

EARLY VOTING: COMPARING CANADA, FINLAND, GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND

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Do early voters differ from election day voters ?

- The youngest group of voters (ages 18–35) are less likely to vote via any means (early or election day) in all countries studied, but only in Finland and Switzerland are they less likely to vote early (via advance or postal voting) than their middle aged (36–55) counterparts. The oldest age group (66+) has the highest predicted probability of voting early across all cases.
- Post-secondary Education has a positive impact on the likelihood of early voting in the two countries studied that employ postal voting (Germany and Switzerland).
- Political interest, political knowledge and partisan intensity are generally able to predict voting via any means (as opposed to non-voting) . The largest differences between the most and least politically interested and knowledgeable are found in the most common form of voting (election day voting in Canada, Germany and Finland, and early voting in Switzerland).

Data from the Making Electoral Democracy Work Project and National Election Studies

Are there differences between countries and types of early voting?



Canada has in-person advance voting over a few days. This model of early voting looks similar to election day voting. The predictors of early voting and election day voting are also similar.



In Finland, in-person advance voting takes place over a week-long period. There is a particularly strong relationship between the oldest voters and early voting.



In Germany, voters must apply in advance for a postal ballot. The difficult procedure may explain why post-secondary education is highly related to early voting.



In Switzerland, postal voting is the default option and there are the largest differences in political interest, knowledge and partisan intensity between early and election day voters.

So will early voting increase turnout among those unlikely to vote?

Early voting rarely reduces the gaps between population groups that tend to vote and tend not to vote. In some cases, these gaps are magnified for early voting. The exception is the elderly, who in other research have lower in voter turnout, but take advantage of early voting in large numbers