

Explaining Regional Variation in Public Support for Bilingualism in Canada

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Abstract

Trudeau's vision of Canada's cultural policy was situated within a bilingual framework. Canada, so conceived, has "no official culture" and two official languages. Nearly 50 years later, debate regarding the effects of this policy combination persists. Empirical research on Canadians' attitudes toward multiculturalism has become increasingly abundant in recent years (Banting and Soroka 2006; Johnston and Soroka 2001). Canadians' attitudes toward bilingualism policy, by contrast, have received relatively little attention. This paper explores regional variation in Canadians' attitudes towards federal language policy, asking: (1) Are Canadians generally supportive of the equality of English and French in the federal government?, (2) Which socio-demographic groups support official bilingualism most? and, (3) What individual level and contextual forces drive some Canadians to support bilingualism policy more strongly than others? The data employed - the results of a massive online survey collected via a partnership between Vox Pop Labs and the CBC in late 2015, alongside conventional cross-sectional survey data collected between 1997 and 2011- provide a new testing ground for these questions.

“There is a tendency to see this subject as part of Canada’s past and not its future, and any discussion of language policy as an exercise in nostalgia. This has been solved, right? Well, no.”

- Graham Fraser (2006)

The adoption of a policy of official multiculturalism within a pan-Canadian bilingual framework is, setting aside the constitutional changes of 1982, perhaps the most significant and enduring policy legacy of the Trudeau years. It goes without saying that language policy is not a technical or purely instrumental issue: not only does the choice of a “personality” or “territorial” principle for a country’s language policy carry substantial practical implications, the choice has profound symbolic value (McRae 1975). Language is, of course, integral to culture; the bifurcation of policy in these two areas carries a certain degree of tension.

A growing body of empirical research probes Canadians’ attitudes toward multiculturalism (Banting and Soroka 2006; Johnston and Soroka 2001). Markedly less attention has been paid to public attitudes toward bilingualism and the use of French and English in the federal government. How do Canadians feel about bilingualism policy? What are their views on bilingualism in requirements in Supreme Court appointments? Is there a consensus on official bilingualism in Canada or is the public polarized? And what are the individual and contextual factors that shape public support for bilingualism?

This paper addresses these questions through the lens of regional differences in Canada. Regionalism in Canadian political culture is the focal point of an extensive, well-established literature encompassing institutional (Black and Cairns 1966; Simeon and Elkins 1974), historical (Wiseman 2007), and survey-based quantitative analyses (Henderson 2004; Cochrane and Perrella 2012). Regional differences in political attitudes and beliefs might plausibly be attributed to differences in the socio-demographic composition of different geographic units. Most of those who devote their efforts to the study of regional differences, however, take the view that the geography and history of different regions, as well as other aggregate-level social, political, and economic variables can exert contextual effects that contribute to regional differences. In other words, regional differences in political attitudes are not reducible to aggregate-level differences in the socio-demographic profile of different regions.

The paper begins with a brief review of the literature on bilingualism and regionalism in Canada and an articulation of key hypotheses. We then assess the extent of public support for bilingualism, its regional and socio-demographic distribution in the population, and the degree of consensus or polarization in public attitudes. The paper then proceeds to a multivariate test of the impact of individual and contextual variables on support. We conclude with a discussion of key findings and their implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

Theory and Hypotheses

The proceedings of the Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B and B) Commission, the passage of the Official Languages Act in 1969, and the ongoing tensions between Quebec and the federal government during this period catalyzed an initial spurt of scholarly interest in the determinants of Canadians' attitudes toward linguistic dualism in the federal government in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Interest in attitudes toward language policy among Canadian political scientists has waned, however, and little recent systematic research exists on attitudes toward official bilingualism and influences on those attitudes.

A crucial point emerging from a survey of that early body of research on bilingualism and public attitudes toward it is that such attitudes are not uni-dimensional. There are a number of key distinctions that need to be established before embarking on an empirical analysis of the subject. First, and perhaps most importantly, differences exist between federal and provincial iterations of bilingualism policy. Whereas the Official Languages Act (1969) applies exclusively to the federal government, each province has developed its own set of laws surrounding the application of bilingualism. Indeed, New Brunswick is the only provincial government that is officially bilingual, a point to which we will return later in the paper. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the lived reality of bilingual public policy is bound to be different for residents of different provinces. The sets of policies confronted by residents of New Brunswick are more extensive than those confronted by residents of other provinces. The focus of this paper, however, is the structure of Canadians' attitudes toward bilingualism in federal government institutions, particularly the attitudes of anglophones (both in Quebec and in the rest of Canada).

