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**VOTER TURNOUT IN THE
2007 PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION:
A SURVEY OF VOTERS AND NON-VOTERS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Elections Manitoba engaged PRA Inc. to conduct a study of voter turnout in the May 2007 provincial election. PRA conducted a random sample survey of two groups of Manitobans: those who voted and those who did not vote in the 2007 provincial election.

A similar survey conducted by PRA for Elections Manitoba in 2003 was the basis for the questionnaire used in 2007. This study involved a random sample telephone survey of adult Manitobans who were eligible and voted (n=400) or did not vote (n=400) in the May 2007 provincial election.

Characteristics of voters and non-voters

While voters and non-voters share many characteristics, compared to voters, non-voters tend to be younger, less educated, and come from households with children under 18 years of age. They are also more likely than voters to come from households where other members also do not vote.

Non-voters tend to fall into two groups: persistent non-voters and irregular non-voters. Persistent non-voters are those who not only did not vote in the 2007 provincial election, but they also did not vote in the 2006 municipal election, the 2006 federal election, or the 2003 provincial election. About 4 non-voters in 10 fall into this category. Irregular non-voters (accounting for about 6 non-voters in 10), did not vote in the 2007 provincial election, but had voted in at least one of the three previous elections. As demonstrated by past behaviour, most non-voters are in fact irregular voters. Indeed, 2 non-voters in 3 reported being very or somewhat likely to vote in the next provincial election.

Voters tend to be consistent in their behaviour. Some 8 respondents in 10 who voted in the 2007 provincial election voted in all three previous elections as well. Almost all voters (95%) reported that they are very likely to vote in the next provincial election.

Although voters and non-voters are equally as likely to report that they live with other eligible voters, non-voters are more likely to come from households containing other eligible voters who also did not vote in the 2007 election. Just over 1 non-voter in 5 reported that all other eligible members of their household voted. This compares with some 9 in 10 voters.

Reasons for voting/not voting

Voters independently provided two broad reasons for voting: the act of voting itself and the outcome of voting. The most common reasons for voting, as given by respondents, are philosophical. That is, they relate to the perceived importance of voting itself. Some respondents suggest that voting is a person's duty or responsibility (24%), while others say that it is a "right" or "privilege" that if not used will mean the end of democracy (20%). Many others say that voting is a way of effecting change or getting a desired outcome. They vote to support a candidate or party (15%), to pick the government (6%), or as a way of bringing about change (5%). They want to have a voice or say in the election (13%), or they say that the act of voting gives them the "right" to complain about the government (11%).

The reasons provided by non-voters for not casting a ballot in 2007 fall into three broad categories: *distraction*, that is, reasons that suggest that they intended to vote but were either too busy or had to work (17%), were out of town (9%), were ill (5%), or simply forgot (5%); *disassociation*, that is, reasons that suggest that they did not intend to vote because they did not trust the candidates or did not like the choices (14%), did not care about the outcome (9%), said it did not matter who won (8%), or felt the outcome of the election was already determined (4%), so their vote would make no difference (1%); and *displacement*, that is, reasons that suggest that they wanted to vote but technical or administrative issues barred them, including that the polls were too far away (4%), the polls closed too early (1%), or they did not know where to vote (2%).

We tested eight reasons with non-voters, asking respondents to rate how important each was in their decision not to vote. For about 3 non-voter in 10, none of these reasons was very important in their decision. The most important reasons as rated by respondents were not knowing enough about the parties (32% said this was very important in their decision not to vote) and being too busy (26% said this was very important in their decision not to vote).

Many non-voters need to be motivated to vote. While 7 in 10 of those who voted in the 2007 election decided to do so the day the election was called, only about 1 non-voter in 4 knew that same day they would not be voting. This suggests that the majority of non-voters intended to vote, but as the election progressed, they decided not to. Although many made the decision sometime after the election was called, about 1 non-voter in 3 decided not to vote only on the day of the election.

As noted above, many did not vote because they felt they were not knowledgeable enough to do so. Partly this results from the fact that non-voters are less likely than voters to report following the 2007 provincial election closely. Indeed, almost 6 non-voters in 10 reported that they did not follow the election very closely. This compares with almost 9 voters in 10 who report the opposite, i.e., they followed the election at least somewhat closely. Although they did not follow the election closely, over half of non-voters said that they were somewhat or very knowledgeable about the policies and platforms of the parties. This suggests that some non-voters feel that there is no need to follow an election to know the platforms of the parties. In other words, they may feel that nothing changes from one election to the next or that the platforms of the competing parties are similar. Voters not only followed the election more closely, 9 in 10 felt that they were very or somewhat knowledgeable about the party platforms.

Motivators to vote or not vote

Regardless of whether they voted in the 2007 provincial election, most respondents believe that it is important that people vote. While over 9 voters in 10 said it is very important or essential to vote, 6 non-voters in 10 said the same. Only about 1 non-voter in 10 said it is not important that people vote.

The reasons why it is important to vote are similar to the reasons provided by voters as to why they cast a ballot in the 2007 election: voting affects outcomes and the act of voting is important. Whether voter or non-voter, over 1 respondent in 5 said that voting gives an individual a voice or a say in how things are done. Whether voter or non-voter, other commonly mentioned reasons to

vote include: letting the majority's voice be heard, it's the only way to change things, and to support a party or candidate. Voters are more likely than non-voters to cite philosophical reasons for the importance of voting. For example, voters are more likely than non-voters to say it is important that people vote because it is one's duty or responsibility, or that it is a right that must be exercised in order to protect democracy. Thus, it is not surprising that non-voters are less likely to agree that voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen. Still, half of non-voters strongly agree with this statement.

Other factors play a role in the decision not to vote. Non-voters are more likely to agree that when people do not vote, it tells us that the system is not working. Over half of non-voters strongly agree compared with 4 voters in 10. Partly, this reflects the fact that 3 non-voters in 10 strongly agree that there was no political party in Manitoba that they really agree with, and another 1 in 4 says that none of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to them. While non-voters (1 in 3) and voters (1 in 5) agree strongly that they are more likely to vote if the election race is close, non-voters are more likely to agree.

Most respondents feel that voting is something that needs to be taught in schools. Although voters (2 in 3) are more likely than non-voters (half) to strongly agree that schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation, still almost 7 non-voters in 10 at least somewhat agree. Similarly, most respondents, whether voters or non-voters, would support Elections Manitoba's encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote. At least 3 respondents in 4 would support such an initiative, including strong support from 4 non-voters in 10 and almost 7 voters in 10.

As noted above, most non-voters recognize that voting is important. However, non-voters offered few suggestions as to what might have encouraged them to vote in the 2007 provincial election. The most common suggestion is not a simple fix; it would involve changing the way they view candidates and parties. Almost 1 in 5 said that they would have been encouraged to vote if they had had greater trust or confidence in the candidates. Others suggested that they would have been encouraged to vote if they had had more information on the candidates and issues (8%), if the election had been held on a more convenient day (7%), if the polls had been more easily accessible (4%), or if they had had more information on where and when to vote (4%). Almost 4 non-voters in 10 could not think of anything that would have encouraged them to vote, including over 1 in 6 who explicitly said that nothing would have encouraged them to vote.

Most respondents, regardless of their recent voting behaviour, are at least somewhat satisfied with the current electoral system. However, less than 1 non-voter in 5 is very satisfied. Indeed, over 1 non-voter in 10 said that the current system discourages him/her from voting. About half the non-voters reported that a proportional representation electoral system would make them more likely to vote, although only 1 in 10 would be much more likely. While proportional representation may appear to promise more voters, in fact almost 1 non-voter in 5 says that he/she would be less likely to vote under such a system.

Conclusion

This research reinforces what we found in 2003: most Manitobans think that it is very important for people to vote, but that whether they personally vote is not as important.

Less than 1 eligible voter in 5 is what we might classify as a permanent non-voter, i.e., a person who simply does not vote. However, this statistic is a bit misleading; although these non-voters are the least likely to vote or see value in voting, they will not necessarily always be non-voters. Many of them are young and indicate that they will vote in the future. Still, when they do start voting, they will be replaced, at least for a period of time, by new, younger non-voters.

There are several concerns about the composition of the non-voter group in general. As mentioned, a large proportion of the non-voter group is made up of young adults. Other research suggests it is quite normal for young adults to be disproportionately represented in the non-voters segment. Indeed, voting is often seen as having a life-cycle; as people age they take on greater responsibilities and are affected more directly by government policies. As a result, they become more engaged in the political process and are more likely to vote. However, it has also been suggested that lack of engagement in the electoral process at an early age can lead to a lifetime of not voting.

The growth of non-voting among young adults may also reflect another sociological phenomenon; what has been called the “adult teenager.” Young adults are taking longer to adopt the responsibilities that used to be associated with adulthood (e.g., a career, marriage, children, mortgage, etc.). They are not taking on these responsibilities until they are in their 30s. It is possible that, like these other adult responsibilities, the responsibility of voting is being delayed until later in life.

In general, most Manitobans believe that voting is important, that is, they accept that the concept of voting is intrinsic to our system of government. However, their own vote (that is, the act of casting their vote) is less important. So the challenge is how to engage all eligible Manitobans so they make voting a priority. As this research shows, the vast majority of Manitobans are predisposed to vote, but for many it is not a priority.

There are many factors in decisions not to vote, and non-voters often have more than one reason for not participating. However, it appears that the reasons for not voting generally fall into two broad categories: people who are either distracted (e.g., too busy) or disassociated (e.g., politicians cannot be trusted) from the election process. The former may believe it is important to vote, but do not value their own vote. Those who are dissociated are the most difficult to get re-engaged in the process, since they are less likely to believe that it is important for anyone to vote.

There is strong support among voters and non-voters alike for taking steps to encourage voting — through both the school system and Elections Manitoba — by explaining the importance of such participation. This reflects that although people do not themselves always vote, they recognize how important it is and want to encourage as many people as possible to do so. In the end, it appears that one of the few things that Elections Manitoba can do to help combat declining voter turnout is to reinforce something Manitobans already believe: that the act of voting is very important.

1.0 Introduction

Elections Manitoba engaged PRA Inc. to conduct a study of voter turnout in the May 2007 provincial election. PRA conducted a random sample survey of two groups of Manitobans: those who voted and those who did not vote in the 2007 provincial election.

The purpose of this research is to understand the reasons people choose to vote or not to vote, any barriers that might have prevented Manitobans from voting, and changes that might encourage non-voters to participate.

1.1 Voter turnout across time

Since the late 1950s, voter turnout for provincial elections in Manitoba has been above 60%, that is until the most recent provincial elections. At 57%, the turnout for the 2007 provincial election was slightly higher than that recorded in 2003 (54%), but down significantly the 1999 provincial election (68%). Indeed, the turnouts in the last two provincial elections are reminiscent of those in the 1940s. See Figure 1.

**Manitoba voter turnout in provincial elections
1945 – 2007**

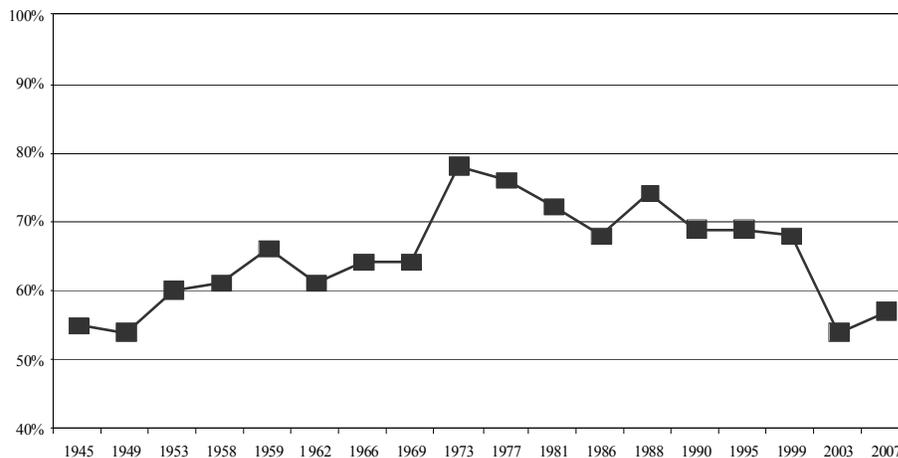


Figure 1

1.2 Methodology

A similar survey conducted by PRA for Elections Manitoba in 2003 was basis for the questionnaire used in 2007. The final version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Respondents were selected by random digit dialling (which allows us to include those with unlisted or new numbers). This technique produces a random sample that includes the highest possible percentage of eligible respondents. This study was to include an equal number of voters (that is, individuals who self-identified as having voted in the 2007 provincial election) and non-voters (that is, those who did not vote in that election). Non-voters were more difficult to find because people hesitate to admit that they did not vote and because non-voters were generally less interested in participating in any survey on voting.

This study involved a random sample telephone survey of 800 adult Manitobans who were eligible to vote in the May 2007 provincial election. The survey was pretested before being administered to the sample. Interviewing was conducted in November and December 2007.

Table 1 provides more details about the methodology.

Methodology	Key information
Pretest dates	November 14, 2007
Survey dates	November 15 to December 21, 2007
Sample size: voters	n=400
Sample size: non-voters	n=400
Interviewing method	Telephone
Sample selection	Random digit dialling
Approximate error rate (theoretical) for each sample	± 5.0%, 19 times out of 20

1.3 Weighting of data

Normally, we would weight the data to more closely conform to the known demographics of the population. In this case, however, we do not know the characteristics of voters or non-voters and therefore could not weight the data. That said, the data from the two subgroups are used primarily for comparison purposes to understand the difference between these two subpopulations.

1.4 Previous research

As mentioned, a similar survey was conducted in December 2003 following that year's provincial election in June. For the most part the findings in the two surveys are very similar. Throughout this report we make comparisons of interest. A complete comparison can be found in Appendix B.

2.0 Characteristics of voters/non-voters

In this section, we review the characteristics of voters and non-voters. Non-voters are not a uniform group. That being said, compared to voters, they tend to be younger, less educated, and are more likely to have children under 18 years of age in their households. They are also more likely than voters to come from households where other members also do not vote. However, only a subset of non-voters is persistent in this behaviour, which suggests that, for most, whether or not they vote depends on the circumstances. This compares with our voter group, which appears to have a strong commitment to the act of voting.

