Democracy's Challenges:

A Comprehensive Analysis of Political Support in Quebec and Canada

A Thesis

In the Department

of

Political Science

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (Political Science) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

January 2024

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

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Entitled: Democracy's Challenges: A Comprehensive Analysis of Political Support in
              Quebec and Canada

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
              Doctor of Philosophy (Political Science)
complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with
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Abstract for PhD
Democracy's Challenges:
A Comprehensive Analysis of Political Support in Quebec and Canada

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While democratic support has been studied for decades, focusing on major cross-national trends and generalizations in public opinion has produced rather elusive conclusions on the overall state of democracy and its most pressing challenges or shortcomings. This is due, in part, to the lack of in-depth data that would allow us to parse out the complexities of citizens' opinions about their democracies.

This project begins to fill this gap, through the collection of large sample surveys conducted in Quebec in 2012 and 2014 and across Canada in 2017, under the Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP), while also drawing comparative baseline data from other large-scale national and international data sources. The purpose of the analyses in this project is to use these Canadian data as a starting point to map out political support both systemically (across the political system) and systematically (through the analysis of multiple indicators, testing several competing theoretical explanations for variations in support).

The primary contribution of this project is the presentation of a more finely tuned, granular approach to the holistic understanding of perceptions of the democratic political system, one that may be drawn upon in the future by researchers interested in political support as well as by those seeking to address any democratic deficits that may exist.

The approach presented in this project should, over the long term, produce the kinds of conclusions necessary to generate more targeted, adaptive solutions. For instance, the analyses illustrate that the ways in which citizens perceive those in power to be performing are key in understanding waning support, that public cynicism runs deep, and that superficial performance improvements may not be enough to remedy more deep-seated negative perceptions. The findings also reveal that complex identity patterns further complicate the support problem. In other words, any efforts aimed at addressing political support will require more targeted and sophisticated response strategies, informed by studies that pay careful attention to the entire political system (on a variety of aspects, using different assessment types) as well as to perspectives that are not generalizable (from different groups, across various sub-contexts).

In memory of
Peter and Mary Hobley, Wendy Mayoff, Joyce Kyles, and Ken Tannahill

For my mum, Linda Hobley, and my sister, Jennifer Tannahill, who have been so patient and who never stopped believing that I could do it. I am so grateful for you.

For my supervisor, Dr. Mebs Kanji, whose mentorship and the important and unique opportunities he created provided me with the confidence and the skills to take on and complete this project, to persevere through the challenges, and to face whatever comes next. Thank you.

Special thanks also to my dissertation committee:
Dr. Edward King, Dr. Daniel Salée, Dr. Mary R. Anderson, and Dr. M. Catherine Bolton

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

> "Democratic regimes are supposed to be run by the citizenry—or at least the citizenry ought to be the ultimate authority. Democracies depend on legitimacy to function effectively; only when a regime is considered legitimate can it rule by consent rather than coercion. Democratic regimes cannot rely on coercion to govern and long remain democratic. Thus, public acceptance is important."
> (Verba 2006, 499)

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

Theoretically, for democracy to work as it should, it requires the strong support of its citizens, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of the political system. This legitimacy in turn encourages citizens to continue to participate in that system in a variety of ways, which helps this system to function and succeed. Such legitimacy-reinforcing perceptions[1] have often been described as *political support* (Easton 1965b; 1965a; Muller 1970; Easton 1975; Kriesi 2013; Foa et al. 2020).

Political support can be understood as the orientations, perceptions, or opinions, either affective or evaluative, that the public have toward various parts of the democratic political system, known as political objects (or the objects of support). Political objects can range from the most specific, such as political authorities and political institutions, to the most diffuse, including democratic regime principles and the political community (Easton 1965b; Dalton 1999)[2]. Furthermore, because a democratic political system is set up 'for the people, by the people'[3], support in a democracy may presumably only be given, or taken away, by those people. In other words, citizens are contributors to their democracies, and without their support (or say) we may not actually have democracy, but rather some other type of political system that only resembles a democracy (Dahl 1961; Almond and Verba 1963; Dahl 1971; 2000; Verba 2006).

Of course, this is not to deny that there remains an important and ongoing theoretical debate on *what* democratic legitimacy means and whether wide public support is even necessary for a democracy to function and continue to exist (Tocqueville 1863; Verba 2006)[4]. Still, among certain systems theorists such as David Easton (beginning in 1953) and the many empirical democratic theorists that followed his line of research, the shared consensus has been that "a government that manages to act in accordance with the preferences of a majority of the citizens

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[1] Of course, support is not only expressed through opinions, but also through actions. Such actions may include shifting levels of engagement with the political system (through voting or other political activities), while declining support for authorities, policies, or even structures, can also result in shifting demands and calls for change. For a detailed discussion of this, see Muller (1977). While the consequences of shifting political support and the expression of discontent are of interest to me, the in-depth analysis of these was simply outside of the scope of this particular project at this point in time. Therefore, I am concerned here only with political support as expressed through perceptions using public opinion (not political behavior such as voting, or other forms of engagement, disengagement, or actions).

[2] There is a long history of discussion and analysis of political support for these various objects, as will be elaborated further in Chapter 2.

[3] As stated by Abraham Lincoln (1863; see also Gienapp 2002; as well as discussions by Graham Fraser, Brenda O'Neill and Jean-Marc Fournier in our forthcoming volume Kanji and Tannahill 2024).

[4] As Easton points out (Easton 1966, 153–54), for a "any kind of system" to function and survive, it must adapt. "To persist, the system must be capable of responding with measures that alleviate […] stress. The actions of authorities are particularly critical in this respect. But if they are to be able to respond, they must be in a position to obtain information about what is happening so that they may react insofar as they desire, or are compelled to do so. With information, they may be able to maintain a minimal level of support for the system". It is this information about support (the signals that citizens are sending to the system) that I seek to better understand in this project.

should thus be perceived as *worthy* of support and could therefore be perceived as enjoying a high degree of *legitimacy*" (Linde and Peters 2020, 292-emphasis added; see also van Ham et al. 2017)[5].

In this project, rather than explore the theoretical debate over how much support is needed to deem the system to be legitimate, I focus on the extent to which support actually exists and dig deeper into the nature (or form) that support can take when it comes to citizens opinions about democracy. To break down the concept of support, I employ the theoretical framework as originally put forth by Easton (1953; 1957; 1965b; 1965a; 1966), later elaborated by him (1973; 1975; 1976) and by those who followed his line of inquiry (Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Fuchs 1993; Klingemann 1999; Norris 1999a; Dalton 2004a; Norris 2011, to name a few). I use this *System Analysis* framework to structure my project and to pinpoint the objects within the political system to be observed throughout my various analyses of public opinion data. Throughout this project, I also draw on the extensive history of theorizing and analyses derived from Easton and those that followed to guide my empirical inquiry into the factors that are most likely to blame for variations in political support for different objects.

In this dissertation, I make two major contributions. The first is to present a more finely tuned, granular approach to the assessment of the democratic political system that, I hope, may be drawn on by researchers in the future who are concerned with issues of political support among citizens. The second, is to introduce in greater detail, the Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP) – a project which I have participated in and now help to design and direct. The data for this study, and the context within which the political system explored herein, center on Quebec and Canada. As such, the findings derived are intended as a snapshot of one particular context, over a specific period in time. This said, the data collected and the findings that may be derived from them, represent perhaps one of the largest samples of public opinion data on political support, and certainly one of the most extensive datasets to ever tap political support in such breadth and depth[6].

Throughout my thesis, I will make contributions to the approach of analyzing political support and to our understanding of its dynamics based on the PCSP data, by unpacking three key questions. First, what is the current state of political support in Quebec and Canada across a variety of political objects, levels of government, and groups? Second, what factors have the greatest tendency to influence variations in political support according to my data, guided by existing theoretical propositions? Third, also according to these data, how do fluctuations in support for authorities and institutions impact support for the political regime and the community more broadly?

Some Context from the Literature
On the State of Political Support
Why is *now* the time to be looking at the state of political support? Why is a more granular approach to understanding political support required? And why have I chosen to focus my analysis on the Canadian case? Currently, there are reasons to suspect that across advanced

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[5] Related work by scholars interested in deliberation and participation also consider public involvement and support as a key factor in determining democratic legitimacy (see for instance, Dahl 1971; Lijphart 1997; Mansbridge et al. 2012; Fung 2015).

[6] The PCSP at this point (prior to our new data collection round in 2023) now consists of online surveys of nearly 10,000 Canadians across the three survey waves, collected over the period from 2012 to 2017, and comprises over 800 variables (plus several hundred sub questions).

industrial democracies – including here at home in Quebec and Canada – democracy may be facing a deterioration in positive public perceptions of their democratic political systems.

In fact, several cross-national studies have already identified increased problems when it comes to support for their representative political authorities and democratic institutions (Dalton 2004a; 2019). Additionally, assessments conducted specifically in Canada have suggested that similar trouble[7] or concerns may be emerging here at home (Gidengil and Bastedo 2014; LeDuc and Pammett 2014; Dalton 2019; Breton, Jacques, and Parkin 2022; Norquay 2022). Furthermore, recent studies have shown that, depending on perceptions of how well certain aspects of the political system are functioning (such as experiences with certain social programs), the effects may even go so far as to change the way citizens engage[8] in democracy more generally (Gidengil 2020).

Although major cross-national studies (and major cross-national datasets of public opinion) are quite extensive, if our goal is to carry out a full system diagnosis of any problem that exists, what we have so far, I believe, is not yet enough. For one, the results emerging from the cross-national as well as the many within-country studies to date have been rather spotty (focusing only on certain aspects of the system)[9]. Indeed, virtually none of the investigations to date have dug as deeply as may well be necessary in complex political systems and diverse societies (Dalton 2004a; Lenard and Simeon 2012) to identify consistent and cross-cutting patterns of variation across all political objects, let alone across different levels of government or among different groups. Nor do they provide the type of holistic and systemic understanding of support through in-depth within-society analyses that would allow us to draw more definitive conclusions (Zhang, Li, and Yang 2022) about the full scope of any political support problems.

More specifically, while broad investigations have provided us with valuable insights and clues as to the areas that may require further exploration, from a more holistic and systemic perspective their results have been fairly general (focusing mainly on univariate cross-national comparisons or cross-time trends on single support indicators) and also rather inconclusive (it is not clear whether advanced industrial democracies are in fact experiencing important and sustained declines in political support across all the systems' objects). In fact, the empirical

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[7] When I point to "problems" of political support, my focus is on identifying variation. I agree that fluctuations in support, dissent on issues, and demands for change are all important components of a healthy and well-functioning democracy – in fact, the stability of the system requires dynamic responsiveness to such problems (Almond and Powell 1966; Huntington 1968). In order to respond to such variations, however, I argue that we need to first gain a full grasp of where those fluctuations are occurring, and what the desires of the public actually are, in order to later pinpoint how to respond. The evolution of federalism in Canada is a perfect example of how the system has adapted over time to meet the demands of citizens, or respond to perceptions that performance was failing (see, for example Jennifer Smith 2004; Bakvis and Skogstad 2008) but even recent evidence on views toward federalism (Breton, Jacques, and Parkin 2022) suggests that we may, once again, require a serious quality-check.

[8] In the "Some Context" section below, under "On the Consequences of Variations in Political Support" I discuss some of the consequences of variations in political support that have been posited in the literature. In this project, however, I look only at the effects of variations in support for specific objects (authorities and institutions) on those more diffuse objects that are expected to be more stable and resistant to fluctuation (regime and community).

[9] When we begin to make sense of all these studies by categorizing them according to what *aspect* of the system (or object of political support) they are targeting and at what level of government, it becomes increasingly clear that no systematic review or study of the whole system has ever been conducted. Even more elaborate studies that compare regime support across the world in both democratic and non-democratic nations (Mauk 2020), do so based on a somewhat limited set of support indicators due to the limitations on the data available for cross-country comparisons.

literature to date is not even in full agreement about whether the democratic deficit[10], as this problem is sometimes called, is in effect, pervasive and worsening over time whether here in Canada (Aucoin and Turnbull 2003; Tanguay 2009; LeDuc and Pammett 2014) or elsewhere (Norris 2012).

For instance, when it comes to systemic conclusions on the overall state of political support, several studies[11] (over the last 60 years or so) have set out to examine the state of democracy generally, to determine whether or not it is in "crisis"[12] as originally proposed by some in the past (for instance: Habermas 1973; Crozier et al. 1975; R. Rose 1979; Fuchs 1993; Klingemann and Fuchs 1995; Pharr, Putnam, and Dalton 2000; Pharr and Putnam 2000). Others have set out to investigate more specifically, the ways in which orientations toward targeted objects and aspects of the democratic system vary (Mounk 2018; Mounk and Foa 2018)[13]. For example, scholars such as Severs and Mattelaer (2014), have argued that diffuse regime and political community support is strong and stable, while Dalton (2004a) contends that specific support for authorities and institutions is waning (see also May 2009). As a result, when it comes to drawing conclusions about a democratic 'crisis' Norris (2011), argues that fluctuations over time reveal that advanced industrial democratic societies do not have too much to fear[14].

In the grand scheme of things, however, I believe that there is still a significant amount of work to be done to truly grasp the full scope of the "so-called" political support problem both in terms of its **nature** and its **extent**[15] across all its political objects, let alone what may be at the root of such concerns. Parsing out the problem in the way that is necessary to achieve a full understanding of its scope will require a more fine-tuned granular approach guided by a clear conceptual map (as I will elaborate on in Chapter 2) and more robust survey instruments[16] that allow us to capture public perceptions across a variety of vantage points. Thanks to some of the original, foundational work on political support, conducted by Kornberg and Clarke beginning in the 70s and 80s and continued until the early 2000s (Kornberg, Clarke, and Stewart 1979; Kornberg and Clarke 1983; 1992; Clarke, Kornberg, and Wearing 2000; T. Scotto, Clarke, and Kornberg 2019), Canada stands out as a key place to return and begin this exploration anew.

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[10] The democratic deficit has become widely referred to and is used to describe the lack of support for democratic political objects by the public (i.e. low political support). See most notably the work by Norris (2011), also see Beetham (2012).

[11] See also Dalton (1999), who conveniently lays out the trajectory of attention paid to political support in advanced industrial democracies, both in practice and in the literature – from the "crisis" question, to the post-communist "euphoria" about democracy, to ongoing concern over political trust and "continuing political doubt" (57).

[12] This crisis is even portrayed in the art world through countless exhibits that lay out, whether successfully or not, the many failures of advanced industrial democracies to live up to the hype (Szabelski 2019). And while criticism in and of itself does not constitute a direct desire to throw the system out entirely, recent work by scholars such as Mounk and Foa (2018; Foa et al. 2020) do demonstrate that alternatives to democracy may in fact be experiencing some rising appeal. I will provide results on commitments to democracy as a way of governing in the chapters to follow.

[13] The number of studies that evaluate single aspects of the democratic system are too numerous to list here (for instance basic orientations have been measured in the form of trust in government, beginning most famously with studies by A. H. Miller 1974; and Citrin 1974; and recently reviewed extensively in Zmerli and van der Meer 2017).

[14] For a recent discussion, see also IPU (2023).

[15] This distinction between the *nature* and the *extent* of the political support problem helps to parse out the concept of political support and the way it plays out in practice. Chapter 2 will build on these two areas further and Chapter 3 will explain how I propose to investigate them.

[16] In the future, based on what we learn, these instruments will also need to be expanded to include not just the perceptions of general publics, but also the views of marginalized groups, elites, the business sector, non-profit and community organizations, media, and others (see Chapter 9 for more details on where my research is headed).

Over the years, our understanding of political support in the Canadian case has evolved, however, just like the international work on support, our conclusions remain rather general. For instance, when reviewing the findings of support in the Canadian and Quebec contexts in particular, the need for careful in-depth within-society analyses becomes quite clear. This need is especially pronounced when we consider the complexities brought on in this context by the long history of strained relationships between provinces and by the way governance is carried out at multiple levels of government, each with differing responsibilities and presumably varying abilities (Clarke, Kornberg, and Wearing 2000), as well as by the diversity of citizens' identities[17] and political cultures present in different regions (Simeon and Elkins 1974; Henderson 2004). As these and other prominent Canadian scholars have shown, the Quebec and Canadian contexts are rich with diversity and differences (Kymlicka 1995; C. Taylor 1997; Eisenberg 2006; Banting, Courchene, and Seidle 2007; M. Smith 2009), yet, beyond analyses of a handful of support indicators (such as satisfaction with democracy, feelings about parties and politicians, or confidence in government), none have ever cast their net as wide as I believe is necessary to fully understand all aspects of support for the political system, across governments, across levels of government, or across diverse groups[18] - certainly not all in one study, using a single dataset[19] that covers perceptions of all objects.

For instance, a recent Environics report (Environics Institute 2020, 13; A. Parkin 2020), drawing on a broader set of indicators[20] than is typical, reveals that: "the patterns [in support variations] are not consistent, with positive trends in one part of the country often being offset by negative trends in another". Looking more specifically just at support at more diffuse levels, some have also suggested that satisfaction with democracy might actually be most problematic in some regions compared to others. For instance, drawing on more dedicated survey instruments[21], some have found that satisfaction with democracy among Quebecers is suffering more than in other provinces (Blais and Kostelka 2016; Samara Canada 2012; 2015)[22]. Conversely, the more recent data collected by Environics through the Americas Barometers, reveal that Quebec is actually doing better than other regions on measures of satisfaction with democracy and respect for its institutions. This said, at the most diffuse level, their findings reveal that Quebecers are

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[17] As will be further elaborated below, it is said that greater diversity may indeed have detrimental effects on *perceptions* of democracy.

[18] There are of course exceptions, where the most common distinctions are usually drawn between Quebecers and other Canadians (Kornberg, Clarke, and Stewart 1979; Kornberg and Clarke 1983; 1992; or recent investigations of regional variations on general support indicators Environics Institute 2020).

[19] In my analyses, by employing a single dataset where all questions are asked to all respondents, it becomes possible to start drawing a clearer picture on the overall state of support across all political objects at all three levels of government. Having large enough sample sizes of respondents who provide their views on all aspects of the system also allows us to pinpoint more precisely the various cross-provincial and cross-group differences, as well as draw on responses to performance, sociocultural, and identity questions to begin breaking down what factors best correlate with these views on system objects.

[20] In their report, they employ cross-time Americas Barometers data.

[21] These studies have conducted their own public opinion surveys and other forms of data collection (the Making Electoral Democracy Work project (see Stephenson et al. 2010) carry out dedicated surveys as do the Samara Citizen Surveys, Samara's Democracy 360 also conduct surveys and other cross-time data collection) rather than relying on data from the usual sources (such as the WVS, CES, or other).

[22] The Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) data, like the PCSP (and the earlier CPEP), are the only surveys of their kind to look at satisfaction with both national level democracy and regional democracy. The MEDW survey Ontarians and Quebecers and find that Quebecers are lower than Ontarians on support for democracy at both the provincial and national levels. The Samara data referred to here, look only at satisfaction with Canadian democracy, but identify lower levels of support in Quebec compared to other regions.

still less likely to exhibit as much pride in the Canadian political community compared to other Canadians (A. Parkin 2020). Indeed, depending on how analyses are conducted, and what measures of political support are interpreted, findings can differ significantly. For instance, when it comes to another measure of diffuse community attachment (national identity) which is also often used, earlier researchers concluded that, although weaker on average, Quebecers actually exhibit strong attachments to Canada alongside their sturdy commitment to the provincial community (Mendelsohn 2002)[23].

Of course, these are only a few examples of the sorts of variations that appear, depending on what objects are being observed, which regions of the country are being compared, and what indicators of support we rely upon to draw our conclusions[24]. The general conclusion from these few examples (as I will elaborate on in the next chapter) is that while significant work has already been done, there is a great deal here that is yet to be fully unpacked and empirically tested with the sort of detail that complex political contexts demand (Canada included). This presents a gap in the literature that increasingly needs to be filled, especially if assessments of political systems continue to be carried out, which – if the last sixty-plus years of developments in the volume of empirical investigations of certain political support indicators are any signal – seems likely. I hope that by casting such a broad net, by empirically unpacking the many layers of support for all objects within the political system, using a variety of indicators (and assessment types[25]) of support for each object, that I will begin to demonstrate the benefits for other scholars to follow similar approaches in the future.

On the Factors Influencing Variations in Political Support: Drivers of Variation

Beyond understanding how political support varies, important work also remains to be done when it comes to what factors are most to blame for differences in political support for various system objects, across contexts and groups (i.e. what drives variations in support[26]). Certainly, if our goal is to eventually devise systematic, strategic, and targeted solutions to any of the challenges we may identify democracy to be suffering from, we will require a much fuller understanding of what is to blame for these challenges and where we need to focus our attention first. In this study, I am not suggesting that I will be able to provide such solutions. I do, however, expect that based on the areas that I identify as most problematic, we will be able to follow up this study with more careful questions, tapping a greater number of stakeholders from even more diverse backgrounds, and employing other methodological approaches beyond just surveys.

While studies to date (for example, Kenneth Newton 2006; Norris 2011) have provided us with a strong starting point[27] – suggesting that drivers of changing support fall within two key

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[23] This is one of the few studies that look at "attachments" to different political communities (provincial vs. national), findings are drawn from several different sources, including polls conducted by Angus Reid, and CROP (Mendelsohn 2002, 81). He also looks at other indicators of identity such as self-identification, sense of belonging, and perceptions of provincial or national citizenship and presents the results of the CES feelings thermometer scores of national versus provincial community support from 1974 to 2000.

[24] Whether institutional support measured by expressions of confidence in institutions, regime support tapped by general indicators of satisfaction with democracy or satisfaction with democracy at a particular level of government, or diffuse support for the political community measured either as community pride or community identity.

[25] In Chapter 2 I will also discuss the differences between affective and evaluative assessments of support.

[26] Or what are also referred to as "correlates of political support" (Muller 1970; Kornberg, Clarke, and Leduc 1978; Dalton 2004a, chap. 3)

[27] In Chapter 3, I will build in more detail on the lessons derived from these studies.

lines of thinking – empirical testing of the effects that factors within these two lines have on support across all objects remains limited.

The two lines of argument (or explanations) that can be identified in the literature so far include: the impact of sociocultural changes (demand-side arguments); and perceptions of political performance (supply-side arguments). Although the factors included within these two core theoretical approaches to explaining political support are not new, even in the Canadian context (Kornberg, Clarke, and Leduc 1978; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; LeDuc and Pammett 2014; Ruderman 2014; Ruderman and Nevitte 2015; Gidengil 2020), the multitude of plausible factors are rarely pitted against each other and certainly are never analyzed in terms of the extent to which these factors impact perceptions of all political objects in the system. Furthermore, the studies that do compare demand- and supply-side factors to each other – likely due to limitations in the types of questions available to analyze – only include a handful of measures of sociocultural or demographic characteristics alongside those for government performance (for instance: Ruderman 2014; Ruderman and Nevitte 2015). Additionally, such studies rarely control for important subnational or contextual differences, which, as prior research has shown, are highly relevant in multilevel governance systems (see, for instance Chou 2019). Lastly, such studies that try to explain why certain individuals may be more supportive than others, seldom even consider some of the many important identity differences that exist in political systems comprising diverse citizenries, such as those found in Quebec and the rest of Canada (Winter 2011; Statistics Canada 2022a).

I would argue that at least part of the explanation for why this gap in the literature (the general literature on variations in political support, the contrasting effects of different supply- and demand-side factors on support, and specific analyses of support in Canada) has developed and remained until now, is because the data required to conduct such a systematic in-depth inquiry are simply not available[28]. Indeed, to conduct such detailed investigations of political support and its prospective explanations in more complex and diverse democratic political systems, extensive public opinion surveys would be required. These surveys would need to include large samples and ask respondents not only what they think about all political objects but must also include questions that allow researchers to tap the many theoretically plausible drivers of support variations. I will delve even further into what these specific drivers are in Chapter 3.

On the Consequences of Variations in Political Support
If such limitations in our theoretical understandings, as well as in the collection and analysis of data are not enough to justify the academic need to dig deeper and more carefully into the question of political support, I suggest that we look briefly also to some of the potential outcomes which are posited as likely should we fail to address any support problems that do exist – or if we fail to properly understand political support and subsequently attempt to administer solutions that target the wrong aspects of the problem.

Notably, despite suggesting that support for diffuse political objects is more stable and resistant, the earliest discussions within the context of Easton's systems analysis, do admit that

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[28] Most broad-based data collection exercises conducted in Canada (including the Canadian Election Studies, Canadian Social Surveys, World Values Surveys, or Americas Barometers, to name a few) all focus on important social and political issues yet are quite limited in the number and variety of political support questions they ask to citizens. This is of course understandable, considering political support and its drivers have not been the main research focus of those carrying them out. Thankfully, however, several of them have included general support questions that I am able to draw on in my research to paint broad cross-time pictures of support in Canada.

declining support for political authorities or institutions can also move upward from these specific objects to impact support for more diffuse ones (Easton 1975; Kornberg and Clarke 1983; 1992; Dalton 1999). And while it is suggested that sustained negative perceptions of specific objects can drive the deterioration of support for the democratic regime as a way of governing or declining attachments to the political community as a whole (Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Foa and Mounk 2016; Putnam 2000), this percolating effect is rarely empirically confirmed (Dahl 2000) and few ever test more than just support for single objects[29].

To begin filling this gap, in this project I will take a first step by seeking to determine the ways in which support for different objects are interlinked (from specific to diffuse). To test these links between objects, I will discuss and empirically analyze in more detail, the diffusing effect of support for specific political objects on more diffuse ones – keeping the analyses mostly contained to assessments of objects within the political system, excluding for now any analysis of specific political behaviors[30].

Of course, beyond citizen support, other forms of denial of the system's legitimacy are also commonly warned about. For instance, extensive evidence in recent years has pointed to shifting political behavior in the form of declining patterns of voter turnout and disengagement from conventional political involvement, including here in Canada (for example: E. Bélanger and Nadeau 2002; Blais et al. 2004; Dalton 2004a; Hiley 2006; Siaroff 2009; Cross 2010). Other studies have pointed to growing demands for institutional[31] and democratic reform (Pharr, Putnam, and Dalton 2000; Aucoin and Turnbull 2003). The most extensive analyses of any shifting civic culture that I have come across can be found in the various works contributed to Dalton and Welzel's *The Civic Culture Transformed* (2014). In Quebec in particular, it is conceivable that diffuse consequences of negative perceptions of our democratic system are also manifesting[32] in other ways, such as the violations of polity laws by individuals (Canadian Press 2017; Moreau 2022) and public officials (Blatchford 2013; Patriquin 2010; Grenier 2020c), support for alternative governing charters like the Charter of Values in Quebec (Montpetit 2016; Flanagin 2014), and uncertain but nevertheless ongoing support for separatist parties that campaign for sovereignty of the provincial community (M. Crête 2021). Even in places like Alberta and Saskatchewan, there are increasing calls for more independence from the federal political community through talks of sovereignty (Braid 2021; Lapointe 2021) and new calls for renegotiations of the equalization formula (Dove 2021; Frew 2021).

I should note that as I conducted the research in this dissertation, using these same data, I also began examining the systematic links between political support for various objects and political behaviors through analyses of changing participation and the tendency to comply with

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[29] There are of course some exceptions which have provided important insights to better our understanding (Gidengil and Bastedo 2014; Gidengil 2020), even if these studies focus mainly on just a few objects, or a few indicators. Very recent work by Cutler et al. (2023), for instance, builds on the individual-level understanding of performance (or the factors that make up an individual's evaluation) in driving satisfaction with democracy in Europe. Nonetheless, while this work provides insights into the performance considerations and micro-macro level factors that should be taken into account when conducting multilevel cross-national research into satisfaction with democracy, it still looks only at one political object (satisfaction with the regime).

[30] I have excluded from this dissertation any analysis of the impact of variations in support on changing participation or compliance. This said, I think these are extremely relevant areas in which to dig deeper going forward, which I am currently pursuing.

[31] Most recently Justin Trudeau's 2015 campaign promises to change the electoral system and reform the Senate (Liberal Party of Canada 2015; Canadian Press 2015) or British Columbia's ongoing attempts to reform the electoral system by taking the province in 2018 to a third referendum on the subject (McElroy 2018).

[32] These are all proposed consequences of low support as put forward by Dalton (2004a, 11–13).

polity rules, as well as investigations of the effects of support on orientations toward reform or shifts in social cohesion. Although I do not lay out these analyses and conclusions here, I can say that based on these preliminary findings[33], there may indeed be serious cause for concern when it comes to the effects of shifting political support on engagement, cohesion, compliance, and demands for change. However, I believe that prior to presenting such findings, it was necessary to first lay out my approach to more carefully and systematically dissecting support across all objects, to empirically understanding the interplay between these objects, and to better assessing the drivers of variations in support for each. With this established, I believe, we can start to then (in future research) begin to make sense of how dire some of these consequences might become if we do not attempt to address concerns at their root.

In this Project

In short, as I made my way through existing work on political support both in the broader international context as well as here in Canada, it became clear to me that very little is known about the full story: such as which political objects are the most problematic, which factors overall are the most to blame for variations in support, not to mention which levels of government are most problematic, for which groups (in this context, among Quebecers and Canadians), and whether the problem is generalizable (again, in this context, across all of Canada). Thus, if we wish to begin sorting out where our priorities should be focused in terms of tackling the culprits of any waning political support, I believe it is necessary *first* to sort the puzzle out into more manageable parts and to investigate the various pieces in as much detail as possible. This is precisely what I begin to do with the analyses I conduct in this dissertation.

Indeed, the political support problem (to the extent that it exists) is likely quite complex and the puzzle probably contains many complicated pieces. Yet, although beneficial in providing clues and laying the groundwork, the literature so far remains incomplete when it comes to painting a clear picture of the state of political support (in terms of the extent to which support varies across all objects and in terms of the true nature of support, thanks to inconsistencies in how assessments are tapped). Furthermore, the findings so far, although often enlightening, remain inconclusive in terms of pinpointing what factors may be most consistently tied to fluctuations in support (and thus might be most promising to target if we wish, someday, to remedy any political support problems that we do identify).

In this project, I take a first step to remedying these shortcomings by employing a more fine-grained approach to the analysis of political support, employing a unique and robust survey carried out in Quebec and Canada[34]. As I mentioned, as part of this dissertation project, I helped to design and implement the Political Communities Surveys (PCS), which are the first detailed surveys of their kind to systematically probe political support across a variety of objects, levels of government, regions, and identity groups in the Canadian context. They also contain an extensive array of theoretically relevant indicators that help to tap many possible drivers of

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[33] There are indeed statistically significant links between assessments of the political system and each of these potential consequences. Unfortunately, however, space has limited me from laying out these analyses and conclusions here. I can say that conclusions from these analyses reveal that, when problems begin to permeate into citizens' assessments of how well their political regime is functioning, levels of satisfaction with specific aspects of democracy can have important effects on compliance, social trust, engagement in both traditional and non-traditional forms of political participation, demands for institutional reform, support for alternatives to democracy, and shifting patterns of territorial identification (national and more local community identifications). I hope to begin presenting the findings from these analyses at upcoming conferences in 2024.
[34] Which is now also being launched in other countries in the fall of 2023.

political support. These data thus make it possible to examine more rigorous, robust, and fully specified explanatory models than have ever been possible in the past[35]. These surveys have also been tested and retested repeatedly for their reliability and validity beginning in Quebec in 2012 and 2014. It was only after conducting these preliminary analyses and documenting the results in several initial papers (Kanji and Tannahill 2013b; 2014b; Kanji, Tannahill, and Hopkins 2015; Kanji and Tannahill 2017a) [36], that we were able to then implement a larger, more refined survey in Canada in 2017. This latest study has approximately 800 different core variables and taps the views of over 6,000 respondents. These are the data that I analyze in this dissertation, along with data drawn from other major public opinion surveys that help me to lay down a baseline understanding of what we know about the scope of the political support problem so far. These baseline analyses draw on data from the World Values Surveys, the Americas Barometers, and the Canadian Election Studies reaching as far back as 1982.

In this work I hope to make several advances that may aid in untangling the "is political support in distress?" question, sort out some of its most relevant points of concern and causes as well as, at the end, provide a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the important and most fruitful routes to take in future rounds of investigation in order to contribute positively to the health of our democracy, all while considering different governance and group contexts. In the following, I conduct an exploration in both the Quebec and Canadian contexts, in an attempt to sort out the most systematic and consistent story. It is my hope that in future research, these findings can be tested for their generalizability in other contexts and be used as a starting point or roadmap for digging deeper so that we may then make more impactful and long-lasting policy (and potentially even system reform) recommendations, where necessary.

Chapter Structure

What I have offered above is an overview of some of the key conclusions that I have drawn from the literature to date in the field of political support, some of the limitations that still exist in our understanding of support, and how I see myself contributing to filling some of the gaps.

Throughout the remainder of this project, I will continue to draw on this literature wherever it is relevant. I have also included two additional substantive chapters that build on the review above by providing a synopsis of how the political support "problem" is understood and measured. What has this literature amassed to date when it comes to understanding what political support is and how it varies, both in terms of its nature and its extent? And what are some of the things that we need to pay particular attention to when examining political support going forward?

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[35] Because most broad-based assessments of support tend to focus on cross-national comparisons in support across countries, employing indicators drawn from surveys whose focus is not necessarily to directly examine political support nor the many theoretically driven components of that support (across objects or explanations). As Cutler et al. (2023, 4) state also: "It is impossible at present to cumulate findings across studies because the empirical-theoretical specifications—the macro and individual-level factors chosen for inclusion in a particular study—are so varied." Seeing as I am looking, in this study, only at Quebec and Canada, I am also able to delve more deeply into the individual-level fluctuations in support, and their drivers – I account for variation that might be caused by macro-level drivers (such as provincial contexts) by including provincial controls for two major contexts (Quebec and Canada) in my analyses.

[36] This in-depth understanding of the political support problem that Quebec faces was disseminated through a variety of means, through presentations to civil servants, opinion pieces, discussions with opinion leaders and academics, presentations at academic conferences, journal and chapter publications, and presentations to students. See several of the conference presentations and publications listed in the Bibliography.

One clear takeaway that I have drawn from the review of the literature contained in this first chapter as well as in Chapter 2 is that, while extensive and also beneficial in providing clues to guide my analyses, the literature (and existing public opinion surveys) still fall short in providing a clear and detailed picture of the scope of any political support problem that might exist in any particular democratic society, across the many assessment forms, political objects, levels of government, or groups. What the literature does provide is a framework, as Easton originally suggested, for better understanding very complex political systems. What remains, however, is to avoid falling into the trap of only digging deeply into individual parts of these complex systems or making the mistake of improperly or inconsistently defining and measuring support for each of the system's parts. Rather, through the analyses presented in this project I hope to provide some clarity when it comes to investigating political support, using the Quebec and Canadian contexts and the PCSP data as an example and a jumping off point for future research.

This brings me to the next major lessons that I have drawn from the literature. What influences can we look to when seeking to understand why political support varies? In Chapter 3, I delve a bit further into the work that has been done to date that motivates me to investigate what factors most consistently drive variations in political support in Quebec and Canada, once again based on the PCSP data. In this theoretical review chapter, I set the stage for my upcoming analyses by reviewing what the literature says about the factors that might either detract from or bolster support across political objects – whether it be perceptions of political performance (supply-side factors) or changes in the sociocultural makeup of society and its varying identity structures (demand-side factors). In this review, I build on the discussion above by identifying in greater detail the many theoretically possible drivers of support fluctuations, from public cynicism about politics and perceptions on the honesty of politicians, to the effects of changing levels of deference, cognitive mobilization, differing levels of interpersonal trust, or even varied group identifications.

As I pointed out above, while the literature provides important clues as to how each of these factors might drive support, my search has also revealed that none have ever empirically investigated (with the depth that is necessary), how these explanations hold up against each other. Is one factor more important than any of the others? Are different drivers more important for perceptions of authorities, while others are more important when it comes to commitments to democracy? These questions will guide my empirical investigations in the latter part of this project, where I also introduce new measures that have never before been employed in studies of political support. These new measures tap the effect that various identity group affiliations can have on support for different objects in the political system.

With the theoretical foundations set in my reviews of existing literature, I then move in Chapter 4 to an outline and description of exactly how I will go about filling some of the gaps that I have identified in the research on political support to date[37]. I start by expanding on the core objectives of this project based on the gaps I identified. I then present in more detail the unique dataset that I have collected and employed to investigate political support in the Quebec and Canadian contexts. Lastly, I outline in more detail the research process that I have followed throughout this project, including the methodology employed in compiling the data and the steps I took when conducting the analyses for this project.

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[37] From my review of existing work on political support over the decades since David Easton's introduction of the Systems Framework for political analysis and his elaboration of the concept of political support.

In Chapter 5, I jump into the first empirical chapter and the start of the series of analyses that make up the remainder of this project. In this chapter, I begin tackling the first objective of this project which is to determine the true scope of the political support problem (both in its nature and its extent). I do this by analyzing and presenting data from major public opinion surveys conducted to date (from which most of our understanding of the state of political support in Canada are based). In doing this, I begin to establish a baseline picture of where we are here in Canada in terms of our understanding of any political support problem that may exist. The key points that I demonstrate in this chapter are that objective measures (from organizations such as Freedom House, Varieties of Democracy, or the Economist Intelligence Unit) do not necessarily coincide with the opinions of everyday Canadians when they are asked directly to assess their democracy. Furthermore, through the cross-study, cross-time, and cross-level analyses of support for each object that I present, I also highlight the importance of question wording and concept specification, as well as the need to measure support across political objects by using a variety of different survey questions (using well thought-out and consistent response categories) that can tap variations in support across levels of government with large enough samples to compare orientations across different regions.

Having established a baseline understanding of the political support problem over time, based on the most used indicators of support, I then turn in Chapter 6, to dig further into the nature of political support, by introducing an even more extensive and systematic assessment of political objects, ranging from evaluations of the most specific objects (political authorities) to affective feelings about the most diffuse ones (political communities). In the same chapter, I then pursue this deep dive even further by observing the extent of the support problem, through analysis of how support varies across these political objects at different levels of government.

In Chapter 7, I delve further into the extent of the problem by investigating how support varies across different groups that have been traditionally relevant in Quebec and Canada. Each of these analyses and discussions allow me to better understand the scope of any political support problem that may exist by establishing whether there are any systematic patterns that appear, such as whether certain objects or levels of government stand out as areas that are more problematic than others, or if there are certain groups that are more concerned or disaffected than others about their political system and its various component parts.