Another important distinction emerging from the literature on bilingualism is support for applications of bilingualism in the federal government, which has tended to be fairly robust, and support for applications in "personal and social" domains (MacMillan 1998: 40). MacMillan reports that whereas the B and B commission generated research showing that over 80 percent of Canadians approved of making the federal government fully accessible in both languages, many fewer Canadians (51 percent) feel that individuals have an obligation to learn the other official language if they happen to work at a company primarily composed of French speakers. Further probing showed that although Canadians tend to express high levels of support for abstract statements about bilingualism generally, support tend to drop for specific applications of the policy, particularly those applications that result in obligations being placed on individuals or businesses rather than on the federal government (MacMillan 1998: 41-42).

Early research on Canadians attitudes toward language policy also highlighted the importance of contact between members of different linguistic communities. This effect is generally attributed to "the frequency with which individuals hear the other language spoken as part of their daily life in their own communities, and to the individuals' degree of familiarity with the other official language" (MacMillan 1998: 42). A number of studies advance this

hypothesis. The earliest articulation of this theory in Canada was Jonathan Pool's study, springing from data collected for the B and B Commission. Pool argues that "those who live amidst members of the other language group are more likely to agree with policies benefiting that group than are those living in comparatively segregated environments..." (Pool 1974: 490). These theories obviously dovetail with and draw on contact theory, a more general perspective on inter-group relations which highlights the potential of inter-group contact for generating increasingly positive inter-group attitudes (see Forbes 1997 for a review).

This research is pioneering and invaluable for providing background information. None of those early studies, however, has a large enough survey sample to use contextual riding-level data to test the impact of contextual influences systematically. Based on the research discussed in the foregoing paragraphs, we specify two hypotheses regarding the impact of linguistic context on public attitudes toward bilingualism policy:

Hypothesis 1a: Anglophones who live in ridings with a higher proportion of francophones (those speaking mostly French at home) will be more likely to support bilingualism policy.

Hypothesis 1b: Anglophones who live in ridings with a more even linguistic divide between francophones and other language groups (i.e. riding-level French/non-French heterogeneity closer to 50/50) will be more likely to support bilingualism policy.

Beyond the effects of socio-linguistic context, ideas about nationalism, culture, and ideology might also influence public attitudes toward language policy. Kenneth McRoberts' seminal *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity* (1997) makes the case that Trudeau's language policy managed to change English-Canadians' self-conception to one anchored in pan-Canadian bilingualism, though it proved incapable of changing the Quebecois' view of themselves as a distinct national community. McRoberts essentially argues that the view of Quebec as a distinct nation within Canada, rooted in a territorial principle of language and culture, is in tension with support for Trudeau's policy of pan-Canadian bilingualism.

Following this logic, we hypothesize that support for official recognition of Quebec as a distinct nation in the Constitution, something Pierre Trudeau staunchly opposed, will be inversely related to support for Trudeau's language policy.

Hypothesis 2a: Anglophones who feel that the Quebec should be constitutionally recognized as a distinct national community will be less likely to support pan-Canadian bilingualism.

The equally plausible alternative hypothesis is that Quebec nationalism is somewhat more pragmatic, aiming to advance Quebecois interests within Canada's current institutional framework (and perhaps also beyond/outside of it), rather than one guided by an "orthodox" ideological vision based on a territorial principle of language and cultural policy. Such an interpretation implies a less homogeneous and territorially-focused ideology, perhaps, as well

as a desire to see French promoted across Canada. The alternative perspective thus predicts that those supporting official recognition of the Quebecois as a nation will also support pan-Canadian bilingualism, because these positions are perceived to advance the interests of French-speakers across Canada, and to further the interests of Quebec within Canada.

The impact of one further ideological variable is considered: left-right self-placement. Evaluations of the rhetoric and policy positions of political parties in the “ROC” suggests that parties of the right tend to take a harder line on issues surrounding Quebec. Canada’s brokerage model of party politics muted these differences to a certain extent in the past, and they have thus not been analyzed systematically in any of the literature on the structure of these attitudes. The collapse of brokerage politics and rise of the Reform party in the federal election of 1993, however, brought clear ideological and regional differences on attitudes toward bilingualism and accommodations for the Quebecois and French Canadians into focus.

One can hypothesize that this effect might be the result of two possible mechanisms. First, elite differences may drive differences in the party’s rank and file. In this view, the public is relatively non-ideological, but has developed affective ties to particular political parties and respond to conflicts between those elites (Converse 1966; Zaller 1992). Stances taken by parties of the right (e.g. the Reform party in the 1990s, or certain leadership contenders in the New Brunswick PC party) can cause those who identify with parties of the right to mirror these positions. Alternatively, it might be that left-right ideology is more than a heuristic used by analysts and party elites to mobilize and organize their supporters. Cochrane, for example, makes the case that the terms left-right are, in fact, understood by and meaningful to many in the electorate, and that they reflect underlying attitudinal differences between voters across different national contexts (2015). From this perspective, left-right differences in attitudes toward federal language policy might well be driven “from the bottom up”: by a left-right ideological divide in the preferences of citizens.

