



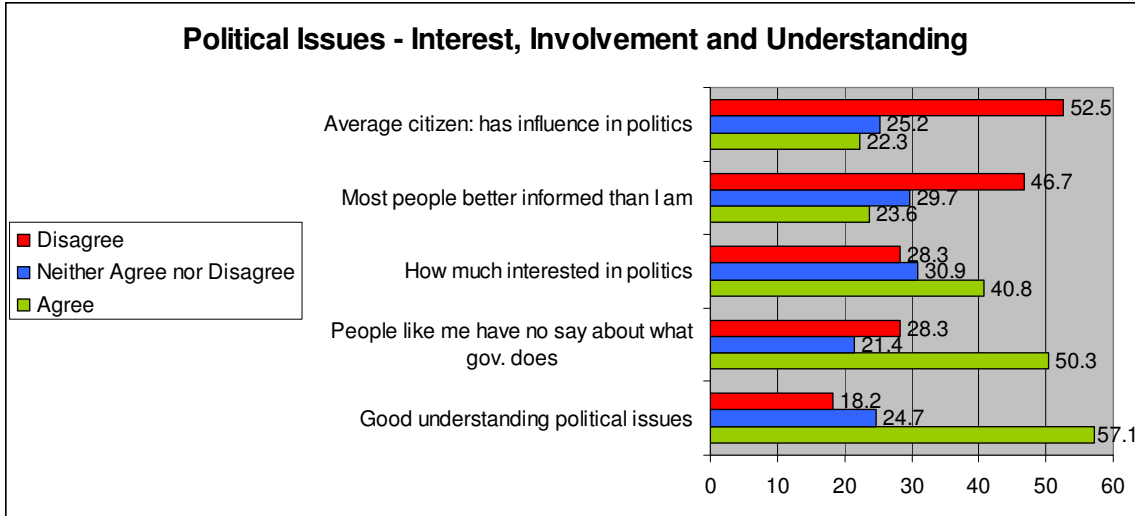
Vote Counts: How we view our knowledge, interest and impact on politics in Canada

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On Monday the 26th of March, Quebecers will be going to the polls. Surveys suggest that the election outcome will be close. Undoubtedly voter turnout will be crucial in determining the results in many ridings. On the basis of a national survey partly funded by the Association for Canadian Studies and conducted by the Carleton University Survey Centre over the summer and fall of 2006 that which follows will examine the value that Canadians attribute to the their votes as well as their knowledge and interest in politics. Some 860 Canadians were surveyed by the CUSC and the survey has a margin of error of 3.6 points 19 times out of 20.

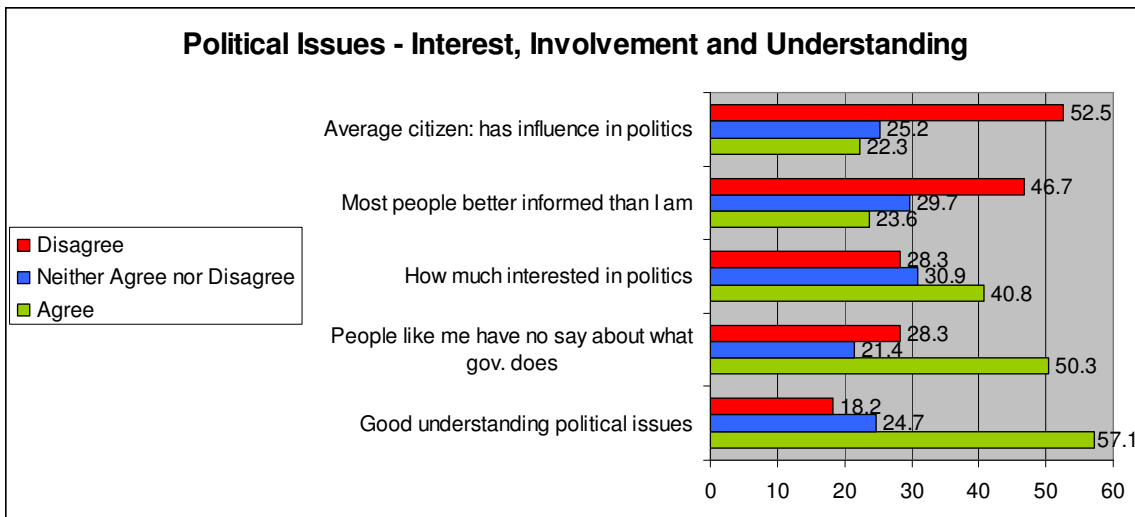
On the whole Canadians believe they have a good understanding of political issues as 57% agree when asked evaluate themselves in that regard. Less than one-quarter admit that most are better informed than they are. Some 40% surveyed agreed they were interested in politics. On questions around the extent to which individually and collectively it is felt that one has influence or a say in politics Canadians were fairly divided.

