that some are very concerned about the local outcome as well. We, however, know little about the magnitude of the gap. Do most people care a lot more about the national outcome or just a little more? And *who* cares more (relatively speaking) about the local outcome? Finally, is caring about the local outcome part of a more general attachment to the local community? As we show above, some studies have documented the presence of strong identification with the local territory. But, as far as we can tell, no prior research has examined whether attachment to the local community is a necessary condition for paying attention to the outcome of the election at the local district.

2. Hypotheses

We expect people who are more integrated into their local community to be more strongly attached to their municipality and to care more about the local electoral outcome. As McLeod et al. (1999: 316) note, 'community integration can be understood as a necessary condition or at least an important

prerequisite for local political participation'. However, the level of integration into the local community varies a lot between individuals (Verba and Nie 1972) and across societies (Almond and Verba 1963; Verba et al. 1978). We capture the notion of social integration through several indicators.

Age is the first intuitive variable of interest. It makes sense to believe that older people are more likely to feel close to their municipality as they are more likely to have lived there for a long period. Riger and Lavrakas (1981) support this idea. Moreover, Putnam (2000: Figures 35 and 36) shows that there is a linear relationship between age and civic engagement. All in all, older citizens should be more deeply rooted in their community. We thus derive our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Age is positively associated with attachment to the local municipality and caring about local electoral outcomes.

Another sociodemographic of interest is being a parent. We assume that having children makes people pay more attention to local services such as public parks as well as the quality of local schools. Furthermore, having children makes one more prone to interact with other members of the neighbourhood. That is, 'New parents, regardless of gender and marital status, report higher levels of social integration compared with their childless counterparts' (Nomaguchi and Milkie 2003: 365). Moreover, Putnam notes that:

Having children cuts further into informal social connectedness, while adding to formal community organizations [...]. Settling down means, among other things, exchanging informal ties for more formal ones, shifting the balance between hanging out with friends and participating in community affairs. (2000: 95)

Hence, we derive a second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Parents are more attached to the local community and care more about local electoral outcomes.

Belonging to a church is another powerful indicator of social integration. Churches foster civic skills, community interest and civic recruitment. ‘Religiously active men and women learn to give speeches, run meetings, manage disagreements, and bear to recruit them into other forms of community activity’ (Putnam 2000: 66). Hence:

Hypothesis 3: Religiosity has a positive impact on attachment to the local community and to caring about the local electoral outcome.

Another crucial feature of being integrated into a community is that it entails being involved in interpersonal networks, which then contribute to higher levels of political interest, knowledge and participation (McLeod et al. 1996). We therefore predict the following:

Hypothesis 4: The level of information has a positive impact on local attachment and caring about local electoral outcomes.

Finally, feeling attached to the local municipality is a deeply grounded attitude that should have a positive impact on the importance attributed to local electoral outcomes. Hence:

Hypothesis 5: The level of attachment to the local community has a positive impact on caring about local electoral outcomes.

We include several control variables to our models. We consider gender because prior research has established that women are less engaged in politics than men, with the exception of the act of voting.⁹

⁹ This claim applies to national elections since Blais and Kostelka (2015) found that women are less likely to vote than men in European Parliament elections.

Norris (2007), however, claims that women are predominant in associations related to education (such as school boards), church and welfare for the elderly. Furthermore, women are more likely than men to belong to a local association. We also have a rural and urban dummy variable since Blais et al. (2003) found that a preference for a local candidate is a more decisive consideration for rural voters. This suggests that living in a rural environment may be correlated with caring about local electoral results. Moreover, the research of Riger and Lavrakas (1981) points out that the better educated are less strongly tied to their local communities; the less educated are more likely to discuss local problems with neighbours, belong to community groups, read a community newspaper and pay attention to neighbourhood events (Riger and Lavrakas 1981: 63). Finally, the better educated travel more and are thus likely to be more interested in global affairs. Hence, we add education as a control variable.

3. Data and indicators

We use 13-panel election surveys in 11 elections that were conducted in the Making Electoral Democracy Work Project between 2011 and 2015 in 9 regions within four countries.¹⁰ Each of these surveys has two waves, usually with about 1000 respondents in the pre-election wave in the last two weeks of the campaign and about 800 in the post-election wave immediately after the election. We solely use the pre-election wave. We chose the Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) dataset because it is, as far as we can tell, the only cross-national dataset that includes the dependent variables that are the focus of this study. The MEDW team selected these specific countries because they represent a wide variety of cases in terms of size, economic development, and, most importantly,

¹⁰ The study also included two regions in Spain (Catalonia and Madrid) which cannot be incorporated in this research since the question about the importance of the outcome in the local district was not asked in that country.

political institutions, especially voting systems. Furthermore, the countries included were well-established democracies. Hence, we do not claim to be able to generalise our results to new democracies. Finally, the countries included offer different levels of elections as the importance attributed to the local level might differ according to different levels. The MEDW project includes both regional and national elections.

The surveys were conducted online among recruited respondents with quotas that ensure the representativeness of the sample in terms of age, gender, education and region. Table A.1 in the Appendix displays the data. With about 1000 respondents per survey (except for the Bavarian and the federal Canadian election, which includes more respondents), we end up with a total of 19,377 observations.

As mentioned above, we have two dependent variables. The first measures the degree of attachment to the local municipality. The exact wording was ‘On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means “not attached at all” and 10 means “very strongly attached”, how attached do you feel to your municipality?’ The MEDW survey also allows us to capture the degree of attachment to the region and the country. The questions are the same, but instead of ‘municipality’, the name of the region or country appears. We are thus able to compare people’s degree of attachment to their municipality, region and country.

The second dependent variable is more specific than the first and is election related. It captures the importance attributed to the local electoral outcome. We asked voters ‘On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you “don’t care at all” and 10 means that you “care a lot”, how much do you care who is elected in your local district?’ On the same scale, we asked voters how much they care about which

party will form the next government.¹¹ As with the first dependent variable, we can thus compare the extent to which people care about the local and the national outcomes.

We include several independent variables to test our hypotheses and to minimise the risk of an omitted variable bias. We look at the respondents' year of birth so that age is measured in a continuous way. Education is a dichotomised variable, that is, whether the person has a post-secondary education or not.¹² Sex is a binary variable with 'male' as the reference category. Rural is a self-reported description of the place where the voter lives with five categories: a big city, a suburb or outskirts of a big city, a town or a small city, a village and the countryside. We dichotomised the measure so that the first three categories (i.e. urban voters) are coded 0, while the others (i.e. rural voters) are coded 1. The survey also included the following question: 'Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services?' with answer choices being 'Never, less often, only on special holy days, at least once a month, once a week, more than once a week, every day, prefer not to say'. We coded the categories going from 0–6, rescaled 0–1. Furthermore, several questions were designed to understand the factual political information. Respondents were asked to match pictures of party leaders with the correct party that they lead. Finally, respondents were asked if they have children, and if so, how many. We created a binary variable indicating if the respondent has at least one offspring.

4. How much does the local matter?

First, we examined the extent to which citizens are attached to their local municipality. Table 1.1.

¹¹ The only exception is Switzerland. The question is equivalent and goes as follow: 'How much do you care which parties will enter the Federal Council after the election?'

¹² Using a four-category variable does not change the results.

displays the descriptive statistics. The mean local attachment is 7.2 out of 10, which is quite high. In fact, it is similar to the mean for the regional and the national level (respectively 7.6 and 7.9). In other words, mean local attachment is only 0.4 and 0.7 points weaker (out of 10) than regional and national attachment. Additionally, the median is 8, which is the same as for the regional level and only 1 point less than the national one. Finally, 24% of respondents say that they are more strongly attached to their local community than to both their region and country. These results are similar to those of Berg (2007). That is, national attachment is strongest, but local attachment is only slightly weaker. However, our results differ from those of Jung (2008), who concludes that people identify first and foremost with their local community. It is likely that the difference with Jung (2008) is methodological, as the question used to measure attachment was different.¹³

The second dependent variable is the importance attributed to the local electoral outcome. Table 1.1 indicates that the mean is 6.4 out of 10. Indeed, the national level is more important by about 1 point (a mean of 7.5). However, the gap between the two is rather modest. More than half of respondents indicated that they care 7 points or more out of 10 about the electoral results at the district level. More importantly, 15% care more about the electoral result at the local level than about the national outcome, and 32% care equally about both levels. The standard deviation in the importance given to the local outcome is quite high. That is, the local outcome matters a lot for some and very little for others. We therefore need to examine what kind of people are more strongly attached to their local community and pay greater attention to the local electoral outcome.

¹³ As mentioned above, respondents had to choose the top two levels they identify the most with among the five following options: Global, continental, national, regional and local.

5. Who thinks local?

To test our hypotheses about who is more likely to feel attached to their local community and to care about the local electoral outcome, we perform OLS regressions as both dependent variables are continuous. We rescale all the variables from 0 to 1 for the sake of comparability between the coefficients. The results are presented in Table 1.2. There are two models per country. The first model predicts the degree of attachment to the local community and the second the importance given to the outcome of the election in the local district. It is important to note that in the case of local attachment we control for regional and national attachment and in the case of caring about the local outcome we consider how much one cares about the national outcome. We are thus looking at the *relative* importance given to the local level, compared to the national and/or regional level. As expected, national and regional attachment and national importance have significant positive coefficients, reflecting the fact that some people have stronger attachment to the territory in general and that others are more interested in politics and elections in general.⁹

Table 1.2. Attachment to the local community and importance of the local electoral outcome

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Switzerland		France		Canada		Germany	
	Local attachment	Local outcome	Local attachment	Local outcome	Local attachment	Local outcome	Local attachment	Local outcome
Age	0.100** (0.032)	0.193*** (0.044)	0.055 (0.055)	0.134* (0.067)	0.107*** (0.024)	0.147*** (0.025)	0.051*** (0.014)	0.131*** (0.020)
Sex	0.000 (0.010)	0.009 (0.014)	0.006 (0.018)	0.020 (0.019)	0.006 (0.007)	0.008 (0.007)	0.017*** (0.004)	0.011 (0.006)
Education	-0.022* (0.011)	0.002 (0.014)	-0.025 (0.018)	-0.019 (0.019)	-0.007 (0.008)	0.010 (0.009)	-0.014** (0.004)	-0.041*** (0.007)
Rurality	0.008 (0.011)	0.016 (0.014)	-0.022 (0.019)	0.005 (0.019)	0.009 (0.007)	0.020** (0.008)	-0.009* (0.004)	0.049*** (0.006)
Parent	0.017 (0.011)	0.014 (0.014)	0.016 (0.018)	-0.017 (0.020)	0.013 (0.008)	0.017* (0.008)	0.015*** (0.004)	0.021*** (0.006)
Church	0.072*** (0.022)	0.093** (0.030)	-0.004 (0.031)	0.056 (0.038)	0.041*** (0.011)	0.064*** (0.012)		
Attendance	0.052** (0.019)	0.105*** (0.027)	-0.042 (0.050)	0.043 (0.056)	0.025 (0.017)	0.093*** (0.020)	0.035*** (0.008)	0.039** (0.012)
Political information	0.092 (0.050)	-0.130* (0.058)	0.175** (0.067)	0.124 (0.066)	0.113*** (0.016)	-0.006 (0.018)	0.119*** (0.014)	-0.014 (0.019)
National attachment	0.602*** (0.049)	0.200*** (0.056)	0.623*** (0.061)	0.093 (0.071)	0.624*** (0.021)	0.039 (0.028)	0.627*** (0.015)	0.073*** (0.022)
Regional attachment		0.105* (0.045)		0.103 (0.058)		0.145*** (0.024)		0.214*** (0.019)
Caring about National outcomes		0.552*** (0.036)		0.533*** (0.056)		0.543*** (0.025)		0.537*** (0.016)
Constant	0.139*** (0.038)	-0.104* (0.051)	0.093 (0.061)	-0.050 (0.067)	0.034 (0.020)	-0.036 (0.022)	0.148*** (0.012)	-0.153*** (0.018)
N	1043	1043	556	556	3355	3355	7573	7369
R ²	0.400	0.419	0.405	0.347	0.428	0.389	0.483	0.282

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

First, we focus on Switzerland. The first model confirms all our hypotheses except for parents (which has, however, a positive sign). That is, the more integrated to society are more attached to their municipality. The same applies to the second model, which predicts the extent to which people care about the local electoral outcome. In each case, age displays the biggest impact. Going from the minimum to the maximum, the increase is of .1 and about .2 (on a scale of 1), which is substantial. The impact of church attendance and political information is also substantial, with coefficients of about .06 and .1.

Second, we turn to France. The results are straightforward for attachment to the local community: none of the coefficients of interest reaches statistical significance. This may be due to the fact that the number of observations for France is much lower. However, when we look at the second model, age turns out to be a significant predictor of caring about electoral outcomes at the district level with an expected positive effect of .13.

Third, the results are more positive for Canada. Every coefficient is in the expected direction. Age and church attendance are significant while having children and political information are not. However, they all turn out to be significant in the second model. Age displays the greatest impact. Political information comes second, followed by church attendance. However, it is worth noting that even if having children is now significant, its impact is quite modest.

Fourth, we turn to Germany. As noted previously, there is no church attendance variable in this case as it was not asked in the survey. Again, age is the most important determinant of attachment to the local level among our coefficients of interest. Political information appears to be almost as strong a

determinant as age. Being a parent is also a significant and positive predictor but its impact is, again, modest.

Finally, we want to verify our fifth hypothesis, predicting that local attachment has a positive impact on caring about local electoral results. We find strong evidence and confirm that those who are more strongly attached to their local community care more about electoral outcomes in the district. The coefficient is positive in each of the four cases and significant at $p < .05$ in three cases out of four.

The patterns stand in all countries but we lack statistical power for the case of France. However, it is worth to note that the magnitude of age is much less important in Germany compared to Switzerland and Canada. Furthermore, rurality is a powerful predictor of both local attachment and the importance attributed to the local outcomes in Germany while it is not the case in the other countries. Finally, church attendance displays its greatest impact in Switzerland. But as mentioned, these differences should not be overstated.

All in all, we can sum up our results by saying that four hypotheses out of five are confirmed in three countries out of four. That is, older, more politically informed, and religious persons identify more strongly with the local community and those who identify with the local level care more about the electoral results in their district. However, contrary to our expectations, being a parent does not lead to a higher level of attachment with the local level or caring about local electoral outcomes. Finally, the patterns are very weak in France.

Some of the control variables display interesting patterns. First, all coefficients for the gender variable are positive, indicating that women are more locally oriented. However, education does not appear to matter. Additionally, rural citizens also tend to care more about the local level but the relationship does not reach statistical significance.

6. Conclusion

In this article, we address a very simple question ‘How much do voters care about the electoral outcome in their district?’ which has been neglected in previous research. This question has strong implications about how we study elections. It makes a big difference whether (or not) the voters themselves pay a lot or little attention to who is elected in their own local district. Our findings show that many people care about who is going to be elected in their local district in all four countries. They may not care quite as much about this as they do about who is going to form the government, but the difference is surprisingly small. We also specified for whom the local outcome matters the most. Our general hypothesis is those who are more integrated into their community have a stronger attachment to their municipality and attach a greater importance to local electoral outcomes. The hypothesis is confirmed in Canada, Germany and Switzerland, but not in France.

We hope to have established that many voters think ‘local’. More research is needed to sort out the implications of this finding. Perhaps the most obvious avenue for future research is to distinguish voters for whom the local level is least and most important and then to examine whether the determinants of vote choice differ in these two groups. Election surveys thus need to include questions such as the ones we have utilised in this study, which allow us to sort out the relative salience to individual voters of both the local and the national electoral outcome. In our study, we have shown that

it is useful to consider how voters themselves rate the relative salience of the local and the national electoral outcomes.

Chapitre 2

What do voters do when they like a local candidate from another party?

Cet article est publié dans la revue *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique* : André Blais et Jean-François Daoust. 2017. What do voters do when they like a local candidate from another party? *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 50(4): 1103-1109.

In Canadian politics, what happens at the district level is still understudied compared to the national level. Paying attention to MPs and constituency politics seems to be in conflict with the traditional understanding of political representation (Stewart, 1977). However, some scholars have recently argued that we need to focus more on the local level (Blidook, 2012; Carty and Eagles, 2005; Cross, 2016). For a better understanding of Canadian electoral politics, we must take into account the multilevel nature of campaigns and not only focus on the national level. We lack knowledge about local politics and we particularly know very little about voters with a preference for an individual local candidate.

We can divide the literature about the local level in elections in two broad categories. Some researchers have studied the role of political parties and candidates at the district level. Others have focused on voters' reactions to the local context.

First, Cross (2016) dedicated his Canadian Political Science Association presidential address to demonstrating the importance of grassroots level activity in the Liberal victory in the 2015 Canadian federal election. He notably focuses on volunteer recruitment, financing and membership renewal, which happen mostly at the level of local associations. Furthermore, there are quite a few studies on the relationship between party or candidate spending and electoral outcomes at the level of the district. Johnston and Pattie (1989) find that in the UK the more a party spends the better its chances of winning in a constituency.

Even adding more controls, Eagles (1993, 2004) report that candidate spending is a major determinant of electoral outcomes at the local level in the elections of 1984, 1988, 1993 and 1997.

For example, the outcome of the 1988 Canadian election would have been different in 35 constituencies if all major parties had spent their allowable limit of money. Moreover, recent studies conducted by Milligan and Rekkas (2008) and Rekkas (2007) conclude that the greater the spending limit, the less competition and thus the greater the winner's victory margin.

Finally, scholars have examined the impact of incumbency. Krashinsky and Milne (1985) studied Canadian elections from 1926 to 1980. They find that incumbents enjoyed a bonus of 4 points between 1957 and 1980 and that this impact was even more important for Social Credit. A more recent study reports that the probability of being elected is about 10 percentage points higher among incumbents (Kendall and Rekkas, 2012).

A second approach has focused on voters instead of political parties. A rich literature examines strategic considerations at the level of the district and evaluates the extent to which voters desert their preferred party when that party has little chance of winning in their constituency. They find that about 3 to 8 per cent of voters strategically desert their preferred party (Blais and Nadeau, 1996; Blais et al., 2001; Daoust, 2015). Others have examined how voters react to local candidates. Blais and colleagues (2003) showed that in the 2000 Canadian election around 40 per cent of Canadian voters expressed a preference for a particular local candidate. These authors then show that the local candidate was a decisive factor for 5 per cent of the electorate, that is, they would have voted differently if they had had no preference among the local candidates (Blais et al., 2003). In this research note we tackle two slightly different questions: How many voters particularly like a candidate from another party? And do these voters vote for their preferred party or their preferred candidate?" To address these questions, we use the Making Electoral

Democracy Work data for the 2015 Canadian federal election (Blais, 2010). Three surveys were conducted in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec. The surveys were conducted online among recruited panel members, with quotas that guarantee that the samples are representative of the electorate with respect to age, gender, education and region. They each include around 1800 respondents in a first wave and about 1300 in the second wave. The analysis includes only those who reported voting in the second wave and who provided information about their party and candidate preferences. The data (N = 3258) are weighted so that the reported vote in each province corresponds to the actual vote.

Respondents were asked how much they liked each party on a scale from zero to ten. This allows us to identify each respondent's preferred party.¹⁴ In the same wave people were asked if "there is a local candidate that you particularly like in your riding?" and if so to indicate from which party. Forty-eight per cent of the respondents expressed a preference for a local candidate. As could be expected, most of them (81%) mentioned the candidate associated with their preferred party. We thus have about 52 per cent with no preference for a local candidate, 39 per cent with a preference for the candidate of their preferred party, and 9 per cent who particularly like a candidate from a non-preferred party. Table 2.1 displays the descriptive statistics, where we first indicate the proportion of voters with *no* local candidate preference, then those with a local candidate preference which is congruent with the preferred party and finally those with a local candidate preference which is not congruent with the preferred party. This latter category is the one of interest.

¹⁴ In case of ties, respondents were asked which party they like the most.

Table 2.1. Party and local candidate preferences

Region	No local candidate preference (%)	Congruent local candidate preference (%)	Incongruent local candidate preference (%)	Total (%)
British Columbia (n = 1079)	50	40	10	100
Ontario (n = 1144)	47	44	9	100
Quebec (n = 1035)	59	33	8	100
Party preference				
Liberal (n = 963)	53	39	9	100
Conservative (n = 877)	48	48	4	100
NDP (n = 772)	49	44	7	100
Green (n = 585)	58	22	20	100
Bloc (n = 61)	74	7	19	100
Total (n = 3258)	52	39	9	100

Note: The percentages add up horizontally, that is, 53% of those who prefer the Liberal party have no local candidate preference, 39% prefer the Liberal local candidate (congruent preference), and 9% prefer a local candidate from another party (incongruent preference).

The highest percentage of people with no local candidate preference is in Quebec (59%). There is little difference between British Columbia and Ontario. Second, those who support the Green party and the Bloc Québécois are more likely to express no local candidate preference, and when they do they are more likely to have an incongruent preference, that is, to like a candidate from another party. This probably reflects the fact that many candidates from these parties were less well known in their constituencies.

These differences remain significant when we run a multinomial regression (see Table B.1. in the appendix). The analysis also includes socio-demographic variables, political interest and political

knowledge.¹⁵ We can see that the propensity to have a preference, either congruent or incongruent, is higher among those who are older and more interested in politics, and who are more prone to form opinions about the candidates.

We now focus on the group that interests us the most, that is, those who like a candidate from a non-preferred party. Our (very simple) question is: Do they vote for their preferred party or their preferred candidate? We leave aside those who vote for neither of them as well as those who voted for strategic reasons since our question is about whether those with incongruent preferences put greater weight to their views about the parties or to those about the local candidates.¹⁶ Hence, we screened out strategic voters following a well-established approach (Blais and Nadeau, 1996). First, we identified voters who met either of the following two conditions: their preferred party was not one of the top two contenders in their constituency and they voted for the party they liked the most among the top two contenders, or their preferred candidate was not one of the top two candidates in their constituency, and they voted for the party they liked the most among the top two contenders.

¹⁵ Political interest is measured on a scale from 0 to 10 (recoded 0 to 1). The question used was “On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means ‘no interest at all’ and 10 means ‘a great deal of interest,’ how much interest do you have in politics generally?” Political knowledge is measured by questions asking respondents to associate pictures of party leaders (Stephen Harper, Justin Trudeau, Thomas Mulcair, Gilles Duceppe and Elizabeth May) with their respective party. The distribution hence goes from 0 to 4 (recoded 0 to 1).

¹⁶ Among the 299 voters with an incongruent preference, 145 are voting for neither the preferred party nor candidate or they are strategic voters.

Table 2.2. Vote choice among non-strategic voters with incongruent preferences

Region	Vote for the party (%)	Vote for the candidate (%)
British Columbia (n = 50)	58	42
Ontario (n = 47)	55	45
Quebec (n = 57)	66	35
Party preference		
Liberal (n = 64)	65	35
Conservative (n = 33)	73	27
NDP (n = 24)	38	62
Green (n = 31)	55	45
Bloc (n = 4)	43	57
Total (n = 155)	60	40

Note: The percentages add up horizontally. Among those who prefer the Liberal party and a candidate from another party (and thus with incongruent preferences), 65% voted for the preferred party (Liberal) and 35% for the local candidate (and thus for another party).

When we remove those voters, we find that 60 per cent of those with conflicting preferences voted for the preferred party and 40 per cent for the preferred candidate. Table 2.2 displays the results.

In general, those who prefer the stronger parties (the Liberals and the Conservatives) tend to vote to a greater extent for their preferred party and those who prefer the weaker parties tend to vote for their preferred local candidate. Quebeckers are somewhat more likely to stick with their preferred party.