Hypothesis 2b: Anglophones who identify further to the right on the ideological spectrum will be less likely to support bilingualism policy.

Analytic Strategy and Data

This paper relies on a unique combination of data sources. First, we draw on two sources of conventional cross-sectional survey data: the Canadian Election Studies, 1997-2011 (CES), and the Survey on Official Languages, 2003 (SOL), produced by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada. These two sources of data provide the attitudinal context for the analysis that follow. The SOL dataset offers a rich array of questions on attitudes toward language generally, and Canada’s two official languages in particular. The CES provides insight into the extent to which attitudes have changed over time. Both datasets are well-crafted and valuable for providing context, but also face limitations, discussed further during their interpretation, that hinder their usefulness in the analysis of regional differences in

public attitudes.

We therefore pair these two datasets with an exciting new dataset: the results of a massive online survey fielded through a partnership between the CBC and Vox Pop Labs in 2015 (VPL). The results were collected via an online application, marketed by the CBC as “Vote Compass”. The application probed respondents’ attitudes about thirty salient issues, including whether SCC justices should “speak both English and French” in order to be appointed to the bench. We take only those respondents who also provided socio-demographic background information, and clean the data (weeding out “straight-liners” who only provide a certain response and “speeders” who complete the survey in an unreasonably short amount of time). Only one response per IP address is recorded. The result is a dataset offering a rare glimpse into the attitudes of Canadians about bilingualism at the Supreme Court.

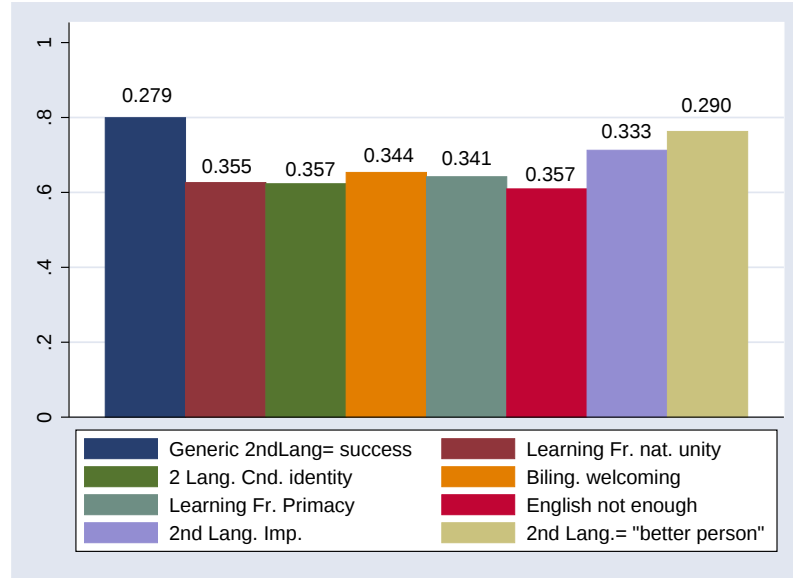
Working with this kind of “big data” also has limitations that should be acknowledged. Most centrally, these data obviously do not resemble the kind of smallish representative sample of randomly-selected respondents that are the basis of conventional cross-sectional polls and surveys. Critics might therefore charge that since the sample is self-selected, biases might creep into estimates that cleaning and weighting cannot adequately correct. We take these concerns seriously as we approach the analysis of this dataset, though it’s also important to acknowledge the context in which we explore this method of data collection. Response rates for conventional surveys, using smallish “representative” samples of pre-selected individuals, have been increasingly unrepresentative for years. Cell phones and caller ID have pushed down response rates to worrisome levels, even for marquee survey projects that make extensive efforts to re-contact unresponsive pre-selected individuals. For polling firms, rates are far, far worse. In light of these trends, a massive survey of Canadians’ for whose socio-demographic details we have and who we know have responded no more than once on their PC, is at least worth exploring as a possible window into regional variation in Canadians’ attitudes.

Multivariate techniques are used to test the key hypotheses specified in the foregoing section. A series of simple ordinary least squared (OLS) regression models are used for an initial foray into the socio-demographic correlates of public attitudes. Because the focal independent variables identified in Hypotheses 1a and b are on a different level of analysis from the other variables in the model, multi-level regression models are employed in subsequent hypothesis tests. Because the dependent variable in these tests is ordinal, multi-level ordinal probit estimation is employed. This model specification corrects for the clustering of standard errors on second level covariates that can lead to inflated estimates of statistical significance.

Do Canadians Support Bilingualism?