2.1 Demographic characteristics

Table 2 (next page) presents a demographic profile of voters and non-voters. These two groups share many similarities. For example, there is no statistical difference among voters and non-voters in terms of gender; men and women are just as likely to have voted or not voted in the 2007 election.

However, there are some differences in the two populations. Non-voters tend to be younger, have slightly lower levels of education than voters, and have children under 18 in their households.

- ▶ **Non-voters tend to be younger than voters.** In our 2007 sample, 20% of non-voters are 18 to 29 years of age compared to just 6% of voters. Indeed, 3 in 4 of the 18 to 29 year olds we interviewed for this study are non-voters. Thus, it is not surprising that voters tend to be older than non-voters. In our sample, over half of voters are 55 years of age or older. This compares with less than 1 in 4 non-voters who are 55 or older (23%). Indeed, 2 respondents in 3 who are 55 or older are voters.
- ▶ **Non-voters tend to have slightly lower levels of education.** Some 51% of non-voters have high school education or less compared with 35% of voters.
- ▶ **Non-voters are more likely to report having children under 18 years of age in their household.** Some 40% of non-voters reported having children under 18 in their household, compared with 29% of voters.

Although it appears that non-voters are more likely to come from households with lower incomes, this difference is only suggestive and is not statistically significant in our study. The differences identified in 2007 are almost identical to those found in 2003, the last time we conducted this survey.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of voters/non-voters		
	Non-voters	Voters
Age*		
18 to 29	20%	6%
30 to 54	57%	41%
55 and over	23%	53%
Gender		
Female	59%	55%
Male	41%	45%
Q71 Household income		
Under \$35,000	32%	22%
\$35,000 to \$50,000	21%	21%
\$50,000 to \$75,000	21%	24%
Over \$75,000	27%	33%
Education*		
Less than high school	21%	15%
High school grad	30%	20%
Some post-secondary	10%	13%
College/University grad	39%	52%
Number of adult members of household size		
One member	27%	22%
Two members	54%	63%
Three or member	19%	15%
Children under 18 in household*		
Yes	40%	29%
No	60%	71%
Live in Manitoba		
All their life	62%	61%
Most of their life	12%	11%
Some of their life	27%	27%
Place of birth		
In Canada	87%	89%
Outside Canada	13%	11%
Note: Percentages exclude those who did not know or refused.		
* Statistically significant difference (chi-square probability=.000)		

2.2 Voting behaviour in past elections

We asked respondents about their past voting behaviour, specifically whether or not they voted in the three most recent elections prior to the 2007 provincial election:

- ▶ the last municipal election in October 2006
- ▶ the last federal election in January 2006
- ▶ the last previous provincial election in June 2003.

Respondents who voted in the 2007 provincial election are also very likely to report voting in all of these previous elections.¹ Conversely, those who did not vote in the latest provincial election are less likely to have voted in any of these previous elections. As shown in Figure 2, of those eligible to vote in these past elections:

- ▶ Almost 9 voters in 10 or more report voting in each of these three elections.
- ▶ Current non-voters are also fairly consistent in their past behaviour. About half our non-voters report voting in the 2006 federal election. Only about 4 non-voters in 10 say they voted in the 2003 provincial elections. About 1 non-voter in 3 reports voting in the last municipal election.

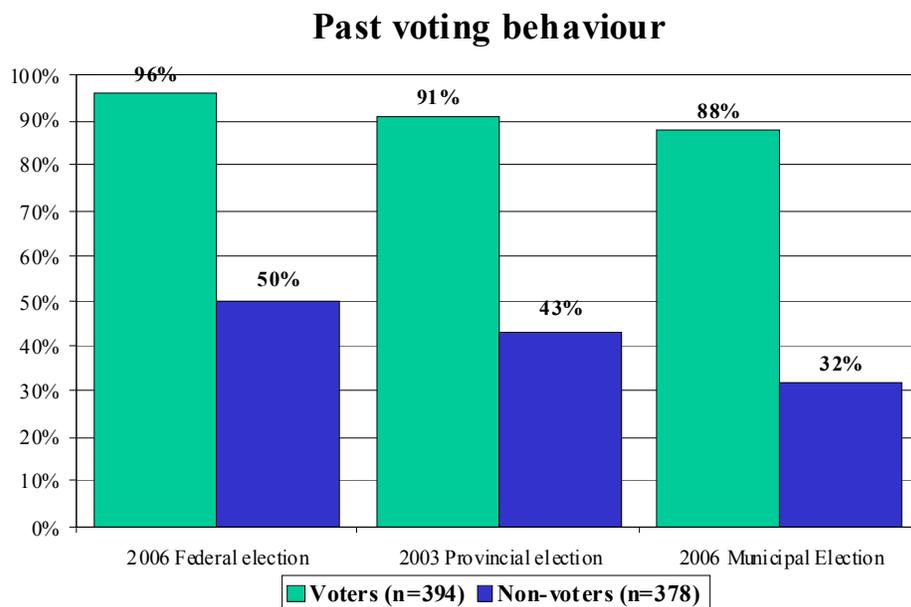


Figure 2

¹ This pattern is similar to the finding in 2003, when considering the three elections previous to the 2003 provincial election. The questions read: *Now I'd like you to think back and tell me if you were eligible and did you vote in the... Q57. Last federal election, that is, in January 2006? Q58. Last civic (municipal) election, that is, in October 2006? Q59. Provincial election in June 2003?*

Figure 3 shows that current voters tend to report that they are consistent in voting.² Those who report voting in the 2007 provincial election appear to be predisposed to vote in any election. Almost 8 voters in 10 also voted in all three previous elections. However, even among these voters, some missed voting in at least one of these elections.

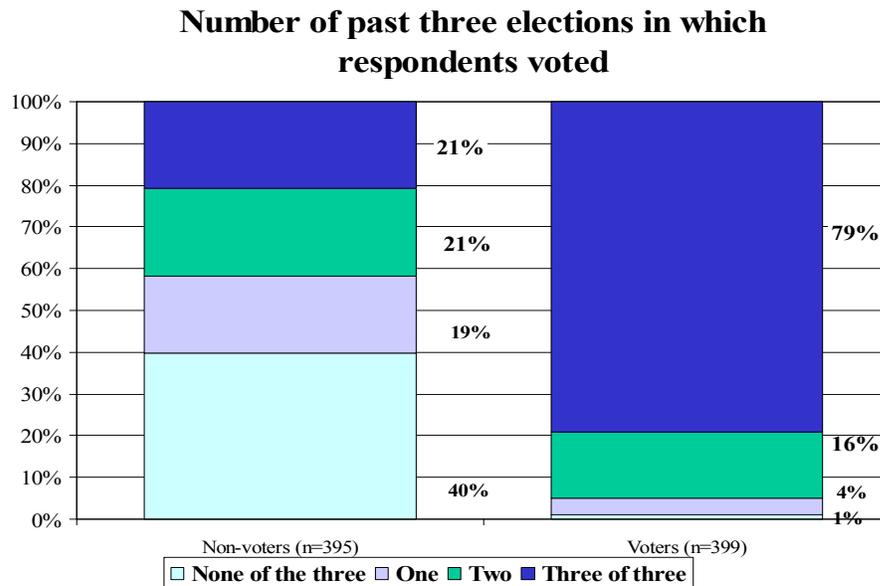


Figure 3

As shown in Figure 3, non-voters are less consistent in their behaviour.

- ▶ Among non-voters, about 1 in 5 appears to be a regular voter, that is, he or she reports voting in all three previous elections. This suggests that particular circumstances may have prevented their participation in the 2007 provincial election.
- ▶ About 4 non-voters in 10 voted in one or two of the last three elections, suggesting that particular circumstances or the type of election may encourage or discourage them from voting.
- ▶ The same number (40%) report voting in none of the last three elections, suggesting that they are not engaged by the process at all.

² This figure excludes those who were ineligible for all three elections. Differences between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

These results are similar to those in 2003 and suggest that non-voters are not a uniform block and that membership in the non-voter group fluctuates from election to election. Indeed, among those who did not vote in the 2007 provincial election, about 6 in 10 might be considered irregular voters, that is, individuals who vote irregularly, likely due to personal reasons or the circumstances of the election. Almost 4 in 10 might be considered persistent non-voters. These individuals have not voted in any of the last four elections.

2.2.1 Voting in future elections

Non-voters are not only less likely to have voted in past elections, they are also less likely to see themselves voting in the future. But again, non-voters are not uniform in their behaviour.

Likelihood of voting in the next provincial election

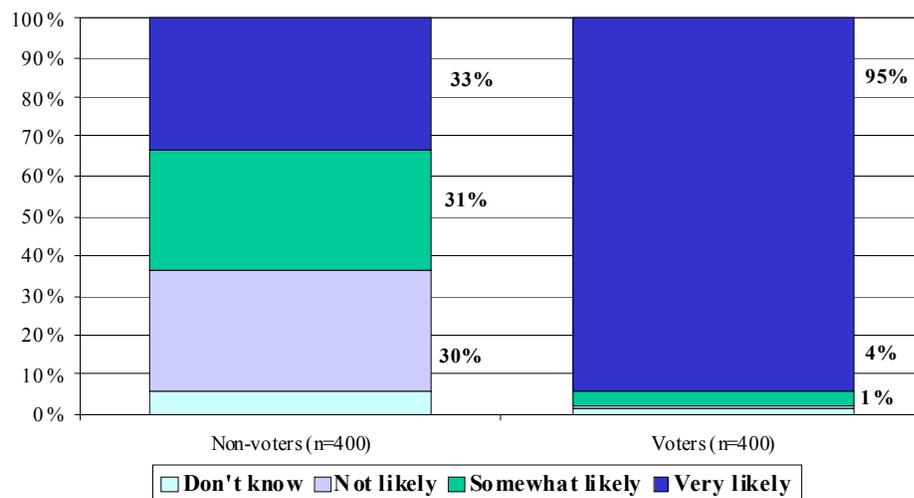


Figure 4

As shown in Figure 4, those who did not vote in the 2007 provincial election are split evenly among three types:

- ▶ **Future voters.** Only 1 in 3 (33%) reports that they are very likely to vote in the next provincial election (that is, they intend to do so).
- ▶ **Possible voters.** Almost as many non-voters (31%) are somewhat likely to vote (that is, they will vote depending on a number of factors and circumstances).
- ▶ **Future non-voters.** Three in 10 (30%) are either very or somewhat (that is, they have no real desire or motivation) to vote.

Almost all (95%) voters say that they are very likely to vote in the next provincial election.³

³ The question read: Q60. *How likely are you to vote in the next provincial general election? Would you say you are very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?* Results between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

2.2.2 Other household members' voting behaviour

Non-voters tend to come from non-voting households. Not voting is not only an individual behaviour, it may also be a family practice.⁴

- ▶ Seven non-voters in 10 report that in the May 2007 provincial election, another person in their household was also eligible to vote. Among non-voters, just over 1 in 5 says that all other eligible members of their household voted.
- ▶ Almost 8 voters in 10 also report that another person in their household was eligible to vote in the May 2007 provincial election. About 9 voters in 10 report that all eligible household members voted.

See Figure 5.

Voting behaviour of others in household

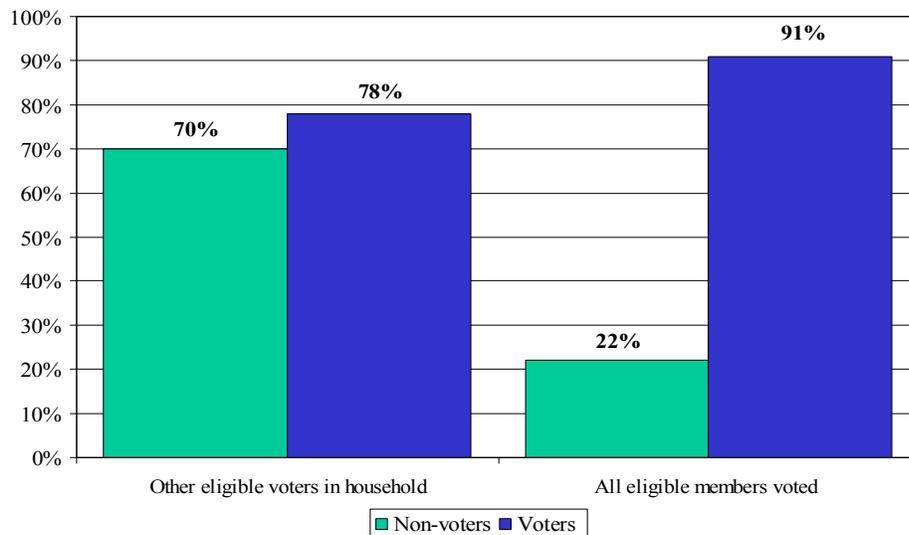


Figure 5

⁴ The questions read: *Q5. Are there other people in your household who were eligible to vote in the May 2007 provincial election? Q6. As far as you know, did all those eligible in your household vote in the May 2007 election?*

3.0 Reasons for voting/not voting

In this section, we examine the decision to vote or not to vote. We find that people have many different reasons for not voting, most commonly because they often do not know who to vote for, do not consider their vote important, or consider other activities more important. Most who did vote say it is because the act of voting itself or the outcome of the vote is important.

Most voters say they made the decision to vote as soon as the election was called, while non-voters make the decision not to vote sometime during the election period. Both of which suggest that most people are predisposed to vote. Most commonly, they end up not voting because the election (i.e., the candidates, the issues, the parties) does not engage them; they feel they do not know enough to make a decision; or other things become more important than voting.

3.1 Reasons for voting

We asked individuals who reported voting, why they voted in the May 2007 provincial election. These unaided responses were categorized as shown in Table 3 but can be grouped into two broad themes:

- ▶ **The importance of the act of voting itself.** The most common reasons for voting, as given by respondents, are philosophical. That is, they relate to the perceived importance of voting itself. Respondents suggest that voting is a person's duty or responsibility (24%), while others say that it is a "right" or "privilege" that if not used will mean the end of democracy (20%). Still others state explicitly that "voting is important" (7%).
- ▶ **The outcome of voting.** Others say that voting is a way of effecting change or getting a desired outcome. Many suggest that they vote to support a candidate or party (15%), to pick the government (6%), or as a way of bringing about change (5%). Others simply want to have a voice or say in the election (13%). Many also mention that the act of voting gives them the "right" to complain about the government, a right they feel does not extend to non-voters (11%).