In short, in these three provinces, around one voter out of ten particularly liked a candidate from a party other than the one he or she preferred in the 2015 Canadian election. For two out of five of such voters, the preference for the local candidate trumped the party preference. Sticking with the local candidate is more frequent among those who prefer smaller parties, like the Bloc and the NDP. This is most likely due to the fact that people prefer voting for a party with some reasonable

chances of winning. As it was clear that the Liberals and the Conservatives were the two main viable parties, at least during the last two weeks of the campaign, voters who preferred one of these two parties were more likely to stick with the party and not the preferred candidate. To the contrary, supporters of minor parties appear to be tempted to desert their non-viable party and vote for a local candidate from a viable party.

This research contributes to the growing literature about the local dimension of elections (Allen and Bartle, 2011; Jung, 2008; Marsh et al. 2008). We believe that these results open many more questions that should be taken up in further analyses and that the local level should be a more prevalent feature of Canadian election studies.

Chapitre 3

What does winning mean? Electoral outcomes and satisfaction with democracy

Ce chapitre fait partie d'un projet de livre, *Satisfaction with Democracy*, destiné à Oxford University Press.

“Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, sometimes it rains.”
-Seen on a sign in a baseball field in the Bronx, New York City, 2015.

There is a vast literature on what affects satisfaction with democracy. One of the well-known findings concerns the winner-loser gap. That is, once electoral results are known, the winners become more satisfied with democracy than the losers (Anderson and Guillory, 1997; Anderson et al., 2005). This line of argument is an extension of what psychologists have already demonstrated: people prefer winning over losing (Thaler, 1994).

Previous research has broadly defined winners as voters who voted for the party (or one of the parties) forming the government (Anderson et al., 2005). However, things might not be that straightforward. There are some contexts in which voters, who appear to be the objective “winners” of the election, may display attitudes that are similar to those of losers. Some research has indeed showed that the effect of winning on satisfaction with democracy sometimes vary with contextual and individual-level factors (Curini et al., 2012; Ferland, 2015; Han and Chang, 2016; Howell and Justwan, 2013; Singh 2014; Singh et al., 2011; Sing and Thornton, 2016). In this paper, I build on these insights scrutinize whether some types of winners may not be as satisfied with democracy as they should be according to current theories.

The first scenario concerns the local level, that is, the district (or ‘riding’) level. On the one hand, two previous studies find that winning at the local level is not a significant predictor of satisfaction with democracy (Anderson and LoTempio, 2002; Henderson, 2008). On the other hand, Blais and Gélinau (2007) find that winning at the level of the district boosts voters’ satisfaction. There is

thus no consensus whether an objective victory at the level of the district will result in a subjective feeling of satisfaction. All in all, I provide an appropriate test to examine in a more systematic way whether the electoral outcomes at the local level affect one's level of satisfaction with democracy by studying this feature with more elections than these three studies combined.

The second scenario is when the winning party at the national level does not obtain a majority of seats. Will voters of that party see the glass as half full or half empty? This question has never been studied in majoritarian and single-party government.

Using the Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) project and the Canadian Election Study (CES) datasets from 1997 to 2015, results demonstrate that winner at the local level is not sufficient to compensate for a defeat at the national level. However, there is no substantial difference whether a voter support a government winning a majority or a minority of seats. They still enjoy an important boost of satisfaction with democracy.

1. Satisfaction with democracy, the local level and minority government

The conventional wisdom is that voters are more satisfied when they vote for the national winner. Anderson et al. (2005) dedicated an entire book focusing on the national level. However, scholars have rarely studied the impact of winning at the district level and when they do so, they find contradictory results.

Two major works argue that the level of the district does not play a role in one's level of satisfaction with democracy. First, Anderson and LoTempio (2002) show using US data that the electoral outcome of 1972 and 1996 at the presidential (national) level does affect voters' satisfaction, but that the results at the congressional (local) level do not. Furthermore, Henderson (2008) replicates this finding in parliamentary systems and demonstrates that the electoral results at the local level are not a significant predictor of satisfaction with democracy in Canada, the UK and Australia. However, she analyzes only one election per country. In contrast, Blais and Gélinau (2007) find that during the 1997 Canadian election, winning at the district level has a significant positive impact on voters' satisfaction with democracy. I will analyze the impact of winning at the local level with more cases than the three studies combined and provide a more systematic test.

I now turn to the second scenario and integrate considerations related to the national level. Recall that my starting point is the winner-loser gap. However, it is worth noting that this winner-loser gap is different across electoral systems (Anderson and Guillory, 1997; Singh, 2014). The main feature is that winners are more positively affected by the electoral outcomes and losers more negatively in majoritarian systems: one-party government being the norm, there is simply more at stake. Hence, in majoritarian democracies, the mean level of satisfaction is about the same as in consensual democracies, but the winner-loser gap is more pronounced (see Anderson and Guillory, 1997, Figure 1).

Under majoritarian systems, the winners of elections are in a strong position to implement their preferred policies for the entire time of their term. Inversely, governments in consensual

democracies need to build coalitions within parliament and this sometimes involves executive power sharing in multiparty coalition governments (Powell, 1982; Lijphart 1984). In this latter case, one could expect that as long as the preferred party is part of the coalition, voters will display attitudes as if they had won the election. However, things are not as simple as they appear. Blais et al. (2015) found that voters react to the seat distribution in the legislature and the seat distribution in the cabinet, but that the increase of satisfaction with democracy is much more important when the preferred party obtains a majority of seats in government. “Being a minority partner in a coalition government may be construed not to be a very positive outcome, especially if this is likely to be a handicap in the following election” (Blais et al. 2015: 5). This rationale could be expanded and tested in majoritarian and single-party government systems to see if voters who voted for a winner obtaining a majority of seats will be more satisfied than voters who voted for a winner obtaining a minority of seats. I thus derive the following:

Hypothesis 1: Supporters of a majority government will be more satisfied than voters who supported a party that forms a minority government.

Hypothesis 1b: Voters who did not support a party that forms a minority government will be more satisfied than voters who did not support a party that manages to form a majority government.

2. Data and indicators

To test the hypotheses, I use Canadian data, a first-past-the-post electoral system where the candidate with the most votes obtains a seat in Parliament. Each voter casts one vote and each riding elects one person to represent their district. Canada is well-suited for this research as there

is a local and a national level and as there have been quite a few minority governments since the early 2000's.

The first dataset comes from the Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) project which conducted surveys in two Canadian provincial (i.e. regional) elections (Ontario 2011 and Quebec 2012) and one national election (in 2015). The second dataset is from the Canadian Election Study (CES). The data from the 1997-2008 elections include the necessary indicators to conduct the analysis (Kanji et al., ed. 2012). Table C.1 of the supplementary material summarizes the data. The survey design of both MEDW and the CES makes it possible to concentrate on satisfaction with democracy once citizens voted (post-electoral) controlling for prior levels of satisfaction with democracy (pre-electoral). Indeed, the best way to determine whether an election affects voters' opinions is to compare these opinions before and after the election (Singh et al., 2012). The dependent variable is measured by the following question: "On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means 'not satisfied at all' and 10 means 'very satisfied', how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [Canada/Ontario/Québec]".¹⁷ The CES uses the same question but with four categories, going from 'very satisfied' to 'not satisfied at all'. Both measures are rescaled from 0 to 1. The other main indicator is related to the classification of winners and losers. I follow many scholars by using a self-reported vote choice and categorize a voter as a winner if she voted for the winning party (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Singh 2014).¹⁸ Other basic indicators are included as control

¹⁷ Respondents from the provincial election in Quebec were asked about the democratic functioning in the province. The same logic applies to Ontario's provincial election. During the federal election, the question was about democracy in Canada. Furthermore, see Linde and Ekman (2003) for a debate of this measure. The authors raise some issues that are worth noting especially because this measure is widely used.

¹⁸ For every district result, I relied on Elections Canada, the official reference of the government for electoral results.

variables: age (as a continuous variable), sex, education (as a continuous variable) and turnout (voted or not).¹⁹ Everything is rescaled [0,1] in order to compare the coefficients.

3. Results

I first display the descriptive statistics for the variables of interest. The proportion of voters who support the local winner is about the same of those who support the national winner as they represent 35.7% and 33.9% respectively. However, it is worth noting that they are not necessarily the same people. In fact, the correlation is low (the Pearson's r is 0.15). Concerning the dependent variable, the level of satisfaction with democracy is .56 in the pre-electoral wave and .63 in the post-electoral one, which confirms a "legitimation effect" of the election, that is, the overall level of satisfaction with democracy is higher right after the election (Blais and G lineau, 2007; Singh et al., 2012).

To analyse if winning at the local level have an independent impact on one's level of satisfaction with democracy, I examine the effect of casting a vote for the winning candidate by pooling all the elections. Furthermore, I do not exclude non-voters but I control for the fact that some people did or did not vote during the election.

¹⁹ However, it is worth to note that the patterns of the results remain the same if economic perceptions, cynicism and partisanship are included as supplementary controls. Results are available upon request.

Table 3.1. The impact of winning at the local and the national level

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Pre Satisfaction	0.48*** (0.01)	0.47*** (0.01)	0.46*** (0.01)
Win Local	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Age		0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Women		-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)
Education		0.06*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)
Turnout		0.03*** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Win National			0.08*** (0.00)
Constant	0.36*** (0.00)	0.28*** (0.01)	0.28*** (0.01)
Observations	19450	19450	19450
R ²	0.267	0.273	0.293

*Notes. OLS regressions. Robust standard errors in parentheses. All elections exception CES 1997 included. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$*

The interpretation is straightforward as the models are OLS regressions. Model 1 shows that winning at the district level increases voters' satisfaction by .01 when no control is included – except the pre-level of satisfaction. The impact is very small. Model 2 adds basic controls which make the impact of winning at the local level disappear ($p = .09$). This null result is not due to multicollinearity between winning at the national level as the correlation is, as mentioned, very low. Furthermore, as shown in Table C.2 of the supplementary material, separate results for each election yield strong support for the claim that winning at the local level has no impact as the impact of winning at the local level is only significant once (and displays a negative sign) in the seven elections under study. Hence, I conclude that winning at the local level is not sufficient to become more satisfied with democracy.

I now turn to the second scenario which focuses on the national level. The general idea is that supporters of a majority government will be more satisfied than voters who supported a party that forms a minority government. Hence, we can expect that the degree of satisfaction should gradually decrease as we move from the first to the last scenarios: A) A majoritarian victory B) A minority victory C) A minority defeat and D) a majority defeat. The level of satisfaction for those groups is as expected: A) .72 B) .68 C) .61 and D) .59. These indicate that people who win and win big (a majority) are very satisfied, but that those who win only a minority of seats do not seem to differ from the winners of the first scenario as the difference is of .04. Table 3.2 provides a crucial test for this claim. Model 1 displays the impact of voting for the national winner in elections where the winner forms a majority government, and Model 2 shows the same impact in elections where the winner forms a minority government.

Table 3.2. Majority versus minority government

	Majority	Minority	Interaction
Pre Satisfaction	0.49*** (0.01)	0.43*** (0.01)	0.46*** (0.01)
Age	0.02 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)
Women	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)
Education	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Turnout	-0.00 (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.01 (0.00)
Win National	0.08*** (0.00)	0.07*** (0.00)	0.08*** (0.00)
Majority			-0.02** (0.00)
Win National x Majority			-0.00 (0.01)
Constant	0.28*** (0.01)	0.31*** (0.01)	0.31*** (0.01)
Observations	12715	9687	22402
R ²	0.320	0.257	0.293

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

On the one hand, voting for the national winner when the party wins a majority of seats boosts one's level of satisfaction with democracy by .08 point. On the other hand, voting for the national winner when the party is a minority boosts one's level of satisfaction with democracy by .07. Clearly, the difference is really small and is probably not significant. However, we need an interaction to test this claim. Model 3 provides this test. The interaction is, as expected, not significant. Hence, I must reject H1a.

Another way to look at the results is to focus on the “Win national” coefficient for separate regression for each election. Table C.2 of the appendix displays the results. A party managed to win a majority of seats in the first three elections. The coefficients for “Win national” are .06, .10 and .12. We need to compare these coefficients with the next five models, where the government did not enjoy a majority of seats. With the notable exception of Canada 2008, the magnitude of the boost on satisfaction with democracy is really consistent (between .06 and .08) and similar to the boost that we note when the government enjoys a majority of seats. However, the Canada 2008 case is an outlier as the boost for the voters who supported the national winner display an increase of satisfaction with democracy of .03.

Moreover, the coefficient of the main effect of a majority government (compared to a minority government) is significant, which means that losers who did not support the majority government are less satisfied compared to losers who did not support a party that forms a minority government. This supports H1b. However, despite the reach of a conventional level of statistical significance, the impact is modest as the unstandardized coefficient is .02. That is, on average, losers are .02 points less satisfied when the government is a minority one. On average, we do not see much difference between a majority and a minority outcome as Model 3 of Table 2 indicated.

One could think of different operationalisation to test the robustness of these results. Indeed, looking at each election separately instead of one pooled model is a must, which I did. Moreover, one could argue that ordered logistic regressions would be more appropriate for this type of dependent variable. This methodological alternative does not change the main conclusion,

Whether I use OLS or ordered logistic regressions, the ratio of the mean coefficient of ‘win national’ in majority versus in minority is 1.5 in both cases.²⁰ Finally, presenting the results using an independent variable with four categories such as Blais and Gélinau (2007) where a voter could either win at the national level and win at the local level, win/lose, lose/win or lose/lose, does not change my main conclusion. When compared to lose at the national level and win at the local level, the lose/lose coefficient is not significantly different, which is consistent with my finding that the local level does not affect satisfaction with democracy.

4. Conclusion

The starting point of this research was that the level of satisfaction with democracy differs between citizens and that elections matter in explaining this variation since it generates winners and losers. However, some electoral victories could be seen as not being real victories. I studied two particular contexts where this is the case.

First, winning at the district level does not necessarily make someone happy. I find strong support for the claim that winning the local level is not a significant predictor of citizens’ satisfaction with democracy. Second, at the national level, I find that the size of the victory does not influence whether voters display attitudes of winners or losers. Voters who support a national party that form a minority government are as satisfied with democracy as voters who support a national party that manages to obtain a majority.

²⁰ Using OLS regressions, the mean coefficient in majority is .093 versus .062 in minority. The coefficients are .8 versus .534 using ordered logistic regressions.

The results entail strong implications for research on satisfaction with democracy. On the one hand, the classical view that one should focus on the national level when studying satisfaction with democracy is supported by my results regarding the first scenario. The local level is not part of that story and my study is the first one to claim it in a really systematic way. On the other hand, winning with a minority of seats in a majoritarian system is not the same thing as winning a minority of seats in a consensual democracy. As there is no significant difference in terms of increase of satisfaction with democracy no matter the size of the elected government, the winner-loser gap is as important as it is when the government enjoys a majority of seats.

The theoretical argument of H1a and H1b was that a minority government would need, as it is the case in minority government in consensual democracy, to bargain with other parties and obtain a consensus in order to stay in power. The results suggest that voters do not think that it is the case. Another way to support that claim would be to look at voters' own subjective feeling of victory or not. It is possible to do it using the three elections of the MEDW datasets. The question asked was "Would you say that the party you voted for: won the election, lost the election, don't know". When the Liberal Party of Canada won a majority of seats in 2015, 98.7% of its supporters said they won the election. The proportion is not significantly lower when the winning party forms a minority government: In Quebec 2012, 96.1% of the PQ supporters and 98.5% of the Ontario Liberal Party supporters in the Ontario 2011 election said that they won the election. All in all, I can't conclude that a minority government reduces the winner-loser gap in a majoritarian system because voters do not seem to perceive any substantial difference between the two scenarios and thus displays the same increase in terms of satisfaction with democracy and feeling of victory.

Chapitre 4

What makes people believe that their party won the election?

Cet article a été accepté pour publication. Voir Stiers, D., J.-F. Daoust et André Blais. What makes people believe that their party won the election? *Electoral Studies*, Oct. 2018.

Free and fair elections constitute a basic ingredient of the democratic process. Much research has been devoted to examining the effect of participating in this democratic event on satisfaction with democracy and political trust. These studies have revealed that although democratic participation can increase these feelings of support for the system, it does not do so for all voters alike. More specifically, stark differences have been found between ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ (Anderson, Blais, Bowler, Donovan, & Listhaug, 2005).

This literature investigates whether winners and losers differ in their attitudes towards the democratic system after an election (Blais & Gélinau, 2007; Blais et al., 2017; Hooghe & Stiers, 2016; Ferland, 2015; Singh et al., 2011). Time and again, research shows that electoral winners display significantly higher satisfaction with the democratic process (Anderson et al., 2005; Esaiasson, 2011).²¹ However, we do not know which aspects of party performance most strongly affect voters’ perceptions of whether they won or lost the election. How do voters construe winning and losing? Do they see elections first and foremost as a contest for obtaining as many votes as possible, for getting as many representatives as possible in Parliament, or for maximising control of government?

Indeed, while some studies explicitly acknowledge that voters might understand winning and losing differently (Blais, Morin-Chassé, & Singh, 2017; Hooghe & Stiers, 2016; Singh, Karakoç, & Blais, 2012), no research has related these measures to voters’ own perceptions (for the single exception, see Singh et al., 2012). Usually, these studies assume that feelings of winning and losing are in line with how ‘winning’ is commonly perceived – i.e.,

²¹ Kostelka and Blais (2018) provide more insight in the causal direction of this effect. Using panel data, they demonstrate that turning out increases voters’ level of satisfaction and not the reverse (i.e. people would turn out because they are more satisfied and not vice-versa).

being the ‘first’ or ‘largest’. However, for some voters – especially supporters of small parties – ‘winning’ could mean that they obtain Parliamentary seats and hence have their voice heard in the political process or that they were able to send a signal through their votes. In this paper, we investigate what determines citizens’ feelings of winning an election. We pay particular attention to what causes voters to deviate from the most common view of winning and losing – that is, why some voters feel like a winner even if their party did not become the largest party in the election.

Furthermore, it remains unclear whether voters distinguish the performance of their party at different levels. For instance, we do not know whether people attach more importance to winning in their own constituency or at the national level. The few studies that have looked at whether the electoral outcomes at the district level have a significant impact on voters’ level of satisfaction with democracy have come up with inconsistent findings (Anderson and Guillory, 1997; Blais and Gélinau, 2007; Henderson, 2008).

This paper fills these gaps in the literature by investigating what makes a voter feel she has won or lost the election, using data of the Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) project. These data include an original question in which voters were asked whether they believe that the party they voted for had won or lost the election. We find that supporters of the largest party almost unequivocally feel that their party won the election, which is consistent with conventional wisdom. Then, we investigate the factors that cause voters to deviate from the commonly assumed definition of winning. Finally, we examine whether voters think they lost the election even if their preferred party was elected in their district, or whether this small electoral success can soften the effect of an electoral defeat at the national level.

What makes people think that their party won or lost an election?

The existence of a winner/loser-gap in attitudes towards the political system after an election is widely supported by previous research and has proven to be very robust (Anderson et al., 2005, Blais et al., 2017; Ferland, 2015; Singh et al., 2011). However, no study so far has examined voters' *subjective* assessments of electoral performance. This shows the lack of understanding of how voters themselves construe 'winning' or 'losing' an election. Do voters care most about their party being in government, or do they want first and foremost their views to be represented in the political debate – i.e., gaining votes so that their party is represented in Parliament? This distinction is grafted on a fundamental opposition between two contrasting views about democracy and elections (Thomassen, 2014, p. 2). While in majoritarian systems elections are mostly about selecting a government that represents the majority, in a consensus model of democracy the focus is on the election of a Parliament that is representative of the whole electorate (Lijphart, 2012; Powell 2000; Thomassen, 2014).

Most commonly, 'winning' means being 'first'. Hence, it is assumed that winning an election is mostly about being the largest party in terms of votes and seats in Parliament and government.²² This conception accords with the majoritarian view of elections. The assumption is, then, that voters construe winning as being the largest party:

Hypothesis 1: Voters of the largest party are likely to feel that their party won the election.

However, voters of a small party may still feel they are winners if their party was 'successful' in some respects. First, in a consensual view of democracy, elections are held to assemble a

²² Note that, as will be explained below, we cannot distinguish being the 'largest party' from being 'in government'. However, in the one case under investigation where this is possible (Germany), we do distinguish dominant incumbent parties from junior coalition parties.”

Parliament in which the different opinions of voters are represented (Lijphart, 2012; Thomassen, 2014). Hence, supporters of small parties may attach importance to (gaining or losing) votes and hence representation in Parliament. Second, voters might vote for small parties to send a signal to the larger parties, and this signal becomes more effective if the party they turn to receives a substantial proportion of the votes (Kselman & Niou, 2011). For these reasons, we expect that not all voters follow the most common understanding of ‘winning’, i.e. being the largest party. These considerations may be particularly relevant if and when voters view elections as a way to bring together different opinions and interests in society (Powell, 2000). Hence, we investigate whether voters attach importance to Parliamentary representation as well:

Hypothesis 2a: Voters of smaller parties that gained votes in the election are more likely to feel that their party won the election.

Hypothesis 2b: Voters of smaller parties that gained seats in the election are more likely to feel that their party won the election.

Our first goal in this study is to investigate which aspect of a party’s electoral performance most strongly shapes voters’ subjective evaluations of whether their party won or lost the election. Our data also allow us to go a step further, and to examine individual-level heterogeneity in voters’ perceptions. More specifically, we identify two characteristics of voters that can be expected to influence their feelings of winning and losing.

First, voters who identify with a party are more optimistic with regard to the performance of the party (Stiers & Dassonneville, 2018). On the other hand, partisanship has been argued to

work as a ‘perceptual screen’, biasing perceptions of political facts (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960). Hence, partisan identifiers are likely to be less affected by a party’s gains or losses in votes or seats, as their subjective perceptions might be biased upward. Both the direct effect of partisanship as well as its interaction with a party’s electoral performance will be investigated.

Hypothesis 3: While partisanship increases feelings of winning, party identification decreases the impact of a party’s performance on voters’ feelings of winning

Another individual-level factor is political information. Blais and Bodet (2006, p. 488) show that more informed voters are more prone to use ‘objective’ contextual information (e.g. polls, outcome of previous elections) when they are asked about their parties’ chances of winning the election. Hence, we expect a stronger link between the electoral performance of a party and perceptions of winning among better-informed citizens.

Hypothesis 4: Political information increases the impact of a party’s performance on voters’ feelings of winning

Electoral performance at the local and national level

Another question that remains unanswered in the literature is whether electoral outcomes at the district level matter. Contradictory results have emerged in this regard. Using data from the United States, Anderson and LoTempio (2002) show that the electoral outcomes of 1972 and 1996 at the presidential (national) level affect citizens’ level of satisfaction, but that the results

at the congressional level do not. Henderson (2008) replicates this finding in parliamentary systems and demonstrates that the electoral results at the district level are not a significant predictor of satisfaction with democracy in Canada, the UK, and Australia. Contrarily, Blais and Gélinau (2007) show that during the 1997 Canadian election, performance at the district level had a significant positive impact on voters' satisfaction with democracy.

Given these conflicting findings, we have no clear expectation about whether the outcome at the district level does or does not matter in constructing voters' opinion about their status of winner or loser, and we hence do not formulate specific hypotheses. Previous studies already convincingly showed the impact of election results at the national level on voters' support for the democratic system. Using our original measure of voters' own perceptions, we are able to test in a more direct way whether or not voters also consider the local level as an additional factor when they come to the conclusion that the party they voted for won or lost the election. Finally, while previous studies were concerned with the effects of winning and losing on voters' satisfaction with democracy, we are dealing with how voters themselves define winning and losing.

Data and methods

The data in this study come from the Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) project (Blais, 2010; Stephenson et al., 2017). The project includes 27 electoral surveys in 5 different countries. The new question tapping individual perceptions of the winner or loser status of the party the voter voted for is available only for Canada, Spain, and Germany. Hence, we focus on these countries, for which we have 11 election studies conducted in the context of seven national or regional elections. The MEDW data are based on online quota-based surveys that

guarantee the representativeness of the sample according to gender, age, education and region. For each election, there was a pre and a post-electoral panel survey. The control variables come from the pre-electoral survey. The question probing the dependent variable was included in the post-electoral survey. The exact wording of the question was “Would you say that the party you voted for:” and the answer choices were “won the election/lost the election/don’t know”.