How do Canadians feel about bilingualism policy? Is there support for the policy or do Canadians have reservations? Is there polarization on the issue or consensus? And how big

Figure 1: Assessing Public Attitudes, 2003



Source: Survey on Official Languages, 2003.

Note: Bars represent weighted mean values (0-1 scale) with standard deviations above. N= 1,900

are the regional and socio-demographic discrepancies in levels of support?

Likely the most extensive and appropriate survey that asks a variety of questions about Canadians' attitudes is the SOL dataset collected in 2003. The survey helps paint a general portrait of Canadians' attitudes toward bilingualism, providing context for the new data considered later in the paper.

Figure 1 presents data on eight key indicators included on the SOL (2003). All respondents are included (English and French speakers). Bars represent the mean responses of Canadians, and standard deviations, representing the average variance around these mean values, are indicated above the bars.

Several points stand out as particularly noteworthy. First, the two generic questions about the benefits of learning another language stand out from the other six, and receive the strongest endorsement from Canadians. Canadians were asked about the extent to which they agree with the following two statements: "In today's global economy, people with an ability to speak more than one language will be more successful" and "learning to speak a second language is one of the best ways to improve yourself as a person". Neither makes reference to French, and both receive the highest average score from Canadians. Further, there is the greatest degree of consensus on these two issues. Whereas the other items included have standard deviations in the 0.33-0.36 range, both of these questions have standard deviations in the 0.27-0.29 range, indicating a higher level of consensus in the population.

Despite this sobering finding, the general picture emerging from the SOL is a positive one regarding official bilingualism in Canada. Turning to the frequencies rather than the summary statistics highlights this fact. For example, when asked in 2003 “If [your children/children in your community] were to learn to speak another language, which language would it be most important for them to learn?”, the vast majority (nearly 90 percent) responded with the other official language (either French or English), followed in a very distant third by Spanish (6.1 percent) and Chinese (4.8 percent).

Further, although questions about the place of bilingualism in Canada’s national identity led to more disagreement and lower levels of endorsement than questions about the economic and personal benefits of learning a generic second language, in absolute terms support is still extremely strong. For example, when asked whether “living in a country with two official languages” is “one of the things that really defines what it means to be Canadian”, over two thirds of Canadians (66.9 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed. A similar figure (67.4 percent) agree or strongly agree that learning a second official language contributes to national unity. Generally, these data suggest that Canadians are very supportive of the symbolic role of official bilingualism (bearing in mind the data were collected in 2003, though there is a segment of the population (perhaps 15 to 20 percent) that seem to reject the centrality of official bilingualism in Canada’s national identity.

The CES data have the advantage of spanning a substantial period of time (1997-2011). The crucial point emerging from an analysis of these data is that Canadians’ attitudes toward bilingualism - specifically their opinion as to whether it has “gone too far” - has been relatively stable between 1997 and 2011. This is the one question on the CES concerning bilingualism over this period, and is unfortunately included on the “mbs” or mail-back component of the survey. That component has the lowest sample size of the three portions of the CES, thus making fine-grained inter-regional comparisons problematic. Also, since the question was not included in 2015, we cannot be sure that no changes have occurred since 2011, but the general picture of Canadians’ attitudes on this front over since the late 1990s has been one of continuity.

What can the VPL dataset (2015) tell us about Canadians’ attitudes toward bilingualism? Unlike the SOL and the CES, the VPL dataset probes a politically-charged issue related to the application of bilingualism in the federal government about which we might expect substantial disagreement.

An overview of the VPL data reveal one particularly influential socio-demographic variable, one that it is also likely the most obvious and the best identified in prior research: language. Those whose first language is French, as well as those who completed the survey in French, were far and away the respondents with the highest levels of support for a bilingual requirement for judges appointed to the SCC. The scores four and five are associated with the responses “agree” and “strongly agree” respectively. Those whose first language is French, and those who completed the survey in French, are the only two groups of Canadians to average a response above four— between “agree” and “strongly agree”— on this survey

item.

The average response to the question about bilingual SCC appointments in the population as a whole is about 3.3 on a one to five scale Likert scale (i.e. between “neutral” and “agree” that SCC judges should be bilingual). When only English language respondents are considered, however, that figure drops to 2.8 (i.e. between “neutral” and “disagree”). As such, we now turn to focus our analysis on more particularly on anglophones, the group whose support for official bilingualism is most in question.

Multivariate Results

Table 1 presents the results of a preliminary exploration of variation in support for bilingualism among English-speakers using VPL data (models 1, 2, and 3), as well as CES data on generic support for bilingualism (models 4, 5, and 6) using a series of OLS models. The idea here is to give an overview of the socio-demographic influences on public attitudes, as well as an initial glimpse into our central hypotheses without obscuring them with an overly complex model (this comes later...).