These findings are very similar to the reasons provided by voters after the 2003 election.

Table 3: Reasons for voting in last provincial election		
<i>Q2. As mentioned, people have different reasons for choosing to vote. Why did you vote in the May 2007 provincial election?</i>		
Reason	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Importance of the act of voting		
Duty/You have to vote/Responsibility	24%	23%
Exercise right/privilege/To protect democracy	20%	24%
Voting is important/I wanted to vote/People should vote	7%	7%
Outcome of the process		
To support a candidate/party	15%	19%
To have a voice/A say in how things are done	13%	14%
No right to complain if we don't vote	11%	14%
Picking government/Government decisions affect everyone/	6%	1%
Only way to change things/Only way to make a difference	5%	9%
To let the majority's voice be heard/To find out what Manitobans want	1%	1%
Other reasons		
Always vote	15%	11%
System doesn't work if people don't vote	-	1%
Other reasons	1%	2%
Don't know	1%	2%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

3.2 Explanations for not voting

We explored with non-voters the reasons why they did not vote, first by asking them to tell us the reason for this decision and then by testing the importance of several reasons in their decision not to vote.

3.2.1 Reasons for not voting in 2007

The literature suggests that there are three general groups within the non-voter population:

- ▶ *displaced* voters, who were unable to vote due to administrative problems or technicalities
- ▶ *distracted* voters, who wanted to vote but had to attend to other commitments
- ▶ *disassociated* voters, who did not want to vote for whatever reason.

As shown in Table 4, we have grouped the reasons provided by respondents into these three general categories.

- ▶ **Distracted.** Many non-voters identify reasons that may be considered distractions in the sense that they took their attention away from voting. Most commonly, non-voters told us that they did not have time to vote because they were either too busy, had to work (17%), or simply forgot (5%). Others were out of town (9%) or ill (5%) on Election Day.
- ▶ **Disassociated.** Many other respondents provide reasons that suggest that they did not want to bother voting. Some say they did not trust the candidates or did not like any of the choices (14%). Others say they did not care about the outcome (9%). Similarly, some think it did not matter who won the election (8%) because there is no real difference among the political parties or because politicians do not keep their promises anyway. A few (4%) say that they did not vote because they felt the outcome of the election was already determined, in other words, their vote would make no difference (1%).
- ▶ **Displaced.** Only a few respondents mention reasons that might be considered administrative or technical. Some say they did not vote because the polls were too far away (4% - which may be more an issue of time rather than location), the polls closed too early (1%), or they did not know where to vote (2%).

Some other reasons include that they felt they did not know enough about the parties or issues (7%) and, similarly, that they did not know who to vote for (6%).

Table 4 also compares respondents' reasons for not voting in 2007 with those provided by non-voters in 2003. The reasons given four years ago are very similar to those given in 2007.

Table 4: Reasons for NOT voting in last provincial election		
<i>Q3. As mentioned, people have different reasons for not voting. Why didn't you vote in the May provincial election?</i>		
Reasons	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)
Distracted		
Didn't have time/Busy/Bad time of year/Had to work	17%	24%
Not at home/Away from home/Out of town	9%	8%
Forgot	5%	7%
Ill/Sick	5%	3%
Disassociated		
Lack trust of candidates/Didn't like any of the choices	14%	13%
Not interested/Couldn't be bothered/Indifferent	9%	12%
Doesn't matter who wins/No difference among parties	8%	8%
Outcome of election already determined	4%	5%
Dissatisfaction with government/Lack of leadership	1%	1%
Issues are irrelevant, not a major concern	1%	<1%
Too lazy to bother	1%	1%
My vote doesn't matter/doesn't make a difference	1%	-
Displaced		
Polls too far away/Far from work/No ride	4%	5%
Didn't know where or when to vote	2%	2%
Wasn't on voters list/Not enumerated can't vote/Didn't have ID	2%	1%
Polls closed too early/Wasn't time to vote	1%	3%
Other		
Not well informed/No info on parties	7%	10%
Didn't know who to vote for/Didn't know candidates	6%	5%
Religious objections	3%	3%
Other	4%	2%
Don't know	4%	4%
Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, column may not sum to 100%.		

3.2.2 Importance of factors in decision not to vote in 2007

We asked non-voters to rate the importance of eight potential reasons why they might not have voted. The importance of these reasons varies, but none is very important to a majority of non-voters, suggesting that there are many influences in the decision not to vote. Indeed, 3 respondents in 10 (30%) found none of these eight reasons to be very important in their decision not to vote, which suggests that there are other reasons that we did not test.

Only one reason was at least somewhat important to a majority of respondents:

- ▶ *Did not know enough about the parties, policies, or candidates to vote.* Almost 6 non-voters in 10 say that not knowing enough about the parties was at least somewhat important, including 32% who say it was very important in their decision not to vote.

None of the other reasons were even somewhat important to a majority of non-voters.

- ▶ *Couldn't relate to any of the election issues.* Half say that being unable to relate to the issues was at least somewhat important in their decision not to vote, including 22% who say it was very important.
- ▶ *Too busy.* Over 4 in 10 say that being too busy was at least somewhat important in their decision not to vote, including 26% who say it was very important.
- ▶ *My vote didn't matter since it was clear which party was going to win the provincial election.* Almost 4 in 10 say the fact that it was clear who was going to win the election was at least somewhat important in their decision not to vote, including 21% who say it was very important.
- ▶ *My vote didn't matter in my riding since it was clear who would win.* Almost 4 in 10 also say that the fact that the outcome in their riding was clear was important, including 20% who say it was very important in their decision.

- ▶ *Didn't know where or when to vote.* Over 1 in 4 says that not knowing where or when to vote was important in their decision not to vote, including 15% who say it was very important.
- ▶ *The location to vote was not convenient.* Over 1 in 4 also says that the location of the voting station was important in their decision not to vote, including 13% who say it was very important.
- ▶ *Out of town.* Again, about 1 in 4 says that being out of town was at least somewhat important, including 15% who say it was very important.

Figure 6 shows those who rated these reasons as somewhat or very important.⁵

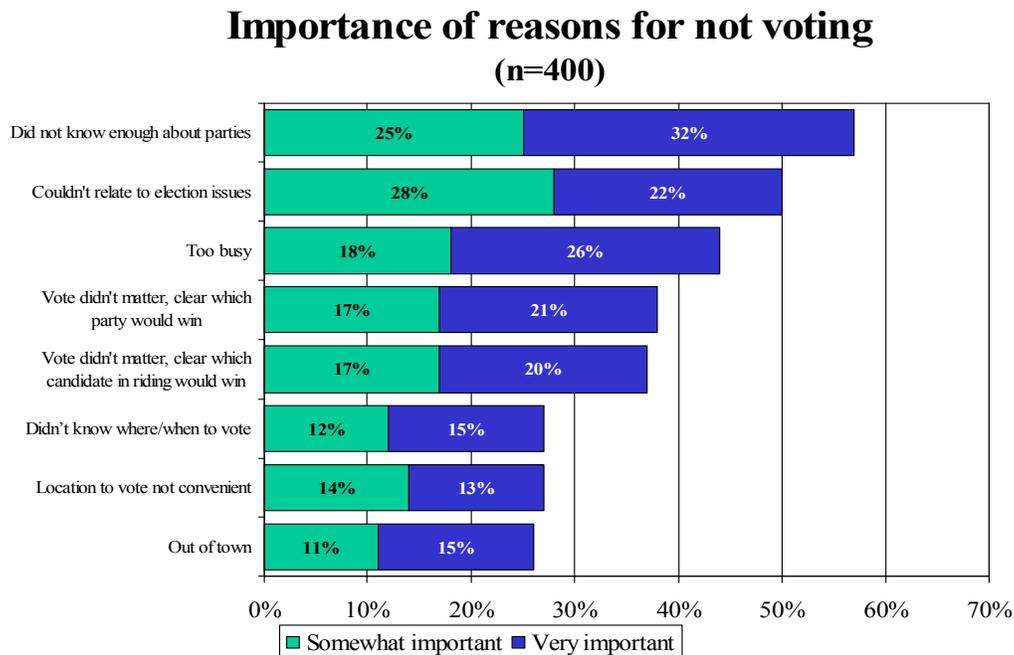


Figure 6

⁵ The question read: *I'm going to read a list of reasons people sometimes give for not voting. As I read each, please tell me whether the reason was very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important in your decision not to vote in the May 2007 provincial election.* The importance of the *location to vote was not convenient* in the decision not to vote was gathered in a separate study conducted in January and February 2008. It is based on the responses of 307 non-voters.

Over 4 in 10 of those who say that being “too busy” was important in their decision not to vote also say that the fact that it was clear who was going to win the provincial election was at least somewhat important in their decision. In other words, knowing the outcome of the election may have allowed some non-voters to prioritize other activities, which made them “too busy” to visit a polling station.

3.3 Reasons for decline in voter turnout

We explained to respondents that voter turnout has been declining in recent Manitoba elections. We asked respondents – both non-voters and voters – why they think this is the case. Most of the reasons are similar to what we have seen above.

Most respondents tend to believe that voters are disassociated from the voting process.

- ▶ Whether voters or non-voters, most attribute the decline in voter turnout to a general disenchantment with the political system. They say that people feel that it does not matter which party wins an election, there is no real difference among parties, people are not interested or do not care about the outcome, or they do not trust politicians.

A few think that distractions account for the decline.

- ▶ A few suggest that people are not voting because they simply have less time. A few also suggest that because people have less time they are not well informed and therefore simply do not know who to vote for.

Very few see the decline as a result of displaced voters, that is, because it is difficult to vote. A few say people are not voting because the polls are too far away, they do not know when or where to vote, or they misunderstand the process. See Table 5 (next page). The results are similar to those in 2003.⁶

⁶ Although the results in 2003 and 2007 are similar, there are some differences. Far more respondents in 2003, both voters (15%) and non-voters (13%) say that they thought they decline in voter turnout was a result of the fact that the outcome of the 2003 election was predetermined, so voting did not matter.

Table 5: Impressions of why voter turnout is declining		
<i>Q7. Voter turnout has been declining in recent Manitoba elections. In your opinion, why are fewer people voting?</i>		
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=400)
Disassociated		
Doesn't matter who wins/No difference between parties	22%	15%
Not interested/Don't care/Couldn't be bothered	14%	27%
Lack trust of candidate/Didn't like any of the choices	12%	11%
Disillusioned with the process/Too many elections/too often	5%	1%
Issues: Irrelevant, not major concerns	5%	2%
Youth: Not educated re: importance, relevance, responsibility	4%	7%
Dissatisfaction with government/Lack of leadership	4%	4%
Outcome of election already determined/Vote doesn't matter	3%	4%
Distracted		
Don't have time/Too busy	6%	7%
Not well informed/No information on parties	4%	4%
Don't know who to vote for/Don't know candidates	4%	3%
People are lazy/stupid	2%	5%
People take democracy for granted	1%	3%
Not at home/Away from home/Out of town	1%	-
Displaced		
Polls too far away	2%	3%
Didn't know where/when to vote	1%	<1%
Polls closed too early/Wasn't time to vote	<1%	-
Not on voters list/Not enumerated	-	<1%
Other		
Other	3%	3%
Don't know	20%	13%
Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.		

3.4 Timing of decision to vote/not vote

We asked both types of respondents when they decided to vote or not vote in the 2007 provincial election. Most voters had every intention to vote from the outset of an election, while non-voters make their decision during the election period.⁷ See Figure 7.

- ▶ About 1 non-voter in 4 knew they would not vote as soon as the election was called, suggesting that they never had any intention of voting. Conversely, 7 voters in 10 knew they would vote as soon as the election was called.
- ▶ Over 1 non-voter in 3 decided not to vote sometime between the election call and Election Day, suggesting that they were waiting for something to help them make up their

⁷

The question read: *Q17. Thinking back to the May provincial election, which of the following best describes when you decided that you would or would not vote?* Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

minds, engage them, or simply encourage them to vote. This compares with 1 voter in 4 who made the decision to vote during this period.

- ▶ One non-voter in 3 made the decision not to vote on Election Day. This suggests that they were either too busy to vote or some circumstance prevented them from voting. Only 1 voter in 20 made the decision to vote on Election Day.

Timing of decision to vote/not vote

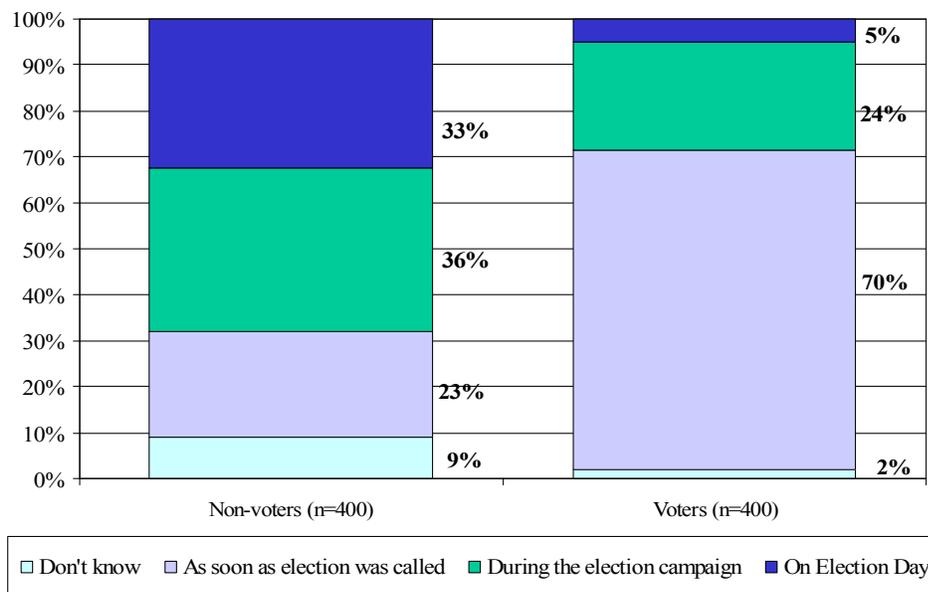


Figure 7

3.5 Knowledge of 2007 election

As would be expected, voters tend to follow the election more closely and assess themselves as being more knowledgeable than non-voters.

