VANCOUVER'S INFORMED ELECTORATE: VOTER KNOWLEDGE IN THE 2005 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

by

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Abstract

This study explores why some voters might be more knowledgeable about civic issues than others. It employs exit poll data from the 2005 Vancouver civic election to examine how voters inform themselves during local elections and to suggest viable alternatives for increasing the overall level of voter knowledge within the Vancouver electorate. Survey data indicate that members of the city’s voting population are generally well-informed of their electoral choices in civic contests. Statistical analysis demonstrates that more informed voters tend to be: homeowners; of lower income; Caucasian; newspaper readers; radio listeners; knowledgeable of their local programs and services; those who engage in regular political discussions; and those who were contacted by a candidate or representative of a candidate during a campaign. This study suggests that Vancouver’s municipal government should continue its current practice of distributing information to voters through print materials, advertising, and its election services webpage.
Executive Summary

Municipal elections often present a daunting challenge to voters in Canadian cities. Compared to their generally less frequent provincial and federal counterparts, local elections require voters to conduct substantially more research before casting ballots—often with access to far less information. Recent scholarship suggests that those who make it to the polls in civic elections are insufficiently informed when making their electoral choices. If voters are in fact uninformed when participating in civic elections, it calls into question not only the legitimacy of an elected municipal government but also the democratic connection between citizens’ electoral choices and their preferences for public policy at the local level.

Vancouver’s unique at-large electoral system presents an even greater challenge for the city’s local electorate, as constituents are able to cast up to 27 votes for various positions in their municipal government. Currently, the City of Vancouver mails voter registration cards and householder voter instruction booklets to constituents, places Candidate Profiles information packages in local libraries and community centres, and maintains an informative elections webpage on its internet site. In addition, the City advertises coming elections on billboards and bus shelters around the city, and produces ads that air on local radio and television during a campaign. This study examines the extent of voter knowledge within Vancouver’s local electorate and aims to uncover the socio-demographic characteristics of these voters and the methods by which they inform themselves during municipal elections.

Exit poll data from the 2005 Vancouver civic election is analyzed to uncover the characteristics of local voters and their information sources, and to subsequently formulate policy alternatives that will raise the overall level of voter knowledge in local elections. The exit poll survey offers a broad range of variables that are considered in statistical analysis. These include voter demographic variables, media exposure variables, other general sources of information, and a measured knowledge of the programs and services offered by Vancouver’s local government.

Survey data indicate that the city’s voting population is largely well-informed of its electoral choices in civic contests. Logistical regression analysis demonstrates that more informed voters tend to be: homeowners rather than renters; of lower income rather than higher income; Caucasian rather than Chinese; newspaper readers; radio listeners; knowledgeable of...
their local programs and services; those who regularly engage in private political discussions; and those who were contacted by a candidate or representative of a candidate during the campaign.

Statistically significant variables are used to formulate policy alternatives that aim to increase the overall level of voter knowledge in future municipal elections. Five alternatives are considered: the Status Quo; expanding the distribution of *Vancouver Sun* newspapers; expanding the distribution of *Sing Tao* Chinese language newspapers; direct public funding to candidates and political parties; and granting tax deductible status to candidates and registered political parties. The viability of each alternative is judged according to three categories of evaluation criteria: cost, public acceptability, and administrative simplicity. Maintaining the Status Quo emerges from the evaluation as the most viable policy alternative for future local elections based mainly on its affordability, administrative simplicity, and the fact that Vancouver voters are generally very well-informed of their electoral choices in civic elections.
Dedication

This paper is dedicated to four of my favourite Canadians and pseudo-Canadians: Victoria, Susanne, Sandra, and especially Bernard. The courage with which these loyal friends have faced a formidable challenge over the past year lends support to a great truth—that the worth of an individual is best measured by wit, wisdom, kindness, and strength of character.
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1 Introduction

Municipal elections often present a formidable challenge to voters in Canadian cities. Compared to provincial and federal contests, local elections require voters to conduct substantially more research before casting ballots. Information is expensive in Vancouver civic politics, as the city is treated as one large constituency and candidates for local office must appeal to constituents from across the city’s many diverse neighbourhoods. Recent scholarship suggests that, due to the significant challenges faced by voters in Vancouver civic elections, the minority of citizens who make it to the polls are insufficiently informed when making their electoral choices (Cutler and Matthews, 2005). If voters are in fact uninformed when participating in these elections, it calls into question not only the legitimacy of an elected municipal government but also the democratic connection between citizens’ electoral choices and their preferences for public policy at the local level.

Starting with the assumption that there are too many uninformed voters in Vancouver civic elections, this study examines levels of voter knowledge in the 2005 Vancouver municipal election. Data were collected during the first ever exit poll in a Canadian civic election and are employed in statistical analysis to understand the extent to which Vancouver’s local voters are informed or uninformed.

Section 2 explains the concept of voter knowledge and its importance to democratic governance, and provides some background information on local elections in Vancouver. Section 3 explains the statistical and analytical methodologies used in the study. Section 4 describes in detail the structures and strengths of statistical models as well as the results of logistical regression analysis. These results are used in section 5 to generate policy alternatives aimed at raising the overall level of voter knowledge in future Vancouver civic elections. Alternatives are then evaluated according to specific criteria in order to formulate a direction for future policy action by the City of Vancouver. Section 6 offers concluding remarks on the study and comments on the potential for policy implementation in upcoming local elections.
2 Background

2.1 Policy Problem

Recent political science research on voter knowledge in Canadian civic elections (Cutler and Matthews, 2005, 366) argues that Vancouver voters are “equipped to engage in broadly partisan, ideological voting” at the local level, but exhibit a general tendency to be poorly informed of their municipal electoral choices. These authors suggest that current City policies are ineffective at informing local voters, and that the City should channel its public resources in more effective ways to educate citizens during municipal election campaigns. Based on these findings, this study begins from a working hypothesis that there are too many uninformed voters in Vancouver civic elections. Data from the 2005 Vancouver civic election are used to assess the validity of this claim and to identify avenues for policy action that can work to better inform voters in future local contests.

2.2 Voter Knowledge and Municipal Elections

Liberal democratic theory dictates that an informed electorate is a necessary condition for the election of a government that is consistent with the preferences of its citizens (Dahl, 1989). If voters in Vancouver truly maintain low levels of knowledge when participating in civic elections, as Cutler and Matthews (2005) assert, then the legitimacy of the city’s elected municipal government is called into question. Inadequate voter knowledge within the municipal electorate also threatens the democratic connection between citizens’ electoral choices and their preferences for public policy at the local level. As voting itself is the ultimate basis upon which citizens grant politicians authority to allocate public resources and make sound policies, than the process of voting itself should therefore be meaningful and informed. Electoral choices should, according to liberal democratic theory, be well-informed, as “there should be a connection between electoral choice and public policy” (Miller, 1988, 1). Liberal democratic theorists such as Dahl (1989) argue at length that one of the fundamental pillars of democracy—that a people ruling themselves is the most appropriate form of governance because only the people themselves know what is in their own best interests—justifies the need for an enlightened, and therefore informed, citizenry.
Voter knowledge is important because it has “intrinsic utility” (Fournier, 102) for all citizens. Delli Karpini and Keeter (1993) argue that voter knowledge assists citizens in discerning their individual and group interests, in connecting these interests to broader notions of the public good, and in expressing these views through political participation. J.S. Mill (cited in Miller, 1998, 242) goes further to specifically defend the virtues of good municipal governance, arguing that local government “is the prime element in democracy, and has an intrinsic value regardless of the functions it may carry out”.

The concept of voter knowledge is not easy to define, and is often referred to in studies of electoral behaviour as political knowledge or political information (Lupia and McCubbins, 1998; Fournier, 2002). Public opinion scholarship over the last 40 years reports a generally low level of political knowledge throughout the Canadian public in various electoral contexts (Cutler and Mendelsohn, 2004). Political scientists generally assess the level of information possessed by voters through examining their answers to questions of political trivia, such as being able to name the outgoing city mayor or the current federal Minister of Finance (Blais et al, 2004; Pammet and LeDuc, 2003; Delli Karpini and Keeter, 1993). This analysis, however, employs the term voter knowledge to describe the amount of information possessed by each voter with regard to the election in which they are presently participating.

Local elections are often referred to as second order elections because the powers of local jurisdictions are derived to a great extent from higher orders of government. Compared to national or provincial elections—or first order elections—voters are less motivated to seek out information during municipal campaigns (Norris, 1997). There is less media exposure surrounding local elections compared to higher order contests, and therefore voters generally have less information readily available to them. Further, voters maintain high levels of uncertainty surrounding the powers of their municipal government, and can be unsure of precisely which programs and services local officials may have the power to change and improve (Norris, 1997). Reif (1997) also notes that there are weaker social pressures among voters to become informed during civic elections than in higher order contests.

Residents of Canadian municipalities are subject to three layers of government—federal, provincial, and local—and each one of these layers is responsible for delivering a fairly distinct basket of public services. For example, federal authorities in Ottawa provide defence through the armed forces, provincial governments fund health care and education, and municipalities provide bus services and refuse collection. This list is by no means exhaustive, and government jurisdictions overlap in certain areas. Multiple tiers of government—all of which are
democratically elected by voters—can lead to confusion within the electorate over which tier is responsible for delivering certain highly valued public services, and subsequently which tier should be held accountable for the delivery of those services when election time comes around. Further, the powers of Canadian municipal governments (although crucial to the efficient functioning of a city) appear to voters as relatively unimportant when compared to the responsibilities of provincial and federal governments, such as health care, environmental protection, education, or national defence. As such, voters likely feel that their electoral choices have greater weight in first order contests than in municipal elections, and are more likely seek out information on their choices during federal and provincial elections. Levels of voter knowledge in Canadian civic elections are therefore likely to be somewhat lower than in higher order contests.

2.3 Vancouver’s At-Large Electoral System and its Challenges

Citizens of Vancouver have been using an at-large plurality method since the 1930s to elect their local government (Stewart, 2003; Tennant, 1980). This system presents a daunting challenge to the average Vancouver voter, as he or she is required every three years to select one mayor, ten councillors, seven parks board members, and nine school trustees. This at-large system is unique among Canada’s larger municipalities, the vast majority of which conduct wards-based elections to choose their local officials (Graham and Phillips, 1998). The decision over whether or not to switch to a wards-based system has been the subject of ongoing debate in Vancouver for decades, and a question on several public referenda (Stewart, 1997; Tennant: 1980).

Cutler and Matthews (2005) suggest that, relative to federal and provincial elections, Vancouver voters have a general tendency to be less well-informed in the municipal electoral context. Several factors are attributed to these low levels of knowledge, including: voters’ uncertainty regarding municipal powers; weak social pressures to be informed in civic elections; the complexity of Vancouver’s at-large electoral system; minimal and low quality media coverage of elections; and a great potential for mobility among citizens if local policies are distasteful (Cutler and Matthews, 2005). The combination of these factors results in voters generally having less structure to their voting decisions at the local level than in national or provincial elections.

Information is costly in Vancouver’s at-large electoral system. The city is treated as one large constituency and candidates for all positions must provide information to every potential
voter (Cutler and Matthews, 2005). Each candidate must appeal to a far greater number of potential voters than a candidate running for a Vancouver-area seat in a provincial or federal election. As the city contains over 400,000 eligible voters (as of 2005), political parties are an important medium for advertising and distributing information on electoral platforms to a great number of potential voters. Local parties, in similar fashion to their counterparts at higher orders of government, allow voters to economize on their electoral choices rather than forcing them to investigate the relative merits of individual candidates. As such, widespread awareness of the platforms and personalities of individual candidates is far lower than of the general platforms or ideologies of political parties (Cutler and Matthews, 2005). This is different than wards-based local electoral systems, where there is a greater burden on voters to know candidates as individuals. Taylor (1994, 18) acknowledges these difficulties that come with at-large elections, suggesting “it is asking a lot of anybody to become knowledgeable enough to choose wisely people for 27 different jobs during a short election campaign”.

Vancouver’s at-large electoral system challenges voters to not only understand the process of voting but also accumulate enough information to adequately weigh the merits of individual candidates. With 96 candidates and 27 possible votes in 2005, the citizens of Vancouver surely had their work cut out for them when attempting to inform themselves of their municipal electoral choices.