First, note that in all models (both using VPL data on bilingual judges and CES data on whether it “has gone too far”), the impact of region of residence remains a robust, substantively important, and statistically significant predictor of public attitudes. That is to say, even when socio-demographic characteristics are controlled, and left-right ideology is controlled, and the effects of cross-time change between 1997 and 2011 are controlled, the effect of region remains a very substantial influence on public attitudes.

What explains this pronounced region-to-region variation in English-speaking Canadians’ attitudes about bilingualism? Here we consider these differences in a preliminary way, establishing that the effects of region are not reducible to socio-demographic influence alone. In order to open up the “black box” of region, we must go further. For now, though, the key insight is that region to region variation in these attitudes among English-speakers is robust and not reducible to individual-level differences.

Also noteworthy are the nature of regional differences in the two datasets. In all cases, the reference category is Quebec, where support is highest. The CES data paint a picture that is perhaps most consistent with conventional wisdom: residing in the Atlantic provinces rather than Quebec reduces one’s likelihood of supporting bilingualism somewhat, residing in Ontario rather than Quebec reduces it substantially, and residing in the West rather than Quebec reduces it a great deal.

More recent data from VPL specifically on the bilingual requirement in SCC appointments tells a somewhat different story. Here, it seems that the anglophones of the Atlantic provinces (and particularly New Brunswick) are among the least supportive of the requirement that

Table 1: Composition Effects and Regional Difference

	InstBilingualCourt.Cdn2015			IssQcVsBilingALL1to5_r		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
regClassicWest	-0.387***	-0.386***	-0.349***	-0.875***	-0.893***	-0.831***
regClassicOntario	-0.289***	-0.288***	-0.272***	-0.702***	-0.688***	-0.614***
regClassicMaritimes	-0.614***	-0.613***	-0.599***	-0.470***	-0.541***	-0.519***
aboriginal	0.008	0.006	-0.020	-0.262	-0.231	-0.353
ancestorWest	0.046***	0.045***	0.032***	-0.038	-0.051	-0.095
immigrant	0.109***	0.113***	0.093***	0.077	0.034	-0.052
age18to34	0.028***	0.030***	-0.001	0.363***	0.323***	0.231***
relNone	0.046***	0.046***	-0.042***	0.246***	0.244***	0.199**
educAllUniv	0.061***	0.058***	0.032***	0.486***	0.488***	0.411***
incomeLow	0.163***	0.168***	0.126***	0.061	0.078	0.022
unionMember		0.050***	0.009		0.067	-0.009
jobNoneSearch		0.023	-0.002		0.100	0.052
rightistFull			-0.878***			-1.172***
as.factor(year)2000				0.287***	0.275***	0.296***
as.factor(year)2004				1.336***	1.443***	1.368***
as.factor(year)2008				1.232***	1.359***	1.331***
as.factor(year)2011				0.458***	0.493***	0.423***
Constant	2.997***	2.985***	3.454***	2.697***	2.673***	3.419***
Observations	284,348	281,863	276,694	4,442	3,163	2,416
R ²	0.012	0.012	0.030	0.207	0.217	0.258

Note:

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

SCC judges speak both official languages. With respect to this issue in 2015, Westerners are actually very much in line with the national average of anglophones.

Other socio-demographic influences are also noteworthy for their consistent effects in both datasets. Age and education are particularly strong and consistent predictors of public attitudes in this domain. Those with some level of university education are significantly more likely to support bilingualism, as are younger Canadians. Lastly, identifying as right of centre ideologically is a powerful predictor of more negative attitudes toward requiring SCC judges to be bilingual in English and French, providing preliminary support for Hypothesis 2a.

This initial foray into the CES and VPL datasets is a useful overview, but in order to exploit the comparative advantages of the VPL dataset with respect to analyzing regional variation in Canada, it is important to introduce riding-level aggregate data into our statistical models in order to probe the effects of local context systematically. We know, from the analysis of the CES and VPL data presented in Table 1, that there is “something going on” with respect to region. It is with this black box that most prior statistical analyses have been forced to stop. We extend the analysis to ask: Does the local socio-linguistic context (i.e. the percentage of francophones in the community, or the balance of French speakers and those who speak other languages in one’s local riding) matter for public attitudes?

