

Support for Political Community: Evidence from Quebec and the Rest of Canada

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Abstract: Despite its diverse makeup and deep divisions, Canada has a fairly solid reputation as a stable democracy and political community but we are repeatedly reminded how fragile this "community of communities" may in fact be. Using new data from the Comparative Provincial Election Project, we examine how Quebecers feel about Canada and Quebec and compare these perspectives to those of other Canadians. We find that support varies provincially, over time and across subnational political communities. And in Quebec, political performance has a strong bearing on support for political communities, even after controlling for other common cultural, structural or contextual explanations.

Keywords: political support, political community, government performance, federalism, Quebec, Comparative Provincial Election Project

Résumé: Malgré sa diversité et ses divisions, le Canada a la réputation d'une démocratie et communauté politique relativement stable. Ceci dit, les occasions sont nombreuses où nous est rappelée la fragilité de cette 'communauté de communautés'. En employant de nouvelles données du 'Comparative Provincial Election Project', nous observons que les perspectives des Canadiens envers leurs communautés politiques provinciales et fédérales diffèrent selon les provinces, la période et la communauté politique en question. Nos résultats suggèrent que pour les Québécois, l'attention portée à la performance politique a une forte incidence sur l'appui des citoyens, en tenant compte des variations culturels, structurels et contextuelles.

Mots-clés : appui politique, communauté politique, performance du gouvernement, fédéralisme, Québec, Comparative Provincial Election Project

Theoretical Framework

Unlike other articles in this edition, our contribution does not address voting behaviour directly. Rather, we focus primarily on Canadians' outlooks toward their federal and provincial political communities, a theme central to most discussions of Canadian politics¹. The Quebec component of the Comparative Provincial Election Project (CPEP) makes it possible to study different aspects of political support in Quebec. How do Quebecers today feel about Canada and Quebec? How do Quebecers' perspectives compare with how other Canadians view their federal and respective provincial communities? And, what determines how Quebecers perceive these two political communities?

The literature on "political support" (Easton 1965, 1975, 1976; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Norris 1999, 2011, 2012; Nevitte 2002; Dalton 2004) consistently suggests that people can and do differentiate between what they like and dislike about different political objects (see also Kanji and Tannahill 2013, 2013a, 2014, 2014a. What citizens make of their political authorities and government institutions need not be consistent with the way they feel about the workings of their political system overall, their political regime, or their political community.² Also, the theory on political support leads us to expect that citizens' feelings toward more diffuse objects, such as their political communities, are likely to be more affect-oriented³, more positive and more stable in character than support for more specific objects, such as parties or politicians (Easton 1965; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Klingemann 1999; Norris 1999, 2011; Dalton 1999, 2004). This

does not mean however, that outlooks toward political communities are any less relevant. On the contrary, Norris (2011: 79) warns that orientations toward political community can "have particularly significant consequences for social cohesion and state legitimacy in multicultural communities and plural societies", and this is especially pertinent in societies such as Canada.

Much of the early Canadian evidence is consistent with the data presented in other societies. It suggests that support for the Canadian political community is relatively strong and fairly stable (Kornberg and Stewart 1983; Kornberg and Clark 1992; Clarke, Kornberg and Wearing 2000). However, there is also some evidence that indicates that support for political communities may vary across different communities and regions. For instance, Kornberg, Clarke and Stewart (1979) found that "there are statistically significant variations in the level of support that Canadians in several regions ascribe to national and provincial political communities...[and that] regional variations in support for the Canadian political community are especially pronounced...and lowest in Quebec" (895-896). Also, this literature suggests that support for provincial political communities tends to be lower than support for the Canadian political community. And there are reasons to suppose that support for political communities may be more variable in some regions than it is in others. For instance, evidence indicates that support for the provincial political community in Quebec may now be stronger than support for the Canadian political community. According to Nadeau and Bélanger (2012: 147), after the failure of

the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords, “an important gap appeared between [Quebecers’] levels of attachment to Quebec (increasing to 79) and to Canada (falling to 61)”. Yet, more recent evidence [from the 2006 Canadian Election Studies] suggests that the proportion of Francophones who support the Canadian political community “is clearly on the rise (now at 74).”

In this article, we examine evidence from the CPEP, focusing primarily on the data from Quebec but also whenever possible, comparing our findings to those in other provinces and at other time points. Our focus on Quebec is driven partly by the history of fluctuations in Quebecers’ outlooks toward various political makes it both compelling and theoretically relevant to investigate if things have shifted yet again. Also, Quebec’s membership in the Canadian political community continues to be a contentious issue,⁴ which makes it important to follow Quebecers’ outlooks toward their respective provincial and federal political communities in the event that there are relevant findings to relay. Lastly, the Quebec component of the CPEP, with its expanded set of questions, makes it possible to conduct such a study in that it allows us to compare different measures of political community support employed in the literature and to test the significance of various alternative explanations.