Methodology

For each country, we first present a table describing voters’ perceptions, together with an overview of the party’s performance in the election. Following the hypotheses, we focus on the most commonly used indicators of winning and losing: being part of the government (coalition), gaining or losing votes, and gaining or losing seats. We pay special attention to the largest party in the election, as it is most commonly assumed that this party can be considered the winner of the election.

Second, we investigate which factors explain whether a voter thinks the party she voted for won or lost the election by estimating logistic regression models. As the first descriptive analyses clearly establish that a party’s status as the largest party is the major determinant of voters’ perceptions, we focus on the other factors that explain perceptions, *apart from the party being the largest party or not*. Therefore, in these models, first, we include a dummy variable ‘largest party’ that indicates whether a voter voted for the largest party or not.²³

²³ Note that in all the cases under investigation the party receiving the largest share of votes is also the party with most seats in both Parliament and government. There is therefore no ambiguity about who is the winner. However, this is not always the case, and in some contexts different parties could claim to be the winner.

After including this dummy, we go on to test which other factors explain why voters feel the party they voted for won the election. To do so, we focus on measures that exemplify the different notions on the role of elections in a democracy. First, we include a dummy variable indicating whether the party the voter voted for was part of the government as a (junior) coalition partner. Second, to test for the consensual view, we include the percentage of vote and seat shares the party gained or lost compared to the previous election.

We finally test whether voters' characteristics explain perceptions of winning or losing the election. First, we test whether partisanship has a direct effect on voters' perceptions of winning or losing. In a second step, we include an interaction between partisanship and change in votes and change in seats respectively. Party identification is included as a dummy variable with value 1 if voters identify with a party and also voted for this party, and value 0 otherwise.²⁴

Second, we test whether there is a stronger link between votes or seats gains or losses and perceptions among voters with higher levels of political information. Respondents were asked to associate pictures of political leaders and party slogans to the correct party. Each picture and slogan is coded 1 if the respondent associates it correctly with the party and 0 if not (Daoust and Sullivan, 2017).²⁵ This measure is rescaled from 0 to 1. As political information is expected to affect the impact of a change in vote shares or seat shares on perceptions of winning and losing, it is included as an interaction in the models.

²⁴ Voters might vote for another party than the one they identify with (for instance because they prefer the leader of another party or for strategic motivations). As perceptions of winning and losing were probed with regard to the party the voter voted for and partisan leanings should matter for the party with which voters identify, we only take into account voters who voted for the party with which they identify.

²⁵ All question wordings are available on www.electoraldemocracy.com.

In the second part of the study, we use our unique measure to investigate whether feelings of winning and losing are primarily determined by performance in the national election or in the electoral district the voter lives in. In these analyses, we focus on the Canadian elections.²⁶ We compare the proportion of voters who feel they won the election in four different categories: (1) voters voting for the party that was elected in their district and formed the government; (2) voters voting for the party that is in the government but not for the candidate elected in their district; (3) voters voting for the party that was elected in their district but is in opposition at the national level; and (4) voters voting for the party that is not elected in their district and that is in the opposition at the national level.

Results

Canada

We start with voters' perceptions of winning and losing in Canada. Table 1 summarises the performance of the parties with respect to the three aspects mentioned above: whether they entered or left government, and whether they gained or lost seats compared to the previous election. As we expect voters to understand 'winning' mostly as being the largest party in the election, that largest party is highlighted in bold.²⁷

A first look at the proportion of voters feeling they won or lost the election indicates that it is mostly voting for the largest party that makes voters feel like winners: more than 90%

²⁶ In Canada, voters cast a ballot at the district (or constituency) level, no matter if it is a regional or a national election. This is what we label as the 'local' level. The common practice is that the party with the most elected representatives will be called to form the government.

²⁷ As mentioned above, in all the elections included in our study, there is no ambiguity about which party is the largest, as the party with most votes is also the party with most seats in both Parliament and government.

of those who voted for the largest party believe that their party won the election. Furthermore, it needs to be noted that after the two regional elections, minority cabinets were formed – and this does not seem to matter for voters’ perceptions of winning. Moreover, there do not seem to be strong differences between staying in government or entering government; voters of the largest party feel like their party won. For the smaller parties, the proportion of votes and seats seems to matter.

This first overview strongly suggests that perceptions of winning are mostly determined by being the largest party in the election. However, losing votes or seats may also influence whether or not a voter feels like the party she voted for won or lost the election. To get a more in-depth view, we estimate logistic regression models with perception of winning as the dependent variable.²⁸ The results of these analyses are summarised in Table 2.

²⁸ As we are interested in voters’ perceptions of winning and losing, respondents using the ‘don’t know’-option (12.25% of the total sample) were excluded from the analyses. However, additional tests distinguishing voters who felt the party they voted for won the election versus the other two categories (i.e., lost/don’t know) lead to the same conclusions. Results of these multinomial logistic regressions are available upon request.

Table 4.1. Perceptions of winning and losing in Canada

Election survey	Party	Government status	Vote share status	Seat share status	% won	% lost	% don't know
Canada National 2015	Liberal Party	Entered government	+20.6 (39.5%)	+44 (54%)	98.3	1.3	0.4
	New Democratic Party	Stayed in opposition	-10.9 (19.7%)	-17 (13%)	4.6	91.9	3.6
	Conservatives	Left government	-7.7 (31.9%)	-20 (29%)	3.1	95.5	1.4
	Bloc Québécois	Stayed in opposition	-1.2 (4.7%)	+2 (3%)	12.3	80.9	6.8
	Green Party	Stayed in opposition	-0.5 (3.4%)	0 (0.3%)	3.0	88.5	8.5
Ontario regional 2011	Ontario Liberal Party	Stayed in government	-4.7 (37.7%)	-17 (50%)	96.7	1.5	1.8
	Progressive Conservative Party	Stayed in opposition	+3.8 (35.5%)	+10 (35%)	8.6	87.5	3.9
	New Democratic Party	Stayed in opposition	+5.9 (22.7%)	+7 (16%)	19.5	63.6	13.9
	Green Party	Stayed in opposition	-5.1 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	0.0	92.6	7.4
Quebec regional 2012	Parti Québécois	Entered government	-3.2 (32.0%)	+3 (50%)	93.4	3.8	2.8
	Québec Liberal Party	Left government	-10.9 (31.2%)	-13 (40%)	25.6	69.6	4.8
	Québec Solidaire	Stayed in opposition	+2.3 (6.0%)	+0.1 (2%)	51.8	35.7	12.5
	Coalition avenir Québec	Stayed in opposition	+10.7 (27.1%)	+10 (15%)	19.7	69.4	11.0
	Option nationale	Stayed in opposition	+1.9 (1.9%)	0 (0%)	0.0	91.7	8.3
	Green Party	Stayed in opposition	-1.2 (1.0%)	0 (0%)	0.0	64.3	35.7

Note: Government status indicates whether the party stayed in government, was in government but became an opposition party ('left government') or was an opposition party but entered government. Vote (seat) share status indicates the change in the vote (seat) share in percentage points. Numbers between brackets indicate the absolute vote (seat) share the party received in the election under investigation. % won/lost/don't know represents the respondent's answers to our dependent variable. The party indicated in bold is the largest party in the electoral results – that will subsequently be included as 'largest party' in the regression analyses.

Table 4.2. Logistic regression models predicting perceptions of winning in Canada

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)
Largest party	6.866*** (0.529)	7.038*** (0.576)	6.269*** (0.327)	6.269*** (0.316)	6.249*** (0.356)	5.416*** (1.038)	6.258*** (0.323)	6.275*** (0.313)
Change in vote share		-0.007 (0.014)						
Change in seat share			0.013* (0.006)	0.013* (0.006)	0.013* (0.006)	0.014* (0.006)	0.014*** (0.004)	0.008 (0.011)
Party ID				0.362* (0.153)	0.356* (0.152)	0.366* (0.151)	0.348** (0.106)	0.364* (0.148)
Information				-0.221 (0.325)	-0.221 (0.323)	-0.399 (0.394)	-0.221 (0.325)	-0.156 (0.360)
Largest party X party ID					0.064 (0.491)			
Largest party X information						1.387 (1.587)		
Change in seat share X party ID							-0.002 (0.005)	
Change in seat share X information								0.009 (0.025)
Constant	-0.799*** (0.003)	-0.792*** (0.009)	-0.540*** (0.118)	-0.547* (0.277)	-0.545 (0.289)	-0.430 (0.377)	-0.543* (0.268)	-0.589* (0.236)
<i>N</i>	4116	4116	4116	4116	4116	4116	4116	4116
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.715	0.715	0.716	0.718	0.718	0.718	0.718	0.718
Percentage correctly predicted	93.95	93.95	93.95	93.95	93.95	93.95	93.95	93.95
Elections fixed effects included	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: entries are results of logistic regression models explaining whether or not the voter thinks the party she voted for won the election. Election-dummies are included in the models, but not reported for space considerations. Standard errors are clustered by election study. Significance levels: *: p<0.05; **: p<0.01; ***: p<0.001.

The results show, first of all, that having voted for the largest party has a very large positive impact on perceptions of winning and losing. More specifically, the probability of feeling like a winner increases from 8.8% to 98.4%. The fact that this single variable has the strongest impact can also be seen at the model fit; including other variables increases the pseudo-R² only marginally and leaves the percentage of correctly predicted observations unchanged. Hence, the first hypothesis is strongly supported by the results.

Investigating the other factors that explain perceptions of winning and losing, Models 2 and 3 indicate that the change in seat share has an impact on voters' perceptions, while a change in vote shares does not seem to have an effect. This lends support to hypothesis 2b. It needs to be noted, however, that the effect is small; gaining 5 percentage points in seats compared to remaining stable increases the probability of feeling like a winner by only 0.4 percentage points.

Turning to the individual-level variables, Model 4 provides support for the third hypothesis, as it shows that voters who identify with the party they voted are more likely to feel their party won the election – although the difference between partisans and non-partisans is small, with a change in predicted probability of feeling a winner of 2 percentage points. To examine whether partisans use the objective information differently, it is interacted with the largest party dummy and change in seat shares. As can be seen in Table 2, the interactions are not significant. Hence, partisans do not seem to react differently to the government status or gains or losses in seats of their party.

Finally, we examine whether more informed voters are more strongly affected by electoral results by interacting the largest party dummy and change in seat shares with voters' level of political information. As the results in Model 6 and Model 8 show, there is no evidence of such interaction effects.

Spain

Table 3 provides descriptive information for the Spanish elections. Perceptions of winning and losing in Spain also seem to be mainly determined by being the largest party in the election. Although the CiU – gaining 6 seats – is generally regarded to be a winner of the national elections, the results of the IU and UPYD show that voters largely feel their party lost the election if it does not enter the government – even if it gained votes and seats.

Table 4.3. Perceptions of winning and losing in Spain

Election	Party	Government status	Vote share status	Seat share status	% won	% lost	% don't know
Spain national 2011	PP	Entered government	+4.5 (44.6%)	+9 (53%)	99.8	0.0	0.3
	PSOE	Left government	-15.1 (28.8%)	-17 (31%)	1.4	98.3	0.3
	ICV/IU	Stayed in opposition	+3.0 (6.9%)	+3 (3%)	33.8	43.8	22.5
	CiU	Stayed in opposition	+1.1 (4.2%)	+2 (5%)	75.5	17.6	6.9
	ERC	Stayed in opposition	-0.1 (1.1%)	0 (1%)	10.7	57.3	32.0
	UPYD	Stayed in opposition	+3.5 (4.7%)	+1 (1%)	33.6	46.9	19.5
	Plataforma per Catalunya	Stayed in opposition	+0.2 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	7.4	81.5	11.1

Note: Government status indicates whether the party remained part of the governing coalition ('stayed in government'), was in government but became an opposition party ('left government') or was an opposition party but entered the governing coalition ('entered government'). Vote (seat) share status indicates the change in the vote (seat) share in percentage points. Numbers between brackets indicate the absolute vote (seat) share the party received in the election under investigation. % won/lost/don't know represents the respondent's answers to our dependent variable. The party indicated in bold is the largest party in the electoral results – that will subsequently be included as 'largest party' in the regression analyses.

To get a more in-depth view on the factors explaining voters' perceptions, we estimate logistic regression models – the results of which are summarised in Table 4. Note that we do not include our dummy for 'largest party'. As can be seen in Table 3, all those who voted for the Partido Popular indicate that their party won the election (apart from one 'don't know' answer). Thus, a dummy indicating a vote for this party has a perfect fit with the dependent variable, and it cannot be included in the analyses. Therefore, in these analyses, we do not include the 'largest party' dummy, and as there is no variance in their answers to explain, we exclude the voters of the Partido Popular. Table 3 already indicated that government status has a very large positive impact, and the results in Table 4 show the factors explaining the perceptions of the voters of the other parties.

Table 4.4. Logistic regression models predicting perceptions of winning in Spain

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Change in vote share	0.221*** (0.002)		0.217*** (0.004)		0.184*** (0.008)	0.028*** (0.007)		
Change in seat share		0.265*** (0.000)		0.267*** (0.004)			0.233*** (0.010)	-0.112*** (0.016)
Party ID			-0.266 (0.590)	0.019 (0.479)	-1.051 (0.628)	-0.277 (0.608)	-0.206 (0.522)	-0.046 (0.547)
information			0.485 (0.583)	0.713 (0.433)	0.501 (0.554)	0.216 (0.741)	0.708 (0.441)	-0.047 (0.317)
Change in vote share X party ID					0.351*** (0.033)			
Change in vote share X information						0.276*** (0.003)		
Change in seat share X party ID							0.180*** (0.005)	
Change in seat share X information								0.676*** (0.046)
Constant	-0.298 (0.402)	-0.228 (0.223)	-0.622*** (0.047)	-0.759*** (0.008)	-0.601*** (0.033)	-0.462*** (0.042)	-0.715*** (0.029)	-0.373*** (0.026)
<i>N</i>	639	639	639	639	639	639	639	639
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.281	0.321	0.283	0.323	0.292	0.290	0.326	0.341
Percentage correctly predicted	62.44	77.15	70.42	78.25	70.42	69.95	78.09	77.93
Elections fixed effects included	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: entries are results of logistic regression models explaining whether or not the voter thinks the party she voted for won the election. Election-dummies are included in the models, but not reported for space considerations. Standard errors are clustered by election study. Significance levels: *: $p < 0.05$; **: $p < 0.01$; ***: $p < 0.001$.

As can be seen in Table 4, both the change in vote share as well as the change in seat share significantly predict voters' perceptions of winning and losing, and these effects hold including the individual-level control variables.²⁹ In terms of substantive effect sizes, increasing the vote share by 5 percentage points increases the probability of feeling like a winner from 43% to 69% compared to receiving the same share of the votes. Likewise, going from a stable seat share to gaining 5 points increases the likelihood of feeling like a winner by 31 percentage-points. Furthermore, while the results in Model 3 and Model 4 show that partisanship does not have an effect on voters' perceptions, the interaction effects show surprising results: while the interaction between information and the parties' performances are significantly positive as expected, the interactions between party identification and the party performance are significantly positive as well. Hence, contrary to our third hypothesis, in Spain voters who identify with the party they voted for seem to react more strongly to the objective performance of their party. More specifically, while the marginal effect of vote-change (seat-change) amounts to 3(4) points for non-partisans, it amounts to 7(6) points for partisans.

Germany

Finally, we conduct the same tests in Germany. First, the proportions of the voters' perceptions are summarised by party in Table 5. The results seem to be largely in line with those of Canada and Spain. The single most influential factor for feelings of winning and losing is whether or not the party the voter voted for is the largest party in the election. Furthermore, also in Germany there do not seem to be strong differences between staying in government or entering government – as long as the party has the largest share of votes and seats. An interesting pattern emerges for the SPD in the national election; although it entered the governing coalition with

²⁹ Note that we do not include both measures in one model, as this results in problems of multicollinearity.

CDU, most of its voters believe it lost the election. In Germany, perceptions of winning and losing are strongly determined by whether or not the party delivers the Chancellor. In this case, although the SPD entered a coalition with CDU, it was the CDU who delivered the Chancellor, and as a consequence SPD voters were prone to conclude that their party lost the election.

Table 4.5. Perceptions of winning and losing in Germany

Election survey	Party	Government status	Vote share status	Seat share status	% won	% lost	% don't know
Germany national 2013	CDU	Stayed in government	+6.9 (34.1%)	+7 (40%)	96.2	1.8	2.0
	SPD	Entered government	+2.7 (25.7%)	+7 (31%)	36.2	43.9	19.9
	Greens	Stayed in opposition	-2.3 (8.4%)	-1 (10%)	7.0	84.3	8.7
	FDP	Left government	-9.8 (4.8%)	-15 (0%)	4.8	85.7	9.5
	Left	Stayed in opposition	-3.3 (8.6%)	-2 (10%)	50.2	28.3	21.5
	Pirates	Stayed in opposition	+0.2 (2.2%)	0 (0%)	9.4	58.9	31.8
	AFD	Stayed in opposition	+4.7 (4.7%)	0 (0%)	72.2	14.1	13.7
	Free Voters	Stayed in opposition	+1.0 (1.0%)	0 (0%)	7.5	78.3	14.2
Lower Saxony regional 2013	SPD	Entered government	+2.3 (32.6%)	+1 (36%)	92.8	2.6	4.7
	CDU	Left government	-6.5 (36.0%)	-10 (39%)	20.0	70.8	10.2
	Greens	Entered government	+5.7 (13.7%)	+6 (15%)	94.4	1.4	4.2
	FDP	Stayed in opposition	+1.7 (9.9%)	+1 (10%)	84.3	9.8	5.9
	Left	Stayed in opposition	-4.0 (3.1%)	-8 (0%)	2.9	82.4	14.7
	Pirates	Stayed in opposition	+0.2 (2.1%)	0 (0%)	13.3	66.7	20.0
Bavaria regional 2013	CSU	Stayed in government	+4.3 (47.7%)	+5 (56%)	92.0	2.2	5.8
	SPD	Stayed in opposition	+2.0 (20.6%)	+2 (23%)	34.4	41.9	23.7
	Greens	Stayed in opposition	-0.8 (8.6%)	-1 (10%)	9.2	66.1	24.7
	Free Voters	Stayed in opposition	-1.2 (9.0%)	-1 (11%)	28.7	37.5	33.8
	FDP	Left government	-4.7 (3.3%)	-19 (0%)	1.4	93.0	5.6
	Left	Stayed in opposition	-2.2 (2.1%)	0 (0%)	3.5	69.0	27.6
	Pirates	Stayed in opposition	+2.0 (2.0%)	0 (0%)	13.2	47.2	39.6

Note: Government status indicates whether the party remained part of the governing coalition ('stayed in government'), was in government but became an opposition party ('left government') or was an opposition party but entered the governing coalition ('entered government'). Vote (seat) share status indicates the change in the vote (seat) share in percentage points. Numbers between brackets indicate the absolute vote (seat) share the party received in the election under investigation. % won/lost/don't know represents the respondent's answers to our dependent variable. The party indicated in bold is the largest party in the electoral results – that will subsequently be included as 'largest party' in the regression analyses.

The results of the German case also allow to examine parties that are running for the first time. In the case of the AFD in the national elections, the results indicate that a majority of the voters think their party won the election – despite the fact that it was 0.3 percentage point short of reaching the electoral threshold. The case of the Pirate Party in Bavaria, however, shows a different picture: here, voters seem to have difficulties in rating their party’s performance, as almost 40% of the voters do not know whether their party won the election.

To investigate the general patterns, also for the German case, we estimate logistic logit models, the results of which are summarised in Table 6.

Table 4.6. Logistic regression models predicting perceptions of winning in Germany

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Largest party	4.431*** (0.147)	4.829*** (0.407)	3.181*** (0.439)	3.953*** (0.273)	3.138*** (0.540)	2.786*** (0.594)	2.869*** (0.691)	3.134*** (0.548)	3.154*** (0.525)	2.954*** (0.432)	3.187*** (0.521)
Junior cabinet party		1.349** (0.511)			-0.059 (0.385)	-0.063 (0.394)	-0.050 (0.395)	-0.019 (0.166)	0.261 (0.606)	-0.238 (0.440)	-0.042 (0.397)
Change in vote share			0.233* (0.094)		0.237* (0.110)	0.239* (0.110)	0.236* (0.110)	0.237* (0.108)	0.234* (0.107)	0.195 (0.102)	0.300** (0.113)
Change in seat share				0.065 (0.044)							
Party ID					0.080 (0.344)	0.010 (0.336)	0.079 (0.344)	0.103 (0.418)	0.085 (0.335)	-0.083 (0.322)	0.094 (0.321)
Information					0.085 (0.194)	0.085 (0.196)	0.039 (0.166)	0.084 (0.201)	0.196 (0.348)	0.083 (0.185)	0.177 (0.256)
Largest party X party ID						0.728 (0.406)					
Largest Party X information							0.467 (0.691)				
Junior cabinet party X party ID								-0.080 (0.436)			
Junior cabinet party X information									-0.491 (0.953)		
Change in vote share X party ID										0.185 (0.112)	
Change in vote share X information											-0.117 (0.155)
<i>N</i>	5087	5087	5087	5087	5087	5087	5087	5087	5087	5087	5087
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.401	0.426	0.454	0.432	0.454	0.455	0.454	0.454	0.454	0.460	0.455
Percentage correctly predicted	81.27	81.48	83.13	80.81	83.13	83.13	83.13	83.13	82.80	82.80	83.00
Elections fixed effects included	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: entries are results of logistic regression models explaining whether or not the voter thinks the party she voted for won the election. Election-dummies are included in the models, but not reported for space considerations. Standard errors are clustered by election study. Significance levels: *: p<0.05; **: p<0.01; ***: p<0.001.

In line with the findings in Canada and Spain, the results show that voters of the largest party feel that the party won the election to a very large extent – with the probability of feeling like a winner increasing from 35% to 98%. However, the result in Model 2 shows that also voters of smaller parties that make part of the governing coalition believe that their party won the election – this result is most likely driven by the high proportion of Green voters in the Lower Saxony elections that think their party won. Furthermore, the results seem to suggest that next to being the largest party in Germany, it is a change in vote share that influences voters' perceptions of winning and losing, rather than a change in seat share – and this effect remains controlling for junior government party status, while the effect of this latter indicator is rendered non-significant when we control for change in vote shares. Furthermore, contrary to the results in Canada, the effect of the change in vote share is substantial – with an increase in probability of feeling like a winner of 17 percentage points when the party gained 5 percentage points in votes compared to a stable vote share. Turning to the individual-level controls, the results seem to indicate that there are no effects of either partisan leanings or political information – neither direct, nor in interaction with the main variables of interest.

Electoral performance in the district versus nationally

To test whether voters focus entirely on the outcome of the national election, or whether they also respond to the party's performance in their own electoral district – and whether a good performance at one level can compensate a poor result at the other level – we investigate the proportion of voters who feel they won or lost the election in Canadian elections, based on the

performance of their party in their district (i.e., the party they voted for had its candidate elected in the district), and at the national level (i.e., the party they voted is in government). The results are summarised in Table 7.

Table 4.7. Feelings of winning in four groups of voters in Canada

Party Performance	Elected nationally and in district (%)	Elected nationally, not in district (%)	Not elected nationally, elected in district (%)	Not elected nationally nor in district (%)
National 2015	99.1	98.0	11.3	2.6
Québec 2012	94.6	97.2	33.6	24.0
Ontario 2011	99.4	97.8	22.4	6.3

Note: entries denote the percentages of respondents feeling like the party they voted for won the election.