2.4 The 2005 Vancouver Municipal Election

In 2005, City employees distributed a voter registration card to every registered voter and an instruction booklet known as a householder to every residential property (Hancock, 2005). Candidates for office were also permitted to write a 150-word description of themselves and their platforms, which were compiled by the City and reproduced in the 32-page Candidate Profiles information package. 120,000 information packages were printed and placed in public libraries and community centres across Vancouver. The City advertised the election on posters, billboards, bus shelters, local radio, local television, and in daily newspapers during the weeks leading up to the November 19 contest, and also maintained a highly informative and easily navigable webpage that provided detailed information on current and past campaigns (City of Vancouver, 2005e).

The 2005 Vancouver Municipal Election offered a twist to the city’s conventional left versus right, east versus west political battle to which Vancouver voters had been accustomed since the early 1980s. Prior to 2005, left-leaning voters generally flocked to the Coalition of
Progressive Electors (COPE), whereas more conservative voters attached themselves to the right-of-centre Non-Partisan Association (NPA). The NPA is Canada’s oldest municipal political party and has dominated city council since the 1930s (Tennent, 1980).

In 2002, COPE managed to sweep nearly all council seats by riding into power on the coattails of star mayoral candidate Larry Campbell. Although extremely popular, Campbell soon tired of political life and left a large rift between the moderate and the more extreme COPE members at the end of his three-year term in 2005. The moderate members of COPE formed Vision Vancouver just months prior to the November 2005 election and ran a slate of five city council candidates and one mayoral candidate.

The 2005 election was essentially a competition for council seats between three major parties (COPE, Vision Vancouver, and the NPA) and a mayoral race between the NPA’s Sam Sullivan and Vision Vancouver’s Jim Green. Both candidates for mayor were city councillors elected in 2002, with Sullivan having sat on council since 1993. Sullivan emphasized fiscal responsibility and lower taxes as the centre of the NPA’s election platform, whereas Jim Green and Vision Vancouver focused on issues that were decisive in the 2002 election campaign such as social housing, drug abuse, and problems in the city’s heavily impoverished Downtown Eastside area (Cernetig, 2005).

Nasty at times, the campaign saw the virtual collapse of COPE, four of five Vision candidates elected, and the re-establishment of an NPA majority in council, as the NPA secured five seats and the mayor’s chair. NPA supporters cite as the reason for their victory a desire within the Vancouver electorate for a return to stability “after three years of fractious politics in which the ruling Coalition of Progressive Electors [COPE] split in two” (Lee, 2005, A1). COPE members also blame the split of their party just prior to the election as the main reason for their loss of all but one council seat (Gold, 2005).

A political unknown by the name of James Green may have played the role of spoiler for Vision Vancouver mayoral candidate Jim Green, as their names appeared one after the other on the ballot, and James Green managed to win over 4,000 votes (Whysall, 2005). This name confusion created considerable controversy immediately following the election, as the difference between Sullivan’s and Jim Green’s vote totals was slightly less than the number of votes received by James Green. The controversy soon died down, however, as Jim Green accepted defeat and the NPA majority began to implement its mandate in the weeks following the election.
2.5 The 2005 Vancouver Municipal Election Exit Poll

To explore levels of voter knowledge and test why some voters might be more informed than others, a team of researchers from Simon Fraser University (SFU) conducted the 2005 Vancouver Municipal Election Exit Poll.\(^1\) This collection of 884 weighted cases was completed on November 19, 2005 by members of SFU’s graduate Public Policy Program, with sponsorship from the Vancouver Sun, Elections BC, and SFU’s Institute of Governance Studies. The exit poll data represent a random sample of the 121,962 voters who cast ballots on November 19, and are considered statistically accurate within +/-3.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Other information for this study was gathered from a review of relevant literature, which provided background research on municipal elections and justifications for hypotheses, as well as informing the exit poll methodology and the selection of survey questions.

Exit poll data are used to investigate levels of voter knowledge within Vancouver’s local electorate, and to uncover the methods by which voters inform themselves during civic election campaigns. Exit polls (also called election-day polls) are often used in U.S. presidential and Congressional elections in order to predict the winners of numerous individual races prior to the closing of voting stations (Mitofsky, 1991). Brown et al. (2005, 2) point out that in the U.S. context, exit polls play a corroborative and explanatory role, as they are “utilized alongside hard official counts to provide context and highlight trends that portend to the formal vote count”.

Brown et al. (2005) explain that election-day polls have three advantages over more traditional election survey methods, such as those used by the Canadian Election Study or the National Election Survey in the U.S. First, exit polls effectively screen non-voters out of the sample. Post-election surveys compiled in the Canadian Election Study have reported dubiously high participation rates, when the actual election results showed far lower rates of turnout. Second, exit polls ensure access to traditionally hard-to-target populations (i.e. voters in local elections). Finally, these polls are able to reach voters immediately after they cast their ballots. As such, exit poll respondents have their electoral preferences at the fronts of their minds, and their answers remain unbiased by election outcomes.

Brown et al. (2005) explain that there are three crucial factors in ensuring that an exit poll is conducted appropriately: a representative sample of polling stations, a proportionate sample of respondents drawn from each polling station, and an appropriate selection process in the field.

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\(^1\) See Appendix B for a thorough explanation of exit poll sampling procedures and methodology.
The 2005 Vancouver Municipal Election Exit Poll effectively takes all three of these factors into account when sampling the city’s voting population.

### 2.6 Exit Poll Data: Some Limitations

Exit polls are indeed the most effective means of studying voter behaviour, as they effectively screen out non-voters with nearly absolute certainty and allow respondents to answer questions before they are aware of overall election results. Although largely accurate, exit polls have on occasion made inaccurate predictions on the outcomes of important contests. For example, major American news outlets incorrectly predicted in 2000 that Al Gore had won enough votes in Florida to secure the U.S. presidency, but final vote counts (despite numerous legal challenges) proved this prediction to be wrong—and very embarrassing for large media networks that had invested great sums of money to conduct their exit polls (Traugott, 2001). The inaccuracies that have surrounded exit polls in the past stem primarily from improper sampling procedures and hasty analysis by large media outlets that are each trying to be the first to predict a winning candidate (Traugott, 2001).

The practice of exit polling has been attacked in the U.S. since 1980, primarily with the assertion that early reporting of exit poll survey results dampens voter turnout (Mitofsky, 1991). Particularly in years when presidential candidates are on the ballot, critics argue that voters in western U.S. states will be less likely to cast ballots if informed by the national media of exit poll results in eastern states. Mitofsky (1991) argues that these assertions are largely unfounded, but concedes that large media networks often make errors when sampling their respondent populations. As with any study of human behaviour, a random and representative sample of the target population must be carefully planned in order to yield accurate results.

There are three major limitations to using exit polls for investigating voter knowledge in the 2005 Vancouver municipal election. First, an exit poll survey must be short and relatively brief in order to ensure a substantial sample size. Exit poll scholars (Mitofsky, 1991; Brown et al, 2005) suggest that surveys should ideally be one-page long and take no more than two minutes to complete. Due to the number of questions involved in the study, however, the 2005 Vancouver exit poll was two pages long and approximately five minutes in length. Had the survey been slightly shorter and briefer, it is possible that a larger sample size could have been achieved. Second, Canadian voters in any electoral context are unfamiliar with the practice of participating in exit polls immediately after casting their ballots. This may have led to uncertainty in some voters about the validity of the exit poll and subsequently discouraged them from participating in
the study. Finally, the weather was fairly cold in Vancouver on November 19, 2005, especially into the evening hours. City of Vancouver officials prohibited exit poll surveyors from positioning themselves inside polling stations, and the frigid temperatures outside could have discouraged some potential respondents from completing the survey. The exact refusal rate on all respondents is not available.

Prior to this study, an exit poll aiming for a random or representative sample of voters had been attempted just once in a Canadian election at any level. Researchers at the Laurier Institute for the Study of Public Opinion and Policy (LISPOP) conducted an exit poll during the 2003 Ontario provincial election in the riding of Kitchener Centre. LISPOP’s exit poll was fairly accurate in predicting the Ontario election outcome (with five percentage points of the overall results), and therefore is a reasonably sound methodology to follow for this study.
3  Methodology

This study examines factors influencing voter knowledge in the 2005 Vancouver municipal election. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether or not civic voters come to the polls armed with adequate knowledge to cast informed votes for their city councilors in Vancouver's at-large electoral system. This study is premised on recent evidence (Cutler and Matthews, 2005) suggesting that Canadian voters possess significantly lower levels of knowledge when they vote in civic elections than when they cast their ballots in electoral contests at other levels of government. It investigates the underlying factors related to this information gap and aims to uncover why some voters in Vancouver municipal elections are more informed than others.

This section outlines the methodology employed to examine voter knowledge in the 2005 Vancouver municipal election and investigate the factors that may affect the amount of electoral information possessed by local voters. It presents all variables used in the study, explains how each variable is measured through the exit poll survey, and describes how these variables are employed in logistical regression to assess the impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable.

3.1  Dependent Variable

As it is difficult to measure the overall level of knowledge informing the preferences and subsequent electoral choices of each voter, the dependent variable for this study must be carefully considered. Knowledge is a subjective concept; there are many different types of knowledge and methods for obtaining information on city elections and municipal affairs. Some voters may rarely read a newspaper or listen to the radio, but may debate municipal politics and other local issues with friends and family on a daily basis. Some citizens may possess very little formal education but may interact regularly with current members of city council and receive their information from this type of engagement.

Surveys from other contexts (Blais et al, 2004; Pammet and LeDuc, 2003; Delli Karpini and Keeter, 1993) aim to test voter knowledge—or political information—fairly generally with a
series of trivia-like questions on politicians or political parties at various levels of government. The Canadian Election Study asks respondents for the names of the current Prime Minister, the Federal Minister of Finance, provincial premiers, and leaders of all major federal political parties (Blais et al, 2004). Although these trivia-style questions highlight a general knowledge of the major personalities in Canadian politics, they do little to test respondents' knowledge of government functions or services, or of candidates running for election in respondents' own constituencies (the individuals for whom voters actually cast ballots).

For this study, the ability to correctly identify incumbent city councillors on an exit survey is used to measure general voter knowledge. Respondents are presented with a list of ten candidates for city council in the 2005 election, five of which are councillors seeking re-election, and the other five are new candidates for office. Each subject is assigned a percentage score representing the number of candidates he or she has correctly identified as either incumbent or non-incumbent. This variable is an appropriate measure of voter knowledge because it tests not only whether voters are aware of the candidates running for local office, but also their awareness of the politicians that make up the outgoing city council. It is reasonable to assume that respondents who score highly on this question are well-informed municipal voters.

It should be emphasized that the dependent variable does not represent a fraction of the total amount of knowledge possessed by each voter, but measures it relative to what this study considers to be an appropriate amount of knowledge held by a well-informed voter. Correctly identifying city councillors seeking re-election is, of course, an imperfect measure of overall voter knowledge. In the context of an election-day exit survey, however, it serves as a rich indicator of the level of information possessed by each voter, and allows analysts to compare scores between respondents. It is possible that a respondent may guess correctly on all ten available choices, but it is unlikely that a subject who has no idea of which candidates are running in the election will be able to score well.

Of the original 884 weighted cases collected during the 2005 election, 187 of these did not have answers recorded on the survey question measuring the dependent variable. However, the remaining sample of 697 cases, out of a total election-day voting population of 121,962, is more than adequate for the purposes of this study and is considered accurate +/-3.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Descriptive statistical data from the exit poll survey reveal some surprising results on the level of knowledge held by civic voters in Vancouver. Contrary to assumptions informed by Cutler and Matthews (2005), the average survey respondent scores

2 See Appendix A, question 6 for the exit poll survey question measuring the dependent variable.
between 70 and 80 percent on the dependent variable question, the mean score being 74 percent. This strong performance on a challenging question reveals that voters are far more knowledgeable of council candidates in 2005—and of the make-up of the city’s outgoing council—than was initially hypothesized.

