

# **Making Sense of the Affinity Vote in the 2021 Canadian Federal Election**

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**30 May 2022**

# Research Question

**Are Canadians more likely to vote for a candidate with whom they share a specific identity characteristic with respect to gender, race, Indigeneity, sexual orientation or immigrant status?**

# Introduction

- ▶ **Political actors, scholars and civil society organizations recognize the importance of diversity in political decision-making bodies for effective representation, policy outputs and democratic legitimacy.**
- ▶ **Canada's SMP system gives voters ample opportunity to draw distinctions and formulate vote choice based on local candidates.**

# Affinity Voting in Canada

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- ▶ Race: limited evidence of racial and ethnic affinity voting effects in Canada.
- ▶ Indigenous: some evidence of affinity voting for Indigenous candidates.
- ▶ LGBTQ+: limited research on affinity effects among LGBTQ+ individuals.

# Objectives

**This paper offers a novel contribution to existing scholarship on affinity voting in Canada in that its uniquely large sample size permits us to model affinity voting at the riding level.**

**We estimate the effect of constituents' propensity to vote for a candidate in their riding on the basis of various “affinities” – *i.e.*, shared racial, ethnic or Indigenous identity, immigrant background, gender or sexual orientation – while controlling for both contextual and individual voter characteristics.**

# Data

**We draw from two sources of data related to the 2021 Canadian federal election. The first captures the identity attributes of all registered candidates in each of the federal ridings. The second is a large sample of public opinion data (n= 161,051), which contains sociodemographic characteristics and vote intention information, collected via the Vote Compass instrument.**

# Methods

- ▶ To estimate the effect on vote choice of shared identity attributes between voters and local candidates, we employ a generalized linear model. We group data by electoral district and “stack” respondents. This means our data features every possible voter/party candidate dyad.
- ▶ The DV is the binary outcome, “voted,” which is 1 if the voter cast a ballot and 0 for all others. The IVs in our model indicate a match between voter and candidate on the respective attribute, with “no match” as the reference level. We control for party ID.

# Results: H1 (Gender Affinity)

- ▶ Women are not more likely to vote for a local candidate identifying as a woman.
- ▶ Men are more likely to vote for a male candidate.
- ▶ Non-binary voters are 13 times more likely to vote for a non-binary candidate.

Table 3: GLM Regression Output for binary Match/Mismatch of Attributes

| Dependent variable:                          |                   |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Vote for Candidate                           |                   |
| Effect of match between voter and candidate. |                   |
| Log Odds (SEs)                               |                   |
| Sex                                          |                   |
| Female                                       | -0.088*** (0.022) |
| Male                                         | 0.143*** (0.019)  |
| Non-binary                                   | 2.559** (1.029)   |
| LGB                                          | -0.186 (0.192)    |
| Immigrant                                    | 0.207*** (0.038)  |
| Race                                         |                   |
| Arab                                         | 0.039 (0.292)     |
| Black                                        | 0.232 (0.142)     |
| Chinese                                      | 0.339*** (0.102)  |
| Japanese                                     | -11.118 (229.421) |
| Korean                                       | -0.826 (0.973)    |
| Latin                                        | -0.674* (0.361)   |
| South Asian                                  | 0.125 (0.094)     |
| SE Asian                                     | -10.654 (127.190) |
| West Asian                                   | 1.110** (0.531)   |
| White                                        | 0.052*** (0.018)  |
| Indigenous                                   |                   |
| First Nations                                | 0.475 (0.421)     |
| Inuk                                         | 0.340 (0.872)     |
| Métis                                        | 0.734* (0.397)    |
| Constant                                     | -6.113*** (0.037) |
| Observations                                 | 161,051           |
| Log Likelihood                               | -47,287.920       |
| Akaike Inf. Crit                             | 94,619.840        |
| Bayesian Inf. Crit.                          | 94,839.610        |

Note:

Multilevel regression (fixed effects); individual voters (n = 39962) nested in electoral ridings (n = 326); coefficients need to be exponentiated to determine odd ratios; stacked data, with all hypothetical outcomes tabulated; DV is '1' for vote intention of respondent, and '0' otherwise.  
\* p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

# Results: H2 (Immigrant Affinity)

- ▶ Immigrants are 1.2 times likely to vote for a local candidate who is also an immigrant.