In Chapter 8, I turn finally to the analyses that form the basis of my responses to objectives two and three of this project. I begin addressing objective two by first introducing an analysis of the varying identity groupings that exist according to my data, which have never before been directly analyzed in studies of political support. I then examine the extent to which more commonly theorized explanations stand up to each other in my models of political support in general. Lastly, I explore how these explanations fare when looking at support across levels of government and how the results differ from when we look at support only generally. Throughout each of these analyses, in responding to my third objective, I discuss the extent to which my findings reveal any support for the early hypotheses presented by Easton that support for authorities and institutions can indeed have important and potentially negative effects on support for the political regime and community.

What each of these analyses reveals is that, when looking at political support, it really does matter which object we are observing, what types of assessment we are considering, and which levels of government we are looking to target. Furthermore, it becomes clearer from the variations observed in each of these analyses, that to gain a fuller picture of what factors best explain variations in support across political objects, levels of government, and groups, it is

crucial that we make sure to fully specify the models that we use for such analyses, using dedicated and extensive survey instruments. For anyone interested or concerned about addressing problems of political support, the various discussions of the findings in Chapter 8 may even serve to provide the first clues (based on the 2017 snapshot from the PCSP in Canada) into where to pursue further investigation, and what factors might be most important to address, depending on if they are looking to address support generally or if they are more concerned with support at specific levels of democracy.

The final chapter of this dissertation provides a brief review of some of my key findings and how, I believe, we can proceed in future work based on these findings. I also provide a closing discussion of some of the main challenges that I faced in completing this project as well as some important rewards. I also discuss the ways in which I will build on my findings and conclusions about political support through the research that I have planned as part of my upcoming post-doctoral work.

I turn now to the first substantive chapters of this dissertation, where, through my review of the literature on political support so far, I identify the need for a more in-depth, systemic understanding and empirical analysis of political support for which a more elaborate and dedicated data collection instrument is necessary (as is now possible with the PCSP).

> "Indeed, it is a remarkable irony that just at the moment when liberal democracy has defeated its enemies on the battlefields of ideology and politics, many people in the established democracies believe that their own political institutions are faltering, not flourishing. The larger issue today, at the outset of the twenty-first century, is not whether democracy will survive or indeed, whether it is in crisis, but how well leaders and institutions in democracies can *meet* the *expectations* and *needs* of their citizens" (Pharr and Putnam 2000, xviii – emphasis added))[38]

Chapter 2: Mapping Support in the Political System

Introduction

Over half a century of research beginning with Easton in the 1950s has brought us to important crossroads in the academic field when it comes to how we will continue to analyze and seek to better understand public perceptions of their political systems. Do we continue to seek out broad-gauged cross-country generalizations, while only accounting for a limited number of within-country individual-level variations? When we seek to dig more intently within democratic societies, do we continue to focus on deep investigations isolated to specific areas (or objects) within the political system? Or has it come time that we learn from each of these approaches, while also seeking to reframe our inquiries and analyses? Can we take what we have gleaned so far, but also step back and appreciate a systemic view of the state of support, returning to the roots that Easton originally intended? This is the crossroads at which I see my work fitting. To justify this, the next two chapters will delve deeper into the lessons that I believe we can learn from the research carried out to date (both in terms of what political support is, how it has come to be understood, and what some of the most common drivers are of variations in system support), while also laying out why I think a new systemic (holistic), yet also granular, approach for understanding and measuring support for objects in the political system is necessary and due.

This academic crossroads, I believe, also coincides with important crossroads in the "real" world. Peaceful and stable democracies, such as Canada's, increasingly embrace non-traditional forms of political activity, through petition signing, protests, boycotts, and even occupations, as acceptable and desirable ways to express voice (Corrigall-Brown 2011; Jakobsen and Listhaug 2014)[39]. And while shifting patterns of participation through protest or other nonconventional

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[38] For another important viewpoint on the question of whether or not democracy is "in crisis", see Jean Bethke Elshtain's (1995) opening statement on *Democracy's Precarious Present* emerging from the 1993 Massey Lectures: "No one can say we live in uninteresting times! Even as nations and peoples formerly under the domination of the Soviet empire proclaim their political ideals in language that inspired and secured the founding of Western democracies…our own democracy…is faltering, not flourishing. More and more, we Americans confront one another as aggrieved groups rather than as free citizens…How will the drama of democracy be played out in the twenty-first century?" (3).

[39] According to my analysis of the World Values Surveys data for Canada (R. F. Inglehart et al. 2020), between 1982 and 2020, the tendency to either engage in or consider engaging in alternative political activities has risen significantly across the board. While a majority of respondents in 1982 expressed that they had either signed a petition (62%) or would consider signing a petition (27%), by 2020, the likelihood of doing so still went up by nearly 10% over the 40-year period (in 2020 95% of respondents stated that they had, in fact, signed a petition). Even more striking are the findings on other types of engagement including joining a boycott (15% in 1982 said they had done it, by 2020 this increased to 28%), attending a demonstration (the proportion who said they had done it doubled from 13% to 26%), or joining an unofficial strike (those who claimed to have done this went from just under 5% in 1982, to just over 13% by 2020 – while the likelihood for respondents to say that they "would never" consider engaging in such an activity decreased over 25% over this period).

political activities are not necessarily bad for democracy[40], we may need to be more concerned if they are replacing conventional institutional forms of engagement (Corrigall-Brown 2012).

Indeed, across democracies, just like here in Canada where voter turnout remains very low (Pammett and LeDuc 2003; Blais et al. 2004; Cross 2010; Howe 2010a; Hager 2021), traditional avenues for influencing government decisions or voicing concerns no longer seem to be exclusively relied upon as the 'go-to' form of political involvement (Dalton 2015; Solijonov 2016, 9; Ortiz et al. 2022). For instance, we may perhaps need to be more concerned if, rather than influencing just governments, engagement starts to impede on the healthy lives and livelihoods of other citizens (Lanza 2019; Xu and Guo 2023). In some recent extreme cases here in Canada, for example, feelings of anger, resentment, and disappointment with government policies and performance went so far as to drive thousands of concerned citizens to occupy Parliament hill and surrounding residential and commercial areas, to get these dissenting voices heard[41]. Meanwhile, even the governments' responses[42] to these expressions of discontent seemed to some to be rather out of touch with what the Canadian public wants or deems appropriate (Osman and Fraser 2022; Rouleau 2023). Notably, when the federal government went so far as to impose the Emergencies Act (Deachman 2023; Tasker 2022a) in response to the freedom convoy in Ottawa, they faced intense public criticisms on the basis that this reaction served to further override the basic rights and freedoms of Canadian citizens (Tumilty 2022; Vieira 2022; Zimonjic 2022)[43]. Of course, this is but one example of how Canadians have taken to alternative means of expressing their discontent with governments, and where governments have fallen short or been inconsistent in their responses (Ljunggren 2020; The Canadian Press 2020; Coates 2021b; Robbins 2022). As Coates (Coates 2021a, 1) states it: "Canada enters this current age of unrest weakened in its capacity and willingness to respond and unsure of how to cope with an assertive citizenry".

Sitting at this crossroads (both in our academic journey to better understand what is ailing democracy, and at this historical time when embracing alternative forms of political engagement is increasingly mainstream – and where government responses to expressions of discontent are perhaps failing), I am concerned that we do not yet have a proper and complete understanding of

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[40] In fact, nonconventional political involvement can be healthy indications of citizens' evolving capacities and interests and have led to important social changes over time (Welzel 2013; for a brief review of the developments in the research on protest, see Jakobsen and Listhaug 2014).

[41] As I mentioned in the previous chapter, I will not test this link between support and unconventional political participation directly in this study, but I do think it is important that it be mentioned as a potential outcome that seems increasingly relevant and potentially resulting from unidentified political support issues that are being allowed to fester or reactions to system's deafness to public will and demands. This said, to determine the disconnect I will be investigating a variety of evaluations of the system's performance and responsiveness as well as the effects that perceptions of the failures of authorities and institutions can have on commitments to democracy as a way of governing and attachment to local, provincial, and national political communities.

[42] Other unconventional ways in which governments have acted in recent years, which, to a certain extent seek to override the public voice and impose top-down decision-making on citizens, include the use of constitutional tools like the notwithstanding clause (applied either pre-emptively or not), or through the passing of borderline authoritarian measures such as the "super-strong-mayor legislation" in the form of minority rule (see, for instance, Keenan (2022b)). See also his discussion of a matching trend among Canadians in supporting a "strongman system" (2022a)

[43] There are, of course, different opinions about the lawfulness of the protests and the appropriateness of the government's response (Graham-Harrison and Lindeman 2022; Stelkia 2022). The point here is to suggest that triggers, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and government responses to it, may be igniting fires in the eyes of Canadians not just because of the reactions themselves but because of more pervasive and underlying systemic discontent – feelings that "enough is enough".

what the public actually want, what specific parts of the political system they deem to be most problematic, and how they perceive the political system to be responding to their opinions and demands. And, while the literature emerging over these last sixty-plus years have pointed to a variety of issues that may be plaguing our democratic political systems (how to fix low voter turnout or disengagement[44], how we might start to improve trust and confidence in our political system[45], or how we might improve citizens' general satisfaction with democracy[46]), there are no clear and definitive conclusions about whether our democracies are actually "in crisis", or on solutions for tackling the underlying stressors that might be driving these issues as opposed to dealing individually with each trigger[47].

   The key reason for this, I believe, is that, in our efforts to understand each of these important issues (and others) on their own, we have lost sight of the big picture. Thus, by focusing in-depth on specific issues or areas within the broader political system, our attention has drifted away from any careful full-system analyses and interpretations. Thus, to remedy this lack of systemic understanding of political support, I believe it is crucial that we seek more careful and in-depth mappings of political support problems before attempting to draw any further generalizable conclusions.

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[44] For a general review of the literature on voter turnout and its causes, see for instance Harder and Krosnick (2008). This topic has been studied extensively both in other contexts (to list just a few: Abramson and Aldrich 1982; Adams and Merrill 2003; Fieldhouse and Cutts 2008; 2012; M. D. Atkinson and Fowler 2014; Baekgaard et al. 2014; Blais 2014; Dassonneville and Hooghe 2017; Birch 2018; Bhatti and Hansen 2019; Brugarolas and Miller 2021) and here in Canada (for example: Milner 1997; Pammett and LeDuc 2003; Archer 2003; Howe 2006; Nakhaie 2006; Johnston, Matthews, and Bittner 2007; Nakhaie 2008; Siaroff 2009; Goodman et al. 2011; Couture, Breux, and Bherer 2014; Siaroff and Wesley 2015; Henderson and McEwen 2015; Elections Canada 2018; Goodman et al. 2018; Blais et al. 2019; Dabin, Daoust, and Papillon 2019; Garnett 2019; Blais and Hortala-Vallve 2021; Garnett and Grogan 2021; Hager 2021; Andrews and Pruysers 2022; Armstrong, Alcantara, and Kennedy 2023).

[45] For illustrative purposes, searches of social science databases for articles on the topics of "political trust", "vertical trust", or "trust in government" reveal thousands of results with steady increases in the number of records published on the topic over the last 20 years. Many major contributions to our understanding of political trust have been made, especially when it comes to the relevance of studying political trust as an important component of the democratic political system (for just a few examples, see Citrin 1974; S. Feldman 1983; Williams 1985; M. J. Hetherington 1998; Plasser 1999; Pharr 2000; Kaina 2004; Marien and Hooghe 2011; Scheidegger and Staerkle 2011; Morgner 2013; Karmis and Rocher 2018; Devine 2022; Zhang, Li, and Yang 2022). Several have also focused investigations on the dynamics of trust here in Canada either broadly speaking or focusing on specific contexts (Bilodeau and Nevitte 2003; É. Bélanger and Nadeau 2005; J. Crête, Pelletier, and Couture 2006; Worthy 2010; Lafuente, Rojas, and Agosta 2012; Neville and Weinthal 2016; Hwang 2017; Norrevik 2020; Lachapelle et al. 2021; Norquay 2022; Weinberg 2023)

[46] I will draw on some of the many studies that explore this topic throughout this dissertation. Some major contributions have been made over the last several decades to our understanding of variations in satisfaction in other countries and in comparative contexts (for example: C. J. Anderson and Guillory 1997; Canache, Mondak, and Seligson 2001; Kim 2009; Foa et al. 2020; Valgarðsson and Devine 2022) as well as here in Canada (Blais and Gélineau 2007; Nevitte and Kanji 2002; Nadeau 2002; Henderson 2008; Thomas, Loewen, and MacKenzie 2013; Thorlakson 2015; Kanji and Tannahill 2017a; A. Parkin 2020; Ridge 2022; Daoust, Ridge, and Mongrain 2023), the implications and drivers of such variations (Ezrow and Xezonakis 2011; Kumlin and Esaiasson 2012; Ariely 2013; Beaudonnet et al. 2014; Bosch and Orriols 2014; Kolln and Aarts 2015; Ceron and Memoli 2016; André and Depauw 2017; Blais, Morin-Chassé, and Singh 2017; Christmann and Torcal 2017; Dahlberg and Linde 2018; Plescia, Daoust, and Blais 2021), and the measurement and reporting of the concept (C. J. Anderson 2002; Linde and Ekman 2003; Poses and Revilla 2022; Valgarðsson and Devine 2022; Cutler, Nuesser, and Nyblade 2023; S. P. Singh and Mayne 2023 just to name a few).

[47] I will elaborate in the next few pages on this idea of underlying stressors versus individual triggers (Lawrence and Homer-Dixon 2023).

The Scope of the Political Support "Problem"

I am not alone in feeling fairly certain that Canadian democracy has strong foundations that continue to be reinformed and strengthened over time (see, for instance, the views of the many contributors in Kanji and Tannahill 2024-forthcoming). I am less certain, however, about whether the functioning of our democracy, as perceived and determined by its citizens, is also on the right track. That is – for a variety of plausible reasons, some of which have been sporadically pointed to and probed in the cross-national literature over-time – it is not clear whether our democratic system continues to be strongly supported (or legitimated) by its citizenry (Howe and Northup 2000; Dalton 2004a). Indeed, as I explained in the introduction, the cross-country and cross-time evidence does not provide the kind of big picture account of political support that we would need to come to any definitive conclusions on the general state of support with any certainty[48].

More specifically, as far as I can tell, the literature addressing the political support question has not always unfolded and resulted in neat and tidy results, nor have the results of investigations into public opinions about political systems (either cross-nationally or in the Canadian case) yet provided any big picture accountings or syntheses[49]. This conclusion, from my review of the work done on political support, makes me all the more concerned that we may not yet have a proper and complete grasp or understanding of what may be going wrong or of exactly how citizens (whether internationally or in this case of Canadians and Quebecers) actually *perceive* their democracies to be working overall.

Indeed, it is quite plausible that our democratic political system is suffering from prominent stress points that might even be on their way to becoming potential breaking points. And the danger is that we may not yet be aware of the extent of them, or at least, nowhere close to understanding how we might go about addressing them in a way that can have the maximum impact. The risk, therefore, is that if we do nothing, or shirk the responsibility of probing the situation well enough, there may be serious repercussions in the making if these pressures are allowed to persist and perpetuate. Worse still, without closer attention and understanding, we risk that these pressures will eventually spiral into more frequent patterns of uncontrollable civic eruptions, requiring more frequent heavy-handed retaliation by the state to quell uprising, without necessarily even satisfactorily resolving the issue which is to blame for the eruption in the first place (Coates 2021a). Further still, the longer term and longer lasting dangers in all of this, are that any unidentified or unresolved stressors that do exist, which continue to simmer over time, could inevitably have even more negative, and possibly even irreparable consequences for the perceived legitimacy and functioning of our democracy down the road.

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[48] Some initiatives have started to pop up, including, notably, the work being done by the Strengthening Canadian Democracy Project at Simon Fraser University (Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue 2019). The stated general goal of this initiative "is to test intervention strategies that could have a measureable impact on the commitment Canadians have to democracy as shown through their participation in democratic processes and activities, the value they attribute to democratic institutions, and their support for the underlying principles of democracy" (p.11). With a focus more on interventions, their work can of course overlap and in the future may even be complimentary to my own.

[49] This is not to discount the vast amount of work that has been done in Canada when it comes to evaluating democracy. For instance, one need only look to works such as the Canadian Democratic Audit (Cross 2010) for examples of the kinds of important and influential accountings of democracy in this country. This said, when it comes to citizens' political support specifically, I have yet to find any such comparable reviews – certainly nothing that comes close to figuring out support across all aspects of the political system, let alone across the important and diverse levels of government and distinct groups present in this context.

Lawrence and Homer-Dixon (2023) pointed out in their recent piece in the Globe and Mail, in the context of raging wildfires and the global pandemic:

> "a trigger event can't start a crisis by itself; some underlying stress or stresses must also be operating. And our leaders should pay far more attention to these stresses, because they're ultimately far more important. Triggers are almost always short-lived events that happen in a specific locality – lightning is a prime example – and their occurrence at a specific time and place is rarely predictable. Stresses, on the other hand, are long-term processes such as climate heating that usually unfold slowly across large regions or even the whole planet; their trajectories are generally measurable with hard data, which means their magnitude can often be predicted – with some certainty – well into the future."

If we apply this to the context of democracy, we can draw similar conclusions. If, for instance, our research (and resulting reforms and policy initiatives) continue to focus only on triggers, such as declining voter turnout or shifting patterns of interpersonal or political trust, as areas of focus for policy change or intervention, without stepping back and observing the bigger picture – one that accounts for evaluations of the political system at all levels of government, that looks at assessments of each system object responsible for the delivery of public outputs to citizens – some of the stresses that may someday truly endanger democracy (or create a true crisis), may go entirely unnoticed.

As I have already outlined in Chapter 1, my goal here is not to provide a conclusion on *all* factors that may be stressing democratic systems, or to yet prescribe specific solutions for how to fix the democratic crisis. However, I do believe that it is only with a deeper understanding of perceptions of objects within the system (to start) – a full system check-in that starts by at least parcelling out or identifying all the areas within the political system where stressors may be manifesting – that we can begin (later) to figure out how these stressors, measured through perceptions, are linked to changing political behavior, shifting patterns of participation or social cohesion, rising unrest or other important and dire consequences.

I begin the first phase of this exercise by providing more details as to what the literature suggests so far when it comes to the state of political support and what pieces of the complex puzzle we should focus on when carrying out investigations into the political support "problem" (or the stresses that may be systematically present and possibly going unnoticed or understudied). I should note that my review of the literature (given the volume of studies that exist), proceeds in a way that outlines general cross-study themes and findings[50], rather than identifying the many specific findings of a variety of individual studies[51].

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[50] Having conducted the research on this topic for the dissertation, looking back I now feel that compiling my review of the literature into a meta-analysis of political support studies (all the ways in which support has been discussed, the countries in which it has been observed, and the measures used to assess it) would be extremely useful in further illustrating the disparate nature of studies on political support conducted so far. This is, therefore, something that I am now working on and that I hope to complete over the next several months. Some recent scholars have conducted meta-analyses looking at specific relationships like trust and government performance (Zhang, Li, and Yang 2022) or the potential outcomes of variations in political trust (Devine 2022), but none have provided a meta-analysis of the study of political support from a systemic lens. This said, some authors have provide useful reviews of how the political support literature has broadly evolved since Easton, include Norris (for example: 1999a; 2011) and Dalton (2004a; 2020). While my review does not provide a meta-analysis of all support studies, in Appendix A1, I do provide a broad overview of all the indicators that I have come across being used to measure support and several of the major surveys that use them.

[51] Although I do often highlight certain specific findings as examples. Also, in Chapter 5, I present my own analyses of the data collected by other scholars who have published in this field and have contributed to the themes that I present here.

Why Political Support Matters and How it has been Assessed

Democracy is often set on a pedestal as being a beacon among different types of political systems and Canada often stands out as a shining example among the rest (Freedom House 2020b; Varieties of Democracy 2020; Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2022; Tannahill, Kanji, and Courchesne 2023)[52]. Yet, as a system of governance administered by "the people" and intended to serve the interests of the people, when it fails to meet the needs and demands of those people, the theory leads us to expect that the system may eventually begin to experience some stress and may even begin to lose some degree of legitimacy, be it gradually, over time (Easton 1975; Kornberg and Clarke 1983; Rogowski 1983; Nye 1999; Clarke, Kornberg, and Wearing 2000; Dalton 2004a)[53]. Moreover, in representative democracies, where responsibility for management is delegated to political authorities to do the work on behalf of citizens, the perceptions of citizens continue be the *core* focus of empirical investigations, as their opinions of the representation they receive and their political actions as a result, ultimately give the system its legitimacy[54], or take it away (Verba 2006; Kriesi 2013; van Ham et al. 2017; Linde and Peters 2020). Consequently, the conventional literature on democracy places a great deal of responsibility and onus on the shoulders of citizens, as co-owners (Shultz 2002)[55] of their democracies, to participate in and contribute to these democracies, to abide by their norms and rules, and to have a stake in their survival and success (Almond and Verba 1963; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Hiley 2006; Bolzendahl and Coffé 2013; Klingemann 2014; Dalton and Welzel 2014; Dalton 2015; Fung 2015). All of this is to say that when it comes to determining the state or health of a democracy, focusing on citizens and trying to better gauge and understand how they feel about their political system and processes, seems inherently pivotal. But where exactly should we start? That is, where does the literature's cumulated wisdom direct me to initially point my investigation?

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[52] In Chapter 5, I will refer in more depth to some of the objective measures used to evaluate democracies around the world and where Canada places amongst them.

[53] This said, with so many different ways to measure legitimacy, in so many different contexts, no clear systematic demonstration has yet to be made that democratic legitimacy is in steady decline (Kriesi 2013), at least within the realm of what citizens think – ignoring any broader normative assessments of what democracy should or could be.

[54] One specific example of how political support is used as an indicator of legitimacy is found in the empirical literature in texts such as Cambridge University's Centre for the Future of Democracy *Global Satisfaction with Democracy Report 2020* "This report examines one indicator of democratic legitimacy – satisfaction with democracy" (p. 4). Kriesi (2013) also refines political support as a measure of legitimacy based on public assessments of the democratic system in four categories: input-side procedural legitimacy (through satisfaction with the quality of representative democracy), output-side procedural legitimacy (in the form of satisfaction with the quality of governance), input-side partisan legitimacy (measured as satisfaction with electoral outcomes), and output-side outcome legitimacy (tapped based on citizens' satisfaction with policy performance).

[55] By this I don't mean owners *in* democracy, where a significant amount of research has focused (i.e. work on class, capitalism, liberalism, etc.). I am referring here to owners *of* democracy. I am not, either, referring to democracy in the way that some have identified it as a "commodity" to be traded or whose benefits may be pitched to citizens for their buy-on (Najslova 2014). Rather, in this context, where democracy is already well established and purportedly here to stay, I am not interested in any framing of democracy to potential buyers and owners – I assume that, as citizens of democracy, we have already bought it. That is not to say, of course, that we may not be questioning this ownership – in fact, as will be shown later, not all citizens are happy with their "property" and some may even wish to trade it in for something else! Quite simply, I intend ownership here simply in the sense that all citizens are proprietors of democracy with a stake in its persistence. While not often, the use of the term "owner" in this way has been used by some, especially in the context of encouraging citizens to make change or to take control when contexts seem to indicate that democracy is failing in some way (see for instance, Shultz 2002).

The answer in representative democracies, begins with the basic understanding that most citizens, when wrapped up in their daily lives do not directly run (or even have the time or the interest to run) the day-to-day operations of their democracies. That is, they delegate this responsibility, counting instead on their elected representatives and institutions to do the running for them (see, for instance Bowler and Donovan 2002; Christopher Anderson et al. 2005; Marien and Hooghe 2011; Severs and Mattelaer 2014; Bowler 2017). In other words, citizens in representative democracies delegate the responsibility to political authorities and governments to guard the gates of their democracies, to continuously work to improve their quality of lives according to their needs and demands, and to tend to the overall greater good of society (R. Fox 2009; J. Fox and Shotts 2009; Vitali 2021). Of course, these authorities and governments function within the limits of core institutions, such as legislatures, political parties, and the civil service, and according to the system's rules, ostensibly also continually seeking ways to improve the end results (the democratic outputs) for all involved (Schweber 2016; Bello Hutt 2022).

As a result, there are a variety of core focal points that exist within this complex process (i.e., the various political authorities and institutions, the workings (or processes and policies) of democracy, the regime principles, and their overall political communities) that citizens regularly look to, depend on, and presumably continuously assess (and reassess) in different ways (Easton 1975; Kornberg and Clarke 1983; 1992; Dalton 2004a; Norris 1999a; 2011). These focal points, or components of the democratic political system, are identified and referred to in the literature simply as "political objects" and mapping and determining support for these objects is the primary preoccupation of my project. Indeed, it is this dynamic and, perhaps precarious, relationship between citizens (as democracies' key subjects) and each of these most fundamental focal points (or political objects) that figure most prominently among followers of Easton's framework for political analysis as the first place to turn when trying to figure out what may or may not be upsetting representative democracies.

The Nature of Support
To flesh out these ideas further, I turn again to Easton's seminal work on political support, his *Systems Theory* or *Systems Framework* (Easton 1957; 1965b; 1965a; 1975; 1976) and the other studies that have developed and tested this framework over time and in various contexts (Kornberg and Clarke 1983; Rogowski 1983; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Fuchs 1993; Klingemann 1999; Dalton 1999; Nye 1999; Norris 1999b; Nevitte and Kanji 2002; Dalton 2004a; Lu and Dickson 2020).

This important theoretical work has long served as an essential roadmap for scholars of empirical democratic theory[56] to better observe, analyse, and understand democratic political systems and the complex relationship between the governing and the governed. More specifically, Easton's original writings essentially suggested that people distinguish between various political objects when assigning or withholding their political support (Easton 1975)[57]

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[56] Empirical democratic theorists have of course faced a variety of criticisms based often on the failure to consider the normative or ideological components of the democratic concepts, conditions and principles being measured (Skinner 1973). Similarly, legitimacy scholars have also faced such criticisms (Wiesner and Harfst 2022). A vast body of literature has emerged in both of these fields of study that, thanks to the scrutiny that it has received, has adapted and evolved our understanding and approaches.

[57] There is also debate about whether citizens can and do in fact distinguish between objects, see for example, the discussions in response to Kornberg, Clarke and LeDuc's *Some Correlates of Regime Support in Canada* (1978; on the debate, see M. M. Atkinson, Coleman, and Lewis 1980; Kornberg, Clarke, and Leduc 1980).

and that they are more likely to withhold this support when they perceive that their political system is not delivering on their needs and demands via the outputs generated by that system.

In essence, both Easton's pioneering work and the lengthy stream of literature that has followed, suggest that the *nature* of support can vary significantly. These studies suggest not only that people observe and assess political objects within their democratic political systems differently, but also that these perceptions are quite sophisticated and thoughtful (Citrin et al. 1975; Fuchs 1993; Klingemann 1998; Nicholson and Howard 2003; Dalton 2004a; Nevitte and White 2012), and that such perceptions translate into varying degrees of support for the *most specific* objects (namely political authorities and institutions) to the *most diffuse* (including outlooks toward the workings of the political system, beliefs in the principles of democracy and orientations toward political communities in the form of feelings of attachment to "Quebec" or "Canada", for instance). The latter, Easton argued, are likely to be more enduring given that they are more likely to be affectively or emotionally grounded and less susceptible to changes in evaluations of day-to-day political performance (Easton 1965b; Kornberg and Clarke 1983; Clarke, Kornberg, and Stewart 1984; Dalton 2004a)[58].

Over the years, various attempts at further clarifying and substantiating Easton's original framework have added considerably to our understanding of public perceptions toward their political systems and the various components present in it. For instance, both the conceptual measures and empirical indicators of support for different political objects (as perceived by citizens in different democracies) have been tested, retested and verified (for instance, S. Feldman 1983; Norris 1999b; Pharr and Putnam 2000; Canache, Mondak, and Seligson 2001; C. J. Anderson 2002; Linde and Ekman 2003; Fiket and Memoli 2012; Poses and Revilla 2022). Moreover, both the basic list of political objects prescribed by Easton and his theoretically specified measurement approaches have evolved.

For instance, in the more contemporary literature, the concept of support for the political regime, as originally outlined by Easton, has been expanded to incorporate outlooks toward different workings of democracy and more direct support for broader regime principles (for example: Klingemann 1998; Linde and Ekman 2003) or specific attributes of democracies (LeDuc and Pammett 2014)[59]. Moreover, in some of our own recent work, my supervisor and I have helped to further unpack this "so-called" amorphous cluster of the "workings of democracy" into a variety of more tangible "sub-objects" (as they pertain to the Canadian case) that can now be more directly observed and tested (Kanji and Tannahill 2017a).

Furthermore, it has now become more common practice to actually mine for and distinguish between potential variations in purely affective (and abstract) versus more evaluative

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[58] With repeated performance failures, however, negativity toward the actions of authorities can have longer lasting effects on perceptions of more diffuse objects such as political institutions more generally (for empirical investigations and discussions of the extent of this effect, see for instance A. H. Miller 1974; Citrin 1974; Williams 1985; Nicholls and Picou 2013; Parker, Parker, and Towner 2014).

[59] Although, analyses of these direct assessments of democracy remain rather rare. In LeDuc and Pammett's work on this for example, they draw on the Samara 2012 Citizens' Survey and report Canadians' satisfaction with a range of attributes all falling within what they call "democratic performance". And while they do not explicitly report these findings as tapping support for different system objects, the data do reveal differences in support for these various objects: from regime principles such as "freedom of expression", to assessments of institutions based on measures such as "governments are honest" and "parties offer alternatives" or evaluations of authorities through indicators tapping views of politicians, including "politicians are accountable" or "politicians keep promises". These attributes also include much more general assessments that do not specify any particular system object, these include for instance "people are treated equally", "public interest served", and "little corruption in politics".

(and empirically determined) types (or forms) of support (for instance, Almond and Verba 1963; Fuchs 1993; Klingemann 1998; 1999; Warren 1999; Dalton 2004a). Dalton (2004a, 23), for example, after drawing initially on Almond and Verba's original work (1963), describes the distinction between affective and evaluative support as follows. Affective outlooks can be thought of as the broad "acceptance or identification with an object" while evaluative orientations are in effect the more direct "judgement about the performance or appropriateness of the object". Likewise, Klingemann (1998, 8) characterizes affective orientations, as an expressive attitude, one that "is focused not on the performance of the object…but rather on certain attributes of the object itself. It is, in a sense, the 'real' type of diffuse identification."

The literature has also added that affective orientations, because of their inherent composition, may be more "deep-seated" and "relatively impervious to change" (Muller and Jukam 1977; Dalton 2004a, 23; L. McLaren 2012, 165) and may be expressed through "feelings" such as 'pride', 'patriotism', 'like or dislike', moral assessments such as 'good or bad'[60], or a general determination of 'support for'. Thus, affective orientations can be said to be distinct from evaluative, instrumental assessments, which require a greater degree of reasoning in the mind of the individual doing the assessing. This is not to say, of course, that affective assessments are not built on some degree or type of evaluation, rather it is to say that they may be interpreted as a more underlying condition that is potentially more stable over time and that, theoretically, may emerge or change more gradually as a result of iterative and recurring evaluations.

Unfortunately, despite increasing the scope of our understanding of support through an expansion of the objects being observed, advances in measurement, and distinctions between assessments, the multitude of studies that explore perceptions of citizens toward the various objects in their political system have also, in some ways, further muddied this understanding. It seems for one that the field continues to suffer from the same lack of specificity in object definition that some have been criticized for in the past (M. M. Atkinson, Coleman, and Lewis 1980; Kornberg, Clarke, and Leduc 1980), where the same terminology is used to refer to different objects[61] or where distinctions between affective or evaluative forms of assessment are not made (Dalton 2004a). Meanwhile, the field is further complicated by investigations into support for specific political objects that fail to directly situate themselves as making a direct contribution to the field of work on political support, or even referencing Easton's founding

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[60] It should be noted that Klingemann also includes a third attitude mode, the "moral" attitude. This he equates with legitimacy: "the moral mode incorporates the idea of propriety. It is the sense that the status of the political…[object] is a matter of appropriateness, or that it is right that things should be as they are, or that the investiture of office is as things should be – that they are legitimate. The instrumental mode rests upon explicit or implicit means-ends calculations" (8). In this project, because legitimacy is considered a potential consequence of citizens assessments of objects in the political system, I will not employ this third attitude mode as a measure of political support in the same way. Rather, here I determine the act of *giving* support in any form as giving legitimacy to the system. The moral determination of the legitimacy of the system and all its parts in the form of "appropriateness", I believe, cannot be provided by the various conclusions of this study alone. However, by the end, I do think I will help to bring us at least one step closer to answering such a moral quandary as to whether *this* particular system, functioning in *this* particular way, is indeed as it should be or if there are some objects within it that need to change (at least according to Canadians from the data derived from the PCSP surveys).

[61] In Kornberg, Clarke and LeDuc (1978), for example, the authors designate their study as investigating regime support while actually measuring feelings about the Canadian government. Throughout Chapter 6, when laying out my own measures to assess support for each object, I also refer more specifically to the various ways in which support for each object has been discussed in other studies (see also Appendix A1 for a summary of support measures).

political support concepts[62]. By "mapping" political support below[63] I hope to help clarify some of this murkiness. I do this by briefly outlining each of the key political objects within the systems framework (authorities, institutions, the regime, and the community) that require attention as well as some of the major expectations we might derive when it comes to citizen support for each object according to what other studies have found so far.

Mapping Political Support

Figure 2.1 captures a variant of the more advanced conceptual framework that is now commonly adhered to by many scholars of political support (such as Norris 1999a; 2011) and that was originally founded on the pioneering "model" put forth by Easton as early as the 1950s (1957, 384). This particular version is my attempt at depicting the cumulative work from several important contributors to the definition and analysis of political support (Parsons and Shils 1951; Almond and Verba 1963; Loewenberg 1971; Muller and Jukam 1977; Rogowski 1983; Fuchs 1993; Klingemann 1998; 1999; Dalton 1999; 2004a, just to name a few). What is of primary importance for us here is that this model clearly lays out the key points of focus for my analysis of the scope of political support, which includes each of the objects of political support as they have been discussed, tested and retested, and adapted over the years.

The core objects of political support (political authorites, political institutions, political regime and political community), as depicted here, are laid out exactly as prescribed by Easton's original theory, on a spectrum from the most specific to the most diffuse (see political system objects from right to left). Although they will not be measured directly in this project, I have also illustrated the outputs derived from the political system (either positive or negative) which represent the inducements that the system produces, such as the various policies, services or benefits made available to citizens, or the political decisions that continue to structure and reshape the political system and affect citizens' lives. The model also outlines the feedback loop, which results from such outputs – in the next chapter I will discuss this influence a little further in the context of the "supply" that citizens perceive from the system, and which subsequently can influence their levels of support. In other words, system outputs (produced by the system's objects) can feed back into the political system through the effect these outputs have on the public. The public's reactions are thus shaped and reshaped and expressed through new or changing demands and increased or decreased support.

To represent the many other influences on the political system (such as the global environment within which it exists or other external factors such as existing social structures or foreign influences) I have also included "other inputs". The effect of some of these other inputs on the citizens who express or withhold support can also be measured and, to the extent that they are relevant in this model and can be tapped using my data, will be discussed in the next chapter (including various sociocultural characteristics, for instance).

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[62] In Canada, for instance, political support is not always called "political support", even though the study of public opinion toward various political objects in the Canadian political system is rather active (Kornberg and Clarke 1983). The authors suggest that support is addressed in Canada through assessments of attitudes toward federalism, feelings about political parties, cynicism or efficacy toward politicians, or attitudes toward separatism.

[63] As I describe, I am not the first to map support in this way (again, see Dalton 2004a for example). I think it is important to reiterate it again, however, as it has become clear to me that we need to keep referring back to this system framework to keep ourselves focused on the bigger picture and all its parts.

Figure 2.1 – Mapping Political Support from the Literature

This framework is founded in David Easton's analysis of political systems (including taxonomies elaborated by Almond & Verba, Klingemann, Fuchs, Dalton).
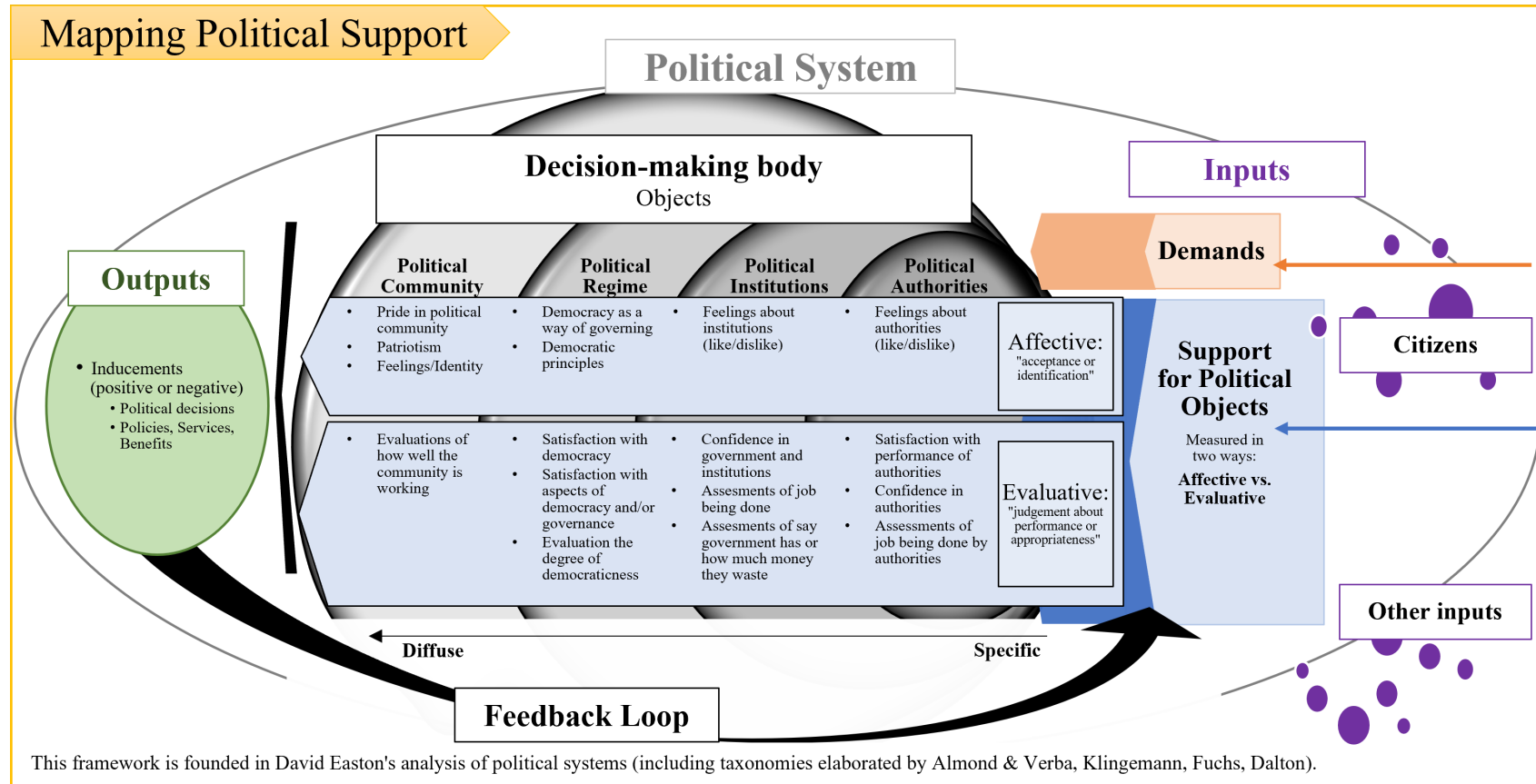
In this model, within the realm of "support for political objects" – the elements of the decision-making body – I have outlined each object and also included some examples of ways that assessments of support for each of these may be operationalized or observed. For instance, the theoretical distinctions between affective and evaluative assessments of political institutions might be observed in the difference between measures tapping degrees in citizens' confidence in governments (Johnston 1986; A. H. Miller and Listhaug 1990; Nye 1997; Dogan 1997) or parliaments (Klingemann 1999; Cook and Gronke 2005; Magalhaes 2006; Kim 2007), which try to get at evaluative assessments of the public's confidence levels, versus those that attempt to measure more affective orientations, such as how much one likes or dislikes an institution[64].