In terms of potential explanations for support for political communities, the literature alerts us to several possibilities. For example, Norris (2011) contends that political support may be tied to basic underperformance. In particular, there are at least two theoretical variants of the underperformance argument that merit consideration when it comes to support

for political communities in the Canadian case. The first has to do specifically with the workings of the federal political system and power relations across different levels of government. Kornberg, Clarke and Stewart (1979: 891) suggest that perceived inequalities resulting from federalism through either the “allocation of costs and benefits” and/or the division of powers can affect outlooks toward political communities. A second variant of the underperformance argument suggests that low levels of support for specific political objects such as political authorities, institutions more broadly, the way a democracy works in general and/or a political regime’s core principles might also detract from people’s support for a political community. According to Kornberg, Clarke (1992: xv) and others (Norris 1999, 2011 or Dalton 2004), support for political objects “flows ‘upward’ – from authorities, to regime, to community.” So if political authorities and institutions are perceived to be performing poorly (particularly for a sustained period of time) there is a chance that this “may generalize to broader evaluations of the regime and the political community” (Dalton 2011: 63)

Various structural and cultural shifts that are commonly associated with the transition from industrialism to post-industrialism provide an alternative set of potential explanations for differences in support for political communities. For instance, Dalton’s (2006) cognitive mobilization thesis suggests that because citizens in advanced industrial societies are better educated, more interested and more engaged in politics than generations past, they may have a greater conviction for the democratic process (see also Norris 1999, 2011). Patterson (1994) and others (see, for instance, Norris 2000) on

the other hand, claim that greater public exposure to negative news may also be partly to blame for declining levels of support across various societies.⁵ And Nevitte (2002: 22) suggests that cognitive mobilization and the information explosion may contribute to a growing “efficacy gap” in politics, in which citizens’ “own subjective political competence has been sustained, [while] their evaluations of the responsiveness of their own political system have been declining.” This too may make citizens more critical when it comes to different objects of support.

In a similar vein, Inglehart (1990, 1997) and others (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Nevitte 1996) suggest that the changing value orientations of post-materialist generations have made them less deferential and more inclined to challenge institutional authority than older, more material generations. In addition, Putnam’s theory on declining social capital (2000) claims that because citizens in several societies today are not as interactive,⁶ they are less likely to trust one another or to be as cohesive. Both of these developments might also have implications for the extent to which citizens in societies support their political communities.

Lastly, there is the additional possibility that Quebecers’ outlooks toward their respective political communities might be tied to a variety of contextual factors. The most obvious of these is the tension that perpetuates between those who are more likely to support the Canadian political community (such as federalists or nationalists) and those who are more likely to favour an independent Quebec (namely sovereignists and separatists), a tension that plays out politically through the

continued presence of separatist parties at both the federal and provincial levels. Other demographic and background characteristics such as language may also influence support for different political communities. Given the longstanding role that the Quebec government has played in preserving and favouring the French culture, we would expect that Francophones would support the provincial political community more so than the Canadian one and particularly more so than non-Francophones. Likewise, other factors such as age, gender, income, and place of birth (Kornberg and Clarke 1992) may also have important implications and they too are important to consider as a result.

Methodology

As mentioned above, the data for this analysis are drawn primarily from the CPEP.⁷ This country-wide study utilizes a standardized survey instrument to examine electoral behaviour and outlooks toward Canadian democracy on a province-by-province basis. These data make it possible to conduct investigations of provincial populations with more significant sample sizes, which is something that more conventional surveys such as the Canadian Election Studies (CES)⁸ cannot always adequately support (Kanji, Bilodeau and Scotto 2012). Also, the Quebec component of the CPEP is based on an expanded questionnaire that makes it possible to conduct even deeper investigations of different objects of political support across both the federal and provincial levels, while controlling for a variety of theoretically relevant explanations.

Unlike the Canadian Election Studies, it is important to note that the

CPEP is conducted online and administered after provincial elections. For instance, the 2012 Quebec survey was launched immediately following the September 4th provincial election and was in the field for slightly more than one month. In total, this survey sampled 1,010 respondents, the large majority of which (n=728) were drawn from an online panel of Canadians built through random phone invitations. The remainder of the sample was randomly recruited through the use of Interactive Voice Response technology. The survey was made available in both French and English and the data were collected through an Internet survey platform licensed by Abacus Data.