Cutler and Matthews (2005) argue the opposite of this finding throughout their paper, suggesting that because of the challenges associated with accumulating electoral information in city elections, voters primarily structure their decisions around party identification and have little knowledge of individual candidates. These authors argue that voters are equipped to engage in “broadly partisan, ideological voting” (Cutler and Matthews 2005, 366), but test only voters’ knowledge of political party ideologies and their ability to name Vancouver’s former mayor. Assessing voters’ abilities to identify candidates—essentially knowing for whom they are currently voting—is not considered by these authors, and judgement is quickly passed on the capacity of Vancouver voters to cast informed ballots in civic elections. Exit poll data, as demonstrated graphically in Figure 1, do not support the position put forth by Cutler and Matthews (2005). Figure 1 demonstrates that most voters in 2005 are able to correctly identify most of the candidates listed on the exit poll survey as either incumbents or new candidates. Results for this question are skewed quite heavily toward the right side of the horizontal axis, indicating that data here are not normally distributed.³

³ Dependent variable data also produce a value of .000 when subjected to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, confirming its non-parametric nature.
As the dependent variable is not parametric, multivariate logistical regression is required to determine which variables have statistically significant impacts on voter knowledge. Logistical regression essentially determines the probability that a respondent who possesses certain characteristics or behaves in a specific way will fall into one of two categories. In order to employ logistical regression in this analysis, respondents’ scores on the dependent variable question (asking voters to identify incumbent candidates) are categorized as being over or under the mean score of 74 percent—those who scored seven out of ten or less, and eight out of ten or more. Those scoring higher than the mean will hereafter be referred to as more informed, and those scoring lower than the mean as less informed. A detailed explanation of the process of logistical regression is located in section 4.

3.2 Independent Variables

The following subsections outline the independent variables considered in this study and explain how each is measured through responses to exit poll questions. The rationale behind the selection of each variable is also presented, as well as a hypothesis estimating the direction of impact (positive or negative) each independent variable will have on the dependent variable.
There are four categories of independent variables included in this analysis: voter demographics, knowledge of municipal programs and services, media exposure, and other sources of information.

3.2.1 Voter Demographics

This group of nine independent variables tests whether change in the dependent variable is affected by gender, age, education, income, ancestral background, the language used at home (English or otherwise), city area of residence (Downtown, Westside, or Eastside)⁴, current living situation (homeowner or renter), and the number of years lived in Vancouver. Since very little is known about the demographic traits of Vancouver’s municipal voting population, incorporating all of these variables into a statistical analysis will provide vital information not only on who is voting in civic elections, but also on which groups are more likely to be more informed when they cast their ballots. Table 1 outlines all voter demographic variables and the hypothesized effect each variable will have on levels of voter knowledge (a positive or negative correlation).

Table 1: Voter Demographic Variables and Hypothesized Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Hypothesized Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 25 and over</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $100,000 household income</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westside resident</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastside resident</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeowner</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 7 years living in Vancouver</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English spoken at home</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese ancestry</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ancestry</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study hypothesizes that age, education, and income will be positively correlated with greater levels of voter knowledge. Fournier (2002, 99) explains that in all electoral contexts, "older, wealthier, and more educated individuals have greater knowledge". Logically, people who have received a university education are more likely be more informed than those who have

⁴ Voters are considered Downtown residents if they live in the Downtown peninsula (west of Main St.), Westside residents inhabit the area south of Downtown and west of Main St., Eastside residents live south of downtown and east of Main St. See Appendix D for a map of Vancouver dividing these areas.
not, and higher income earners are more likely to not only have received a university education but also to pay greater amounts of municipal property taxes. Cases are divided by income as either earning more or less than $100,000 annually per household, following a similar division in recent scholarship on local elections in Vancouver (Cutler and Matthews, 2005). As residents of East Vancouver tend to earn lower incomes than Westside and Downtown dwellers (Statistics Canada, 2001), and are subsequently less likely to have received higher forms of education, it is hypothesized that Eastside voters will be less informed. Also, homeowners will likely be more informed than renters, as they generally earn higher incomes and pay municipal property taxes each year that renters do not. Voters who have resided in Vancouver for several years are more likely to be more informed than newer residents, as they would have a greater knowledge of the city’s local political history. As most information from the City is offered in English, this study hypothesizes that voters who speak English at home are more likely to be more informed than speakers of other languages. This study offers no hypothesis regarding the impact that gender and ethnicity will have on predicting variation in the dependent variable. Table 2 presents frequencies of exit poll responses with respect to voter demographics.
Table 2: Frequencies, Voter Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>(35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 or older</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>(662)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>(332)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than University</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>(365)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>(528)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $100,000</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>(169)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>(231)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westside</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>(200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastside</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>(266)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living Situation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeowner</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>(352)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>(345)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years in Vancouver</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 7</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>(177)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 7</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>(520)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Spoken at Home</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>(556)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>(141)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>(308)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>(389)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ancestry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>(449)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>(82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>(166)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with federal and provincial elections, young voters make up an extremely small portion of the voting population. In federal contests, it is estimated that just 25 percent of the youngest age bracket (age 18-24) turn up to cast their ballots on election days (Pamment and Leduc, 2003). In the 2005 Vancouver civic election, just five percent of the city’s voters come from this age category, when about eight percent of the city’s population is between the ages of 18 and 24 (Statistics Canada, 2001). For the age variable, 72 missing cases are included in the 25 years or more category. In terms of education, Vancouver voters are a fairly well educated group, with over 50 percent of respondents having earned at least a bachelor’s degree. However, 2001 census data indicates that just over 25 percent of Vancouver residents have obtained higher
levels of education (Statistics Canada, 2001). Missing cases for the education variable—a total of 74 cases—are included in the less than university category.

Voters earning $100,000 in annual household income comprise about 25 percent of the sample. It should be emphasized that these voters represent very high-income earners ($100,000 is greater than the average household income in Vancouver), and that 142 missing cases are placed in the lower income category (those earning less than $100,000). Regarding area of residence, the 697 cases are divided fairly evenly between the Downtown peninsula, Westside, and Eastside. An even split between homeowners and renters also exists among respondents, with 82 missing cases incorporated into the renter category. For years residing in Vancouver, about three quarters of exit poll respondents have lived in the city for at least seven years—long enough to remember at least the last two terms of local government. Missing cases are included in the less than 7 years category, totalling 68 respondents. In terms of language spoken in the home, an overwhelming majority of subjects indicate that English is used predominantly in their homes. Just 20 percent of voters speak other languages, and 86 missing cases are included with this other language category. Exit poll respondents were split quite evenly in terms of gender, with 71 missing cases included in the male category. The ancestry variable offers some surprising statistics, as just under 12 percent of voters are of Chinese ancestry, despite the fact that over 30 percent of Vancouver’s total population have Chinese backgrounds. The vast majority of voters are White/Caucasian (64 percent), and about 24 percent of respondents fall under other ancestry. Seventy-four missing cases are included in the White/Caucasian category.

### 3.2.2 Knowledge of Local Services

Recent literature suggests that citizens generally possess a poor knowledge of municipal programs and services, and a high degree of confusion about which level of government is responsible for delivering these programs and services (Cutler and Matthews, 2005; Cutler and Mendelsohn, 2004; Miller, 1988). In order to measure voters’ knowledge of which specific services are offered by the Vancouver municipal government, respondents are asked to select items from a list. Three of these options are in fact services offered by local government (police, zoning, and garbage collection) and the remaining options are services offered by other levels of government (health care, port authority, and welfare). Citizens are assigned a score out of six on this question, which is then converted to a percentage score.\(^5\) This study logically hypothesizes

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\(^5\) See Appendix A, question 11 for an example of this survey question.
that subjects with greater knowledge of the services provided by their municipal government are more likely to be more informed voters.

Results of the exit poll survey indicate that a vast majority of voters possess a strong knowledge of services offered by the city of Vancouver, as 82 percent of respondents scored at least five out of six on this question. Missing cases here—22 in total—are classified as having a score of zero on this question. Figure 2 illustrates exactly how well-informed Vancouver voters are about these locally provided services.

Figure 2: Knowledge of Municipal Services (%)

Due to the one-sided distribution of responses to this question, cases are subsequently recoded into dichotomous categories to compare voters demonstrating greater knowledge of local services (scores of 80 percent or higher) to those showing lower levels (scores under 80 percent). As missing cases were included as scores of zero prior to the recoding, these cases are subsequently included with lower scoring respondents. These results contradict recent analysis by Cutler and Matthews (2005) suggesting that Vancouver voters experience substantial confusion when it comes to identifying the correct level of government that bears responsibility for the delivery of specific programs or services.
3.2.3 Media Exposure

The local media is probably the most widely used source of information on civic elections, local governance, and civic affairs. Political scientists argue that because less media attention is given to civic elections than to provincial or federal elections, voters receive less information and are therefore generally less interested in local contests (Cutler and Matthews, 2005; Norris, 1997; Taylor, 1994). In order to measure the frequency of interaction with several types of local media in the 2005 Vancouver election, each exit poll respondent is asked how often they consult newspapers, television, radio, and the internet. For the purposes of statistical analysis, responses are recoded into dichotomous variables as voters who have or have not consulted these forms of media for election information in the past 12 months. This study logically hypothesizes that media exposure will be positively correlated with levels of voter knowledge, as those who interact with local media are more likely to be more informed voters. Table 3 presents the frequency distributions within the sample population for media consultation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspaper</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>(600)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not Consult</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>(97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TV</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>(496)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not Consult</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>(201)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radio</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>(435)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not Consult</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>(262)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internet</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>(284)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not Consult</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>(413)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Newspapers are the most popular form of media with Vancouver voters, as a great majority (86 percent) report consulting a newspaper at least once a month. Forty-five missing cases for newspaper consultation are located in the does not consult category. Television is second with 71 percent of respondents consulting it at least once a month, with 95 missing cases included with the does not consult category. A majority of voters also tune in to the radio at least

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6 See Appendix A, question 9 for an example of this question on the exit poll survey.
once a month, with 137 missing cases included with the *does not consult* group. Surprisingly, just 40 percent of voters go on-line at least once a month to consult the vast supply of information available on the internet. However, a full 206 cases did not have answers recorded for the question measuring consultation with the internet, and are categorized as *does not consult*.

### 3.2.4 Other Sources of Voter Information

It is likely that Vancouver citizens receive their information on civic elections from a variety of sources. This study aims to test six distinct non-media sources through which citizens may have gathered information on the 2005 election. Table 4 identifies these sources of information and the hypothesized effect each will have on the dependent variable.

#### Table 4: Other Sources of Information Variables and Hypothesized Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Hypothesized Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discusses politics regularly with family and friends</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received voter information card</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted <em>Candidate Profiles</em> information package</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted by a candidate or representative during the campaign</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited party website</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended community meeting</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.2.4.1 Private Discussion of Politics

This variable measures information gathering through private interaction by asking how often voters discuss politics with family and friends (often, sometimes, rarely, or never). For the purposes of statistical analysis, this variable is recoded into two categories: those who discuss politics often or sometimes (*regularly*), and those who discuss it rarely or never (*not regularly*). This study hypothesizes that subjects who regularly engage in political discussions within a familiar social setting will demonstrate greater levels of voter knowledge than those who do not. Table 5 shows frequency distributions within this variable.

#### Table 5: Frequencies, Discussion of Politics with Family and Friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>(603)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Regularly</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>(94)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

7 See Appendix A, question 4 for an example of this survey question.
Vancouver voters are very well engaged in private political discussion; as over 85 percent of respondents indicate that they participate regularly in this type of interaction. The three subjects that did not offer responses to this question are included with respondents who do not regularly discuss politics with family and friends.

3.2.4.2 Information Produced by the City

The second type of these sources is written information published and distributed in English by the Vancouver municipal government. In civic elections, each registered voter should receive a registration card through the mail. To measure the frequency of subjects receiving these cards, each respondent is asked if they received a card and must answer yes or no. It is hypothesized that if voters are notified by the City of the upcoming election they will be more likely to research their votes, making them more informed voters. In 2005, the City of Vancouver reported a list of 404,958 registered voters, all of whom were issued a registration card through the mail instructing them where and when to cast their ballots on November 19.

A few weeks prior to each election day, the municipal government also distributes a 32-page information booklet entitled Candidate Profiles, in which each registered candidate for mayor, councillor, School Trustee, and Parks Board may write one 150-word paragraph promoting their candidacy. This package is not mailed or distributed directly to the homes of Vancouverites, but is placed in every library and community centre across the city. The exit poll survey asks voters to indicate with a yes or no response whether they consulted this package. It is logically hypothesized that respondents who have consulted these packages are more likely to be more informed voters than those who did not. Table 6 shows frequency distributions for receipt of voter registration cards and consultation with Candidate Profiles packages.