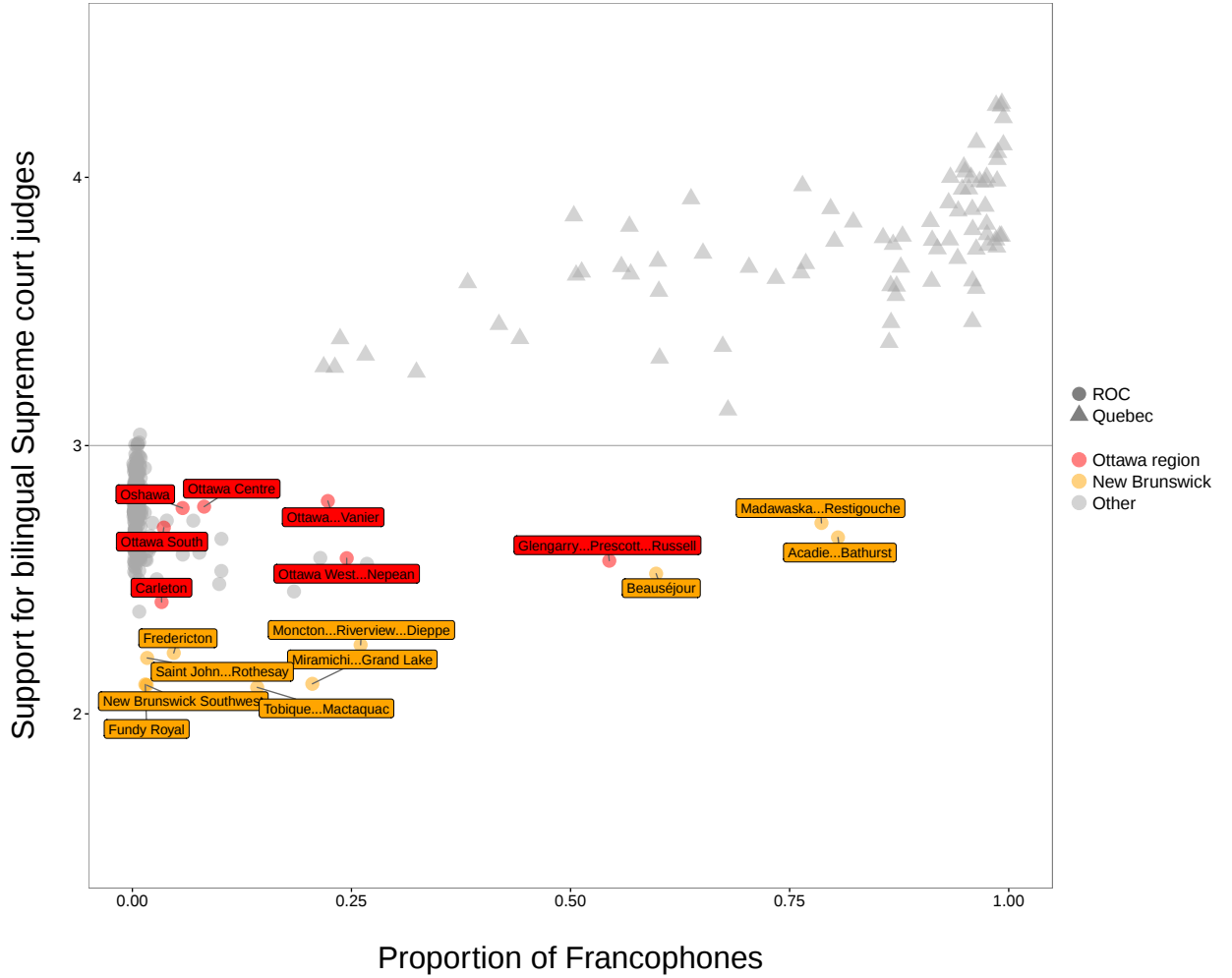
However, before moving to a multi-level multivariate framework, the VPL data can be used to assess the level of preliminary support for Hypothesis 1a: that the percentage of francophones (i.e. that speaking mostly French at home) in an English-speaker’s riding is positively related to support for bilingualism.

Figure 2 plots the percentage of francophones in a riding along the x axis and the level of support for a bilingualism requirement for SCC judges on the y axis. Only English language respondents are included in the analysis. The data offer a rare glimpse into regional variation in public attitudes toward a contentious issue related to support for bilingualism in the federal government. This does not constitute conclusive proof, of course, but is nonetheless a valuable starting point before delving into a relatively complex statistical model.

First, there is *prima facie* evidence for Hypothesis 1a. There is a clearly a positive relationship between the proportion of francophones in a riding and the level of support among English-speakers in that riding for bilingual judges. A closer look, however, tells a more nuanced story, and casts some initial doubt on Hypothesis 1b. First, it seems that some of the very lowest levels of support are found in New Brunswick - the only provincial government in Canada to be officially bilingual and the home of a number of ridings that are divided in terms of language. Another linguistically divided area, the National Capital Region, has levels that are only middling.

This is an intriguing first step in testing Hypotheses 1a and 1b, but does not tell the whole story. Is it possible that what really boosts English speaking individuals’ levels of support for bilingualism is being in a riding in the middle part of the graph? Might it be that

Figure 2: The Socio-Linguistic Context of Support



Source: Census (National Household Survey, 2011, adjusted to new rep. order) and VPL data (2015).

after taking into account socio-demographic factors that make the English-speaking residents of heavily francophone ridings distinctive, that the real force driving support is linguistic diversity?