- ▶ Just over 4 non-voters in 10 reported following the election somewhat or very closely. Almost 9 voters in 10 reported the same.
- ▶ In spite of not following the election closely, over half of non-voters felt they were somewhat or very knowledgeable about the various political parties that participated in the election. Nine voters in 10 reported the same.

See Table 6.

Table 6: Knowledge of 2007 election		
<i>Q18. Thinking about the last provincial election in Manitoba, held in May 2007, would you say that you followed the election very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely or not at all closely?</i>		
<i>Q19. Thinking about the various political parties that participated in the election, would you say that you were very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable, or not at all knowledgeable about their policies and election platforms?</i>		
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=400)
Follow election		
Very closely	11%	25%
Somewhat closely	33%	60%
Not very closely	24%	12%
Not at all closely	33%	3%
Knowledge of the policies and platforms		
Very knowledgeable	10%	21%
Somewhat knowledgeable	45%	69%
Not very knowledgeable	25%	8%
Not at all knowledgeable	19%	1%
Note: Non responses are included in the calculations but not shown. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).		

4.0 Motivators to vote or not vote

In the previous section, it appears that voters are more engaged by the electoral process than non-voters. In this section, we attempt to identify changes that may motivate non-voters to vote and reinforce current voters' participation.

Most voters and non-voters alike believe it is very important, even essential, that people vote in elections. The fact that non-voters do not always get around to it does not mean voting is not important. Indeed, most respondents, regardless of type, agree that it is a citizen's duty to vote. For many, the act of voting itself is important; for others, it is the outcome of the act that makes it important. Indeed, most voters and non-voters alike agree that both schools and parents should be doing more to make children aware of the importance of voting. Both groups also support Elections Manitoba in doing more to encourage voting.

Although some non-voters say that political parties are not meeting their needs, that their vote doesn't really matter, and that the outcomes of provincial elections do not have a direct effect on them, the majority are satisfied with the current electoral system. Indeed, few non-voters say that the current system discourages them from voting.

4.1 Importance of voting

Whether they voted in the recent provincial election or not, most respondents believe that it is very important that people vote in elections.⁸

- ▶ Almost 9 non-voters in 10 think it is at least somewhat important, including about 6 in 10 who think it is very important or essential to vote in elections. Only about 1 in 10 thinks it is not important.
- ▶ It is not surprising that almost all voters think it is at least somewhat important to vote in elections, including over 9 in 10 who think it is very important or essential.

See Figure 8.

Importance of voting in elections

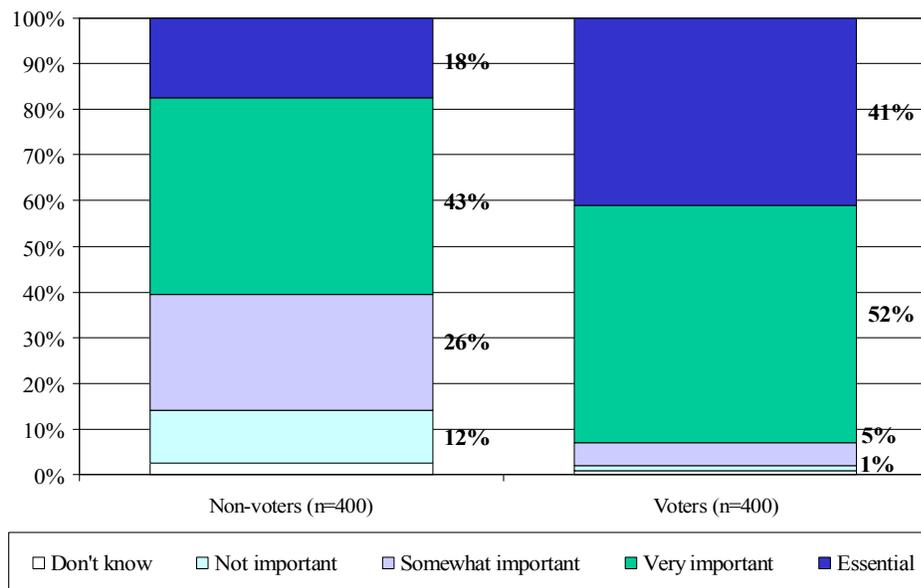


Figure 8

⁸ Question 20 read: *In your view, how critical is it that people vote in elections? Is it essential, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?* Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

We asked those who rated voting as important, why they think it is important to vote. The reasons given are similar whether the respondent voted or did not vote in the 2007 provincial election. The reasons tend to fall into one of two broad categories: voting is important because it influences the outcome of the election, and voting is important for its own sake.

For many, the importance of voting is in the result or outcome.

- ▶ Over 1 respondent in 5 says it is important to vote in order to have a voice or a say in how things are done. This is true whether the respondent voted (21%) or did not vote (22%) in the 2007 election.
- ▶ Each of the following reasons was provided by about 1 respondent in 10: voting allows an individual to support the party or candidate he/she believes in; it gives a voice to the majority; it is about choosing a government and government decisions affect everyone; or it is the only way to change things. Voters are more likely than non-voters to say the reason it is important to vote is because it gives people the right to complain.

For others, the importance of voting is less about outcomes and more about the act of voting itself. Voters are more likely than non-voters to mention most of these reasons.

- ▶ Although over 1 non-voter in 10 says that voting is a right or privilege that will be lost if not used, almost 1 voter in 4 says the same thing.
- ▶ Others say that voting is important, the system does not work if people do not vote, or that it is one's duty or responsibility. The last reason is mentioned more often by voters than by non-voters.

See Table 7.

Table 7: Reason why it is important to vote		
<i>Q21. Why is it important that people vote?</i>		
Reasons	Non-voters (n=344)	Voters (n=391)
Affect outcome		
To have a voice/a say in how things are done	22%	21%
To support a candidate/party	14%	7%
To let the majority's/Manitobans' voice be heard	12%	14%
Choosing a government/Government decisions affect everyone	11%	7%
Only way to change things/Only way to make a difference	10%	10%
No right to complain if we don't vote	7%	18%
Importance of the act of voting		
Exercise right/privilege/To protect democracy	12%	23%
System doesn't work if people don't vote	4%	5%
Voting is important/People should vote	3%	2%
Duty or responsibility to vote	2%	6%
Other reasons		
Don't know	7%	2%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

4.2 Attitudes toward voting and public issues

We asked both voters and non-voters to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of 11 statements. We present the results below grouped by broad themes. There is no uniform opinion held by voters or non-voters. That said, there are significant differences between voters and non-voters in some areas.

4.2.1 Attitudes toward voting process

As we saw above, the majority of voters and non-voters say that voting is important, so it may not be surprising that both groups also believe in a citizen's obligation to vote. However, non-voters are more likely than voters to agree that the system is not working.

A majority of non-voters agree at least somewhat (a rating 6 or more out of 10) with the following statements:

- ▶ *When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working.* Non-voters are more likely than voters to agree with this statement. About 2 non-voters in 3 (67%) agree at least somewhat, including over half who agree strongly (a rating of 8 or higher out of 10) with this statement. Voters are less likely to see not voting as an indication of a problem with the system. About half of voters agree somewhat (51%), including just 4 voters in 10 who agree strongly.
- ▶ *Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen.* Over 6 non-voters in 10 (62%) agree at least somewhat that voting is the duty of good citizens, including almost half who strongly agree. This suggests that many non-voters wanted to vote in the 2007 provincial election but were distracted from doing so. Almost all voters agree at least somewhat with this statement (92%), including over 8 in 10 voters who agree strongly.

Table 8 shows those who strongly agree (a rating of 8 or higher out of 10).

Table 8: Attitudes toward voting process		
<i>Q32-33. Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.</i>		
Statement	Strongly agree (8 to 10)	
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=400)
When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working.*	53%	40%
Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen.*	50%	86%

*Note: Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

4.2.2 Attitudes toward political parties and issues

Non-voters are more likely to find the existing political parties wanting, that is, they do not feel there is a choice that meets their needs. As well, they are more likely to feel that the issues are too complicated for voters to understand, which makes the choice even more difficult.

We asked respondents to rate their level of agreement (or disagreement) with a series of statements about political parties and issues.

- ▶ *There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with.* Similarly, about 4 non-voters in 10 (39%) agree at least somewhat, including 3 in 10 who agree strongly. Again, a majority of non-voters disagree or are neutral suggesting that there are political parties that they agree with. Voters are less likely to agree. About 1 voter in 5 (17%) agrees at least somewhat, including 1 in 10 who agrees strongly.
- ▶ *None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me.* About 4 non-voters in 10 (41%) agree at least somewhat with this statement, including almost 1 in 4 who agree strongly. Conversely, a majority of non-voters either disagree or are neutral, suggesting that most non-voters could have chosen a party to vote for that met their needs. Voters are even more likely to disagree with this statement than non-voters; in fact, only about 1 voter in 4 (23%) agrees even somewhat with this statement, including 1 in 10 who agree strongly.
- ▶ *Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand.* About 1 non-voter in 3 (31%) agrees at least somewhat with this statement, including almost 1 in 5 who agrees strongly. This compares with about half as many voters; about 1 in 7 agrees somewhat (15%), including less in that 1 in 10 who agrees strongly.

Table 9 provides the percentage of respondents who agree strongly (a rating of 8 or higher).

Table 9: Attitudes toward political process/issues		
<i>Q25-27. Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.</i>		
Statement	Strongly agree (8 to 10)	
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=400)
There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with.*	30%	10%
None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me.*	24%	11%
Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand.*	17%	7%

*Note: Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

4.2.3 Attitudes toward voting

The closeness of the election race is a feature in both voters' and non-voters' decisions to participate. That being said, non-voters are more likely to feel that their vote does not really matter to the outcome. Partly, this reflects not the race itself but the belief that the outcome has no impact on them personally. However, a majority of non-voters do not agree with any of these suggestions.

We asked respondents to agree or disagree with a series of statements on voting.

- ▶ *I'm more likely to vote if the race is close.* This attitude is shared by both voters and non-voters. There is something about the closeness of the race that makes some feel that their vote matters more. Over 4 in 10 (44%) of the non-voters agree at least somewhat, including over 1 in 3 who agrees strongly that they are more likely to vote if the race is close. Voters are slightly less likely to agree, suggesting that they vote regardless of the closeness of the race. Even so, about 1 voter in 4 (27%) also agrees at least somewhat that they are more likely to vote if the race is close, including over 1 in 5 who agrees strongly.
- ▶ *Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me.* Over 1 non-voter in 3 (35%) at least somewhat agrees with this statement, including almost 1 in 4 who agrees strongly. This compares with less than 1 voter in 5 (17%) who agrees at least somewhat, and 1 in 10 who agrees strongly. So regardless of their voting behaviour in 2007, a majority of voters and non-voters say that, in fact,

the outcomes of provincial elections do have some direct effect on them.

- ▶ *My vote doesn't really matter in my electoral division.*
Even though they did not vote, most non-voters would not agree that their vote does not matter either in their electoral division or, as we will see in the next bullet, in a provincial election in general. That being said, 1 non-voter in 3 (33%) agrees at least somewhat with this statement, including 1 in 5 who agrees strongly. This compares with 16% of voters who agree at least somewhat, and over 1 in 10 who agrees strongly.
- ▶ *My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election.*
Similarly, more than 1 non-voter in 3 (35%) agrees at least somewhat with this statement, including 1 in 5 who agrees strongly. Again, voters are less likely to agree (16%) even somewhat, and less than 1 in 10 agrees strongly.

Table 10 provides the percentage of respondents who strongly agree (a rating of 8 or higher).

Table 10: Attitudes toward voting		
<i>Q23, 24, 29, 35. Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.</i>		
Statement	Strongly agree (8 to 10)	
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=400)
I'm more likely to vote if the election race is close.*	32%	23%
Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me.*	23%	10%
My vote doesn't really matter in my electoral division (riding).*	21%	11%
My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election.*	21%	8%

*Note: Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

4.2.4 Encouraging voting

We also asked respondents to rate their agreement with a number of statements about actions that might encourage voting.

- ▶ *Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation.* Although non-voters tend to have more negative attitudes towards the voting process, political parties, and the value of their vote in general, the majority think it is important to educate children on the benefits of political participation. Almost 7 non-voters in 10 (68%) agree at least somewhat with this statement, including over half who agree strongly. Slightly more voters – 3 in 4 (76%) – agree at least somewhat, including over 2 in 3 who strongly agree.
- ▶ *Parents should instill in their children the importance of voting.* Almost as many non-voters – 2 in 3 (67%) – agree at least somewhat with this statement, including half who agree strongly. Voters are significantly more likely to agree with this statement. Indeed, over 9 voters in 10 (92%) agree at least somewhat. Voters are more likely to agree that parents should be doing more rather than leaving it to the school system. This is interesting since voters are less likely to have school-aged children. Non-voters are just as likely to think it is the responsibility of both the school system and parents.

See Table 11.

Table 11: Attitudes toward encouraging voting		
<i>Q31, 34. Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.</i>		
Statement	Strongly agree (8 to 10)	
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=400)
Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation.**	52%	66%
Parents should instill in their children the importance of voting.*	51%	87%
Note: Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi sq. *prob=.000 **prob=.001).		

4.2.5 Role of Elections Manitoba

We explained that Elections Manitoba is an independent agency responsible for running provincial elections. We asked respondents whether they would support or oppose Elections Manitoba's encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote.

Overwhelmingly, both voters and non-voters would support Elections Manitoba undertaking such a campaign.

- ▶ Some 3 non-voters in 4 would support such an initiative, including 4 in 10 who would strongly support it.
- ▶ Over 9 voters in 10 would support such an initiative, including almost 7 in 10 who would strongly support it.

See Table 12.

Table 12: Encouraging Manitobans to vote		
<i>Q43. Elections Manitoba is an independent, non-political agency responsible for running provincial elections. Would you support or oppose Elections Manitoba specifically encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote?</i>		
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=400)
Strongly support	39%	68%
Somewhat support	37%	26%
Somewhat oppose	10%	2%
Strongly oppose	10%	2%
Don't know	4%	3%
Total	101%	101%
Note: Columns do not sum to 100% due to rounding. Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).		