Agree N=866	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
Good understanding political issues	57.1	24.7	18.2
People like me have no say about what gov. does	50.3	21.4	28.3
How much interested in politics	40.8	30.9	28.3
Most people better informed than I am	23.6	29.7	46.7
Average citizen: has influence in politics	22.3	25.2	52.5



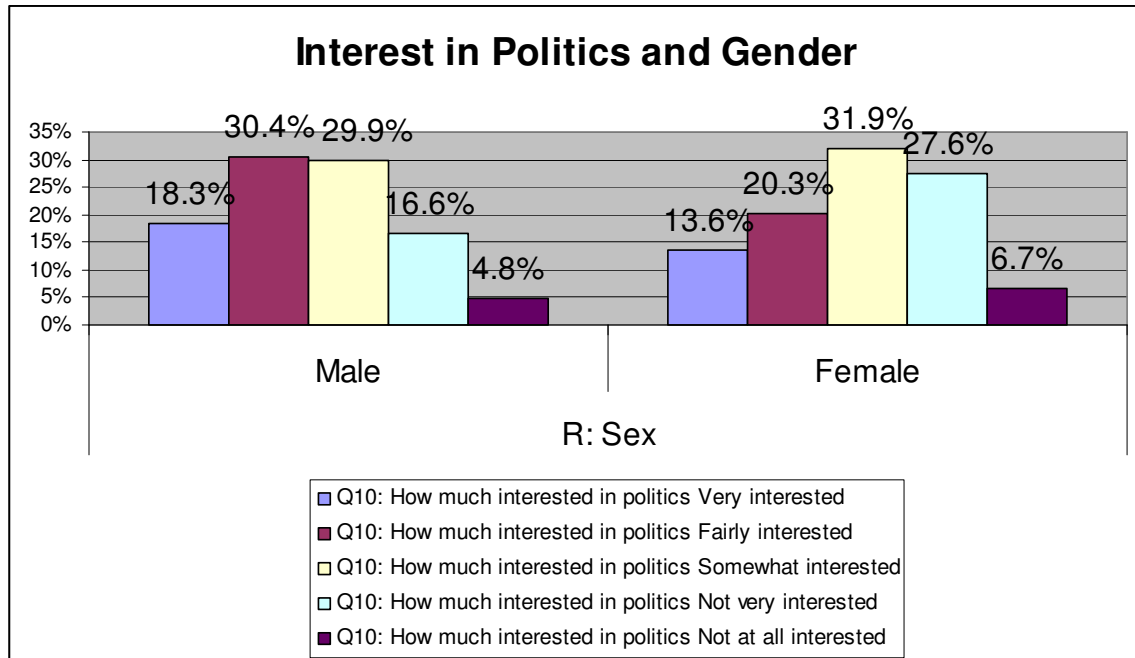
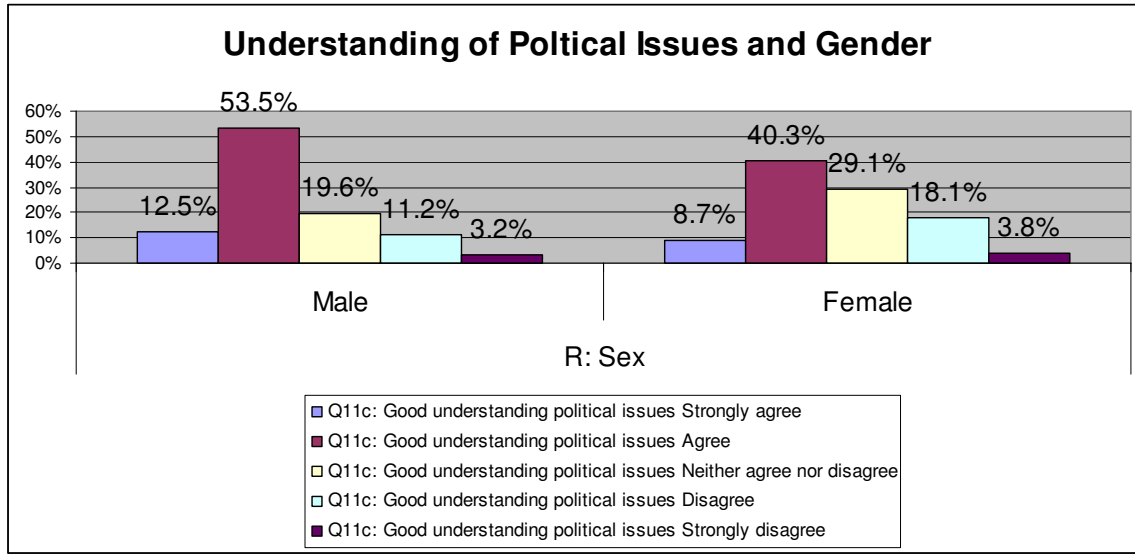
Those who report having voted in the last federal election were more likely to agree that they had a good understanding of political issues, less likely to admit that others had better knowledge, and were more interested in politics. But on the issue of influence both those who reported voting and those who didn't are in relative agreement about the influence in politics are around what government does.