When it comes to trends in evaluative versus affective measures of institutional support, some cross-national conclusions emerge depending on the study. Major evidence reveals, for example, that there have been important cross-time declines on evaluative measures such as confidence in institutions (Dalton 2004a)[65]. Others have shown more recently that some states have actually seen growing levels of institutional support (Norris 2011)[66]. Meanwhile still others demonstrate that variations in institutional support depend on which institution is being observed, whether parliament, courts, the civil service or other non-system institutions (Nevitte and White 2012 show, for example, that there are no clear trends in support for political institutions, but there have been observable declines in support for non-system institutions)[67]. On affective measures of institutional support, meanwhile, the cross-national data that Dalton reports show a general decline in support across most contemporary democracies, including Canada (Dalton 2004a, 33). This said, the measure used to conclude declining affective support taps only support for political parties generally, using partisanship (through party attachment)[68] as a proxy for political support.

When it comes to evidence of support for authorities, questions used to tap such support in different contexts are ever more varied. In fact, many studies even brush over the importance of

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[64] Affective assessments of institutions are far less prevalent except insofar as scholars use like/dislike measures to tap partisanship. As Caruana et al. (2015) point out, party support can be measured using indicators that tap affective support for parties and can be interpreted as either positive (like) or negative (dislike) partisanship. This particular indicator of affective party support has been tapped extensively by the Canadian Election Studies over its many waves, results on these indicators are often used to measure the degree of polarization in Canadian politics between partisans (Santos 2019; Johnston 2023). In other contexts, such indicators have also been questioned as to their ability to fully tap affective polarization, suggesting that polarization measures should also tap feelings about other partisans (see Gidron, Sheffer, and Mor 2022). In Chapter 6 (Figure 6.1 – Political Support – Variations to Expect and Others to Explore), I summarize, where they exist, some of the conclusions that I have drawn from the literature on variations that have been empirically observed on evaluative or affective support for each of the objects, starting with the most specific objects: institutions and authorities.

[65] Dalton (2004a, 38) analyzes data on confidence in parliament from the WVS starting in 1981, as well as a few other data sources in different countries (such as the Canadian Institution of Public Opinion from 1979 to 1996). He also provides results on a variety of other "confidence" in government indicators which vary across countries and are drawn from national election studies carried out in each (p.29). For Canada, he uses the CES and responses to the statement "Government doesn't care". He compares this to other questions in other countries, such as results on a question that taps whether respondents "trust government" (asked in Australia, Italy, and the United States).

[66] Norris (2011, 105) draws, for example, on WVS data and looks at trends in confidence from 1981 to 2005 by combining confidence in multiple institutions (governments, armed forces, politics, courts, political parties, parliament and the civil service).

[67] These authors also use WVS data, comparing Canada and the United States specifically to other established democracies.

[68] The party identification questions that Dalton uses for each country are drawn from national election studies in each country as well as the Eurobarometers and one wave of the European Election Study.

evaluating authority support in the context of the system support model suggesting it is "the most limited measure of political support" (Dalton 2004a, 28–30). Others who argue for clear delineation between objects when measuring support and suggest how, among other objects, support for authorities could be tapped, subsequently exclude investigation of support for this particular object from their analyses due to the lack of consistent data that is available to do so (Norris 2011, 43).

When we dig for possible distinctions that exist according to past studies between evaluative and affective support for authorities, it becomes clear that affective measures of support are rarely employed[69] and, where they are, it is done outside of any direct discussion or acknowledgement of their relevance within the broader context of Eastonian-style political support or systems analysis, focusing instead on likeability of leaders as a driver of vote choice[70]. Instead, within the context of the broader systems analyses, the most common indicators used to tap authority support are more evaluative in nature and consist of a variety of performance assessments (for example: A. H. Miller and Wattenberg 1985a; Ruderman 2014).

On these performance evaluations, one thing is quite consistently stated: that "there is clear evidence of a general erosion in support for politicians […] in most advanced industrial democracies" including Canada (Dalton 2004a, 28–30). This "clear" evidence, however, is based (in the Canadian case for example) on only one question that taps authority support through responses to the statement that "MPs lose touch". In other countries, the "comparable" questions that are interpreted generally as 'trust' in authorities, range not only in the concept that is actually being measured (whether trust or something else), but also in who is being evaluated (whether more specific, such as MPs, or national politicians, or far more general, such as politicians or even leaders)[71].

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[69] One example of affective assessment of party leaders can be derived based on feelings of like or dislike toward certain politicians, such as party leaders (Bittner 2011).

[70] Affective assessments of like or dislike (or of approval or disapproval), are commonly reported in the media (A. M. Jones 2023) or by pollsters in the leadup to elections or even during political scandals (Nanos Surveys 2019). Often also, judgements of like or dislike are actually derived from questions that tap evaluative assessments or interpreted based on responses to questions about political behavior such as "would you vote for…" (see, for example Fournier 2020; McKelvey and DeJong 2021). In the CES, affective feelings about leaders have been traditionally tapped using questions such as "And what do you think of the party leaders?" where respondents are asked to rate individuals on a 0 to 10 or 0 to 100 thermometer scale. Likeability questions of this kind, in the Canadian context, are thus most often employed to determine whether feelings about a party's leader may explain or predict vote choice for that party or used to figure out what specific characteristics of leaders are most attractive to voters (see, for example Brown et al. 1988; Gidengil et al. 2012).

[71] For example, the results (Dalton 2004a, 29) compare survey responses that tap assessments of specific politicians such as "Federal MPs honest", "MPs lose touch" and "Trust national politicians", to much broader authority categories such as "Politicians" or "Leaders" with statements like "Politicians don't care", "Politicians trustworthy", "Politicians knowledgeable" or even "Leaders crooked". Later in his book, Dalton also creates some of the most elaborated measures of support for each political object (using responses on multiple questions) to tap general assessments of each object. His measure of authorities, however, although assembled based on strong factor loadings of responses spread over the four objects, still combine indicators within the "authorities" category which may not necessarily be direct reflections of evaluations of authorities per se, but rather evaluations of the institution of government or politics and cynicism toward the political system more generally. More specifically, his factor scores for the authority support dimension consist of only one question that is clearly an authority assessment: "satisfaction with the incumbent", but also factors which can only be considered to be assessments of authorities if we really stretch our understanding of the concept of *authority* support: "rate political system today", "country run for benefit of all", and "extent of corruption" (Dalton 2004c, 59–60).

LeDuc and Pammett (2014, 34) in the Canadian context use similar authority evaluations to report on "dissatisfaction with specific aspects of the Canadian political system". These include questions, again from Samara 2012, that tap perceptions of MP performance generally as well as the performance of the respondent's own MP. Their conclusions from this and results on Canadians views on the "government handling of [a specific] issue" and the representation of individual interests, provide foundations for their conclusion that "in a political system that, by comparative standards, should be rated high on accountability, Canadians do not see their politicians as sufficiently accountable [whereas when they] rate the performance of a number of different institutions and processes, representation does somewhat better" (p. 37-38). Ruderman (2014), in the same volume, provides more detail to elaborate on satisfaction with MPs in particular, drawing on satisfaction with the specific roles or actions of MPs, and digging into what best explains satisfaction with these particular authorities (providing separate analyses of the effects of socio-demographics, as well as knowledge and media attention)[72].

Turning next to the more diffuse levels, several scholars predict that support is most likely to be strongest and most stable as we move into assessments of the system's regime and the political community most broadly (Easton 1965b; Kornberg and Clarke 1983; Clarke, Kornberg, and Stewart 1984; Dalton 2004a). The reason being that, while orientations toward political leaders and representatives as well as political institutions might vary from time-to-time with periodic changes in governments and their day-to-day performance, more affectively grounded attachments to community and overall beliefs in the core principles of democracy, especially, are likely to remain quite stable in reasonably well-functioning democracies (Dalton 2004a, 40). In other words, support for specific authorities, who tend to come and go over different terms, is likely to fluctuate and be more variable than more diffuse support for regime principles and political communities, which is likely to be more stable over time (Easton 1975; Kornberg and Clarke 1983; 1992; Dalton 1999).

The findings from cross-national studies of support for the political community, frequently measured as national pride, draw on cross-time evidence to reveal fluctuations, with support over time in some countries increasing while in others it is decreasing. Dalton's findings (2004a, 45), for instance, based on WVS data, reveal that Canada experienced no change from 1981 to 2001 with pride levels remaining among the highest of all countries surveyed, while most other countries experienced important increases in pride levels and only a few (Australia, Japan, Switzerland, and the US) experienced minor drops in national pride. In his most recent presentation of findings from the WVS on community support, Dalton (2020)'s later analysis of WVS data, reveal that while pride in Canada has not drastically increased, the declines in other countries now place Canadian pride among the highest. Despite such declines in other contemporary democracies, however, this particular object (the political community), remains one of the most positively viewed objects in the system. As Norris (2012, 46) describes it, based on measures of "national pride and national identity", "the evidence confirms that nationalism remains strong and relatively stable"(see also, Norris 2011, 107–10).

Yet, depending on the context under study, some investigations have revealed that changes in citizens' feelings of attachment to their political community are not entirely immune to change and that they can and may indeed vary (particularly if community support is measured based on assessments of the community other than just pride or identity). This has been demonstrated

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[72] Petry (2014), also in the same volume, provides an alternative way to assess political authorities by tapping "politicians' promise-keeping performance" based on assessments of the Conservatives and their tendency to keep promises made in their 2011 party platform.

particularly in the Canadian context, especially during heated discussions over Quebec independence, sovereignty association and constitutional reform (Kornberg and Clarke 1983; 1992; Dalton 2004a; Bakvis and Skogstad 2008; Lenard and Simeon 2012). Similarly, the same logic might be applied to expect that there could plausibly be fluctuations in affectively-based community support during periods of elevated western alienation (Berdahl 2021) and around the time of significant events such as the passing of the Alberta Sovereignty Act (Wherry 2022).

Moreover, one added point to make here is that, unlike affective assessments of community, evaluative assessments of community based on general questions that tap how well citizens perceive their communities to be working, at least according to my knowledge, have yet to be properly investigated[73]. Thus, at this stage we know very little about the state of evaluative assessments of this political object, nor do we know much about if or how these assessments may vary over time[74].

Lastly, when it comes to support for the political regime, our cumulative understanding thus far suggests that variations in evaluative assessments of the regime tend, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, given their diffuse nature, to not always be stable. For example, satisfaction with the workings of democracy in both Canada (and elsewhere) have been shown to vary from one study to another (Fuchs 1993; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Norris 1999a; Clarke, Kornberg, and Wearing 2000; Pharr, Putnam, and Dalton 2000; Canache, Mondak, and Seligson 2001; C. J. Anderson 2002; Linde and Ekman 2003) thanks again to the great variety in the types of questions used to tap perceptions of democracy as well as in how even the word "democracy" might be interpreted by respondents[75].

In Dalton (2004a, 40), evaluative assessments of the regime are measured by tapping satisfaction with democracy over time in six European countries from 1973 to 1999 and suggests that "the long-term trend in these opinions is relatively flat". Norris provides an even more sophisticated assessment of regime support by tapping the democratic deficit based on a gap between what citizens think democracy should be (or how important it is to them) and how democratically they think their country is being governed in reality (Norris 2011, 110–14). On this deficit measure, she finds that in all democracies, both young and old, there is a gap between

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[73] The important distinction here is that, although evaluations of objects within the broader community are tapped, evaluations of the workings of the community itself are not asked directly. For example, it can be expected that if citizens are asked about specific institutions, they might provide different responses than if they are asked about the community in general (which comprises each of the authorities, institutions, and system of governing including all its rules, etc.). A distinction between such perceptions is at least worth exploring even if no variations are revealed. Another distinction in evaluations that might be worth considering is how well the public perceive political communities to be working together or against each other (the institutions and authorities within these communities, as well as the communities as a whole). Institutional evaluations of intergovernmental relations are far from missing in the Canadian literature (for example: Painter 1991; D. Cameron and Simeon 2002; Bakvis and Skogstad 2008), however, I have yet to locate analyses that explore these assessments from the perspective of citizens.
[74] While Klingemann (1999) makes reference to evaluative assessments of this political object (through instrumental assessments of the object's "effectiveness") as distinct from other assessment forms (including "moral" assessments of the object's legitimacy and "expressive" attitudes in the form of identity), he does not go on to test this assessment. Likely due, at least in part, to the lack of data available to do so.
[75] See, for instance, Cutler, Nuesser and Nyblade (2023, 2), who draw similar conclusions to mine from their review of the literature that focuses on support for the regime (through cross-national comparisons of satisfaction with democracy): "the field could be called hyper-empirical, with each new study formulating a new model, often including one or two new variables or interactions but not building solidly on a common core of cumulating findings". While I am not empirically cumulating the findings of other studies in this work, I am drawing on these findings to justify the need for greater attention to the system as a whole and detail in our assessments and conclusions on each object (including the regime).

what citizens expect and what they perceive to be receiving, however, they also generally have "relatively positive perceptions of how democracy works". Canada sits at about the mid-range compared to other democracies according to the WVS data she analyzes (Nevitte and White 2012 report similar findings for Canada, using the same data).

And while, many of these studies blame any democratic deficit or issues with democratic regime support on major declines in performance of objects at lower levels, overall, they have suggested that dedication to the idea of democracy itself (a more affectively-based assessment of the regime) seems generally to be well supported. In other words, more affective outlooks toward democracy as a preferred system of governance (for example) have tended to be quite stable and resistant to change. Recent cross-national evidence, however, has revealed some striking findings on this front for most democracies. In fact, alongside their reports of serious declines in evaluations of satisfaction with democracy[76], these scholars have also suggested that (on affective support measures) such as assessments of the desirability of democratic alternatives, through support for other non-democratic systems of rule, may actually be on the rise (Foa and Mounk 2016; Wike et al. 2017; Coughlan 2020).

What is clear from the discussion I have presented up to this point, is that citizens have been both theorized and empirically demonstrated to have a great deal of varied feedback to offer, both evaluatively and affectively speaking, on the spectrum of diffuse to specific political objects that co-exist within their democratic political systems. Moreover, while the research conducted to date has enabled us to advance a fairly sophisticated framework for better understanding and examining citizens' outlooks toward various political objects, the broad-gauged and fairly general cross-national investigations are exactly that, broad-gauged and general.

In essence, because the evidence to date draws on data sources whose primary goals are not necessarily to tap political support from a systemic standpoint – such as national election studies, various social barometers such as the Americas Barometers or EuroBarometers, various general social surveys (such as the International Social Survey), as well as several values surveys including the European Values Surveys and World Values Surveys – major cross-national conclusions on trends that exist are still limited to the questions available in these datasets and to cross-national macro-level differences (see, for instance, one of the broadest cross-dataset compilations to date, presented in Dalton 2004a)[77]. Most notably, "trendless fluctuations" that have been determined as being the most conclusive or decisive finding on the true and complete state of political support (Norris 2011, 241) are based on the evidence that is available and already collected, and on only a handful of comparable support indicators.

Furthermore, although important distinctions are drawn by some scholars in the types of assessments of each object in the political system (either evaluations or affective orientations), and some have reiterated the need for careful analysis of each political object within the system[78], the empirical investigations taken on that apply an Eastonian systems approach to

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[76] Most recent evidence suggests that a large proportion of democracies, Canada included, are increasing falling within a category of countries labelled as "cases of concern", based on citizens' satisfaction with these democracies (Foa et al. 2020, 12).

[77] More recently, contributors to Norris (2011), draw on similar datasets, also bringing in several objective democracy indicators from sources such as Polity IV, Freedom House, and International IDEA.

[78] Norris (Norris 2012, 46) states "the evidence reinforces the conclusion that it is essential to distinguish trends in public attitudes that operate at different levels rather than to treat 'political support' as though it is all of one piece".

presenting and discussing all objects, still generally only focus on a handful of single indicators as examples of types of support for each object (see again, Dalton 2004a; Norris 2011; 2012).

Consider too that there remains still within the realm of investigation, the continued use of and dependence on measures of democracy that have been hugely contested (Canache, Mondak, and Seligson 2001; C. J. Anderson 2002; Linde and Ekman 2003). This includes ostensibly 'objective' measures of democracy determined based on aggregate country-level information (Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2020a; Freedom House 2020a; Varieties of Democracy 2020) that can be more or less useful for gaining a bigger picture understanding of the state of democracy in the world today[79]. On the other hand, individual micro-level measures of democracy that allow for reporting of citizens' evaluations of those democracies are arguably more misleading due to their more subjective and general nature. Such measures include, for instance, indicators that are intended to tap *satisfaction with democracy* (where the level of government is generally not specified nor is the particular aspect of democracy)[80].

In addition to such measures of democracy, there are other common indicators of support at more specific levels which suffer from the same lack of clarity and confusion in their interpretation, such as measures like confidence in government vs. trust in government (Hardin 2002), two words that mean different things but are often used in survey instruments interchangeably. Indeed, in French, there is actually just one word for both trust and confidence (la "confiance") and it is only in the way the term is used in a sentence that allows for any differentiation between two different, however related, concepts (Morgner 2013; Castiglione 2018)[81]. Thus, by using questions that tap orientations toward only one object or that look at only one assessment type (in this case, looking only at evaluative assessment, not affective), that require us to make pretty large assumptions in our interpretations of what these questions are actually reporting, can we really make clear conclusions about the true nature of the political support problem? Surely a more complete and careful mapping of the concepts we are assessing and the questions we use to do so is important[82].

Cross-national studies of support have also demonstrated that, especially when it comes to support for authorities and institutions, given the important institutional and contextual differences between countries, more general measures of specific support, even when available, do not provide the kind of specificity that we might need to properly understand the true scope of support dynamics. For any complete understanding of these dynamics, we would require instead more detailed within-country investigations that span the range of possible objects and assessment types.

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[79] For an extensive overview of some of the many ways in which democracy is measured, see also Herre (2022)

[80] Some of the work that I have done (with my supervisor) in the leadup to completing this dissertation, shows that high support on such general satisfaction measures are not necessarily consistent with a correspondingly high degrees of satisfaction when citizens are asked about specific aspects of democracy (Kanji and Tannahill 2017a).

[81] While I have not found any studies on the methodological differences in tapping trust versus confidence in the context of political support, there are some discussions of the distinctions between these two concepts in other fields such as risk analysis (see for instance: Earle 2010; Siegrist 2010) or in philosophy (see for example: C. Smith 2005) where a distinction between these two concepts is revealed as important due to the varying ways in which problems surrounding trust or confidence may be solved differently depending on which concept is actually to blame. Morgner (2013) provides a review of the ways in which the meanings of these two concepts have evolved and historically been employed, as well as how they might apply to a few examples of political crises. Castiglione (2018) provides refers to the way trust, confidence, and credibility are understood in English, French, Italian and German and the various meanings that each word and its variants may imply.

[82] I will come back to this throughout this project, starting in Chapter 4 (where I explain how I will do this) and Chapter 5 (where I start to lay out the differences that can emerge when questions are asked in different ways).

In short, what is more and more evident from all of this, is that in seeking to better gauge support across the entire political system and all of its objects, we will very likely need to take a more granular approach in our data collection and analyses in order to help sort this puzzle out and propel our understanding forward. Indeed, considering that the bulk of the research so far has focused largely on broad-gauged and cross-national investigations, our conclusions about the state of political support overall (if we can draw any) still cannot point to any conclusive and definitive trends – likely due not only to discrepancies in focus and measurement, but also to a lack of attention to within-case micro-level factors and variations. I suggest, therefore, that we need to start delving deeper within individual democratic societies if we are going to supplement the intelligence we have gained to date and begin to piece together a more developed and detailed understanding of the state of political support within democratic societies – particularly when it comes to more complex and diverse societies such as Canada's.

Certainly, the Canadian context provides a promising place to delve deeper. As discussed above, the results of much of the past work conducted in this context provide generally mixed findings and no clear conclusions when it comes to how supportive Canadians are of all political objects and across all assessment types[83]. In Quebec and Canada, there are also a variety of sub-categories that exist within different categories of objects that may be relevant to pay attention to. Within the category of political authorities, for instance, it may be relevant and necessary to determine whether there are differences in the patterns of perceptions that exist between mayors versus city councillors, or between members of various legislative assemblies versus the leaders of those assemblies. In addition, there are likely important differences in how the public differentiate between various core governmental institutions (legislatures versus the public service, for example). Certainly, the distinction in perceptions of these specific objects will matter if we want to identity which ones need to improve.

These distinctions within the Canadian political system bring me to the second area in which question specificity in surveys and our interpretations of the scope of the political support problem may also be limited. That is, when examining support assessments, are the public thinking only about their national political systems or something else? In a context with multiple levels of government or distinct political communities, which ones are respondents thinking about when answering our questions? This leads me into the next section, where I begin to question, to what extent are our surveys tapping the important distinctions that might exist within societies across regions and across diverse groups? Are all Canadians the same in their views or are some groups more dissatisfied or discontent than others?

The Extent of Support
Until now what is clear is that a consistent line of investigation on political support in democracies has evolved and continues to grow. What is still needed, however, is more detailed supplemental research that helps to provide a deeper understanding of how this support varies not just in its nature (which objects are being assessed as well as the types of assessments being interpreted and conclusions we draw about the state of political support), but also in the *extent* to which these assessments differ across levels of government and across groups. For instance, in investigations of political support in other contexts, several analyses have revealed that citizens evaluate the performance of different governments in different ways, both across regions within societies (Bradbury 2003; Ekman and Linde 2003; Eichenberg and Dalton 2007; Barnes 2010;

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[83] Again, pinpointed analyses of individual political objects within the Canadian political system are more popular than any systemic approach to studying all objects.

Denk 2012) and across levels of government (Fitzgerald and Wolak 2016; Daniell and Kay 2017; McCarthy 2018; Steenvoorden and van der Meer 2021).

In the Canadian context, in particular, important differences are likely to emerge when we examine how support might vary across the country, considering the distinct regional differences that exist[84] and the varying responsibilities that each level of government has under the federal framework (Jennifer Smith 2004). Furthermore, some studies have already pointed out that peoples' experiences with different political authorities and institutions in Canada vary significantly across municipal, provincial, or federal levels whether it be in terms of the representation they receive or the protection of their rights by different levels of government (for example: Tolley 2011; White 2014), the perceived quality of the services they receive or the responsiveness of different levels of these governments to crises (OECD 2020; Pollara Strategic Insights 2022; Angus Reid 2022), or even the degree to which citizens feel that governments at different levels can work together (Simeon 2006; Bakvis and Skogstad 2008). As a result, the degree to which support extends across those levels may be significantly impacted[85].

Differences across levels of government and territorial groups are also likely to appear across social groups as well. Existing studies in other contexts have begun pointing to the ways in which gender, race, or economic status (Abrajano and Alvarez 2010; Cernat 2010; Gormley-Heenan and Devine 2010) as well as perceptions of inequality (Scheidegger and Staerkle 2011) might influence support for specific objects. Complications brought about by group differences may also be especially relevant in the Quebec and Canadian contexts which comprise a great deal of growing diversity across multiple segments, including but not limited to language and ethnicity[86]. As studies on individual value orientations have revealed (R. Inglehart 1990; 1997; Nevitte 1996; Kanji 2002; Nevitte and Kanji 2004; Nevitte 2014), great variation in identities, ethnic origins, and languages may also be accompanied by varied and complex demands on the political system (Dalton 2004a; Lenard and Simeon 2012) which may, in turn, result in a variety of perceived unequal political outcomes.

Furthermore, within the diverse Canadian context, differences in identities are also often mobilized by political parties (Dalton, Farrell, and McAllister 2011) and interest groups in different ways[87], resulting in greater potential discrepancies between those who perceive

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[84] Cochrane and Perrella (2012) have built on our regional conceptions (Henderson 2004) of difference in Canada (see also, Henderson and McEwen 2015), suggesting that other effects are also important to examine and may be even more powerful drivers of variation. They explain and test, for instance, how province might influence ideology and find that the provincial effect is actually a language one, denoting how important it is to take multiple factors into consideration (not just region, or province, but also group differences such as language and other socio-demographics as I will do in my analyses beginning in Chapter 7).

[85] Bakvis and Skogstad (2008) and their contributors, for instance, argue for the importance of understanding performance across all levels of Canada's federal system. In their concluding chapter, they also suggest that performance assessments will ultimately depend on who you ask (and can vary even among experts). In this project, I am concerned with what citizens think. In future work, I will be asking politicians, public servants, business leaders, and civil society leaders – all with the goal to eventually build a more *complete* picture of the health of Canadian democracy according to its members.

[86] And according to Statistics Canada, diversity in ethnicity, language and religion is expected to continue to increase significantly over the next two decades (Statistics Canada 2022b; 2022a).

[87] The direct effect of interest groups on public opinion is still an evolving field of study. It has been argued that the public are quite sophisticated in that their opinions are shaped by information and the arguments made by interest groups rather than just by their membership in a particular group (Dür 2019).

themselves to be winners versus those who feel that their voices go unheard[88]. Individuals are rallied into groups for the purpose of supporting certain prospective policies or to protect groups that may be disadvantaged (L. Young and Everitt 2004; 2010). This mobilization can also sometimes be exploited for political gain or advantage (Helbling, Reeskens, and Stolle 2015). As a result, certain groups are assigned special rights and receive a greater share of system outputs, while others may be systematically left out (Pal 1993; Coleman and Skogstad 1990; Sniderman et al. 1996). Meanwhile, although Canadians (and their leaders) often tout themselves as "proud" of Canadian diversity (Trudeau 2015), "social attitudes and practices are not necessarily the same" (Labelle 2005). Indeed, pride in diversity does not necessarily translate into action and resulting equal outputs for all groups, and a number of groups in Canada "continue to be disadvantaged in Canadian society" (Ibid). Thus, different groups' experiences with various aspects of their democratic system may vary significantly. And all of this may have important consequences for political support and our diagnosis of the problem overall.

All told, the combined complexity contained within various categories of political objects and within our federal political system, plus a growing and increasingly diverse citizenry (Li 2003; Statistics Canada 2017; 2018; 2022a), demand that any investigation of political support in Quebec or Canada should, at the very least, try to account for some of these complications. Yet, to date, analyses of political support both here and internationally, that dig into within-society differences in support across levels of government or groups, have yet to provide us with any clear conclusions on how support varies across all the system's objects (or even within particular objects but across assessment types). In fact, while the Canadian context has helped drive a lot of theoretical work on "the compatibility of federalism and democracy", as well as the added study of identities and community within the context of federalism (Simeon 2002; as described by Vipond 2008), much empirical work still remains to be done in terms of connecting the realities of the federal system or its diverse citizenry to variations in perceptions of how well citizens across the country from diverse backgrounds assess political objects in different levels of government.

Moreover, beyond the differences between provinces and regions (and to a degree between Francophones and Anglophones) that have been highlighted by empirical work done on political culture, looking at basic political support questions that only tap political trust (Simeon and Elkins 1974; Elkins, Simeon, and Blake 1980; Henderson 2004), or more recent work that investigates the effects of trust on support for specific policies (Kitt et al. 2021; Lachapelle et al. 2021), we know very little about variations in political support across provinces for the multitude

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[88] Anderson and Tverdova (2001) also show that winning or losing (in terms of whether one supported the party that forms government – labelled as falling with the "majority") has a significant effect on evaluative assessments of democracy in Canada (through evaluations that the democratic system is working). I will discuss the effect that voting for the winning or losing party has on support for all objects again in Chapter 3 and test this effect in Chapter 8.

of political objects present across different levels of government in our system[89], and even less about the support of different identity groups for each of these objects.

And so, when examining both the nature and the extent of the political support problem, it is apparent that while we may have learned a great deal from past trajectories of broad-scale cross-national investigations of support for different objects, or within-case studies of how objects of the political system function across levels or how diverse public interests might be across groups, no study that I have come across to date ties all of these factors together within a single context[90]. I believe that the time has come to start probing more closely into the more complicated patterns of political support that may still be hidden within particular societies – and I will do so starting here in Canada.

Filling the Gap – Starting in Canada
In sum, when exploring the political support problem, especially here in Canada, there are a variety of areas in which we can dig deeper. We can seek, for instance, to know more about which particular politicians, for instance, the public dislike most. Is it their leaders, their Senators, their MPs or their local officials? We can also dig deeper to figure out exactly what it is that Canadians think is working or not within their democratic system, be it how elections are run, or what they think of the services they receive. If there are variations in these assessments, it is certainly important to consider them when formulating strategies for democratic reform or implementing any kind of change to our system of governance. It is also important, if we are going to target our strategies and reforms, to know which governments require the most attention. Do we need to focus, for instance on fixing political institutions at the local level such as individual municipal councils, or does the problem lie only at the federal level with the way parliament functions? Additionally, are these assessments the same across all groups or are some more forgiving than others?

These types of differences across political objects, levels of government and groups are examples of the scope of the investigation carried out in this project. Throughout the following analyses, I carry out a detailed and comprehensive investigation of what citizens think about all sorts of different political authorities and institutions, how they perceive various aspects of democracy to be working, what their views are on different regime principles, as well as the diverse ways in which they assess their political communities. And I do this by comparing

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[89] Differences are usually drawn between Quebec and the rest of Canada and usually focus only on objects at the national level (or they do not specify to respondents which level is being referred to, for example the WVS asks how much confidence respondents have in "the government", "parliament", and "the civil service"). Where distinctions are drawn between levels of government, they are usually restricted to differences in feelings about the national versus provincial community (up to the year 2000 in the CES), or in evaluations of governments (using confidence questions, such as those found in the CES, see for instance Kanji (2002)). When it comes to assessments of the regime at different levels, major surveys like the CES have yet to capture cross-level differences. Other surveys, however, have started to fill this gap including the Making Electoral Democracy Work project and the Comparative Provincial Election Project (from which the PCSP emerged). Wesley's (2016) *Big Worlds*, presents findings from the CPEP through an overview of top-level provincial differences in national and subnational community identities (which is distinct from support, see Chapter 3) and satisfaction with national and subnational democracies, as well as several other province-specific contextual realities such as ideologies, political behavior, and political cultures, economies, institutions, and cleavages.

[90] Recent data has allowed some to draw more specific conclusions about variations across a broader set of objects (Environics Institute 2020) but unfortunately these analyses are still limited by the questions available in the Canadian waves of the Americas Barometers surveys (both questions that allow a deeper understanding of support for each object, as well as a deeper sense of what may be driving support variations) .

opinions of these political objects across all three levels of government and across some of the many identity groups that make up the social fabric of Quebec and Canadian society.

By carrying out the analyses in this way, I am hopeful that I will be able to contribute in new and significant ways to the literature on the topic of political support, by applying a systemic lens to our investigations of political support, using more extensive survey instruments that tap support for the political system in much greater detail. I believe also that the approach and some of the findings outlined here can begin to pinpoint areas in which we may focus our attention to improve and advance our democracy in the future. Chapter 4 delves in greater depth into exactly how this study is conducted, but first, I turn to a review of what the literature says so far about what might explain (or drive) any variations in political support that we might identify.

Chapter 3: Potential Drivers of Variation in Political Support – According to the Literature

Introduction

After having focused in the previous chapter primarily on the literature from which I derived the first major objective of this project – which was to get a better fix on how to identify the scope of the political support problem in Canada and Quebec in terms of its nature and extent – I turn now to my second goal: which is to figure out what may be responsible for any variations in political support that I will observe in my analyses. In this chapter, I will also speak briefly to the third goal – which is to better understand whether wavering specific support can have more serious consequences for diffuse support more generally. Notably, when it comes to what the literature tells us about what is to blame for differences in political support for political objects (i.e. what drives variations in support), there are several possible explanations available, however, there is very little in terms of definitive conclusions that are generalizable across political objects, contexts, or groups. Furthermore, we still lack a clear understanding of the extent to which specific support problems may consistently detract from more diffuse systemic support.

As Rogowski pointed out (1983, 34), "our evidence is far less extensive and less conclusive than our theorizing" and one of the most important areas where more careful research is needed is into the causes of political support[91]. And, although the need for a systematic (and systemic) evaluation of the causes of support was identified over 40 years ago, within-case in-depth analyses remain rather limited in their scope, opting instead to hypothesize and test individual causes for trouble with individual political objects or to look generally at macro-level indicators across contexts. In effect, while many scholars have sought to explain support for specific political objects either within or across contexts, there are very few, if any, who have attempted to systematically test all of the most prominent explanations of variation in political support simultaneously or compare the results across different political objects. Even fewer (if any) have attempted to do so across different levels of government while also considering how various groups may differ. I suggest, meanwhile, that by including all possible explanations simultaneously in a single model (comparing the explanatory power of all drivers on support separately for each level of government and controlling for different groups), it may be possible to derive a more precise and complete understanding of what is most to blame for variations in levels of support.

For example, is dissatisfaction with democratic institutions only due to declining respect for hierarchical authority (R. Inglehart 1999; Nevitte 2014)? Or are there other reasons that are perhaps more powerful drivers of dissatisfaction for such institutions, such as perceptions that politicians are corrupt (CJ Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Clausen, Kraay, and Nyiri 2011)? Or are certain groups (such as Francophones or young Canadians, for instance) just less likely to be satisfied with institutions regardless of how they perceive political authorities to be performing or how they value hierarchical authority?

Until now, without the necessary information, it has not been possible to compare each of these effects simultaneously. With the PCSP data, and through the regression models that I will present in Chapter 8, I am able for the first time to report the independent effects of each

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[91] Of course, Rogowski also suggested earlier on that a cross-system analysis was necessary, a call to which many scholars responded (as I laid out in more detail in Chapter 2).

explanation, while holding variations in all other factors constant. The investigation that I present in this project (which I will outline in more detail in Chapter 4) represents the most extensive within-country attempt at a systematic exploration of the drivers of support variations across all political objects that has been conducted to date. In other words, I can isolate through my analyses, which drivers are the most powerful and consistent, according to my data, in potentially affecting variations in support. With more confident conclusions about the factors that best explain any political support problems, and through repeated analyses, we might eventually be able to identify what remedies are likely to have the greatest impact in fixing some of these problems.

While studies to date have not analyzed each potentially important driver of political support to the extent that may be necessary to derive effective implementation strategies, the expansive body of literature that has developed over the last several decades does provide important areas to focus my investigation here in Canada. Primarily, and most broadly speaking, these studies point to two main lines of argument when it comes to potential explanations for variations in political support – including the impact of sociocultural changes (or demand-side factors) as well as perceptions of political performance (or supply-side factors)[92]. Unfortunately, however, in addition to rarely pitting these explanations against each other, the studies that do[93] hardly ever incorporate the breadth of theoretically refined measures that can tap variants of these explanations and allow us to dig more precisely into each of these two lines of explanations.

In this chapter, building on the brief overview that I provided in Chapter 1, I lay out these two main lines of argument used to explain variations in political support (and their different variants) in more detail, with an eye later in this project (in Chapter 8), to test these explanations against each other. This investigation will allow me to better understand which of these factors, if any, have the most consistent effects on support for political objects both generally (using more robust indices of political support that I will present in Chapters 6 and 7) and across various levels of government. I will also discuss the theoretical relevance of identities in the context of political support, and how I propose to begin incorporating identity into our more careful and broad-based assessments of system support.

Theoretical Determinants of Political Support

As previously mentioned, the lines of argument that emerge from the literature which delves into what factors may account for major support problems in advanced industrial democracies, fall into two key categories which have been described on the one hand as "supply-side" performance-based arguments and on the other as "demand-side" sociocultural effects

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[92] Norris (2011, 243) also points to the "news media as the intermediary channel of information between citizens and the state".

[93] See again, Norris (2011) for example. In these analyses, the various drivers (performance, sociocultural factors like cognitive mobilization and value orientations, and the media) are generally assessed at the macro-level to identify cross-country differences and the range of all possible individual-level explanations are never tested within a single country model.

arguments[94]. As Norris (2011, 8) explains, there is an interplay between these two sides within the political system and the mismatch between them can help to better understand any democratic deficits that might exist:

> "In a loose market model, mass culture reflects the demand-side, communications is the connective information environment, and government performance represents the supply-side of the equation. In short, deficits may arise from complex interactions involving rising democratic hopes, negative political news, and perceptions of failing performance" (see also, for instance Kenneth Newton 2006).

Performance (Supply-side)

Within the supply-side, the first and most prominent hypothesis stems all the way back to Easton's foundational work on the political system in 1965. According to Easton, the political system, and those who benefit from it, are supplied by outputs in the form of "inducements" (see outputs in Figure 2.1) which consist of decisions made by the various authorities and institutions within the system as well as the diverse advantages, programs and services that emerge from it. These inducements may also be negative and come in the form of restrictions or limitations on citizens, such as laws, rules, and perhaps even conventions (Easton 1975; Muller and Jukam 1977). Importantly here, reactions to these inducements (or outputs of the system), as well as those who generate them (i.e., the political authorities and core government institutions), feed back into the political system in the ways they are evaluated by citizens (either through support or shifting demands), resulting in important and potentially either positive or negative effects on system support for all objects, from the most specific to the most diffuse[95].