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8 See Appendix A, question 16 for an example of this survey question.
9 See Appendix A, question 16 for an example of this survey question.
Table 6: Frequencies, Information Provided by the City of Vancouver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voter Information Card</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>(553)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not Receive</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>(144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candidate Profiles Information Package</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>(200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not Consult</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>(497)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Registration cards are reaching a substantial majority of voters, as just under 80 percent of exit poll respondents indicate that they received their card in the weeks prior to the 2005 election. Seventy-one missing cases are included in the did not receive category, which totals about 20 percent of all respondents. Although City officials would likely be pleased that most voters are receiving their registration cards in the mail, they may be disappointed that less than 30 percent of all voters consulted Candidate Profiles information packages prior to casting their ballots. Cases that contain missing answers for the Candidate Profiles question—91 in total—are grouped with those who did not consult the package.

It is important to note that consultation with the householder information booklet is not tested for its potential impact on levels of voter knowledge. As space was limited on the exit poll survey, the decision was made to incorporate one active form (Candidate Profiles packages) and one passive form (voter registration cards) of printed information produced by the City. Further, the householder booklet and the Candidate Profiles information package look very similar and potential exists for respondents to confuse these two materials when answering survey questions.

3.2.4.3 Contacted by Candidate

This variable considers direct contact between voters and candidates or candidate representatives during the 2005 municipal election campaign. It is measured by simply asking subjects whether or not they were called or visited at home by a candidate or representative of a candidate.\(^\text{10}\) It is possible that engaging citizens face-to-face or over the phone will not only increase the likelihood that they will vote, but could also prompt citizens to research their votes more thoroughly than they otherwise would—becoming more informed in the process. This study hypothesizes that this is likely to be true in the 2005 Vancouver civic election. Table 7

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\(^{10}\) See Appendix A, question 16 for an example of this survey question.
outlines those respondents who were and were not contacted at home by a candidate or representative of a candidate during the 2005 campaign.

Table 7: Frequencies, Contacted by a Candidate or Representative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contacted</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not CONTACTED</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a fairly even split between respondents who were contacted during the campaign and those who were not. 86 missing cases were categorized as voters who were not contacted.

3.2.4.4 Party Websites

This variable measures whether or not respondents actively sought information on the election campaign from the websites of municipal political parties involved in the election. Currently, all major parties provide easily accessible information regarding their ideas, ideals, candidates, and electoral platforms on internet websites. It is hypothesized that respondents who accessed these websites prior to the 2005 election will be more likely to demonstrate greater levels of voter knowledge. Table 8 offers frequency distributions for voters who consulted party websites during the election campaign and those who did not.\(^\text{11}\)

Table 8: Frequencies, Consulted a Municipal Political Party Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consulted</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not Consult</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>517</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exit poll data indicate that nearly three quarters of voters did not consult the website of a local political party in the 12 months leading up to the November 19 election. Parties that devote precious campaign resources into designing and maintaining websites would no doubt be interested to discover that only a small minority of voters use these internet sites as sources of information. The 90 voters who failed to answer the question on consultation with a party website are included in the did not consult category.

\(^\text{11}\) See Appendix A, question 16 for an example of this survey question.
3.2.4.5 Community Meetings

The final source of voter information considered in this analysis is attendance at a community meeting, and is measured by asking voters whether or not they attended a meeting about a local issue in the past year. These meetings occur fairly frequently in various capacities across Vancouver's many diverse neighbourhoods, and can deal with any number of local concerns including public safety, public services, infrastructure renewal, and numerous other issues. Citizens who take time out of their schedules to attend local gatherings likely represent the more active members of their communities, and it is hypothesized that these individuals will be more likely to be more informed municipal voters. Table 9 offers frequency distributions for respondents who attended and did not attend community meeting in the past 12 months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9: Frequencies, Attended a Meeting About a Local Issue</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>(310)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not Attend</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>(387)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cases are distributed quite evenly across both categories for attendance at a community meeting in the past year. As just under half of all respondents indicate that they had attended a meeting, it appears that Vancouver's local voters are reasonably active in dealing with issues that concern their immediate communities. The 53 missing cases for this variable are included in the did not attend category.

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12 See Appendix A, question 10 for an example of this survey question.
4 Results of Statistical Analysis

This section explains the use of logistical regression to assess the impacts of all independent variables on levels of voter knowledge. The results of statistical analysis are presented and subsequently used in section 5 to inform alternatives for policy action by the City of Vancouver.

4.1 Logistical Regression

The Enter method of multivariate logistical regression is used to estimate the probability that a voter with particular characteristics or who interacts with specific sources of information will fall into the more informed category. Logistical regression holds control variables constant as it tests the significance of each independent variable and explains how much more likely a person with specific characteristics or behaviour might be more informed of their choices in local elections than someone who does not possess these characteristics or does not behave in a certain way.

The scorecard style question used to measure the dependent variable was initially selected in hopes that it would provide normally distributed, parametric data that could be used in least-squares regression analysis. Unfortunately, it was impossible to employ this type of regression due to the non-parametric nature of the data. Least-squares regression allows for comparison between precise scores of each respondent and which independent variables are correlated with higher and lower scores. The least-squares method is a much richer tool than logistical regression for studying variation in the dependent variable, as it allows for comparisons between all scores (from one to ten), and not simply the likelihood that a respondent will fall into one of two categories.

Diagnostic tests on all independent variables indicate that no problems of multicollinearity exist within the statistical model. Coefficients for variables significant at a 95 percent confidence interval or greater are then considered in the formation of policy alternatives (in section 5) that aim to improve the overall level of voter knowledge within the Vancouver electorate.
Unfortunately, not all 697 surveys included in the analysis contain responses to questions that measure independent variables. In order to maintain a case count of 697 through the logistical regression analysis, missing cases were included in one of the specific categories within each independent variable. A missing case occurs when a survey respondent does not offer an answer to a specific question measuring one of the variables. Regression analysis will eliminate from its calculations responses to all survey questions by a particular voter if even one answer is left blank. Placing missing cases within one category allows cases with some missing values to remain in the regression while making a very conservative estimate on number of respondents included in the category (or categories) in which the missing cases are not placed. For example, when subjects were asked to record their gender as either male or female, 71 of them did not provide a response. These 71 cases were subsequently added to the male category, bringing the number of male respondents up to 389 and maintaining the total case count at 697. The coding of missing cases is explained with the following analysis of all independent variables.13

4.2 Overall Fit of Statistical Models

Four models of logistical regression are employed to demonstrate not only how different types of variables can predict whether a voter will be more informed or less informed, but also how these variables interact with each other. Model 1 incorporates only voter demographic variables as predictors of the dependent variable category. Model 2 adds knowledge of municipal services before considering exposure to media or other sources of information. Model 3 adds the media exposure variables and Model 4 incorporates all other sources of information.

Prior to statistical analysis with all independent variables, the predicted value of more informed voters would be 52 percent of all cases. Without the model, analysts would therefore be capable of predicting the dependent variable category to which each case belongs with 52 percent accuracy. Once all variables are included in the regression, the overall predictive ability of the model rises from a Nagelkerke pseudo-$R^2$ value of .098 in Model 1 to .235 in Model 4, explaining about 24 percent of the change in the dependent variable. The final model is able to predict the dependent variable category to which each case belongs with 68 percent accuracy—an increase of more than 16 percent from Model 1. Table 10 outlines the four statistical models used to determine which variables are significant predictors of voters more likely to fall into the more informed category.

---

13 When all missing cases are included in the logistical regression, the case count is reduced to 321. Seven of eight significant variables from the 697 case regression are also significant in the 321 case regression. In the 321 case regression, ethnicity is not significant but age becomes significant.
Table 10: Logistical Regression. 4 Models.\textsuperscript{14}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>MODEL 1</th>
<th>MODEL 2</th>
<th>MODEL 3</th>
<th>MODEL 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 18-24</td>
<td>-.468*</td>
<td>-.463*</td>
<td>-.539</td>
<td>-.609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Education</td>
<td>1.285</td>
<td>1.308</td>
<td>1.183</td>
<td>1.149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Income ($100,000+)</td>
<td>-.564**</td>
<td>-.561**</td>
<td>-.524**</td>
<td>-.509**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westside resident</td>
<td>1.239</td>
<td>1.166</td>
<td>1.035</td>
<td>1.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastside resident</td>
<td>-.916</td>
<td>-.888</td>
<td>-.851</td>
<td>-.915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeowner</td>
<td>2.353**</td>
<td>2.202**</td>
<td>2.223**</td>
<td>2.161**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+ years living in Vancouver</td>
<td>-.779</td>
<td>-.367</td>
<td>-.789</td>
<td>-.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks English at home</td>
<td>1.185</td>
<td>1.096</td>
<td>1.072</td>
<td>1.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-.744</td>
<td>-.805</td>
<td>-.852</td>
<td>-.831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese ancestry</td>
<td>-.378**</td>
<td>-.452**</td>
<td>-.447**</td>
<td>-.525*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ancestry</td>
<td>-.746</td>
<td>-.871</td>
<td>-.892</td>
<td>-.847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable of municipal services</td>
<td>3.014**</td>
<td>2.627**</td>
<td>2.447**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults newspaper</td>
<td>3.952**</td>
<td>3.557**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults TV</td>
<td>-.930</td>
<td>-.895</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults radio</td>
<td>1.740**</td>
<td>1.663**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults internet</td>
<td>-.944</td>
<td>-.902</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discusses politics with family and friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.178**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received voter registration card</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted Candidate Profiles package</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted by candidate or representative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.477*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted party website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended community meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.311</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N                                               | 697      | 697      | 697      | 697      |
Nagelkerke pseudo-R\textsuperscript{2}            | .098     | .141     | .208     | .235     |

\textsuperscript{*Significant at} <.05, **Significant at} <.01

4.2.1 Model 1

Model 1 incorporates only voter demographics and aims to isolate the characteristics of both groups of voters. The predictive capacity of this model is quite weak, indicated by a Nagelkerke pseudo-R\textsuperscript{2} value of .098. Four demographic variables are significant at a 95 percent confidence level or greater: homeowners, age 18-24, high income, and Chinese ancestry. The coefficient values on the homeowner and high income variables maintain their strength fairly consistently across all four models. Chinese ancestry has a moderately strong expected Beta value of -.378, indicating that voters of Chinese descent are about 60 percent less likely to be

\textsuperscript{14} See Appendix E for full statistical data on the Model 4 regression including Beta values, expected Beta values, residuals, Wald statistics, and statistical significance of all variables.
more informed than Caucasian voters. Young voters in this model, as hypothesized, are about 50 percent less likely to be more informed on the election than voters 24 years and older.

4.2.2 Model 2

Model 2 adds knowledge of municipal services to the regression, slightly inflating the Nagelkerke pseudo-$R^2$ value to .141. The predictive capacity of the Chinese ethnicity variable falls from -.378 to -.452, while the expected Beta values of all other demographic variables that were significant in Model 1 shrink only marginally. Model 2 shows that a good knowledge of local services explains away about 16 percent of Chinese ethnicity as a predictor of the dependent variable category. The knowledgeable of municipal services variable remains significant at a 99 percent confidence level across the remaining two models.

4.2.3 Model 3

Model 3 incorporates the four media exposure variables (newspapers, TV, radio, and internet) and increases the Nagelkerke pseudo-$R^2$ value to .208. Two modes of media interaction—newspapers and radio—are significant at the 99 percent confidence level, indicating that voters who read newspapers or listen to the radio are more likely to be more informed of their electoral choices. Adding the four media variables removes age as a predictor of the dependent variable category, suggesting that exposure to media by young voters makes up most of the explanatory power of the 18-24 age category. Media exposure also accounts for a portion of the knowledgeable of municipal services variable, decreasing its expected Beta value to 2.627 from 3.014.

4.2.4 Model 4

Model 4 incorporates all independent variables, adding all other sources of information to the regression. These remaining variables increase the explanatory capacity of the model only slightly, garnering a Nagelkerke pseudo-$R^2$ of .235, and—with the exception of exposure to newspapers—do not substantially decrease the expected Beta values of any variables that are significant in Model 3. The explanatory capacity of newspaper consultation declines by about ten percent when all remaining variables are included. Of the other sources of information variables, regular discussion of politics and being contacted by a candidate are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level or greater.
4.3 Analysis of Significant Variables

The following subsections examine variables that are statistically significant in the regression to determine their consistency with the hypotheses described in section 3.