Findings

Our analysis begins by comparing Quebecers' and other Canadians' affective orientations toward their federal and respective provincial political communities using a variety of measures that are typically employed in the literature.⁹ For instance, most Canadian studies tend to focus on feeling thermometers (Kornberg et al. 1979, 1992; Nadeau and Bélanger 2012), while cross-national studies rely more on indicators such as pride and identification with the community (Dalton, 2004: 44). In this analysis, we examine all three. The results in Table 1 start by illustrating the extent to which Quebecers and Canadians in other provinces like or dislike their federal and provincial political communities on a 100-point feeling thermometer. Note that although there are several observable distinctions across different provinces, some of the most striking differences are between Quebec and other provinces in the rest of Canada

(ROC) and between Francophones and Anglophones in Quebec.

More specifically, the evidence in Table 1 suggests that Quebecers still "like" their provincial political community (80.4 points) more than they like Canada (60.5 points). In most other provinces for which we have data, the opposite is true. Most Canadians outside of Quebec typically like their country more than their province. In certain provinces such as Ontario and Manitoba, these differences are more notable than in Saskatchewan, PEI or Alberta. Still, the only exception is Newfoundland and Labrador where citizens are an average of five points more fond of their province than their country.¹⁰ Notice too that variations in support for the Canadian and provincial political communities are much greater in Quebec than in other provinces. Moreover, relative to citizens in a sample of other Canadian provinces, Quebecers are not only much less likely to indicate that they are fond of the Canadian political community (by an average of nearly 29 points) but they are also less inclined to indicate that they like their own provincial political community (by an average of 5 points). So according to this evidence, Quebecers are less supportive of both their federal and provincial communities than other Canadians. Furthermore, there are also major differences between Francophones and Anglophones within Quebec. The former are even more negative about Canada (55.3 points) and slightly more positive about Quebec (83.1 points) than Quebecers overall. And Anglophones are much more positive about Canada (87.5 points) and much more negative about the way they perceive Quebec (65.2 points).

Table 1. Changes in Feelings toward Canada and the Province, 1974-2012

	2011/2012			Δ from 1974		Δ from 1993		Δ from 1997		Δ from 2006	
	Canada	Province	Mean Difference	Canada	Province	Canada	Province	Canada	Province	Canada	Province
All Quebecers	60.5	80.4	-19.9***	-14.0	9.5	-3.6	2.9	-8.0	-2.4	-16.5	1.0
Francophones	55.3	83.1	-27.8***	-16.3	10.7	-6.0	4.0	-10.1	-1.1	-18.7	3.5
Anglophones	87.5	65.2	22.3***	-2.8	3.5	3.2	-1.2	0.3	-2.9	-4.4	-13.2
All ROC	89.4	85.6	3.8***	2.1	4.7	25.3	4.0	1.8	-7.6	2.0	
Ontario	89.2	80.5	8.7***	-1.5	1.0	3.9	1.6	1.0	-15.8	-0.6	
PEI	90.6	88.9	1.6*	4.7	3.1	4.8	0.9	6.0	-9.5	-0.8	
NFLD & Labrador	87.3	92.5	-5.2***	11.1	10.5	4.3	7.0	0.8	1.2	-1.9	
Manitoba	90.7	82.8	7.9***	4.0	3.4	3.3	0.4	2.0	-4.0	6.3	
Saskatchewan	91.4	89.9	1.5**	5.0	8.5	7.0	11.3	3.6	4.4	1.7	
Alberta	88.1	83.6	4.5***	3.3	-1.2	4.1	2.6	1.4	-8.1	-1.2	

Questions: "Using a 100-point scale, where zero means that you really dislike the country, province or group and 100 means that you really like it, how do you feel about the following?"; All language questions based on language spoken at home. The 2004-2006 CES survey question asks what language was first learned and still spoken.

T-test: *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Source: CPEP: Quebec 2012, Saskatchewan 2011, NFLD and Labrador 2011, Manitoba 2011, PEI 2011, Ontario 2011, Alberta 2012; CES: 2004-2006; 1997; 1993; 1974

Note too that when compared to past data as introduced at the outset of this article (Kornberg Clarke and Stewart 1979; Nadeau and Bélanger 2012)¹¹, these results suggest that support for the Canadian political community in Quebec has declined once again and that it is now lower than it was following the failed Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords. More specifically, the CPEP evidence demonstrates that support for the Canadian political community in Quebec is currently 14 points lower than in 1974 (74 points), nearly four points lower than in 1993 (64 points), seven points lower than in 1997 (68 points), and 16 points lower than in 2006 (77 points). When it comes to other provinces, the aggregate cross-time findings relating to support for the Canadian political community have been much more stable. In terms of outlooks toward provincial communities, the evidence indicates that between 1974 and 1997, Quebecers' average ratings of their province increased from 70 to 82 points and that support has remained reasonably consistent since. In the other provinces, the aggregate cross-time findings suggest that citizens' feelings toward their provinces also increased on average from 80 to 93 points from 1974 to 1997. However, after that, the proportion of Canadians outside of Quebec who like their provinces has decreased by nearly 8 points.