The results in Table 7 show that voters whose party performed well at both levels almost unanimously think their party won the election. Also, those whose party is elected nationally but whose candidate in their district was not elected also overwhelmingly believe that their party won. Voters whose party performed poorly at both levels convincingly state that they lost the election. However, the main interest is in the difference between this latter group (i.e., the last column in Table 7) and the group of voters whose party is in opposition at the national/regional level, but whose candidate was elected in their district (i.e., the second to last column of Table 7). Comparing the proportions of voters who feel like they won the election between these columns, it seems that a good outcome in the district softens the blow of a bad result at the national level. In each election under investigation, there is a substantial minority of voters feeling that their party won the election when that party had its candidate elected in the district compared to the voters losing at both levels.

To investigate this finding in-depth, we estimate logistic regression models with feelings of winning as dependent variable, and we include the different groups of voters defined in Table 7 in the analysis. As we are mostly interested in the difference between those voters whose preferred party did not get elected at any level versus those voters whose party was elected in their district but not at the national level, we include the former category as reference category. The results are summarised in Table 8.³⁰

Table 4.8. Logistic regression models predicting feelings of winning and losing for different groups of voters in Canada

	Canada 2015		Québec 2012		Ontario 2011	
	Model 1 B (s.e.)	Model 2 B (s.e.)	Model 1 B (s.e.)	Model 2 B (s.e.)	Model 1 B (s.e.)	Model 2 B (s.e.)
Not elected any level (ref.)						
Only elected in district	1.485*** (0.215)	1.485*** (0.216)	0.499* (0.246)	0.545* (0.250)	1.477*** (0.351)	1.497*** (0.354)
Only elected nationally	7.214*** (0.376)	7.521*** (0.376)	4.640*** (0.605)	4.685*** (0.250)	6.505*** (0.770)	6.603*** (0.782)
Elected both levels	8.271*** (0.415)	8.269*** (0.415)	3.951*** (0.484)	3.970*** (0.488)	7.780*** (1.043)	7.810*** (1.045)
Party ID		0.006 (0.203)		0.773 (0.516)		-0.251 (0.868)
Information		0.366 (0.524)		1.578** (0.578)		-0.562 (0.675)
Constant	-3.613*** (0.167)	-3.845*** (0.368)	-1.154*** (0.149)	-2.146*** (0.383)	-2.743*** (0.286)	-2.402*** (0.481)
<i>N</i>	3172	3172	551	551	559	559
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	79.14	79.16	36.29	37.78	66.47	66.57
Percentage correctly predicted	96.44	96.44	80.58	80.76	92.15	92.15

Note: entries are results of logistic regression models explaining whether or not the voter thinks the party she voted for won the election. Election-dummies are included in the models, but not reported for space considerations. Significance levels: *: p<0.05; **: p<0.01; ***: p<0.001

³⁰ We also estimated the interactions between the different groups of voters on the one hand and partisanship and information on the other hand. These analyses did not reveal substantial differences between the groups for partisans or voters with different levels of knowledge – although it needs to be noted that the models suffered from low numbers of observations. The results are available upon request.

The results presented in Table 8 suggest that voters whose party was elected in their district but not at the national level are significantly more likely to believe this party won the election than voters whose party was not elected on any level. Furthermore, as was clear in Table 7, those voters whose party was elected at the national level only or at both levels are even more likely to feel like their party won the election – and additional analyses show that the difference between these two latter groups is not significant. These results are robust against controlling for party identification and political information. Hence, the results strongly suggest that having one’s candidate elected in the district to some extent attenuates the effect of having one’s party in opposition at a higher level.

Conclusion

There is a large literature analysing the impact of winning or losing elections on voter’s attitudes as satisfaction with democracy and political trust. However, these studies pay little attention to voters’ individual perceptions of whether the party they voted for won or lost the election. This study fills this gap by investigating voters’ own perceptions of whether winning and losing. Using the MEDW data sets, we set out to determine which aspects of electoral outcomes shape voters’ subjective perceptions in Canada, Spain, and Germany.

The analyses show that whether one’s party was the largest party in the election or not best explains peoples’ feelings of victory or defeat. Hence, voters seem to understand ‘winning’ first and foremost in majoritarian terms. However, next to this indicator we also find significant effects

of alternative indicators that are more in line with consensual views on democracy. In Canada, change in seat shares seems to matter for voters' perceptions as well, although the effect is substantively small. In Spain, then, both the change in seat share as well as the gains or losses in votes affect voters' perceptions. Finally, in Germany, change in vote share helps explaining voters' feelings of winning and losing. However, while alternative measures of 'winning' and 'losing' do matter, our main conclusion is clear and simple: Most voters, like most political scientists, construe winning or losing an election to mean, first and foremost, that the party is the largest party in the election.

Taking into account this measure of winning and losing, we went on to examine whether voters care mostly about winning their district or the national government. Interestingly, while those who voted for the party that enters government but that is not elected in their district do not significantly differ in their perception of winning and losing compared to voters whose party was successful at both levels, voters whose party is in the opposition at the national level but whose candidate was elected in their district are significantly more inclined to think that their party is a winner than voters whose parties were unsuccessful at both levels. Hence, even though previous research has found that electoral outcomes at the district level do not significantly affect voters' level of satisfaction with democracy, they seem important for some voters in terms of whether they view their party as a winner. Future research could isolate the characteristics of those voters who attribute more importance to the district outcome.

Although the study results in clear conclusions, some limits of the analyses should be taken into account as well. In our analyses, we rely on data from Canada, Spain, and Germany only. Although the three cases under investigation represent different electoral systems, it can be reasonably assumed that the results would differ across contexts. In highly fragmented party systems with government coalitions formed of multiple parties, for instance, it might be very difficult for voters to ascertain the performance of the parties in the election. On the other hand, in a case like Switzerland – in which all major parties are by definition part of the government coalition – winning and losing can be expected to be about something else than being in government. Furthermore, all countries under investigation have a stable party system with a limited number of party blocs – and it thus should not come as a surprise that being in government or not strongly affects voters’ perceptions of winning and losing. Hence, the results should only be interpreted in the context of the countries under investigation. Moreover, none of the elections covered by our study produced ‘ambiguous’ outcomes, whereby the party with most votes does not have a plurality of seats and/or does not enter government. Future research should examine more specifically such ambiguous cases. Finally, it would be interesting to take into account voters’ expectations before the election. Do voters feel like winners (losers) when their party performed better (worse) than expected? Unfortunately, our data do not include measures of voters’ expectations, and we are therefore unable to address this question. We leave it for future research.

Despite these limitations, and with the data at hand, the main conclusion of the study is that the basic assumption of previous research on the winner/loser-gap seems to be confirmed. Winning is first and foremost about being the largest party.

Chapitre 5

Polarisation, partisan preferences and strategic voting

Cet article a été présenté dans le cadre de plus de plusieurs conférences et est en évaluation à la revue *Government and Opposition* suite à un R & R.

Voters do not always vote for their most preferred party. Sometimes, they decide to vote for their second or even third choice to increase their probability of affecting the electoral outcome. This behaviour is called strategic voting because the voters reflect on the behaviour of others when casting their vote.³¹ Strategic voting is at the heart of Duverger's (1954) and Cox's (1997) theories on the impact of plurality rule on the number of parties. In elections organised under plurality rule, there are incentives for voters to not vote for their most preferred party if they anticipate that this party has little chance of winning in their district. Hence, voters might cast a vote in favour of a party that has some chance of winning, or more precisely the one that they prefer between those that are viable, as their vote could potentially make the difference between which of these wins. In turn, strategic voting, and the anticipation of this behaviour by parties, reduces the number of parties (Bol, Blais, and Labbé St-Vincent 2018).

It is important to study strategic voting for normative and empirical reasons. First, from a normative perspective, a non-strategic vote, sometimes called a sincere vote, is often seen as a democratic fundamental (Gibbard 1973; Satterthwaite 1975). In an ideal democracy, all voters should vote for their preferred party so that the electoral outcome is perfectly representative of their political preferences. Second, still from a normative perspective, if only a subset of the electorate votes strategically, this creates inequalities in representation. Strategic voters are 'better represented' in the final electoral outcome because they make their vote count (Eggers and Vivyan

³¹ In the literature, we find other definitions of strategic voting. Sometimes, deserting the most preferred party is not considered to be a necessary condition for casting a strategic vote. The very act of voting for the party that maximizes one's utility in taking into consideration its chances of winning is sufficient for it to be characterized as strategic, regardless of whether this is desertion or not. However, in this paper, we follow the classic definition of strategic voting used in the literature based on survey data, which states that deserting the most preferred party is a necessary condition for casting a strategic vote (see e.g. Blais and Nadeau 1996). In some studies, strategic voting is sometimes called 'tactical voting' (Niemi, Whitten, and Franklin 1992).

2018). Third, from an empirical perspective, it is important to study strategic voting because it can substantially affect the overall score of parties by up to 10%-points. This has happened in the United Kingdom (Heemin and Fording 2001), France (Pons and Tricaud 2018), Canada (Gidengil et al. 2012), and the United States (Burden 2005).

Party polarisation has generated growing interest among political scientists. Polarisation refers to the ideological positions parties take in the ideological space, and the distance between these positions. Simply put, a polarised party system is a system where parties take very different positions in the ideological space (Dalton 2008; Sigelman and Yough 1978). The growing academic interest in polarisation is partly due to the growing polarisation in the United States. Gentzkow (2016) shows that from the 1970s to the 2000s, the proportion of books analysing polarisation has tripled. Polarisation is a relevant topic to study strategic voting because of its consequences for the vote. Lau and Redlawsk (1997) show that it is easier for voters to identify the party for which they should naturally vote considering their political evaluations and aspirations when the election is heavily polarised. In this paper, we aim at contributing to this literature in showing that polarisation also affect the probability of voters to cast a strategic vote. What is more, whereas the literature on polarisation tends to focus on the United States, our work studies another party system, Canada. It therefore extents the literature to a different context, and in particular, a multi-party system where there are strong incentives for voters to cast a strategic vote.

We are not aware of any study that evaluates the effect of polarisation on strategic voting. In this paper, we develop the implications of polarisation for supporters of non-viable parties for partisan preferences, and explain how it should, in theory, affect strategic voting. We then test these implications using Making Electoral Democracy Work survey data (Stephenson et al. 2017) from three Canadian federal and provincial elections. The survey was specifically designed to identify strategic voting. We measure party polarisation at the election-level (variations come from changes in the parties that are viable at the district-level), and the implications of the theory at the individual level. Our paper contributes to the literature on strategic voting by shedding a light on an important determinant of this behaviour. It also contributes to the literature on party polarisation by showing how it affects the voting behaviour of non-viable parties' supporters.

Polarisation and strategic voting

In this paper, we follow the widely-used definition of strategic voting developed by Blais and Nadeau (1996).³² In this definition, the authors note three *sine qua non* conditions that must be fulfilled for a voter to be considered as strategic under plurality rule: (1) she must prefer a party that is not among the top two contenders of her district; (2) she must not vote for this party; and (3) she must vote for her preferred candidate among the top two contenders. According to Cox (1997), the two first parties in a district are called 'viable'. It is only when a supporter of a smaller party vote for one of these two that she casts a strategic vote. The intuition is that voting for a

³² This is the most common definition of strategic voting under plurality rule. There are other types of strategic voting under proportional representation (e.g., Gschwend 2007).

party that comes third or lower is a waste of a voter's vote. By definition, the voter's vote could only make the difference between which of the top two contenders wins.³³

The notion of strategic voting relies on the assumption that voters are instrumental and aim to influence the electoral outcome of an election in their favour (Downs 1957). To do so, they usually vote for the party that proposes the platform they prefer the most. However, sometimes they cast a vote in favour of another party, because they know that their preferred party has almost no chance of winning in their district. The strategic voter will decide to desert her favoured party that is not viable to vote for her preferred party among the top two contenders. In doing so, she maximizes her chances of affecting the legislative body's composition and in turn the electoral outcome.

Previous studies of strategic voting in plurality elections find that only a small, though significant, proportion of the electorate engages in this behaviour. In Canadian elections for example, the number of strategic voters is about 4-8% (Blais and Nadeau 1996; Blais, Young and Turcotte 2005; Daoust 2015; Merolla and Stephenson 2007). However, as noted by Alvarez, Boehmke and Nagler (2006), this percentage should be interpreted in view of the number of voters that are in a situation in which they could potentially engage in such strategic behaviour. Most voters support large parties that are viable in most districts, and therefore do not have the opportunity to cast a strategic

³³ Although this approach is standard in the literature on strategic voting (e.g., Blais et al. 2001; Merolla and Stephenson 2007), there are other definitions and measures of viability. For example, Alvarez and Nagler (2000) use a continuous measure for which each party is more or less viable and conditional logit model predicting vote choice by various independent variables including viability. We cannot use this approach in our paper because our hypotheses necessitates a binary definition of the concept (see below). Hence, we stick to the classic definition of viability of Cox (1997). In the rest of the paper we use the term 'non-viable party supporters' to denote voters who have incentives to cast a strategic vote because their preferred party is not among the two first parties in the district. This definition puts together supporters of parties that are (almost) never viable, and supporters of parties that are sometimes viable, sometimes not (depending on the district).

vote. If we only consider the supporters of non-viable parties, the proportion of strategic voters increases drastically (between 20-35% in Canada, see Blais and Nadeau 1996; Daoust 2015). In line with the literature on strategic voting outlined above, we only focus on the potential strategic voter, that is voters who prefer a party that is not viable in their district.

Various factors are said to affect the probability of voters to cast a strategic vote. The first group of determinants relates to the state of party competition. Several studies show that strategic voting is more frequent when two viable parties in a district are very close in terms of votes, since voters feel that their choice is more likely to make a difference in who is ultimately elected (Abramson et al. 1992). Also, they reveal that voters are reluctant to desert their most preferred party when this party is viable, because they believe that their preferred party might still win (Cain 1978; Niemi, Whitten, and Franklin 1992).

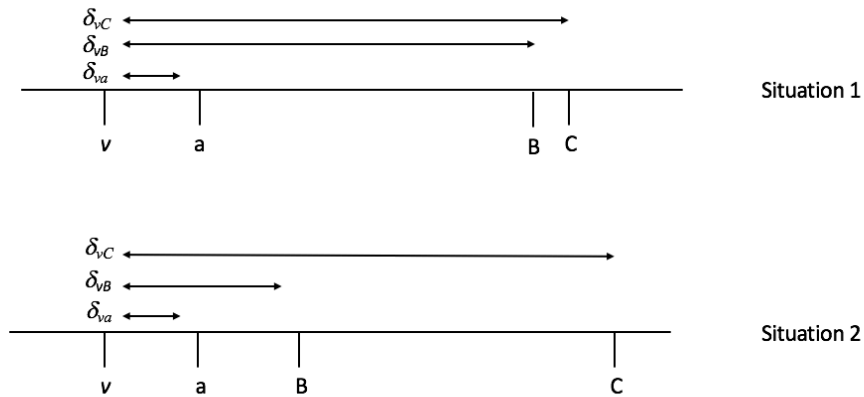
A second group of determinants concerns the intensity of the voter's preference for a party. Some studies find that voters who identify with a party are reluctant to desert their first party of choice, as the cost of deserting this party is sizable (Gschwend 2007; Niemi, Whitten, and Franklin 1992). Finally, cognitive abilities and political sophistication are also found to influence the probability of casting a strategic vote. The line of reasoning is that politically sophisticated voters are better at evaluating the chances that parties have of winning in their district (Merolla and Stephenson 2007), or that voters with higher abstract-thinking capabilities are better able to understand the concept of utility maximization (Loewen, Hinton, and Scheffer 2015).

In this paper, we look at how polarisation affects strategic voting. Party polarisation is a concept that refers to the ideological spread of parties (Dalton 2008; Sigelman and Yough 1978). To participate in elections, parties must develop an ideological platform and adapt it to voters' preferences. Polarisation then is a measure of how different these platforms are. Some studies find that a high degree of party polarisation is associated with a high level of partisanship (Lupu 2015) and ideologically consistent voting (Lachat 2008). However, we also have good reasons to think that the polarisation between viable parties should also influence the propensity of supporters of non-viable parties to cast a strategic vote.³⁴

An easy way to present our argument is to consider a one-dimension spatial model as perceived by a voter v (see Figure 1). The horizontal line represents the ideological space, and a , B , and C are parties. Following the example of classic spatial model studies, we assume that voters prefer voting for the party that is the closest to them in the ideological space. In both situations, voter v is the closest from party a , which is her preferred party. However, party a is small and not viable, unlike parties B and C (that is why they are represented by capital letters). Thus, voter v has incentives to desert party a for party B .

³⁴ Note that our theory goes somehow against previous studies that show a positive effect of party polarisation on the likelihood of voters to cast a correct vote for a party that is the closest to them in the ideological space (Lachat 2008; Lau and Redlawsk 1997). However, our findings do not entirely contradict the findings of these other studies. We discuss this in the conclusion.

Figure 5.1. Strategic voting in the ideological space



A key difference between the two situations is the polarisation between the viable parties; in the second situation, the viable parties are more polarised, or more distant on the ideological space. Our argument is that voter v is more likely to cast a strategic vote in this second situation. This constitutes our first hypothesis:

H1. The probability of a non-viable party supporter to cast a strategic vote increases with the ideological distance between the viable parties, i.e. their polarisation.

This prediction comes from two spatial implications of the polarisation between viable parties. A way to understand this is to consider the ideological distances between the voters and each of the parties: that is, δ_{va} , δ_{vB} , and δ_{vC} in Figure 1. At this stage, it is important to note that in our empirical

analysis the ideological distances are approximated with individual-level measures of partisan preferences: the closer a voter is from a party, the more she likes it (using like-dislike party scores, see below). Since politics is often multidimensional, partisan preferences are better measures of proximity than left-right placements (Broockman 2016; Lenz 2012). However, we rely on a unidimensional definition of proximity in this theoretical section for the sake of clarity.

The first implication concerns how much voter v 's likes the viable parties B and C . In the first situation, there is little difference between δ_{vB} and δ_{vC} . Although voter v would prefer party B to win (she is closer to party B than to party C), this preference is weak as the two parties are ideologically very close to each other. In other words, it makes little difference for voter v whether it is party B or party C that is elected. By contrast, voter v has stronger incentives to cast a strategic vote in the second situation as she is much closer from party B than party C . This leads to our second hypothesis:

H2. The probability of a non-viable party supporter to cast a strategic vote increases with how much she likes her favourite viable party (δ_{vB}), compared to how much she likes her least favourite viable party (δ_{vC}).

The second important implication concerns how much voter v 's likes her favourite non-viable party (a), and her favourite viable party (B). If the viable parties are polarised like in the second situation, the distance between voter v and party B (δ_{vB}) is small. The cost of deserting her preferred

party is thus small, given that δ_{vB} and δ_{va} are almost the same. In the first situation, voter v would be more reluctant to desert party a as she further away from the closest viable party, that is her strategic option (party B). The third hypothesis is as follows:

H3. The probability of a non-viable party supporter to cast a strategic vote decreases with how much she likes her favourite party (δ_{va}), compared to how much she likes her favourite viable party (δ_{vB}).

The three hypotheses are complementary, as H2 and H3 are directly derived from H1. In the example presented in Figure 1, the distance between the two viable parties increases from Situation 1 to Situation 2 (H1). This dissociation should increase both voter v 's preference to her favourite viable party compared to her least favourite viable (H2), and voter v 's preference and compared to her distance to her preferred party (H3). However, it is not always the case. If voter v and party a are located in between the party B and C , but still closer to party B than to party C , the polarisation between viable parties can lead to an increase in δ_{vB} . Consequently, voter v might become reluctant to desert party a . For this reason, the measures used in H2 and H3 are more precise than the one used in H1. Our analysis below proceeds in two steps: (1) we demonstrate that the polarisation between viable parties as defined in H1 affects partisan preferences as defined in H2 and H3, and (2) that these partisan preferences in turn affect the probability to cast a strategic vote. Our overall argument is that the polarisation between viable parties affects the probability of casting a strategic vote via changes in partisan preferences. In other words, the effect of the polarisation between

viable parties should disappear when we include individual-level partisan preferences in our analysis, because the latter are more precise measures.

Three Canadian elections

Our analysis focuses on three elections: the 2011 Ontario provincial election, the 2012 Quebec provincial election, and the 2015 Canadian federal election. Elections in Ontario, Quebec, and Canada are similar in many respects. They are held under the same single-member district plurality rules, which advantages large parties. Consequently, the winning party frequently receives a majority of parliamentary seats and is able to form a single-party government. When the winning party does not receive the majority of the parliamentary seats, it forms a minority government.

However, the party systems of Ontario, Quebec, and Canada are somewhat different. This is partially due to the federal character of the country and its unique political history. In Ontario, there are three large parties³⁵: The Ontario New Democratic Party (ONDP), which is located at the centre-left of the political spectrum, the Ontario Liberal Party (OLP), which is located at the centre, and the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario (PCO), which is located at the centre-right. There is also a much smaller party, the Green Party of Ontario (GPO), that usually receives at least 1% of the vote and is located to the left of the ONDP. The GPO has never obtained a parliamentary

³⁵ We consider that a large party is a party that obtained more than 15% of the vote, and a small party is a party that obtained between 1 and 15% of the vote. In our analyses, we only include parties that obtained at least 1% of the vote

seat. A key feature of Ontario's party system is the competition revolves around the left-right dimension.³⁶

The situation is different in Quebec, where there are six parties that receive at least 1% of the votes. Unlike other provinces, Quebec is mostly composed of French speakers, and a substantial portion of the population has secessionist aspirations driven by a strong community/national identity (among other factors). Consequently, party competition takes place on two ideological dimensions: the left-right dimension and the secessionist/non-secessionist dimension. At the left of the left-right spectrum, the Parti Vert du Québec (PVQ) has no position on the secessionist issue, while Québec Solidaire (QS) and Option Nationale (ON) are largely in favour of the creation of an independent Quebec state. These are all small parties. Then, the Parti Québécois (PQ), which shares a similar position with QS and ON on the secessionist/non-secessionist dimension, is closer to the centre on the left-right dimension. On the right, the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) is neutral regarding the secessionist issue, and the Parti Libéral de Québec (PLQ) is strongly opposed to the creation of an independent Quebec state. The PQ, CAQ and PLQ are large parties. However, as the left-wing parties tend to be more secessionist than right-wing parties, the positions of the parties on the two dimensions are correlated.

The party system at the federal level in Canada is similar to the party system of Ontario, although there are some differences between some of the provinces. The 2015 Canadian federal election

³⁶ The actual results of the parties included in the analysis can be found in Table E.1 of the appendix. We also include a brief explanation of the political context of each election covered in the data.

survey we use in this paper focuses on the three largest provinces of the country: Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia. Like the situation at the provincial level, there are three large parties at federal level in Ontario. There is the New Democratic Party (NDP) at the centre-left, the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) at the centre, the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) at the centre-right, (as well as) a small left-wing party (the Green Party of Canada - GPC). British Columbia's federal party system is almost the same, with the exception that the GPC is much stronger in the province. In 2015, the GPC obtained 8% of votes in BC and, for the first time in history, won a seat in the province. At the federal level in Quebec there is an additional large party, the Bloc Québécois (BQ), that is centre-left on the left-right spectrum and secessionist (all other federal parties in Canada are non-secessionist).

The party systems of the three elections covered in this paper offer variations. In Ontario (federal and provincial elections) and British Columbia (federal election), there are three large parties and one small party. In Quebec, there are three large parties and one small party in the provincial election, and four large parties and one small party at the federal election.

Measuring strategic voting

To measure strategic voting, we rely on various unique pre- and post-election panel surveys conducted within the 'Making Electoral Democracy Work Project' (Stephenson et al. 2017). They recruited respondents at the provincial level using pre-existing online panels. They used quotas based on age, education, gender and regional quotas to ensure the socio-demographic diversity of

the sample. In total, we have the data of five surveys: two in Ontario (provincial and federal elections), two in Quebec (provincial and federal elections), and one in British Columbia (federal elections).