4.3.1 Voter Demographics

Three voter demographic variables—homeowners, high income, and Chinese ethnicity—are significant at the 95 percent confidence level across all four statistical models. Homeowner maintains a relatively strong coefficient value, declining only from 2.353 in Model 1 to 2.161 in Model 4, when all independent variables are included. As such, voters who are homeowners are about 120 percent more likely than renters to be more informed when all variables are considered. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis, and can likely be explained by the fact that homeowners pay property taxes to their municipal government and renters do not. Homeowners probably have a greater financial interest in who is elected to local office and likely make greater efforts to inform themselves of which candidates might be making important decisions with their tax dollars in the near future.

The coefficient associated with the high income variable reveals a somewhat weak predictive capability but is fairly consistent across all models, increasing slightly from -.564 to -.509. As demonstrated by table 10, this variable holds a negative expected Beta value, indicating that—when all variables are considered—high income voters (those earning over $100,000 in annual household income) are about 50 percent less likely than voters of lower income to be more informed about the local election. This is a surprising result and contradicts the initial hypothesis, but an explanation for this unexpected finding may be found in traditional economic theory. As personal income increases, so does the opportunity cost of not only casting a vote but also of investing substantial amounts of time, effort, and money to inform one’s electoral choices. Beyond a certain income level, the opportunity cost of taking time to read newspapers, listen to the radio, or attend a community meeting becomes very high for wealthier members of society. Although this theory applies to the transition between the $80,000 to $99,999 and $100,000 to $109,999 income brackets, voter knowledge continues to be fairly high in some income brackets above $100,000. Table 11 offers a crosstabulation of income levels and voter knowledge.
Table 11: Crosstab, Voter Knowledge and Income (N=557)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>More Informed</th>
<th>Less Informed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0-19,999</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$19,999-39,999</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000-59,999</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-79,999</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000-99,999</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000-109,999</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$110,000-129,999</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$130,000-149,999</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000-169,999</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$170,000 or more</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a substantial number of voters in the $110,000 to $129,999 and $130,000 to $149,999 income brackets are *more informed*, the theory that the high opportunity cost of gathering election information hinders wealthier voters from becoming *more informed* does not appear to hold. However, respondents are often unwilling to disclose information on their personal income, and the answer to why wealthier voters are less likely to be *more informed* may lie in the 140 missing cases on the income variable.

Table 10 shows the Model 4 coefficient values and statistical significance for the Chinese ancestry variable. The explanatory power of this variable is not extremely strong across all four models, declining from an expected Beta value of -.378 to -.525. As such, when all variables are incorporated, Chinese voters are about 50 percent less likely than Caucasian voters to be *more informed* in local elections. It is difficult to account for this discrepancy from the exit poll data. This surprising finding indicates that not only are less than half of Vancouver’s Chinese population voting in local elections, those who are voting are less likely to be knowledgeable of their electoral choices. It is possible that some cultural or language barriers exist in Vancouver that make it slightly more difficult for Chinese voters to gather information on candidates for city council. The issue of Chinese voters being under-informed in local elections will be addressed in section 5 with the formulation and explanation of policy alternatives.

### 4.3.2 Knowledge of Local Services

As demonstrated in Figure 2, Vancouver’s municipal voters are generally quite knowledgeable of their local services. Model 2 shows that being informed of local programs and services is also a strong predictor of whether or not voters are *more informed*. The coefficient
value remains fairly strong when media exposure variables and other sources of information variables are added to the regression in Models 3 and 4. Media exposure and other sources of information account for some of this variable's predictive capacity, as its coefficient value declines slightly in Models 3 and 4. The discovery that voters who demonstrate stronger knowledge of their local services are more likely to be more informed on local elections is consistent with the hypothesis.

4.3.3 Media Exposure

It is hypothesized in section 4 that voters who are exposed to various forms of media are more likely to be more informed on local elections than those who have limited or no interaction with the media. Model 3 shows that two forms of media—newspapers and radio—have statistically significant impacts on levels of voter knowledge. Voters who consult newspapers at least once a month are far more likely (by about 2.5 times) to be more informed on the election than those who do not read newspapers, as indicated by the coefficient values of 3.952 in Model 3 and 3.557 in Model 4. The predictive power of the consults radio variable is fairly consistent across Models 3 and 4, with values of 1.740 and 1.663 respectively. Subjects who listen to the radio a minimum of once a month are about 70 percent more likely to be more informed than those who do not tune in.

4.3.4 Other Sources of Information

Two other sources of information variables are statistically significant when the final six variables are added in Model 4. Regular discussion of politics with family and friends, with an expected Beta value of 2.178, is a fairly strong predictor of whether voters are more informed or less informed. As hypothesized, respondents who engage in private political discussions on a regular basis are about 120 percent more likely to be more informed voters. Whether or not voters were contacted by a candidate or representative of a candidate has less predictive power than private political discussion, but those who were contacted are about 60 percent more likely to be more informed than those who were not contacted.

4.4 Summary of Major Findings

In summary, regression analysis on exit poll data paints a fascinating picture of Vancouver's more informed local voters, and the more effective strategies they employ in efforts to educate themselves on their electoral choices. Analysis of statistically significant variables
reveals that Vancouver's *more informed* voters in 2005 are more likely to be homeowners rather than renters, of lower income rather than high income, Caucasian rather than Chinese, and knowledgeable of their local services. All other demographic variables—gender, years residing in Vancouver, age, language used in the home, and area of residence—all failed to have statistically significant impacts on the dependent variable. Voters who read newspapers (especially) and listen to the radio are also more likely to be *more informed* than those who do not interact with these types of media. Neither TV viewing nor internet usage had statistically significant impacts. Voters who discuss politics regularly and were contacted by candidates or candidate representatives tend to be *more informed* than those who do not engage in regular political discussions or were not contacted. Further, information provided by the City in the forms of voter registration cards and *Candidate Profiles* packages placed in libraries and community centres failed to have significant impacts, as did consultation with party websites.

Table 12 outlines all independent variables included in Model 4 that failed to have significant impacts (at a 95 percent confidence level or greater) on levels of voter knowledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 18-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastside resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westside resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+ years living in Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English spoken at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ancestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Voter Registration Card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted <em>Candidate Profiles</em> package</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted party website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended community meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the non-significant variables in Table 12, university education is likely the most surprising, as obtaining a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree makes no impact on whether the respondent is *more informed* or *less informed*. Area of residence makes no difference either, refuting the traditional west versus east rivalry that has been part of Vancouver's political
Long-term residency also plays no role in determining levels of voter knowledge, suggesting that voters who have lived in Vancouver for many years are no more informed or less informed than newer residents. The language spoken at home, gender, and ancestries other than Caucasian and Chinese all failed to have significant impacts, indicating that these groups do not require any specific targeting through City policies.

Of the media exposure variables, consultation with TV and internet had no influence on predicting higher or lower levels of voter knowledge, hinting that these two forms of media are not particularly effective at informing local voters. Although 80 percent of voters received their registration cards in 2005, receiving these cards had no influence on voter knowledge. A further surprise is that the Candidate Profiles information package also had no significant impact on determining whether voters are more informed or less informed. This finding suggests that the printing and distribution of this package in its current form is not working to effectively inform voters as intended. Party websites and community meetings also prove to be ineffective tools for informing local electors.
5 Analysis of Alternatives

This section employs regression results to formulate policy alternatives that aim to increase the overall level of voter knowledge in future city elections. Policy alternatives are initiatives that can be taken by public bodies and will be judged against relevant criteria in order to assess their overall viability as well as their value to local officials and the Vancouver electorate.

5.1 Relevant Characteristics of Vancouver Municipal Voters and their Levels of Knowledge

As demonstrated in section 4, the following voter characteristics are relevant to predicting whether or not a subject is more informed or less informed of his or her electoral choices in local elections. More informed voters in the 2005 Vancouver municipal election tend to be:

- Homeowners rather than renters
- Of lower income (less than $100,000 annual household income) rather than high income (more than $100,000)
- Caucasian rather than Chinese
- Knowledgeable of their municipal services
- Newspaper readers
- Radio listeners
- Those who engage in regular political discussions with family and friends
- Those who were contacted at home by a candidate or representative of a candidate
5.2 Policy Alternatives: Status Quo

As indicated by Figure 1, Vancouver voters demonstrate a high level of knowledge with respect to their electoral choices in the 2005 civic election. Again, exit poll respondents scored an average of 74 percent on a challenging question requiring them to identify incumbent and non-incumbent candidates. This surprising finding suggests that the City's current practices of distributing information and advertising to voters are working effectively to inform Vancouver’s electorate. Maintaining the Status Quo would mean that the City would continue to distribute voter information cards and householder instruction booklets to registered voters, as well as placing Candidate Profiles information packages in local libraries and community centres. Advertising on billboards and bus shelters, in daily newspapers, and on local radio and television would also continue in future civic elections. Maintaining the City's excellent website and thorough election information webpage would also carry on in future local contests.

It is difficult to determine precisely how City policies are working to inform local voters. Perhaps exposure to election advertising or coming in contact with print materials prompts voters to research the provision of their local services or to discuss politics more frequently with family and friends. The $1.4 million allocated by the City of Vancouver to the 2005 municipal election likely had a positive effect on informing voters (or at least these policies did not have a negative effect), and this amount should not be decreased if the high levels of knowledge seen in 2005 are to be maintained in future contests.

5.3 Policy Alternatives: Expanding Vancouver Sun Newspaper Distribution

Statistical analysis in section 4 demonstrates that newspapers, more than any other form of media tested, are by far the most effective means of informing voters in local elections. Eighty-six percent of voters read newspapers and those who read them are about two and a half times more likely to cast an informed ballot than voters who are not newspaper readers. Therefore, encouraging citizens to read more newspapers during municipal election campaigns will likely increase the overall level of voter knowledge within the local electorate.

This alternative would require a partnership between the City and one or more of Vancouver's major local newspapers. Here, public funds could provide a greater newspaper distribution in the weeks prior to an election—perhaps offering free newspapers to all residents of the city once a week for one month leading up to the election. The Saturday edition of the Vancouver Sun, with 60,000 subscribers in Vancouver and 155,000 total units sold across the
province each week, holds the largest share of the local market and the widest readership among local newspapers (Moore, 2005). To ensure that all residents of the city are treated equally with this policy, each home should receive one newspaper. As Vancouver maintains 248,981 private dwellings (Statistics Canada, 2001), the funding body would be required to purchase an equal number of copies of the Saturday Sun. Offering copies to residents would likely be more effective if papers are distributed fairly regularly in the weeks leading up to each municipal election. As such, Saturday copies of the Sun will be given to residents on each of the four weeks leading up to the election—meaning that four copies in total will be given to each residential property. The Vancouver Sun does not offer a discount for government advertising, nor would it consider offering free or discounted newspapers for purchase.

5.4 Policy Alternatives: Expanding Sing Tao Newspaper Distribution

This policy option would increase the distribution of Chinese language newspapers across Vancouver. An emphasis on informing Chinese residents is appropriate, as voters of Chinese ethnicity are about 50 percent less likely than Caucasian voters to fall into the more informed category. Similar to the previous alternative that would provide a free copy of the Vancouver Sun to every residence in the city, this option will offer a free copy of a Chinese newspaper to every resident of Vancouver with Chinese ancestry. Sing Tao, printed seven days a week, is the most popular of Vancouver’s Chinese language newspapers and is likely the most appropriate for distribution to the electorate. Sing Tao sells about 50,000 copies on Sunday, more than on any other day of the week (Lai, 2006). Since the Sunday edition has the widest circulation, this is probably the most appropriate day for distributing free papers to Chinese voters. In order to decide which residents will receive copies of Sing Tao’s Sunday edition, City officials would examine the surnames of registered voters to determine which ones are of Chinese ancestry and then give the addresses of their target readers to the Sing Tao group for distribution on the selected Sunday. Like the Vancouver Sun alternative, copies of the Sunday Sing Tao will be distributed during the four weeks prior to each municipal election.