Indeed, as other scholars (Weatherford 1987; Hay 2007; Norris 2011) have tested the theory, they have found some evidence to conclude that the way in which citizens receive these outputs works to significantly boost or detract from political support. In fact, for some, the way the public perceive a system's outputs or its "supply" has the most important effect on the degree to which those same citizens will interact with and in turn support the system and some of its

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[94] Early on in the Canadian context, drawing on the work from several prominent and influential theorists, Rogowski (1983) also summarized several theories that help to explain support variations, including the links between support and "perceptions of fairness", the "subconscious and symbolic elements", "the experience of participation", "the effectiveness of regimes", and "people's positions in the social division of labor". Elements and dynamics from each of these can fall to some extent within each of the two main lines of argument that I discuss here, depending on how we choose to measure the relationships (whether the driver is a characteristic of the individual: demand; or whether it is a response to the political system and its outputs: supply). There are several variants of these two "sides". For example, Kornberg and Clarke (1983) call them 'rational calculations' vs. 'social generational change'. Norris (1999a) discusses 'cultural values' vs 'performance'. Dalton (2004a) suggests differences between 'socialization' and 'cost-benefit calculations'. Similarly, Cook and Gronke (2005) focus on 'socialization' vs. 'performance'. Andrain and Smith (2006) also suggest support varies based on similar calculations of cost-benefit but call this the 'political exchange model'. Newton (2006) proposes that explanations may be either 'society centered' or 'politics centered', while Keele (2007) looks at 'social' capital (or interpersonal trust) vs 'trust in government'. On the other hand, Newton and Zmerli (2011) argue that democracies need more than just 'particular' or 'general' social trust for 'political trust' to be present. Kaina (2008), similar to Maier (2011) who focuses on 'functional' vs. 'dysfunctional' theories, proposes that trust can have opposing effects on support and uses a 'political culture' vs. 'constitutional' approach.

[95] As Magalhães describes (2014, 78), this feedback based on "effectiveness" was also deliberated by important scholars such as Lipset, Dahl, and Linz, starting in the late 1950s.

parts[96]. In other words, the better a system performs its role of delivering inducements to citizens – through the supply of responses to the needs and demands of its members – the better its citizens will perceive aspects of the system to be performing and the more support they will grant to it. Alternatively, should citizens perceive poor performance, or an undesirable supply (either through bad policies, unfair rules, or other outputs they dislike or disagree with), the system may suffer significantly, losing the support of the members that grant it its legitimacy. This dance, of course, becomes even more complex when citizen demands are more diverse or as groups compete for limited outputs (Falcone and Van Loon 1983; Nord and Weller 1983)[97]. That is, when greater complexity is introduced, the capacity of the system to deliver accordingly is tested even more and the public may withhold its support the more they perceive authorities and institutions to be failing to transform their complex demands into sufficient outputs (Crozier et al. 1975; Dalton 2004a).

Furthermore, should performance continue to fail, or if the public perceive their authorities and institutions to be continuously falling short of expectations, assessments of the failures of political objects at the most specific level (authorities and institutions) to perform can start to percolate upward to more diffuse levels of the political system, through declines in support for democracy as a suitable way of governing or withdrawal of support for the political community more broadly (Easton 1965b; Kornberg and Clarke 1992)[98].

There are a variety of possible ways in which the public may perceive and rationalize the way in which authorities or institutions produce outputs, or supply inducements to citizens. Here in Canada, whether examined as a specific case (Clarke, Kornberg, and Stewart 1984; Gidengil

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[96] Norris (2011), for example, employs "process performance indices" drawn from country-level assessments conducted by Freedom House and Kaufmann-Kraay. She correlates these in her analyses with country-level scales of satisfaction with democracy generated from individual-level WVS data in each country. Nevitte and White (2012) also examine democratic performance but instead investigate the effect of conceptions of democracy on perceptions of performance (also described as satisfaction and measured as the gap between expectations and democraticness). They compare Canada to ten other countries and find that those who conceive that "procedural elements are essential characteristics of democracy are more dissatisfied with the democratic performance of the political system than are others" (p. 69-70). Ruderman (2014) investigates the effects of negative contact, knowledge and other socio-demographic characteristics on evaluations of MPs in Canada as well as resulting effects on traditional and non-traditional engagement. He finds that direct experiences with government offices when accessing services have the greatest effect on MP evaluations. Meanwhile, these MP evaluations do not have a significant effect on voting or on "extra-electoral" participation.

[97] Falcone and Van Loon examined the effects that federalism and its division of powers can have on changing perceptions of performance and satisfaction with governments at different levels and regional differences in attitudes toward the division of powers and responsibilities in Canadian federal system. Nord and Weller, also using Canadian examples, suggest that as certain groups gain the ear of governments, or their issues become more salient, other groups could potentially lose out.

[98] Some have shown that, like in several other older democracies, Canadians' dissatisfaction is actually linked to being more politically active through engagement in "system-correcting political acts" but not consistently tied to declines in voting (Nevitte and White 2012, 71–72). The authors suggest, therefore, that dissatisfaction may not necessarily be something to be overly concerned about. Others have shown, meanwhile, that in Canada dissatisfaction has no significant effect on voting or other non-traditional types of participation (Ruderman 2014). Some may debate, then, if participation is not suffering, whether discontent or dissatisfaction with performance even matters. But what if dissatisfaction persists and affects feelings about democracy itself as a way of governing or commitments to the community more generally? As we saw from the constitutional crisis in Canada, support for community (and anything that might detract from it) could lead to important changes for the future of a unified state, for instance. Additionally, if we were to find that failures in performance or shifting sociocultural patterns are tied to declining support for democracy as a way of governing (with growing preference for alternatives), should we not also pay attention?

and Bastedo 2014) or in comparative perspective (Singer 2011; Nevitte and White 2012), most analyses of performance as perceived by citizens, draw on the same indicators of support (namely national-level indicators of confidence in government institutions, measures of support for national political authorities, or questions that tap perceptions of how democratically the country is being governed)[99] once again collected through major cross-national surveys[100] like the WVS (in Lenard and Simeon 2012), from the country's national election study, the Canadian Election Studies (CES)[101], from the Samara Citizens' Survey (in Gidengil and Bastedo 2014), or from polling firms like Environics (2017).

Where Canadian studies dig deeper into performance, they generally take place outside of the context of political support or employ approaches that do not tap public perceptions directly using public opinion data. More specifically, beyond studies of public opinion, Canadian researchers have built upon our understanding of system performance in several ways. One important approach has been to draw upon the perceptions of elites to tell a story of the issues that may be plaguing the Canadian political system (Loat and MacMillan 2014; Marland 2020). Others use more historical analyses to observe changes in government institutions over time (Rathgeber 2014; Savoie 2019), or investigate the structures, qualities, or representativeness of government institutions (Docherty 2012; O'Neill 2015; Tossutti and Hilderman 2014). Others offer important insights through their own observations and conclusions on government performance based on personal experiences within government (for example: Rae 2015; Kanji and Tannahill 2024) or after having studied it their entire careers (Savoie 2015).

While investigations that delve deeper into public opinion data to explore citizen perceptions of performance (especially government performance) in Canada are still limited

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[99] Each of these indicators, according to my taxonomy of indicators (see Appendix A1), represent evaluative assessments of objects. Other more precise indicators of performance, as Ruderman presents (Ruderman 2014), have also been collected through projects like the Samara Citizens' Survey which measures satisfaction with a specific interaction with government.

[100] For more extensive assessments of political support in Canada, findings must instead be drawn from a combination of many different surveys. For instance, Clarke, Kornberg and Wearing (2000) assemble what may be one of the most recent and expansive snapshots of support (as well as voting and fragmentation) in Canada. This work draws on a few performance indicators (including views on the economy, evaluations of specific behaviors or actions of political parties, or evaluations of certain jobs governments in general are doing). To do this, they pull together data from a variety of individual panels and surveys conducted between 1983 and 1997, alongside Canadian Election Studies starting in the 1960s, data points from the Quality of Life studies conducted in the late 70s and early 80s, and polls carried out by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion (CIPO).

[101] Usually in the context of political behavior studies that look at vote choice and party support, not political support more generally. Key determinants of voting in these contexts consist of performance indicators such as economic performance (both national economic performance and perceptions of personal financial performance), stances on specific issues (which are not necessarily direct measures of issue performance), and evaluations of leaders (see, for instance: Gidengil et al. 2012)

(Gidengil 2020)[102], studies carried out in other contexts are slightly more prevalent[103]. What is clear and stands out most prominently as the underlying thread of each of these studies and approaches, which we can learn from when seeking to look deeper into perceptions of the supply-side factors driving political support here at home, is the importance of failures (or successes) in the way governments (and political actors) perform and the potential effects that such performance may have on citizens (the feedback effect)[104].

What has not yet been made as clear, or explicitly delineated, is what aspects of performance are being evaluated by citizens: whether, on the one hand, they are evaluating political objects themselves and their actions (for example, evaluations of the job being done by certain political objects which can also be considered "evaluative" support, or the various misbehaviors of political authorities) or, on the other, the outputs that the system is producing (such as specific policies or how outputs impact or influence their lives). Furthermore, when assessing the actions or behaviors of authorities (through perceptions of their honesty and integrity, for example) we know little about whether the public are thinking about the performance of specific political actors or if they are focusing more generally on a group of individuals, let alone if performance is more important at some levels of government than it is at others (as identified in our understanding of the *nature* and *extent* of our understanding of the political support problem in the previous chapter).

When it comes to system outputs (often referred to as "supply" when examining explanations of variations in support), Easton (1975; and others, A. H. Miller 1974) proposed that the way in which system outputs are perceived can have important implications for the continuity of the system and its institutions. Indeed, such perceptions may supersede any feelings of like of dislike for specific authorities, where, if the outputs are satisfactory, support for individual actors may be less important. For instance, Easton stated that "conceivably a person may have little trust in the political authorities and may not even believe in their legitimacy. But if he perceives that his demands have been met, he may be prepared to extend limited support to

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[102] New data and questions on performance are emerging as well. For example, in Gidengil's recent book (2020), she provides findings from new surveys and signals the importance of in-depth analyses within individual political systems (in specific policy/program areas). Although not a study of general political support, her study includes findings that are relevant to the support discussion more broadly (namely performance and the feedback effect on perceptions of the political system as well as engagement). Gidengil draws on survey data from two online surveys carried out in 2016 in Ontario. These data tap performance by asking about respondents' direct experiences with specific government services. In this study, Gidengil measures the effects of perceptions of program performance on satisfaction with the provincial government, confidence in both government and the justice system, as well as against more general attitudes toward politics and satisfaction with democracy. She also includes evaluations of specific aspects of the health care system.

[103] This list is by no means exhaustive, but it serves to demonstrate the way in which our understanding of performance (especially government performance) has expanded significantly over the years thanks to the work of many scholars in other contexts. These studies measure performance in a variety of ways, including through public opinion surveys as well as other data sources: (R. Rose 1979; Lipset and Schneider 1983a; 1983b; Bok 1997; Nye 1997; Seligson 2002; Van and Bouckaert 2003; Bowler and Karp 2004; Kaina 2004; Christensen and Lægreid 2005; Cook and Gronke 2005; Kampen, Walle, and Bouckaert 2006; Espinal, Hartlyn, and Kelly 2006; Listhaug 2006; Catterberg and Moreno 2006; Clarke et al. 2009; Clausen, Kraay, and Nyiri 2011; Ezrow and Xezonakis 2011; Maier 2011; Grönlund and Setälä 2012; Heurlin 2012; Aydin and Cenker 2012; Bouckaert 2012; Kumlin and Esaiasson 2012; Schuck, Boomgaarden, and de Vreese 2013; Nicholls and Picou 2013; Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro 2014; Lazarev et al. 2014; Diamond and Plattner 2015; Esaiasson and Ottervik 2014; van Ham et al. 2017; Kumlin and Haugsgjerd 2017; Wike, Silver, and Castillo 2019).

[104] See, for instance, Gidengil's (2020) review of the literature on the effects of policy feedback on political behavior in general as well as within the context of the Canadian health care system.

the incumbent office" (Easton 1975, 438). In other words, and as several studies have explored, regardless of whether individuals vote for the individual or party that forms government (depending on the context) or feel affectively inclined toward the political authorities that make decisions on their behalf, the system can still maintain the important reservoirs of support necessary to ensure its survival (whether support for lower level objects such as institutions, or higher level objects such as the regime or political community). In short, if the outputs are satisfactory, regardless of feelings toward specific objects, diffuse support may not suffer.

Unfortunately, however, in testing these assumptions, the distinctions between outputs and those that produce them (the objects), have not always been made entirely clear. To clarify, I divide this next discussion into two sections, one that deals with evaluations of object performance (which also includes vote choice as well as assessments of political behaviors of those in power through perceptions of their honesty and integrity, or general feelings of cynicism) and the other that deals with output evaluations (including, for instance, evaluations of the policies or benefits produced by the political system)[105]. There are, of course, overlaps in conceptions of these supply-side assessments but hopefully this discussion will help to sort out some of the overlaps and further justify the need for more careful attention to the measures used in analyses and the interpretations made when seeking to understand the link between performance effects and support.

Object Performance
One especially fruitful area of research into the effect of specific support for authorities on more diffuse system support, has been in determining the impact of winning or losing on satisfaction with democracy[106]. More specifically, several scholars have sought to determine whether, by voting for the winning candidate in the election, for instance, citizens are likely to feel that their participation in democracy has been rewarded. Depending on the indicators accounted for in these models however, and how each are measured, the findings are rather varied (see, for example, discussions of the conceptualization of what it means to "win" in Daoust, Plescia, and Blais 2021) and mostly exclude any understanding of how the effect of "winning" might compare to other individual-level system assessments.

While studies, including Canada as a comparative case, have examined the effect of wining on perceptions of performance (S. Singh, Lago, and Blais 2011), few have yet examined whether the effect of winning stands up as an explanation of support across objects compared to perceptions of performance. Blais, Morin-Chassé and Singh (2017), for instance, look at Quebec and Ontario in comparative context to regions in other countries, exploring the way in which the effect of winning on satisfaction might be tempered by perceptions of performance. In their study, however, they look only at performance as views on "deficits in representation", where they tap whether respondents feel that the support the party received electorally is reflected in the

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[105] This distinction loosely resembles Norris' (2011, 188–215) contrast between "process performance", "policy performance", and "institutional structures". In her distinctions, however, the contrasts are based on a combination of 'objective' macro-level indices alongside micro-level public opinion responses rather than just individual-level within country assessments.

[106] This is an area that has been studied extensively, focusing mainly on the effect of winning or losing on satisfaction with democracy across several countries, Canada included (C. J. Anderson and Tverdova 2001; CJ Anderson and LoTempio 2002; CJ Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Blais and Gélineau 2007; Henderson 2008; Kolln and Aarts 2015; S. P. Singh 2014; Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2012; Dahlberg and Linde 2015; Plescia, Daoust, and Blais 2021; Daoust, Plescia, and Blais 2021).

number of seats that the party secures in the legislature or in government. This contribution to our understanding of the effect of performance compared to other factors in driving satisfaction with democracy is important, however, given that the representation deficit is but one measure of the "performance" of one institution (the electoral system) it still deserves additional investigation.

To fill this gap a bit more, recent research (Daoust, Ridge, and Mongrain 2023) examines how the performance effect (through an assessment of the governments impact on quality of life), alongside winning or losing, might differ at different elections (regional vs. national) across countries, again including Canada. They find that: "the moderating effect based on citizens' perceptions of the influence of their regional government suggests that empowering subnational governments could increase the winner-loser gap" (p.5). In other words, while the winner-loser gap (where losers are more dissatisfied) is smaller at the regional level, when citizens perceive regional governments to have greater influence on their lives, the gap is greater. While this does not provide us with a direct assessment of the impact that performance of regional or national governments can have on support for the political regime (through satisfaction with democracy as they measure it), it does lend further support for the need to better understand not just the performance of governments, but also support across levels of government (or regions) and these effects on support more broadly – through satisfaction with democracy, as well as other object assessments.

Ultimately, one thing that remains rather reasonable to expect, and is starting to emerge as an area with a need for further investigation, is that if citizens perceive the individuals and parties that form government after an election to be performing badly (for example, beyond whether the electoral system translates votes into seats or assessments of whether these governments help improve citizens' individual quality of life, to questions of whether they deliver on promises, or even if they are perceived to lie or cheat, or act in ways that are inconsistant with what would be reasonably expected of them), it is likely that there will be important feedback effects on citizens' support regardless of whether they voted for the winning candidate or not[107].

Notably, as the honesty and integrity of public officials seems to make constant and growing headlines both here in Canada[108] (Delacourt 2022) as well as elsewhere in the world (Wike et al. 2021), empirical investigations into the specific actions or behaviors of political authorities have also grown – suggesting that perceptions of specific authorities (both the job these authorities are doing and other behaviors they engage in while in office) may indeed matter quite a bit. More specifically, such investigations look at public reactions to the failures of their political leaders and elected representatives (Della Porta 2000; Pharr 2000; Seligson 2002; CJ Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Hay 2007; Rothstein and Eek 2009; Clausen, Kraay, and Nyiri 2011; Uslaner

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[107] For instance, as Anderson et al. (2005, chap. 9) demonstrate, winning or losing might influence support for institutional reform and therefore it is necessary that institutions, and the actors within them, behave in ways that give citizens confidence that, even if they don't win in one round, that they stand a chance of "winning" in another. I think winning here can also be thought of beyond just voting for the winning party, but also perceiving oneself to be a winner in terms of receiving what one feels to be satisfactory rewards from the political system (I will talk about this a bit more in the identity section below).

[108] Canada has seen the largest drop in its ranking on the 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index compared to all other countries since 2017 (Wood 2022; Transparency International 2022). Some of the indicators used to calculate this index include "Diversion of public funds", "Officials using their public office for private gain without facing consequences", and "Ability of governments to contain corruption in the public sector" (Transparency International 2021).

2017; Torcal and Christmann 2021)[109]. Moreover, many of these preliminary investigations have revealed that the effects of corruption or scandal by political officials as well as mismanagement by governments, at levels beyond just the national one (Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro 2014), are far reaching and important drivers of citizens' loss of support for governments and even for the regime itself (Seligson 2002).

Perceptions of the behaviours of certain authorities have also been shown to have more pervasive long term effects on political cultures, through increased public cynicism about politics both elsewhere (Plasser 1999) and here in Canada (Desjardins 2013; T. Parkin 2018). Unsurprisingly, the literature also suggests that, as such disappointment and negativity toward the political system and its players turns into cynicism, there may be serious implications for overall political behavior[110] (Manoliu and Sullivan 2016) if not just on their levels of political support[111].

As these studies reveal, the measurement of the performance of political objects (how citizens perceive political objects to be performing their duties), in studies conducted both here in Canada as well as internationally, can range significantly – from perceptions of basic job performance (Bok 1997) which are most often tapped using evaluative support indicators that may also tap output performance, to more morally-based judgements about integrity (Camerer 2006), views on the way in which various levels of government interact with each other (Simeon 2006), or even the extent to which individual elected members of parliament are limited by party discipline and message control (Marland 2020)[112]. Several have also argued that governments should be especially concerned about object performance, suggesting that by addressing any perceived shortcomings in performance, governments would go a long way toward improving citizens' trust and confidence in them overall (Bouckaert and Van de Walle 2001; Bouckaert 2012)[113].

Yet, when it comes to understanding the effect of public assessments of political authorities (evaluative assessments) and the perceived performance of these particular objects (performance explanations), focus has often centered more on the extent to which the public respond to government performance generally by choosing whether to "throw" non-performing "rascals out" (A. H. Miller and Wattenberg 1985b; Nicholls and Picou 2013) – i.e. focusing on the effects performance has on political behavior – rather than on political support through perceptions of the political system. Notably, a key area in this line of research has been on the effects of performance on political behavior through research seeking to understand the impact of perceptions of both macro- and micro-level economic performance on voting behavior (Clarke and Kornberg 1994; Guerin and Nadeau 1998; Kanji and Archer 2002; Kanji and Tannahill 2013c). Although the conclusions have been that "economic performance per se does not appear

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[109] Just to name a few.

[110] Although some findings still remain quite mixed in this regard (Rosenberg 2003).

[111] Again, although the analyses included in this dissertation do not cover the effect of object evaluations on political engagement (through voting or alternative forms of engagement), I do look more carefully at the effects of evaluations of specific political objects on support for the regime and political communities more broadly.

[112] Although not a study of political support, Marland's work reveals that there are important issues with the way political authorities behave (or are constrained from behaving) once in office.

[113] Beyond improving performance, involving the community (including the public and various experts) in regular government performance updates could presumably also go a long way toward improving perceptions of performance, finding new and innovative approaches to problem solving, and increasing public confidence (Metzenbaum 2022).

to be a primary source of the long-term trend in declining support in contemporary democracies" (Dalton 2004a, 127)[114].

Where research on the effects of object performance (either evaluative assessments of objects or specific performance explanations) has expanded to reach beyond the effects of performance on political behavior (through voting or engagement) to political support (through perceptions of system objects), focus has been primarily on examinations of the specific effects of performance perceptions (based on experiences with government offices, for example) on assessments of how well authorities deliver on certain expectations (Ruderman 2014)[115]. They also include some broader assessments of the impact that performance evaluations might have on other objects as well – mostly on support for institutions through measures of confidence in government (for example: Magalhaes 2006; Clausen, Kraay, and Nyiri 2011; Grönlund and Setälä 2012) or evaluations of the regime, through assessments of satisfaction with democracy (for instance: Kumlin and Esaiasson 2012; LeDuc and Pammett 2014)[116]. However, as I demonstrated in Chapter 2, the nature and extent of political support is much broader and thus, I would argue, requires a more systematic testing of each of the possible object performance effects on support across all political objects[117].

Output Evaluations

When it comes to assessing system outputs, outside of academia, governments, such as the federal government here in Canada, invest taxpayer dollars into better understanding what citizens want, how well the public perceives services to be delivered, and how well various policies are received. More specifically, not only do each of the national governments' departments follow a set of guidelines and strategies for monitoring and addressing government performance (Government of Canada 2010)[118], recent governments have also spent significant amounts of money asking Canadians their opinions in a variety of policy areas (Communication Canada 2003; Government of Canada 2023a).

This said, my preliminary review of the objectives of many of the larger ticket public opinion studies commissioned by the Canadian Government, reveals that such explorations by the federal government into public perceptions of performance may not be entirely "selfless"

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[114] These findings are based mostly on US and European data, although trends in "consumer confidence" and perceptions that "government doesn't care" are also reported for Canada (where both are declining – which is different from several other countries, where consumer confidence increased, while support decreased). On tests of the direct links between economic performance and support (rather than comparing cross-time trends), Dalton uses Eurobarometers data from the 1990s and examines the effect of personal family and national expectations of the economy on trust in government and legislatures, satisfaction with democracy, and national pride (Dalton 2004b, 119). He concludes, however, that while the two are linked (economic performance and support for institutions and democracy, but not community), these taub correlations can only be interpreted as covariation not "evidence of causation" (p.118).

[115] Authority evaluations in Ruderman's analysis of the Samara 2012 data are based on ratings of how well MPs are doing at "representing party views", "debating and voting", "staying in touch", "representing constituent views", "holding governments accountable", "dealing with constituents' problems", and "putting constituents' interests first".

[116] LeDuc and Pammett present findings on satisfaction with "government handling of an important issue", "how […] interests are represented", the "performance of MPs in general" and satisfaction with "my MP".

[117] Of course, I cannot test "all" the effects and measures, but I can start with a few and use the findings to lay the groundwork for more in-depth inquiries in the future.

[118] The "Policy on Evaluation and its instruments" has since been replaced by the "Policy on Results" (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2020).

(Dalai Lama and Hougaard 2019)[119]. What I have found so far[120], is that the main goals of these studies are not necessarily always to figure out how Canadians are perceiving government performance and how to improve it, but rather to figure out the best ways to *communicate* to Canadians. Which begs the question, is the Canadian government spending public funds on figuring out what Canadians think about government and its performance, to make it better and to better communicate information about public services so that more citizens can benefit, or are they directing these funds in ways that further aid them in devising political "spin" to placate the public and garner more political capital – a strategy that may drive up public cynicism even further, threatening democratic health even more (Delacourt 2013; Marland 2017)?

In fact, the largest ticket item in the federal government's 2023 spending on public opinion research was on a project called "Continuous Tracking of Canadians' Views, Quantitative Survey" carried out by Elemental Data Collection Inc., with yearly studies dating back to at least 2018. The stated objective of this initiative is: "to assess the perceptions of Canadians on government priorities. This input was needed because complex issues are often difficult to communicate to the Canadian public in a manner that is easily and clearly understood. By carrying out this research PCO [the Privy Council Office] will be able to ensure a better understanding of the views and concerns of the public and to develop effective communications strategies and products" (Public Services and Procurement Canada Government of Canada 2022b). What is most interesting to note here is the wording of these objectives. According to the 2022 methodology report for this ongoing study, while the focus is ostensibly on Canadians' perceptions of priorities, the end goal is "to develop effective *communications strategies* and products" [emphasis added][121]. The price tag on this study is more than three times any of the other public opinion research studies carried out in 2023 (coming in at nearly 1 million 100 thousand dollars[122]).

To determine what exactly, the PCO are interested in knowing, I hoped to dig deeper into what kinds of perceptions they have been gathering from Canadians. Yet, short of locating reports on this study's methodology (how many Canadians are surveyed, and how, as well as the demographic and regional distributions of surveys completed), I have been unable to find any details of what substantive areas are being tapped in the *Continuous Tracking of Canadians' Views* studies or what specific questions Canadians are being asked in these surveys. Interestingly, according to information that one reporter was able to find on this study back in 2021, presumably through an access to information request, questions did in fact include measurements of trust in government (through responses to a question about whether Canadians trust the information that the government puts out). The results, according to this reporter's digging, show that between 10 and 35% across different regions in the country do not trust the information coming from the Government of Canada (Dzsurdzsa 2021). These findings have still

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[119] This will of course not be surprising to many, especially the most cynical, although when it comes to the role that governments and representatives should play in society the Dalai Lama (2019) suggests that leaders should in fact seek to be not only "mindful" and "compassionate", but also "selfless".

[120] Again, this is just based on a preliminary investigation and would require more careful in-depth analysis of publicly tendered contracts for survey research and other government initiatives, to the extent that such information can be accessed.

[121] This focus on "communication" is consistent with what Page (2006) discovered several years ago in his analysis of the ways in which public opinion was used by three different Canadian governments in three specific policy areas.

[122] The qualitative component of this study, carried out by and entitled "Continuous Qualitative Data Collection of Canadians' Views", cost taxpayers just over $810,000 in 2022-2023 (Government of Canada 2023a).

not been made public by the PCO[123]. Also, without more information on the findings of such studies, it is hard to know exactly how they are being used to improve government performance or citizen support for different policy outputs or even confidence in various governments' ability to deliver.

When it comes to governments' attempts at better understanding the broader implications of output evaluations and their effects on confidence in government (object performance), for instance, previous Canadian governments have expressly acknowledged a need to better understand "the extent to which citizens' confidence in government has eroded in Canada, and elsewhere" as well as other potential percolating effects such as the degree to which "this might cause democratic institutions and processes to suffer" (Sims 2001, 1). Interestingly, however, as this report carried out by the Canadian Center for Management Development (CCMD) makes clear, the value of this research may still be less than fully appreciated by those responsible for carrying out such studies on behalf of government:

> "It is entirely reasonable to suppose that the better the job governments do in delivering their services to people, the more confidence people will have in them. But given all of the other forces which affect trust in government, it is entirely possible for the positive impacts of improved service delivery to be swamped by other events and circumstances. This suggests that it would be neither useful nor appropriate to justify continuing efforts to improve government service delivery in terms of their possible impacts on confidence or trust. Nor is it necessary…There is likely to be ongoing interest among academics in the determinants of citizen trust in government for some time. For purely practical reasons, it would probably be useful for CCMD to leave that field of research to them." (Ibid, 28)

The reasoning for this last recommendation, to abandon research into confidence in government, by the CCMD is based on the justification that improving performance and services are a benefit for citizens in and of themselves and should therefore not be a justification for continuing to focus energy on understanding support in this way (through investigations of what drives confidence or trust in government). This conclusion, I believe, would have to be based at least partly on the lack of any strikingly compelling and systematically consistent evidence that the CCMD was able to find of any stable and comparatively robust "causal" link between "performance" and confidence in existing literature. A conclusion which likely draws primarily on secondary evidence that was not specifically designed to examine variations in political support and its potential causes (as I have found to be lacking in much of the academic studies of citizen perceptions of performance conducted to date as well).

The first major issue that I see with this sort of reasoning and decision-making is that it may be somewhat short-sighted (as well as possibly tone-deaf) in its lack of concern for potentially drawing false negatives based on less than adequate secondary evidence as well as its inability to transcend beyond what is *causing* declines in confidence or trust, to also consider more seriously and carefully the effect that declining confidence or trust might have on the political system, its support, and in turn, political legitimacy more broadly. Second, despite basically conceding that performance matters, the inclination nonetheless is to conclude that other things likely matter as well (such as sociocultural factors perhaps), and as such the need to better understand confidence in this major institution, according to them, is simply not necessary nor practical.

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[123] More digging could potentially provide interesting and important insights. In order to access the results of these surveys, I will need to file an access to information request.

This conclusion, I also think, is rather careless and perhaps even misguided, especially without the appropriate evidence-based research that properly evaluates and considers the overall value of the problem being explored. It is considerations such as these, or even the tendency for governments to stand clear of (and basically avoid) reporting on public perceptions of confidence or trust in government performance that makes me think that neither political support nor the public's perceptions of performance have a lot of currency among those in power – except when it comes to putting a more positive spin on government performance in their communications with citizens by emphasizing what government is doing right[124]. I mean why would governments, seeking to remain popular, want to point out or highlight their own declines in legitimacy or dwell on their performance inadequacies. It is not all that surprising to me, therefore, that I have not found any follow up reports on this topic made publicly available by government[125]. And, as the recent spending on public opinion conducted by the federal government might suggest, even if this work is being done internally, it is not yet being made entirely public.

Luckily, the task of evaluating outputs and, to a degree, linking these evaluations to object performance has been taken up by academics. In fact, over time scholars have started to venture deeper into supply-side performance arguments, looking beyond just the effects of voting for winning candidates or parties on satisfaction with democracy, or the effect that perceptions of individual representatives' job performance have on confidence in government, to examine more specific output side elements of the system model. These efforts have revealed that a variety of output or supply-related factors may be just as important as the political actions or likeability of individuals within the system and that there are, in fact, significant feedback effects from such evaluations of output on both political support and political behavior (Gidengil 2020).

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[124] The only study, that I can tell from what has been published so far, which counts among the top ticket items for the 2022-23 year, that focuses specifically on performance, is the "Service Canada Client Experience Survey 2021 to 2022". This report reveals that although Canadians are satisfied with certain aspects of Service Canada delivery, satisfaction in other areas have decreased and overall satisfaction "stand at the lowest levels observed" since 2019 (Public Services and Procurement Canada Government of Canada 2022a, 11). In the same year, another big-ticket study was conducted, but the results have yet to be reported as far as I can tell. This one is titled "Understanding the Impact of Public Trust, Misinformation and Disinformation Across Policy Areas and our Democratic Society". This study has cost almost 300,000$ and, if the results are ever published, it will be interesting to find out what they investigated. Another report, entitled "COVID-19 tracking survey and focus groups on Canadians' views" which also cost Canadian taxpayers nearly three hundred thousand dollars, like the *Continuous Tracking of Canadians' Views* survey, seems to also focus mainly on communication rather than performance. More specifically, although the stated goals of this research are to figure out the views of Canadians on COVID-related issues, the benefits the Canadian government identifies are that "the research will allow the Government of Canada to *develop and refine communications activities* to meet the specific needs of Canadians with timely, up-to-date, easily understood information based on the current perceptions of Canadians" (Public Services and Procurement Canada Government of Canada 2023).

[125] Statistics Canada released a report in 2015 entitled "Public confidence in Canadian institutions" (Cotter 2015) and, while it looked at confidence in a few different institutions, its focus on explaining confidence was primarily on confidence in the police, based on experience with crime and the perceived performance of the police. Other than reporting the effect of language, sex, Aboriginal identity, and minority status, no other investigation of causes of confidence in government, like performance, were reported. More recently, the Privy Council Office has released data collected through EKOS Politics that there is a link between citizen engagement and trust (L. Wesley 2018). This said, they themselves admit that this link is not based on any systematic evaluation rather: "We have no data showing that there is a causal effect between opening up government and increased trust. We only know that trust is up at the same time that the government has held an unprecedented number of consultations on a broad range of topics of importance to Canadians."

Just like object performance, among the studies that dig more deeply into output evaluations in Canada, there are several approaches (such as thermostatic modelling of the gap between demands and actual outputs (Soroka and Wlezien 2010)[126], analyses of the content of government policies, as well as historical analyses and assessments of policy change over time[127]. When it comes to the public opinion assessments of the quality of government outputs, however, the literature is not as clearcut. The main reason for this, similar to the limitations identified in Chapter 2, can mainly be linked to the substance of public opinion surveys carried out to date (in-depth questions about outputs do not frequently appear in broad-based cross-national surveys).

This is not to say that such questions are not asked. Cross-national studies have included questions tapping policy priorities, but the most common questions about specific system outputs tend instead to be asked mainly in within-country studies. In the context of political support in particular, perceptions of the system's outputs have been examined by analyzing perceptions of system procedures or rules (Norris, Frank, and Martinez i Coma 2014; Grimes 2017), evaluations of specific policy outputs (McAllister 1999; Farnsworth 2003; Dalton 2004a; Ruderman 2014), the more elaborate and dynamic responsiveness of governments to public demands and issue importance (Petry 1999; Soroka and Wlezien 2010), or even more complex judgements about the extent to which governments fulfill the personal expectations of citizens (Andrain and Smith 2006; Norris 2011; Nevitte and White 2012).

Most often, however, the indicators of policy or general system output quality are based on macro- or national-level statistics such as assessments of improvements in overall life expectancy, schooling, unemployment (McAllister 1999), certain within-country measures of procedural fairness such as transparency (Grimes 2017)[128], impartiality, professionalism, or the rule of law (van der Meer 2017)[129]. When looking at public perceptions within countries, output evaluations based on personal expectations of democracy are derived from questions that tap opinions "about the importance of procedural characteristics as core elements of democracy" versus preferences for "redistribution and legal and economic order" (Nevitte and White 2012, 57), where citizens in Canada that express more support for "procedural elements as essential characteristics" are found to be less satisfied with the democraticness of the country[130]. Other

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[126] Burstein (2003; 2020) offers extensive reviews of the work that has been done across contexts on the links between public opinion and policy.

[127] For an extensive review of this work, how much of the work on policy analysis in Canada has emerged from studies carried out in the US, and the various approaches that can be applied, especially here in Canada, see the recent compilation by Dobuzinskis and Howlett (for example: 2018).

[128] In the context of political trust, Grimes (2017) identifies the need for further research into citizens' understanding and evaluations of various system procedures and processes. Further confusion on this particular system output is also introduced when trying to distinguish between procedures and processes as outputs of the system or as rules or parameters that in turn structure decision-making within the system itself (even though these rules are produced by the system through legislative decision-making).

[129] This study looks at the effects on trust in parliament and satisfaction with democracy using European Social Surveys from 2012 and a combination of macro-level data from the Quality of Government Institute, Freedom House, and the Quality of Government Expert Survey (van der Meer 2017, 142–43). It also draws on expert evaluations of corruption from the Corruption Perception Index, which, as I explained above, could be considered more an evaluation of object performance rather than an evaluation of outputs.

[130] These indicators, according to the authors (Nevitte and White 2012), are compared to other explanations in multivariate analyses. However, the detailed results of these analyses are no longer available using the link that they provide in the book. The only results that are displayed are on the cross-national differences in responses on citizens' "conceptions of democracy" as either procedural, redistributive, or legal and economic order.

indicators of citizen expectations based on public opinion, where supply is perceived to fall short, are indicators of "democratic aspirations" (Norris 2011)[131] which are also reported at the aggregate level and analyzed in the context of political support using other macro-level country characteristics.

A Fuller Performance/Supply-Side Picture

Despite growing attention to the specific behaviors of political authorities (often pointed out by the media) or to reactions to a variety of outputs (mostly by scholars), within the context of political support – where links are drawn between supply-side assessments and the feedback effects these can have on support or where individual-level within country-public opinion of these supply-side factors are tapped extensively (and exclusively) – a lot of work remains to be done. For one, individual-level within-country analyses of the effects of supply-side factors on political support are still quite sporadic (usually looking at only one indicator of performance on the supply-side, for instance, or at the effects of performance on support for a single political object). Also, they generally are assessed cross-nationally, combining both macro- and micro-level factors in their analyses. Lastly, we have very little systematic evidence on the more pervasive effects of performance evaluations of specific political objects, such as the degree to which the perceived performance of authorities and institutions may percolate upward and potentially eat away at affective assessments of the democratic political regime or community.

Indeed, aside from satisfaction determined in various ways, confidence or trust in authorities and institutions, or the analyses of broad-based perceptions of general corruption and misbehavior[132], few studies have attempted to more systematically investigate the effects that evaluations of various inducements (such as the political decisions, policies, services, and other benefits that are generated through the system's institutions), as well as the behaviors of political actors (such as how well they are doing their jobs, or how ethically they are behaving) might have on affective storehouses of political support across different political objects and contexts[133].

More specifically, as demonstrated in this chapter so far, although investigations of variation in support for the most specific objects (such as governments) have been extremely prominent over the years, especially in investigations seeking to understand changing levels of satisfaction with democracy or the democratic deficit, including here in Canada (see, for example: Norris 2011; and Nevitte and White 2012), more comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the performance-oriented drivers of support for more diffuse political objects (especially support for

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[131] Based on survey questions that tap how important it is to the respondent to live in a country that is governed democratically.

[132] For instance, investigations into the effects of perceptions of corruption and evaluations of authorities on outlooks toward political institutions or satisfaction with democracy are likely the most common (CJ Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Clausen, Kraay, and Nyiri 2011; Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro 2014). This said, each of these are evaluative indicators of support and do little to provide any insight into the effect that such evaluations have on more deep-seated affective assessments of objects in the political system (there are some exceptions, where investigations are carried out outside of the Canadian context: Seligson 2002).