They conducted the first wave of panel surveys during the two weeks preceding Election Day, and the second wave the week after. For each provincial election, about 1,000 respondents completed the pre-election questionnaire, and among them approximately 800 filled the post-election questionnaire. For the federal election, about 1,800 respondents completed the pre-election questionnaire in each province, and among them approximately 1,400 completed the post-election questionnaire. However, we excluded respondents who did not respond to at least one of the questions that were necessary for our analysis. As to correct the attrition rate between the two waves and other potential biases, we created a sample weight based on the respondents reported vote and actual electoral results at the provincial level. Hence, we correct for the general overestimation in surveys of third party voters such as the Greens. Our analyses are conducted with and without this weight.

Our surveys were specifically designed to measure strategic voting. That is, it includes questions about preferences, expectations and vote choice. First, in the pre-election questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate how much they like each party on a scale from zero to ten (from ‘really dislike’ to ‘really like’).³⁷ Based on the responses to this question, we identified the preferred party of each respondent, i.e. the one with the highest rating. In the case of tie,

³⁷ All the questions used in the analyses are listed in the appendix (Table E.7).

respondents were asked a follow-up question where they had to choose which of the two parties they liked the most.

Second, still in the pre-election questionnaire, respondents were asked to evaluate the chances that each candidate in their district had of winning, also on a scale from zero to ten (from ‘no chance at all’ to ‘certain to win’). With the responses to this question, we could identify the two parties that had the most chances of winning in the eyes of the respondents. These are the two viable parties. Sometimes, there were more than two viable parties. For example, if a respondent considered that party *a* had winning chances of 7, and parties *b* and *c* had winning chances of 6, the three parties (*a*, *b* and *c*) were viable.³⁸ Finally, in the post-election questionnaire, respondents were asked to report the party they voted for.

With the responses to these questions, we identified respondents that were potential strategic voters (i.e. non-viable party supporters) and the actual strategic voters, that is, non-viable party supporters who voted for their most preferred party among those that were viable. Table 1 reports the weighted and un-weighted proportions of these two types of voters. First, we observe that about one fifth of the respondents were non-viable party supporters; this proportion is similar in all surveys, being between 18 and 20%. The proportions are similar when we use a weighted or

³⁸ Respondents’ perception of the chances of each party is close to the results of the elections covered in this paper. In Table E.1 in the appendix, we report the average of this measure for each party and for each election. This finding is very much in line with what other studies using the same measure find. We sometimes call about ‘wisdom of the crowd’ (Murr 2017, for a review of this vast literature). Table E.1 also show that the sample vote share is similar to the vote share in reality for each of the election covered in the paper. What is more, in the 2015 federal election in Canada, about 80% of people are good at sorting out the weakest parties in their district, which is crucial in the study of strategic voting (Bol, Blais, and Laslier 2018).

unweighted sample (the differences do not even reach 2%-points). These potential strategic voters constitute the sample of interest for this paper.

Table 5.1. Strategic voting in Canada

Survey	Non-viable party supporters (%)	Strategic voters (%)	Strategic voters (among non-viable party supporters, %)
Ontario (provincial)	17.8 (17.8)	6.6 (6.7)	37.3 (37.8)
Ontario (federal)	18.9 (18.2)	9.3 (8.9)	49.5 (49.1)
Quebec (provincial)	19 (18)	7.7 (7.7)	40.8 (42.7)
Quebec (federal)	18.2 (17.7)	6.1 (6.4)	33.5 (36)
British Columbia (federal)	19.8 (19.6)	6.1 (6.4)	49.7 (48.1)
Total	18.8 (18.4)	8.1 (8.1)	43.2 (44.2)

Note: Entries are non-weighted proportions. Weighted proportions are into parentheses. N = 618 (Ontario provincial), 1038 (Ontario federal), 517 (Quebec provincial), 900 (Quebec federal), 957 (British Columbia federal), 4030 (Total).

Second, we find some variations in the proportions of strategic voters. In Ontario, the proportion varies between 6 and 9% (provincial and federal respectively), in Quebec, between 6 and 8% (federal and provincial respectively) and is 6% in British Columbia. The different contexts of these elections are not a very helpful explanation for these (small) differences. Although there seems to be less strategic voting in Quebec, where the number of parties is larger, we see that the proportion of strategic voters was also quite low in the 2011 Ontario provincial election, where the number of parties is smaller. Similarly, although the proportion of strategic voters was large in the 2015 federal election in Ontario and British Columbia, it was relatively low in Quebec.

Third, at first glance the proportion of strategic voters seems quite small. However, it is important to note that a clear majority of voters are not in a position to cast a strategic vote, because their most preferred party is in fact viable. If we restrict the sample to non-viable supporters (N=757), we see that a large portion do cast a strategic vote (between 33 and 50%, see last column of Table 2). Strategic voting is thus far from a marginal practice in this perspective (Alvarez, Boehmke and Nagler 2006).

Independent variables

In order to measure the polarisation between viable parties needed to test H1, we first calculate the position of each party in the ideological space in taking their average placement on the left-right scale (from extreme left 0 to extreme right 10) as reported by respondents. This aggregation technique, based on the idea of the ‘wisdom of the crowd,’ has been used for the same purpose in other studies that deal with party positions (e.g., Golder and Stramski 2010). It is usually considered as a good indicator of the actual position of the parties in the ideological space.³⁹ Then, we calculate the absolute ideological distance between each dyad of parties, and derive the following variable:

³⁹ Our measure of polarisation is imperfect. Party competition is often multidimensional, as it includes more dimensions than the left-right one. However, recent studies show that, even nowadays, the left-right dimension is still capturing a great part of the variation in party completion in the country (Cochrane 2010; Daoust 2017). However, as we mentioned above, the left-right dimension is less relevant in the province of Quebec where the secessionist/non-secessionist dimension is also salient. In a robustness test, we reproduce the analysis without Quebec respondents.

(H1) Polarisation between viable parties = |Largest ideological distance between viable parties|

As to measure the variables needed to test H2 and H3, we use the party like-dislike scores described above. Then, we can calculate the relevant variables to test H2 and H3, so that:

(H2) Preference for viable parties (favourite v/s least favourite) = How much the voter likes her favourite viable party – How much she likes her least favourite viable party

(H3) Preference for favourite parties (non-viable v/s viable) = How much the voter likes her favourite non-viable party – How much she likes her favourite viable party

Table 2 reports the means and standard deviations of our independent variables for the sample of interest in this paper, i.e. non-viable supporters. The mean of the variable ‘polarisation between viable parties’ is around 2.0. The standard deviation is small, around 1.0, as the variance comes from whichever party is viable in the voters’ district. The variance of the ‘perceived distances to viable parties’ is greater. That is, the mean is around 3.0 and the standard deviation is around 2.5. As for the ‘perceived distance to the preferred party and strategic option,’ the mean is 5.8 with a standard deviation of 3.0 (party like-dislike question).

Table 5.2. Description of independent variables.

	Ontario (prov.)	Ontario (fed.)	Quebec (prov.)	Quebec (fed.)	British Columbia (fed)	Total
Polarisation between viable parties	2.6 (0.8)	2.3 (0.9)	2.3 (1)	1.7 (1.3)	2.3 (1.2)	2.2 (1.1)
Preference for viable parties (favourite v/s least favourite)	2.6 (2.3)	3.6 (2.9)	3.7 (2.7)	3.2 (2.7)	3.5 (2.7)	3.3 (2.7)
Preference for favourite parties (non-viable v/s viable)	5.4 (2.8)	5.8 (3)	6.4 (2.7)	5.7 (3.2)	5.8 (3.1)	5.8 (3)
N	110	196	98	164	189	757

Note: Entries are means. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

In line with the literature on the determinants of strategic voting outlined above, we also include several control variables: age, education (having a university degree or not), gender, partisanship (feeling close to a party or not), and fixed effects for each survey. We also control for political sophistication that we measure using answers to two survey questions related to political knowledge. In the first question, the respondents were asked (in the pre-electoral survey) to associate pictures of the three main party leaders to the correct party. In the second one, they were asked (in the post-electoral survey) to associate three selected emblematic pledge to the correct party. We sum up, for each respondent, the number of correct answers to these questions to create an overall variable measuring political sophistication. In our sample of potential strategic voters, the variable has a mean is 4.0 with a standard deviation of 1.3. Finally, we also control for the difference of perceived chances of winning of the preferred party and the closest viable party (see above for a description of the question regarding perceived chances). We expect that voters are more likely to cast a strategic vote when the difference is large. In our sample, the variable has a mean of 4.1 and a standard deviation of 2.4.

Results

As mentioned, the first step of our analysis is to show that the polarisation between viable parties as defined in H1 affects the preference for favourite and least favourite viable parties, and the preference for non-viable and viable favourite parties, as defined in H2 and H3 respectively. In Table 3, we report the results of OLS regressions in which we predict each of the two variables related to partisan preferences defined above by the variable ‘polarisation between viable parties’. We observe that, in the first case, the polarisation between viable parties is a good predictor of partisan preferences. In line with our expectations (see above), the polarisation between viable parties increases the preference for the favourite viable party compared to least favourite viable party (Model 1). The effect is statistically significant at a level of $p < 0.01$. As to give an idea of the magnitude of these effects, an increase in one unit in the variable ‘polarisation between viable parties’ (that is, more or less an increase in one standard deviation), increases perceived party distances by around one fifth of their standard deviation. In Model 2, the coefficient of polarisation between viable parties goes into the expected direction (negative) but fail to reach statistical significance. Yet, we believe that this is a first evidence that polarisation at least partially alter partisan preferences.

Table 5.3. The effect of polarisation on perceived distances

	(Model 1)	(Model 2)
Polarisation between viable parties	0.43*** (0.07)	-0.06 (0.08)
Preference for viable parties (favourite v/s least favourite)	0.61*** (0.02)	
Preference for favourite parties (non-viable v/s viable)		0.73*** (0.03)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.01)
Female	0.03 (0.14)	0.13 (0.15)
University degree	0.18 (0.15)	-0.28 (0.16)
Political sophistication (0-6)	0.02 (0.06)	0.16* (0.06)
Partisan	-0.14 (0.15)	1.01*** (0.16)
Difference in perceived chances (1-10)	0.02 (0.03)	0.06* (0.03)
Survey fixed effects	YES	YES
Constant	-2.29*** (0.44)	2.84*** (0.48)
<i>N</i>	757	757
<i>R</i> ²	0.516	0.518

*Note: Entries are coefficients from an OLS regression predicting preference for viable parties (Model 1), and preference favourite parties (Model 2). Standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.*

To test our hypotheses, we estimate logit models predicting the probability that the non-viable party supporters cast a strategic vote. Table 4 reports the results of these estimates. Model 3 only includes the polarisation between viable parties as an independent variable. In Model 4, we add partisan preferences as defined in H2 and H3. In both models, we include the control variables presented above. However, in the appendix, we also replicate the analysis without control variables. We discuss this in the robustness checks section.

Table 5.4. The effect of polarisation on strategic voting among potential strategic voters

	(Model 3)	(Model 4)
Polarisation between viable parties	0.19*	0.12
	(0.07)	(0.09)
Preference for viable parties (favourite v/s least favourite)		0.56***
		(0.06)
Preference for favourite parties (non-viable v/s viable)		-0.54***
		(0.06)
Age	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Female	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.16)	(0.17)
University degree	0.36*	0.35
	(0.17)	(0.18)
Political sophistication	-0.01	0.01
	(0.06)	(0.07)
Partisan	-0.53**	-0.34
	(0.16)	(0.18)
Difference in perceived chances	0.20***	0.27***
	(0.03)	(0.04)
Survey fixed effects	YES	YES
Constant	-2.18***	-1.17*
	(0.49)	(0.55)
N	757	757
Pseudo R ²	0.071	0.198

*Note: Entries are coefficients from a logit regression predicting the probability of non-viable party supporters to cast a strategic vote. Standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.*

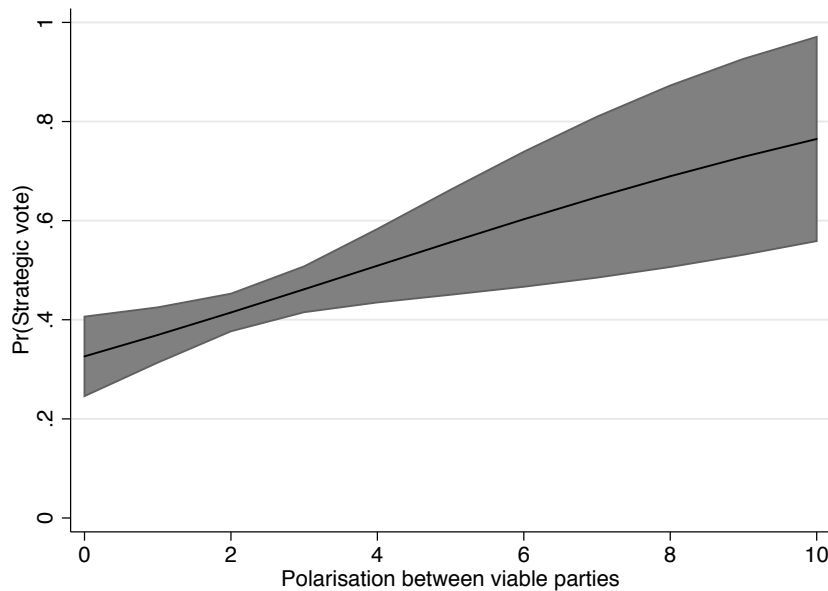
Table 3 reveals that, in Model 3, the coefficient associated to polarisation between viable parties goes into the expected direction (positive). It is statistically significant at a level of $p < 0.05$. However, as mentioned above, the variable is not very precise, as an increase in polarisation between viable parties does not necessarily increase the incentives of all non-viable party supporters to cast a strategic vote (typically, not for the centrist ones). H1 is thus confirmed.

In Model 4, we add perceived partisan preferences as independent variables. The first observation to be made of these models is that the coefficient associated to polarisation between viable parties is much smaller than in Model 3 (and not statistically significant). This suggests, as we hypothesise above, that the effect of this variable is captured by partisan preferences.

From Model 4, we also observe that the coefficient associated to preference of viable parties (favourite v/s least favourite) is positive, and the one associated to the preference of favourite parties (non-viable v/s viable) is negative. This is in line with our expectations. Moreover, the coefficients are statistically significant at a level of $p < 0.01$ in both instances. H2 and H3 are thus also confirmed.

As to better visualise the magnitude of the effects, we draw the predicted probabilities of non-viable party supporters to cast a strategic vote as the main independent variables vary from their minimum (0) to their maximum (10), while other variables are kept at their means. We also report the variation in predicted probabilities plus or minus one standard deviation around the mean. To do so, we use the estimates of Models 3 and 4. Figure 2 reveals the effect of polarisation between viable parties when the partisan preferences are not included (Model 3). The predicted probability of a non-viable party supporter to cast a strategic vote goes from 0.33 (minimum of polarisation) to 0.76 (maximum of polarisation), that is an increase of 43%-points. A first difference t-test reveals that this difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). If we take an increase from -1 and +1 standard deviation around the mean of the variable, the effect still goes from 37 % to 48% (first difference t-test $p < 0.05$).

Figure 5.2. Predicted probabilities of voting strategically and polarisation (viable parties)

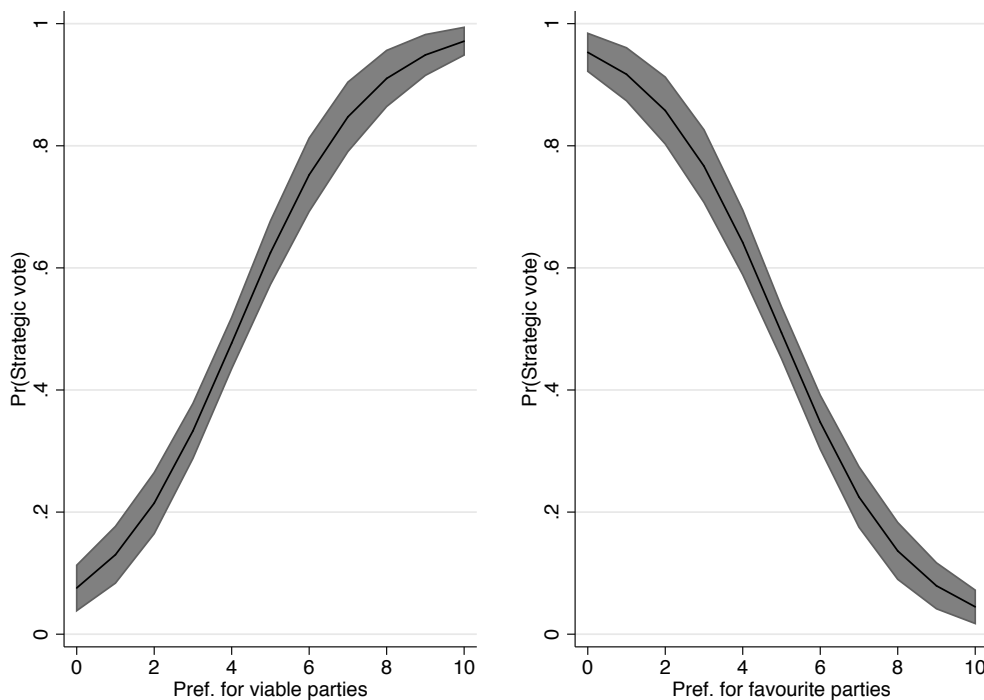


Note: Based on Model 3, Table 4. The shaded area is the 95% confidence interval. All other variables are set at their mean.

Moreover, Figure 3 reveals that the effects of the partisan preferences (H2 and H3) are substantial. Each of the two variables almost entirely cover the variation of the dependent variable. From Figure 3 (left-panel), we observe that the predicted probability for a non-viable party supporter to cast a strategic vote goes from 8% when the preference for viable parties is null (that is, she equally likes both viable parties) to 96% when it is maximal (that is, she likes one of them to a level of 10 and dislikes the other to a level of 0). A first-difference test reveals that this difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). If we take an increase from -1 and +1 standard deviation around the mean of the variable, which is more realistic, the effect still goes from 12% to 74% (first difference test: $p < 0.01$).

From Figure 3 (right-panel), we observe that the predicted probability of a non-viable supporter to vote strategically is 93% when the preference for the favourite non-viable party compared to the favourite viable party is null (that is, she almost equally likes the two⁴⁰) and 6% when she prefers the favourite non-viable party by 10 points. Again, a first-difference test reveals that this difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). If we take an increase from -1 and +1 standard deviation around the mean of the variable, which is more realistic, the effect still goes from 76% to 11% (first difference test: $p < 0.01$).

Figure 5.3. Predicted probabilities of voting strategically as partisan preferences vary



Note: Based on Model 4, Table 4. The shaded area is the 95% confidence interval. All other variables are set at their mean.

⁴⁰ In the survey, when a respondent reported that she equally likes two parties, there was a follow-up question asking her to tell which one of these two she likes the most overall. This is why there are some non-viable supporters in the dataset who equally likes a viable and a non-viable party. These are those who said that overall they prefer the non-viable party.

In addition, it is worth noting that for a non-viable supporter having a university degree, feeling close to a party, and believing that the preferred party has much less chances to win than the closest viable party have a statistically significant effect on the likelihood to vote strategically. This corroborates with previous findings in the literature (see above).

As to test the robustness of these findings, we re-estimate Models 3 and 4, in a series of supplementary analyses. First, we weight the data according to the actual electoral results as we did for the descriptive analyses of our variables. Second, we remove the control variables. Third, we use an alternative the definition of ‘viability’. Instead of considering only the top two contenders in the respondent’s district, we consider that all parties which have 50% or more chances of winning in the eyes of the respondents as viable.⁴¹ Fourth, we use an alternative measure of the variables related to H2 and H3. Instead of using party like/dislike scores, we use responses to left-right placement questions. For these questions, each respondent places herself and all of the main parties on a scale from 0 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right). Hence, we calculate the variable ‘preference for viable parties (favourite v/s least favourite)’ in using the difference in left-right proximity between the respondent’s favourite and least favourite party (H2). Similarly, we calculate the variable ‘preference for favourite parties (non-viable v/s viable)’ using the difference between the respondent’s proximity between her favourite non-viable party and her favourite viable party (H3). Fifth, we exclude Quebec elections from the data (regional and federal). The results remain largely unchanged. They are displayed in Table E.2, E.3, E.4, E.5 and E.6 of the appendix.

⁴¹ Note that with this alternative definition of viability, there are 24% of potential strategic voters in the dataset, and 31% of them vote strategically.

Finally, we tested for potential interaction effect between polarisation between viable parties and other control variables (Model 3). We envision the possibility that the effect of polarisation on the probability of non-viable party supporters to cast a strategic vote is stronger for those who have a university degree or are politically sophisticated (because they understand better the rationale behind strategic voting), and for those who are not partisan (because they are less reluctant to desert their preferred party). There was, however, no significant interaction.

Conclusion

Although strategic voting does not concern all voters, a substantial portion engage in this behaviour in both plurality and proportional representation elections. This makes the study of the factors that encourage it very important. However, it is methodologically challenging to study the determinants of strategic voting, as this behaviour only concerns a subset of the electorate, that is non-viable party supporters. As a consequence, the overall number of strategic voters in surveys is often low. In this paper, we pooled five surveys that were specifically designed to capture strategic voting as to have enough potential strategic voters.

We study a determinant of strategic voting that receives little attention in the literature: party polarisation. We still know very little about the effect of the position that parties take in the ideological space on the proclivity of non-viable party supporters to vote strategically. We subsequently test the effect of polarisation measured at the election-level on partisan preferences measured at the individual-level, and the effect of both on the probability to cast a strategic vote. We find that (1) the polarisation between viable parties increases the probability of a non-viable

supporter to cast a strategic vote, because it (2) increases how much she likes her favourite viable party (compared to her least favourite viable party), and (3) decreases how much she likes her favourite non-viable party compared to her favourite viable party.

Our paper brings an important contribution to the literature on strategic voting, party polarisation, and voting behaviour. Previous studies have found that party polarisation has a direct effect on vote choice: it tends to increase the proportion of correct voters who vote for the party that they like the most and/or is the closest to them in the ideological space (Lachat 2008; Lau and Redlawsk 1997). Thus, our findings contradict those by demonstrating that polarisation increases the proportion of strategic voters. However, we believe that the two findings are complementary. The reason is that, in this paper, we only examine the voting behaviour of a specific type of voters: non-viable supporters. It is reasonable to think that party polarisation can have a different effect on vote choice depending on the type of voter: for viable party supporters, it increases the probability to cast an ideologically correct vote, and for non-viable party supporters, it increases the probability to cast a strategic vote.⁴² However, testing this hypothesis falls beyond the scope of this paper. It is, however, an interesting avenue for future research.

⁴² Another implication of our study is that as polarisation increases, non-viable supporters tend to desert their favourite party. This means that, on average, small parties become smaller as polarisation increases. This is in line with the literature that shows that mainstream parties are more popular when they get ideologically closer to niche parties (Meguid 2008).