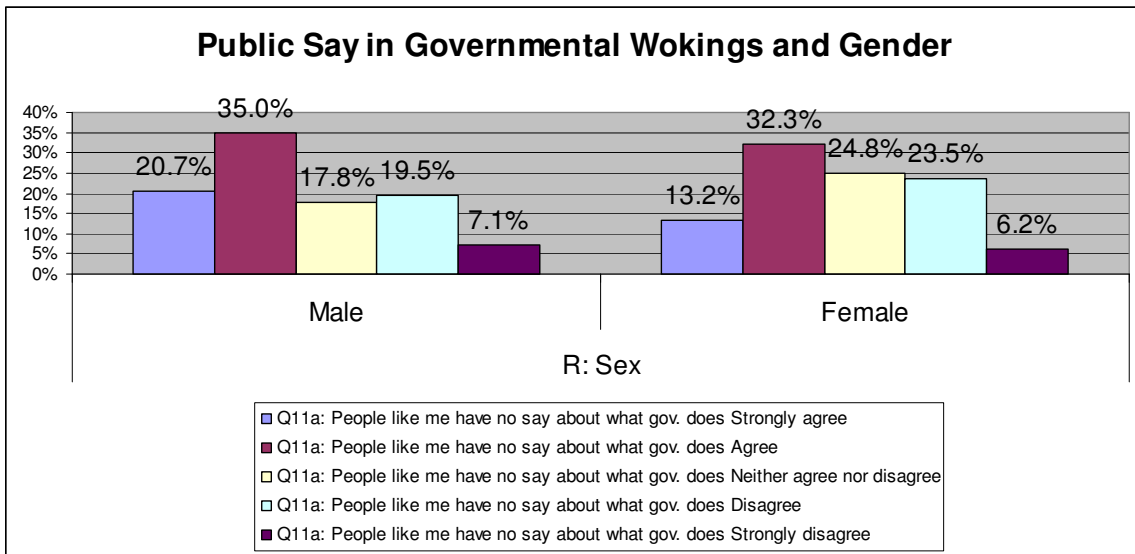
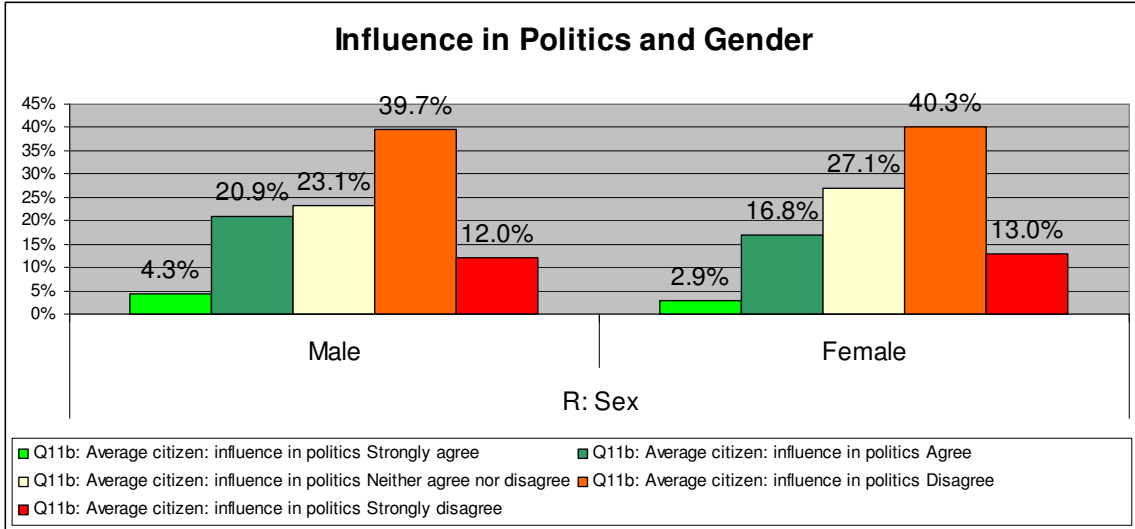
Agree (strongly and somewhat)	Voted in Last Election	Did Not Vote in Last Election
Most people better informed than I am	21.8	33.3
Interested in politics	44.9	20.8
Good understanding political issues	62.2	31.9
Average citizen: has influence in politics	22.7	21.4
People like me have no say about what gov. does	50.2	50.3