Table 3: GLM Regression Output for binary Match/Mismatch of Attributes

| Dependent variable:                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vote for Candidate                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Effect of match between voter and candidate. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Log Odds (SEs)                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| -----                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Sex                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Female                                       | -0.088*** (0.022)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Male                                         | 0.143*** (0.019)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Non-binary                                   | 2.559** (1.029)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| LGB                                          | -0.186 (0.192)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Immigrant                                    | 0.207*** (0.038)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Race                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Arab                                         | 0.039 (0.292)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Black                                        | 0.232 (0.142)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Chinese                                      | 0.339*** (0.102)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Japanese                                     | -11.118 (229.421)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Korean                                       | -0.826 (0.973)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Latin                                        | -0.674* (0.361)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| South Asian                                  | 0.125 (0.094)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| SE Asian                                     | -10.654 (127.190)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| West Asian                                   | 1.110** (0.531)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| White                                        | 0.052*** (0.018)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Indigenous                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| First Nations                                | 0.475 (0.421)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Inuk                                         | 0.340 (0.872)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Métis                                        | 0.734* (0.397)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Constant                                     | -6.113*** (0.037)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| -----                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Observations                                 | 161,051                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Log Likelihood                               | -47,287.920                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Akaike Inf. Crit                             | 94,619.840                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Bayesian Inf. Crit.                          | 94,839.610                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| =====                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Note:                                        | Multilevel regression (fixed effects); individual voters (n = 39962) nested in electoral ridings (n = 326); coefficients need to be exponentiated to determine odd ratios; stacked data, with all hypothetical outcomes tabulated; DV is '1' for vote intention of respondent, and '0' otherwise.<br>* p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 |

# Results: H3 (LGB Affinity)

► No evidence to support hypothesis.

| Table 3: GLM Regression Output for binary Match/Mismatch of Attributes                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Dependent variable:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |
| Vote for Candidate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                   |
| Effect of match between voter and candidate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                   |
| Log Odds (SEs)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| Sex                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |
| Female                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | -0.088*** (0.022) |
| Male                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 0.143*** (0.019)  |
| Non-binary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 2.559** (1.029)   |
| LGB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | -0.186 (0.192)    |
| Immigrant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                   |
| Race                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                   |
| Arab                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 0.039 (0.292)     |
| Black                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 0.232 (0.142)     |
| Chinese                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 0.339*** (0.102)  |
| Japanese                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -11.118 (229.421) |
| Korean                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | -0.826 (0.973)    |
| Latin                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | -0.674* (0.361)   |
| South Asian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 0.125 (0.094)     |
| SE Asian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -10.654 (127.190) |
| West Asian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 1.110** (0.531)   |
| White                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 0.052*** (0.018)  |
| Indigenous                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                   |
| First Nations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 0.475 (0.421)     |
| Inuk                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 0.340 (0.872)     |
| Métis                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 0.734* (0.397)    |
| Constant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -6.113*** (0.037) |
| Observations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                   |
| Log Likelihood                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| Akaike Inf. Crit                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                   |
| Bayesian Inf. Crit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |
| Note:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                   |
| Multilevel regression (fixed effects); individual voters (n = 39962) nested in electoral ridings (n = 326); coefficients need to be exponentiated to determine odd ratios; stacked data, with all hypothetical outcomes tabulated; DV is '1' for vote intention of respondent, and '0' otherwise. |                   |
| * p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                   |

# Results: H4 (Racialized Affinity)

- ▶ Chinese voters are 1.4 times as likely to vote for a Chinese candidate.
- ▶ West Asian voters are 3 times as likely to vote for a West Asian candidate.