When we examine the extent to which Canadians and Quebecers "identify" with the federal and respective provincial political communities, we are more limited in the number of cross-time data points that we have for analysis. Nonetheless, regarding current orientations, we find essentially the same patterns, with only minor differences¹². For instance, as illustrated in Table 1,

Table 2 suggests that Quebecers' affective orientations toward the Canadian political community are lower than toward the provincial community. More specifically, they are much less likely to identify with Canada (63%) than they are with Quebec (91%). Conversely, the aggregate results for Canadians' orientations toward the provincial or national political community in most other provinces are almost identical. About nine in ten Canadians outside of Quebec identify with both their federal (94%) and provincial (91%) political communities. Note however that these findings suggest that Quebecers are as likely to identify with their provincial political community as other Canadians. So unlike the feeling thermometer results, these data suggest that Quebecers are no less supportive of their provincial political community than other Canadians. On the differences between linguistic groups, these results show that the same group differences between Francophones and Anglophones exist as measured by the feelings thermometer. Francophones are even less likely to identify with Canada (58%) and more likely to identify with Quebec (95%) than Quebecers overall. And Anglophones are more likely to identify with Canada (92%) and less likely to identify with Quebec (65%). In addition, note that the gap between provincial and national community support is once again greater for Francophones than Anglophones.

Table 2. Support for the Canadian and Provincial Political Community, 2011/2012

	Canada			Province			Differences in Support		
	Feelings (means)	Identification (%)	Pride (%)	Feelings (means)	Identification (%)	Pride (%)	Feelings (mean)	Identification (%)	Pride (%)
All Quebecers	60.5 (1,004)	63% (1,001)	65% (1,010)	80.4 (1,002)	91% (1,002)	89% (1,010)	-19.9***	-28***	-24***
Francophones	55.3 (832)	58% (828)	60% (837)	83.1 (831)	95% (830)	93% (837)	-27.8***	-37***	-33***
Anglophones	87.5 (119)	92% (120)	92% (120)	65.2 (118)	65% (120)	62% (120)	22.3***	27***	30***
All ROC	89.4 (4,712)	94% (4,761)		85.6 (4,714)	91% (4,779)		3.8**	3***	
Ontario	89.2 (980)	96% (986)		80.5 (976)	84% (987)		8.7***	12***	
PEI	90.6 (484)	93% (502)		88.9 (486)	92% (507)		1.6*	1	
NFLD and Labrador	87.3 (811)	83% (826)		92.5 (819)	95% (833)		-5.2***	-12***	
Manitoba	90.7 (769)	95% (774)		82.8 (762)	91% (774)		7.9***	4***	
Saskatchewan	91.4 (795)	97% (801)		89.9 (798)	95% (803)		1.5**	2*	
Alberta	88.1 (873)	96% (872)		83.6 (873)	88% (875)		4.5***	8***	

Questions: Feelings: "Using a 100-point scale, where zero means that you really dislike the country, province or group and 100 means that you really like it, how do you feel about the following?"; Identification: "How much do you identify with each of the following?": % that responds "a great deal" or "quite a lot"; Pride: "How much pride do you take in each of the following?": % that respond "a great deal" or "quite a lot"

T-test: *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001 sample sizes in parentheses

Source: CPEP Quebec 2012, Saskatchewan 2011, NFLD and Labrador 2011, Manitoba 2011, PEI 2011, Ontario 2011, Alberta 2012

Another way to measure support for political communities is through sentiments of pride. In this case, the CPEP does not allow us to compare the amount of pride that Quebecers and other Canadians take in Canada and their respective provincial communities, as measures of pride were not included on survey instruments that were administered outside of Quebec. Still the data that we have are important to examine because they provide another useful test within Quebec. Note first that the results in Table 2 indicate that Quebecers take much less pride in Canada (65%) than in Quebec (89%). Note, too, that Francophones have even less pride in Canada (60%) and much more pride in Quebec (93%). And the opposite is true for Anglophones. More than nine in ten Anglophones in Quebec (92%) indicate that they take some pride in Canada, whereas 62% contend that they take pride in Quebec. Lastly, note that the gaps between how much pride different Quebecers take in the Canadian versus the Quebec political communities range from 24% to 33% and that they are greater once again for Francophones than Anglophones.