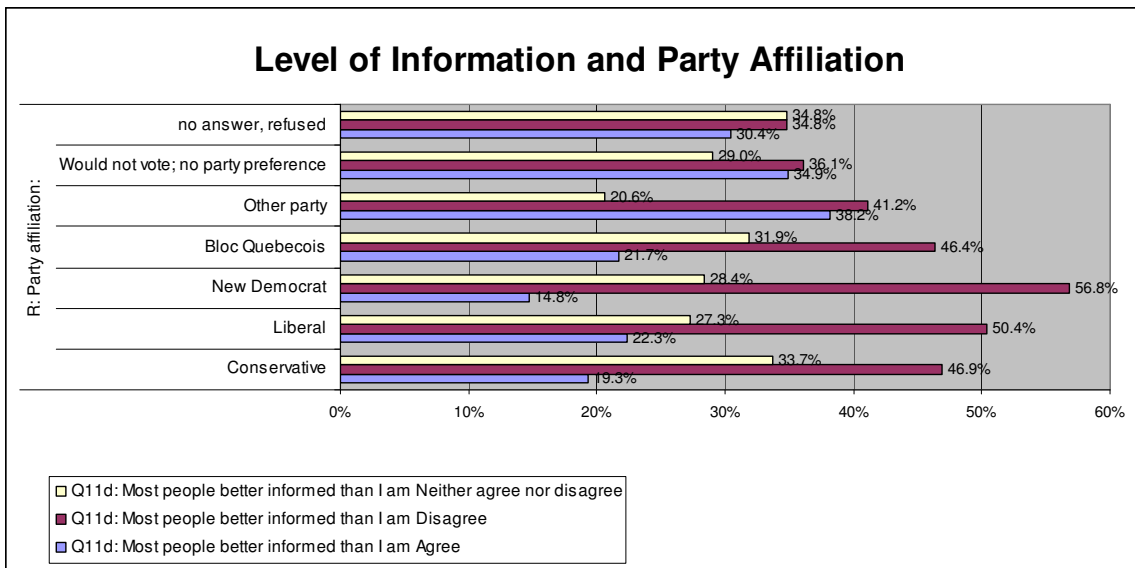
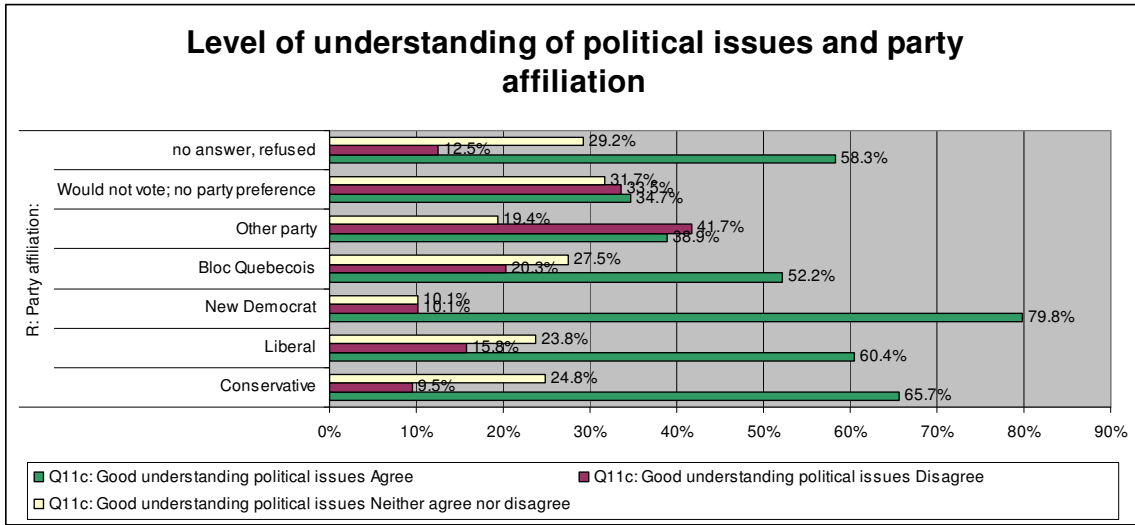
Gender and Politics

As observed below men tend to report having a better understanding of political issues than women however the gap is narrowing between the two groups (66% versus 49%). Men also continue to be somewhat more interested in politics (48% versus 34%). Men and women are however not too far apart when it comes to perceptions about influence in politics (25% versus 20%).