4.3 Encourage respondents to vote

We also asked non-voters what would have encouraged them to vote in the recent election. We again grouped their responses into broad categories that seem to suggest that they are disassociated, distracted, or displaced. Table 13 shows the result from 2007 and compares them to those in 2003.

- ▶ **Disassociated.** Almost 1 in 5 (18%) says they would have been more likely to vote if they had more trust or confidence in candidates or the government. Almost as many (16%) explicitly state that “nothing” would have encouraged them to vote. Others say that they would have

been more likely vote if the issues were of greater interest or if politicians addressed issues that interested them (7%).

- ▶ **Distracted or displaced.** Voters who might be considered distracted or displaced offered similar solutions that would encourage them to vote. Some say that if technical or process issues had been addressed, they would have been more likely to vote. A few respondents say that if the polls had been more accessible or convenient (4%), they would have been more likely to vote. A few others suggest that they would have voted if they had had more information on when and where to vote (4%); still others mentioned longer poll hours (2%) or easier access to advance polls (<1%). Others suggest that they if they had been more informed about candidates or the issues (8%), or if the election had been on a more convenient day (7%), they would have voted.

A few mentioned that they would have voted if the outcome was not already known (4%) or that, in fact, they normally do vote (4%). About 1 in 4 could not think of anything that would have encouraged them to vote, saying they did not know.

See Table 13 for non-voters' unaided suggestions. The responses provided in 2007 are very similar to those in 2003.

Table 13: Encourage respondents to vote		
<i>Q4. What, if anything, would have encouraged you to vote in the recent election?</i>		
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Disassociated		
Having greater trust/confidence in candidates	18%	18%
Nothing would encourage them to vote	16%	19%
If there were important issues/Addressing issues of interest	7%	7%
Distracted/displaced		
More informed about candidates/issues	8%	9%
Election on a more convenient day/On a different day	7%	7%
Polls more easily accessible	4%	6%
More informed about when/where election was	4%	5%
Polls open earlier/later/longer	2%	3%
Alternate ways to vote (Internet, phone, mail)	<1%	2%
Advanced polls easier to access	<1%	1%
Other		
If outcome wasn't already determined	4%	3%
Usually do vote/If had been well enough to vote	4%	-
Other	5%	6%
Don't know	24%	20%
Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, column may not sum to 100%.		

4.4 Satisfaction with current system

We explained that for Manitoba provincial elections, people vote in an electoral division and the candidate with the most votes wins. We asked respondents how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the present electoral system. Most voters and non-voters are at least somewhat satisfied with it.

- ▶ Seven non-voters in 10 are satisfied, although only 17% are very satisfied.
- ▶ Voters are more satisfied, with almost 9 in 10 being at least somewhat satisfied, including 3 in 10 who are very satisfied.

We also asked those who say that they were dissatisfied with the current system if their dissatisfaction discourages them from voting. Few say it did. Overall:

- ▶ Just over 1 non-voter in 10 reported that the current system discourages them from voting, including 8% who say that it did so very much.

See Table 14.

Table 14: Satisfaction with current electoral system		
<i>Q44. As you know, for Manitoba provincial elections, people vote in an electoral division, and the candidate with the most votes wins. In general, how satisfied are you with the present electoral system? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?</i>		
<i>Q45. Does the current method of deciding who wins discourage you from voting?</i>		
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=400)
Satisfaction*		
Very satisfied	17%	31%
Somewhat satisfied	53%	56%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14%	10%
Very dissatisfied	11%	2%
Not sure	6%	2%
Discourage you from voting		
Yes, very much	8%	1%
Yes, somewhat	5%	2%
Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. *Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).		

4.4.1 Proportional representation

Although the idea of changing the electoral system in some fundamental way appears to make voting more appealing for many respondents, others say that they would be less likely to vote as a result of such changes.

We briefly explained proportional representation to respondents and asked them if they would be more or less likely to vote if Manitoba adopted such a system.

Table 15: Impact of proportional representation		
<i>Q46. What if we had a different system in which the seats would be divided among the political parties according to the total percentage of votes they get? If this system, known as "proportional representation," was implemented in Manitoba, would you be much more likely, more likely, less likely, or much less likely to vote?</i>		
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=400)
Much more likely	11%	12%
More likely	40%	26%
Makes no difference	22%	39%
Less likely	11%	11%
Much less likely	6%	3%
Don't know	10%	10%
Total	100%	101%
Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Difference between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).		

As shown in Table 15:

- ▶ About half the non-voters say that they would be more or much more likely to vote under a proportional representation model. However, only 11% say that such a change would make them **much more** likely, and in fact, almost 1 non-voter in 5 says that he/she would be less likely to vote under such a system.
- ▶ About 4 voters in 10 say that they would be more or much more likely to vote under such a model, but again, many – 1 in 7 – would be less likely.

5.0 Types of non-voters

In this section, we examine some of the key characteristics of non-voters in more depth.

The findings outlined below suggest that most young non-voters are distracted and possibly displaced from voting rather than disassociated from the political process. It is not that they feel that voting is not important; rather, they are preoccupied with other activities and do not feel that they know enough to make the important decision of who to vote for. Although they would prefer to vote, at this point in their lives, the issues do not interest them enough to gather the information necessary to make a choice. In fact, it appears that many young non-voters would like to vote, but hesitate to because they do not want to waste their vote on the wrong candidate. Like non-voters in general, making voting more convenient is only a small part of the problem. Engaging young people in the issues is the true challenge in getting them to vote.

Non-voters are divided about 60/40 between irregular non-voters and persistent non-voters. Membership in the persistent non-voters group is not static. Young people make up a large chunk of this group. However, as they age, many will become irregular non-voters or even regular voters. The question is whether this group of persistent non-voters is growing. This research cannot answer that question, but it does suggest that most non-voters (young and old) plan to vote in future elections and, as such, have not given up on the electoral system. In other words, a majority of non-voters, regardless of type, are predisposed to vote. It is not the process or the system that stops them, but their own sense of the worth of their own vote. Although it is important that people vote, it seems that it is less important that they themselves do so.

5.1 Age of non-voters

We noted above that non-voters tend to be younger than voters, but even among non-voters, age plays an important role in their reasons for not voting and in their support for various alternatives.

5.1.1 Age and past voting

Among those who were eligible to vote in at least one of these previous elections, those in the youngest age cohort (18 to 29) are the most likely to report voting in none (even though they were eligible to vote in at least one). Almost 6 in 10 say they did not vote in any of the previous three elections.

Older respondents are more likely to have voted, but even in the oldest age cohort (55+), only about 1 in 3 voted in all three. See Table 16.

	Eligible non-voters (n=379)		
	18 to 29	30 to 54	55 or older
All three	11%	21%	32%
Two of three	15%	22%	25%
One of three	18%	18%	23%
None	56%	39%	21%
Total	100%	100%	101%
Note: Excludes those who were ineligible for all three elections. Results are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.001).			

5.1.2 Age and reasons for not voting

Historically, young people have always been less likely to vote than older adults. Participation is often seen as a “life cycle” issue, with many young non-voters becoming voters as they age and political issues affect them more directly. The concern is not so much that young people do not vote. Rather, it is with the growth in non-participation among young adults. The primary concern is that the youngest electors may be less likely to vote as they age. The act of voting increases the likelihood that an individual will vote in the future. Therefore, as the pool of young voters shrinks, so (the argument goes) does the proportion of future voters. The larger the pool of non-voters among the youngest age group, the smaller the number of individuals who will vote in the future. Although this hypothesis cannot be addressed directly through

these survey results, we can look for hints of the future behaviour of young non-voters.

Our survey indicates that young adults (18 to 29) are most likely to report that a lack of knowledge and lack of interest are the barriers that prevented them from voting in the last provincial election. Of the eight reasons for not voting tested with respondents, age was a significant factor in the perceived importance of three.

- ▶ Young adults (18 to 29) are more likely to say that not knowing enough about the parties, policies, or candidates was a very important reason for not voting. Indeed, over 4 in 10 in this age cohort say that this reason was very important. As respondents get older, they are less likely to say this was very important in their decision. (However, this difference is only suggestive, not statistically significant.)
- ▶ Younger respondents are also more likely to say that being too busy was very important in their decision not to vote. About 1 in 3 of those 18 to 29 years of age say that this reason was very important, compared to half as many of those 55 and older (15%). Being “too busy” to vote is another way of saying that voting is not a priority and that other activities in their lives are more important.
- ▶ Younger non-voters are also more likely to say that not knowing where or when to vote was very important in their decision. Although this is very important to many, regardless of age group, the younger age group is more likely to say it is at least somewhat important in their decision not to vote (37%), compared with older age groups (e.g., 55+ – 26%). Again, not knowing where or when to vote is also a sign of lack of interest, as voting locations and times are widely publicized and easily discovered if interested.

See Table 17.

	Very important (n=384)		
	18 to 29	30 to 54	55+
Did not know enough about the parties, policies, or candidates	44%	31%	21%
Too busy*	32%	28%	15%
The location to vote was not convenient**	21%	12%	19%

Note: Differences in results by age group are statistically significant (chi-square probability=*.000 **.002).

It is not surprising then that only some young non-voters (18 to 29) are less likely than older non-voters to say that they followed the 2007 election closely (23%) or that they were knowledgeable about the policies and platforms of the various parties (41%). See Table 18.

During 2007 provincial election...	Age of non-voter (n=384)		
	18 to 29	30 to 54	55+
Followed the election somewhat or very closely	23%	41%	67%
Somewhat/very knowledgeable about the policies and election platforms	41%	54%	70%

Note: Differences in results by age group are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

5.1.3 Age and attitudes toward voting

Age of non-voters has little significant impact on attitudes about voting. Most non-voters, regardless of age, say that it is very important or essential that people vote. Similarly, regardless of age, few think it is not important.

This findings suggests that non-voting among youth is part of the “life cycle” issue and that, although they are not yet participating, they recognize the importance of voting and may do so in the future. See Table 19.

	Age of non-voter (n=384)		
	18 to 29	30 to 54	55+
Very important/essential	54%	60%	69%
Somewhat important	33%	28%	12%
Not important	12%	11%	14%
Don't know	1%	1%	6%
Total	100%	100%	101%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Regardless of their age, non-voters share many similar attitudes towards voting.

- ▶ **Attitudes toward the voting process.** Regardless of their age, a majority of non-voters agree at least somewhat that voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen. That being said, the survey findings suggest that younger non-voters are less supportive of the current voting process, with most saying low voter turnout indicates that the system is not working. However, neither difference is statistically significant.
- ▶ **Attitudes toward political process/issues.** Regardless of age, non-voters share some attitudes regarding political parties and issues. Many of these non-voters agree that there are no political parties they really agree with and that none of the political parties address the issues that are important to them. That being said, a majority in non-voters of all age groups agree with these statements.
- ▶ **Attitudes toward voting.** Regardless of age, many non-voters say they are more likely to vote if the race is close. The survey findings suggest that young non-voters are less cynical about the outcome of provincial elections. While almost half of those 55 or older agree the outcome has no direct effect on them, only about 1 in 5 of those 18 to 29 years of age agrees. Similarly, younger non-voters are less likely than older non-voters to say their vote does not really matter in a provincial election or in their electoral division.
- ▶ **Attitudes toward encouraging voting.** Although not statistically significant, the youngest age group is most likely to agree that schools should do more to educate children of the benefits of voting. Possibly because they feel that they lack knowledge, most young non-voters support the idea of schools doing more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation. A majority in all age groups also think parents should do more to instill the importance of voting in their children. However, possibly because they do not necessarily agree with their parents' political positions, young non-voters are slightly less likely than older non-voters to agree that parents should instill the importance of voting in their children. See Table 20.

Agree that...	Age of non-voter (n=384)		
	18 to 29	30 to 54	55+
Attitudes toward voting process			
When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working	72%	71%	59%
Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen	59%	65%	66%
Attitudes toward political process/issues			
None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me	37%	48%	45%
There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with.	34%	44%	44%
Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand.	26%	30%	35%
Attitudes toward voting			
I'm more likely to vote if the election race is close	43%	46%	49%
My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election*	30%	34%	38%
Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me	22%	38%	46%
My vote doesn't really matter in electoral division**	21%	37%	36%
Attitudes toward encouraging voting			
Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation	79%	72%	65%
Parents should instill in their children the importance of voting	60%	68%	75%
Note: Differences in results by age group are statistically significant (chi sq. probability=* .002 ** .005)			

As Table 21 shows, those in the youngest age cohort are not significantly different from older respondents in terms of their likelihood to vote in the next provincial election. Although this is not definitive, it does suggest that most young non-voters have not dismissed the system, although they are not as wedded to it as older non-voters.

Vote in the next provincial election	Age of non-voter (n=384)		
	18 to 29	30 to 54	55+
Very likely	26%	34%	42%
Somewhat likely	41%	33%	19%
Unlikely	32%	28%	29%
Don't know	1%	5%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Note: Difference statistically significant chi-square p=.007			

5.2 Past voting behaviour

As mentioned, about 4 non-voters in 10 had not voted in any of the three previous elections. These persistent non-voters often have different attitudes than irregular non-voters (i.e., those who voted in at least one of the last three elections).

Based on the findings from this survey, in the last election, about 17% of eligible voters might be classified as persistent non-voters. About 26% might be considered irregular non-voters, who, like many voters, do not always vote in every election.

5.2.1 Characteristics of types of non-voters

As mentioned, young adults are more likely to be persistent non-voters.

- ▶ About 3 persistent non-voters in 10 come from the 18 to 29 age cohort, although they account for just over 1 in 10 of irregular voters. Persistent non-voters also tend to have lower levels of education; about 2 in 3 have a high school education or less.
- ▶ Conversely, irregular non-voters tend to be older and have a higher level of education. (Of course, in part, this reflects the younger age of persistent non-voters.) See Table 22.

	Persistent non-voters (n=162)	Irregular non-voters (n=238)
Age*		
18 to 29	31%	14%
30 to 54	56%	57%
55 and older	13%	30%
Education*		
Less than high school	26%	17%
High school grad	39%	25%
Some post secondary	10%	10%
College/University grad	26%	47%
Note: *Differences in results by persistent and irregular non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000). This includes only those who provided responses.		