[133] As Zhang and their colleagues (Zhang, Li, and Yang 2022) point out, based on a meta-analysis of over 70 studies, more care is needed when evaluating the impact of performance perceptions on support (in their study, they look specifically at support through measures of trust in government), paying specific attention to within-context variations. They point to the importance of considering cultural factors particular to individual contexts that are often excluded from analyses of performance and political trust. I will explore the influence of sociocultural factors in the next section.

democracy as a way of governing the regime or support for the political community) in complex political systems and diverse societies have not (the evidence from Kornberg and Clarke 1992 in Canada on support for the political community, for example, dates from the 1980s). And certainly, none have yet dug into each of the potential performance indicators as they have been expanded over the years[134] and compared the effects that each of these evaluations might have across all objects in the political system let alone how these may differ across levels of government[135].

For example, do perceptions of corruption or cynicism influence outlooks toward authorities and institutions more than they drive variations in satisfaction with democracy? Are citizens who have lost during traditional democratic contests (elections), less likely to support government institutions compared to those who have won, or are they likely to feel less pride in their political communities? Are certain levels of government perceived to be producing better outputs than others or to have more honest public officials and do these differing perceptions (if they exist) impact orientations toward all aspects of the political system equally? Answers to these questions, as far as I can tell, have yet to be answered. Thus, in this project, I will dig into citizens' perceptions of the conduct of political authorities in various respects[136], other potential object performance explanations including specific evaluations of objects[137], as well as evaluations of outputs[138], to try and sort out more systematically which have the most severe effects on political support. Even after disentangling how they have been treated in the literature, object performance evaluations and output evaluations continue to be difficult to fully distinguish, thanks both to the findings and discussions that have been put forward to date but also simply due to the interconnectedness of the concepts and how the system functions in reality (for instance, policies do not simply appear without the presence of system actors and institutions). I also admit that what I will present in my analyses based on the data that I have

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[134] Looking, for example, at differences in the effects of cynicism vs. perceptions of honesty and integrity while also controlling for other important sociocultural factors such as efficacy (Marshall, Thomas, and Gidengil 2007) and deference (Nevitte 1996; 2014).

[135] Some studies have started digging into the performance argument a little further, evaluating the performance of local governments, with some looking at public perceptions as well (for example: Pontones Rosa, Pérez Morote, and Muñoz Colomina 2014; Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro 2014; Fitzgerald and Wolak 2016; Ma 2017). Even in Canada, some early work (Falcone and Van Loon 1983) sought to analyze how citizens perceive federalism to be working for different levels and across regions. And although there are certainly other studies that investigate the performance of federalism elsewhere (Rice and Sumberg 1997; Kogan, Lavertu, and Peskowitz 2016) and here in Canada (Bakvis and Skogstad 2008), few (if any) have ever done so by directly examining the perspectives that citizens have of specific measures of performance of different levels of government and the impact these perceptions have on outlooks toward each system object.

[136] I operationalize these as "Performance Explanations", see Appendix A2. They include, for instance, perceptions on the honesty and integrity of authorities across levels and feelings of political cynicism.

[137] I operationalize these as "Specific/Evaluative Support Measures", see Appendix A2. They include, for instance, evaluations of the various jobs being done by institutions across levels of government, confidence, satisfaction, and evaluations of democraticness. One important limitation that I should note here is that, although I am able in my analyses in Chapters 6 and 7 to assess differences in perceptions of performance of a broad variety of authorities (including political vs. non-political ones), due to the size of the samples available, I was not able to test the effect of these views of political versus non-political authorities on assessments of the system more broadly. Instead, I was limited to including only evaluations of political leaders and elected representatives. This said, inclusion of these authorities, for whom support will be shown (starting in Chapter 5) to be rather problematic, provides an important starting point for better understanding the dynamics of support and paving the path forward for future research in the area.

[138] Again, see Appendix A2 for the specific jobs that are asked about in the PCSP surveys. The results of these analyses (output evaluations) will be discussed in Chapter 6.

collected may not dissect these differences as cleanly as is ultimately necessary. I do believe, however, that by starting to pay attention to such distinctions, both in our discussions and in our data collection, we might at least start to move closer to greater clarification of the political support picture (and its explanations) going forward.

Sociocultural Change (Demand-Side)

Of course, although performance-related, supply-side arguments (both in terms of the actions of authorities and the outputs the system produces) have been identified as important, not all of the burden or blame can necessarily be placed on those individuals and institutions that are meant to *deliver* in a political system[139]. Some attention needs also to be paid, as Norris points out in her exploration of the democratic deficit (Norris 2011), to the changing cultural mix of Canadian society, or the "demand side". That is, there are reasons to suppose that within advanced post-industrial democracies such as Canada, not only are democracy's subjects changing in the nature of their demands (what they are asking from the system), they are also changing in the way they are evaluating what they perceive and receive (as they become more educated and more aware, and better able to monitor the outputs that they receive).

As Dalton argues for instance (2005, 133), it is "changing citizen expectations, rather than the failure of governments, [that] are prompting the erosion of political support in advanced industrial democracies". In other words, according to Dalton, it is not the failure of the system to perform (or deliver on demands), and citizens' perceptions of that performance that is entirely to blame for any political support problems that may be exist. Rather, he suggests, it is the changing sociocultural makeup of post-industrial democracies that is making support harder to achieve. Consequently, to better understand why variations in political support may occur, my study also takes a deeper look at the various sociocultural demand-side factors, as well as several contextual and identity factors (which are new to the theory) that may be influencing varying affective feelings about a political systems' objects.

Namely, as Dalton, Norris, and several of their colleagues have suggested, supply-side explanations of support are joined by a second potential line of inquiry which stands out as significantly influencing political support (for example: Norris 1999a; Dalton 2004a; Magalhaes 2006; Norris 2011; Lenard and Simeon 2012; Gidengil and Bastedo 2014). This category of explanations derives from the changes brought about by the evolving sociocultural mix within societies, changes which originate in part from early socialization experiences (R. Inglehart 1971; Dalton 1977; R. Inglehart 1977) and may be much slower to evolve – yet they have been shown, by some, to have important effects on cross-national differences in attitudes towards governments and regimes (R. Inglehart 1990; Abramson and Inglehart 1995; Norris 1999b) – and, presumably, may also be more resistant to any kind of intervention.

Indeed, as public opinion surveys have grown over the past sixty-plus years, so too has the attention paid to the sociocultural factors that drive shifting public opinion on a variety of topics (H. E. Brady 2000). This expansive body of research has produced evidence of important cultural and value shifts in democratic societies that may instead place the onus of responsibility for explaining variations in political support more on the "demand-side" of the political system, rather than solely on evaluations of its functioning or its outputs. In other words, political support

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[139] Certainly, other factors also come to mind immediately, such as the potential differences that might exist between groups based on age and region, or the important influences that attention to information from different sources can have on outlooks toward the political system. These factors and others are discussed in the "Other Factors" section later in this chapter.

in democratic societies is shifting because the people who are evaluating its performance, receiving its benefits (or not), and determining their commitments to it, are changing. Most notably, factors such as the shifting social makeup of societies, changing values and beliefs, and growing divides in how publics view authority and each other, have been proposed as potentially some of the most important characteristics responsible for shifting patterns of political support in advanced industrial democracies today (Almond and Verba 1963; Harrison and Huntington 2001; Dalton 2004a).

Post-Materialism (and post-modernization)

One particularly prominent variant of this argument comes from Ronald Inglehart and his colleagues, who contend and demonstrate that there has been a generational shift away from more materialist ideals that focus on the need for security and stability, toward more post-materialist interests, such as self-fulfillment, a shift which has been underway across advanced industrial societies. Among other things, the underlying logic of this shift suggests that the publics in advanced industrial societies are becoming less deferential to authority, making them more inclined to challenge institutional hierarchies compared to the previous more materialist generations of their parents and grandparents (R. Inglehart 1971; Dalton 1977; R. Inglehart 1977; 1990; 1997; R. Inglehart and Welzel 2005; R. Inglehart 2007; Nevitte 1996; 2014; Dalton 2004d). Yet, despite the great volume of research that has emerged on values, thanks in large part to expansive publicly available data resulting from projects such as the World Values Surveys[140], in-depth more systematic examinations of the effect of such materialist vs. post-materialist values on political support across all political objects and within specific socio-political contexts are rather limited. Likely again, because the WVS do not *also* include as extensive a battery of dedicated political support questions that I believe is necessary to fully capture the scope of system support.

Dalton (2000; 2004d), for instance, tests the effect of post-materialism on political support, using data drawn from a variety of sources, including the WVS as well as the Eurobarometers[141]. He demonstrates in his analyses that changing values may indeed have an important impact on political support – at least when it comes to support that is captured and measured in certain ways[142]. The majority of the analyses of these effects, however, are conducted using simple correlations (or two item mean scores) between whether individuals hold post-materialist values and the resulting influence on support. When testing the effect of various explanations on

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[140] Which I will also employ in Chapter 5.

[141] In "Citizen Politics", which is now in its 7th edition, Dalton also draws on data sources such as International Social Surveys, which do include trust, efficacy indicators, and cynicism indicators as well as a couple of political support questions, namely questions that tap evaluations of democracy today versus in the past or normative evaluations of what governments "should do" in terms of their policy focus (Dalton 2020).

[142] Again, the extent of objects observed is usually rather limited, for instance, to indicators that tap orientations toward a single object (even if orientations toward this object are built on a combination of measures of confidence in various institutions) (Dalton 2000, for example, uses 1990-93 WVS data from across countries including Canada. He combines confidence in the armed forces, civil service, police, parliament, and the legal system. He compares this to confidence in several non-political institutions as well). He later (2004c; and 2004d, looking again at WVS data, including Canada, from the 1980s and 1990s) elaborates on the institutions tapped and also builds on the support dimensions (or objects of support). He also includes tests of the effect of post-materialist values on support across all four objects, not just institutions. This said, the construction of the object indicators (based on the concepts being tapped by the questions included in the dimension factors), remains rather questionable – or at least might require some adjustment (see footnote 71 in Chapter 2).

support, they also draw upon pooled data from across several countries rather than digging into within-country samples. And while such analyses provide great insights and direction, the bulk of them do not at the same time control for the competing effects of other factors, such as citizen's evaluations of performance or other variants within the array of possible sociocultural, demand-side effects.

For instance, Inglehart tests whether increasing post-modern values are tied to declining hierarchical authority (based on measures of confidence in three hierarchically structured institutions: the church, the police, and the armed forces). In his analysis, while he shows a link between increasing post-modern values and declining confidence in these institutions, he also concludes that there is a correlation between post-materialist values and declining support for "a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections" – an indicator he uses to tap "support for democracy" (R. Inglehart 1999)[143]. Unfortunately, as an early analysis of political support, the conceptual definitions of political support he uses still lack the kind of clarity and empirical specificity required to achieve a more straightforward interpretation of support (as I map out in Chapter 2). More specifically, as I will also show in more detail in Chapter 6, by using only one question to tap support for democracy, as Inglehart does in this case, we are rather limited in terms of how much we can truly conclude about what people think about their regime overall (this measure taps only one aspect of the elements that make up our understanding of what can be called 'democratic rule' – being the strength that should be accorded to leaders). Additionally, while important in that these analyses advance our understanding of the links between post-materialist value changes and political support, this early model excludes controls for other possible alternative explanations – although it remains useful in offering a more systemic picture of support across both institutional objects (through confidence in institutions), and for one characteristic of a type of political regime (one that favours strong leaders and less public intervention in the political process).

Although most analyses of sociocultural change, including measures of post-materialist or post-modern values, contain mainly bivariate correlation tests using unidimensional indicators to tap political support, some have attempted to delve slightly deeper (as I suggest is necessary), to simultaneously compare the effects of a variety of explanatory factors on several aspects of the political system. Dalton (2004c), for instance, introduces multivariate analyses[144] to test the effects of post-materialist values compared to other potential explanations, he uses pooled data from across the democratic countries included in the 1995-1998 WVS surveys. By doing this, he provides a cross-national picture of what factors may be most important in driving support and finds that, "while postmaterialists are more critical …[of authorities, institutions, and community]… they are actually stronger adherents of democratic norms" (Dalton 2004c, 76). And, although his operationalization of support objects could be better specified and the range of controls used in his models could be expanded, his findings are extremely important for our understanding of the effects of post-materialist shifts in value orientations on political support. Notably, not only does he confirm that shifting values matter in the context of support across objects, but his analyses also reveal that post-materialist values drive support for different objects in different ways.

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[143] Based on pooled data that include Canada alongside 17 other countries.
[144] From what I can tell, this pooled analysis excludes Canada.

Cognitive Mobilization

In addition to changing values, Dalton has also suggested in his work, that there are other factors that may potentially be to blame for changing patterns of political support. One such alternative explanation for fluctuations he describes as cognitive mobilization (Dalton 2020; see also Norris 1999a, 11). More specifically, Dalton's cognitive mobilization theory suggests that citizens in advanced industrial states are becoming better educated, more interested, and more engaged in politics than generations past, due to certain structural advances such as improved access to higher education and the explosion of new technology. As such, they may be more informed and knowledgeable about how the democratic system works but also more mobilized in the sense that they may be more interested[145] and likely to discuss politics and related issues with others (Alaminos and Penalva 2012; Donovan 2017). As a result, they may also have greater conviction about the democratic political process and, in turn, be more critical about its shortcomings.

Cognitive mobilization is generally described as a condition or environment within which other characteristics (like shifting values) emerge, but it has not always been tested as a direct cause or driver of variations in support. Instead, it is most often tested in the context of declining participation (Dalton 2007), a related but not direct study of political support. Other prominent areas of investigation of the effect of cognitive mobilization is into the effects it has on national or supranational identity (R. Inglehart 1970) or on affective party support (Dalton 1984; 2002; Albright 2009). Although less numerous, some have also ventured into more direct studies of the effects of cognitive mobilization on political support beyond just support for political parties, by linking this sociocultural change to shifting patterns in evaluations of object performance and changing democratic expectations (Donovan and Karp 2006).

In the Canadian context, for instance, Anderson and Goodyear-Grant (2005) highlight the importance of better understanding the effects of cognitive mobilization (alongside other sociocultural changes) in driving a shift in citizens' expectations of the representation that they receive. They suggest that such attention is especially important if we are to consider reacting to shifting perceptions through more permanent structural adaptions: "in-depth examination of public attitudes and representational expectations becomes an imperative first step for wise institutional change" (p. 1030)[146]. Although they use only knowledge[147] as an indicator of cognitive mobility in their models, the findings of their analyses reveal that political knowledge has important effects on all views about representation. While greater knowledge (independent of the effect of education) is generally tied to decreased support for the use of referenda, they also reveal that more knowledgeable respondents prefer delegate-style representation (over

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[145] Presumably, of course, with greater interest will come greater knowledge and vice versa (Rotgans and Schmidt 2017).

[146] The authors also point to the limitations in the available data to fully understand these effects. They draw on the 2000 Canadian Election studies for their analyses. They measure the effects of value differences on support for the use of referenda, choices between delegate versus mandate style representation, and the characteristics that respondents deem to be most important in determining representation (either territorial based on region, or other factors, including language, gender, and ethnicity).

[147] As opposed to a more fully specified measurement of the concept of cognitive mobilization that also includes the degree to which this knowledge is mobilized (through interest and discussion, for example). Of course, while they refer to cognitive mobilization early on in their piece and present mixed findings from previous Canadian research on what we should expect in terms of variations in views toward representation based on differences in cognitive mobilization (likely because these studies also measure cognitive mobilization in different ways) and knowledge, they do not say they will test the concept of cognitive mobilization, but rather the effect of knowledge – based on whether questions tapping knowledge of political facts are answered correctly or not.

mandate style)[148], and that knowledge influences preferences for territorial versus group representation differently for men and women (where more knowledgeable women prefer group representation, while more knowledgeable men prefer territorial/regional representation).

      The most important takeaway from this study and others that investigate the effects of cognitive mobilization on attitudes toward representation and the "crisis" that may be faced by various democratic institutions (Invernizzi-Accetti and Wolkenstein 2017)[149], is that knowledge (and the degree to which it is mobilized) is closely tied to perceptions of object performance (closely linking both the supply- and demand- side of the political support equation) and can have important and varying effects on the ways in which publics view their representatives and the institutions that house them. This interconnection between knowledge, mobilization, expectations, and perceptions of the extent to which political objects deliver on expectations, are closely tied to the next variant of the demand-side argument: efficacy.

Efficacy: Internal vs. external

According to this argument, where an increasingly vast and accessible amount of information combines with growing levels of education, political knowledge, and interest, people's sense of their own subjective political competence or capacity have also been posited as being tied to a declining sense of the system's responsiveness (Esaiasson, Kölln, and Turper 2015). In essence, what this argument suggests is that as citizens' perceptions of their own contribution to the political system has grown, so too has the sense that their contributions are not being heard or answered by that system[150]. This gap between citizens' understanding and their growing capabilities as well as perceptions of the degree to which the system reciprocates, has been termed the 'efficacy gap' (Finkel 1987; Nevitte 2002; McCluskey et al. 2004; Karv, Lindell, and Rapeli 2022).

      In other words, through changing societal values, education, interest, and perceptions of one's own capacity, a growing gap has emerged, where perceptions of one's own internal efficacy are increasingly diverging with the external efficacy of the system's objects (or perceptions of object responsiveness). This development is also said to be contributing to variations in political support, although most empirical studies look mainly at the effect of

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[148] Those who prefer delegate-style representation are coded according to the extent to which they said that their MPs should represent the interests of the riding. Although, they also admit that the questions that they drew from the CES are rather limited in testing the difference between these two types of representation.

[149] The authors suggest that due to shifts in cognitive mobilization and participation, political parties are losing important political support. As such, they propose that to remedy declining support, considering the increasing levels of knowledge and engagement in society, that parties should respond by becoming more deliberative. Thus, by considering the sociocultural shifts present in society, we may start to better understand why certain objects are perceived to be falling short.

[150] Others have argued that this efficacy gap may also be between what citizens feel they can contribute or what "influence" they have in reality compared to what they "ought to have" (McCluskey et al. 2004). Failure to deliver on these expectations may in turn lead to withdrawal from the political system through changing political participation (M. R. Anderson 2010a; 2010b; see also, L. Feldman and Hart 2016; Rico, Guinjoan, and Anduiza 2020).

efficacy on political participation[151]. Add to this also, the related line of thinking that suggests that with the shift away from materialist and survival values toward greater self-expression and self-fulfilment, and the growing gap between one's self-perceived sense of competence and their waning perceptions of system responsiveness, has also emerged an ever-declining sense of deference toward authority in various forms (Nevitte 1996).

Deference: Respect for authority

As Inglehart points out (1999), and as mentioned earlier, this declining respect for authority can impact the confidence that the public has in a variety of hierarchically organized institutions including the police, the church, and the army. Indeed, looking directly at the empirical evidence based on a now commonly used measure of "respect for authority", Inglehart reported that in Canada alone from 1982 to 1990, overall respect for authority dropped by 13% (one of the largest drops among the 36 countries observed).

To update these results, my own analysis of the more recent WVS data (R. F. Inglehart et al. 2020) reveals that, although there was a slight increase in deference in 2000 (up 4%) and in 2006 (up another 3%), by 2020, respect for authority in Canada had dropped to its lowest level yet (from 76% in 1982 to 43% in 2020)[152]. These numbers are particularly concerning considering that all of democracy's institutions are, for the most part, hierarchically structured. Consequently, it is fair to assume, that declining patterns of deference to authorities within these institutions might also have serious implications for Canadians' perceptions of their core government institutions and authorities, an effect that has yet to be extensively tested in Canada since Nevitte's influential work in the late 1990s[153]. Of course, when looking at deference toward authority, the lines between whether this is an indicator on the supply-side or the demand-side of the political support model are especially blurred. Indeed, respect for authority, is ultimately a measure of authority support (while also being an affective assessment of

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[151] For an early study of efficacy, its conceptualization and link to trust and political behavior, see for example Craig (1979). For a new approach to understanding efficacy in terms of perceptions of the "willingness" of authorities versus the "ability" of authorities to respond, see de Moor (2016). This "ability" is something that will be further explored in the next phases of my research (through interviews with elites and an expanded series of questions on the adaptive capacity of governments). Scotto, Xena, and Reifler (2021) also offer a discussion of the ways in which political efficacy can be measured.

[152] These are based on the publicly available 1981-2020 WVS pooled country data file, looking at results for those who stated "a good thing" on the question "I'm going to read out a list of various changes in our way of life that might take place in the near future. Please tell me for each one, if it were to happen, whether you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or don't you mind? 'Greater respect for authority'". Note that the proportion that my analysis reveals for 1982 is not the same as that reported by Inglehart in his 1999 chapter (it is off by just over 1%). This may be due to revisions done to the datafile since it was originally reported, or to slight differences in the weighting applied to these data by the researchers. This said, the overall conclusions remain the same.

[153] Among other things, Nevitte looked at confidence in government institutions and compared this to general orientations toward authorities to determine the impact on the perceived desirability of changes to the status quo (based on whether respondent felt that reforms should be made to government, whether they thought reforms were happening fast enough). His regression analyses revealed that, in Canada, orientations toward authority are on par with confidence in institutions in driving support for changes to the "political status quo" (Nevitte 1996, 310).

authorities[154]). Given the factor's important role in shaping our understanding of political culture in Canada (Nevitte 1996; 2014), however, I have included the measure in my own work as a sociocultural change/demand-side factor. This said, by testing it independently from other factors, I will be able to draw conclusions about how this concept holds up when tested within a more complex and fully specified model of support explanations.

Media Exposure – Traditional and Online

Related to all of this are the potential effects of the media. In this case, there are two primary and opposing arguments that have been made about the effect that exposure to information through news media may be having on public perceptions of their democracies. That is, some argue that exposure is having a negative effect (Patterson 1994) while others argue that this effect may in fact be more mitigating and positive (Norris 2011). While it is not difficult to imagine that watching negative news can lead to growing cynicism about politics and democracy, it is relevant to note too that Norris' more recent evidence suggests that, in contrast to this media malaise theory, increased consumption of news may in fact work to reduce the democratic deficit by making the public more aware and perhaps even more understanding of the challenges faced by our political leaders, institutions, as well as democracies more generally (Norris 2011).

In his analyses, on the other hand, Dalton demonstrates that greater television usage is linked to decreases in support for authorities, institutions, and democracy, but greater support for community (Dalton 2004c)[155]. Yet, his conclusion is to suggest that, although support is influenced differently depending on the object, "there is little evidence that media users are more sceptical about the political process" (p.74)[156]. He also cites Norris' study "that 'we need to look elsewhere than television news for the source of our political ills'". While it is extremely important that we look elsewhere for drivers of support variations (as I have been arguing consistently up to this point), we should also be cautious in discounting certain explanations (such as the effect of the media). Especially considering, as Dalton admits (p. 73), that the WVS questions as they are asked, do not include any information about the content of the "television usage" reported by respondents (if it is news or something else), nor are any questions asked about the public's attention to any other media sources (such as radio or print, or even more non-traditional sources such as social media).

Indeed, the types of media (and content) that publics are paying attention to are potentially important factors to consider when assessing political support and drawing conclusions about media effects on various political objects. Notably, a fast-growing variant in the area of research on the effect of information and news on the democratic deficit, focuses on whether the news accessed through new social media platforms has the same effect as more traditional sources of

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[154] Based, primarily on the way this question is asked "do you think that great respect for authority is a good thing". In other words, the question ultimately might require (presumably depending on the respondent) that the person answering the question make a normative judgement about whether greater respect for authority *should* happen, while also asking them to *evaluate* its benefits. As Inglehart and Welzel (2005, 157) explain also: "a democratic system will become stable only if people have internalized democratic norms and practice them in their daily relationships". In other words, the evaluative and affective assessment of authorities in this case becomes embedded in citizens' underlying values and beliefs about democracy. An effect that makes parsing out different objects and explanations even more complex.

[155] Again, these data are drawn from 1995-98 WVS from several countries, excluding Canada.

[156] He says the effect of media use (based on "hours of TV usage") on some objects (where it decreases support for institutions and the regime) "is countered" by the improvements it makes to support for community (Dalton 2004c, 74).

information. Here, the findings from research conducted so far seems rather mixed. Some of the results suggest that new social media may be "hijacking democracy" (Olaniran and Williams 2020)[157], whereas others propose that it may be good for democracy as it offers mobilizing effects that improve citizen involvement and create participation opportunities that did not previously exist (Wike et al. 2022)[158]. Still others propose that the effects on democracy may be even more complicated, at least when it comes to political trust, in that effects seem to differ not just between exposure to traditional versus non-traditional media, but also across various online media sources (Ceron 2015; Ceron and Memoli 2016) as well as across content producers[159].

When it comes to testing the effects of media, either traditional or non-traditional, in the Canadian context, findings are still emerging. Ruderman (2014, 49) looks, for example, at the effects of the consumption of internet news compared to other types of news (including television, print and radio). He finds, in his analysis of the Samara Citizens' Survey from 2012, that internet news has a positive effect on MP evaluations, yet attention to traditional news sources is not significant[160]. When asked directly about whether online media is good for democracy, Wikes et al. (2022) find that, according to data from the Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Survey in 2022, Canadians are almost evenly split on whether they think social media has been a good or bad thing for democracy (47% say it's a bad thing, compared to 49% who say it's good). Meanwhile, although Canadians are less inclined than Americans to think that the internet and social media have a negative impact on society more generally (average effect of 2.54, compared to 3.05 in the US), respondents across most of the democracies surveyed think the internet plays a significant role in spreading "false information and rumors" which can present an important threat to democracy. They also report that, in the US at least, political leaders play a big role in this spread of misinformation for political gain[161].

Similarly, in a recent Leger study (Leger, Institute for Public Relations, and McMaster University 2022), they find that 70% of Canadians surveyed do not trust politicians to provide "accurate news or information", even though they tend to blame politicians for the spread of disinformation only slightly less than Americans do (67% compared to 77% in the US). Furthermore, their polls reveal that 72% of Canadians feel that disinformation threatens Canadian democracy, and due to the disinformation they perceive to be receiving from Canadian

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[157] It certainly has provided social movements with a new tool to engage in and influence democracy. The authors look at examples drawn from studies that examine online media content during events like certain US elections and votes on Brexit in the UK.

[158] The Pew Research Center findings are drawn from surveys conducted in several democracies, including Canada.

[159] This includes journalists who, according to recent evidence, may be spinning the content of their reporting depending on their biases and social networks (Wihbey, Joseph, and Lazer 2019). Other research into the content of media consumed in a variety of ways also reveals that the mode of information delivery may not be as important as what is contained within each source and the framing with which the content is delivered (Blidook 2008; Adriaansen, van Praag, and de Vreese 2010). If the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation during the pandemic (Garneau and Zossou 2021) provided any insights, it was the significant mobilizing effect that such information can have and the important consequences for democratic stability – as seen by the January 6th, 2021 protests in Washington or the occupation of Parliament Hill in Ottawa in 2022. The next wave of PCSP data collection includes new questions that help to tap the nature of much of this information.

[160] Likely because the model also includes a measure of performance which emerges as the most significant driver of support in his model.

[161] This is another example of how closely intertwined different concepts of support and drivers of its variation might be. On one hand, studies may measure the effect of the media on support. However, without controlling for perceptions of or trust in political authorities (as another potentially biased source of information), our conclusions about the media as a key driver of support variations will, at minimum, be incomplete, and at worst, be misleading when pinpointing what is most to blame for the support problems that we observe.

sources, one out of seven Canadians turn to non-Canadian sources to get their news instead. The study findings also indicate that Canadian respondents are more distrusting of social media (between 64 and 77%) as an accurate source for news or information compared to American respondents (between 59 and 72%). However, they do not report findings on the degree to which respondents feel that more traditional news sources are responsible for the spread of disinformation. This said, they do demonstrate that only half of respondents (51%) think that sources like the CBC are doing a good job of "combatting" disinformation (although it is not specified if this is on television or online). Meanwhile even fewer (47%) think that CBC radio is doing a good job in this regard, while other news outlets, including local broadcasters, are doing even worse (between 41 and 43%)[162].

All of this said, despite a growing interest not only in the public's perceptions of media (see also Lebouc 2022) and their use of various types of media (Baugh 2020; Statistics Canada, Morris, and Séguin 2023), but also into the quality of information that is shared (MacNeil 2024)[163], the content of the information covered by various news sources (Public Policy Forum 2017; 2018), as well as the foundations[164] on which news sources are built in this country, still remain an area to be further examined and understood in order to more fully understand the impact that attention to any of these sources of information has on perceptions of the political system and all its parts.

Social Capital: Interpersonal trust
Moving lastly to the concept of social trust, which is distinct from the political support indicator of *political* trust, the literature suggests that this too may be an important area of concern when it comes to variations in political support[165] especially as it relates to the ways in which it strengthens the shared social fabric required to support the healthy functioning of a democratic political system (Kenneth Newton 1999; 2001; Paxton 2002). The theory in this case suggests that as societies have begun moving away from the community groups that de Toqueville first identified as having such positive effects on the social fabric responsible for much of democracy's success (Elshtain 1996), the degree of social trust resulting from close social ties and rich community engagement have also been shown to be experiencing an important and damaging decline.

Indeed, as Putnam's (1993; 2000) influential work on this topic suggests, expansive declines in interpersonal trust, termed social capital, are underway as a result of decreasing

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[162] Interestingly, they also report that only 41% think that colleges and universities are doing a good job of combatting disinformation. We will be delving into perceptions of non-political institutions such as colleges and universities, as well as the leaders of these academic institutions and academics more generally, in the next round of PCSP surveys.

[163] This is clearly a concern to the federal government also, as indicated in part by the nearly three hundred thousand dollars they paid to Ekos Research Associates in 2022-23 to collect information on public views on disinformation through the "Understanding the Impact of Public Trust, Misinformation and Disinformation Across Policy Areas and our Democratic Society" study (Government of Canada 2023a) as well as what is presumably (Dzsurdzsa 2021) being asked about in their "Continuous Tracking of Canadians' Views".

[164] Taylor and DeCillia (2021) present an in-depth analysis of Canadian news media based on three major dimensions: Freedom/Information, Equality/Interest Mediation, and Control/Watchdog. They suggest that despite strong foundations, the future of the news industry in this country may be threatened.

[165] Although a major focus on this research is on the link and differences between social and political trust (in authorities and institutions) and not necessarily on the effects that social trust can have on affective orientations toward the political system and all its parts.

engagement in social activities and groups, as individuals are becoming more detached and less interactive, spending more time in their cars or public transit, commuting from one place to the next, or more time in front of their televisions or other preferred technology. The end result, argues Putnam, is that these changing activities are making people and communities less cohesive and far less trusting of one another (Putnam 2000) and this is likely to have negative implications on political support. Much research has been conducted in this area of social capital or interpersonal, social trust (Zmerli and van der Meer 2017)[166], but some also warned earlier on of the ways in which this research has developed (Jackman and Miller 1998).

Notably, depending on how it is interpreted, trust may have important effects within democratic societies either by strengthening social ties and cohesion within societies (generating social capital) or through the improved economic or political performance of democratic institutions that result from a strong network of social institutions, social cohesion, and institutional trust (Putnam 1993; Algan 2018). However, as Jackman and Miller (1998) describe, these two discussions are quite different as one involves trust that already exists within society (or within individuals: as "endogenous") resulting in the creation and maintenance of social institutions that, in turn, help to foster democratic success. Meanwhile, the other suggests that declining involvement in social institutions (where social capital is "exogenous", measured and built on networks of trust[167]) are to blame for declining levels of interpersonal trust.

This latter form of social capital is the one that is most often discussed in studies of political culture[168] and is closely tied to the success or failure of political institutions and democracies (as well as linked to discussions of vertical trust in authorities and institutions or discussions of political participation). In this complex societal interplay, therefore, trust (measured as interpersonal, between members of society) can be either an important precursor to democratic success, or it may be a condition that emerges or disappears depending on perceptions of the social and political system. As such, in this project I investigate the effects of social trust on political support, but I do not lose sight of the possibility that political support may in turn feed back into both social and political trust[169].

Of course, in addition to the preceding sociocultural forces, it is important not to ignore the basic demographic heterogeneity of Canadians (that may be made even more powerful by the broad range of identity backgrounds). Certainly, these diverse Canadians are likely to vary in their support for the political system, based on the extent to which its outputs coincide with their diverse demands. These cleavages between groups may be captured, to a certain extent, by exploring the many value and conditional differences (such as the degree of cognitive mobilization or attention paid to the media) described here, as well as traditional group differences (such as language or orientations toward federalism and sovereignty). However, to fully understand the true complexity of political support in such a heterogeneous society, I argue that it is particularly important to also try to pay some direct attention to the various identity divides that are present, especially the ones that are often politically mobilized within these

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[166] Another recent account of trust, mistrust, and distrust in the context of multinational democracies is available from the works in Karmis and Rocher's (2018) edited collection where the various chapters talk not only about the definitions and understandings of trust, but also the complex interplay of trust both within nations and between them.

[167] Or, as I will investigate in my future work, changing patterns of political support.

[168] The authors cite the political culture works of Almond and Verba (1963) and those that emerged from it.

[169] I have conducted this analysis outside of this dissertation and my findings reveal that support does indeed have important effects on interpersonal trust toward a variety of groups in society, as well as on trust in a broader range of governmental institutions (including legislatures and governments, as well as courts and the civil service).

societies. So, it is to a review of the relevant aspects of the supporting literature on this topic that I turn to next.

Identity (Building on the Demand-side)

Expressed identity is yet another alternative line of investigation within the realm of demand-side sociocultural explanations of political support that I also plan to incorporate and consider in my analysis. Dalton (2004c) includes group membership, for instance, within his accounting of the effects of social capital on support, suggesting that membership in multiple groups (versus few or none) is a way to measure greater social capital. Using early WVS data, he finds that increased group membership is significantly linked to greater levels of political support across all political objects. Although insightful, to dig deeper into the dynamics of group identity, I believe that identity warrants its own dedicated focus.

The identity argument (to the extent that it is used a standalone factor that potentially influences political support) contends that the presence of multiple or even cross-cutting individual and group identities within a society, especially when politically mobilized, may contribute directly to variations in levels of political support (for some examples: Rummens 2000; Mendelsohn 2002; Abdelal et al. 2006; M. R. Anderson 2010a; Winter 2011; Bühlmann and Hänni 2012; Harell et al. 2021)[170]. But how does this transpire? As Dalton (2004c) proposes in his work, this happens through the trust ties that are built within societies. In this section I build on this understanding a bit more by reviewing some of the ways in which identity has been conceived so far (either directly or indirectly) in the context of political support.

The first key point to stress here is that the concept of identity is complex and it is often intertwined in the literature with the notion of diversity, where it is examined insofar as it is mobilized for conflict or political gain (Huddy 2001; Rummens 2000; 2003). And while the presence of diverse identities may have important effects on political support, the way in which these direct effects of identity on support are understood is often limited to only a cursory discussion because, I would suggest, the primary focus of this literature has been elsewhere[171]. For instance, one major focus in the literature has been on the diversity of backgrounds, values, and beliefs that make Canada so unique (Wayland 1997; McLachlin 2004; Angus Reid and CBC 2016). In fact, Canada's diversity has even been touted as a source of tremendous pride (Trudeau 2015). Moreover, it is Canada's success in managing this diversity, or rather, limiting conflict as a result of it, which has led the Canadian case to being one that is widely studied as a model of success (Vipond 2008).

More specifically, when it comes to managing diversity, it has been argued that through conventional brokerage politics, the interests of Canadians of diverse backgrounds and beliefs have been successfully accommodated and consistently united under broad and inclusive political platforms (Carty and Cross 2010). Brokerage politics of this kind have allowed the consideration of diverse interests and afforded the possibility of reconciling and finding ways to maintain unity in the face of diversity, while also considering the general good of society as a whole. Also, since the Charter in the 1980s in particular, the protection of diverse identities has been attributed to the entrenched protection of individual and minority group rights and

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[170] Studies tend toward using identity as an indicator or potential driver within investigations of political behavior or analyses of social inclusion.

[171] Similar to the concept of "community", the use of "identity" as a variable also suffers from a great deal of inconsistency across disciplines, both in its measurement and conceptualization (Huddy 2001; Abdelal et al. 2006; see also M. R. Anderson 2010a).

freedoms, and other policies and priorities intended to preserve and protect cultures (McLachlin 2004; Soroka, Johnston, and Banting 2007; Reitz et al. 2009). In all, it is not so difficult to see why and how the study of identity politics, in the Canadian case especially, has grown in relevance to become an important area of research for many prominent and influential Canadian scholars (for further discussion, see Simeon 2002, 24). That is, Canada is a deeply diverse society, partly as a result of its history and openness to and need for immigration, and thus a large preoccupation of our politics has been dedicated to dealing with and managing the consequences of the diversity that has resulted, so too has our research followed suit (M. Smith 2009).

Still, it is relevant to recognize that diversity can also complicate matters. These complications may, in turn, have confounding and stressful effects on the political system in that heterogeneous societies come with diverse demands which can easily become more difficult to reconcile and govern (Dalton 2004a; Labelle 2005; Reitz et al. 2009). Moreover, different groups are likely to have different experiences (based on their successful or failed interactions with government). Identity groups may, in certain instances, also be politicised or mobilized for political gain both by other members of society and by political elites (Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Hoerner and Hobolt 2020), some even to the extreme (Long 2022; Yakabuski 2023). Indeed, as identity groups become mobilized, additional strain may be placed on democratic institutions and the ability of different political objects to deliver on public needs and demands may suffer (Dalton 2004a; Fish and Brooks 2004; Labelle 2005; Abrajano and Alvarez 2010; Lenard and Simeon 2012).

In some cases individuals and groups may turn to the courts to resolve disputes or uphold their interests (Brodie 2001) or even to the media (Gamson 2009). Doing this, however, may turn debates and discussions over public and group interests into adversarial battles and reduce the prospects for comprise (Elshtain 1996). Furthermore, in some cases, when difference pits individuals and groups against each other, the chasms that result may become irreconcilable, at least in the short term (M. Hetherington and Weiler 2018).