In order to disentangle these individual-level and contextual factors, we specify a multi-level ordinal probit regression model. Our dependent variable, attitudes toward the bilingualism requirement for SCC appointments, is based on a Likert scale running from one to five. An effort is made to strive for parsimony in model specification partially on account of how computationally intensive this model is given the sample size. Both of the key independent variables used to test Hypotheses 1a and 1b are measured at the riding level and thus “riding” is used as the grouping variable for the error correction in the model (n=338).

The two riding level independent variables implicated in the Hypotheses 1a and 1b - the percentage of francophones in a respondent's riding and the level of balance between francophones and non-francophones - are gathered from Canadian Census data (National Household Survey) from 2011. The question used to build these variables asks what language respondents use "most often" at home. The focal independent variable used to test Hypothesis 1a reflects the percentage of the population in each riding to respond French (the scale runs from zero to one). Zero represents a riding with no francophones at all, and one represents a riding in which 100 percent of the population reports speaking mostly French at home.

The focal independent variable used to test Hypothesis 1b, though constructed from the same question, and is also a zero to one scale, but is markedly different. Here, a "0" reflects a riding that is homogeneous with respect to the use of French (i.e. either 100 percent French or 100 percent non-French), and "1" reflects a riding that is perfectly divided between French and non-French speakers. Higher scores are thus associated with a greater degree of evenness between French and English in one's riding.

Alert readers will notice that these data were collected in 2011 under the old representational order (which involved 308 electoral districts), whereas the VPL data were collected in 2015 under the new order of 338 ridings. In these analyses we use a re-ordered version of the 2011 data which has been transposed onto the new 338 electoral district boundaries in order to match up with the VPL data from 2015.

As indicated in Table 2, when Hypothesis 1a is set in opposition to Hypothesis 1b, Hypothesis 1a is not confirmed, whereas there seems to be strong support for Hypothesis 1b. That is to say, the analysis suggests that linguistic diversity between French, English and other languages in one's local riding is the real driver of support for bilingualism among anglophones, not the absolute percentage of francophones in the riding. Those who live in ridings where there is a more even split between anglophones, allophones and francophones will be more likely to support the requirement that SCC appointments be bilingual.

This analysis should not be interpreted to suggest that the number of francophones in a riding does not matter to support for bilingualism among anglophones. We have entered both variables into this model in order to establish whether it is the fact of linguistic diversity that's driving this effect or whether it is the absolute proportion of francophones in the riding that matters. The data presented in Table 2 indicate that the former is more likely. When only the percentage of francophones in the riding is entered into the model, it acts as a significant positive predictor of support.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b are tested with a question about whether Quebec should be recognized a distinct nation in the Constitution, and a question about respondents' ideological self-placement on a left-right scale, respectively. Hypothesis 2a, that support for recognition of Quebec as a nation is inversely related to support for bilingualism policy, is not confirmed, and the alternative hypothesis receives support. The analysis presented in Table 2 suggests that support for constitutional recognition of Quebec as a nation is a strong positive predictor support for requiring SCC appointees to be bilingual in French and English. This finding

Table 2: Modelling Public Attitudes toward Bilingualism

	Coef.	Std. Err.
<i>Contextual-level</i>		
Riding per. French	0.0075	(0.0075)
Riding Fr./Non-Fr. heterogeneity	0.0647***	(0.0102)
<i>Individual-level</i>		
Quebec a nation	0.1152***	(0.0016)
Right-of-centre self-placement	-0.2047***	(0.0041)
<i>Socio-dem. controls</i>		
Age	0.0018***	(0.0001)
EducAllUniv	0.0334***	(0.0035)
Female	0.0450***	(0.0036)
Immigrant	0.0482***	(0.0051)
Income	0.0016***	(0.0004)
<i>Intercepts</i>		
/cut1	-0.4884***	(0.0072)
/cut2	0.1722***	(0.0071)
/cut3	0.6608***	(0.0072)
/cut4	1.3289***	(0.0074)
Riding, var(_cons)	0.1552**	(0.0048)
N (contextual-level)	338	
N (individual-level)	355,942	
Wald chi2(9)	9,010.58***	
<i>Note:</i> **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.		
<i>Method:</i> Multi-level ordinal probit regression.		

suggests that whereas academics might find tensions between territorial and pan-Canadian cultural and linguistic policy intriguing, most Canadians anglophones do not seem hung up on these distinctions, and those who see Quebec as a distinct nation are also likely to support bilingual policy in the federal government.