These findings clearly lend further support to the earlier claims made by others (Kornberg, Clarke and Stewart 1979; Johnston 1986; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Nadeau and Bélanger 2012). More specifically, our data suggest that support for political communities may not always be as consistently strong and stable as the general literature on political support purports. For one thing, support for different political communities varies across different provinces and in this respect the differences between Quebecers and other Canadians are exceptionally striking. Also, the evidence

indicates that support for political communities can shift over time and this support varies considerably for different groups within Quebec.

So what accounts for these differences? Data from the Quebec component of the CPEP allow us to explore a variety of plausible explanations including some theoretically relevant performance-related possibilities¹³. For instance, respondents were asked about their perceptions of federalism and specifically the workings of inter-governmental relations¹⁴. Do Quebecers think that their various levels of government are “working extremely well together” or “not working well at all”? The results in Table 3 point to two key findings. The first is that although there are some aspects of inter-governmental relations that Quebecers think are working better than others, on balance the results indicate that perceptions are more negative than not. For instance, only a small majority of Quebecers indicate that relations between their municipal and provincial governments (56%) and among different municipal governments (52%) are working well. In other respects, views on intergovernmental relations are even less rosy. Only 23% of Quebecers feel that relations between their provincial and federal governments are working well. Only one in five Quebecers (21%) feels that same way about relations between their municipal and federal governments. And only 37% of Quebecers feel that their provincial government works well with other provincial governments.

The second key finding illustrated by this measure is that Anglophones are far more critical than Francophones in their evaluations of intergovernmental relations. On the whole, only a minority of

Anglophones feels that inter-governmental relations are working well. More specifically, only 37% of the English speaking community in Quebec respond optimistically about relations between their municipal and provincial governments. Even more problematic to Anglophones are the perceptions that relations are working well between provincial and federal governments (18%) and municipal and federal governments (20%). Slightly more satisfactory to Anglophones are the relations among governments at the same level. And, while just under a majority (45%) perceive relations positively between municipal governments, only 27% of English-speaking Quebecers feel that relations between provincial governments are working well. Moreover, based on these results it is certainly plausible that perceptions of underperformance of inter-governmental relations have some role to play in explaining variations in support for the federal and provincial political communities in Quebec. These results lend further support to the claims made by Kornberg, Clarke and Stewart (1979) about perceptions of inequalities resulting from federalism.

Also within the Quebec component of the CPEP, there is a battery of questions that allows us to tap another aspect of the workings of federalism. These questions ask respondents about the current power structure in the Canadian political community and whether they think that it requires any change. Assessments such as these are likely based on people's perceptions of how the current political system performs and they too may affect support for political communities. Note, first, that few are completely satisfied with maintaining

the status quo except with regards to how much "power and say" municipal governments have in the national political community (61%). And even then, at least one in three Quebecers (33%) feels that municipal governments should have more influence. Conversely, more than a majority of Quebecers (55%) feel that their provincial government should have more power and say in the Canadian political system. And a sizeable proportion of Quebecers (45%) feel that the federal government should have less power and say than it currently has. Moreover, when we examine these data by language groups, the results indicate that Francophones (63%) are even more supportive of giving the provincial government greater influence in the Canadian political community and of reducing the current influence of the federal government (50%). Most Anglophones on the other hand would prefer to retain the current power balance within the Canadian political community, where more than a majority respond that the "power and say" of each the municipal (62%), the provincial (62%) and the federal (62%) governments should remain the same. Notice too that Anglophones are slightly more inclined than Francophones to want to reduce the current influence of the municipal (11%) and provincial (23%) governments (compared to 4% for Francophones). But a larger proportion of Anglophones than Francophones would like the federal government to have more "power and say" (22% compared to 8%).