5.2.2 Decision not to vote

Persistent non-voters are more likely than irregular voters to report:

- ▶ not being interested in the 2007 provincial election. Persistent non-voters are more likely to report that they did not follow the 2007 provincial election closely (76%). Irregular non-voters are more involved in the process. Unlike persistent non-voters, a majority of irregular non-voters followed the 2007 provincial election somewhat or very closely (only 44% did not).
- ▶ Not knowing about the policies and platforms of the various political parties (60%). Irregular non-voters tend to think of themselves as somewhat or very knowledgeable about the policies and platforms of parties in the 2007 provincial election (only 33% say they are not).

See Table 23.

Table 23: Knowledge of 2007 election		
	Persistent non-voters (n=162)	Irregular non-voters (n=238)
Followed 2007 election		
Very closely	4%	15%
Somewhat closely	20%	41%
Not very closely	25%	24%
Not at all closely	51%	20%
Knowledge of the policies and platforms		
Very knowledgeable	6%	13%
Somewhat knowledgeable	33%	53%
Not very knowledgeable	30%	22%
Not at all knowledgeable	30%	11%
Note: Non-responses are included in the calculations, but not shown. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Differences between persistent and irregular non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).		

However, persistent and irregular non-voters tend to say that the same reasons were very important in their decision not to vote.

- ▶ Interestingly, the most common reason rated as at least somewhat important by both persistent (57%) and irregular (57%) non-voters is that they did not know enough about the parties, policies, and candidates to vote. This appears to be at odds with how closely the irregular non-voters follow the election and knowledgeable these irregular non-voters claim to be compared to persistent non-voters.

- ▶ Both persistent (45%) and irregular (43%) non-voters are as likely to say being too busy played a role in their decision to not vote in this election.
- ▶ Indeed the only significant difference in ratings of the importance of various reasons for not voting is being out of town. Irregular non-voters (31%) are almost twice as likely as persistent non-voters (17%) to say this was important in their decision not to vote.

Many persistent non-voters never intended to vote in the last provincial election. About 1 persistent non-voters in 3 knew as soon as the election was called that they would not vote. Only about 1 in 5 made the decision on Election Day. Irregular non-voters are much more likely to wait, with some 4 in 10 deciding not to vote on Election Day. This suggests that time constraints prevented many irregular non-voters from casting a ballot, whereas persistent non-voters were simply not interested in voting. See Table 24.

Decided not to vote...	Persistent non-voters (n=162)	Irregular non-voters (n=238)
As soon as the election was called	32%	17%
Sometime during the election	37%	35%
On Election Day	20%	41%
Don't remember	11%	7%
Total	100%	100%

Note: Differences in results by persistent and irregular non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

5.2.3 Attitudes toward voting

Perhaps it is not surprising, but persistent non-voters are much more less likely than irregular non-voters to think voting is important and generally have less positive attitudes about voting and what it means.

As shown in Table 25, although persistent and irregular non-voters share opinions on the importance of people voting, persistent voters are less convinced. Still, a majority of persistent non-voters believe that voting is at least somewhat important.

- ▶ Over 3 persistent non-voters in 4 say that it is at least somewhat important that people vote in elections, including 41% who say it is very important or essential.

- ▶ Over 9 irregular non-voters in 10 say it is at least somewhat important, including 74% who say it is very important or essential.

	Persistent non-voters (n=162)	Irregular non-voters (n=238)
Essential	8%	24%
Very important	33%	50%
Somewhat important	36%	19%
Not important	19%	7%
Not sure	4%	1%
Total	100%	101%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Differences in results by persistent and irregular non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

Although persistent and irregular non-voters share many attitudes about voting, they differ in significant ways as well.

Statement	Agree (6 to 10)	
	Persistent non-voters (n=162)	Irregular non-voters (n=238)
Attitudes toward voting process		
When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working	66%	66%
Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen*	47%	73%
Attitudes toward political process/issues		
None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me	43%	40%
There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with.	44%	36%
Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand.	36%	27%
Attitudes toward voting		
I'm more likely to vote if the election race is close*	30%	53%
My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election	38%	32%
Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me*	36%	34%
My vote doesn't really matter in electoral division	36%	31%
Attitudes toward encouraging voting		
Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation	64%	71%
Parents should instill in their children the importance of voting*	49%	78%

*Note: Difference between persistent and irregular non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

As shown in Table 27 above:

- ▶ **Attitudes toward the voting process.** Although a majority of both types of non-voters agree that not voting suggests that the system is not working, irregular non-voters (73%) are much more likely to agree than persistent non-voters (47%) that voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen.
- ▶ **Attitudes toward political process/issues.** Interestingly, both types of non-voters are as likely to agree that there is no political party that they really agree with; that none of the parties addressed issues important to them; and that the issues the government deals with are too complex for the public to understand. However, in neither case does a majority agree.
- ▶ **Attitudes toward voting.** In most cases only a minority of non-voters, regardless of type, agrees with statements that suggest their vote is not important. Irregular non-voters are more likely than persistent non-voters to be influenced by the closeness of the race. About 1 in 3 persistent non-voters agrees they are more likely to vote if the race is close. This compares with over half those who are irregular non-voters. Although both types of non-voters are as likely to agree that the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on them, irregular non-voters are more likely to disagree (52%, compared to 35% of persistent non-voters), while persistent non-voters are more likely to be neutral (25%, compared with 17% of irregular non-voters).
- ▶ **Attitudes toward encouraging voting.** Persistent non-voters are less likely to agree that parents should instill in their children the importance of voting. About half of persistent non-voters agree, compared with almost 8 in 10 irregular non-voters. However, a majority in both groups support greater efforts in schools to teach students about the benefits of voting.

Although a majority of persistent non-voters believe that voting is important, that their vote counts both in their electoral division and overall, and that schools should do more to educate children about voting, a majority of these non-voters do not plan to vote in the next provincial elections.

- ▶ About 1 in 3 persistent non-voters say they are likely to vote in the next provincial election, including only 9% who

say that they are very likely. Almost 6 in 10 say they are unlikely to vote in the next provincial election.

- ▶ Over 8 in 10 irregular non-voters say they are likely to vote in the next provincial election, including half who say they are very likely. Indeed, only 11% of irregular non-voters are unlikely to vote in the next election.

See Table 27.

Vote in next provincial election	Persistent non-voters (n=162)	Irregular non-voters (n=238)
Very likely	9%	50%
Somewhat likely	27%	33%
Unlikely	58%	11%
Don't know	6%	6%
Total	100%	100%

Note: Differences in results by persistent and irregular non-voters statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

While many persistent non-voters do not think they will vote in future elections, most still support Elections Manitoba specifically encouraging Manitobans to vote.

- ▶ About 2 persistent non-voters in 3 at least somewhat support Elections Manitoba in these efforts. It may be that the majority of persistent non-voters would themselves like such encouragement.
- ▶ About 8 irregular non-voters in 10 at least somewhat support Elections Manitoba encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote.

	Persistent non-voters (n=162)	Irregular non-voters (n=238)
Strongly support	23%	49%
Somewhat support	42%	34%
Somewhat oppose	15%	7%
Strongly oppose	14%	8%
Don't know	7%	3%
Total	101%	100%

Note: Columns do not sum to 100% due to rounding. Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

Persistent non-voters are less likely than irregular non-voters to be satisfied with the present electoral system. Still a majority of persistent non-voters (over 6 in 10) are at least somewhat satisfied. About 3 in 4 irregular non-voters are at least somewhat satisfied.

	Persistent non-voters (n=162)	Irregular non-voters (n=238)
Very satisfied	9%	22%
Somewhat satisfied	53%	53%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14%	14%
Very dissatisfied	14%	8%
Not sure	12%	3%
Total	101%	100%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Difference between persistent and irregular non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

Changing the voting system to proportion representation would encourage some non-voters to vote. However, among both persistent (7%) and irregular (14%) non-voters, it makes only a few much more likely to vote. Indeed, such a change makes more respondents less likely to vote. Changing the system does not appear to be the way of encouraging these non-voters to vote. See Table 30.

	Persistent non-voters (n=162)	Irregular non-voters (n=238)
Much more likely	7%	14%
More likely	40%	40%
No more likely	22%	23%
Less likely	19%	15%
Not sure	12%	8%
Total	100%	100%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

6.0 Conclusion

This research reinforces what we found in 2003, that most Manitobans think that it is very important for people to vote, but that whether they personally vote is not as important.

Compared with the previous provincial election, there was a dramatic drop in the voter turnout in 2003. At the time of the 2003 research, we postulated that all else being equal voter turnout would rebound in the next provincial election closer to, if slightly lower than, that in 1999. We were, in part, correct; there was a slight rebound in turnout (54% to 57%), but still far below the 1999 election (68%). While these lower than normal turnouts may be circumstantial, the concern remains that electors are becoming increasingly disengaged from the process and will continue to turn out in smaller numbers.

6.1 Profile of non-voters

Compared to voters, non-voters tend to be younger, less educated, have children under 18 years of age in their households, and come from households that do not vote. That being said, there are non-voters in every age cohort, education group, and household type. In addition, the non-voters group is not static; a person may be a member of this group in one election but not the next. Indeed, many non-voters are irregular voters, who have voted in the past, but circumstances particular to the last election made voting less of a priority for them.

Less than 1 in 5 eligible voters are what we might classify as permanent non-voters; that is, those who simply do not vote. Even this is misleading; although this is the group that is the least likely to vote and see a value in voting, membership is not permanent and many younger non-voters indicate that they will vote in the future. However, they will be replaced, at least for a period of time, by new, young non-voters.

There are several concerns about the composition of the non-voter group in general. As mentioned, a large proportion of the non-voters group is made up of young adults. Other research suggests it is quite normal for young adults to be disproportionately represented in the non-voters segment. Indeed, voting is often seen as having a life-cycle; as people age they take on greater responsibilities and are affected more directly by government policies. As a result, they become more engaged in the political process and are more likely to vote. However, it has also been

suggested that lack of engagement in the electoral process at an early age can lead to a lifetime of not voting. Non-voting in one election reinforces the decision not to vote in the next. The worry is that the growing number of young adults not voting will result in more of these young adults remaining non-voters throughout their life.

The growing non-voting among young adults may also reflect another sociological phenomenon; what has been called the “adult teenager.” Young adults are taking longer to adopt the responsibilities that used to be associated with adulthood (e.g., a career, marriage, children, mortgage, etc.). These responsibilities are being delayed until they are in their 30s. It is possible that, like these other adult responsibilities, the responsibility of voting is being delayed until later in life.

6.2 The idea of voting

In general, most Manitobans believe that voting is important, that is, they accept that the concept of voting is intrinsic to our system of government. It is a system that most are satisfied with and believe requires participation of people to work. However, their own vote (that is, the act of casting their vote), is less important. So the challenge is how to engage all eligible Manitobans so they make voting a priority.

As this research shows, the vast majority of Manitobans are predisposed to vote, but for many it is not a priority. Most believe (regardless of whether they voted or not in 2007) that it is very important, or even essential, that people vote. Most also agree that it is the duty of good citizens to vote. And if asked, most non-voting respondents would likely say that they are good citizens. Although they did not get around to voting, many probably believe their non-voting was an anomaly. In other words, they consider their intention to vote almost as good as the act of voting itself. Likely the outcomes of elections help reinforce their decisions, as the results would not have changed if they had voted.

6.3 Reasons for not voting

Although most Manitobans continue to think voting is important, it does not necessarily mean they will vote.

There are many factors in decisions not to vote, and non-voters often have more than one reason for not participating. However, it appears that the reasons for not voting generally fall into two broad categories: people who are either distracted or disassociated from the election process.

Most non-voters give reasons that suggest that they wanted to vote, but other things distracted them from casting a ballot. They report they did not vote because of lack of time, illness, or travel. Many of these reasons are just another way of saying that voting was not a priority, compared to other activities. As a group, these non-voters are the more likely to participate in future elections than other non-voters, and might be considered irregular voters.

Disassociated non-voters can be further broken down into two subcategories. There are those who are not interested in the process because they feel the issues are too complex to understand, they do not know enough to vote, or they are not interested in the issues. These non-voters may believe it is important to vote, but do not value their own vote for the reasons listed above. These non-voters are more difficult to encourage to vote. Although they have not given up on the system, they simply do not believe that their vote is constructive because they know so little.

The other subcategory of disassociated non-voters includes those who have chosen to disengage from the process because they believe political parties do not represent their views, parties do not address the issues that important, or more generally that politicians cannot be trusted. They also believe that the outcome does not affect them directly. This group is the most difficult to get re-engaged in the process, since they are less likely to believe that it is important for anyone to vote.

While we have painted these types of non-voters as distinct, as mentioned, non-voters report many different reasons as important in their decision not to vote.

6.4 Encouraging voting

Issues of displacement, that is, the way the election is administered, are relatively insignificant in the decision not to vote. In some ways, this is unfortunate because such problems would be the easiest to address. Making it more convenient to vote may encourage non-voters to cast their ballot, but the impacts appear to be marginal. Although some non-voters report being dissatisfied with the current electoral system, few report that it stops them from voting. Substantive changes to the electoral system (e.g., proportional representation) would encourage some non-voters to participate, but would discourage others.

There is strong support among voters and non-voters alike for taking steps to encourage voting — through both the school system and Elections Manitoba — by explaining the importance of such participation. This reflects that although people do not themselves always vote, they recognize how important it is and want to encourage as many people as possible to do so. In the end, it appears that one of the few things that Elections Manitoba can do to help combat declining voter turnout is to reinforce something Manitobans already believe: that the act of voting is very important.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

INTRO:

Good evening, this is _____ and I'm calling from Prairie Research Associates, an independent research firm based in Winnipeg. Tonight we are calling on behalf of Elections Manitoba, the independent organization charged with running provincial elections, to get your impression of the process of voting in the province.

We are very interested in getting opinions of both people who voted and those who did not in the last provincial election. Would you have time now to do this short survey with me?

S1. Before we begin, I just have a few things to confirm with you. Were you eligible to vote in the last Manitoba provincial election, held in May 2007?

Yes -- CONTINUE.....	1	
No -- TERMINATE	0	=> /TERM
Don't Know -- TERMINATE.....	8	=> /TERM
No Response -- TERMINATE.....	9	=> /TERM

S2. And just to confirm, you are at least 18 years of age or older?