Hypothesis 2b receives further empirical support from the analysis presented in Table 2. Consistent with the findings presented in Table 1 (from both the CES and VPL datasets), those who identify as right of centre ideologically are more likely to oppose the requirement that SCC judges be bilingual. This turns out to also be the case when the effects of socio-linguistic context are controlled. Left-right ideological disagreement seems to be implicated in the debate surrounding bilingualism requirements on Canada’s highest court.

Concluding Discussion

The analyses presented here shed some light on our central hypotheses. With respect to the role of socio-linguistic context, we find that it is not so much the sheer volume of exposure to French in an Anglophone’s immediate surroundings, but rather the balance between French, English and other languages that leads to higher levels of support for bilingualism. This finding is at once hopeful and dispiriting: the reality of Canadian society is that we do remain, to a significant extent, “two solitudes”, with French-language speakers concentrated overwhelmingly in Quebec and levels of functional bilingualism in the population at large in the “ROC” fairly low (see Fraser 2006). Nonetheless, the analyses presented here suggest that linguistic communities really living together- at the neighbourhood/riding level- can bolster support for bilingualism in the federal government.

The themes addressed by this analysis - the territorial and personality principles in language policy, Trudeau’s pan-Canadian constitutional vision, socio-linguistic context and regional political cultures - are some of the most central to our understanding of what makes Canada what it is. They are the focus of much of the canonical literature in Canadian political science, from quantitative analyses of public attitudes to rich historical narratives. The implications of the topic extend beyond technical issues of public administration to deep symbolism surrounding Canadian identity and national unity. The findings also carry implications for more general discussion of contact theory and the benefits of cultural and linguistic diversity.

We first approached this topic together in 2011 (as fellow graduate students of Canadian politics, office-mates, and friends) in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto. At that time, as now, we feel that the topic is somewhat neglected by Canadian political scientists, particularly those working in English Canada. We came to the subject with different linguistic backgrounds and different preconceptions, but found that the frequent discussions we had brought us closer together. The data presented here suggests that that same mechanism works on a broader scale.

We also feel that the proliferation of exciting new opportunities for the collection of “big

data” has the potential to illuminate the uniqueness of Canadian political culture in all its beguiling, maddening nuance and peculiarity. These new data sources, coupled with appropriate statistical modeling, can shine new light on old questions. This paper sought to offer a glimpse into a set of perennial questions about attitudes toward Canadian language policy, and we are confident that this is not the last word. The subject remains a frontier of research characterized by many important questions that remain unexplored.

Appendix: Description of Variables

Canadian Election Study:

Support for bilingualism: “For each statement below, please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Please write the number that best reflects your opinion in the space at the right of each statement...We have gone too far in pushing bilingualism in Canada.” [reverse-coded]

Age: “First, in what year were you born?” [coded in years old]

Education: “What is the highest level of education that you have completed?”

Left-right self-placement: “In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on the scale below?” [the scale runs from zero to ten]

Income: “Could you please tell me your total household income before taxes for the year 2010? Be sure to include income FROM ALL SOURCES TO THE NEAREST THOUSAND DOLLARS. What was your TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME?” [For 2011 data]

Survey on Official Languages:

“For each of the following please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree”:

a) “In today’s global economy, people with an ability to speak more than one language will be more successful” [qc97a] (0-1)

b) “Learning to speak French is an important way in which Canadians can help to keep the country united?” [qc97b] (0-1)

c) “Living in a country with two official languages is one of the things that really defines what it means to be Canadian?” [qc97c] (0-1)

d) “Having two official languages has made Canada a more welcoming place for immigrants from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds?” [qc97d] (0-1)

e) “It is more important for children in Canada to learn to speak other languages like Spanish or Chinese than it is for them to learn to speak French?” [qc97e] (0-1) [reverse-coded]

f) “In Canada, English is the only language you really need to know in order to be successful?” [qc97f] (0-1) [reverse-coded]

g) “Schools should focus on teaching practical subjects like math and science and shouldn’t waste time trying to get children to learn a second language?” [qc97g] (0-1) [reverse-coded]

h) “Learning to speak a second language is one of the best ways to improve yourself as a person?” [qc97h] (0-1)

Vox Pop Labs/CBC “Vote Compass” Data:

Support for bilingualism at the SCC: "Only those who speak both English and French should be appointed to the Supreme Court"

"Strongly disagree"=1, "Disagree"=2, "Neutral"=3, "Agree"=4, "Strongly agree"=5.

Support for recognition of Quebec as a nation: "Quebec should be formally recognized as a nation in the Constitution."

"Strongly disagree"=1, "Disagree"=2, "Neutral"=3, "Agree"=4, "Strongly agree"=5.

Age: "In which year were you born?" [coded in years old]

Education: "What is the highest level of education that you have completed?"

Left-right self-placement: "In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on the scale below, where 0 is left and 10 is right?" [Scale runs from zero to ten].

Income: "Which of the following best describes your combined household income before taxes?"

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