Also, because societies such as Canada are more diverse now than ever before in terms of both their values (Abramson and Inglehart 1995; R. Inglehart 1997; Kanji and Bilodeau 2006; Kanji and Doyle 2009; Kanji 2011), and their overall linguistic, ethnic and racial makeup (Statistics Canada 2017), identity divides can more often become prominent, and take centre stage, as the political process has to grapple with allocating values across a greater variety of citizen preferences and demands (Nevitte and Kanji 2004; Dalton 2004d; McGrane, Berdahl, and Bell 2017). Indeed, it is possible to argue that it is pressures such as these that helped nudge the Canadian party structure to become more fractured and expand as the traditional brokerage model and party system was no longer capable (or willing, depending on who was at the helm) of adequately managing and responding to the expanding diversity of citizens needs (Carty 2006b; 2006a; Gagnon and Tanguay 2007; J. J. Wesley 2009; Johnston 2017).

Thus, in this context of great diversity, it becomes clearer (at least for our purposes) that not all identity groups may emerge from their interactions with the political process as winners (Schwartz 1983) and that they may even turn out more frequently to see themselves as losers in the political process, which could also contribute to variations in the degree to which they feel or express their political support (Kolln and Aarts 2015). Therefore, a greater understanding of the dynamics of identity politics within this context and its implications for political support is necessary. Moreover, it is also necessary to note that, while several characteristics of the diversity of our society and identity politics here in Canada have been explored – namely,

differing values, backgrounds, and language as discussed above – others still remain largely underexplained. Indeed, I would contend that the diversity of individual and group identities and the direct study of their impact on political support have been mostly under-examined[172].

Of course, it is also important to mention here that there have been those who have offered bold and broader speculations on the relevance and increasing effects that identity clashes might have on democracies in the future (Huntington 1993; 1996). Yet, increasing clashes between states and societies aside, this still says very little about how identity differences *within* societies might impact the way in which a society's individual members perceive their own political system. Put simply, differences between identity groups may be heightened when they are mobilized, which can have the effect of providing great benefits to some groups but could conceivably also leave other groups feeling more left out and even potentially oppressed (for instance, Howard-Hassmann 2018). Also, diverse interests associated with differing identities (as with different values) may create great complexities in the demands laid on the political system, and cause rising levels of stress, which may result in unequal outcomes for different groups and even failures of the system to deliver on all that is expected of it[173]. And all of this may have important implications for political support.

None of this is to deny of course, that in terms of the outcomes of identity mobilization, and conflicting group demands, that there may also be some positive consequences. For example, social and political mobilization may result in productive and beneficial outcomes, especially for the more marginalized members of society (Ahuja 2019). That is, this mobilization may inspire either the creation of "community institutions" that promote democratic involvement (Elshtain 1995), ethnic party mobilization which is more common in other areas of the world (Chandra 2005; Helbling, Reeskens, and Stolle 2015), or the assembly of "policy communities" that also help represent diverse interests and elevate the voices of those that are otherwise unheard (Coleman and Skogstad 1990).

In addition to mobilization through institutions such as the courts and the media, membership in certain groups may also have direct effects on individuals' actions, even when those groups are not institutionally organized or politically mobilized. Early sociological research shows that identity "is associated with situated expectations for conduct and has the capacity for affecting behavior by providing the person with a frame of reference for interpreting the situation and planning actions in it" (Biddle et al. 1985, 160). As such, it is reasonable to assume that actions and behaviors, that are particularly shaped by self-identification or membership in a particular group, may also shape the way in which individuals of that group both engage in and experience democratic life, just as it shapes their actions and behaviors in other ways (Pavlenko and Norton 2007).

Pavlenko and Norton draw on Anderson's (1991) famous work on 'imagined communities' to investigate the effect of various group "identity clusters" on language learning, demonstrating

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[172] With the exception of national, regional or territorial identity (which itself is mostly explored in the European context)

[173] Recognizing this challenge, the federal government has expressed its "commitment to Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus)" across its departments and policies. For instance, the Department of Justice's (2018) official statement on the approach expresses that: "GBA Plus helps to ensure that federal government legislation, policies, programs and other initiatives are responsive, inclusive and reflective of diverse experiences and realities in order to address inequities and barriers…An intersectional approach requires consideration of how multiple overlapping factors shape legal, social, health and economic opportunities and outcomes, as well as barriers to accessing systems, programs or services. This intersectional approach informs GBA Plus and can help foster inclusion and address inequities."

in very practical terms, the ways in which identity can shape preferences and behaviors. Moreover, this work suggests that imagined communities formed around shared identity may be more than just territorial (or national) as originally proposed by Anderson (see also Phillips 2002; and M. R. Anderson 2010a)[174]. It is conceivable too, as others have suggested (Pal 1993) that there are close links that form between individuals, authorities, and the state that can be developed and cultivated through the ways in which these group identities (or imagined communities) are constructed and reinforced. Furthermore, given these close ties in identity formation, mobilization, promotion, or exclusion between communities and the state, it is reasonable to assume that membership in a particular group would have important effects on political support for the system's various objects – depending on the group with which an individual identifies and that group's experiences with the political system.

So, let's turn now to considering what has been done so far (in terms of research and study) when it comes to trying to understand the effect of identity on political support? To my knowledge, the depth of this pool of work remains fairly limited. Beyond looking at the direct effect of value differences, no extensive empirical studies of the influence of varying 'group' identities on political support have yet been conducted. This said, there has been a fair amount of work done on the effects of 'national' or territorial identity on political support. In fact, some have even opted to use national identity as, itself, an indicator of political support. On balance, these studies have argued that strong 'national identity" is quite important for political support.

For one, strong national identity is linked to nation building and a shared sense of community (D. Miller 1995) that, as Easton originally proposed, might help members of that community to work together (Easton 1957). This has been discussed and tested, especially in Europe in the context of political support in the European Union. In this sense, shared national identity is said to constitute the nation beyond its legal and bureaucratic structures. And in this respect, the idea of unity through shared values[175], common goals, and history is tied to the strength of the political system – and greater diversity or the dilution of this shared national identity, through migration for example, is believed to possibly erode some of this national attachment or support (D. Miller 1995; L. McLaren 2012).

It becomes clear, when discussed in this way, that the idea of 'national' community or shared national identity could easily be conflated with support for the political community. In other words, identification with a common polity or 'national identity' is not very distinguishable from support for the 'political community'[176]. Conflating the two terms, however, leads to significant confusion, especially when trying to distinguish political *support* from the elements

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[174] Anderson (M. R. Anderson 2010a) suggests that studies of communities in political science focus generally on "locational" communities which are delimited mainly based on geographic territories. She proposes that "relational" communities, built upon certain common interests or identities (citing Bess et al. (2002)), play a vital role in developing one's "sense of community", which in turn has even more important (yet understudied) implications for political behavior and attitudes toward the political system (levels of efficacy, trust, knowledge, interest, and participation).

[175] Banks (2004) and his colleagues (Banks et al. 2005), in the context of arguing the value of civic education for improving democracy, discuss the balance that needs to be struck between "unity" and "diversity". Here, they suggest that for strong democracies, the benefits of unity should be taught while also embracing, and not erasing, difference.

[176] Dalton (1999; 2004a) also outlines "sense of national identity" as a way to measure affective orientations toward political community.

that might influence that support[177]. McLaren (2012, 167)[178] states for instance that "political systems are thought to be prone to failure if there is an absence of political community – again, if individuals in the system are not 'sufficiently oriented toward one another' and willing to support the existence of a group of individuals who can negotiate and settle differences". This concept of political community – while it was originally measured in this way by Easton (1957, 391–92) – should be further clarified so that we can better assess and understand it.

That is, it is only by separating out the interpersonal relationships (the complex web of interactions and identification between individuals and groups) that exist *within* the political community from the community itself, as a political object, that we can come to a clearer assessment of what might, in turn, drive variations in political support. Notably, as Easton elaborates further in his 1957 article, the "American Civil War is a concrete example of the cessation of input of support for the political community…the issue turned on whether there was sufficient mutual identification among the members of the system for them to be able to work together as a political community" (1957, 392). In this example, working together and a common identity are distinct from political community – these are factors influencing the survival of the entity which is the political community (in this case an American national state). Thus, I reiterate, to properly identify, measure, and understand the complexity of what Easton includes in this idea of "mutual identification" it is important to keep it distinct from the object that is the political community.

Consequently, for the purposes of distinguishing political support from identity in this study, I define the concept of identification *with* a political community as *territorial identity* (a sense of attachment to, rather than an assessment of). This can be better understood by thinking about this attachment as purely identification, through statements such as "I identify as Canadian", a concept that can also be interchanged with national identity – at least when referring to identification with Canada or even identification with Quebec. This is distinct from support *for* the object: political community. Support for this particular political object, as I will demonstrate extensively in the upcoming chapters[179], consists of assessments, either affective or evaluative, of the community (whether the national, provincial, or municipal ones).

In a similar vein, for the purposes of the upcoming analyses, I define *group identity* as the degree to which someone sees themselves as part of a particular assembly of individuals (whether organized, mobilized, or not)[180]. Individuals may identify with members of their own group (who share potentially similar characteristics) or with members of other groups (i.e. they

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[177] Such challenges in the measurement of political support concepts are not new, as Kornberg and Clarke pointed out early on (1983, 6). Mendelsohn (2002) also explained later, when examining the concept of identity more directly, that feelings thermometer used to tap assessments of the political community are often used as indicators of identity. He presents findings on this measure of community support (employed in the CES until about 2000) and suggests that such indicators "are the most abstracted from individuals' *sense of self* and may be the least reliable measures to gauge the potential for nationalist mobilization" (p. 85, emphasis added). In other words, feelings thermometers are better suited to assess object support rather than national identification (or assessment of one's own identity). I will draw a similar distinction between assessments of pride based on questions that tap pride in *being* Canadian versus pride *in* Canada, in Chapter 5.

[178] This is in no way meant as a criticism of McLaren's very fine and careful work. Not only am I not in any position to criticize her scholarship but also, her research served extensively to inspire work on my MA thesis and has been of great help to me when thinking about concepts in this current project, not to mention she has made significant contributions to the theoretical and empirical understandings of political support more generally.

[179] In Chapter 5, I give a more concrete example of how our interpretation of support for community can differ depending on how the question is asked, for example: "pride in *being* Canada" versus "pride in Canada".

[180] Similar to the idea of "relational" communities mentioned above.

may identify with particular groups even if they do not share the same obvious characteristics, such as similar backgrounds or demographic traits). In other words, in the spirit of Easton's original writings, I understand identity as the strands of the overall fabric that bind or divide societies. The overall strength of the fabric represents the intensity of orientations 'toward one another', the cross-cutting territorial and group bonds, the 'mutual identification among members' or lack thereof. However, unlike Easton, I distinguish between mutual identification based on group identification (group identity) versus those based on territorial identification (territorial identity) and set out to examine the effects of group identity alone, leaving territorial identity to a separate study[181].

Finally, it is important to mention here also, that the few studies that exist that reach beyond 'territorially' defined identity and link these identity discussions to political support, do little to consistently define, measure, or discuss these identities in any systematic way as they relate directly to political support. For example, one particular attempt at analyzing the impact of identity on political support employs indicators that measure the way in which certain policies (like immigration) might threaten an existing shared national culture and how views on this in turn impact political support (see also, L. M. McLaren 2015). Others have evaluated how multicultural policy aimed at redefining "conceptions of national identity" influence political support (Citrin, Levy, and Wright 2014). Not only do these studies conflate group and territorial identity (i.e. mixing the idea of 'shared culture' with 'national identity'), they also mix understandings of group identity with the values, priorities or beliefs that may serve to construct these group identities. Understanding identity in these ways, looking not necessarily at the identity group, but rather at the values that underlie different identities, is certainly helpful for better understanding the social fabric and shared cultures that make up democratic societies. However, it also tends to confuse the different concepts and mechanisms at play between values, identity, and support, and leads to even more complication when trying to parse out and compare distinct drivers of variations in political support.

Additionally, even in Canada, while significant work on identities has also focused on how identities are constructed, either through the social construction of these identities, the appropriation of identities, or their redefinition (Rummens 2000; 2003), very few studies ever investigate the direct effect of group identification on political support (for instance, the extent to which any shared identity might affect views of the state). Of course, there are studies that exist that dig into identity and link this to support for specific policies. However, similar to the European works, many of them focus mostly on national identity and the resulting orientations toward various policies, such as the benefits provided by the welfare state, attitudes toward immigration, and support for multiculturalism policies (Johnston et al. 2010; Raney and Berdahl 2011; Citrin, Johnston, and Wright 2012)[182].

This said, there are some who have started to dig even deeper, broadening our understanding of group identities, the effects of identity in Canada on support for welfare state

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[181] I do not analyze territorial identity here. Instead, as I explain, I stick to analyses of group identity only and the effect of such group identities on political support for each object (including the political community, which is not measured as territorial identity but rather as pride, patriotism, and feelings of like or dislike for the community). In a separate study that I am currently working on, I do investigate the effect of political support on territorial identities and find that, as a consequence of variations in political support, territorial identities do indeed fluctuate.

[182] Although efforts are being made to expand our understanding of what we understand 'national identity' to mean to different individuals and how this ties into support for the welcoming and acceptance of new members in our societies (Bilodeau and Turgeon 2021 who contributed their own questions to our PCSP in 2017 to tap what these identities mean to Canadians).

redistribution, and the realities that Canadians view some groups as deserving of support, while others may be less so (Banting, Soroka, and Koning 2013; Harell et al. 2021). In their recent work, Harell and her colleagues have delved more carefully into the dynamics of identity and support for the welfare state by conducting empirical investigations that examine the degree to which a sense of "shared membership", which reaches beyond just measures of national attachment[183] (Ibid, p. 990) can impact how deserving Canadians view certain groups to be of the welfare support they might receive. The authors argue that to properly understand (and in turn promote) shared membership and a willingness to support redistribution policies, we need to broaden our understanding and measurement of national identity (or "we-ness") through an expansion of the notion of "shared membership" (Harell et al. 2021; see also, Bühlmann and Hänni 2012; Marsiglio 2023).

Work such as this does not explicitly identify itself as directly speaking to the broader literature on political support, however, a lot can be gleaned from the new data it brings forth, the revisions made to concepts such as national identity, and the complexity of the dynamics tying identity to support within democratic societies. This said, however, when drawing on these studies, we should also be careful not to fall into the trap of further confusing the notions of identity, community, and support, remaining mindful of the complex dynamics between each concept within complex societies while also attempting to keep each empirically (and conceptually) distinct.

In other words, while several of the studies I have discussed here provide important insights, none that I have come across so far have systematically measured the influence of group identity directly – by evaluating citizens' identification with specific groups – on political support for objects in the political system. Their focus has instead been on the identity explanations of support for specific policies (mainly redistributive welfare state policies, and, until recently, mostly just national identity). Meanwhile, earlier research has shown that "support for redistribution depends more on trust in government institutions than on interpersonal trust, and that trust in government is less sensitive to changes in the ethnic composition of society" (Rothstein 1998; as referenced by Banting, Soroka, and Koning 2013, 168)[184]. So, if we are to understand support (be it support for political objects, or support for the policies that the political system produces), I would argue that a much clearer understanding of the effects of group identity on perceptions of the political system are of utmost importance – an understanding that reaches beyond just political trust in a few institutions to include support across all objects.

Of course, it should be noted that I will seek initially to identify whether there is any direct effect of membership in or connection with a particular group on political support – ignoring, to a certain extent, the underlying values, histories, or beliefs that serve to assemble or construct

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[183] Their battery includes eight "items" that measure respondent's evaluations of others' commitment to shared membership, including more traditional political support measures (for community), such as the degree to which they feel that others identify with the national community, and how patriotic they perceive these others to be, as well as more specific assessments of their willingness to care about others, sacrifice or fight, or even go to war for the country.
[184] As Hwang (2017) points out, most of the research in the Canadian context to date has been focused on the effects of ethnic diversity on social trust, as opposed to political trust. When studies have examined political trust in Canada, they have been centered mainly on the more traditional group divide between Francophones and Anglophones. Still, according to Hwang (p.26), group differences – at least in terms of trust in a handful of institutions – do exist: "the Canadian evidence, though not extensive, suggests that both French Canadians and visible minorities, especially in recent times, express more trust in political institutions than do other Canadians. In contrast, political trust among Indigenous Peoples appears lower than for other groups, including other minorities."

those identities[185]. Also, although I believe that a greater understanding of support for specific policies, especially those that help maintain a healthy, just, and equal society, are extremely beneficial, for the purpose of this systemic analysis of political support, it is necessary for me at this time to leave out any analysis of support for specific policies or societal values focusing instead on the link with affective support for the system's component parts, controlling for how well respondents see the system to be performing in various policy areas. My intention here, of course, is not to discount in any way that the various values, beliefs, and priorities that underly our communities, groups, and individual identities are also of significant interest, however, in this first cut of my analysis of the influence of group identity on political support, I feel it is necessary in order to keep the model and our resulting understanding as parsimonious as possible.

Thus, to begin to parse out the effect of identity on political support, I start by exploring the impact of certain identity "labels", as groups are commonly and consistently mobilized or excluded based on these labels (Retzlaff 2005; Magazzini 2018)[186]. With this general understanding of the effect of group identity on support, I may then turn in future research (depending on what my results suggest) to figuring out the more complex story that might exist when it comes to what Easton proposed as the 'common identity', 'mutual identification', or 'we-ness' that may be most vital to fostering greater unity within democratic societies and support for the system's various political objects and outputs. In short, in the analyses that I will present in this project, I will explore the effect of identity groupings on political support based solely on identification with particular *groups* and how identification with different groups cluster together[187].

Other Factors

Finally, my discussion here would not be entirely complete if I neglected to mention that as with most studies of political behavior, scholars interested in political support (as well as political behavior) typically include important contextual factors as controls in their empirical models[188], as will I. Such contextual factors include demographics that can be operationalized similarly across political systems, including income and education which are both demonstrated to have

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[185] My analyses in Chapter 8 of the identity group memberships and group clusters are also limited, for now, to those groups identities that we asked about in our 2017 PCSP survey – even though the number of groups is still more expansive than what we have had available to examine in other Canadian surveys so far.

[186] Staerklé (2009) and colleagues (Staerklé, Alain, and Spini 2011) have also suggested that diverse interests are "objectified" through these identity groupings or labels. In other words, identity becomes a lens through which to view interests and orientations or by which opinions about policies and other political outputs may perhaps be shaped.

[187] Of course, some of the important values that coexist in Canadian society which may, to a certain extent, help to shape some group identities are also explored (as laid out in the previous sections of this chapter) – but the connections between these values and the group identities discussed here are not analyzed. These links between values and identities will be important areas to be explored in a dedicated study in the very near future, using revised and more expansive data to be collected in 2023, guided by the findings of this project.

[188] Models should of course, always be carefully specified based on theoretical expectations and such controls should not be included simply for the sake of inclusion. For a discussion of this and the sometimes contested use of demographic controls in political science models, see for instance Timpone (1998).

important effects on assessments of the political system[189]. Moreover, due to the effect that one's disposition might have, both when answering public opinion surveys and when assessing politics and society (Helliwell and Barrington-Leigh 2010), another indicator which is becoming increasingly popular to control for in conducting public opinion research in this area is an individuals' subjective well-being. As Norris (Norris 2011, 208) suggests, based on her cross-country analyses, satisfaction with democracy may be directly linked with satisfaction with life in general, based on a rational calculation that governments and the political system are directly responsible for citizens' security and the services and benefits on which their quality of life depends.

As will be demonstrated in the upcoming chapters, other factors that may be even more context-specific include language or one's point of origin, especially considering the demographic composition or the historical conditions of the Canadian case. Certainly, and as I will show in Chapter 7, in a place like Canada and especially in some of its provinces, language, differences between Canadian-born and non-Canadian born citizens, and political orientations toward federalism and Quebec independence, are all crucial to understanding political support in Quebec and Canada more broadly and will continue to be included in my analyses going forward.

The generational divide has also become one cleavage to pay particular attention to here in Canada (Kanji 2012a; Coletto 2018). Young people, although they seem to be disconnecting from traditional political participation, have become increasingly active in various non-traditional forms of political participation, sometimes clashing violently over issues such as tuition (Patriquin 2012), the environment (BBC Newsnight 2019), and more recently over issues of secularism (CBC News 2019). Different generational understandings, preferences, and motivations as well as vastly different experiences based simply on the number of years one has lived may thus also drive important variations when it comes to political support and will be examined here as well.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined two of the major theoretical determinants of political support that the literature has to offer to date, as well as the many subvariants of these arguments. From my review, I have concluded that although the literature is extensive in pointing to areas where we might seek possible explanations for variations in support, the extent to which studies have tested these areas empirically are somewhat more limited.

What I have found is that the same limitations that constrain our understanding of how support varies[190] also constrain our understanding of what might explain why support varies and,

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[189] These are tested generally in the context of understanding institutional support and trust. Income and perceptions of performance on the economy have been demonstrated to have important effects on support for incumbent governments (see for instance Palmer and Whitten 2011), while education has been shown to influence performance assessments and decreased trust in contexts where corruption is present (for example Hakhverdian and Mayne 2012). These factors may also have direct effects on some of the other indicators included in my models. For instance, some studies include education within constructed measures of cognitive mobilization (like Dalton 2007). As others have found that education and knowledge can have different effects on orientations toward the political system (C. D. Anderson and Goodyear-Grant 2005), I choose to keep these factors separate. This allows me to ensure that I am controlling for any independent and direct effects that each may have on political support.

[190] Including a lack of granular within-context data that provides for possible differences in citizen support for different objects but also in types of object assessments, assessments within categories of objects, and variations across levels of government.

until now, we simply have not had the kind of data that we needed to address these limitations. Indeed, while many empirical studies have tested several demand- and supply-side factors to determine the extent to which these factors (measured in specific ways) might affect support for certain objects, none have ever been able to build the kind of statistical models that would be necessary to test each category of argument along with each subvariant against support for each object.

By outlining the various determinants of support and subvariants that the literature has posited (and, to a certain extent, tested), I have laid a foundation on which my analyses in the coming chapters will build. Namely, in Chapter 8, I will test the various explanations (or drivers of support) to capture a more complete picture of what may be driving support (or not) in the Canadian case according to my 2017 PCSP data. My analyses will wade more carefully and systematically through the different variants within each of the "supply-side" and the "demand-side" arguments to determine their direct effects on political support, including incorporating some new controls for variations in identity[191] as well as other important demographic and contextual differences.

I will test each of these potential explanations to determine their implications for political support across different political objects, levels of government, and in Quebec compared to the rest of Canada. Before jumping directly into these analyses, Chapter 8 will also begin with an overview analysis of the various identity group questions that we asked about in the latest wave of the PCSP. Doing so provides a more nuanced snapshot of the distribution of some of the key identity groups that might exist here in Canada according to the questions we asked at the time. The analysis also outlines the ways in which identifiers with different group clusters differ in their levels of support across political objects. I then conclude the investigation and the thesis by presenting a full picture analysis, comparing the explanatory power of each of the factors presented here against each other. Doing so allows me to begin drawing clearer conclusions about how each factor influences support (whether positively or negatively), what explanations are most powerful (while holding all others constant), and which ones do not hold up (which ones do not have significant effects on support, when all other factors are taken into account). Importantly, these findings also provide areas in which, in future rounds of data collection and analysis, we can try to delve deeper and ask more pointed questions – as I will outline briefly in Chapter 9[192].

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[191] Including self-identification with others based on similarities in language, generation, ethnic origin, or religion, or identification with specific groups such as different economic classes, groups with specific political views on federalism or national unity, environmentalists, feminists, First Nations, Inuit or Métis, members of the LGBTQ community, and others. See Appendix A2 and Figure 8.1 for a full list of identity groups included in the 2017 PCSP survey.

[192] See also the table presented in Appendix B4 on "Next Steps".

Chapter 4: Objectives and Methodology – In Greater Depth

Introduction

The first three chapters in this project so far have broadly outlined where I plan to go with this work. I have also delved into the theoretical literature to provide a synthesis of what we know so far about political support and identified what the bulk of analyses of democratic political systems reveal. In doing this, I also identified a variety of important theoretical, methodological, and empirical gaps, which I propose to fill through my work. This next chapter provides, in greater depth, the process I will follow to accomplish this.

The first important point to note here is that I have opted in this research, as has been made clear from my preceding chapters, to pursue a methodology that relies on the analysis of public opinion data collected through large-scale online surveys conducted as part of the PCS project between 2012 and 2017, as well as through the use of secondary data from other major sources including the World Values Surveys, Americas Barometers, and the Canadian Election Studies. As Anderson (2010a, 15) states "we can observe individuals from afar […], however we can only understand their perception […] by asking them". In essence, the decision to employ large-n public opinion research as my methodology in this project versus some other approach, such as participant observation (for example – which would tell us only how participants behave, not necessarily how they think), is based simply on the idea that, to properly understand how the public feel and evaluate their political system, we must ask them.

The other main reason for my selection of this approach is my desire to contribute to clarifying – and hopefully assisting in bolstering – the long line of political support scholarship, all of which centers on the use of public opinion data to establish an understanding of shifting patterns of support for various parts of democratic political systems. This is not to say, of course, that there is no room for other types of studies to supplement this work. In the words of Easton himself:

> "We can try to understand political life by viewing each of its aspects piecemeal. We can examine the operation of such institutions as political parties, interest groups, government, and voting; we can study the nature and consequences of such political practices as manipulation, propaganda, and violence; we can seek to reveal the structure within which these practices occur. By combining the results we can obtain a rough picture of what happens in any self-contained political unit. In combining these results, however, there is already implicit the notion that each part of the larger political canvas does not stand alone but is related to each other part; or, to put it positively, that the operation of no one part can be fully understood without reference to the way in which the whole itself operates."(Easton 1957, 383)

Indeed, in other work that I am currently pursuing, which builds in part on the findings of this study, I am also exploring other aspects both within (such as online surveys of political elites and public servants) and alongside the political system (such as civil society and business, through one-on-one interviews as well as large-n surveys of leaders in these areas). Each part of the "political canvas" is, thus, coming together through a careful, repeated, and systematic parsing out of the system as a whole – beginning here with an understanding of political support among Canadian citizens according to a few data sources, but primarily drawing upon data collected through the PCSP.

Throughout this chapter, I review and elaborate on each of my objectives as derived from my understanding of the state of the study of political support to date. I then present, in greater

detail, the data that I employ in this project and how it is unique compared to what has been collected and analyzed over the course of the last several decades. Finally, I outline the research process and methods that I employ throughout the remainder of this study.

Objectives of this Project Expanded
Objective 1: Scope of the political support problem
The empirical work in this project seeks to achieve three core objectives. The first objective is to better understand the true scope of the political support problem in the Canadian context. I plan to accomplish this by examining a variety of perceptions that citizens have of their political system to get a better grasp of the *nature*[193] of their political support as well as the *extent* to which it varies according to the Canadian evidence, looking for any consistent or cross-cutting patterns across different political objects and sub-objects, levels of government, subgroups, and subnational territories such as Quebec.

Based on the limitations identified in political support studies to date, I propose a more systemic and granular approach for the study of political support. I offer, in this project, an example (employing Canada and Quebec as my case study) of how we might go about digging deeper into both the nature and the extent of support for various core aspects of the political system. These focal points are drawn directly from the pioneering theoretical framework advanced by Easton (Easton 1957; 1965b) and which have been further developed, tested and retested by several others across multiple democracies (see again Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Norris 1999a; 2011; Nevitte and Kanji 2002; Dalton 2004a, just to name a few).

Of course, looking at support for different objects is not necessarily unique, in fact most of the research on political support today begins from this same starting point. This said, my research aims to expand the evolving theoretical framework of political support even further, by pushing the exploration parameters beyond the basic ways that citizens feel about their core political objects in general. That is, in the coming analyses, I investigate variations in political support not just across the conventional spectrum of specific to diffuse political objects in general, but also more specifically across various sub-categories of political objects that exist across all three levels of government – the municipal, provincial and federal – as well as across different territorial contexts and through the viewfinder of different subgroups within Canadian society. In other words, I introduce and systematically explore a variety of other more detailed measures of political support and assess them through a variety of more fine-grained perspectives (i.e., across a variety of subgroups and subnational contexts) that, to my knowledge, has never been done as extensively nor as systematically (see specific measures presented in Appendix A1 and operationalization of all measures in Appendix A2).

More concretely, this research offers a model of political support that further fleshes out the evolving theoretical framework that is currently employed. It does so by exploring, within a complex federal and diverse society such as Canada's, whether there are any empirically systematic distinctions in the way that citizens feel about specific categories of political sub-objects, such as leaders vs. elected representatives vs. civil servants, as opposed to political authorities generally; or parliaments vs. the civil service vs. political parties at different levels of government, as opposed to just governments generally or federally. Moreover, I examine the extent to which outlooks toward different sub-objects are consistent across levels of government and how they vary across prominent groups within Canadian society including traditional

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[193] By this I mean simply, of what political objects are Canadians the most supportive and in what respects exactly are they the least supportive?

divides, such as language, political orientations toward Quebec sovereignty, and immigration status.

Most democracies, like Canada, have their inherent sociocultural complexities, and my approach to analyzing these complexities will begin to supplement the broad-gauged cross-national and cross-time studies that have been much of the primary focus in the literature thus far, with more detailed and fine-tuned within-case study that will help to provide added and helpful insights for scholars in the future and which will also help guide my own upcoming investigations.

Objective 2: Explaining political support

My second objective in this project is to determine what may be responsible for any variations in support that I find across different political objects within the Canadian context. In other words, I also plan to test which explanatory factors (whether on the "supply-side" or the "demand-side" of the political support model) are most consistently and powerfully associated with positive (or negative) perceptions of the various political objects and sub-objects that I consider in this dissertation.

Briefly again, supply-side arguments suggest that citizens' disillusionment with the democratic process is most likely performance-related (Pharr and Putnam 2000; Dalton 2004a; Norris 2011). That politicians and government institutions, for example, may not be performing up to citizens' expectations and this is the reason why the latter may be becoming more disillusioned with their democratic process, as demonstrated by their varying outlooks toward different political objects. Meanwhile, demand-side arguments, suggest that it is citizens in post-industrial democracies that have in fact grown more critical of their political processes, due specifically to a variety of structural and lifestyle changes (such as higher levels of education, the explosion of readily available and more accessible information, the rise of post-materialist values, etc.)[194], and that it is likely such inter-generational changes in the sociocultural evolution of modern day democracies that are making citizens more critical and less deferential, thereby affecting outlooks toward political objects and sub-objects.

As I explored in more depth in Chapter 3, while these two main lines of explanation for variation in political support have co-existed and been tested in the literature in a variety of ways over time, the analysis that I carry out below travels much deeper than anything that we have seen in the past, by employing more fully-specified explanatory models that aim to sort out which specific variants of these two lines of argument most consistently and systematically standout as being the most relevant, not just at the national level, but also across other levels of governments, subnational territories, and subgroups.

My hope, once again, is that this approach will help to provide some interesting new insights that further our overall theoretical understanding of the political support problem in advanced industrial democracies, based on the findings from this Canadian case, that will guide inform further investigations in the future, and that will provide some clues into where we may need to focus our attention when seeking to design strategic, viable, and targeted solutions to the challenges that may be facing our democracies.

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[194] For some examples, see Dalton (2004a; as well as Dalton and Welzel 2014; R. Inglehart 1990; 1997; 2007; Klingemann and Fuchs 1995; Nevitte 1996; 2002; 2014; Clark and Rempel 1997; Norris 1999a; 2011; Putnam 2000; R. Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

Objective 3: Gravity of political support problems

This leads me to my third objective, which is to start to make more empirical sense of the gravity of the political support problem in Canada and to figure out more clearly how it might impact our democratic political and social system more broadly, and particularly in the way legitimacy may play out in different ways[195]. To do this, I look more closely at the gravity of variations in support by investigating the <u>effect of specific political support on more diffuse levels of political support</u>. In other words, to determine the extent to which we should be concerned about fluctuating patterns of support for the most specific objects (like attitudes toward authorities and institutions), I explore the effect that these fluctuations can have on opinions of objects at the more diffuse levels (such as opinions of the democratic regime and the political community)[196].

To reiterate, it has been posited theoretically that the causal arrow runs in one direction: where opinions of specific objects (are expected to) influence the way individuals conceive of more diffuse political objects. And while the impact of perceptions of specific objects on diffuse ones has been investigated in the past, focus has generally been on the effect that certain authority evaluations have on institutional confidence, or on the ties between evaluations of the impact of confidence in institutions on satisfaction with democracy. Less attention, however, has been paid to the more pervasive effect of specific object performance (or evaluations) on affective assessments of diffuse objects. Indeed, while support for certain democratic regime principles or attachments to the political community may not be as elastic as more specific outlooks toward political authorities or institutions, there is still the (less frequently empirically tested) theoretical plausibility that when outlooks toward specific political objects are bad enough, they could have more serious and concerning diffuse effects. But is there any direct evidence that this may be materializing in the Canadian context?

To fulfill the third objective and better understand the gravity of the political support problem, therefore, I test how support filters upward from authorities, to institutions, to the regime and, in turn, to the political community. Admittedly, there are other important consequences of political support that may be examined (including impacts on compliance, participation, and demands for reform). Unfortunately, however, due to the length of this study and the extensive analyses already included, I have had to exclude analyses of these other consequences.

This said, I believe that the in-depth and broad range of investigations that I have included here, start to paint a clearer picture of the potential dangers the Canadian democratic system may

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[195] The measurement of legitimacy, according to some (McCullough 2015), may be divided into two camps: normative approaches which measure "features of the governing entity" and empirical approaches, that focus instead on "the beliefs of the governed population". While this project focuses on the latter it also achieves, to a certain extent, a clearer understanding of what specific aspects of the governing side might also require careful attention (at least in the eyes of the public). Future research, as will be discussed in my conclusion, will dig more deeply into the governing side of the legitimacy equation.

[196] Alongside this project, I have also begun a second foray into the gravity of the political support problem where I have built on the legitimacy implications by investigating the effect of low political support on five potential consequences that may tell us even more about the overall perceived legitimacy of the democratic political system. More specifically, these five additional potential consequential points of focus include the impact on public compliance in the social and political domain, the effect on levels of social and political capital (i.e., the levels of inter-personal and vertical political trust), the willingness to contribute to and engage in the political system, the tendency to want to change the current political system through the desire for political reforms or even through the more drastic possibility of adopting alternative types of political regimes entirely and, finally, in the effect on broader overarching identity ties through the inclination to alter one's national and other territorial identifications. These analyses will be revised and submitted for conference presentation and publication.

face in the future if more attention is not given to what may otherwise be understood as "harmless" fluctuations in support for political authorities and various political institutions – or evaluations of the performance of all political objects for that matter. Certainly, there is the potential here for a gradual erosion of diffuse affective support, or even an interruption or more severe decline in political legitimacy that should not be ignored. Indeed, stakeholders wishing to reform any part of our political system might choose to take stock of and build on these findings, regardless of how preliminary they may be.

The Data

As I have argued, the sorts of data that are required to conduct the type of in-depth, robust and systemic investigation of whether political support is in distress or if we have a political support "problem" – within a diverse democratic society such as Canada[197] – have simply not been available for investigation before now.

Until very recently, most of the analyses that have been conducted on the state of public perceptions toward democracies world-wide have been based on comparable and mostly general-level public opinion data from various cross-national and cross-time values, elections, and social surveys. Indeed, the vast array of studies that have been conducted and published on political support worldwide over the last 60 years or so, have been collected as part of larger surveys whose primary focus is not necessary on "political support" per se, or even on investigating "challenges to democracy"[198]. And while data from surveys such as the World Values Surveys, the European Values Surveys, European and Americas Barometers, General and European Social Surveys, and various national election studies, have helped to teach us a great deal about the general scope of the political support problem worldwide, Canada included, they have also helped to alert us to various inconsistencies and analytical limitations. These limitations and the lack of clear and consistent generalizations that can be made based on analyses of these surveys, have made abundantly clear the need to acquire additional data designed specifically to probe even deeper into individual democratic contexts, to continue learning more and expanding our understanding of the theoretical complexities and nuances of political support as well as the various explanatory possibilities and more diffuse, deep-seated consequences.

The road to developing and implementing such a survey instrument required reviewing a copious amount of literature on political support and reviewing the bulk of the survey work that had been conducted to date to establish a more complete inventory of the sorts of concepts and indicators we have worked with in the past and the types of data that we had collected and analyzed. Working with my supervisor, we began the very meticulous task of filling in the missing blanks between what the literature led us to want to survey and what the available survey material would not yet allow us to explore. As well, we began to expand considerably on the realm of plausible indicators that were theoretically relevant but not yet developed or available for analysis. Thus, we began to design, test and re-test a variety of never-before implemented

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[197] Again, which features a complex multi-level system of governance, with multiple focal points (political objects and sub-objects), at different levels of government, and an increasingly diverse society.

[198] Rarely (to the best of my knowledge) have investigations of political support been grounded in their own dedicated, large-scale survey. Allan Kornberg and Harold Clarke, did begin this journey many years ago (Clarke and Kornberg 1993), however, as far as I am able to tell, with the help of Tom Scotto, the last wave of a variant of these surveys was collected in 2004 and no other waves of the PSC were conducted after that (T. Scotto, Clarke, and Kornberg 2019) as the authors turned their focus more toward investigations into cross-national public opinion and political behavior in elections (Clarke et al. 1996).

survey questions that would help us fill the various gaps that existed between what we wanted to analyze more deeply in the Canadian context and what has already been done worldwide.

Our first two pilot studies involved testing our new survey instrument as part of the Quebec component of the Comparative Provincial Election Project (CPEP), which was a survey project that was administered online (J. J. Wesley et al. 2015). My supervisor was asked to be the lead PI on both the 2012 and 2014 post provincial election CPEP surveys conducted in Quebec, and he had acquired the funding to make it possible. So, this provided us with at least two viable opportunities to test the validity and reliability of our newly developed measures by piggybacking our survey questions onto a larger and, at that time, more established survey project, before taking our survey instrument countrywide. Throughout this process, we also analyzed and documented our preliminary results (as much as possible) as they emerged and presented our results in a variety of different outlets for valuable feedback and suggestions which we considered and incorporated as we progressed (Kanji and Tannahill 2013b; 2013a; 2014b; 2014a; Kanji, Tannahill, and Hopkins 2015; Tannahill and Kanji 2016a; Kanji and Tannahill 2017a)[199].

These repeating cycles of survey design and redesign, testing and retesting, took multiple iterations and years to get to the point where we were more certain that the various new measures that we had designed were in fact valid and reliable, and that they were worthwhile to implement more broadly in terms of how they were interpreted by respondents, the variation that they captured, and the results that they provided. Furthermore, we had to secure the financial partners along the way to make such a large-scale survey project doable.