Chapitre 6

Support for minority government and strategic voting

Ce chapitre est publié dans l'ouvrage suivant :

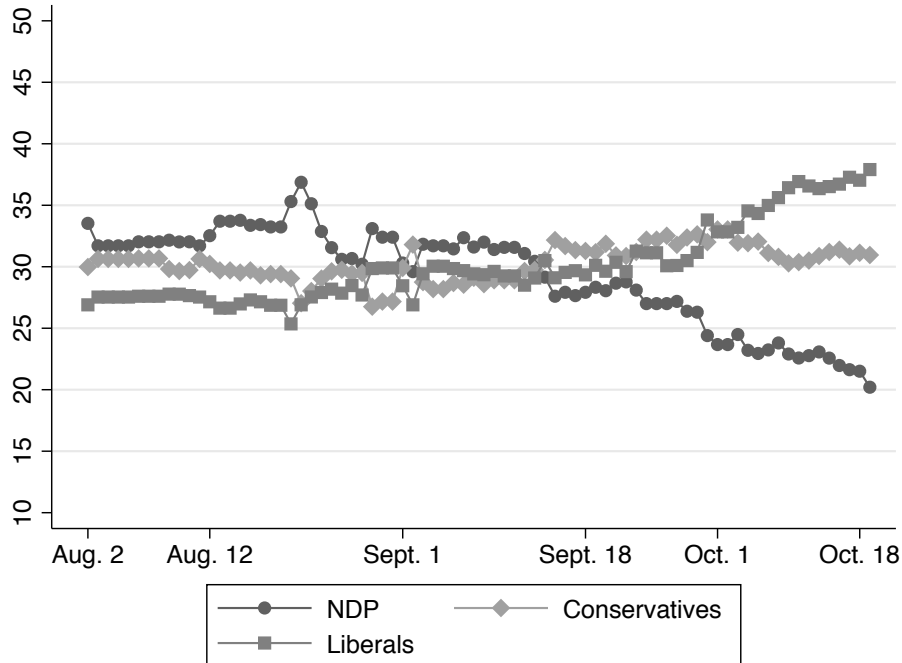
Aldrich, John, André Blais et Laura Stephenson. Strategic voting and political institutions. University of Michigan Press. Forthcoming [2018]

First-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral systems are known to produce single-party majority governments (most of the time). This winner-take-all system is largely responsible for the fact that Canada had a majority government 20 out of 28 times in the twentieth century by allocating a disproportionate bonus of seats to large parties. However, things changed at the beginning of the twenty-first century: in three consecutive elections between 2004 and 2011, no party won a majority of seats, and the 2004 election produced the first minority government since 1979. This new dynamic might have changed voters' calculus of voting as they integrated considerations related to the possible formation of a minority government. That is, Canadians had been accustomed to majorities, but the events of the 2000s might have caused them to rethink their expectations.

The 2015 Canadian election is particularly well suited to explore this possible new dynamic because polls predicted an unprecedented three-way horse race between the main parties—the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC), the New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP), and the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC)—each of which led in the polls at least once during the campaign. The NDP was ahead at the beginning of the campaign, while the Tories and Liberals competed for first place during the final weeks. This environment provided a nearly perfect “coordination dilemma” (Cox 1997), as the Left was divided between the Liberals and the NDP and faced a united right in the CPC. The stage was set for voters to at least consider the possibility of voting strategically, providing a unique opportunity to understand voters' strategic motivations. Poll results illustrated this situation throughout the campaign. As figure 6.1 shows, in the middle of the campaign, no party had a significant lead. However, in the last weeks, it became clear that the NDP could not form the next government because the party was trailing in Ontario, which sends the most

representatives to the parliament. By early September, the number of people intending to vote for the NDP declined dramatically, while the Liberals seemed to gain from those desertions.

Figure 6.1. Poll results and the decline of the NDP.



Note: each observation represents a poll result.

As chapter 1 [of Aldrich et al., 2018] discusses, the study of strategic voting developed under FPTP assumptions (Downs 1957; Riker and Ordeshook 1968). The logic appeared very simple, with the focus on single-member districts (or for presidential elections, the nation conceived as a single district). Strategic voting has been defined as a vote that takes into account the preferences regarding candidates and expectations regarding outcomes. It is often evaluated as a two-step process (Blais and Nadeau 1996), where the researcher first scrutinizes whether voters have

incentives to desert strategically (that is, their preferred parties are not viable) and then examines if whether voters supported preferred party *between the viable parties*.

In its purest form, strategic voting thus derives from a local calculus only, since voters cast a single vote that counts solely at the local level. However, as chapter 1 suggests, this vote at the local level could impact national considerations. For instance, the selected (local) representative will contribute to collective national outcomes such as the selection of the prime minister in a parliamentary system or the leadership of the House in a presidential system. Hence, at least indirectly, local votes can shape national outcomes. While chapter 1 suggests that national considerations might matter for strategic voting, this chapter argues that the preference for minority government is one of the national considerations that affects a voter's calculus. Because minority governments have become more common, at least in the Canadian case, preferences about the size of the government could also matter.

This chapter considers theoretical arguments related to minority governments and coalitions and their impact on strategic voting. The chapter then tests these arguments via two different approaches using data from the Making Electoral Democracy Work project. The conclusion discusses the relevance of national considerations even in FPTP electoral systems.

1. National determinants of strategic voting

We already know quite a lot about the individual determinants of strategic voting as commonly defined and as referred to in chapter 1 (see table 1.1). Political sophistication is one of the most studied determinants of strategic voting. Most of the time, the relationship is positive: more

sophisticated voters are more likely to vote strategically (Black 1978; Blais and Turgeon 2004; Merolla and Stephenson 2007), although some authors find null results (Blais and Gschwend 2011; Daoust 2015; Duch and Palmer 2002). Partisanship is also known to impact the proclivity to vote strategically. The literature is unequivocal: voters who are more partisan are less likely to vote strategically as the expressive costs of desertion increase (Gschwend, 2007). Somewhat related to partisanship, the intensity of preferences is known to negatively influence voters' proclivity to cast strategic votes—that is, more intense voters are less likely to desert their preferred options (Blais, 2002). This is a direct impact, but there is also an indirect one. Voters who really like a party or a candidate are more likely to display wishful thinking and to believe that their preferred choice has some chance of winning (Blais and Turgeon, 2004). Hence, such voters do not find it rational to desert.

However, given the likely outcome of a minority government, some *national* considerations might influence voters to desert strategically even in FPTP electoral systems where voters cast only one vote and this vote is at the local level. By national considerations, I mean considerations that are not related to the local level—that is, the constituency. This is even more likely because the Canadian media typically cover national polls and focus on which party is leading nationally and whether it has enough support to form a majority government.

There are many theoretical reasons to believe that national considerations may influence voters' choices in Canada. First, voters who believe that it is better to have a government with a majority of seats may desert their first choice to increase the chances of another party winning at least 170 of the 338 seats. This assumes, of course, that for some voters, the utility of having a majority

rather than minority government outweighs the expressive benefits of voting for their first choice. Second, when they integrate new considerations, voters are more tempted to change their votes. It appears that such was the case in 2015, when political pundits talked a lot about the possibility of a minority government and the possibility of a two-party coalition, which has only happened once (during the First World War). We know that novelties bring voters to reconsider their choices (Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000), which means that those who have stances on new issues are more likely to change their behavior.

Furthermore, voters may have different preferences regarding majority or minority governments. First, there are strategic considerations. On the one hand, supporters of small parties could benefit from a minority government by exerting a greater influence in the legislation than their share of seats might suggest (Thomas, 2007). On the other hand, supporters of major parties might also prefer a minority government in a particular context: for example, if they expect their preferred party to lose the upcoming election. “For them, a minority outcome might be preferable to a legislature controlled by their major party opponents.” (Dufresne and Nevitte, 2014: 828). Finally, Russell (2008) argues that minority governments are viewed as being more associated with open-style democracy and more consensual politics, with a tighter process of checks and balances and a government this more likely to compromise or bargain. Hence, on the top of strategic considerations, some voters’ principles might lead them to view minority government as better.

Institutional rules shape a variety of outcomes and thus ways in which “winning” is defined. In the Canadian case, it is necessary to take into account the decision-making calculus utility function associated with possible outcomes at the local and the national levels, since citizens vote at the

district level as well as indirectly for the government. Preferences about majority versus minority governments shape this utility function. For example, a supporter of the NDP may prefer a victory by the party at both the local and national levels but likely does not expect the NDP to form the next government. If this voter also prefers minority governments, she may consider deserting her preferred option in order to support a party that could form a minority government at the national level. As the LPC is spatially closer to her than the CPC, the two most preferred outcomes are likely

$$\text{NDP(Minority)} > \text{LPC(Minority)}$$

However, even if she prefers minority government to majority government, she may prefer a majority government by her preferred party over a minority government by her second choice. Hence, the preferred outcomes are

$$\text{NDP(Minority)} > \text{NDP(Majority)} > \text{LPC(Minority)}$$

In both cases, if the voter concludes that the two first options are not possible, since the NDP will not win the most seats, she rationally turns to the third option. This is a case of national strategic voting because it is shaped by preferences regarding the formation of the national government. The analysis in this chapter identifies exactly this kind of vote: strategic voting as a consequence of national considerations. More precisely, the chapter analyzes strategic voting resulting from preferences regarding minority government.

2. Data and case study

To tackle the possibility that attitudes toward minority government affect strategic voting, I use the Making Electoral Democracy Work datasets (Blais 2010) for the Canadian election of 2015. The project conducted three surveys in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec, with 1,879, 1,891, and 1,864 respondents, respectively, in the first wave conducted in the two weeks before Election Day. A second wave of the surveys was conducted during the two weeks following the election, with a return-to-sample rate of 73%. I weighted the data so that the reported vote matches the official outcome in each province. This is necessary because third parties are overrepresented and their supporters are more likely to desert strategically.

In the 2015 Canadian federal election, incumbent prime minister Stephen Harper of the CPC lost office to the LPC and its leader, Justin Trudeau. As table 6.1 shows, the Conservatives received 32% of the votes and 29% of the seats. The Liberals won with 39% of the votes and 54% of the seats. The NDP came third, garnering 24% of the votes and 20% of the seats. In Quebec, the Bloc Québécois received 20% of the votes and 13% of the province's seats. Finally, the Greens obtained 3% of the votes and one seat (in British Columbia, where the party is strongest). No other party received more than 1% of the votes at the national level.

Table 6.1. Votes and seats share, 2015

	British Columbia	Ontario	Québec	Canada
CPC	30 (24)	35 (66)	17 (15)	32 (29)
LPC	35 (41)	45 (27)	36 (51)	39 (54)
NDP	26 (33)	17 (7)	25 (21)	20 (13)
Bloc Québécois	N/A	N/A	20 (13)	5 (3)
Greens	8 (2)	3 (0)	2 (0)	3 (0.3)
<i>Total</i>	99 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)	99 (100)

Note: Cell entries are vote shares (%). Seat shares (%) are in parentheses.

3. Strategic voting in the 2015 Canadian election

Tackling national strategic voting ideally requires measures of preferences, expectations about election outcomes at the local and national levels, and vote choice. The Making Electoral Democracy Work data provide these measures. To calculate strategic voting, I rely on the approach proposed by Blais and Gschwend (2011), counting as strategic voters anyone who does not vote for their preferred party, leader, or local candidate. This strongly correlates with other measures of strategic voting and is the best option offered by the data.

Empirically, the approach consists of three steps, as I successively take into account party, leader, and local candidate preferences. The preferred party is the one that scores the highest on a 0–10 party-liking scale. In the case of ties, respondents were asked a follow-up question where they had to indicate which party they like the most. The same applies to the preferred leader. In the case of

a tie, the preferred leader is the one whom the respondent thinks would be the best prime minister. Finally, respondents were asked if they liked a particular candidate in their district, and if so, from which party.

A vast majority of voters—77% of the electorate—supported their preferred party. This means that 23% of voters did not vote do so. This proportion goes down to 18% when the condition of not voting for the preferred leader is added. Finally, when those who supported their preferred local candidate are removed, 14% of the total electorate satisfies these three criteria, which do not capture pure strategic voting but do identify a voting behavior that is highly correlated with strategic voting. The three steps are described in table 6.2.

Table 6.2. Strategic voters

Proportion of voters who did not vote for their preferred party	22.6%
Proportion of voters who did not vote for their preferred party or their preferred leader	17.8%
Proportion of voters who did not vote for their preferred party, their preferred leader, or their preferred local candidate	14.4%

Table 6.3. Preferred party and vote choice among strategic voters

	CPC	NDP	LPC	Bloc	Greens	Total
CPC	0 (0)	22 (17)	20 (35)	2 (5)	20 (14)	64 (14)
NDP	20 (23)	0	30 (51)	20 (48)	51 (36)	120 (26)
LPC	54 (64)	100 (77)	0	18 (44)	65 (46)	238 (52)
Bloc	4 (5)	6 (5)	2 (3)	0	4 (3)	16 (4)
Greens	4 (7)	2 (2)	7 (11)	2 (4)	0	15 (4)
Total	82 (100)	130 (100)	58 (100)	42 (100)	141 (100)	454 (100)

Note: Number of observations are in cells with the percentages in parentheses. The preferred party is indicated by the row and the vote choice by the column. Hence, the diagonal entries would represent sincere voting.

Table 6.3 compares sincere preferences and actual votes for the 454 strategic voters, showing which party they preferred and which party they supported. Because nearly all voters do not expect the Greens to be a viable option, they are disproportionately represented. Overall, most of the strategic desertion comes from NDP and Green supporters, and most goes to the Liberals. More specifically, 64% of the Conservatives who voted strategically opted for the Liberals, as did 77% NDP strategic voters and 52% of strategic Greens. Finally, small variations occurred among the three provinces. More strategic voting occurred in British Columbia (17%) and less in Ontario (11%), with Quebec right in the middle (14.5%). Second, the Liberals benefited less from strategic voting in Quebec, since strategic voters from the Bloc Québécois were slightly more likely to choose the NDP than the Liberals.

4. The impact of attitudes toward minority government and coalitions

To isolate the impact of opinions regarding minority government, different conditions were elaborated, and they strongly suggest that voters deserted for national considerations. For each party, I isolated voters who were defined as strategic, who did not expect their preferred party to win the most seats, and who preferred a minority government. I repeat the exercise for each party. Voters were asked “Which party do you think will win the most seats in this election?” and “Do you think it is better to have a majority government, a minority government or does it make no difference?” Table 6.4 displays the results.

Table 6.4. The impact of national considerations on strategic voting

Preferred party	Does Not Expect the Preferred Party to Win at the National Level	Is Defined as Strategic Voter	Prefers Minority Government	Number of Voters Meeting These Criteria/Number of Strategic Voters from Party
CPC				4/72 (6%)
NDP				9/138 (7%)
LPC				7/51 (14%)
Bloc Québécois	Yes	Yes	Yes	14/46 (30%)
Green				58/145 (40%)
All				92/452 (20%)

A substantial proportion of voters—94 of the 454 strategic voters (20%; 3% of the total electorate)—satisfy all the criteria. The criteria I use are consistent with an interpretation that some of the strategic voters were mobilized by national considerations.⁴³ Minor parties such as the

⁴³ A logit regression (see Table E.1) shows that supporters of the LPC, NDP, Bloc Québécois, and the Greens are more likely to prefer minority government than are supporters of the CPC. However, the magnitude of the impact is greater for nonmainstream parties. The Greens and the Bloc Québécois are most in favor of minority government. This makes sense using strategic considerations, as those small parties might hope to obtain the balance of power in case of a minority government.

Greens are overrepresented because they are more likely to express positive attitudes toward minority government. Among Greens supporters, 43% saw minority governments as the best option, while only 13% of the Conservatives' electorate did so.

To determine whether attitudes toward minority government have an independent impact on strategic voting, I run a logistic regression using a dependent variable coded 1 if the voter is a strategic deserter and 0 otherwise. Table 6.5 shows the results. The main independent variable of interest is minority government. It is a dummy coded 1 if the respondent believes that it is better to have a minority government and 0 if the respondent answers that a majority is better, believes that it makes no difference, or does not know. Among the electorate, 28% believes that a minority government is better.

Table 6.5. National (minority government) considerations among strategic considerations

	Model 1
	b/se
Age	-0.022*** (0.00)
Female	-0.199 (0.13)
Education (University)	0.262* (0.13)
Political information	-1.243*** (0.35)
Local not viable	0.896*** (0.15)
Partisanship	-0.142 (0.14)
Leader polarization	-0.006 (0.01)
Party polarization	-0.137*** (0.03)
Minority government	0.441** (0.14)
Province (reference=BC)	
Quebec	-0.420** (0.18)
Ontario	-0.725*** (0.17)
Constant	0.162 (0.34)
Pseudo R ²	.10
N	2643

*Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$*

I also control for the impact of sociodemographic variables, preferences for party and leaders, political information, and partisanship. Age is a continuous variable from 18 to 94; sex is a dummy, with female as the reference category; and education is a dummy coded 1 if the respondent has completed at least some university. Political information is an index that asked the respondent to

identify pictures of leaders from the major parties (appendix to this chapter). Partisanship captures the effect of feeling close to a party. Party polarization is the absolute difference between the score attributed to the preferred party and the score attributed to the second preferred party. Leader polarization is the absolute difference between the score given to the preferred leader and the score given to the second choice leader. These indicators of preference must be taken into account because the expected-utility-maximizing choice reflects the intensity of voters' preferences.

Furthermore, identifying whether national considerations affect strategic voting requires controlling for the fact that some voters have local incentives to desert. Hence, the Local not viable variable is a dummy controlling for voters whose preferred party is not viable in the local context—that is, when their preferred party is perceived as not among the district's top two contenders.

The results display strong support for the influence of attitudes toward minority government on strategic voting. The Minority government variable is significant at $p < .01$. Furthermore, it is positive, meaning that voters who believe that it is better to have a minority government are more likely to desert strategically. However, the magnitude of the impact is quite limited, which is not surprising and is in line with the previous test that isolated national strategic voters using particular criteria. Voters who believe that minority governments are better have a 17.5% chance of deserting, whereas those who do not share that belief have a 12.6% of doing so. The attitude toward minority government thus gives increases the likelihood of strategic desertion by 4.9 percentage points. In light of the fact that 14.4% of voters were defined as strategic, we can say that around 5% of voters are strategic because of national considerations. It is also likely that the indirect nature of the national outcomes reduces their saliency to the determination of the vote relative to the more

immediate case of an expected close contest in the constituency.

Table 6.4 indicates not only that national determinants have an impact on strategic voting but also that the local level and context matter. First, the Local not viable variable illustrates that voters whose preferred options are not viable in their districts are far more likely to desert. This strongly suggests the existence of strategic voting as a consequence of local considerations and that it is twice as important as national considerations in the voter's calculus. Context also matters, as shown by dummy variables demonstrating that the extent to which voters act strategically is not uniformly distributed in the country. Both Ontario (5.2 percentage points) and especially Quebec (2.8 percentage points) display less strategic voting than does British Columbia.⁴⁴

Finally, individual determinants are also part of the story. Indeed, feeling close to a party increases the expressive cost of strategic voting and is thus negatively associated with strategic voting, but that association is not significant. Furthermore, the level of political information is negatively correlated with strategic voting, a finding that differs from other studies, which have found a positive but not significant relationship (Blais and Gschwend 2011; Daoust 2015; Duch and Palmer 2002). Education, however, displays a positive sign, meaning that sophistication but not information might be positively related to strategic voting.

⁴⁴ These results do not change before or after the addition of controls.

5. Conclusion

Canada's minority governments between 2004 and 2011 likely altered voters' calculus. While I cannot analyze voters' considerations before and after this period, I do find that a preference for minority government was integrated as a strategic consideration in the Canadian federal 2015 election.

My study finds that one in five strategic voters would be driven by national considerations and that attitudes toward minority government had an independent impact of 3.1 percentage points on the proclivity to cast a strategic vote—a realistic and nonnegligible effect. However, local considerations appear to be much more prominent among strategic voters. Hence, it is not surprising that the variable capturing the effect of the viability of a voter's preferred party displays a greater impact, reflecting the local impact on strategic calculus.

The two methods I used offer different ways to analyze the impact of national considerations on strategic voting, but both reveal that information related to the local level has more impact than national considerations. However, they also reveal that mobilizing national considerations accounted for about one in five strategic voters and that a favorable view of minority government increases the likelihood of strategic desertion from 12.6% to 17.5%, a substantial amount. Thus, scholars of strategic voting should not disregard national considerations—they are relevant and make important contributions to the study of strategic voting.

Conclusion

Parfois, ce sont des événements politiques comme l'élection du Parti progressiste-conservateur de Joe Clark lors de l'élection canadienne fédérale de 1979 qui rappellent aux chercheurs et au grand public que le processus électoral en système parlementaire n'est pas une seule grande élection nationale, mais plutôt une série de contestations locales dans chacune des circonscriptions au pays. En perdant le vote national face aux libéraux de Trudeau (36% contre 40%), mais en remportant plus de sièges (i.e. 136 victoires individuelles dans 136 circonscriptions contre 114 pour les libéraux), le Parti progressiste-conservateur de 1979 a réussi à déloger le Parti libéral du Canada pour former le gouvernement et, du même coup, a rappelé l'importance de la politique au niveau de la circonscription. Après tout, une fois à la Chambre des Communes, chaque élu ne dispose que d'un seul vote, peu importe s'il a été élu avec 28% ou 70% des votes de sa circonscription.

Ma thèse s'inscrit dans une perspective qui propose de prendre au sérieux la politique locale. Cela implique de considérer le niveau local comme étant presque aussi important que la politique nationale. De plus, j'adopte une perspective citoyenne. C'est-à-dire que contrairement à la littérature qui étudie les liens entre les élites (partis politiques, élus, etc.) et la politique au niveau de la circonscription, je m'attarde aux attitudes des citoyens et aux impacts de la politique locale sur ces derniers. Il y a maintenant lieu de résumer les six chapitres qui couvrent le cœur de la thèse pour ensuite aborder les questions supplémentaires que suscitent ces articles et offrir des réflexions plus larges à propos des implications de mes résultats.

Le premier article se veut fondamental. À la question « A quel point les électeurs attribuent de l'importance aux résultats électoraux dans leur circonscription? », une réponse indiquant que les citoyens ne portent pas attention à ces résultats viendrait miner la pertinence des études sur la politique locale. J'ai pu répondre à la question de recherche grâce aux données du projet Making Electoral Democracy Work car, pour la première fois, il y avait un indicateur de l'importance subjective attribuée aux résultats électoraux à l'échelle nationale et au niveau de la circonscription, ce qui permet d'évaluer l'importance *relative* du local. De plus, la base de données comprend 11 élections (à différents niveaux) dans quatre pays, à savoir l'Allemagne, l'Espagne, le Canada et la France, qui présentent des institutions différentes (dont le mode de scrutin).

Les résultats indiquent que, tel qu'attendu par la croyance populaire, les résultats électoraux au niveau national sont plus importants que ceux au niveau local. Toutefois, il serait faux de dire que le local n'est pas important. Concrètement, sur une échelle de 0 à 10, le niveau local est seulement 1 point moins important aux yeux des citoyens (Tableau 1.1), ce qui représente un écart que je qualifie de modeste. De plus, on peut cadrer les résultats de différentes manières qui reflètent l'importance des résultats au niveau de la circonscription. D'une part, la médiane est de 7 sur 10, ce qui est davantage que la moyenne de 6.4. D'autre part, 15% des électeurs accordent *plus* d'importance aux résultats locaux qu'aux résultats nationaux et 32% présentent une égalité. Il y a donc une certaine hétérogénéité de réponses quant à l'importance des résultats électoraux en fonction des différents niveaux, ce qui m'amène à poser une question supplémentaire : qui sont les

électeurs qui attribuent plus (ou moins) d'importance aux résultats électoraux au niveau de la circonscription?

Le Tableau 1.2 résume les caractéristiques des gens qui pensent davantage en termes locaux. Les résultats sont séparés en pays individuels pour illustrer les différences entre les cas, mais certaines récurrences émergent. Essentiellement, les personnes plus âgées, mieux informées, plus religieuses (pratiquantes) et celles qui s'identifient davantage à leur municipalité accordent plus d'importance aux résultats électoraux dans leur circonscription. Néanmoins, ces résultats sont plus faibles pour la France et parfois, bien que statistiquement significatives, certaines variables ont des effets qui sont faibles en termes substantiels. Par exemple, les coefficients pour l'âge apparaissent comme étant de très bons prédicteurs, mais lorsqu'on prend un compte l'étendu de cette mesure et qu'on se concentre sur l'impact de plus ou moins un écart type autour de la moyenne, l'impact est d'environ .05 sur 1. En ce sens, il faut garder en tête que ces relations sont parfois modestes, voire faibles. Finalement, il y a lieu de noter que les citoyens ruraux n'accordent pas, contrairement à la croyance populaire canadienne, plus d'importance aux résultats dans leur circonscription.