Table 3. Potential Explanations of Support for Political Community, 2012

	Quebecers (1,010)	Francophones (837)	Anglophones (120)
Support for the workings of federalism (working well)			
<i>"How would you rate the working relationships between..."</i>			
the municipal government and the provincial government	56%	59%	37%
the provincial government and the federal government	23%	23%	18%
the municipal government and the federal government	21%	20%	20%
the municipal government and other municipal governments	52%	54%	45%
the provincial government and other provincial governments	37%	39%	27%
Support for the power structure in the political community			
<i>"Do you think the following should have more, less, or about the same power and say in the Canadian political community?"</i>			
Municipal government			
more	33%	34%	27%
about the same as now	61%	62%	62%
less	5%	4%	11%
Provincial government			
more	55%	63%	15%
about the same as now	37%	33%	62%
less	7%	4%	23%
Federal government			
more	11%	8%	22%
about the same as now	44%	42%	62%
less	45%	50%	16%
Specific support (mean scores: 0 = low support; 1 = high support)			
Democratic Regime Principles			
Canada	.83	.82	.85
Quebec	.81	.81	.84
Satisfaction with Democracy			
Canada	.49	.47	.55
Quebec	.58	.59	.55
Confidence in Government Institutions			
Canada	.51	.50	.59
Quebec	.56	.58	.46
Confidence in Political Leaders			
Canada (PM)	.38	.36	.45
Quebec (Premier)	.53	.57	.29
Confidence in Elected Representatives			
Canada (MP)	.55	.54	.57
Quebec (MNA)	.57	.58	.55

Note: Where decimals are greater than 0.6, values are rounded up.

Source: CPEP Quebec 2012

The second variant of the performance-based argument suggested that how Quebecers feel about their federal and provincial communities may at least partly be shaped by what they think about more specific objects such as democracy as a regime, the way their democracy works, as well as the amount of confidence they place in their government institutions more generally and in their political authorities (Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Norris 1999, 2011; Dalton 2004, 2011). The final set of findings in Table 3 present each of these possibilities using aggregate scales that are standardized from 0, meaning low support, to 1, meaning high support¹⁵. The first point to note is that average support for democracy in principle is strong and virtually consistent in both the Canadian (.83) and Quebec (.81) political communities. The same applies when we unpack these data for different language groups. Average Quebecers, both Francophone and Anglophone, strongly prefer democracy as a system of political decision-making and governance to other more authoritative alternatives. When we look at how satisfied citizens are with the way that their federal and provincial democracies work in practice, however, the findings are neither as strong nor as consistent. On average, Quebecers appear only moderately satisfied (.49) with the way that Canadian democracy works and they are not all that much more satisfied with the way that democracy works in Quebec (.58). When we examine the results for different language groups, the evidence shows that average Francophones are slightly less satisfied with the way that Canadian democracy works (.47) and slightly more satisfied with the way that democracy works in Quebec (.59). The average Anglophone on

the other hand makes virtually no distinction between how the federal (.55) and provincial (.55) political systems work and in both instances they are moderately satisfied.

With respect to Quebecers' confidence in their various governmental institutions, such as the federal and provincial governments, political parties, civil service, and legislative assemblies, the results are quite similar. The average Quebecer seems only moderately confident in federal government institutions (.51) and just slightly more confident in their provincial government institutions (.56). Moreover, the results for Francophones are not all that different from average Quebecers. However, average Anglophones are slightly more distinct in the confidence they place in their government institutions. More specifically, the gap between levels is larger and they report having more confidence in federal government institutions (.59) than in their provincial government institutions (.46).

With regard to political authorities, views tend to be more negative when it comes to political leaders than toward elected representatives. Compared to the other specific political objects presented here, the average Quebecer expresses a much lower degree of confidence in the Canadian Prime Minister (.38). Notice however that average Quebecers

tend to be slightly more confident in their Premier (.53)¹⁶, their Members of Parliament (MPs) (.55), and Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) (.57). Virtually the same is true for average Francophones while Anglophones on the other hand are slightly more positive about the Canadian Prime Minister (.45) but have even less confidence in the provincial Premier (.29) than average Francophones do in the Canadian Prime Minister (.36). Finally, Anglophones are slightly more confident in their MPs (.57) but less confident in MNAs (.55) than Francophones.

We now turn to examine whether these performance-based indicators are in fact associated with support for the Canadian and provincial political communities in Quebec¹⁷. Table 4 reports the results of a regression analysis that investigates the explanatory power of these arguments while controlling for a variety of structural, cultural and contextual factors. Note first, that the most consistent contextual determinants of support for the Canadian and provincial political communities in Quebec are party identification and language. As expected, Quebecers with separatist party attachments¹⁸ are less likely to be supportive of the Canadian political community and they are more supportive of Quebec. Also, Anglophones are more likely than Francophones to support the Canadian political community and not as likely to support the Quebec

political community. Furthermore, another consistent contextual finding suggests that Allophones are more likely than Francophones to support the Canadian political community and less likely to support Quebec. There is no denying therefore that the presence of separatist parties and different language groups, each with their respective experiences and goals, has an important influence on how Quebecers view their federal and provincial political communities. Note too, that two out of three of these factors have more powerful effects on support for the Canadian political community than they do on support for the provincial political community. Consider also that there are other contextual factors such as age, gender, and income that turn out to be significant, but their effects are not nearly as consistent nor as powerful.¹⁹

In addition, our results show no consistent and robust structural and culture change effects, which suggests that these types of explanations may not have direct implications for diffuse political support. But this is an interpretation that we have yet to investigate in much more detail (in other contexts for instance). The only significant findings suggest that greater cognitive mobilization leads to more support for the provincial political community and that greater respect for authority and inter-personal trust are linked to more support for Canada.