Eventually, thanks to partners such as Elections BC, the Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada, we were finally ready to go. Our final cross-Canada survey instrument to be administered across Canada in all provinces in 2017 had over 800 different variables and would take approximately one hour to complete each sitting, of which there were two – Wave 1 and Wave 2. Each survey wave was translated and delivered online to a random selection of Canadians, in either French (translation supplied and verified by me[200]) or English depending on the preferred language of the respondent. It was coded and administered by Abacus Data, a prominent market and political research firm located in Ottawa, Canada. All the respondents who answered our surveys were recruited to participate through a representative panel of over 500,000 Canadians coordinated by Abacus with their sampling provider partners.

The respondents who were invited to do our surveys, either as part of earlier CPEP waves or as part of the last 2017 Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP), were all Canadian citizens, of voting age, and residents of their home province for at least six months. We did this to ensure that the people we were surveying were all adults and had at least some experience living in their current political contexts.

For a more detailed breakdown of the samples that we collected in 2012, 2014 and 2017 and how they compare to an average distribution of Canadians and Quebecers by mother tongue according to Statistics Canada, see Figure 4.1 below. These findings help to illustrate how closely the sample data that we compiled generally resembled (or represented)[201] the actual

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[199] These were also presented at a series of conferences between 2012 and 2023.

[200] I also spent a bit of time reviewing the questionnaire with a native French speaking colleague, Emilie Champagne which was based on the original translation that Soheyla Salari and I completed in 2012.

[201] These data also contain a larger sample of Allophones than is typical in surveys, which provides a better representation of the views of this particular group and a closer reflection of the real population.

population distribution in Quebec and, later, in Canada. Of course, the proportions are not perfect (with only slightly higher proportions of English speakers compared to French for all years) but they are quite close.

Figure 4.1 – Language Distribution in PSCP

Mother Tongue - PCSP Sample Respondents vs. Census

	Quebec				Rest of Canada		All of Canada	
	PCSP 2012	PCSP 2014	PCSP 2017	Census 2011-2016	PCSP 2017	Census 2011-2016	PCSP 2017	Census 2011-2016
English	20%	20%	16%	9%	82%	72%	71%	58%
French	66%	72%	73%	78%	3%	4%	15%	21%
Other	13%	8%	10%	13%	14%	24%	14%	21%
Sample (n)	1,289	1,545	1,201		5,651		6,852	

Data: Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP): Comparative Provincial Election Projects (2012 and 2014) Political Commutities Survey 2017
    Statistics Canada, Census of Population, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2018001-eng.htm
Question: "What is your mother tongue?"
Note: Category 'Other' is recoded based on respondents selecting any language other than 'French' or 'English'.

In 2012, the sample that we collected consisted of 1,010 panelists from Quebec only[202], contacted between September 5th and October 11th, 2012. Following that, a second wave of panelists representing a boosted number of immigrants and non-French speakers was then contacted between November 2nd and the 16th. This second wave added an additional 279 respondents to the total sample (for a total 2012 sample of 1,289) which helped in better representing certain core demographics overall and allows for deeper probing of variations between various key groups.

In 2014, in an attempt to follow up on what we had learned from our first pilot project in 2012, and to continue to test and retest the measures that we were designing for our more in-depth study of political support in Canada, we went into the field again following the 2014 provincial election in Quebec[203]. During this round of data collection, as we did in 2012, we conducted a random online survey of Quebecers. This survey was launched on April 8th and was in the field until April 15th. During this time, we were able to collect a total of 541 responses. In order to collect a more fully representative sample, we then conducted a second wave of surveys between April 30th and June 3rd, wherein we collected an additional 1,004 responses (for a total 2014 sample of 1,545). During this round of data collection, we did not boost our sampling of immigrant respondents as we had in 2012 (due to funding constraints) but we were able to achieve a representative and deep enough pool of both Anglophones (20%) and Francophones (72%) to be able to carry out a more detailed and robust investigations of the Quebec population.

In 2017, after conducting a significant amount of pilot testing on our overall survey design and conceptual measures through the first two years of surveys, as well as having received and implemented the feedback we received during several preliminary presentations of our results, the time had come to launch our more detailed and dedicated survey of political support across

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[202] This survey was launched immediately after the Quebec provincial election on September 4th, 2012.
[203] The 2014 Quebec provincial election was held on April 7th.

Canada. To mark this important transition, we decided to rename our study, more fittingly, as the Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP)[204].

Because our plan in 2017 was to now survey Canadians from all provinces about their support for various political objects – and not just Quebecers after their respective provincial elections – we opted to conduct the survey in between two federal elections[205]. In other words, we aimed to gather a representative sample of respondents from *every* region (excluding the territories)[206] and we tried as much as possible to stay clear of artificially biasing our results for most provinces with any electoral interference.

Based on all that we had learned from analyzing (and reanalyzing) data and feedback that we had collected from our two preliminary rounds of pilot studies conducted in Quebec in 2012 and 2014, we also incorporated several new and expanded questions into the 2017 Canada-wide questionnaire to dig much deeper into political support. For instance, in order to meet the objectives of this study, the PCSP surveys, for the first time, incorporated more pointed questions[207] that tapped citizens' perceptions of specific aspects (or focal points) of the political system in Canada (such as distinct democratic communities, principles, institutions, and types of political authorities) at different levels of government[208] (municipal, provincial, federal)[209]. In addition, the surveys also included more focused questions that measure how individuals perceive the way the political system performs (for example, questions that probe more deeply into what specific aspects of their multi-level system of governance Canadians are most and least satisfied with), more questions on affective support for authorities and institutions, and additional questions that tap evaluations of specific aspects of democracy as well as orientations toward a variety of democratic principles.

Splitting the 2017 survey into two waves allowed us to ask these additional questions while also being mindful of the survey experience for our respondents, reducing any survey fatigue or response-set bias that might occur. Thus, we had all respondents in the first wave answer a series of questions (indicated in Figure 4.2 below as "Wave 1") we then invited all respondents back to participate in a second wave of questions (indicated as "Wave 2"). This way, only those who indicated that they were interested in taking part in the second wave were then re-contacted with

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[204] As our overall goal has always been to learn more about the workings of political support so that we might eventually be able to provide more sound advice for building healthier democratic political communities.

[205] Due to the partnership that we established with Elections BC, the survey did coincide with the end of the provincial election held in British Columbia on May 9th. It also happened to take place shortly after the Nova Scotia general election which was held on May 30th. This said, because data collection did not start until near the end of July, the immediate effect of coinciding with a general election may be mitigated slightly.

[206] Data collection in the territories may be planned in the future, but for the 2017 wave of data collection the cost to survey in Nunavut, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories was too prohibitive.

[207] As already mentioned, refer to Appendix A1 for a list of questions, comparing questions that have been asked in the past to the new questions that have been created and administered for this study.

[208] Stephenson, Blais and their colleagues, as part of the Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) Project, sought to do something similar by, asking Quebecers and Ontarians what they think of democracy at the national and *provincial* levels. The questions included in their survey, however, do not include the municipal level and are nowhere near as extensive as in the PCSP surveys. They state "one of the exceptional features of this project is that citizens are asked to evaluate the democratic performance of several levels of government. Therefore, we can distinguish between the perceived performance of Canada's federal and provincial democratic institutions respectively" (Blais and Kostelka 2016) For a full list of their questions and the data from the 27 surveys that were conducted under this project, see Stephenson et al. (Stephenson et al. 2010)

[209] All of which were pretested and retested for reliability and validity over the course of our first two rounds of data collection in Quebec.

a follow up and asked to complete part two of the survey questionnaire. This group completed all questions from both waves 1 and 2.

Figure 4.2 – Provincial Distribution in PSCP
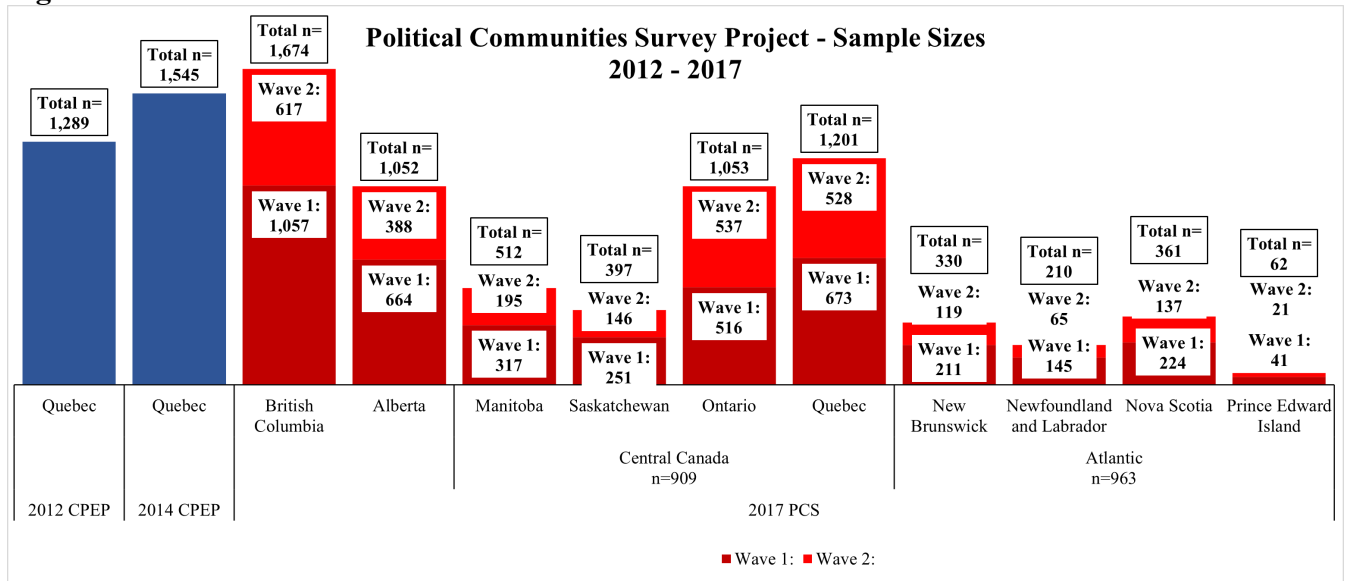
In terms of more specific timelines, the data collection for the first wave of our 2017 survey took place from July 20th to September 13th, where 6,852 respondents completed the questionnaire and submitted their responses. The second wave was then carried out between September 13th and the 15th. In this case, a total of 2,753 of the original group of respondents provided us with completed survey responses within the span of these three days. In all, representative samples were drawn from every region of the country: 1,674 from British Columbia[210], 1,052 from Alberta, 909 from Central Canada (Manitoba and Saskatchewan), 1,053 from Ontario, 1,201 from Quebec, and 963 from the Atlantic (including Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island).

The Research Process – Detailed Breakdown

Once the Canada-wide round of data collection for this project had been completed and the data had been scrubbed for any errors, the actual trajectory of my data analysis unfolded in five major steps, summarized below in Table 4.1.

Note that these steps are categorized and organized according to the three main objectives that I seek to accomplish overall with my research and this dissertation project – (1) to examine the scope of the political support problem in Canada, (2) to explain what best accounts for variations in political support, and (3) to probe the gravity of any political support problems through assessment of the potential consequences of low political support for specific objects on more diffuse ones.

Note too that the first three steps of my research process overall are dedicated solely to satisfying the first objective because it is by far the most expansive and complex. Indeed, it involves parceling out and reporting on all of the political objects that I plan to examine, across

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[210] Due to our collaboration with Elections BC, which helped to fund some of the British Columbia sample, we collected a larger number of respondents in this province.

multiple indicators, across all levels of government, and across various relevant groups and territorial contexts. Objectives two and three, on the other hand, are more straightforward and, as a result, each only consists of a single step. This is not to say, of course, that the analysis involved was any less complex, nor the results generated any less detailed or relevant.

In short, each of the five steps that I took in conducting the research and data analysis for this project are (in my view) essential for achieving my overall research objectives and end goals – which is to provide an alternative vantage point on the political support problem in Canada and Quebec, according to a unique and expansive dataset, to rigorously assess what may be responsible for variations, as well as to provide some systematic account of the potential consequences of "harmless" fluctuations in support for the system's ever-changing authorities and institutions. My hope is that this research will help to provide an example of how more detailed, systematic, and holistic analyses of political systems may be carried out by others in the future and at least start to shed some light on where political support might need more attention and what areas might be most fruitful when looking to make improvements.

Table 4.1 – Steps for Achieving the Objectives of this Project

Objective 1	Scope of the political support problem	
	Understanding the NATURE and EXTENT of the political support problem	
Step 1	Establishing a baseline understanding	What have other studies demonstrated on three key indicators
Step 2	Determining the *nature*	Using new detailed and in-depth indicators
Step 3	Determining the *extent*	Observing variations **3.1** Across levels of government; and **3.2** Across traditional groups and territorial contexts (i.e., Canada vs. Quebec; language; political orientation)
Objective 2	Explaining political support	
	Figuring out what drives variations in political support	
Step 4	Testing various explanations	Measuring the impact of: 1) Perceptions of performance; and 2) Various sociocultural characteristics.
	Observing variations across levels of government and across traditional groups	
	Observing variations across an expanded set of identity groups	
Objective 3	Gravity of political support problems	
	Understanding the consequences of variations in political support	
Step 5	Understanding the effects of political support problems	Measuring the impact of specific support on diffuse support.

Step 1 – Establishing a baseline understanding

To start then, I begin the data analysis required to meet my first research objective (to examine the overall scope of the political support problem in Canada) by seeking to establish an initial baseline (using several data sources) that hopefully serves as a useful backdrop from which to launch into my more detailed, within-Canada investigations using my expanded 2017 dataset. That is, I commence my data analysis by generating an overview of the state of political support

in Canada over time, as represented by some of the most prominently utilized indicators in other studies that have, from time to time, examined political support in the past. These indicators include pride in one's country, satisfaction with its democracy, evaluations of how democratic it is, orientations toward different ways of governing the regime, confidence in government, and satisfaction with the performance of authorities.

These measures cover the entire spectrum of political dimensions that Easton and those that followed him have described as ranging from more specific support for government authorities and institutions to more diffuse support for a political community and represent the most commonly tapped indicators of support. Moreover, the data that I examine in this case come from a variety of sources, including: the 2012, 2014, and 2017 PCSP surveys, as well as other major surveys including the World Values Surveys, Canadian Election studies, and the Americas Barometers. In reviewing these common indicators of support using all of these data sources, not only do I provide a snapshot of the ways in which political support has fluctuated over the years in Canada, I also use this opportunity to contrast findings from my own data to those findings derived from data as it has been collected in the past, to help justify the need to dig deeper by employing a more granular and systematic approach to data collection and analysis.

Step 2 – Determining the 'nature'

To better understand the exact *nature* of the political support problem in Canada in more detail, I turn next to an examination of the degree to which Canadians' support the entire spectrum of political objects, as theoretically identified and developed in the cross-national and cross-time literature on political support. More specifically, my empirical investigation turns to a deeper analysis of the survey data collected as part of the PCSP to probe the nature of the political support problem in Canada more fully. I do so by tapping various conventional and several new measures of affective and evaluative support for different political objects: including orientations toward a variety of political authorities and institutions (not just MPs and governments), the workings of various aspects of democracy (not just democracy in general), various regime types and the core principles of our democracy, as well as various measures of support for political community (beyond just pride or national identity).

My hope is that this begins to broaden the scope of what we currently know about the state of political support in the Canadian context, as well as provide us with some greater assurances as to the validity and reliability of what we find. For instance, in addition to looking simply at how Canadians feel about politicians in general, I differentiate and look also at other sub-objects, through assessments of how respondents in my surveys also feel about a variety of more specific political representatives. Likewise, when determining how the public feel about their political institutions, rather than look only at government, as many have done in the past, I dig in deeper to find out how Canadians' and Quebecers' outlooks toward a variety of core (governmental) institutions might vary, such as governments compared to political parties, legislatures, and the civil service. Similarly, I also include in this analysis an overview not only of how well the public think governments are doing their jobs overall, but also which jobs they think various governments are excelling at versus those they think still need some work. Moreover, instead of finding out how satisfied the public are with their democracy generally, this phase in the investigation also seeks to determine how the public assess various more specific aspects of their democracy. Do they feel, that certain aspects of their democracy are working better than others (are they more satisfied, for instance, with election spending or public spending, with the way

laws are made or with how they are reviewed by the judiciary)? Also, are Canadians discerning when it comes to their outlooks toward democracy more generally? That is, do they support certain democratic principles more than others (such as the rule of law, ministerial responsibility, or responsible government)? Finally, do these data offer any insights into how they differ in the way they express their outlooks on political community?

Another way in which this portion of my study contrasts from what others have done in the past is in the number and combination of new affective and evaluative measures that I incorporate into this analysis. For instance, unlike previous investigations, not only am I interested here in affective assessments of diffuse objects such as whether Canadians take pride in their political community, I am also interested in knowing whether they evaluate their political community to be working well (which is something that to my knowledge, has not been asked of citizens before). Also, unlike other studies, not only do I look at evaluative indicators of more specific objects, I also incorporate an investigation of Canadians and Quebecers affective views toward these authorities and institutions.

Step 3 – Determining the 'extent'

In step three, I shift my focus, still using my PCSP data, to investigate the *extent* to which any political support problems vary within Canada and Quebec. That is, in this step I strive to reach beyond the more general national approach traditionally used to assess political support and democracy[211]. In this sense, this study seeks to determine the full extent of variations in political support not only across a much more detailed and varied set of objects and measures, but also across levels of government, among different groups of individuals and of course, across various subnational territorial contexts.

More precisely, this step of the analysis seeks to find out if Canadians assess their various political objects at the municipal level differently from those at the provincial or federal levels. For instance, do citizens in Quebec like their cities and towns more than they like Canada or even their province? Moreover, how do Canadians feel about the working relationships between these different political communities? And how do such outlooks vary across different prominent social groups and territorial contexts? Does social diversity contribute to the complexity of the political support problem? Do Francophones, for instance, feel more positively about the way their government is running than Anglophones do? Are immigrants less satisfied with the democracy they receive than citizens who are native born? And do Canadians across different territorial contexts, such as Quebec versus the other provinces, think differently about their federal political system than they do about the provincial and municipal ones? It is important to point out here that, when looking at different territorial contexts, I will be looking only at Quebec compared to the rest of Canada (ROC)[212].

While the results of Step 1 are presented in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, Steps 2 and 3 are covered in Chapters 6 and 7. To reiterate here again, it is my view that these first three steps alone constitute an important advancement for the theoretical and empirical understanding of the

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[211] Usually conducted at the macro-level, comparing support across countries or even within countries, looking at support for different objects but focusing only on questions that tap national support (or that don't specify any level at all).

[212] Due to limitations in both space and sample size, extensive analyses of each province or each region is not possible in this particular project. This said, my preliminary examinations do indicate that there are no significant differences in how explanations of political support hold up across the regions. This said, there are some slight differences between certain provinces in their overall orientations toward diffuse objects.

political support problem in more complex and diverse democracies such as the Canadian context. That is, through the considerably more detailed analyses conducted in Chapters 6 and 7, this research fills an important gap in our understanding not just of the nature of the political support problem but also the extent to which it exists or varies depending on how well different governments and communities perform, and the extent to which certain groups might perceive their demands being met compared to others; at least based on the Canadian evidence tapped by the PCSP. Moreover, it is by digging deeper into the PCSP data, which contains both conventional and unconventional newly tested and retested, affective and evaluative survey indicators, that I am able to start compiling a clearer picture of the ways in which such a complex concept as political support may vary, in more complicated political systems, and diverse democratic societies more broadly. A picture that, in the future, other scholars of political support might choose to refer to when seeking to fit their own work within this larger more complex picture, building more carefully on our knowledge in this area, rather than simply contributing further to the hyper-empirical and disparate state of the literature in the areas of political support and investigations into democracies' challenges.

Step 4 – Testing various explanations and variations across levels and groups
Turning next to step four, the primary objective shifts from describing to explaining, and to gaining a clearer understanding of the key drivers of variations in political support. More specifically, this step involves the pursuit of objective two of this project which is the analysis of two main categories of explanations for why political support may be suffering in modern democracies – by building more fully-specified explanatory models and first testing them using my Canadian data. The theoretical basis of these two arguments (supply-side versus demand-side) were more thoroughly reviewed in Chapter 3, and the empirical results generated by this step will be reported in Chapter 8.

   In this step of my analysis, I examine and compare different variants of these two lines of argument to determine which, if any, are the most consistent at accounting for variations in political support. As with the previous steps, these explanations are also tested across the spectrum of political objects, and they are analyzed to identify whether different explanations drive political support at different levels of government or across various groups and territorial contexts[213]. This analysis includes, for instance, the investigation of certain performance arguments – such as the evaluations (object performance) of political authorities, the influence of outlooks toward unethical behavior and corruption, and perceptions of successes or failures in economic and other policy areas (output evaluations) – and their impact on political support. Moreover, I also test various sociocultural change arguments – such as the effect of materialist versus post-materialist values, the influence of the gap between respondents' feelings of internal versus external efficacy, the impact of interest and knowledge (i.e., cognitive mobilization), the effect of social trust, and the frequency of exposure to the news media in different forms.

   In addition, as with step 3, where I look at how support varies between different prominent groups (such as between Francophones, Anglophones, or Allophones, as well as between immigrants and native-born Canadians), I also introduce in Step 4 an examination of the distribution of various group identities across our survey respondents and the relevance of these

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[213] Again, these territorial contexts are limited to Quebec versus the rest of Canada.

identities and identity group clusters for political support[214]. Due to the potentially varied experiences that different social groups have in the political context, the differences in the outputs these groups might receive, as well as their varying demands, values, and sociocultural compositions, it is conceivable that citizens who identify with certain groups could have more or less sympathetic views toward the democratic process compared to others. Thus, this investigation builds on the understanding of the effect of traditional group divides as outlined in Step 3 by adding a new dimension to our understanding of how identity groups (beyond just language or immigration status) might view objects in the political system.

Step 5 – Testing the diffuse effects of specific political support variations

In the fifth and final step of this study, I pursue objective three, which is to empirically test the theorized effect of variations in support for specific objects on more diffuse ones. This is my initial attempt at investigating the broader ways in which variations in political support may gradually eat away at the legitimacy or stability of the political system itself. That is, the gravity of the political support problem or the potential erosion of political legitimacy is determined in this step by measuring the effect of specific evaluative assessments of political objects (the pillars of the political system) on diffuse and, presumably, more deep-seated affective political support (the whole house).

Unlike previous studies, rather than investigate correlations between authority evaluations and assessments of government or satisfaction with democracy, I expand the scope of the analysis to investigate the degree to which lower level evaluations of authorities and government institutions lead to changes in attachment to democracy as a way of governing or the degree of pride, patriotism and attachment that citizens have for their political communities. Because my examination seeks also to control for any other potentially confounding effects that may muddy the impact of specific evaluations on diffuse support (such as the sociocultural, identity, or contextual factors explored in Step 4) this first attempt at better understanding the consequences of variations in support is carried out as part of the final regression tests conducted in Step 4. The findings are also discussed alongside Objective 2 (explaining political support) discussions in Chapter 8 (both generally as well as across levels of government).

Conclusion

The magnitude of the analyses and the extensive batteries of indicators used to conduct them in this project are unique and the approach outlined here, the research agenda as it has developed over the course of the last several years, the new way in which we are now collecting our data, as well as the findings of this bigger-picture research approach, will offer a first more systemic and detailed account of some of the greatest problems underlying Canadians' frustrations with their democratic political system[215], the factors most consistently driving disaffection, and the extent to which poor authority and institutional performance may impact the stability of the democratic regime and political community[216] if these problems go unaddressed.

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[214] Groupings based on a variety of identity groups tapped in the 2017 survey are created and analysed as direct drivers of support as well as compared to all other supply- and demand-side arguments. The method for grouping these identities and the results of these analyses can be found in Chapter 8.

[215] As far as we can generalize based on the multi-year data from the WVS, Americas Barometers, CES, and now the more detailed findings from the PCSP surveys.

[216] Again, at this point, through opinions about democracy as a way of governing at different levels and perceptions of political communities. How this translates into varying behaviors is also being explored outside of this project.

Chapter 5: Scope of the Political Support Problem: Establishing a Baseline Understanding

Introduction

When it comes to cross-national assessments of political systems, built on multidimensional scales of performance according to a variety of democratic ideals, constructed using aggregate measures of several aspects including judgements about the protection of human rights, liberties such as freedom of association, or even the accountability of public officials, Canada ranks among the top countries in the world. For instance, based on its Voice and Accountability index[217], the Economist Intelligence Unit's data from 2020 placed Canada among the top 7 countries in the world[218] (Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2020a; 2020b; see also Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi 2010; Kaufmann and Kraay 2022). The US, by comparison, was ranked in 35th place[219]. Similarly, according to Freedom House's 2020 Global Freedom scores, Canada also ranked among the top 7 countries and regions[220] in the world, while the US ranked much lower, but still among the top 60 countries overall (Freedom House 2020b).

Meanwhile, on the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) for the same year, Canada ranked 19th overall out of the 179 countries on their Electoral Democracy Index (polyarchy)[221], while the US ranked 31st (Varieties of Democracy 2020; Coppedge et al. 2021; 2023). According to this measure, while Canada still ranks among the top countries in the world (top 10%), its position among the top is a little less remarkable[222]. Indeed, when applying a more thorough gauge of the country's democraticness, using a broader set of characteristics, which some have concluded

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[217] This index combines evaluations of democracy that include measures of democratic processes and performance, civil liberties, human rights and freedoms, and the degree of accountability of public authorities (Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2020b; 2021).

[218] This puts Canada in the top 4% of the 184 countries evaluated. Of all the countries that the EIU reviews in 2020, 74 would be considered "free" according to Freedom House. Canada's EIU ranking thus place it among the top 9% of these free democracies.

[219] Even before the pandemic, when this last ranking was reported, Canada consistently rated among the "best" democracies according to this particular collection of measures. In 2019, for instance, Canada's democracy was ranked 8th in the world by the EIU's various Voice and Accountability measures, while the US was still in 34th place. And even if we go all the way back to 2015, prior to the election of Donald Trump, according to this particular collection of measures the US was only ranked as the 33rd best democracy in the world, while Canada was at that same time still ranked in 8th place (Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2020b; 2021). In 2021, Canada dropped to 9th (2021 EUI data retrieved from: Kaufmann and Kraay 2022)

[220] Based on assessments of a variety of processes, rights guarantees and liberties (Freedom House 2021). Canada, in 2020, achieved a score of 98/100, losing one point in the category "Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?" and one point in the category "Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?". This score puts Canada in the top 3% of the 210 countries and regions evaluated. Of all of them, 84 would be considered "free". Among these free democracies, Canada ranks in the top 8%. Canada's score in 2023 is still 98/100.

[221] This includes measures that seek to measure: "electoral competition for the electorate's approval under circumstances when suffrage is extensive; political and civil society organizations can operate freely; elections are clean and not marred by fraud or systematic irregularities; and elections affect the composition of the chief executive of the country. In between elections, there is freedom of expression and an independent media capable of presenting alternative views on matters of political relevance" (Coppedge et al. 2021, 43).

[222] Of all the countries that V-Dem reviews in 2020, 63 would be considered "free" according to Freedom House. If we reconsider Canada's score then among this group of free democracies, Canada is an even less exceptional model of democracy compared to the others (falling within the top 30% instead of the top ten percent). According to the most recent data from 2022, Canada is still ranked 19th overall (Coppedge et al. 2023).

make the V-Dem index in some ways "better constructed than the other measures" (Vaccaro 2021, 673; see also Boese 2019)[223], we see that Canada is actually not doing as well as other rankings might suggest. By including a broader set of indicators that assess not only the protection and guarantee of freedoms and liberties, but that also gauge levels of engagement in a variety of ways (including both electoral and non-electoral), that dig deeper into object performance by accounting for levels of deliberation and dialogue in the country, and that examine the extent to which rights, resources, and "access to power" are equally distributed across all members of society (Coppedge et al. 2021, 43–45) the results suggest that Canada may still have quite a bit of work to do[224].

This presentation of some of the more prominent country-level objective structural characteristics of democracy primarily reveal that (it is at least plausible) that not all these measures provide an accurate reflection of the reality of democracies today. Secondly, it shows that to gain a more precise understanding and assessment of any one democratic political system, it may be necessary to dig a little deeper. Furthermore, and as Daxecker pointed out this summer in her contribution to the special forum published in the *International Studies Review* (Bartels et al. 2023, 4)[225], the issues that may actually be affecting or challenging our democracies today "do not figure prominently in how electoral democracy is traditionally measured, which could result in high scores on electoral democracy measures yet poorly reflect voters' actual experiences". She states also that "another complication in conceptualizing and measuring the decline of democracy is that national patterns can mask subnational variation" (Ibid), an issue which also appears when observing political support research and opinion data. In other words, even when it comes to understanding public support more specifically (beyond more traditional objective system measures) much of the data and the conclusions that we have focus primarily on national level general assessments.

All of this suggests, as I have pointed to based on my review of political support and democratic system assessments carried out to date, that a deeper probe into public support may be necessary before making conclusive claims about the health and performance of Canadian democracy. In this chapter, I begin the probe into some of the challenges that citizens may be perceiving when it comes to the health of democracy, by digging subnationally into the Canadian

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[223] Vaccaro compares V-Dem to Polity IV and the Vanhanen Index, which I do not report here, and to Freedom House's democracy index. He concludes that "the choice of the measure of democracy affects significantly the conclusions, but also that the interchangeability of these measures has become weaker during the last few decades. On the whole, it is worrying that measures of democracy can be so differently related to common predictors of democracy, but it explains some of the inconsistent conclusions related to democracy, its causes, and its consequences". He cautions that, depending on what we are looking to assess theoretically, we should try to avoid drawing major conclusions based on any one of these indicators. In my case, cross-national objective measures provide a snapshot but, in seeking to know more specifically what the public think of democracy, of course a more careful within-country examination is required.

[224] According to the World Governance Indicators, which aggregate indicators from across data sources, specifically on "government effectiveness" in 2020, Canada ranked 13th overall. Meanwhile on "control of corruption" the country ranked 18th (Kaufmann and Kraay 2022)

[225] Although this special issue focuses primarily on international challenges to democracy, where democracy may be "backsliding" as a result of several factors including increasing polarization, the spread of misinformation, and the lack of commitment to democracy promotion by states (or attention to the interests and actions of elites), one of the key takeaways most relevant for my work and understanding of the health of democracy and the challenges that it might face, is that regardless of whether we are looking at support for democracy within states, or promotion of democracy by international actors, attention to the details is of primary and utmost importance. Without asking the harder, more detailed questions, our understanding of any challenges that do exist will remain cursory at best, and at worst, mislead us to administer ineffective and potentially harmful remedies.

case. I provide a review of the empirical findings to date on all four main political objects, unpacking support for these objects using some of the most prominent indicators available and most commonly referred to in the literature today (and the most used national and cross-national datasets). These initial analyses provide an overview snapshot of the indicators that we *usually* look at when assessing political support and help to make the case that it is necessary to probe deeper, using more measures, more specific questions, and across a broader range of areas.

This general introduction and background on the political support story in Canada is divided in this chapter into four sections, one for each object. Furthermore, as this overview requires the presentation of a great deal of data and interpretations, at the end of each section I also provide several summary boxes that help to consolidate the main findings drawn from each of the baseline analyses of each of these prominent indicators of political support, looking at the results according to all Canadians, comparing Quebecers to non-Quebecers, and looking more carefully at just Quebecers. In each section, I also include some additional takeaways that I feel may be helpful in synthesizing and interpreting the evidence on support for each political object and that can be carried over into subsequent analyses and interpretations in this project.

Despite Canada's relatively high position on certain objective rankings compared to other countries in the world[226], the findings in this chapter suggest that we might have more reason to question Canada's democratic success than what the EIU or Freedom House would suggest. In other words, as more rigorous measures of democracy like the V-Dem score reveal, all is not so rosy when it comes to assessments of the Canadian political system. Indeed, as Daxecker suggested (Bartels et al. 2023), in Canada citizens are more discerning and perhaps less likely to be as optimistic as traditional measures of democracy in this country would otherwise suggest. This chapter will not delve into the many possible reasons for variation in support across the system's objects (as I will do later), the goal here is simply to first demonstrate a baseline understanding of the state of political support according to indicators that exist in cross-national and national election surveys for Canada, how question wording and response categories might affect the reporting of results, and how digging deeper than what has been done so far may be a worthwhile exercise if we are interested in better understanding the challenges that may be facing democracy (starting in Canada).

Developing A Baseline Understanding
Political Community
In 2015, Mebs Kanji, Vincent Hopkins, and I, published a paper in the *Canadian Political Science Review* which started to unpack the question of support for political community in Canada using the earliest wave of PCSP data collected in Quebec in 2012. Distinctive in this study, was the use of not just one, but three measurements of support for political community: feelings of like or dislike, identification, and pride. The findings we reported were also unique in that they allowed us to begin developing a more detailed understanding of support for political community (Kanji, Tannahill, and Hopkins 2015).

Unlike our study, analyses of support for the political community have more typically tended to focus generally on support by employing only one indicator at a time[227]. Some, for instance, have examined feelings of like or dislike, which was the approach used by the

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[226] As well as in relation to its closest ally and biggest trading partner, the United States.
[227] As I discussed in Chapter 2.

Canadian Election Studies teams over the years[228]. Others have opted instead to ask citizens about how patriotic they feel, an approach that has been used much more in the American context by survey outfits such as YouGov, ABC News, the Washington Post and the New York times news poll series (CBS News/New York Times Poll Series 2022; ABC News/Washington Post 2022; YouGov 2022). By far, however, the most widespread and popular approach has been to ask citizens about their national or community pride[229].

Consequently, I begin in this study with an overview of this most commonly used indicator in the field, national pride, and report how Canadians and Quebecers have responded to this question over time (see Figure 5.1), which also allows me to build and expand on the initial study and the first round of PCSP data we reported in 2015[230]. The evidence that I rely on in this case, is assembled from a variety of sources, including the World Values Surveys (WVS) and the Americas Barometers (ABs), which allow me to go as far back in time as 1982, to see how support for political community on this measure (national pride) has evolved over time.

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[228] Kornberg and Clarke reported pretty constant feelings about the national community from 1974 to 1988 based on the question "How do you feel in general about Canada" dropping to 75 points out of 100 in 1983 but otherwise hovering between 79 and 84 using data from the CES (Kornberg and Clarke 1992, 106–7). This team also later drew data on this question from the Political Support in Canada survey to compare Quebecers to other Canadians, linking community support to referendum voting (Clarke, Kornberg, and Wearing 2000). This question was not asked in the most recent 2021 waves of the CES. Instead, the most recent CES has only included feeling thermometers that tap feelings toward certain parties, politicians, and groups. In fact, from the data that are publicly available, there are no measures of support for political community in the 2021 waves of the CES at all (Stephenson et al. 2022), not even a measure of national pride which is otherwise pretty typical in national election studies.

[229] Other indicators are also used, but far less often. For instance, Dalton and Welzel (2014) draw on WVS data and measure national "allegiance" using a question that taps citizens' willingness to say that they would go to war for their country: "Of course we all hope that there will not be another war, but if it were to come to that, would you be willing to fight for your country?". Allegiance in this case is not a measure of support for community directly but a consequence of support for community (or lack thereof), as the authors find that likelihood to be willing to go to war is dependent on national pride. In their analysis, pride is the only significant factor in driving the willingness to fight for one's country. They also find that this willingness to fight has decreased significantly over time in the 90 countries in their investigation. Willingness to fight is not used in my study or asked in the PCSP, but pride is.

[230] This study was also unique in that it illustrated important differences in public orientations toward different political communities at the national, provincial, and municipal levels in Quebec (Kanji, Tannahill, and Hopkins 2015). The study also provided us with important clues about what may be most problematic for maintaining community support, which were discussed in more depth in Chapter 3 and will be tested in Chapter 8.

Figure 5.1 – Support for Political Community: Pride

Pride in Being Canadian - among all Canadians

Data: World Values Surveys (WVS) 1982 (n=1227), 1990 (n=1,693), 2000 (n=1,888), 2006 (n=2,111), and 2020 (3,927); Americas Barometers (ABs) 2006 (n=601), 2008 (n=2,032), 2010 (n=1,500), 2012 (n=1,500), 2014 (n=1,517), 2017 (n=1,511), 2019 (n=1,508), 2021 (n=2,201); Political Communities Survey Project 2017 (n=6,731)
WVS Question: "How proud are you to be Canadian?" Categories: "Quite proud" "Very proud". ABs Question: "To what extent are you proud of being a Canadian?" Categories: responses include "4 and 5" and "6 and 7" on scale from 0 "not at all" to 7 "a lot". PCSP Question: "How much pride do you take in each of the following?... 'Canada'." Categories: "A great deal" "Quite a lot".
Response groupings: "At least some pride" includes "quite proud, very proud" or "4 through 7 on 7-point scale" or "a great deal, quite a lot". "A lot of pride" includes "A great deal of pride", "Very proud", or "6 or 7 on 7-point scale"
Notes: Cross-Canada data not available for PCSP in 2012 and 2014.Questions and response categories differ slightly between surveys.

Not surprisingly, given the expectation that diffuse support is said to be rather deep-seated and stable[231], the evidence above confirms high levels of support that are rather consistent over time, particularly when it comes to those Canadians who indicate that they feel "at least some pride" in being Canadian (shown by the green line). Indeed, both the theoretical expectation for this political object and the subsequent empirical investigations that followed Easton's original suggestions have confirmed that support tends generally to be the strongest and most stable at the more diffuse level of political community. According to WVS and ABs data, nine or more Canadians out of ten consistently indicate that they feel at least some pride in their national political identity[232].

This said, when we reflect further on these patterns in citizens' support, one important thing appears which is often overlooked, but may be important to pay attention to. That is the intensity of support that citizens express toward their community. As Caruana et al. (2015) have demonstrated, it is quite reasonable to assume that negative attitudes may have very different effects and outcomes from positive attitudes[233]. What they suggest is that negative partisanship may be construed as an 'affective repulsion', which is different from just a passing 'dislike', and that the two are likely to have different implications or consequences when it comes to other political orientations or behaviours. It is also reasonable to expect, that a similar distinction may be observed when it comes to potential differences in citizens' *degrees* of positivity and/or

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[231] See the review of the literature that was presented in Chapter 2.

[232] Note here that I say "identity", not "community". I will discuss this distinction in the pages to follow.