Une fois que j'ai établi que la politique au niveau de la circonscription était loin d'être triviale et même plus importante que le niveau national ou égal pour une partie non négligeable de l'électorat (15% et 32%, pour un total de 47%), je m'intéresse dans le second article aux gens qui indiquent avoir une préférence pour un candidat local dans leur circonscription. Plus précisément, j'examine ceux chez qui cette préférence est différente de leur parti préféré, en d'autres mots, ceux qui ont

une préférence au niveau local incongrue par rapport au niveau national, dans trois provinces (Québec, Ontario et Colombie-Britannique) lors de l'élection canadienne de 2015.

Dans un premier temps descriptif, j'élabore une typologie distinguant trois catégories d'électeurs en fonction de leur préférence envers les candidats locaux. Premièrement, il y a les électeurs qui n'ont pas de préférence pour un candidat local. Ils représentent 52% de l'échantillon. Deuxièmement, il y a ceux qui ont une préférence pour un candidat local qui est affilié avec leur parti préféré – autrement dit, une préférence congruente. Ils sont 39%. Troisièmement, le 9% restant est constitué de ceux qui ont une préférence incongrue, c'est-à-dire qu'ils ont une préférence pour un candidat local et que celui-ci provient d'un autre parti que leur parti préféré. Le Tableau 2.1 résume cette typologie et reproduit les distinctions en fonction de la province et des préférences pour les différents partis. Entre autres choses, cette distinction met en lumière le fait que le Québec a davantage d'électeurs sans préférence pour un candidat local que l'Ontario et la Colombie-Britannique, et que les électeurs du Parti vert du Canada ont plus souvent des préférences incongrues.

Le Tableau B.1 en annexe illustre les caractéristiques de ces trois différents types d'électeurs. Les citoyens plus âgés sont plus à même d'avoir des préférences, congrues ou incongrues. Il est également intéressant de noter que, comme dans le premier article, l'éducation n'a aucun impact significatif. Par contre, un niveau d'intérêt politique élevé est une caractéristique importante de ceux qui ont une préférence pour un candidat local. Les effets de partis et de provinces confirment

pour leur part les résultats du Tableau 2.1 déjà mentionnés – moins de préférences pour les candidats locaux au Québec et plus de préférences incongrues chez les verts.

La question la plus importante de cette recherche, qui est en fait le titre, est répondue au Tableau 2.2, qui isole le comportement électoral des électeurs avec des préférences incongrues. Globalement, une majorité (60%) de ce type d'électeur va voter pour leur parti préféré tandis que 40% d'entre eux vont voter pour le candidat local préféré. Encore une fois, je note que le Québec est moins « local » que les autres provinces. Non seulement les électeurs de cette province ont moins de préférence pour un candidat dans leur circonscription, mais lorsqu'ils ont des préférences incongrues, ils se rangent davantage derrière le parti plutôt que le candidat (66% par rapport à 58% et 55% pour les deux autres provinces). Quant aux effets de partis, le contraste entre le NPD et les conservateurs est marquant : les électeurs du premier parti se rangent majoritairement derrière le candidat local, tandis que les électeurs du deuxième parti optent largement pour le parti.

Au final, lorsqu'on se concentre sur les électeurs qui ont un dilemme entre un candidat local et son parti préféré, le niveau local apparaît assez important puisque 40% des électeurs optent pour le candidat. Une autre perspective consiste à dire qu'il y a en fait seulement 2% de l'électorat global pour qui le candidat local est si fort qu'il permet de voter « contre » le parti préféré. Je pense toutefois que la première perspective est plus appropriée puisqu'au final il est étrange d'inclure l'ensemble des électeurs puisque chez la majorité d'entre eux, le dilemme entre le candidat local et le parti préféré ne se pose même pas. De plus, il faut mentionner que peu importe la perspective, le candidat local peut également avoir un impact indirect que notre étude ne mesure pas. En effet,

si le candidat d'un parti influence positivement un électeur, ce dernier aura très probablement une opinion plus positive du parti associé à ce candidat. Par exemple, si un candidat local bien apprécié est affilié au Parti libéral du Canada, il peut y avoir un effet de contagion faisant en sorte qu'un électeur aura comme parti préféré le PLC. Il n'a pas de préférence incongrue, qui est le cœur de notre étude, mais clairement, le local a eu un impact sur ce citoyen. Peu importe la perspective choisie pour présenter les résultats, il faut être conscient de cet effet indirect difficile à mesurer et qui attribue une certaine importance au niveau local.

Après avoir illustré dans le premier article qu'une proportion significative d'électeurs attribue beaucoup d'importance aux résultats électoraux dans leur circonscription, je démontre dans le second article que près de la moitié des électeurs avait, au-delà de leur parti préféré, une préférence pour un candidat local. Et surtout, lorsqu'ils ont une préférence locale différente de leur parti préféré, ils vont dévier de leur préférence nationale et voter pour le candidat local dans 40% des cas, ce qui est une proportion assez élevée d'électeurs. Les deux prochains articles analysent l'impact des résultats locaux au niveau de la circonscription sur la satisfaction envers la démocratie et le sentiment d'avoir gagné ses élections.

L'objectif du troisième article consiste tout d'abord à trancher un débat déjà présent dans la littérature à savoir si les résultats électoraux au niveau de la circonscription affectent le niveau de satisfaction envers la démocratie des citoyens. S'il s'avère que oui, alors il faudrait revoir la littérature sur la satisfaction avec la démocratie qui s'intéresse exclusivement à l'impact des résultats nationaux (i.e. qui forme le gouvernement?) sur les citoyens. D'une part, on peut

s'attendre à des résultats nuls en suivant Anderson et LoTempio (2002) et Henderson (2008). D'autre part, on peut anticiper un effet indépendant positif d'une victoire locale sur le niveau de satisfaction envers la démocratie si on se fie à l'étude de Blais et Gélinau (2007). À l'aide de deux bases de données, j'intègre plus d'élections à mon analyse que les trois études sur ce sujet. La base de données principale est l'Étude Électorale Canadienne qui couvre la période de 1997 à 2008, mais j'ajoute également les trois élections canadiennes du projet MEDW (Ontario 2011, Québec 2012 et Canada 2015).

Dès l'analyse bivariée entre l'impact des résultats au niveau de la circonscription et la satisfaction envers la démocratie, la relation s'avère faible (voir la colonne 1 du Tableau 3.1). Bien que significatif, le coefficient indique qu'un gagnant au niveau local, par rapport à un perdant, voit son niveau de satisfaction augmenter de .01 sur 1, à savoir un impact très faible. Une fois qu'on inclut différentes variables contrôles, le coefficient diminue et ne franchit plus la barre du $p < .05$ malgré un nombre très élevé d'observations. La conclusion est claire : les résultats électoraux au niveau de la circonscription n'ont pas d'influence sur le niveau de satisfaction envers la démocratie. Ces résultats amènent une certaine tension avec la conclusion du chapitre 1 où j'illustre que globalement, les citoyens accordent une importance assez importante – bien que moins qu'au niveau national – aux résultats locaux. Il n'est pas impossible que la question surestime l'importance accordée au niveau local. En ce sens, ce chapitre suggère que le niveau local n'est pas suffisamment important pour influencer la satisfaction envers la démocratie – contrairement, par exemple, au chapitre 6 qui démontre que le local est plus important que le national lorsqu'on analyse le vote stratégique.

La deuxième partie de l'analyse se tourne vers les résultats nationaux et remet en question le fait qu'une victoire nationale vient nécessairement avec une augmentation de la satisfaction envers la démocratie. L'argument est le suivant : dans un système pluralitaire comme le Canada, une victoire minoritaire ne serait pas satisfaisante et ne serait pas suffisante (contrairement à une victoire majoritaire) pour augmenter le niveau de satisfaction envers la démocratie. Or, les résultats indiquent que peu importe le contexte, les citoyens qui votent pour le gagnant au niveau national présentent une augmentation de satisfaction envers la démocratie très semblable.

Le quatrième article explore également l'impact des résultats électoraux au niveau de la circonscription sur les citoyens. Mais avant cela, une première partie de l'article cherche à examiner ce qui fait en sorte que les électeurs considèrent qu'ils ont gagné leur élection au niveau national. Cela est possible grâce aux données du projet MEDW qui incluent une question novatrice qui demande directement aux électeurs si, *selon eux*, le parti pour lequel ils ont voté a gagné ou perdu les élections.⁴⁵ Il s'agit d'une question qui est en droite ligne avec la perspective citoyenne de ma thèse. Trois dimensions nationales sont examinées : le fait de voter pour un parti qui fait partie du gouvernement ou non, les votes reçus et les sièges remportés. Clairement, le fait de voter pour un parti qui forme le gouvernement ou fait partie d'une coalition gouvernementale est le déterminant le plus fort lorsqu'on veut prédire si l'électeur a le sentiment d'avoir gagné ou perdu ses élections. Sans revisiter la croyance populaire, cet article est le premier qui démontre

⁴⁵ Cette question est très intéressante, mais serait encore mieux que les études à venir posent également la question aux abstentionnistes sur le gagnant principal de l'élection. Ou encore, on pourrait poser la question à tout le monde quant au gagnant « principal » (par exemple, « Selon vous, qui est le principal gagnant de l'élection? ») et ensuite, poser la question concernant leur parti.

empiriquement que le citoyen qui a voté pour un parti qui forme le gouvernement a effectivement tendance à se définir comme ayant gagné l'élection.

La deuxième partie de l'article se penche sur l'impact des résultats électoraux au niveau de la circonscription en se concentrant sur le cas canadien. Le Tableau 4.7 confirme le fait de voter pour le gagnant au niveau national est suffisant pour se considérer comme un gagnant. Même lorsqu'on perd au niveau de la circonscription, les électeurs se disent gagnant 98% du temps s'ils ont voté pour le parti formant le gouvernement au niveau national. Ce résultat suggère que l'impact du local est faible. Toutefois, on peut se poser la question suivante : une victoire au niveau local peut-elle compenser pour une défaite nationale et procurer un sentiment de victoire aux électeurs?

Pour y répondre, il faut comparer la proportion de citoyens qui se disent eux-mêmes gagnant lorsqu'ils ont perdu au niveau national et local avec ceux qui ont perdu au niveau national mais gagné au niveau local. La seule différence entre ces deux groupes consiste au fait que le second a gagné au niveau de la circonscription. Les deux dernières colonnes du Tableau 4.7 illustrent que la proportion de gagnants est plus élevée (d'environ 10 points de %) chez ceux qui ont gagné au niveau local. Cela suggère une certaine pertinence d'une victoire locale dans la perception subjective que les citoyens ont d'avoir gagné ou non l'élection. Les analyses de régressions logistiques au Tableau suivant démontrent que cette constatation descriptive était bel et bien robuste. En regardant le coefficient « only elected in district » qui est comparé avec la catégorie de référence « not elected at any level », on constate que ces électeurs sont significativement plus susceptibles de répondre qu'ils ont gagné l'élection. Ce résultat amène un contraste intéressant par

rapport au Chapitre 3. Alors que je démontre qu'il n'y a pas de lien entre une victoire locale et la satisfaction envers la démocratie, j'illustre au Chapitre 4 que le sentiment subjectif de victoire est affecté. Cela soulève notamment la question des mesures et il faut rappeler que mes deux variables dépendantes sont différentes (la satisfaction avec la démocratie est notamment beaucoup plus large que simplement le sentiment de victoire ou défaite) et que ces deux résultats ne se contredisent pas mais offrent plutôt des perspectives différentes.

Les deux derniers articles de la thèse analysent un comportement qui a été défini par la littérature comme étant intimement local : le vote stratégique. Après tout, en système pluralitaire, l'électeur n'a qu'un seul vote et il l'utilise au niveau de sa circonscription. La chose est évidemment différente lorsque l'électeur peut voter pour une liste au niveau national, mais je me concentre sur le vote stratégique en contexte d'un système pluralitaire.

Le cinquième article s'intéresse à l'impact de la polarisation perçue sur la propension à voter stratégiquement. Pour ce faire, j'utilise les données des trois élections canadiennes du projet MEDW, ce qui est tout à propos pour deux raisons. D'une part, les indicateurs inclus dans les enquêtes électorales sont idéaux pour mesurer le vote stratégique (on mesure les préférences pour les partis en plus de pouvoir trancher en cas d'égalité plutôt que de trancher aléatoirement, on mesure les perceptions des chances de l'emporter au niveau de la circonscription et une vague post-électorale permet d'avoir le vote rapporté). D'autre part, l'hétérogénéité des cas (Ontario 2011, Québec 2012, Ontario 2015, Québec 2015 et Colombie-Britannique 2015) permet d'analyser une variété de contextes.

À partir du schéma théorique de la Figure 5.1, je dérive plusieurs hypothèses à tester sur les électeurs qui ont des incitatifs à voter stratégiquement. Essentiellement, la polarisation entre les partis viables devrait avoir un impact important sur la propension à voter stratégiquement. D'une part, une plus grande polarisation entre les partis viables augmente la distance idéologique entre le parti le plus éloigné et l'option stratégique et, d'autre part, réduit la distance idéologique entre le parti préféré et l'option stratégique. Les résultats confirment ces hypothèses et les effets sont assez importants. Par exemple, si on prend une augmentation de -1 à +1 écart-type par rapport à la moyenne de la distance idéologique entre le parti préféré et l'option stratégique, la probabilité qu'un électeur vote stratégiquement passe de 50% à 38%.

Le sixième et dernier article propose un cadrage un peu plus différent des autres manuscrits au sens où il dévie du niveau local pour examiner s'il existe des considérations nationales qui influenceraient le vote stratégique des électeurs. Le cas étudié est l'élection canadienne fédérale de 2015 avec les données du projet MEDW. Ce cas est particulièrement intéressant puisqu'il s'agit d'un contexte de dilemme de coordination où les trois partis ont chacun été en tête dans les sondages nationaux au cours de la campagne électorale. De plus, l'enquête incluait une question à savoir si l'électeur préfère un gouvernement minoritaire, majoritaire, ou si cela ne fait pas de différence. Je me concentre sur cette considération nationale et son impact sur la propension à voter stratégiquement ou non.

Je procède de deux manières très différentes pour illustrer que les préférences envers les gouvernements minoritaires ont une influence sur le vote stratégique. D'une part, j'ai isolé les électeurs qui perçoivent leur parti préféré comme n'étant pas le plus susceptible de gagner le plus de sièges au niveau national, qui sont stratégiques et qui préfèrent les gouvernements minoritaires. Il s'agit de 20% des électeurs stratégiques, soit 3% des électeurs. D'autre part, j'ai procédé à une régression logistique où la variable dépendante est le fait de voter stratégiquement ou non et où la variable indépendante d'intérêt est la préférence envers un gouvernement minoritaire. Même en contrôlant notamment pour la viabilité du candidat au niveau de la circonscription, avoir une préférence pour un gouvernement minoritaire a un effet positif et significatif sur le fait de voter stratégiquement. Concrètement, un électeur qui préfère les gouvernements minoritaires a 17.5% de chances de voter stratégiquement contrairement à 12.6% s'il n'a pas de telle préférence – une augmentation de 5 points de pourcentage. Somme toute, en ramenant mes résultats dans une perspective locale puisque j'ai dû contrôler pour la perception des chances de l'emporter des candidats dans la circonscription pour isoler le vote stratégique national, j'en conclus que le vote stratégique ne semble pas être exclusivement local et il faut tenir compte des considérations nationales si on veut produire des analyses plus complètes. Toutefois, mes résultats indiquent que le niveau de la circonscription est clairement plus important que les considérations nationales.

Au-delà des six contributions scientifiques qu'offre ma thèse, celle-ci constitue en quelque sorte un plaidoyer pour une intégration plus systématique de la politique au niveau local en science

politique et pour une utilisation plus fréquente d'une perspective citoyenne. J'ai démontré la grande pertinence de la politique au niveau de la circonscription aux yeux des citoyens. J'ai noté que 40% des électeurs qui ont une préférence particulière pour un candidat local vont délaissé leur parti préféré au profit d'une candidature locale. J'ai finalement illustré l'impact de la politique locale sur la satisfaction avec la démocratie, le sentiment d'avoir gagné ou perdu son élection et le vote stratégique. Mais qu'est-ce que cela implique pour les futures recherches? Comment pourrait-on mener encore plus loin la réflexion et les analyses?

Tout d'abord, les questions de recherche posées au Chapitre 1 pourraient être examinées dans une perspective plus comparative que celle présentée. Par exemple, j'aurais pu mener les analyses dans un seul modèle combinant toutes les élections et ajouter des variables dichotomiques pour capturer les effets contextuels des différents pays pour chacune des deux variables dépendantes. Dans tous les cas, il faudra plus d'élections dans différents contextes, notamment institutionnels, pour comparer l'impact sur la politique au niveau local et notamment l'importance accordée par les citoyens aux résultats dans leur circonscription. La question du mode de scrutin est évidemment centrale, mais la magnitude des circonscriptions est également pertinente. En particulier, une comparaison féconde pour les futures recherches consisterait à analyser des cas où les circonscriptions sont uninominales comme le Canada ou la France avec des cas où les circonscriptions sont plurinominales avec listes ouvertes comme l'Irlande ou la Belgique.

Dans le premier article, je conclus que les résultats électoraux au niveau de la circonscription sont assez importants aux yeux des citoyens, plus ce que l'on croit généralement. La suite logique serait

de distinguer les individus pour qui les résultats locaux sont importants et examiner si l'importance attribuée au local modère l'impact de certains déterminants du choix électoral des électeurs. Prenons par exemple la littérature sur l'impact des leaders (McAllister, 2007). En fait, peut-être qu'il est encore plus important d'étudier l'impact des leaders chez les gens qui attribuent peu d'importance au niveau local et, au contraire, leur impact serait significativement moins important chez ceux qui accordent plus d'importance au niveau local. Le même raisonnement s'applique à l'impact de l'identité partisane, conçue de manière nationale, sur le choix électoral. En somme, il faut prendre en compte l'hétérogénéité des électeurs quant à leurs attitudes sur la politique au niveau de la circonscription.

Le Chapitre 2 soulève une question plus générale qui avait déjà été abordée par Blais et al. (2003) qui étudiaient l'élection canadienne de 2000. Un des résultats marquants des auteurs est que le fait d'avoir une préférence pour un candidat local a été un facteur décisif pour 5% des Canadiens. Toutefois, ils mentionnent qu'il y a un écart entre le Québec et le reste du Canada. En fait, alors que le candidat local était décisif pour 6% des électeurs hors-Québec, ce l'était pour seulement 2% des Québécois. Sur cet aspect, le Québec apparaît donc comme étant trois fois moins porté à intégrer le local dans ses décisions. Dans le Chapitre 2, les résultats qui se fondent sur des données d'une élection qui a eu lieu 15 ans plus tard que celle étudiée par Blais et al. (2003) illustrent également que le Québec est moins local dans ses préférences et comportements politiques. D'une part, près de 60% des électeurs au Québec n'ont pas de préférence pour un candidat local alors que cette proportion est de 50% en Colombie-Britannique et 47% en Ontario (voir le Tableau 2.1). L'écart de plus de 10 points n'est pas mince. D'autre part, chez ceux qui ont des préférences pour un candidat local, mais que celle-ci n'est pas la même que pour le parti, les Québécois sont

d'avantage portés à voter pour le parti que le candidat que les électeurs hors-Québec. Chez ce type d'électeur québécois, 35% d'entre eux vont opter pour le candidat local contrairement à 42% et 45% des électeurs de la Colombie-Britannique et de l'Ontario (voir le Tableau 2.2). Encore une fois, un écart qui est près de 10 points. Somme toute, mes travaux viennent confirmer ce qui pouvait être une suspicion et amène la question suivante : pourquoi la politique au niveau de la circonscription est-elle moins importante au Québec par rapport au reste du Canada?

Une hypothèse envisageable serait le fait que les électeurs québécois soient davantage affiliés à des partis politiques, ce qui ferait en sorte qu'ils pensent en termes nationaux. Un électeur qui se dit libéral va voter pour le parti libéral, peu importe ce qui se passe au niveau de la circonscription. Or, si on regarde la question qui cible l'identification partisane dans les données du projet MEDW (Canada 2015), on note que 34% des Québécois se disent proches d'un parti politique fédérale. En comparaison, 34% et 37% des électeurs de la Colombie-Britannique et de l'Ontario font de même. Ce n'est donc pas la proportion de partisans qui fait en sorte que le Québec est moins local que le reste du Canada. Peut-être alors que les Québécois s'identifient de manière plus intense à leur parti. Encore une fois, cette piste est à écarter, car il n'y a pas de différence substantielle – comme les deux provinces du reste du Canada, près de 60% des Québécoise se disent « somewhat close » de leur parti.

Une autre hypothèse à prendre au sérieux concerne la mobilisation. Plus précisément, le contact en personne par un politicien pourrait faire en sorte que les électeurs soient davantage concernés par la politique au niveau de la circonscription et surtout intégrer leur préférence pour un candidat

local dans leur calcul électoral. Utilisant les mêmes données pour le Canada de 2015, on peut examiner la proportion d'électeurs québécois contactés en personne par rapport au reste du Canada. Les différences sont marquantes : alors que seulement 11% des Québécois disent avoir été contactés en personne, cette proportion s'élève à 22% en Colombie-Britannique et 33% en Ontario, soit le double et le triple. De plus, il faudrait regarder si les circonscriptions sont en moyenne plus grandes au Québec, car nous savons que les citoyens dans les plus grandes circonscriptions sont moins contactés par les politiciens et sont moins satisfaits de la démocratie (Daoust, 2017). Bref, le contact politique *personnel* (d'un candidat local) est une piste intéressante, mais il faudrait une analyse beaucoup plus systématique et comparative entre le Québec et le reste du Canada.

Dans les Chapitres 5 et 6, j'analyse le vote stratégique et ses déterminants pour conclure qu'il y avait des considérations locales et nationales qui jouent. Tel qu'anticipé, la variable contrôle liée à l'attachement partisan décrivait l'effet suivant : les électeurs qui se disent proches d'un parti votent moins stratégiquement. Toutefois, la littérature se penche depuis quelques années sur l'idée de partisannerie négative, c'est-à-dire d'avoir une très mauvaise opinion d'une option politique au point de ne vraiment pas vouloir voter pour celle-ci (Medeiros et Noel, 2014; McGregor et al., 2015) et son effet s'avère très important sur certains comportements politiques dont le choix électoral. Mais jusqu'à ce jour, aucune étude n'a intégré la partisannerie négative comme un déterminant du vote stratégique.

Pourtant, l'idée de voter pour un deuxième (ou troisième) choix dans le but de bloquer une pire option est intimement « négative » car on veut s'assurer de battre « la pire option » au profit d'une « moins pire ». En ce sens, on pourrait développer un cadre théorique qui stipulerait qu'un individu qui n'aime vraiment pas une certaine option et qu'il perçoit cette option comme étant susceptible de l'emporter aurait davantage d'incitatifs à voter stratégiquement que quelqu'un qui n'a pas d'identification négative. D'une part, si l'option n'est pas aimée en raison des politiques qu'elle prône, alors l'électeur a, suivant une perspective Downsienne, des incitatifs à voter stratégiquement en vertu d'un calcul coûts-bénéfices. D'autre part, s'il n'aime pas l'option politique pour ce qu'elle représente, alors l'électeur pourrait vouloir voter stratégiquement pour des raisons non pas rationnelles, mais plutôt psychologiques, pour bloquer ce que représente l'option non-désirée. Il y a déjà des données pertinentes disponibles pour tester l'impact de la partisanerie négative sur le vote stratégique et il y aurait lieu, dans de futures recherches, que cette hypothèse fasse l'objet d'une analyse à part entière.