Table 4. Determinants of Support for the Canadian and Provincial Political Communities in Quebec (OLS Regression Analysis), 2012

Determinants	Canada		Quebec	
	B	SE B	B	SE B
Performance-based explanations				
Intergovernmental relations (working well)	.23	(.04)***	.10	(.03)**
More power/say in municipal govt. (vs. less)	.02	(.02)	-.003	(.02)
More power/say in provincial govt. (vs. less)	-.12	(.03)***	.17	(.02)***
More power/say in federal govt. (vs. less)	.15	(.02)***	-.04	(.02)*
Specific support (strong)	.38	(.05)***	.24	(.05)***
Structural and cultural change explanations				
Cognitive mobilization (high)	-.02	(.04)	.12	(.03)***
Efficacy gap (high internal)	-.04	(.04)	-.002	(.04)
Post-materialism (pm values)	-.03	(.02)	.008	(.02)
Respect for authority (good thing)	.07	(.02)**	.03	(.02)
Interpersonal trust (high)	.03	(.02)*	.004	(.01)
Media exposure (high)	.04	(.01)	.03	(.04)
Contextual explanations				
Party ID (separatist)	-.28	(.01)***	.07	(.02)***
Gender (Female)	.03	(.01)*	.03	(.01)**
Anglophone (vs Francophone)	.11	(.02)***	-.12	(.02)***
Allophone (vs Francophone)	.13	(.03)***	-.09	(.03)**
Age (young)	-.03	(.01)	-.04	(.02)**
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	-.003	(.02)	.03	(.02)
Income (high)	.04	(.02)*	-.02	(.02)
Constant	.36	(.05)***	.42	(.04)***
R ²	.65		.44	
Adjusted R ²	.64		.43	
N	842		840	

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001
Source: CPEP Quebec 2012

The most important findings in this analysis indicate that even after controlling for a variety of alternative explanations, several performance-based explanations turn out to have significant, consistent and powerful effects on support for the Canadian and provincial political communities. For example, the

more positive Quebecers are about the workings of inter-governmental relations, the more inclined they are to support both their federal and provincial political communities. Also, Quebecers who feel that the provincial government should have more power and say in the Canadian political system are less likely to support

Canada, but more likely to support Quebec. Conversely, Quebecers who feel that the federal government should have more power and say in the Canadian political system, are more likely to support the Canadian political community and less likely to support Quebec. Lastly, the most robust finding overall suggests that when specific support is strong, support for both the Canadian and provincial political communities in Quebec benefits. More specifically, the more supportive Quebecers are of their regime principles, the way their democracy works, their government institutions more generally and their political authorities, the more likely they are to support both Canada and Quebec. Note too that in most cases the effects of these factors are much stronger on support for the Canadian political community than they are on support for the provincial political community²⁰.

Implications

These findings make several contributions to the literature on political support. First they verify once again that support for different political communities varies and in several ways (across provinces, over time and across different sub-national political communities or groups). Also, these findings show that performance-based arguments have a significant bearing on support for political communities in Quebec, even after controlling for various contextual, structural and cultural arguments. More specifically, the findings from this analysis suggest that when Quebecers view the workings of inter-governmental relations negatively, it has significant implications for support for political communities. Also, Quebecers

who feel that the structure of power relations between the federal and provincial governments needs to be adjusted are less likely to be supportive of these political communities. But most importantly, when Quebecers lack support for specific political objects they are less likely to support their respective federal and provincial political communities. Moreover, most of these factors have much more powerful consequences for support for the Canadian political community than they do on support for the provincial political community.

The results of this analysis suggest that support for various political communities may not be driven primarily by demographic/political differences or by shifting political cultures. Rather, our findings suggest that low support for political communities may be addressed and redirected by strengthening political performance and better meeting the performance expectations of citizens, regardless of the growing diversity of those expectations (Farnsworth 2003; Dalton 2004). Of course more research is still required. For instance, in the future, it would be valuable to test the generalizability of these findings in other provinces. Also, more research on what citizens would consider to be better performance would also be extremely valuable when it comes to designing and implementing any future democratic reforms. Future variants of the CPEP should be vital in both of these respects²¹.