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15 Information on newspaper sales and distribution provided by Clayton Moore, Sales Operations Manager at the Vancouver Sun, in an informal telephone conversation on February 9, 2006.
16 Sing Tao does not have information on its sales in the City of Vancouver. All information on Sing Tao newspapers is provided by Katie Lai in Sing Tao’s advertising and sales department in an informal telephone conversation on February 22, 2006.
17 Voter registration lists are public documents and are available for public viewing about six weeks prior to a civic election. No privacy issues exist with giving these names to a private organization. If they so choose, registered voters can request that their personal information not be released.
It is difficult to determine precisely how many Chinese residents in Vancouver are registered voters. As of 2001, 161,110 Vancouver residents were of Chinese ancestry, comprising about 30 percent of the city’s total population (Statistics Canada, 2001). As approximately 70 percent of Vancouver’s total population was registered to vote for the 2005 election, it is likely that no more than 70 percent of Vancouver’s Chinese residents—about 113,000—were registered as well. This number, however, is likely an overestimate of registered Chinese voters, as exit poll data indicate that only about 12 percent of those who cast ballots in 2005—about 16,000 voters—were of Chinese ancestry. It is therefore highly unlikely that 113,000 Chinese residents were registered prior to 2005, but this figure will be used as an upper limit on the number of newspapers that would be required.

5.5 Policy Alternatives: Direct Public Funding to Candidates and Political Parties

Statistical analysis demonstrates that voters who were contacted by candidates or candidate representatives prior to the 2005 Vancouver civic election are about 50 percent more likely to fall into the more informed category. As such, this alternative would see public funds transferred to individual candidates and local political parties, allowing them to distribute information throughout the city in a manner of their choosing. Similar to public financing in federal elections, the amount of transferred funds is based on the number of votes that each candidate or party (a cumulative total for all candidates who ran for each party) had received in the previous election (Canada, 2003). At the federal level, parties receive an annual allowance of $1.75 per vote provided they had achieved two percent of the overall popular vote or five percent of all votes from a specific constituency in the most recent election. This policy will allow smaller parties and independent candidates—who often have difficulty raising funds from donors—an opportunity to expand their campaign budgets and distribute information on their platforms to a wider audience. It can also encourage voters to cast ballots for parties and candidates that have little chance for victory, as these electors may view their votes as a small donation to a worthy cause.

Federal legislation allows for funding only to registered political parties, but as Vancouver has a substantial number of independent candidates (16 out of 20 mayoral candidates and 18 out of 36 council candidates ran as independents in 2005) it is appropriate to expand eligibility for funding to all candidates provided they achieve two percent of the popular vote. Vancouver’s at-large system allows voters to cast several ballots for four separate offices, and as
such each vote for city council, Parks Board, and School Trustee will be divided by the number of positions available (council votes will be divided by ten, Parks Board by seven, and School Trustees by nine). Votes for mayor will not be divided as only one mayoral vote is available to each voter. Based on 2005 results, four parties (COPE, Vision Vancouver, Green, and the NPA) and one independent candidate (James Green) would meet the two percent threshold for public funding in future elections.

5.6 Policy Alternatives: Tax Deductible Status to Candidates and Political Parties

As with the previous alternative, this policy would put money into the hands of candidates and political parties to distribute information to the Vancouver electorate. Again, the rationale behind this approach is that voters who had been contacted during the 2005 campaign by a candidate or candidate representative were about 50 percent more likely to be more informed. Here, instead of a direct transfer of public funds, private donations to political parties would be encouraged through credits against donors’ municipal property taxes. Tax credits are not currently offered to those who make financial contributions to registered local parties and candidates, and this would likely attract a greater number of contributions and allow for advertising to a wider audience during future civic election campaigns. This option is modelled after the British Columbia tax credit scheme laid out in section 20(2) of the provincial Income Tax Act (British Columbia, 2004). The provincial law prescribes a declining scale for the percentage of each donation that can be deducted from annual income tax payments, up to a maximum deductible amount of $500 per year. The $500 limit is reasonable at the local level provided the property tax credit is non-refundable. Although this policy would not entail any direct increase in the City of Vancouver’s election budget each year, it would effectively reduce the amount of property tax revenue received each year from local taxpayers.

5.7 Discarded Policy Alternatives

The following two policy alternatives, expanding radio audiences and distributing Candidate Profiles information packages, were discarded prior to analysis. The rationale for discarding both of these options is explained in the following two subsections.
5.7.1 Discarded Policy Alternatives: Expanding Radio Audiences

Expanding radio audiences in Vancouver was initially considered as a policy alternative in this study, but was eventually discarded due to a substantial lack of information available on the potential impacts and costs of such an investment. There are several news radio stations in Vancouver, one of which—CBC Radio One—already receives public funding from the federal government. Other popular news radio stations include CKNW NewsTalk 980, and News 1130. Although these stations provided reasonable coverage of the 2005 Vancouver municipal election campaign, it is difficult to determine which one offered the most comprehensive coverage or was listened to most frequently by exit poll respondents. Some, but not all, of these organizations are able to offer market research data on their Lower Mainland audiences but do not have reliable numbers on the sizes of their audiences within the City of Vancouver. If it could somehow be determined which radio station was the most effective at informing the Vancouver electorate, and data on the size of its Vancouver audience could somehow be obtained, it would still be extremely difficult to determine the most appropriate medium for increasing the size of this audience. A monetary donation to increase a station’s advertising budget or a public endorsement could possibly accomplish this, but this policy could also raise significant equity issues with other radio stations if these other stations did not receive similar treatment from local government.

5.7.2 Discarded Policy Alternatives: Distributing Candidate Profiles Information Packages to Vancouver Residents

Distributing the Candidate Profiles information package directly to all Vancouver households was also initially considered as a policy alternative but then discarded. As explained in section 2, this 32-page booklet offers detailed information on each candidate running for election. Although a popular desire exists among Vancouver voters to have easier access to this information (75 percent of exit poll respondents indicate that they would like information on candidates mailed directly to their homes), regression analysis reveals that consultation with this package had no statistically significant impact on levels of voter knowledge.

5.8 Criteria for Judging Alternatives

Three criteria are used to assess the five policy alternatives, and are ranked relative to one another as low, medium, or high on each criterion. The alternatives are as follows:

Cost: This refers to the monetary cost for the City of Vancouver of funding the proposed alternative. The City spent $1.4 million on the 2005 election (City of Vancouver, 2005a), and
City officials are unwilling at this time to speculate on any potential changes to how it will distribute information in future elections (Hancock, 2006). Considering that the right-leaning NPA party holds a majority in city council as of 2005, it is unlikely that this group would approve a very costly policy alternative when voters already demonstrate strong levels of knowledge in local elections. A low ranking is therefore assigned to alternatives that would increase the public spending on elections by more than ten percent from 2005. A moderate ranking is given to options that increase the City’s election budget by five to ten percent, and a high ranking is assigned to alternatives that raise election spending by zero to five percent.

**Public Acceptability:** This criterion refers to the level of support or opposition among the Vancouver electorate to the given alternative. Acceptability was tested for some alternatives during the exit poll survey, asking voters whether they favoured, opposed, or were neutral to several specific policy reforms. Neutral cases are removed for the purposes of assessing responses to questions measuring the acceptability of policy changes. It should be noted that respondents were not informed of any potential tradeoffs that would come with these proposed reforms (i.e. they were not asked if they favoured or opposed a particular policy if it meant that their property taxes would increase).

**Administrative Simplicity:** This criterion refers to the ease, relative to the Status Quo, with which the proposed alternative will be implemented and administered by the City of Vancouver and any other organization involved in distributing information. Also, unless specifically prescribed by law, any amendment to the Vancouver Charter must be approved by a vote in the provincial legislature (Stewart, 2003). An amendment to existing provincial legislation could be required with an alternative, adding difficulty to the implementation and administration of policy.

### 5.9 Evaluation of Alternatives

The following subsections outline the rankings and central points of information associated with each alternative, as judged by the evaluation criteria. These alternatives are presented in four separate subsections.

It is important to note in the following analysis that all funding for any of the proposed alternatives would come entirely from the City of Vancouver. Elections BC indicates that it, along with Elections Canada, considers local elections to be the jurisdiction and responsibility of

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18 See Appendix A, question 17 for an example of this exit poll question.
municipal governments and their employees (Porayko, 2006). Both Elections BC and Elections Canada currently limit their involvement in municipal elections to information sharing—primarily of voting lists (although municipalities in British Columbia must purchase these lists prior to each civic election). Elections BC had its annual budget slashed by 45 percent in 2001 and was forced to close all four of its regional offices at that time. Donation of funds by Elections BC for informational initiatives in civic elections is therefore not a viable option at this time. Significant equity issues also surround a possible donation of funds from provincial or federal electoral offices to the City of Vancouver for the purposes of distributing election information. As there are 158 municipalities in British Columbia, and thousands more across Canada, other local governments may deem a transfer of funds solely to Vancouver to be an unfair practice.

5.9.1 Comparative Rankings Matrix

The following matrix compares the rankings of all five alternatives across each of the three evaluation criteria. Note that scores of low, moderate, and high refer to the ranking of each alternative (i.e. a high ranking for the cost criterion indicates that a small amount of financial investment is required). Complete explanations of evaluations for each of the alternative follow the table.
Table 13: Comparative Rankings Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY ALTERNATIVE</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Public Acceptability</th>
<th>Administrative Simplicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status Quo</td>
<td>HIGH ($0)</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Deductible Status to Candidates and Parties</td>
<td>HIGH ($0 direct, but potential for high tax expenditures)</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding Sing Tao Distribution</td>
<td>LOW ($565,036)</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding Vancouver Sun Distribution</td>
<td>LOW ($1,473,888)</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Funding to Candidates and Parties</td>
<td>LOW ($690,227 per year)</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.9.2 Evaluation: Status Quo

Status Quo: Cost

As making no changes to the existing policy for distributing information would mean maintaining current expenditure levels ($1.4 million in 2005), the Status Quo ranks **high** on the cost criterion. Officials from the Vancouver City Clerk’s office are unwilling to comment before the 2007/08 fiscal year on the possibility of making any changes to their policies and practices for distributing distribution during elections (Hancock, 2006). As current levels of voter knowledge in Vancouver are fairly strong, it is likely that existing policies are working in some way to effectively inform voters (or at least are not affecting them negatively). Elected City officials would probably be sceptical of investing public funds in an attempt to raise the already strong level of voter knowledge seen in municipal elections.

Status Quo: Public Acceptability

The Status Quo ranks **low** on public acceptability, as a majority of exit poll respondents indicate a general desire for several reforms to the City’s current electoral policies. For instance, 75 percent of voters favour having information on candidates mailed directly to their homes.
percent favour changing to an electoral system based on wards, and 53 percent favour granting more power to local political parties.

*Status Quo: Administrative Simplicity*

Since local government employees administered the existing procedures for informing voters during the 2005 election campaign, it is likely that they will be able to accomplish this task again in future contests. Also, no changes to existing provincial legislation would be required to maintain the Status Quo. As such, the Status Quo ranks high on administrative simplicity.

**5.9.3 Evaluation: Expanding *Vancouver Sun* Distribution**

*Expanding *Vancouver Sun* Distribution: Cost*

This alternative ranks low on the cost criterion, as it would cost the City $1,473,888 to purchase enough copies of the Saturday *Sun* to provide four to each of Vancouver's 248,981 residential properties (at a cost of $1.50 per newspaper). This would represent a budget expenditure increase of 105 percent. As mentioned earlier, the City of Vancouver is unwilling to comment on the feasibility of any changes prior to the 2007/08 fiscal year. However, as Vancouver has a more fiscally conservative mayor and council than it did prior to the 2005 election, it is unlikely that the new government would approve such a costly initiative.

*Expanding *Vancouver Sun* Distribution: Public Acceptability*

In terms of public acceptability, it is logical to assume that most residents would welcome a free edition of the Saturday *Sun*. Seventy-five percent of exit poll respondents indicate that they would favour receiving information on the election through the mail, and it can be logically assumed that they would have similar feelings about a free newspaper. A high ranking for public acceptability is therefore assigned to this policy alternative.

*Expanding *Vancouver Sun* Distribution: Administrative Simplicity*

Finally, this alternative receives a moderate ranking for administrative simplicity, as it would require the *Vancouver Sun* to arrange delivery for an additional 248,981 copies of their Saturday newspaper each week—more than four times its usual number of units sold in Vancouver every Saturday. There would be no added administrative difficulty for City officials aside from approving the necessary funds to purchase newspapers, and no changes to provincial legislation would be required with this alternative.
5.9.4 Evaluation: Expanding Sing Tao Distribution

Expanding Sing Tao Distribution: Cost

It would cost the City up to $565,036 to provide four Sunday editions of Sing Tao to a maximum of 113,000 voters of Chinese ancestry—although the number of registered Chinese voters is likely lower than this. This policy would increase the City’s election budget by 40 percent from 2005, and ranks low on the cost criterion.