Outre ces aspects qu'on pourrait intégrer afin de pousser l'analyse plus loin, mes résultats suggèrent également des réflexions plus larges. Celles-ci ont notamment trait à la démarche méthodologique à employer pour étudier le local et à l'impact de mes recherches sur le mode de scrutin.

Au niveau méthodologique, j'ai adopté une démarche qui s'appuyait exclusivement sur des données de sondages, ce qui comporte des avantages, mais aussi des désavantages, notamment en ce qui a trait aux prétentions de causalité. Toutefois, un pluralisme méthodologique pourrait être

un atout : des expériences de terrain ou encore par sondage pourraient convaincre un autre public, qui valorise davantage les expériences, que la politique au niveau local est importante à étudier.

Une possible étude pourrait se consacrer à l'effet qu'un élu tienne compte ou non de l'opinion de sa circonscription dans ses comportements sur les citoyens. Ceux qui ont une conception de la représentation politique où l'élu doit représenter le plus précisément possible l'opinion de sa circonscription pourraient être grandement influencés par son comportement. Une expérience par sondage est tout à fait appropriée pour isoler l'impact de cet aspect. Il faudrait composer une vignette très courte où on décrit un élu de différentes manières et où l'on mentionne dans un premier traitement que le député votera de manière à refléter sa circonscription sur un projet de loi particulier. Dans un deuxième traitement, on mentionne que l'élu votera de manière contraire à l'opinion de ses électeurs. On mesure par la suite les préférences des répondants quant à l'élu (à quel point il est un bon élu, la probabilité de voter pour lui, etc.) qui serviront de variables dépendantes. Si les électeurs estiment que le député doit défendre les opinions de la circonscription, alors le groupe qui reçoit l'information où l'élu vote à l'encontre de l'opinion majoritaire dans sa circonscription devrait recevoir une appréciation moins bonne. De plus, même s'il y a un effet, il faudra comparer son ampleur avec d'autres composantes de la représentation. Par exemple, est-ce que le fait de représenter l'opinion de sa circonscription est plus ou moins important, aux yeux des citoyens, que d'être loyal au parti? Est-ce que c'est aussi important que de voter sur une loi avec sa propre conscience? Cette recherche pourrait démontrer que la politique au niveau de la circonscription est importante pour les citoyens et les élites, et ce, avec un devis méthodologique différent que ce que j'ai utilisé.

Une autre approche méthodologique pour étudier la politique au niveau local pourrait se fonder sur la *regression discontinuity design*. Dans la revue de la littérature, j'ai mentionné que cette méthode était très utile pour estimer l'avantage des candidats sortants (Kendall et Rekkas, 2012). On pourrait également l'appliquer dans d'autres contextes où il y a certains « seuils » clés qui affectent la politique au niveau local.

Par exemple, il existe un seuil qui permet aux associations politiques locales d'obtenir le remboursement de 50% des dépenses électorales. Ce seuil est de 15% des votes exprimés dans une circonscription, peu importe les résultats électoraux du parti au niveau national. Évidemment, le remboursement de la moitié des dépenses électorales ou non est une composante essentielle dans la planification stratégique de l'équipe locale d'un candidat. On peut très bien anticiper théoriquement qu'un parti qui obtient un remboursement de 50% de ses dépenses électorales à une élection donnée (au temps t) fera mieux à l'élection suivante (au temps $t+1$) qu'un parti qui n'obtient pas de remboursement, notamment parce qu'il aura davantage de ressources et moins de chances d'avoir une dette à rembourser. On pourrait utiliser des données observationnelles et regarder l'impact de franchir ou non le seuil du 15% sur la différence entre les résultats obtenus au temps t par rapport au temps $t+1$.

Une régression qui inclut la discontinuité à 15% obtenu au temps t pourrait isoler l'impact causal de franchir ce seuil sur les résultats électoraux. On peut stipuler que ceux qui sont légèrement en dessous du seuil de 15% (par exemple, un parti qui obtiendrait 14,9%) et ceux qui sont légèrement au-dessus (par exemple, 15,1%) sont distincts de manière aléatoire. On pourrait donc régresser la

proportion des votes obtenus au temps $t+1$ sur la proportion des votes obtenus au temps t en estimant deux pentes différentes de chaque côté du seuil de 15%.

Finalement, un autre aspect au niveau du financement des partis politiques au Québec mérite une pleine attention pour un chercheur qui estime que la politique au niveau de la circonscription est importante. En 2013, le don maximal d'un électeur est passé de 1000\$ à 100\$ et en échange les partis politiques reçoivent une somme plus élevée des fonds publics en fonction du nombre de votes reçus. Ce changement est lourd de sens pour les associations locales. Par exemple, une association qui trouve 100 citoyens qui donnent le montant maximum par année verra son financement divisé par 10 (puisque la limite est dix fois plus petite qu'avant les changements). Cependant, l'association nationale des partis politiques recevra beaucoup plus d'argent. En bref, la nouvelle loi électorale sur le financement des partis politiques creuse l'écart entre les ressources financières que possède le niveau local par rapport au niveau national d'un parti politique. Il n'est pas impossible que ce débalancement vienne de pair avec une centralisation plus forte du niveau national des partis politiques qui pourrait avoir un pouvoir décisionnel plus grand sur la politique au niveau de la circonscription tel que sur les stratégies à adopter ou même les candidatures à présenter.

Une manière d'analyser la situation pourrait être de conduire des entrevues au sein des dirigeants des partis politiques de même que des acteurs clés d'associations locales. Toutefois, comme ce contexte procure un contexte de « quasi-expérience » où il y a eu une intervention externe, on pourrait utiliser une autre approche, qui pourrait être complémentaire, en examinant si le niveau

national redistribue l'argent de manière à refléter les ressources financières des associations locales au niveau d'*avant* les changements à la loi électorale ou s'il adopte d'autres stratégies telles que cibler des circonscriptions clés et y investir beaucoup plus d'argent qu'ailleurs. Le test serait concrètement de regarder la distribution des dépenses électorales par circonscription. Si la distribution est significativement différente de ce qui prévalait avant la nouvelle loi, alors il y a aura bel et bien eu un impact sur la stratégie d'allocation des ressources au détriment des associations locales des partis politiques.

Une recherche qui s'attarderait à l'impact de la loi sur le financement des partis politiques n'est toutefois pas la seule avenue de futures recherches en lien avec les politiques publiques. Mes recherches sur la politique au niveau de la circonscription font également écho au débat sur la réforme du mode de scrutin, qui est notamment d'actualité au Canada – il y a eu de vastes consultations publiques dans l'optique de le modifier au niveau fédéral et la même campagne s'opère actuellement par le gouvernement de Colombie-Britannique. Un des messages clés de la présente thèse est que la politique au niveau de la circonscription est importante aux yeux des citoyens et que cela se reflète dans leurs attitudes et comportements politiques. En ce sens, j'estime qu'il y a lieu d'être prudent lorsqu'on propose un mode de scrutin (semi)-proportionnel où l'attache territoriale des députés devient moins importante. Au niveau descriptif, les citoyens accordent plus d'importance aux résultats électoraux dans la circonscription que ce que la croyance populaire laisse croire. En conséquence, élargir les circonscriptions pourrait compliquer la représentation politique d'une population plus hétéroclite et faisant face à différents enjeux.

De plus, un des arguments communs contre le mode de scrutin pluralitaire actuel est qu'il procure des incitatifs aux électeurs pour voter de manière stratégique, ce qui serait contre l'intuition démocratique dont je parlais en introduction. Mes recherches démontrent qu'il existe bien un vote stratégique, mais j'illustre également que la proportion de ce type d'électeur n'est pas plus élevée que dans d'autres types de mode de scrutin.

Pour les chercheurs qui croyaient déjà en l'importance d'étudier la politique au niveau de la circonscription, ma thèse vient empiriquement fonder leur postulat à l'effet que les citoyens considèrent ce niveau comme étant important. Pour les chercheurs qui n'intègrent pas la dimension locale dans leurs analyses des élections, mes résultats démontrent qu'ils passent à côté d'une dynamique qui est importante pour les citoyens et qui influence notamment le choix électoral.

Finalement, outre le niveau national qui est déjà abondamment étudié et le niveau local qui doit être davantage analysé pour obtenir des analyses plus complètes, il n'est pas impossible que l'étude de certaines dynamiques régionales soit également féconde. Par exemple, dans la province de Québec, la région de Québec semble voter de manière assez monolithique pour certains partis plutôt que d'autres (Daoust, 2017). L'île de Montréal ou encore ses banlieues sont aussi l'objet de certaines tendances intéressantes qui pourraient porter certains chercheurs à intégrer cette dimension régionale dans leurs analyses. Il y a lieu effectivement lieu de se demander si la dynamique d'une région n'est que le fruit de la somme des dynamiques locales ou s'il y a des

éléments plus macros qui influencent la politique de chacune des circonscriptions d'une région particulière.

Je pense que plusieurs chercheurs en science politique souhaitent obtenir des résultats novateurs qui expliquent davantage que les théories précédentes. Cela est tout à fait souhaitable et on ne peut que s'en réjouir lorsque cela arrive. Toutefois, la découverte de résultats qui permettent d'amener un nouvel éclairage, même s'ils expliquent un phénomène dans une mesure moindre, est également souhaitable. Possiblement par peur d'obtenir de « trop petits effets » ou, « pire », des résultats nuls (considérant le biais largement documenté contre les publications aux résultats nuls en sciences sociales), des avenues de recherche comme la politique au niveau de la circonscription sont délaissées. Pourtant, des résultats comme ceux du Chapitre 1 où je confirme que le niveau local est moins important que le niveau national (mais de peu) sont loin d'être inutiles et font progresser notre connaissance. À même titre que de grandes découvertes, les plus petits effets et les résultats nuls ont la qualité de réduire la confusion entretenue entre différentes écoles de pensées. Adhérant à la maxime de Francis Bacon voulant que « la vérité sort plus facilement de l'erreur que de la confusion », je considère qu'il faut valoriser davantage cette façon de faire de la science.

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Annexe A. Chapitre 1.

Tableau A.1. Making Electoral Democracy Work datasets

Elections	<i>N</i>
Switzerland	
Lucerne regional	874
Zurich regional	834
France	
IDF national	754
PACA national	721
Germany	
Lower Saxony national	760
Lower Saxony regional	822
Bavaria national	4451
Bavaria regional	4468
Canada	
Ontario regional	881
Quebec regional	725
Quebec national	1317
Ontario national	1441
British Columbia national	1329
Total	19,377

Question wording

Age

In what year were you born?

Sex

Are you...?

– A male

– A female

Education

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

[Different categories in different countries]

Rural

What best describes the place where you live?

- A big city
- A suburb or outskirts of a big city
- A town or small city
- A village
- The countryside

Children

How many people living in your household are under the age of 18?

Attachment

On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means ‘not attached at all’ and 10 means ‘very strongly attached’, how attached do you feel to your [COUNTRY/REGION/MUNICIPALITY]?

Importance of local outcome

On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you ‘don’t care at all’ and 10 means that you ‘care a lot’, how much do you care who is elected in your local district?

Importance of national outcome

On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you ‘don’t care at all’ and 10 means that you ‘care a lot’, how much do you care which [party/parties] will form the next government?

Annexe B. Chapitre 2.

Table B.1. The determinants of local candidate preference

	Congruent preference b/se	Incongruent preference b/se
Age	1.743*** (0.229)	1.641*** (0.361)
Female	-0.044 (0.079)	-0.123 (0.131)
College	-0.002 (0.080)	0.112 (0.131)
Interest	1.924*** (0.207)	1.510*** (0.318)
Information	-0.133 (0.237)	-0.537 (0.351)
Conservative	0.273** (0.100)	-0.594** (0.208)
NDP	0.385*** (0.106)	0.041 (0.202)
Green	-0.462*** (0.129)	0.945*** (0.176)
Bloc Québécois	-1.574** (0.503)	1.017** (0.392)
Quebec	-0.292** (0.099)	-0.480** (0.185)
British Columbia	-0.204* (0.093)	-0.063 (0.160)
Constant	-2.625*** (0.294)	-3.375*** (0.469)
<i>N</i>	3258	3258
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.072	0.072

Note: Standard errors in parentheses

The reference category for the dependent variable is “no preference for a local candidat”

** $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$*

Annexe C. Chapitre 3.

Table C.1. Datasets

Election	Year	Government	N
CES datasets			
Canada	1997	Majority	3884
Canada	2000	Majority	3620
Canada	2004	Minority	4275
Canada	2006	Minority	4032
Canada	2008	Minority	4429
MEDW datasets			
Ontario	2011	Minority	1012
Quebec	2012	Minority	979
British-Columbia (Canada)			1879
Ontario (Canada)	2015	Majority	1891
Quebec (Canada)			1849

Table C.2. Separate election results

	Canada 2015 Majority	Canada 1997 Majority	Canada 2000, Majority	Quebec 2012 Minority	Ontario 2011 Minority	Canada 2004 Minority	Canada 2006 Minority	Canada 2008 Minority
Pre Satisfaction	0.51***	0.44***	0.50***	0.49***	0.64***	0.48***	0.38***	0.46***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Age	0.08***	-0.04	-0.04	0.19**	0.07	0.03	0.02	-0.08
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.28)
Women	-0.01	-0.01	0.00	-0.02	0.00	-0.01	-0.02***	-0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education	0.05*	0.04	0.01	-0.11*	0.06	0.11***	0.04*	0.07**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Turnout	0.02*	0.01	-0.02	0.07*	-0.00	-0.01	0.02*	-0.03
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Win Local	-0.01		-0.03*	-0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01
	(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Win National	0.10***	0.06***	0.12***	0.07***	0.07***	0.08***	0.06***	0.03***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Constant	0.24***	0.35***	0.30***	0.27***	0.13**	0.24***	0.38***	0.33***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Observations	3934	2952	2677	694	868	2955	6038	2284
R ²	0.355	0.282	0.329	0.324	0.472	0.312	0.216	0.263

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Annexe D. Chapitre 5.

Table D.1. Score of parties included in the analyses

Election	Vote share (Real)	Vote share (Sample)	Avg. expectations of chances of winning according to respondents
2011 Ontario (provincial)			
OLP	38%	39%	5.9
PC	35%	37%	5.6
ONPD	23%	21%	3.8
GPO	3%	4%	0.9
2012 Quebec election (provincial)			
PQ	32%	34%	5.7
PLQ	31%	26%	4.6
CAQ	27%	27%	4.6
QS	6%	10%	2.1
ON	2%	2%	0.8
PVQ	1%	2%	1.2
2015 Ontario (federal)			
CLP	45%	45%	5.9
CPC	35%	31%	5.4
NPD	17%	20%	4.5
GPC	3%	3%	1.5
2015 British Columbia (federal)			
CLP	35%	34%	5.6
CPC	30%	28%	5
NPD	26%	31%	5
GPC	8%	7%	2.6
2015 Quebec (federal)			
CLP	36%	33%	5.4
NPD	25%	25%	5.7
BQ	19%	22%	4
CPC	16%	17%	3.6
GPC	2%	3%	1.5

2011 Ontario election

After the 2011 Ontario provincial election, the incumbent OLP Premier, Dalton McGuinty, was re-elected with 38% of the votes and 50% of seats. The PCO formed the official opposition with

35% of the votes and 35% of seats. The ONDP came third with 23% of the vote and 16% of seats, while the GPO received 3% of the vote and no seat.

2012 Quebec election

In the 2012, the incumbent PLQ premier, Jean Charest, called an early election in the midst of a social conflict involving student mobilization and corruption scandals. The PQ won the election with 32% of the vote and 43% of the seats, forming a minority government. The closest opponents were the PLQ, which received 31% of the vote and 40% of seats. The CAQ came third with 27% of the vote and 15% of seats, and lastly QS received 6% of the vote and less than 1% of seats. Finally, the ON and the PVQ obtained respectively 2% and 3% of votes but failed to win any seats in the Quebec legislature.

2015 Canada election

In the 2015 Canadian federal election, incumbent Prime Minister Stephen Harper of the CPC lost against the LPC and its leader Justin Trudeau. The CPC received 32% of the vote and 29% of seats. The LPC won with 39% of the vote and 54% of seats. The score of the party is mainly due to its landslide victory in Ontario where it received 45% of the vote and 66% of seats. The BQ, which only competes in Quebec, came third with 5% of the national vote (19% in the province) and 3% of seats. The NDP obtained 24.2% of the vote and 19.7% of seats. Finally, the GPC obtained 3% of the vote and one seat (their leader, Elizabeth May, in British Columbia). No other party received more than 1% of the vote at the national level.

Table D.2. Regressions with weights

	(Model 3)	(Model 4)
Polarisation between viable parties	0.18*	0.11
	(0.07)	(0.09)
Preference for viable parties (favourite v/s least favourite)		0.57***
		(0.07)
Preference for favourite parties (non-viable v/s viable)		-0.55***
		(0.06)
Age	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Female	-0.04	-0.04
	(0.16)	(0.18)
University degree	0.43*	0.42*
	(0.17)	(0.19)
Political sophistication	-0.05	-0.03
	(0.07)	(0.07)
Partisan	-0.48**	-0.25
	(0.17)	(0.19)
Difference in perceived chances	0.22***	0.28***
	(0.03)	(0.04)
Survey fixed effects	YES	YES
Constant	-2.02***	-1.04
	(0.51)	(0.56)
N	757	757
Pseudo R^2	0.072	0.200

*Note: Entries are coefficients from a logit regression predicting the probability of non-viable party supporters to cast a strategic vote (similar to Table 3). Standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.*

Table D.3. Regressions without controls

	(Model 3)	(Model 4)
Polarisation between viable parties	0.16*	0.07
	(0.07)	(0.08)
Preference for viable parties (favourite v/s least favourite)		0.51***
		(0.06)
Preference for favourite parties (non-viable v/s viable)		-0.48***
		(0.05)
Constant	-0.62***	0.47*
	(0.17)	(0.23)
Observations	757	757
Pseudo R^2	0.005	0.127

*Note: Entries are coefficients from a logit regression predicting the probability of non-viable party supporters to cast a strategic vote (similar to Table 3). Standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.*

Table D.4. Regressions with alternative measure of viability

	(Model 3)	(Model 4)
Polarisation between viable parties	0.19**	0.09
	(0.06)	(0.08)
Preference for viable parties (favourite v/s least favourite)		0.56***
		(0.06)
Preference for favourite parties (non-viable v/s viable)		-0.48***
		(0.05)
Age	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Female	0.04	-0.13
	(0.17)	(0.19)
University degree	0.32	0.41*
	(0.18)	(0.20)
Political sophistication	0.15*	0.22**
	(0.07)	(0.08)
Partisan	-0.30	-0.12
	(0.18)	(0.21)
Difference in perceived chances	0.10**	0.22***
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Survey fixed effects	YES	YES
Constant	-2.37***	-2.29***
	(0.58)	(0.65)
Observations	606	606
Pseudo R^2	0.035	0.206

*Note: Entries are coefficients from a logit regression predicting the probability of non-viable party supporters to cast a strategic vote. Standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.*

Table D.5. Regressions with left-right placements instead of party like/dislike scores

	(Model 1)	(Model 2)
Polarisation between viable parties	0.19**	0.09
	(0.06)	(0.08)
Proximity to favourite viable party – Proximity to least favourite viable party		0.56***
		(0.06)
Proximity to favourite non-viable party – Proximity to favourite viable party		-0.48***
		(0.05)
Age	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Female	0.04	-0.13
	(0.17)	(0.19)
University degree	0.32	0.41*
	(0.18)	(0.20)
Political sophistication	0.15*	0.22**
	(0.07)	(0.08)
Partisan	-0.30	-0.12
	(0.18)	(0.21)
Difference in perceived chances	0.10**	0.22***
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Survey fixed effects	YES	YES
Constant	-2.37***	-2.29***
	(0.58)	(0.65)
Observations	606	606
Pseudo R^2	0.035	0.206

*Note: Entries are coefficients from a logit regression predicting the probability of non-viable party supporters to cast a strategic vote (similar to Table 3). Standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.*

Table D.6. Regressions without Quebec

	(Model 1)	(Model 2)
Polarisation between viable parties	0.16	0.02
	(0.10)	(0.11)
Preference for viable parties (favourite v/s least favourite)		0.59***
		(0.08)
Preference for favourite parties (non-viable v/s viable)		-0.51***
		(0.07)
Age	0.00	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Female	-0.08	-0.17
	(0.19)	(0.21)
University degree	0.56**	0.57*
	(0.20)	(0.22)
Political sophistication	-0.04	-0.03
	(0.08)	(0.08)
Partisan	-0.28	-0.01
	(0.20)	(0.23)
Difference in perceived chances	0.25***	0.30***
	(0.04)	(0.05)
Survey fixed effects (without Quebec)	YES	YES
Constant	-2.24***	-1.24
	(0.59)	(0.65)
N	495	495
Pseudo R^2	0.080	0.203

Note: Entries are coefficients from a logit regression predicting the probability of non-viable party supporters to cast a strategic vote (similar to Table 3). Standard errors are in parentheses.

** $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.*

Table D.7. Questions used in the surveys

Party Liking

Please rate each of the following political parties in [province] on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you really dislike that party and 10 means that you really like that party.

Expectations

Please rate the chances of each party's candidate winning the seat in your local riding on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means no chance at all and 10 means certain to win.

Partisanship

Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular political party in [province]?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Education

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- Less than secondary school
- Graduated from secondary school
- Certificate or diploma from community college, CEGEP.
- Completed some university study, but no degree
- University certificate or diploma below bachelor level
- Graduate or professional degree above bachelor level

Vote choice

Which party did you vote for?

Left-right placement

In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place each of the party in [province] on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 means far left and 10 means far right?

In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on this scale on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 means far left and 10 means far right?

Political sophistication

Canada 2015

Below there are names of four parties and pictures of eight different people. Four of the people are party leaders in the FEDERAL election, one from each party. Match leaders with Conservative Party of Canada/New Democratic Party of Canada/Liberal Party of Canada/Green Party of Canada/Bloc Québécois.

Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogans?

- Protect our economy

- Ready for change
- It's time for real change
- A Canada that works. Together.

Ontario 2011

Below there are names of four parties and pictures of eight different people. Four of the people are party leaders in the FEDERAL election, one from each party. Match leaders with Conservative Party of Ontario/New Democratic Party of Ontario/Liberal Party of Ontario.

Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogans?

- Forward together
- It's time for change in Ontario
- You can choose the change you want

Quebec 2012

Below there are names of four parties and pictures of eight different people. Four of the people are party leaders in the FEDERAL election, one from each party. Match leaders with Parti libéral du Québec/Parti Québécois/Québec solidaire.

Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogans?

- A nous de choisir
- Debout
- Pour le Québec
- C'est assez, c'est le temps que ça change

Annexe E. Chapitre 6.

Table E.1. Attitudes toward minority government

	(1)
	b/se
Age	0.010***
	(0.003)
Education	0.095
(University)	(0.087)
Female	-0.281**
	(0.086)
Preferred party	
(ref=Conservatives)	
NDP	1.432***
	(0.136)
Liberals	0.960***
	(0.132)
Greens	1.777***
	(0.144)
Bloc	2.107***
	(0.298)
Political information	1.229***
	(0.230)
Partisanship	0.062
Province (ref=BC)	(0.089)
Quebec	-0.085
	(0.118)
Ontario	-0.134
	(0.104)
Constant	-3.215***
	(0.252)
<i>N</i>	2992
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.069

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Political Information Assessment

Below there are names of four parties and pictures of eight different people. Four of the people are party leaders in the FEDERAL election, one from each party. Match leaders with Conservative Party of Canada; New Democratic of Canada; Liberal Party of Canada; Green party of Canada.

Conservative Party of Canada: Picture of Stephen Harper

New Democratic Party of Canada: Picture of Thomas Mulcair

Liberal Party of Canada: Picture of Justin Trudeau

Green Party of Canada: Picture of Elizabeth May

[Quebec Only] Bloc Québécois: Picture of Gilles Duceppe