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Endnotes

¹ As highlighted in important works such as Kenneth McRoberts' (1997) *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity*, Clarke et al.'s

(2000) *A Polity on the Edge: Canada and the Politics of Fragmentation* and Nelson Wiseman's (2008) *In Search of Canadian Political Culture*, to name only a few.

² Norris (2011: 24-25) suggests that support for different objects may be observed as follows: "Political community: "belonging to the nation-state, exemplified by feelings of national pride, patriotism and identity"; Regime principles: approval or not of the principles associated with a democratic system of governance or other regime type; Regime performance: evaluations of the "workings" of the regime; Regime institutions: confidence in government, parliaments, parties, the civil service, the courts, and the security forces; Authorities: trust in elected and appointed office-holders, including leaders and elected representatives."

³ Kornberg and Clarke (1992: 4) describe affective support as being "granted or withheld on the basis of powerful feelings of like or dislike – feelings grounded in the early socialization experiences of individuals..."

⁴ For instance, Bill 99, a provincial law that affirms Quebec's right to seek independence and to determine the conditions under which it would do so, has recently been challenged by the federal government (Wells 2013).

⁵ Note however, that more recent evidence (Norris, 2011: 244) suggests that greater exposure to news has a positive effect on satisfaction with democracy.

⁶ For a variety of reasons, such as more time spent watching TV and commuting from one place to the next.

⁷ See, <http://cpep.ualberta.ca/>.

⁸ See, <http://ces-eec.org/>.

⁹ Doing so allows us to also parcel out whether there are variations in the conclusions drawn about citizens' affective orientations depending on the measure in use.

¹⁰ While this may be partly attributable to the efforts of former Premier Danny Williams (The Globe and Mail 2010), these findings are not new and studies conducted as early as 1974 suggest the same trend in differences between feelings toward the provincial versus the national political communities in Newfoundland (Johnston 1986). This is also consistent with the findings on the identification measure presented in Table 2.

¹¹ This analysis has also been replicated using CES data from the 1974, 1993, 1997 and 2004-06 surveys. Note that while different survey modes may introduce some error, identical survey

questions and the consistency of the resulting findings across time and across modes allow us to draw some generalizable conclusions. While there is significant debate about the pros and cons of different forms of data collection, recent tests have also demonstrated that findings collected using differing modes can be equally useful especially when care is taken to collect data from representative samples using identical question wording (see for instance Sanders et al. 2007 and Ansolabehere and Schaffner 2011).

¹² These data illustrate that respondents are consistent in their different orientations toward the Canadian community versus the provincial community regardless of the indicator used to measure those orientations. Note too that support in all provinces except Quebec is on average greater than 80 points on the 100 point scale and more than 80% support both communities across all provinces except in Quebec.

¹³ The data presented in Table 3 illustrate basic variations in the performance questions highlighted in the literature and help to establish the plausibility that such variations may have an effect on support for the different political communities. These indicators are included later in our final analysis.

¹⁴ CPEP surveys conducted in other provinces do not include this question.

¹⁵ Evaluations of democracy in practice, the institutions of government, and the political authorities may be partly linked to feelings of cynicism toward government resulting from news of the ongoing Charbonneau Commission which is currently investigating allegations of corruption and collusion in government.

¹⁶ And this is immediately after the new Premier, Pauline Marois, had just been elected.

¹⁷ Support for community is an additive measure constructed using responses to the three questions presented in Table 2 (feelings, identification, and pride). The Cronbach's Alpha for these indicators are .921 for Canada and .837 for Quebec.

¹⁸ In this review we measure individuals' separatist attitudes by investigating whether they identified with a separatist party. This measure reflects both covert attitude and some overt desire to break up the Canadian political community. Inclusion of this measure as an independent variable in our model is based on the assumption that while Party ID (especially separatist party attachment) may be significantly linked to low levels of affective support for a Canadian

community, support for either community may also be independently subject to other important theoretically relevant factors. When Party ID is removed, the story doesn't change. A regression analysis run without this factor reveals that all other variables included retain the same significance in their effects on the outcome variable.

¹⁹ For instance, the evidence indicates that younger Quebecers are less likely to support their provincial political community than older Quebecers. And high income earners are more likely to support the Canadian political community than those who do not earn as much.

²⁰ We acknowledge that while data from a single time point may not provide adequate empirical evidence to support the direction of the causal effect of the relationships tested here and proposed by the literature, our findings are suggestive that a significant and strong relationship exists and that further analysis is warranted.

²¹ A more recent study was conducted following the most recent 2014 election in Quebec which includes a battery of questions that do just this. Findings from this survey are forthcoming.