Yes -- CONTINUE.....	1	
No -- TERMINATE	0	=> /TERM
Don't Know -- TERMINATE.....	8	=> /TERM
No Response -- TERMINATE.....	9	=> /TERM

S3. Have you been living in Manitoba for the past 12 months?

Yes -- CONTINUE.....	1	
No -- TERMINATE	0	=> /TERM
Don't Know -- TERMINATE.....	8	=> /TERM
No Response -- TERMINATE.....	9	=> /TERM

S4. Are you a Canadian citizen?

Yes -- CONTINUE.....	1	=> /Q1
No -- TERMINATE	0	=> /TERM
Don't Know -- TERMINATE.....	8	=> /TERM
No Response -- TERMINATE.....	9	=> /TERM

Q1:

SECTION 1: VOTING BEHAVIOUR

Q1. People have many different reasons for deciding whether to vote or not to vote. During the last provincial election in May 2007, approximately half of eligible voters turned out to vote. In this case, both voting and not voting was common in the last election. Did you choose to vote in the May 2007 provincial election?

Yes	1	=> /TERM
No.....	0	
Don't Know - TERMINATE.....	8	=> /TERM
No Response - TERMINATE.....	9	=> /TERM

Q2:

IF Q1 = YES

Q2. As mentioned, people have different reasons for going out to vote. Why did you vote in the May 2007 provincial election?

Reasons for voting (SPECIFY)	66	O
Don't Know	88	X
No Response	99	X

Q3:

IF Q1 = NO

Q3. As mentioned, people have different reasons for not voting. Why didn't you vote in the May provincial election?

Reasons for not voting (SPECIFY)	66	O
Don't Know	88	X
No Response	99	X

Q4:

IF Q1 = NO

Q4. What, if anything, would have encouraged you to vote in the recent election?

Incentives (SPECIFY)	66	O
Don't Know	88	X
No Response	99	X

Q5:

Q5. Are there other people in your household who were eligible to vote in the May 2007 provincial election?

Yes	1	
No	0	=> Q7
Don't Know	8	=> Q7
No Response	9	=> Q7

Q6:

IF Q5 = YES

Q6. As far as you know, <dumm2 > did all those eligible in your household vote in the May 2007 election?

Yes	1
No	0
Don't Know	8
No Response	9

Q7:

Q7. Voter turnout has been declining in recent Manitoba elections. In your opinion, why are fewer people voting?

Reasons (SPECIFY)	66	O
Don't Know	88	X
No Response	99	X

Q8X. I'm going to read a list of reasons people sometimes give for not voting. As I read each, please tell me whether the reason was very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important in your decision not to vote in the May 2007 provincial election.

Q8:

QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED

Q8. Didn't know where or when to vote. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the May 2007 provincial election?)

Very important.....	4
Somewhat important.....	3
Not very important.....	2
Not at all important.....	1
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know.....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

Q11:

QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED

Q11. Out of town. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the May 2007 provincial election?)

Very important.....	4
Somewhat important.....	3
Not very important.....	2
Not at all important.....	1
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know.....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

Q12:

QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED

Q12. Too busy. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the May 2007 provincial election?)

Very important.....	4
Somewhat important.....	3
Not very important.....	2
Not at all important.....	1
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know.....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

Q13:

QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED

Q13. My vote didn't matter since it was clear which party was going to win the provincial election. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the May 2007 provincial election?)

- Very important..... 4
 - Somewhat important..... 3
 - Not very important..... 2
 - Not at all important..... 1
 - (DO NOT READ) Don't Know..... 8
 - (DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9
-

Q14:

QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED

Q14. My vote didn't matter in my riding since it was clear who would win. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the May 2007 provincial election?)

- Very important..... 4
 - Somewhat important..... 3
 - Not very important..... 2
 - Not at all important..... 1
 - (DO NOT READ) Don't Know..... 8
 - (DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9
-

Q15:

QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED

Q15. Did not know enough about the parties, policies, or candidates to vote. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the May 2007 provincial election?)

- Very important..... 4
 - Somewhat important..... 3
 - Not very important..... 2
 - Not at all important..... 1
 - (DO NOT READ) Don't Know..... 8
 - (DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9
-

Q16:

QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED

Q16. Couldn't relate to any of the election issues. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the May 2007 provincial election?)

- Very important..... 4
 - Somewhat important..... 3
 - Not very important..... 2
 - Not at all important..... 1
 - (DO NOT READ) Don't Know..... 8
 - (DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9
-

Q17:

ALL RESPONDENTS

Q17. Thinking back to the May provincial election, which of the following best describes when you decided that you would or would not vote...(READ RESPONSES)

As soon as the election was called.....	1
Soon after the election was called	2
Part way through the election campaign	3
A few days before election day	4
On election day	5
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response	9

Q18:

Q18. Thinking about the last provincial election in Manitoba, held in May 2007, would you say that you followed the election very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely or not at all closely?

Very closely	4
Somewhat closely.....	3
Not very closely	2
Not at all closely.....	1
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response	9

Q19:

Q19. Thinking about the various political parties that participated in the election, would you say that you were very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable, or not at all knowledgeable about their policies and election platforms?

Very knowledgeable.....	4
Somewhat knowledgeable	3
Not very knowledgeable	2
Not at all knowledgeable	1
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response	9

Q20:

SECTION 3: ATTITUDES TOWARD VOTING

Q20. In your view, how critical is it that people vote in elections? Is it essential, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

Essential.....	5	
Very important.....	4	
Somewhat important.....	3	
Not very important	2	=> Q22X
Not at all important.....	1	=> Q22X
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know	8	=> Q22X
(DO NOT READ) No Response	9	=> Q22X

Q21:

IF Q20 = 3-5

Q21. Why is it important that people vote?		
Reasons (SPECIFY).....	66	O
Don't Know.....	88	X
No Response.....	99	X

Q22X:

Q22X. Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree

QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED

Q23. My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree.....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

Q24:

QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED

Q24. My vote doesn't really matter in my electoral division (riding). (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree.....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

Q25:

QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED

Q25. There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1	01
2	02
3	03
4	04
5	05
6	06
7	07
8	08
9	09
10 - Strongly agree	10
Don't Know	88
No Response	99

Q26:

QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED

Q26. Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1	01
2	02
3	03
4	04
5	05
6	06
7	07
8	08
9	09
10 - Strongly agree	10
Don't Know	88
No Response	99

Q27:

QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED

Q27. None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1	01
2	02
3	03
4	04
5	05
6	06
7	07
8	08
9	09
10 - Strongly agree.....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

Q29:

QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED

Q29. Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1	01
2	02
3	03
4	04
5	05
6	06
7	07
8	08
9	09
10 - Strongly agree.....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

Q31:

QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED

Q31. Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1	01
2	02
3	03
4	04
5	05
6	06
7	07
8	08
9	09
10 - Strongly agree.....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

Q32:

QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED

Q32. When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1	01
2	02
3	03
4	04
5	05
6	06
7	07
8	08
9	09
10 - Strongly agree.....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

Q33:

QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED

Q33. Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1	01
2	02
3	03
4	04
5	05
6	06
7	07
8	08
9	09
10 - Strongly agree	10
Don't Know	88
No Response	99

Q34:

QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED

Q34. Parents should instill in their children the importance of voting. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1	01
2	02
3	03
4	04
5	05
6	06
7	07
8	08
9	09
10 - Strongly agree	10
Don't Know	88
No Response	99

Q35:

QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED

Q35. I'm more likely to vote if the election race is close. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.) (PROMPT: By race we mean the competition between candidates/parties.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1	01
2	02
3	03
4	04
5	05
6	06
7	07
8	08
9	09
10 - Strongly agree.....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

Q43:

Q43. Elections Manitoba is an independent, non-political agency responsible for running provincial elections. Would you support or oppose Elections Manitoba specifically encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote?

Strongly support.....	4
Somewhat support.....	3
Somewhat oppose.....	2
Strongly oppose.....	1
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know.....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

Q44:

Q44. As you know, for Manitoba provincial elections, people vote in an electoral division, and the candidate with the most votes wins. In general, how satisfied are you with the present electoral system? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

Very satisfied.....	4	=> Q46
Somewhat satisfied.....	3	=> Q46
Somewhat dissatisfied.....	2	
Very dissatisfied.....	1	
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know.....	8	=> Q46
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9	=> Q46

Q45:

IF Q44 = SOMEWHAT/VERY DISSATISFIED

Q45. Does the current method of deciding who wins discourage you from voting?

Yes, very much.....	2
Yes, somewhat.....	1
No.....	0
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know.....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

Q46:

Q46. What if we had a different system in which the seats would be divided among the political parties according to the total percentage of votes they get? If this system, known as "proportional representation," was implemented in Manitoba, would you be much more likely, more likely, less likely, or much less likely to vote?

Much more likely	4
More likely	3
Less likely.....	2
Much less likely	1
(DO NOT READ) Would make no difference.....	0
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response	9

Q58:

Q58. Now I'd like you to think back and tell me if you were eligible and did you vote in...
...The last federal election, that is, in January 2006?

Yes	1
No -- Did not vote	2
No -- Not eligible	3
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response	9

Q57:

SECTION 6: PAST BEHAVIOUR

Q57. Did you vote in... ..The last civic (municipal) election, that is, in October 2006?

Yes	1
No -- Did not vote	2
No -- Not eligible	3
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response	9

Q59:

Q59. Did you vote in... ..The provincial election in June 2003?

Yes	1
No -- Did not vote	2
No -- Not eligible	3
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response	9

Q60:

Q60. How likely are you to vote in the next provincial election? Would you say you are very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?

Very likely	4
Somewhat likely.....	3
Somewhat unlikely.....	2
Very unlikely	1
Don't Know	8
No Response	9

Q63:

SECTION 7: BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

Q63. Finally, I would like to ask you some background questions. These help us analyze the information collected. Do you have access to the Internet?

Yes	1
No.....	0
Don't Know.....	8
No Response	9

Q64:

Q64. How many people live in your household?

\$R 2 20

One person / Just myself.....	01	=> Q66
Don't Know.....	88	
No Response	99	

Q65:

Q65. How many household members are 18 years of age or older? NUMBER MUST NOT BE GREATER THAN TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN HOUSEHOLD (<Q64 >)

\$R 1 20

Don't Know.....	88
No Response	99

Q66:

Q66. Were you born in Canada or outside Canada?

In Canada.....	1
Outside Canada.....	2
Don't Know.....	8
No Response	9

Q67:

Q67. How long have you lived in Manitoba? ENTER NUMBER OF YEARS

\$R 2 100

Less than 6 months.....	000
6 to 12 months.....	001
All my life.....	777
Don't Know.....	888
No Response	999

Q68:

Q68. In what year were you born?

\$R 1904 1989

Don't Know / No Response.....	8888	=> Q69
-------------------------------	------	--------

Q69:

Q69. What is the highest level of education you completed?

Elementary school (0-8)	01
Some high school (9-12).....	02
High school grad	03
Some community / technical college.....	04
Community / technical college grad.....	05
Some university.....	06
University grad.....	07
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know	88
(DO NOT READ) No Response	99

Q70:

Q70. What are the first three characters of your postal code? (ONLY VALID MANITOBA POSTAL CODES ACCEPTED)

Q71:

Q71. I'm going to read some broad income categories. When I read the one that represents your total annual household income, please stop me.

Under \$20,000.....	1
\$20,000 to \$35,000.....	2
\$35,000 to \$50,000.....	3
\$50,000 to \$75,000.....	4
Over \$75,000	5
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response	9

GENDR:

RECORD GENDER - DO NOT ASK

Those are all the questions I have. On behalf of Prairie Research Associates and Elections Manitoba, thank you for your time. I also want to assure you that all your answers will be kept confidential.

GENDER:

Female	1	=> /INT99
Male	2	=> /INT99
Undetermined.....	3	=> /INT99

APPENDIX B

Comparison: 2007 with 2003 Findings

Introduction

The tables below compare the results from the 2007 and 2003 surveys of voters and non-voters, which occurred after that year's provincial election.

Characteristics of voters/non-voters

Demographics

Table B1: Demographic characteristics of voters/non-voters: 2007 and 2003				
	Non-voter		Voter	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Age*				
18 to 29	20%	33%	6%	10%
30 to 54	57%	52%	41%	47%
55 and over	23%	16%	53%	43%
Gender				
Female	60%	58%	55%	50%
Male	40%	42%	45%	50%
Q71 Household income				
Under \$35,000	32%	39%	22%	32%
\$35,000 to \$50,000	21%	23%	21%	19%
\$50,000 to \$75,000	21%	23%	24%	24%
Over \$75,000	27%	16%	33%	25%
Education*				
Less than high school	21%	20%	15%	20%
High school grad	30%	31%	20%	21%
Some post-secondary	10%	13%	13%	14%
College/University grad	39%	35%	52%	44%
Number of adult members of household size				
One member	27%	24%	22%	23%
Two members	54%	57%	63%	59%
Three or member	19%	18%	15%	18%
Children under 18 in household*				
Yes	40%	44%	29%	30%
No	60%	56%	71%	70%
Live in Manitoba				
All their life	62%	67%	61%	64%
Most of their life	12%	8%	11%	14%
Some of their life	27%	25%	27%	22%
Place of birth				
In Canada	87%	92%	89%	92%
Outside Canada	13%	8%	11%	8%

* Statistically significant difference (chi-square probability=.000)

Note: Percentages exclude those who did not know or refused.

Voting behaviour in past elections

Table B2: Past voting behaviour: 2007 and 2003				
<i>Now I'd like you to think back and tell me if you were eligible and did you vote in the...</i>				
<i>Q57. The last federal election, that is, in January 2006? (2000)</i>				
<i>Q58. Last civic (municipal) election, that is, in October 2006? (2002)</i>				
<i>Q59. The provincial election in June 2003? (1999)</i>				
	Non-voters		Voters	
	2007 (n=378)	2003 (n=342)	2007 (n=394)	2003 (n=382)
Voted in...*				
The last federal election	50%	48%	96%	96%
The previous provincial election	43%	44%	91%	94%
The last municipal election	32%	41%	88%	95%
Number of past three elections voted in**				
None	40%	38%	1%	2%
One	19%	21%	4%	3%
Two	21%	19%	16%	13%
All three	21%	23%	79%	82%
Note: *Based on those who were eligible to vote. **Excludes those who reported they were ineligible for all three elections.				