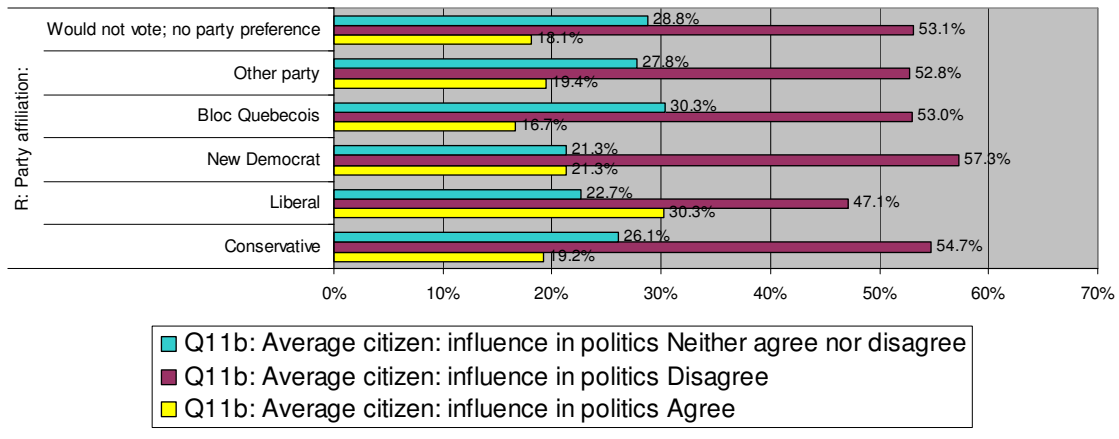




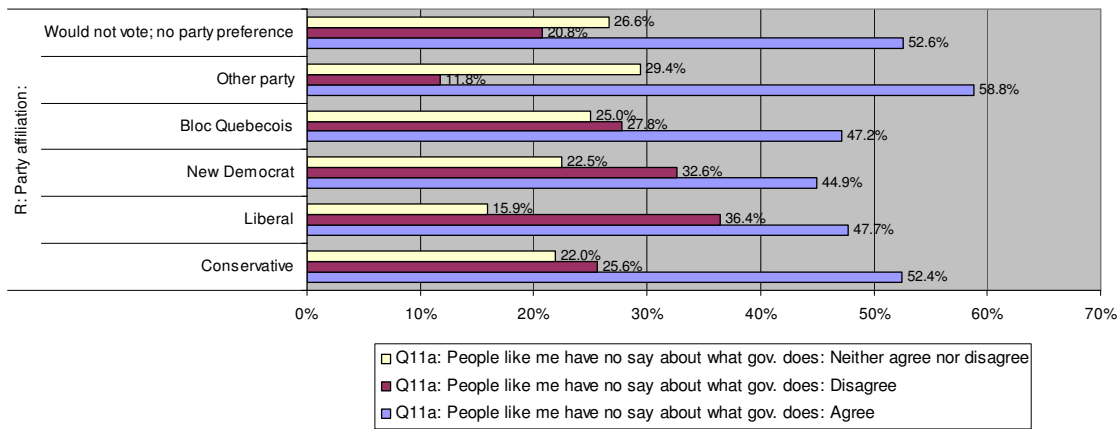
Party Preference and Knowledge, Interest and Influence in Politics



Level of influence of average citizen in politics and party affiliation



Input into governmental working and party affiliation



When asked about their level of interest in politics some 37.5% of francophones reported that they were very or fairly interested in politics versus 45.1% of anglophones in Canada. When asked about whether they felt that had no say about what government does some 58% of francophone Canadians agreed versus 49.6% of English Canadians. As to the influence of the average citizen in politics just under one quarter of Anglophone and Francophone respondents alike agree that people have influence, one quarter neither agree nor disagree and about half disagree. When asked whether respondents had a good understanding of political issues some 60% of Anglophones say they have a good understanding compared to 56% of francophones.

Agree	Anglophones	Francophones
Most people better informed than I am	20.3	30.8
How much interested in politics	45.1	37.5
Good understanding political issues	59.0	55.6
Average citizen: influence in politics	22.2	25.3
People like me have no say about what gov. does	49.9	57.7