| Table 3: GLM Regression Output for binary Match/Mismatch of Attributes                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Dependent variable:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |
| Vote for Candidate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                   |
| Effect of match between voter and candidate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                   |
| Log Odds (SEs)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| Sex                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |
| Female                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | -0.088*** (0.022) |
| Male                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 0.143*** (0.019)  |
| Non-binary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 2.559** (1.029)   |
| LGB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | -0.186 (0.192)    |
| Immigrant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 0.207*** (0.038)  |
| Race                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                   |
| Arab                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 0.039 (0.292)     |
| Black                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 0.232 (0.142)     |
| Chinese                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 0.339*** (0.102)  |
| Japanese                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -11.118 (229.421) |
| Korean                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | -0.826 (0.973)    |
| Latin                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | -0.674* (0.361)   |
| South Asian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 0.125 (0.094)     |
| SE Asian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -10.654 (127.190) |
| West Asian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 1.110** (0.531)   |
| White                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 0.052*** (0.018)  |
| Indigenous                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                   |
| First Nations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 0.475 (0.421)     |
| Inuk                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 0.340 (0.872)     |
| Métis                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 0.734* (0.397)    |
| Constant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -6.113*** (0.037) |
| Observations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                   |
| 161,051                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                   |
| Log Likelihood                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| -47,287.920                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                   |
| Akaike Inf. Crit                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                   |
| 94,619.840                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                   |
| Bayesian Inf. Crit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |
| 94,839.610                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                   |
| Note:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                   |
| Multilevel regression (fixed effects); individual voters (n = 39962) nested in electoral ridings (n = 326); coefficients need to be exponentiated to determine odd ratios; stacked data, with all hypothetical outcomes tabulated; DV is '1' for vote intention of respondent, and '0' otherwise. |                   |
| * p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                   |

# Results: H5 (Indigenous Affinity)

- ▶ Little evidence to support hypothesis.
- ▶ Métis voters are twice as likely to support local candidates who identify as Métis.

| Table 3: GLM Regression Output for binary Match/Mismatch of Attributes                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Dependent variable:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |
| Vote for Candidate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                   |
| Effect of match between voter and candidate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                   |
| Log Odds (SEs)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| Sex                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |
| Female                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | -0.088*** (0.022) |
| Male                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 0.143*** (0.019)  |
| Non-binary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 2.559** (1.029)   |
| LGB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | -0.186 (0.192)    |
| Immigrant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 0.207*** (0.038)  |
| Race                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                   |
| Arab                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 0.039 (0.292)     |
| Black                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 0.232 (0.142)     |
| Chinese                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 0.339*** (0.102)  |
| Japanese                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -11.118 (229.421) |
| Korean                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | -0.826 (0.973)    |
| Latin                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | -0.674* (0.361)   |
| South Asian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 0.125 (0.094)     |
| SE Asian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -10.654 (127.190) |
| West Asian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 1.110** (0.531)   |
| White                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 0.052*** (0.018)  |
| Indigenous                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                   |
| First Nations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 0.475 (0.421)     |
| Inuk                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 0.340 (0.872)     |
| Métis                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 0.734* (0.397)    |
| Constant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -6.113*** (0.037) |
| Observations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                   |
| 161,051                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                   |
| Log Likelihood                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| -47,287.920                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                   |
| Akaike Inf. Crit                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                   |
| 94,619.840                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                   |
| Bayesian Inf. Crit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |
| 94,839.610                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                   |
| Note:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                   |
| Multilevel regression (fixed effects); individual voters (n = 39962) nested in electoral ridings (n = 326); coefficients need to be exponentiated to determine odd ratios; stacked data, with all hypothetical outcomes tabulated; DV is '1' for vote intention of respondent, and '0' otherwise. |                   |
| * p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                   |

## Discussion and Conclusion

- ▶ **Affinity voting is a factor in terms of influencing vote choice for local candidates even when controlling for party ID.**
- ▶ **The largest effect observed was that of non-binary identity.**
- ▶ **Support for affinity voting at the local levels by immigrants and specific racialized communities, particularly Chinese and West Asian voters.**
- ▶ **No support for the hypothesis that LGB voters are more likely to support a local candidate who shares their sexual orientation.**

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