Voting in future elections

Table B3: Likelihood of voting in the next provincial elections: 2007 and 2003				
<i>Q60. How likely are you to vote in the next provincial general election? Would you say you are very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?</i>				
	Non-voters		Voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Very likely	33%	37%	95%	94%
Somewhat likely	31%	36%	4%	5%
Not likely	30%	22%	1%	1%
Don't know	6%	6%	2%	-
Total	100%	101%	102%	100%
Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding				

Other household members' voting behaviour

Table B4: Other people in household: 2007 and 2003				
<i>Q5. Are there other people in your household who were eligible to vote in the May 2007 (June 2003) provincial election?</i>				
<i>Q6. As far as you know, did all those eligible in your household vote in the May 2007 (June 2003) election?</i>				
	Non-voters		Voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Eligible to vote	70%	72%	78%	75%
	(n=280)	(n=288)	(n=310)	(n=310)
All eligible members voted*	22%	26%	91%	90%
* Statistically significant difference (chi-square probability=.000)				

Reasons for voting/not voting

Reasons for voting

Table B5: Reasons for voting in last provincial election: 2007 and 2003 voters		
<i>Q2. As mentioned, people have different reasons for choosing to vote. Why did you vote in the May 2007 (June 2003) provincial election?</i>		
Reason	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Importance of the act of voting		
Duty/You have to vote/Responsibility	24%	23%
Exercise right/privilege/To protect democracy	20%	24%
Voting is important/I wanted to vote/People should vote	7%	7%
Outcome of the process		
To support a candidate/party	15%	19%
To have a voice/A say in how things are done	13%	14%
No right to complain if we don't vote	11%	14%
Picking government/Government decisions affect everyone/	6%	1%
Only way to change things/Only way to make a difference	5%	9%
To let the majority's voice be heard/To find out what Manitobans want	1%	1%
Other reasons		
Always vote	15%	11%
System doesn't work if people don't vote	-	1%
Other reasons	1%	2%
Don't know	1%	2%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, column may not sum to 100%.

Explanations for not voting

Reasons for not voting in 2007/2003

Table B6: Reasons for NOT voting in last provincial election: 2007 and 2003 non-voters		
<i>Q3. As mentioned, people have different reasons for not voting. Why didn't you vote in the June (May) provincial election?</i>		
Reasons	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Distracted		
Didn't have time/Busy/Bad time of year/Had to work	17%	24%
Not at home/Away from home/Out of town	9%	8%
Forgot	5%	7%
Ill/Sick	5%	3%
Disassociated		
Lack trust of candidates/Didn't like any of the choices	14%	13%
Not interested/Couldn't be bothered/Indifferent	9%	12%
Doesn't matter who wins/No difference among parties	8%	8%
Outcome of election already determined	4%	5%
Dissatisfaction with government/Lack of leadership	1%	1%
Issues are irrelevant, not a major concern	1%	<1%
Too lazy to bother	1%	1%
My vote doesn't matter/doesn't make a difference	1%	-
Displaced		
Polls too far away/Far from work/No ride	4%	5%
Didn't know where or when to vote	2%	2%
Wasn't on voters list/Not enumerated can't vote/didn't have ID	2%	1%
Polls closed too early/Wasn't time to vote	1%	3%
Other		
Not well informed/No info on parties	7%	10%
Didn't know who to vote for/Didn't know candidates	6%	5%
Religious objections	3%	3%
Other	4%	2%
Don't know	4%	4%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, column may not sum to 100%.

Importance of factors in decision not to vote

Table B7: Very important reasons for not voting: 2007 and 2003 non-voters		
<i>Q8,11-16. I'm going to read a list of reasons people sometimes give for not voting. As I read each, please tell me whether the reason was very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important in your decision not to vote in the May 2007 (June 2003) provincial election.</i>		
	Very important	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)
Did not know enough about the parties, policies, or candidates to vote	32%	30%
Too busy	26%	28%
Couldn't relate to any of the election issues	22%	15%
My vote didn't matter since it was clear which party was going to win the provincial elections	21%	16%
My vote didn't matter in my riding since it was clear who would win	20%	19%
Did not know where/when to vote	15%	12%
Out of town	15%	15%

Reasons for decline in voter turnout

Table B8: Impressions of why voter turnout is declining: 2007 and 2003 Non-voters		
<i>Q7. Voter turnout has been declining in recent Manitoba elections. In your opinion, why are fewer people voting?</i>		
	Non-voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)
Disassociated		
Doesn't matter who wins/No difference between parties	22%	30%
Not interested/Don't care/Couldn't be bothered	14%	17%
Lack trust of candidate/Didn't like any of the choices	12%	11%
Issues: Irrelevant, not major concerns	5%	3%
Disillusioned with the process/too many election/too often	5%	-
Dissatisfaction with government/Lack of leadership	4%	5%
Youth: Not educated re: importance, relevance, responsibility	4%	3%
Outcome of election already determined/Vote doesn't matter	3%	13%
Distracted		
Don't have time/Too busy	6%	6%
Not well informed/No information on parties	4%	4%
Don't know who to vote for/Don't know candidates	4%	3%
People are lazy/stupid	2%	2%
People take democracy for granted	1%	2%
Not at home/Away from home/Out of town	1%	<1%
Displaced		
Polls too far away	2%	2%
Didn't know where/when to vote	1%	1%
Polls closed too early/Wasn't time to vote	<1%	<1%
Not on voters list/Not enumerated	-	-
Other		
Other	3%	5%
Don't know	20%	13%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

Table B9: Impressions of why voter turnout is declining: 2007 and 2003 Voters		
<i>Q7. Voter turnout has been declining in recent Manitoba elections. In your opinion, why are fewer people voting?</i>		
	Voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Disassociated		
Doesn't matter who wins/No difference between parties	15%	29%
Not interested/Don't care/Couldn't be bothered	27%	24%
Lack trust of candidate/Didn't like any of the choices	11%	14%
Youth: Not educated re: importance, relevance, responsibility	7%	5%
Outcome of election already determined/Vote doesn't matter	4%	15%
Dissatisfaction with government/Lack of leadership	4%	2%
Issues: Irrelevant, not major concerns	2%	3%
Disillusioned with the process/too many election/too often	1%	-
Distracted		
Don't have time/Too busy	7%	8%
Not well informed/No information on parties	4%	4%
Don't know who to vote for/Don't know candidates	3%	2%
People are lazy/stupid	5%	3%
People take democracy for granted	3%	3%
Not at home/Away from home/Out of town	-	<1%
Displaced		
Polls too far away	3%	1%
Didn't know where/when to vote	<1%	1%
Polls closed too early/Wasn't time to vote	-	-
Not on voters list/Not enumerated	<1%	<1%
Other		
Other	3%	2%
Don't know	13%	12%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

Timing of decision to vote/not vote

Table B10: Timing of decision to vote/not vote: 2007 and 2003				
<i>Q17. Thinking back to the June provincial election, which of the following best describes when you decided that you would or would not vote?</i>				
	Non-voters		Voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
On election day	33%	35%	5%	5%
During the election campaign	36%	37%	24%	20%
As soon as the election was called	23%	23%	70%	75%
Don't remember	9%	5%	2%	-
Total	100%	100%	101%	100%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. For each survey, differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

Knowledge of election

Table B11: Knowledge of election: 2007 and 2003				
<i>Q18. Thinking about the last provincial election in Manitoba, held in May 2007 (June 2003), would you say that you followed the election very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely or not at all closely?</i>				
<i>Q19. Thinking about the various political parties that participated in the election, would you say that you were very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable, or not at all knowledgeable about their policies and election platforms?</i>				
	Non-Voters		Voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Follow election				
Very closely	11%	6%	25%	22%
Somewhat closely	33%	37%	60%	65%
Not very closely	24%	30%	12%	10%
Not at all closely	33%	27%	3%	3%
Knowledge of the policies and platforms				
Very knowledgeable	10%	10%	21%	19%
Somewhat knowledgeable	45%	45%	69%	69%
Not very knowledgeable	25%	27%	8%	11%
Not at all knowledgeable	19%	17%	1%	2%

Note: Non responses are included in the calculations but not shown. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

Movitators to vote or not vote

Importance of voting

Table B12: Importance of people voting in election: 2007 and 2003				
<i>Q20. In your view, how critical is it that people vote in elections? Is it essential, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?</i>				
	Non-voters		Voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Essential/very important	60%	65%	93%	92%
Somewhat important	26%	25%	5%	7%
Not important	12%	8%	1%	1%

Note: Non-responses are included in the calculations but not shown. Columns do not sum to 100%.

Table B13: Reason why it is important to vote: 2007 and 2003				
<i>Q21. Why is it important that people vote?</i>				
Reasons	Non-voters		Voters	
	2007 (n=344)	2003 (n=363)	2007 (n=391)	2003 (n=405)
Affect outcome				
To have a voice/A say in how things are done	22%	27%	21%	24%
Only way to change things/Only way to make a difference	10%	10%	10%	12%
To let the majority's voice be heard	12%	10%	14%	13%
To support a candidate/party	14%	9%	7%	10%
No right to complain if we don't vote	7%	9%	18%	21%
Government/Government decisions affect everyone	11%	6%	7%	4%
Importance of the act of voting				
Exercise right/privilege/To protect democracy	12%	15%	23%	22%
System doesn't work if people don't vote	4%	9%	5%	9%
Duty or responsibility to vote	2%	4%	6%	7%
Voting is important/People should vote	3%	2%	2%	1%
Other reasons				
Don't know	7%	7%	2%	1%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

Attitudes towards voting

Table B14: Attitudes toward voting process: 2007 and 2003				
<i>Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.</i>				
Statement	Strongly agree (8 to 10)			
	Non-voters		Voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Attitudes toward voting process				
When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working.*	53%	51%	40%	36%
Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen.* †	50%	46%	86%	82%
Attitudes toward political process/issues				
There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with.* †	30%	27%	10%	11%
None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me.* †	24%	29%	11%	14%
Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand.*	17%	18%	7%	9%
Attitudes toward voting				
I'm more likely to vote if the election race is close.*	32%	27%	22%	27%
Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me.* †	23%	21%	10%	9%
My vote doesn't really matter in my electoral division (riding).* †	21%	19%	11%	9%
My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election.* †	21%	14%	8%	8%
Attitudes toward encouraging voting				
Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation.** ††	52%	52%	66%	66%
Parents should instil in their children the importance of voting.* †	51%	50%	87%	85%
Note: Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square p=.000 *2007 † 2003 p=.001 **2007, p=.003 †† 2003)				

Role of Elections Manitoba

Table B16: Encouraging Manitobans to vote				
<i>Q43. Elections Manitoba is an independent, non-political agency responsible for running provincial elections. Would you support or oppose Elections Manitoba specifically encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote?</i>				
	Non-voters		Voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Strongly support	39%	38%	68%	53%
Somewhat support	37%	43%	26%	37%
Somewhat oppose	10%	10%	2%	4%
Strongly oppose	10%	7%	2%	4%
Don't know	4%	4%	3%	2%
Total	101%	101%	101%	100%
Note: Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).				

Encourage respondents to vote

Table B17: Encourage respondents to vote: 2007 and 2003 voters		
Q4. What, if anything, would have encouraged you to vote in the recent election?		
	Voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Disassociated		
Having greater trust/confidence in candidates	18%	18%
Nothing would encourage them to vote	16%	19%
If there were important issues/Addressing issues of interest	7%	7%
Distracted/displaced		
More informed about candidates/issues	8%	9%
Election on a more convenient day/On a different day	7%	7%
Polls more easily accessible	4%	6%
More informed about when/where election was	4%	5%
Polls open earlier/later/longer	2%	3%
Alternate ways to vote (Internet, phone, mail)	<1%	2%
Advanced polls easier to access	<1%	1%
Other		
If outcome wasn't already determined	4%	3%
Usually do vote/If had been well enough to vote	4%	-
Other	5%	6%
Don't know	24%	20%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, column may not sum to 100%.

Satisfaction with current system

Table B16: Satisfaction with current electoral system: 2007 and 2003				
Q44. As you know, for Manitoba provincial elections, people vote in an electoral division, and the candidate with the most votes wins. In general, how satisfied are you with the present electoral system? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?				
Q45. Does the current method of deciding who wins discourage you from voting?				
	Non-voters		Voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Satisfaction*				
Very satisfied	17%	17%	31%	30%
Somewhat satisfied	53%	57%	56%	57%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14%	13%	10%	8%
Very dissatisfied	11%	8%	2%	3%
Not sure	6%	6%	2%	2%
Discourage you from voting				
Yes, very much	8%	4%	1%	<1%
Yes, somewhat	5%	5%	2%	2%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. *Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

Proportional representation

Table 31: Impact of proportional representation

Q46. What if we had a different system in which the seats would be divided among the political parties according to the total percentage of votes they get? If this system, known as "proportional representation," was implemented in Manitoba, would you be much more likely, more likely, less likely, or much less likely to vote?

	Non-voters		Voters	
	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Much more likely	11%	13%	12%	11%
More likely	40%	44%	26%	28%
Makes no difference	22%	15%	39%	34%
Less likely	11%	17%	11%	16%
Much less likely	6%	4%	3%	4%
Don't know	10%	7%	10%	7%
Total	100%	100%	101%	100%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. *Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability=.000).

APPENDIX C

Outcomes of numbers dialled

Call Record Elections Manitoba – Voter Turnout		
Outcome	n	%
A Total numbers attempted	19,160	100%
1. Not in service	3,651	19%
2. Fax	328	2%
3. Business	275	1%
Remaining	14,684	77%
B Total eligible numbers	14,684	100%
4. Busy	140	1%
5. Answering machines	2,322	16%
6. No answer	1,422	10%
7/8. Language/illness/incapability	634	4%
9. Selected/eligible respondent not available	269	2%
Remaining	9,897	67%
C Total asked	9,897	100%
10. Household refusal	356	4%
11. Respondent refusal	3,208	32%
12. Qualified respondent break off	568	6%
Remaining	5,765	58%
D Co-operative contacts	5,765	100%
13. Disqualified	4,965	86%
14. Completed interviews	800	14%
Refusal rate = (10+11+12)/C	4,132	42%
Response rate (D/B)	5,765	39%