Expanding Sing Tao Distribution: Public Acceptability

Similar to offering free copies of the Vancouver Sun to residents, distributing free Sunday editions of Sing Tao to registered voters ranks high in terms of public acceptability. Seventy-five percent of all exit poll respondents and 79 percent of Chinese respondents indicate that they would like to receive more information directly to their homes, and it is likely they would have similar feelings about free newspapers.

Expanding Sing Tao Distribution: Administrative Simplicity

This option ranks as moderate for administrative simplicity. No amendment to provincial legislation is required, but it will take a substantial amount of time for City officials to determine which residents on the list of 407,040 registered voters are of Chinese ancestry. This alternative would also require the Sing Tao newsgroup to substantially increase the production of their Sunday edition for each of the four weeks that copies are distributed.

5.9.5 Evaluation: Direct Public Funding to Candidates and Political Parties

Direct Public Funding to Candidates and Political Parties: Cost

This option ranks low on the cost criterion, as it would require a total of $690,227 each year to provide funding to parties and candidates based on their vote totals from the 2005 election (those parties and candidates that met the two percent threshold). This represents a 49 percent increase in overall election expenditures from 2005 for just one annual payment. Based on 2005 voting statistics and a donation of $1.75 per vote, the NPA would be the greatest benefactor of this policy, warranting $370,602 in annual contributions from the city. COPE would be second with $166,994, followed by Vision Vancouver with $145,203, Green with $31,204, and finally independent candidate James Green with $7,478.19 Again, the City is unwilling to comment on any potential changes to election spending prior to 2007/08, but the NPA majority on council is

19 Data on vote totals from all Vancouver municipal elections from the City of Vancouver (2005e).
unlikely to approve a large increase in election expenditures when the Vancouver electorate is already reasonably well-informed.

**Direct Funding to Candidates and Political Parties: Public Acceptability**

The exit poll survey asks respondents whether they would favour or oppose granting more power to local political parties. As 53 percent indicate that they are in favour of such a policy, granting public money to political parties through an Elections Canada-style funding program ranks as moderate on public acceptability.

**Direct Funding to Candidates and Political Parties: Administrative Simplicity**

Finally, this alternative is assigned a low ranking in terms of administrative simplicity. The dollar amounts of financial contributions are quite easy to calculate, and distribution would also be fairly simple, as only four registered parties and one independent candidate would currently qualify for public funding. However, accountability measures would be required to ensure that the parties do not misuse these funds, and all allocated money is spent on election advertising or other party-related activities. Further, this policy would require an amendment to the *Vancouver Charter*—a piece of provincial legislation—which governs local elections in British Columbia.

5.9.6 **Evaluation: Tax Deductible Status to Candidates and Political Parties**

**Tax Deductible Status to Candidates and Parties: Cost**

This alternative would result in no direct increase to election spending for the City of Vancouver. However, determining the precise dollar amount of tax expenditures required for this policy proves challenging. This difficulty arises because the cumulative deductions to contributors’ property tax payments will depend on Vancouver’s rapidly increasing property values, the amount each donor contributes to a party or candidate (deduction rates vary by the dollar amount of contributions), and how effectively this policy will be at attracting new contributors.

In 2002, Vancouver’s two largest political parties, the NPA and COPE, spent $1.3 million and $1.1 million respectively on their election campaigns (Luba, 2005). Following provincial electoral legislation, income tax deduction rates for contributions to provincial political parties vary from about 50 to 75 percent depending on the amount deducted (British Columbia, 2004). If similar expenditures occur in future elections, this policy could cost the City of

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20 Figures on parties’ election expenses for the 2005 election were not available at the time of writing.
Vancouver between $1.2 million and $1.8 million in property tax revenue for these two major parties alone (assuming all funds are received from donors who contribute less than the $500 maximum and apply for the property tax credit). This alternative ranks as high on the cost criterion since there is no direct increase in the City’s election spending but potential exists for revenue losses from tax expenditures.

Tax Deductible Status to Candidates and Parties: Public Acceptability

The exit poll survey asked respondents whether they would favour or oppose granting more power to local political parties. With greater funding, local political parties would no doubt have more power during elections than they currently hold. As 53 percent indicated that they are in favour of such a policy, this alternative ranks as moderate on public acceptability.

Tax Deductible Status to Candidates and Political Parties: Administrative Simplicity

This alternative ranks low on administrative simplicity as it will require an amendment to the Vancouver Charter, and must be approved by a vote in the provincial legislature. This policy will also require amendments to the City’s property tax payment procedures so contributors to political parties may list their deductions against their property tax payments each year.

5.10 Evaluation Summary

Once all alternatives are compared across the three evaluation criteria, the Status Quo emerges as the most viable policy alternative. This option ranks high on cost (none), low on public acceptability, and high on administrative simplicity. The City’s current practices of printing and distributing written materials (voter registration cards, household instruction booklets, and Candidate Profiles packages), advertising through billboards, TV, daily newspapers, and radio, and maintaining its website are somehow working in combination to inform those Vancouver residents who choose to cast ballots every three years in local elections. The City spent $1.4 million on the 2005 election and if it maintains this level of expenditure, high levels of voter knowledge within the Vancouver electorate will likely continue in the future.

Offering free copies of the Saturday Sun to residents would likely be effective at raising the overall level of voter knowledge, but the considerable financial cost of this option ($1,473,888) and the moderate administrative burden it places on the Vancouver Sun make it less feasible than the Status Quo. Distributing free copies of Sing Tao would effectively target Chinese voters who are less likely to be more informed in local elections. This alternative would be less expensive than expanding Vancouver Sun distribution (a maximum cost of $565,036), but
would still increase the City’s 2005 election budget by 40 percent. Working through the list of over 400,000 registered voters would place a significant burden on City officials to determine which voters are of Chinese ancestry and will receive free newspapers. Adding to this, the Sing Tao newsgroup would be required to more than double the weekly production of its Sunday newspaper. It is also important to note that Chinese voters comprise just 12 percent of all voters in local elections, and funding of this magnitude is likely better spent on increasing voter participation rates in Chinese communities. Both alternatives for expanding newspaper distribution rank high on public acceptability, as a large majority of voters indicate that they would like more information mailed directly to their homes during election campaigns.

Ensuring that independent candidates and political parties have more funding to distribute information to voters would also likely increase the levels of voter knowledge in future Vancouver elections. Granting tax deductible status would have no direct cost, but could result in revenue losses depending on the number of contributors attracted to the new policy and the amount of money each one donates. Although this option has no direct cost and receives a high cost ranking, there is uncertainty surrounding precisely how much revenue the City would lose through annual tax expenditures. It also receives a moderate ranking on public acceptability, as voters are lukewarm to granting more power to political parties but not overly enthusiastic. Granting tax deductible status receives a low grade on administrative simplicity because it requires an amendment to provincial law as well as changes to practices of issuing annual and semi-annual municipal property tax bills. Creating a federal-style public financing system to fund candidates and political parties would also likely be an effective policy alternative. This option is costly ($690,227 per year), and it is unlikely that the right-leaning city council elected in 2005 would approve a 53 percent increase in election expenditures to provide even one year of funding to parties and candidates. Again, the public moderately favours granting more power to local political parties but not by an overwhelming margin. This option is also complex administratively, as it would require an amendment to the Vancouver Charter and the establishment of accountability procedures to ensure candidates and parties spend public monies appropriately.
Next Steps

This study demonstrates that voters in the 2005 Vancouver municipal election are better informed of their electoral choices than was initially anticipated based on a review of the relevant literature. Although the problem of uninformed or under-informed voters is not as extensive as expected, there are still some Vancouver citizens who enter polling stations every three years and cast several uninformed votes. This presents somewhat of a problem for city governance and local democracy, as the policy preferences of a minority of voters are not necessarily reflected in their electoral choices. This study identifies five policy alternatives that the City of Vancouver could implement to inform the local electorate in future civic contests. Of these five, the Status Quo emerges as the most appropriate alternative when evaluated in terms of cost, public acceptability, and administrative simplicity.

The question of whether or not to take action on improving levels of voter knowledge will not be answered by City officials until the 2007/08 fiscal year. This answer will depend on whether or not the city council elected in 2005 decides it should do more to inform their constituents of their electoral choices every three years. This council, which contains a right-of-centre NPA majority, may decide that Vancouver voters are already sufficiently informed of their electoral choices, and that policy action that uses scarce public dollars is not warranted.

Current City policies appear to be effective at informing Vancouver’s local voters, whether informing them directly or inspiring them to research their electoral choices more thoroughly than they otherwise would. It is important to note that maintaining current practices and policies in local elections means maintaining current levels of government expenditures in these contests, and that new ideas on cost-effective ways to inform voters in future elections should not be discouraged. As this study demonstrates, the central problem with local elections in Vancouver is not uninformed or under-informed voters. Perhaps City officials could focus future efforts and greater funding on raising Vancouver’s historically low turnout rates rather than working to inform voters in municipal elections.

Based on this analysis, it is recommended that the City of Vancouver maintain the Status Quo with respect to informing voters during local elections. Since Vancouver voters are far more informed than anticipated, and costly efforts to inform the electorate are unlikely to be
approved by the current council, City staff should maintain their present course when it comes to
distributing information leading up to each civic contest. Credit should also be given to the
citizens of Vancouver who, despite the challenges faced by the at-large electoral system, exhibit a
keen interest and high level of knowledge when it comes to casting their ballots every three years
in municipal elections.
Appendices
Appendix A: 2005 Vancouver Municipal Election Exit Poll Survey

884 municipal voters (weighted cases) responded to this survey during the Vancouver Municipal Election on November 19, 2005. Of these respondents, 697 were acceptable for statistical analysis in this study. See the following pages for an example of the exit poll survey.
MUNICIPAL ELECTION EXIT POLL
THE VANCOUVER SUN

About the survey: This five minute survey is being conducted by Simon Fraser University for the Vancouver Sun. The survey looks at voter behaviour in the 2005 Vancouver election. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you can withdraw at anytime. In filling out this survey you are consenting to participate in this study. Your responses will be confidential and will not be distributed to outside parties. The survey is anonymous, please do not identify yourself. If you have any concerns or complaints, contact Dr. Nancy Clewiler at (604)268-7913.

1. For whom did you vote as Mayor of Vancouver?
☐ Jim Green (Vision Vancouver)
☐ Sam Sullivan (Non-Partisan Association)
☐ Other ________________________________

2. Please circle the number of city councillors for whom you voted from each party (maximum 10).
NPA 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Independent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
COPE 1 2 3 4 5
Vision Vancouver 1 2 3 4 5
Green 1

3. Which issue mattered most in deciding how you voted for mayor? (choose only ONE)
☐ Taxes/Budget ☐ Social Services
☐ Candidate Qualities ☐ Transportation
☐ Crime ☐ Olympics
☐ Downtown Eastside ☐ Drugs
☐ Housing/Homelessness ☐ Other ________________________________

4. How often do you discuss politics with family / friends?
☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

5. Which Federal party best represents your views?
☐ NDP ☐ Liberal ☐ Conservative ☐ Green ☐ Other

6. Which city councillors are seeking re-election? (please check all that apply):
☐ Fred Bass ☐ Raymond Loue
☐ Kim Capri ☐ Peter Ladner
☐ George Chow ☐ Patrick Malhi
☐ Heather Harrison ☐ Tim Stevenson
☐ B.C. Lee ☐ Ellen Woodsworth

7. Does Vancouver City Council consult enough with citizens when making decisions?
☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Are you informed enough about local issues to help your city government make decisions?
☐ Yes ☐ No

9. How often did you consult the following for information about this election?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>Once a week</th>
<th>Everyday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. In the past year how often have you interacted with, or participated in, the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Few times a year</th>
<th>Few times a month</th>
<th>Once a week</th>
<th>Few times a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Which programs or services does your municipal government provide? (please check all that apply):
☐ Health care ☐ Zoning ☐ Port Authority
☐ Police ☐ Garbage Collection ☐ Welfare

12. How much do you trust your municipal government to do what is right?
☐ Always ☐ Most of the time ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

13. Does your municipal government provide enough information about how it spends your tax dollars?
☐ Yes ☐ No

14. Would you participate in the following?
☐ Neighbourhood councils ☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Block parties ☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Community consultations ☐ Yes ☐ No

15. Would you participate in more neighborhood meetings, block parties or community consultations if they were held in your first language?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable
16. During the past 12 months:
   a. Did you receive a voter registration card from the City?  
   b. Did you consult the candidate information package at your local library or community centre?  
   c. Did any candidate or candidate representative call or visit your home?  
   d. Did you visit any municipal political party websites?  
   e. Did you receive a copy of the municipal budget?  

17. How much do you favour or oppose the following reforms?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reform</th>
<th>Strongly Favour</th>
<th>Somewhat Favour</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Oppose</th>
<th>Strongly Oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. More referendums &amp; plebiscites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. More community consultations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Changing to an electoral system based on wards</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Giving more power to local political parties</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Mailing information on all candidates directly to your home</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Printing the election ballot in other languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Creating neighbourhood councils</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Creating more community spaces</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Having translators at community meetings</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>j. Supporting community, business, &amp; government cooperation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>k. More deliberative groups like the Citizen's Assembly</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

18. Using the following scale, please rank how much you trust the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do not trust at all</th>
<th>Completely trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Family</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Friends</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Neighbours</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Strangers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Municipal Government</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Provincial Government</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Federal Government</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. Are you:  
[ ] Female  [ ] Male

20. Postal Code: ____________________

21. How many years have you lived in Vancouver?

- [ ] less than 1 year
- [ ] 1 - 3 years
- [ ] 4 - 6 years
- [ ] 7 years or more

22. What is your current living situation?

- [ ] Homeowner  [ ] Renter

23. Your age:

- [ ] 18-24  [ ] 25-34  [ ] 35-44

24. Do you mainly speak English in your home?

- [ ] Yes  [ ] No

25. What is the highest level of education you have completed (check one):

- [ ] Did not complete high school
- [ ] High school
- [ ] Trade certificate
- [ ] College certificate
- [ ] Bachelor degree
- [ ] Graduate degree

26. What is your annual household income?

- [ ] $0-19,999
- [ ] $20,000-39,999
- [ ] $40,000-59,999
- [ ] $60,000-79,999
- [ ] $80,000-99,999
- [ ] $100,000-109,999
- [ ] $110,000-129,999
- [ ] $130,000-149,999
- [ ] $150,000-169,999
- [ ] $170,000 or more

27. Which best describes your ancestral background?

- [ ] Chinese
- [ ] Southeast Asian
- [ ] Filipino
- [ ] White/Caucasian
- [ ] Japanese
- [ ] Other
- [ ] South Asian

28. Were you born in Canada?

- [ ] Yes  [ ] No
Appendix B: Exit Poll Sampling and Methodology

Data for this study were gathered on November 19, 2005 during Vancouver’s general local election. This first ever exit poll of voters in a Canadian civic election was designed and administered by members of Simon Fraser University’s (SFU) graduate Public Policy Program and funded by the Vancouver Sun, Elections BC, and SFU’s Institute of Governance Studies. The purpose of the exit poll was not only to gather data for academic research but also to make a prediction on mayoral voting results for Global TV and to provide information for the Vancouver Sun’s special election edition.

Prior to this study, an exit poll aiming for a random or representative sample of voters had been attempted just once in a Canadian election at any level. Researchers at the Laurier Institute for the Study of Public Opinion and Policy (LISPOP) conducted an exit poll during the 2003 Ontario provincial election in the riding of Kitchener Centre, and were quite accurate in predicting the election outcome (within five percentage points of the overall results).

Vancouver is divided into 142 voting districts, as all eligible voters within an individual district will vote at one specific location. In 2005, the size of these districts ranged in population from 1792 to 4055 registered voters. All eligible voters are also given the opportunity to vote in one of four advanced polls in the two weeks prior to the election, and eligible voters that meet strict requirements are able to mail-in their ballots. The exit poll sample includes only those who cast ballots on November 19 (121,916 total voters) and excludes all advanced, mail-in, and special ballots. It is important to note that every single election participant did not make use of all 27 votes that were available to him or her on election day. For example, although 121,196 total ballots were cast, only 120,055 votes were cast for mayor—meaning that 1861 voters either neglected to vote, or actively decided not to vote, for mayor.

Exit polls generally rely on a two-stage sampling method based on first selecting a number of polling stations and then randomly sampling voters as they exit these stations (Levy, 1983; Brown et al, 2005). While there are a number of methodologies for selecting polling stations, the 2005 Vancouver Exit Poll employed a combination of sampling techniques. To generate election night information for Global TV and the Vancouver Sun, this study targeted voters casting ballots in 11 “bellweather” polling stations. These stations were selected based on their tendency to accurately reflect, within +/-5 percentage points, the overall results from the mayoral race in three previous elections (1996, 1999, and 2002). Calculating previous vote totals for station selection was slightly problematic due to minor geographic changes to station
boundaries from those used in 1996, 1999, and 2002. However, these changes to voting divisions are quite small and do not present a major problem.

The 11 bellweather voting divisions also provide a very accurate reflection of the city’s diverse demographic composition. For example, where 30 percent of Vancouver’s overall population is of Chinese ancestry, the average population of Chinese residents across the 11 selected stations is also 30 percent (Statistics Canada, 2001). There is, however, a major discrepancy between the city’s median income and the median income averaged across the 11 stations. Where bellweather stations reveal an average median income of $50,363, the city-wide amount is $42,026 (Statistics Canada, 2001). This gap can likely be explained by the absence of the very poor Downtown Eastside area from the sampling frame. This area was deliberately excluded due to its long history of very low voter turnout and concerns over the safety of exit poll surveyors.

In order to achieve a sample population that is demographically representative of Vancouver, voters were also surveyed at five randomly selected polling stations—bringing the total number of stations polled up to 16. The additional five stations were added to raise the overall sample size and to ensure that some of the city’s concentrated minority pockets were included in the sample. These five stations effectively reinforce the demographic accuracy of the sample population.

The second phase of exit poll administration is the random sampling of voters leaving each polling station. To achieve this, surveyors stand outside polling stations and ask voters—after voters have cast their ballots—to complete a survey. Exiting voters are selected using a skipping process where each nth voter is approached and asked to complete a survey. If the selected voter refuses to participate, the skip interval is cut in half until a survey is completed successfully. Skip intervals were calculated by averaging the number of people casting ballots from two previous elections (1999 and 2002) and then dividing this average by the desired number of surveys (a generic target of 100 surveys was set for each voting division for easy calculations of skip intervals). Thus, if previous turnouts indicated that about 2000 voters would likely cast ballots at a polling station, then dividing that number by 100 produces a skip interval of 20. Therefore, every twentieth voter leaving the station would be asked to complete the survey. If that individual refuses, the tenth exiting voter would be approached until a successful survey is completed, then the skip interval would return to every twentieth voter. See Levy (1983) for a detailed explanation of exit poll skip interval calculations and techniques.
Exit poll data from each voting division are weighted to reflect the different probabilities of all voters having an equal chance of being surveyed. This weighting ensures that surveys from larger polling stations are not weighted more heavily than those collected in stations with a smaller number of registered voters. Cases are also weighted to compensate for the number of surveys collected compared to the number of registered voters within each polling station. 535 total surveys were collected in the 11 bellweather stations, and 349 from the five supplementary divisions for a total sample of 884 weighted cases. A random sample of this size produces an overall confidence interval of +/-3.3 percent, 19 times out of 20. There will likely be some controversy over whether or not the sample used in this study warrants this level of confidence, as 11 of 16 voting divisions were not selected randomly, but purposively due to their ability to predict the overall mayoral vote in the 1996, 1999, and 2002 elections.

A well-executed exit poll offers an immediate test of its accuracy, as actual election results are available on the same day that surveying is completed. According to official results, Sam Sullivan of the NPA received 56,565 of 120,055 votes cast for mayor (or 47.1 percent of the popular mayoral vote). The exit poll indicated that of those asked “Who did you vote for as Mayor of Vancouver?: Jim Green (Vision Vancouver); Sam Sullivan (Non-Partisan Association/NPA) or Other”, 363 of the 831 (43.7 percent) respondents who answered this question indicate that they voted for Sullivan—a percentage that falls within the 3.3 percent margin of error. However, the exit poll shows that 428 of 831 (or 51.4 percent) of respondents selected Jim Green as mayor but the official vote count indicates that Green received just 53,692 of 120,055 votes cast (or 44.7 percent of all mayoral votes)—a difference of 6.7 percent, and outside the 3.3 percent margin of error for the entire sample. This discrepancy between survey data and official results is puzzling upon first examination, as an over-sampling of Green voters would likely be complemented by an under-sampling of Sullivan supporters. However, this is certainly not the case as exit poll data for Sullivan’s supporters are highly accurate.

The inflation of Green supporters comes not from under-sampling Sullivan supporters but from surveys completed by supporters of other candidates. This reinforces a controversy that arose the 2005 election where voters cast their ballots for a candidate named ‘James Green’ when they intended to vote for ‘Jim Green’ (James Green’s name appeared just before Jim’s on the alphabetical ballot). As such, some voters mistakenly cast ballots for James Green in the voting booth, but when completing the exit poll survey they indicated that they voted for Jim Green when given a choice between ‘Green’, ‘Sullivan’ or ‘Other’. If ballots cast for James Green are added to Jim Green’s total, Jim Green’s share of the mayoral vote increases to 48 percent and
falls just within the margin of error. With Green’s high percentage of votes explained by voting errors and spoiled ballots, the exit poll predicted the results for both candidates within the 3.3 percent margin of error.

21 An unpublished study by Scott Matthews of the University of British Columbia suggests that many people voted for James Green when they meant to vote for Jim Green. Bula and Fowlie (2005) describe an unusually high number of spoiled ballots as a result of this confusion.
Appendix C: Map of Selected Polling Stations

Sixteen polling stations were selected for surveying during the Vancouver municipal election on November 19, 2005. See the following page for a map highlighting the selected stations.
Appendix D: Regions of Vancouver (Downtown, Westside, Eastside)

As outlined in section 3, Vancouver is divided into three sections to determine if a voter’s area of residence has any significant impact on whether a voter is more informed or less informed. The borders were drawn along Main St. to divide West from East, and the Downtown peninsula west of Main St. is considered Downtown.
Figure 4: Regions of Vancouver

Source: City of Vancouver, 2005c.
## Appendix E: Model 4 Regression Coefficients (697 Cases)

### Table 14: Logistical Regression, Model 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Hyp.</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>(n/a)</td>
<td>-1.185</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>1.024</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td>.831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+ Years living in Vancouver</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>-.226</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.979</td>
<td>.322</td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeowner</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td>.206</td>
<td>13.994</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>2.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 18-24</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>-.496</td>
<td>.408</td>
<td>1.479</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td>.609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks English at home</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.758</td>
<td>1.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Education</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>.535</td>
<td>.465</td>
<td>1.149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Income ($100,000+ household)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>-.676</td>
<td>.221</td>
<td>9.392</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Ancestry</td>
<td>(n/a)</td>
<td>-.645</td>
<td>.318</td>
<td>4.118</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ancestry</td>
<td>(n/a)</td>
<td>-.166</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>2.093</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td>.847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westside resident</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.718</td>
<td>1.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastside resident</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>-.088</td>
<td>.217</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.684</td>
<td>.915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable of municipal services</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>.245</td>
<td>13.377</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>2.447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults Newspaper</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>1.269</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>18.664</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>3.557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults TV</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>-.111</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>.895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults Radio</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>.509</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>7.205</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>1.663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults Internet</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>-.103</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td>.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discusses politics regularly with family and friends</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td>.277</td>
<td>7.919</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>2.178</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consulted Candidate Profiles package</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>.194</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.868</td>
<td>.968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted at home by a candidate</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>4.728</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>1.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted party website</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>-.091</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.682</td>
<td>.913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended community meeting</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>2.359</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>1.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.341</td>
<td>.530</td>
<td>41.404</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Percentage dependent variable category predicted correctly: 68.0 percent

Cox and Schnell Pseudo $R^2$: 0.176

Nagelkerke Pseudo $R^2$: 0.235
Bibliography

Works Cited


**Interviews**


**Public Documents**


Works Consulted


Websites Reviewed