[233] From Caruana (p. 2) "We conceive of negative partisanship in similar terms. Holding a negative partisanship toward a party is an affective repulsion from that party, one that is more stable than a current dislike and more strongly held than a passing opinion, resilient in part because it entails selective information gathering and processing that is capable of overriding rational updating." In other words, if someone expresses severe dislike for a particular politician, institution, or community, the way they express that distaste and the effect it has on other perceptions may be quite different from someone who expresses deep appreciation for the same individual, institution, or community.

negativity. In other words, the degree to which individuals like or dislike a particular political object – or give and withhold pride for instance – may also be an important element of the picture to consider. It is with this in mind, therefore, that I suggest it may also be worthwhile to focus, not just on absolute differences in political support, but also to observe and take into consideration any notable variations in the intensity with which support is expressed.

Indeed, if we turn to look at Figure 5.1 again, focusing this time only on those who state that they have a lot of pride in being Canadian (the orange line), the numbers appear considerably less positive – even though they still show that, typically, at least 60% of Canadians express having a lot of pride in being Canadian. During certain timepoints, however, depending on the degree of pride we observe, the findings may sometimes be rather concerning[234]. Consider for instance, that in 2017 the PCSP data indicate that less than half (48%) of the nearly 7,000 Canadians surveyed said that they had a lot of pride in Canada. Furthermore, in 2020, in the midst of a global pandemic[235] – when rhetoric about 'we-ness' and statements like "we are all in this together" seemed to be at an all-time high (Monbiot 2020; Pelley 2020; Smith-Spark 2020; Wang 2020; Krupka 2021) – the findings were only marginally better: according to the WVS, 51% of Canadians surveyed at that time indicated that they were proud to be Canadian (Haerpfer et al. 2020). Certainly, it is quite plausible that these standout low points may suggest a deeper reality, that contrary to what we may have previously believed, these presumably stable stores of diffuse support may be more susceptible to atypical period effects resulting from factors such as a global recession or a worldwide pandemic. In other words, contrary to the major conclusions generally made about diffuse community support (Easton 1965b; Clarke, Kornberg, and Stewart 1984; Dalton 1999; Norris 2011) – the stability and intensity of diffuse judgements (at least in Canada) may actually be prone to fluctuation. Given that support in this form is often tied to the stability and survival of the political system itself (Norris 2011), dips like this in support may suggest that we should at least pay closer attention.

It is also important to note here that, although the 2017 PCSP finding for strong pride is comparable to the later finding from the WVS in 2020, it is still plausible that some of this variation may be at least partly attributable to differences in question wording[236]. Indeed, rather than tapping pride in the Canadian identity – i.e., "being Canadian" – as these other surveys have typically done in the past, the PCSP asks directly how proud respondents are "of Canada" (or the object: political community). It is possible, therefore, that by asking more specifically and directly about how proud people are of the political community, rather than how proud they are of their own identity as a member of that community, we may be getting closer to achieving a

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[234] Concerning in part because, as Kornberg and Clarke demonstrated (1992, 172), support for the national or provincial community can be both directly and indirectly linked, for instance, to motivations that resulted in support for a separatist Parti Québécois and pro-sovereignty voting in the May 1980 referendum in Quebec.

[235] Data for Canada collected as part of the 7th wave of the WVS (2017-2022) were collected in October 2020 (World Values Surveys (WVS) 2022) when the pandemic was well underway.

[236] Questioning respondents about their "pride" whether in *being* Canadian or *in* Canada, is different from asking them how patriotic they feel or if they "like" Canada, all of which are measures that are used rather interchangeable in the literature when drawing conclusions about diffuse support. For wording of all questions used in this study, see Appendices A1 (Measuring Political Support – which also compares the PCSP indicators to other prominent studies that measure support in Canada) and A2 (Operationalization – where I operationalize my unidimensional and multidimensional measures of support). Certainly, when compared to the ABs conducted in the same year (2017), it is clear that the two questions are tapping different orientations. Meanwhile, looking at later 2021 ABs, it appears as if pride in "being Canadian" is starting to creep closer to these lower levels of pride "in Canada".

more accurate assessment of political support at the most diffuse level using the PCSP question – rather than tapping a proxy of identity.

To find out, I have run the same analysis again, this time comparing the PCSP question that taps assessments of the political object of community more directly (using a question that asks about "pride in Canada") alongside another America's Barometer question that also weighs assessments of the political community more directly by asking how proud Canadians are of "living under the political system of Canada" (LAPOP Lab 2022). Furthermore, in order to get even more immersed in the findings and to start digging into any distinctions that may exist between Quebec and the rest of Canada, I also look at how Quebecers rank their pride in Canada compared to the rest of Canadians. These results are presented here in the

Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 – Support for Political Community: Pride – Quebecers vs. Other Canadians

Data: Americas Barometers (ABs) 2006 (n=601), 2008 (n=2,032), 2010 (n=1,500), 2012 (n=1,500), 2014 (n=1,517), 2017 (n=1,511), 2019 (n=1,508), 2021 (n=2,201); Political Communities Survey Project 2017 (n=6,731)
ABs Question: "To what extent are you proud of being a Canadian?" and "To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of Canada?" Category: responses include "6 and 7" on scale from 0 "not at all" to 7 "a lot". PCSP Question: "How much pride do you take in each of the following?.. 'Canada'." Category: "A great deal". Note: Crossection from other provinces for PCSP not available in 2012 and 2014 (surveys only conducted in Quebec). Provincial crossections for Americas Barometers available for all years.

First, when studying political support, it starts to become clear why so much variation might exist across studies seeking to determine whether democracies are in crisis. That is, question wording across surveys of public assessments of the political system, even though they appear similar, may have important effects on the results and in turn on our interpretations of the state of support the community is receiving. This will be the first of many demonstrations of the important effect that question wording can have on our conclusions when studying political support[237]. As we can see based on the cross-time data reported above, the simple difference between asking someone how proud they are of "being" Canadian versus how proud they are "of Canada" or "of living under Canada's political system" can have important effects on the

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[237] Again, see Appendices A1 and A2 for wording of all questions.

results[238]. That is, the latter approach (pride *in* Canada/political system of Canada) tends to generate less supportive results, regardless of the time point that we consider. Furthermore, these differences are by no means insignificant[239]. Across the timeline from 2006 to 2021, the gap between Canadians' pride in *being* Canadian and their pride in the Canadian political system was consistently high (for Canadians outside Quebec, the gap ranged from a high of 41 points in 2010 to a low of 21 points in 2021). For Quebecers, the gap is smaller but still significant (ranging from a high of 25 points in 2010, to a low of 12 points in 2021).

An important point to note here is that although the national level sample sizes provide usual top-level results, the subnational analyses (looking at differences between groups, for instance) become somewhat more challenging as large enough samples are not always consistently available across all timepoints examined. In other words, while generating a cross-Canada picture, based on a large sample size is almost always possible, once aggregate samples are broken up regionally or provincially, the number of respondents that are available for analysis during each timepoint is typically drastically reduced. For instance, if we were to conduct an analysis of just Quebecers, to investigate their patterns of political support, using a survey like the Americas Barometers, these surveys would give us sample sizes of no more than about 500 respondents to work with (samples range from 99 Quebecers in 2006 to 500 in 2021). Meanwhile, the PCSP provides samples of 1,289 in 2012, 1,544 in 2014 and 1,177 in 2017. These larger sample sizes allow us to have greater confidence in the integrity and reliability of our results (Archer and Berdahl 2011) and our ability to make more accurate generalizations from these data about the Canadian (or Quebec) public. This becomes especially important as I move deeper into my analysis, which requires an even further breakdown of these samples into different subgroups (for instance, French vs. English, etc.).

Turning now to a more substantive interpretation of the findings reported in
Figure 5.2, the general gist of the results may not seem all that surprising, given that we are comparing Quebecers and the rest of Canadians (ROC), and given the historical evolution of these two solitudes (C. Taylor 1992; 1993; D. Smith 1998). Still, there are differences that emerge, and they are significant, which again suggests that digging deeper into the political support problem may be quite beneficial if we are to then try to understand why such variations are occurring[240]. That is, the data for the "pride in being Canadian" questions show that Quebecers notably express feeling less pride in being Canadian than do other Canadians. Moreover, it is also relevant to find that, although pride in being Canadian is at an all-time high among other non-Quebecers in the rest of Canada in 2006 (at 94%, 69% for Quebecers), by 2021 that pride had dropped significantly among these other Canadians (over 30% down to 61%) as well as among Quebecers (by 13% to 56%)[241].

Similarly, when we look at the measure of pride "in Canada" or "living under the political system of Canada", I find again that from 2006 to 2010, pride in Canada among Quebecers was

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[238] In 2006 and 2008 only, according to Americas Barometers codebooks, the label on the questionnaire for the response category representing *a lot* of pride, was actually "a great deal". In 2010 onward, the extreme on this scale was changed to "a lot".

[239] Two-tailed difference of means tests for each ABs year on the two questions also reveal that differences in responses are statistically significant with p<0.0001.

[240] At least to the extent that we are interested or think that community support matters which, as Kornberg and Clarke (1992) as well as Dalton and Welzel (2014) demonstrated, support for community not only impacts support for sovereignty, but also impacts willingness to fight for one's nation.

[241] For all years, differences between Quebecers and other Canadians on pride in one's Canadian identity (in being Canadian) are statistically significant with between 90% (in 2021) and 99.9% confidence (in 2006 to 2019).

consistently lower than among other Canadians, and that by 2010, the level of pride among both groups had dropped precariously low (to under 40% in the rest of Canada and less than 30% in Quebec). Moreover, over the course of the next 11 years from 2010 to 2021, pride in Canada or the Canadian political system never recovers to its pre-2010 levels, except for a spike among non-Quebecers in 2017 (52%). Among Quebecers, pride in Canada recovers only slightly, to 42% and 44% in 2019 and 2021 respectively, whereas among other Canadians, the most recent evidence suggests that levels of pride in Canada dropped back down to 39% as of 2019 and sat at 40% in 2021. Indeed, it is striking to discover here that by 2019 and 2021[242], Quebecers stand out as being slightly prouder of Canada than non-Quebecers in the rest of Canada, although, as might be expected, they remain less proud than other Canadians of *being* Canadian.

　　What this evidence suggests to me is that, if we are to properly assess the health of the political system, it is first and foremost important to pay particular attention to the questions used and to acquire large enough sample sizes that allow us to dig deeper when conducting our analyses. Moreover, what these preliminary baseline data also indicate to me is that there are good reasons to look more closely at the political support problem in Canada, as even the evidence at the most diffuse levels suggests that support may not be as strong as it once was, nor as stable, and that there are likely also a variety of important subnational variations that exist. Indeed, if we are to make important statements like "nationalism remains strong and relatively stable" (Norris 2011, 241)[243] or if we are at all interested in fully understanding the scope of any political support problems generally or the challenges that may be facing Canadian democracy in particular, we may need to pay more attention to our definition of the support concepts[244] we are examining and how we design the surveys that will test them.

　　I turn next in Figure 5.3 to unpack a bit more of the complexity that may appear within the Canadian political support story as a result of the different levels of government that co-exist within the Canadian political system. More specifically, in this figure, I present Quebecers' affective assessments of each of their different political communities, at the municipal, the provincial, and the federal levels. Such an investigation has not been possible until now, due to

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[242] Although Quebecers' pride in Canada levels are higher than non-Quebecers in 2019 and 2021, the differences are small and, according to these data (with a Quebec sample of 350 in 2019 and 500 in 2021), are not statistically significant. This finding suggests that Quebecers and non-Quebecers are becoming far more similar in their views toward the national political community, although a larger sample would help to confirm this with greater confidence.

[243] Norris draws this conclusion based on her analysis of WVS data over time, looking at trends in other democracies over time, with an observation of Canada at a single time point (2006). In her analyses, support for the national community is operationalized by combining responses to two questions: one that taps national pride and the other that taps "willingness to fight for one's country". Recall from Figure 5.1, however, that the pride question in the WVS asks about pride in *being* Canadian, rather than pride in "the Canadian political system" or "in Canada". In other words, although there may not be any generalizable cross-country erosion in national identity in other advanced liberal democracies, in Canada, the ABs data from 2006 to 2021 tell a slightly different story (both in respondents' feelings about being Canadian and in their assessments of the Canadian political community. And so, there are reasons to believe that community support (even if not in ones' own national identity but rather, in assessment of the community) may indeed be suffering (both for Canadians overall and for both Quebecers and non-Quebecers in the rest of Canada).

[244] A statement that I believe Norris would agree with as she concludes: "public support for the political system has not eroded consistently in established democracies" and "it is essential to distinguish trends in public attitudes that operate at different levels [i.e. across objects] rather than treat 'political support' as though it is all of one piece" (Norris 2011, 241). I believe this should be taken one step further, not only by paying attention to support across objects but also by digging deeper within each object, considering also how we are asking our questions, what we are asking about, and how well our conclusions account for and represent the reality within individual contexts.

the fact that no other surveys have contained the more detailed line of questioning required to do so[245].

Figure 5.3 – Support for Political Community: Pride across Communities – Quebecers

Data: Political Communities Survey Project: CPEP 2012 (n=1,289), CPEP 2014 (n=1,544), PCS 2017 (n=1,177)
PCSP Question: "How much pride do you take in each of the following?... 'Canada', 'Quebec', 'Your city/town'." Categories: "A great deal" and "Quite a lot".
Response groupings: "At least some pride" includes "a great deal" and "quite a lot". "A lot of pride" includes only "a great deal".
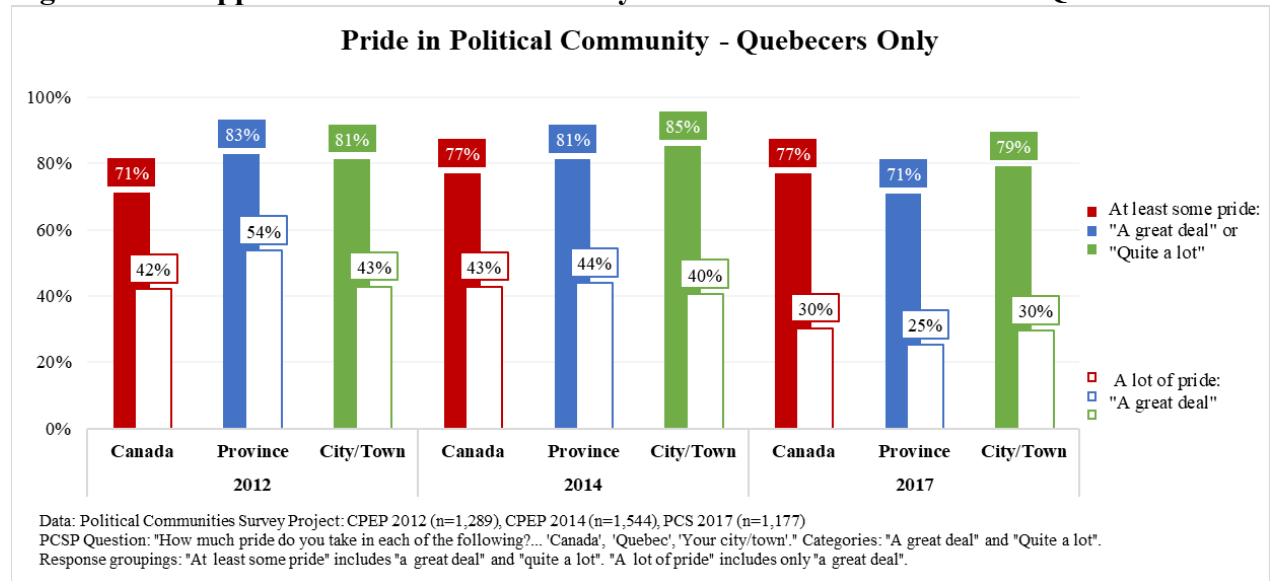
Drawing a distinction between different political communities in the Canadian case is especially important, particularly in a place like Quebec where the notion of a "national" community has been hotly contested (Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Ipsos 1995; O'Neal 1995; *Reference Re Secession of Quebec* 1998; Kanji, Tannahill, and Hopkins 2015; Tannahill and Kanji 2016a; Polèse 2021; Fitterman 2022) and distributions of powers across levels have been extensively debated (Kornberg, Clarke, and Stewart 1979; Jennifer Smith 2004; Bakvis and Skogstad 2008; Laforest 2010). Thus, it is not so surprising perhaps, that when we look at Quebecers' pride in political communities at all three levels of government, we see interesting differences emerge – although the variations aren't always what we might expect.

Based on the province's history of struggle for distinct society recognition and nation status, we would no doubt expect that support for the federal political community in Quebec, would be lowest in favor of much greater support for the provincial political community (Mendelsohn 2002; Tannahill and Kanji 2016a). And this is indeed the case, at least until more recently. In both 2012 and 2014, a large majority of Quebecers expressed at least some pride in Quebec (83% and 81% respectively). By comparison, these data show that Quebecers are slightly less proud of Canada than they are of Quebec. By that I mean specifically that the difference is much greater (12 percentage points) in 2012 than in 2014 (about 4 points).

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[245] The CES did, on occasion ask about feelings about Quebec (from 1974 to about 2000), and the Political Support in Canada Surveys (PSC) asked about other provinces, yet the last available PSC dataset that I am able to locate is from 1988 (Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Johnston et al. 1995; Clarke, Kornberg, and Wearing 2000; see also the cross-time cross-level results on the CES feelings thermometers in Mendelsohn 2002). No recent surveys ask all Canadians what they think about their own provincial political communities, nor do they tap into assessments of municipal political communities. The PCSP waves not only include questions about pride across levels, they also contain large enough samples to isolate the drivers of variation in these indicators of support (as I demonstrate using the 2017 PCSP in Chapters 7 and 8).

While general pride in Canada remained constant in 2017, where about 3 in 4 Quebecers indicated that they had at least some pride in the Canadian political community, the cross-time story of community pride has shifted slightly for Quebecers. That is, the more recent data indicate that Quebecers had more pride in Canada (77%) than they did in Quebec (71%). In fact, pride in the provincial community over time had fallen by 12 points (from 83% to 71%), while pride in Canada had increased by six points (from 71% to 77%). It is also worth noting that support for municipal political communities among Quebecers is not always consistent with their support for the provincial and national communities, but that overall pride in municipal communities has tended, on average, to fluctuate slightly around the 79 to 85 percent mark (usually higher than national community pride and either on par or slightly higher than provincial community pride)[246].

When we look at the intensity of pride that Quebecers have in their various political communities, however, the picture is even more telling. In effect, if we look only at those Quebecers who feel a lot of pride, wherein they have stated that they feel the maximum amount of pride possible (i.e. 'a great deal' on an ordinal scale ranging from 'none at all' to 'a great deal'), we find that the proportion who take a great deal of pride in Quebec drops from 2012 to 2014 (from 54% down to 44%) while those who take a great deal of pride in Canada remains constant (at around 42 to 43%). Furthermore, by 2017, the proportion of Quebecers who express a great deal of pride in both communities takes a deep plunge, especially pride in Quebec (down by more than half, from 54% in 2012 to 25% in 2017), while pride in Canada also drops significantly, although not as drastically given that it started off already at a lower level (down from 42% in 2012 to 30% in 2017).

A similar trend can also be observed in outlooks toward the municipal community. While general pride in this community in 2012 was at 81% in 2012 and slightly higher at 85% in 2014, those Quebecers who felt a great deal of pride for their municipal communities fell by 13% over time (from 43% in 2012 to 30% in 2017). This most recent evidence also suggests that the proportion of Quebecers who express a great deal of pride for their municipal communities is now more in line with how they feel about the provincial and national communities (all ranging between 25% and 30%).

What the findings from these various analyses (contained in Figure 5.1 to Figure 5.3) seem to indicate most alarmingly is that political support at the most diffuse level may indeed be experiencing a certain degree of stress (see the summary box below for a review of some key findings). The decline in support for various political communities is observable across time, across territorial contexts, and across levels of government. Furthermore, strong feelings of support (those that feel 'a great deal' of pride) have suffered the most and, at least in Quebec, support for the provincial political community appears to have taken the greatest hit. These findings are especially interesting considering the reemergence of support for a separatist party, at least in the last two federal elections which some have credited to "the need of Québécers for recognition and national affirmation" (Seymour 2019). But the real reason may be something else. To know for sure, we need to isolate for different groups and perceptions across a spectrum of explanatory factors.

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[246] While I will not be looking at what explains cross-time fluctuations in support for political communities at different levels, my analyses in Chapter 8 will go a long way toward understanding what factors might best explain variations in support at different levels. In future analyses, following the collection of additional waves of PCSP data, it should be possible to employ more advanced statistical techniques, such as time series analyses, to pinpoint with greater precision what may be driving such cross-time variations.

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Political Community – Pride
Summary of Some Key Findings

All Canadians
- Across time, Canadians generally have at least some pride *in being* Canadian;
- There are, however, fewer Canadians in general who have a lot of pride or are very proud of being Canadian;
- Also, by comparison, the findings are not as stable over time when it comes to Canadians who state that they have a lot of pride or are very proud of being Canadian.

Quebecers vs. Rest of Canadians (ROC)
- Both Canadians and Quebecers are less proud of Canada than they are of *being* Canadian;
- Moreover, pride in the Canadian political community has dropped significantly since the mid-2000s especially among non-Quebecers;
- By 2021, Quebecers appear more proud *of* Canada than other Canadians (despite being less proud of *being* Canadian).

Quebecers only
- In 2012 and 2014, Quebecers took more pride in Quebec than in Canada;
- By 2017 however, Quebecers' pride in their province sinks lower than pride in Canada or in one's city or town;
- The proportion of Quebecers who take a great deal of pride in all of their respective political communities (federal, provincial and municipal) has dropped over time.

Takeaways
- The indicator used to measure community pride can have important effects on the resulting interpretations (pride in *being* Canadian vs. pride *in Canada*)
- Pride in political community appears to be under stress among *all* Canadians;
- There are clear variations in how proud Quebecers are of different political communities;
- The tendency to claim 'a great deal' of pride in any community, especially, appears to be dropping significantly.

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Speculation about the cross-time variations aside however, it is important to note that, while pride is an important indicator of support which helps to better understand citizens' affective outlooks toward their political communities, a much more common – although still debated – measure of political support is satisfaction with democracy[247]. In the next set of figures therefore, I examine levels of satisfaction in Canadian democracy, pulling in data again from the Americas Barometers as well as various waves of the Canadian national election surveys that have been administered over time, comparing these results to the findings from the PCSP.

Political Regime
Recent studies have suggested that earlier claims about a 'crisis' of democracy, that have appeared and reappeared, time after time, in the political support literature, may not be entirely off base, particularly when it comes to citizens' satisfaction with their democracies in advanced

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[247] Again, for a discussion of regime support according to the literature, see Chapter 2.

industrial or western states[248]. Foa et al.'s (2020) recent report, brings together survey responses from several datasets from 1969 to 2019 to demonstrate (among other things) the general trends in satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with democracy over time in various democracies, Canada included. To say the least, the picture is not so rosy:

Figure 5.4 – Support for Political Regime: Dissatisfaction with Democracy
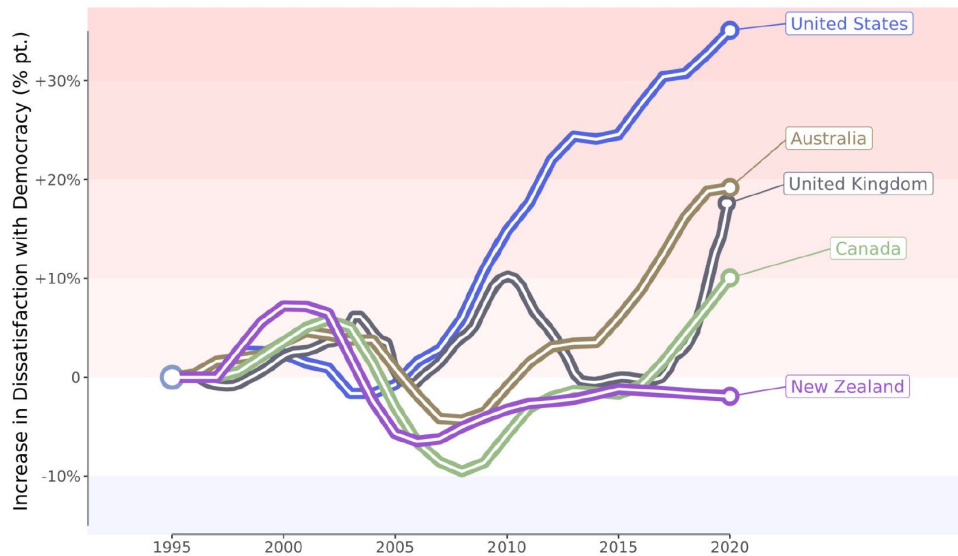
Figure 13: *Change in satisfaction with democracy since 1995 in the Anglo-Saxon democracies, from baseline level.*

Source: Foa et al. (2020, 19).

In this report, as illustrated in Figure 5.4, the data for Canada exhibit a similar trend to those reported for the United States, Australia, and the UK, in that they suggest that dissatisfaction with democracy has grown, in particular, over the period from around 2007 to 2019. And while it certainly appears that the size of the increase in dissatisfaction may not be quite as large in Canada as it is in these other countries, the findings are nevertheless troubling and at the very least demand further investigation. Another important point to raise about this report is that the survey questions used to determine satisfaction are not all the same across the countries being observed, which, as we saw for support for the political community is relevant to bear in mind. I will elaborate on this again below, in the context of measuring regime support as well[249].

For this alternative cross-time evaluation of democratic satisfaction in Canada, in order to probe as many comparable cross-time data points as I can, I have drawn not only from the Americas Barometers[250] but also from the Canadian Election Studies (CES) and the PCSP. Also, unlike Foa et al., who report satisfaction levels relative to a baseline point in time, in my analysis I present the raw satisfaction levels that Canadians express with their democracy at all available timepoints from 2004 to 2021.

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[248] Others, such as Foa et al. (2020) also describe these democracies as "Anglo-Saxon" democracies.
[249] Valgarðsson and Devine (2022) also demonstrate this inconsistency across surveys in their analysis of a variety of datasets that measure satisfaction with democracy and warn that we should be cautious when employing such measures when pointing to any cross-time trends.
[250] As Foa et al. did in their report for the Canadian data points.

Figure 5.5 – Support for Political Regime: Satisfaction with Democracy

Satisfaction with Canadian Democracy - among all Canadians

Data: Americas Barometers (ABs) 2006 (n=595), 2008 (n=2,009), 2010 (n=1,500), 2012 (n=1,500), 2014 (n=1,516), 2017 (n=1,511), 2019 (n=1,507), 2021 (n=2,198); Canadian Election Studies (CES) Campaign Period, phone survey (CPp) 2004 (n=4,181), Post-Election, phone survey (PEp) 2004 (n=3,046), CPp 2006 (n=3,882), PEp 2006 (n=3,157), CPp 2008 (n=3,111), PEp 2008 (n=3,611), CPp 2011 (n=4,206), CPp 2015 (n=4,076), Campaign Period, online survey (CPo) 2015 (n=6,722), CPp 2019 (n=3,954), CPo 2019 (n=36,887), PEp 2019 (n=2,853), Post-Election, online survey (PEo) 2019 (n=10,170), PEo 2021 (n=20,386); Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP) PCS 2017 (n=6,306).
ABs Question: "in general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in Canada" Categories: responses include Very satisfied" and "Satisfied" . CES and PCSP Questions: "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in... 'Canada'." Categories: "Very satisfied" "Fairly satisfied". Response groupings: "At least some satisfaction" includes "Very satisfied" or "Satisfied, Fairly satisfied". "Very satisfied" includes Very satisfied"
Notes: Cross-Canada data not available for PCSP in 2012 and 2014. Response categories differ slightly between ABs versus CES or PCSP surveys.

Once again, the results of this preliminary investigation (reported in Figure 5.5) demonstrate the relevance of variations in question wording. This time, however, differences are less obvious, appearing not in the question itself, but in the possible response categories that were provided to survey participants to select from when completing the survey questionnaires. More specifically, in the case of the ABs, the response categories that are available for respondents who are satisfied with democracy to choose from are either "satisfied" or "very satisfied"[251]. In the case of the PCSP or the CES, on the other hand, the response categories that are available for respondents who are satisfied with democracy to choose from are actually threefold: "very satisfied", "fairly satisfied", and "not very satisfied"[252]. The distinction, in other words, between the two sets of response categories is that the latter is more delineated (meaning that the available options for expressing satisfaction are perhaps more precisely defined) and this is an important difference to bear in mind and pay attention to when conducting cross-time and cross-national comparisons of this sort.

More specifically, as reported in Figure 5.5, the proportion of Canadians who are "very satisfied" tends to be much more consistent over time regardless of the survey employed (as denoted by the orange line), than the proportion who indicate that they are generally satisfied overall (or have at least some satisfaction, as indicated by the green line). That is, the findings reported for the latter tend to be much more varied and less stable over time, depending (in part) on the surveys used as well as the response categories available for respondents to choose from.

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[251] Where two related but distinct attitudes (positive vs. negative) are being measured in the same question: satisfaction measured as "satisfied" or "very satisfied" and dissatisfaction being expressed as "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied".

[252] Where all assessments directly tap the level or degree of satisfaction ranging from "not at all satisfied" at the low end, through "not very satisfied" and "fairly satisfied", to "very satisfied" at the top end.

The 2017 survey results, for example, provide a closeup illustration of both the magnitude and likely underpinnings of this difference.

During the 2017 wave of the ABs, 81% of Canadians indicated that they have at least some satisfaction with Canadian democracy (i.e., they said they were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'), while during the PCS which was administered in that same year, only 71% of Canadians indicated that they have at least some satisfaction in the workings of their democracy (claiming either that they are '*fairly* satisfied' or 'very satisfied'). This difference is not insignificant (10%) and is perhaps largely due to the broader range of satisfaction levels (as opposed to satisfaction vs. dissatisfaction) tapped by the latter measure relative to the former. That is, in the case of the PCS (and CES) measures, respondents are provided the opportunity to also specify whether they are "not very satisfied", as well as "fairly satisfied" and "very satisfied", which helps to more precisely disaggregate, distribute, and categorize satisfaction levels. Whereas in the case of the ABs, the basic "satisfied" response category does not delineate between general satisfaction levels and those who may be "not very satisfied", potentially resulting in a net effect of overestimating (or artificially inflating) the proportion of respondents who are truly "satisfied" with the workings of their democracy.

Similar effects are also observable when looking at results from the Canadian Election studies (CES) dating back to 2004[253]. Generally speaking, when results from the ABs are available within the same year as findings from the CES, the results relating to the proportion of respondents who say that they are "very satisfied" with their democracy are quite similar between the two surveys. Meanwhile, the proportion of respondents falling into the 'at least some' satisfaction category varies a bit more, potentially due once again to the difference between how respondents interpret the response categories available to them when seeking to report the intensity of their support. In either case, it seems that the combination of "fairly satisfied", "very satisfied" and "not very satisfied" responses accommodates more variation in the intensity of feelings toward democracy and likely reflects less inflation in support for the workings of democracy overall[254].

Looking, for instance, at results reported for 2006 I find that the contrast just discussed is also quite stark. In this case, 90% of respondents to the ABs indicate that they are either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the way democracy works in Canada – but only 19% say that they are "very satisfied". By comparison, in the post-election wave of the CES conducted during that same year, the same proportion of respondents indicated again that they are "very satisfied" (19%), but only 81% say that they are at least somewhat satisfied (i.e., either "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied"). The difference in results (9 points), here again, is not insignificant and may be due (at least partly) to variations in available question response categories and the fact that the CES allow respondents to distribute their satisfaction levels more precisely across the three response categories as opposed to just two ("very satisfied" and "satisfied"), which has the effect

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[253] For simplicity, I have opted to include CES surveys dating back only to 2004 rather than all the way back to 1965. Looking over the last fifteen years allows enough of a cross-time picture of the state of democratic satisfaction in Canada to illustrate any trend which might be occurring on this measure while also including data drawn from periods under three different Prime Ministers from both of the leading national political parties.

[254] For now, this helps to point at least to the importance of paying attention to discrepancies in question wording *as well* as response category wordings and the dangers of aggregating questions from different surveys (even when the question itself is worded the same). These discrepancies may be further complicated when questions are asked in different languages. In the next round of surveys, we will for the first time, be carrying out methodological tests to further clarify our understanding of response category rankings and the ratings that respondents apply when answering our surveys to further refine our interpretations of support levels.

of inflating the proportion of respondents who report their satisfaction levels on the ABs measure versus the CES or PCSP[255].

Of course, this is not to deny the possibility, that in some cases, such differences in results may also be due to exogenous period effects resulting from when the surveys were administered and the survey responses were collected. A case in point in this instance, once again, is 2006. That is, if we compare the results from the CES surveys conducted around the time of the national election, we find that during the election campaign (denoted by the acronym CPp, for Campaign Period phone survey) only 62% of Canadians indicated that they had any satisfaction with the way democracy was working, whereas, immediately after the federal election (denoted by the acronym PEp, for Post-Election period phone survey) 81% said they were either "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their national democracy. This shift, as significant as it is (nearly 20%), is not surprising given that there is evidence to suggest that citizens' satisfaction levels typically increase immediately following an election for a variety of reasons (Blais and Gélineau 2007), including the fact that they have just had an opportunity to witness democracy in action, working as it is meant to, and to have had a direct say in who governs[256].

Likewise, in 2015, the distinctions in the results that appear may be attributable, in part, to differences in data collection modes (see, for example Keeter 2015). For instance, based on the CES Campaign Period phone survey, 18% of Canadians indicated that they were very satisfied with their democracy, and 70% indicated that they were generally satisfied (either "fairly" or "very"). Now compare those results with those collected during the same campaign period, but privately online, as opposed to in the company of a survey interviewer on the telephone. In both instances, the data indicate much lower levels of satisfaction (11% say they are very satisfied and 61% say they are generally satisfied). This result may presumably be because citizens tend to be more inclined to be more candid when they are responding to survey instruments on their own than they are when responding to an interviewer (Chang and Krosnick 2010). All of this to say therefore, that if we are going to draw any kind of clear conclusions on political support patterns or draw recommendations on the political support problem based on survey research findings that are taken from different studies, it is of utmost importance that we keep question wording, context, as well as the data collection mode, in mind, and be as vigilant as possible, as well as employ as consistent and comparable measures as the pool of available data allow[257].

With all of this in mind, the data reported in Figure 5.6 make a more concerted effort at comparing apples with apples, to the extent that it is possible with the varied cross-time evidence that is currently available for analysis. More specifically, this figure reports fluctuations in satisfaction with democracy in Canada, while distinguishing between Quebecers and other Canadians using only those surveys that employ the exact same questions as well as identical

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[255] A more careful analysis of these distinctions would be required with a dedicated instrument or experiment. But the finding points at least to the need for greater caution when comparing what appear to be similar measures with identical question wordings.

[256] Not to mention that those who answered the Post-Election period phone survey are individuals who took part in the previous wave of the survey as well (where, for instance, some of those who were less satisfied may have opted not to participate in the follow CES survey). Their commitment to taking part in multiple waves of a panel survey of this kind might be reflective of a higher level of political interest, knowledge, and engagement. Again, this would need to be tested.

[257] Other scholars have also identified that discrepancies and confusion exist in how political support is understood and measured and, especially if these assessments are to be employed in other types of regimes or comparatively across contexts, care should be taken to better understand and build on the measures we employ and how the dynamics of support play out (Lu and Dickson 2020).

response categories (the CES and the PCSP). Doing so reduces the possibility that the results may be skewed and possibly exaggerated by variations in question or response category wording. Of course, variations in responses may nonetheless be influenced from time to time by certain period or contextual variations, such as before and after an election, or by the way that the data have been collected, such as by telephone as opposed to online.

Figure 5.6 – Support for Political Regime: Satisfaction with Democracy – Quebecers vs. Other Canadians

Satisfaction with Canadian Democracy - "Some Satisfaction" Quebecers vs. ROC

Data: Canadian Election Studies (CES) Campaign Period, phone survey (CPp) 2004 (n=4,181), Post-Election, phone survey (PEp) 2004 (n=3,046), CPp 2006 (n=3,882), PEp 2006 (n=3,157), CPp 2008 (n=3,111), PEp 2008 (n=3,611), CPp 2011 (n=4,206), CPp 2015 (n=4,076), Campaign Period, online survey (CPo) 2015 (n=6,722), CPp 2019 (n=3,954), CPo 2019 (n=36,887), PEp 2019 (n=2,853), Post-Election, online survey (PEo) 2019 (n=10,170), PEo 2021 (n=20,386); Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP) CPEP 2012 (n=1,287), CPEP 2014 (n=1,535), PCS 2017 (n=6,306)
CES and PCSP Questions: "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in... 'Canada'." Categories: "Very satisfied" and "Fairly satisfied". Note: Crossection from other provinces for PCSP not available in 2012 and 2014 (surveys only conducted in Quebec).

What becomes even more evident from the findings reported in Figure 5.6 is that there is a clear need to dig more deeply into what Canadians make of the workings of their democracy. Consider, for instance, the findings reported for general satisfaction levels overall (i.e. respondents who are either "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied" or express "at least some satisfaction" – illustrated using the dark red and blue lines), which is the degree of satisfaction that is most typically reported and focused upon in the literature for Canadians as a whole (for example: Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Blais and Gélineau 2007; Nadeau 2002; LeDuc and Pammett 2014). These data suggest first that there are important within-population, subnational differences that may go unnoticed if we focus solely on aggregated country findings without probing more deeply into the available evidence across regions within those countries.

Notice for instance, the cross-time findings for Quebecers and non-Quebecers are, once again, quite distinct. For example, according to these data, satisfaction with Canadian democracy among non-Quebecers ranges from 59% to 64% between 2004 and 2019. On the face of it, this would seem to point to a small increase in satisfaction over time, with some short-term ups and downs over consecutive federal elections. However, these same data also suggest that, immediately following the 2019 election, when citizens are typically expected to be overall more

positive about their democracy[258], no more than 2 in three Canadians indicated that they had at least some satisfaction in the workings of their democracy (64% in both post-election surveys[259]), which is actually an average drop in satisfaction of 7% compared to the campaign period.

A closer look at these data also suggests that the general trajectory of support for the workings of democracy for Canadians outside of Quebec, since 2008 in particular, may actually be negative. Indeed, the cross-time data from this point on suggest that the proportion of Canadians outside of Quebec who are not very satisfied (and not at all satisfied) with the way their democracy works may have increased by as much as 13%[260]. This is by no means an insignificant drop in satisfaction levels. In fact, in 2019, satisfaction with Canadian democracy among non-Quebecers was only 5% higher[261] than it was in 2004 around the time when news of the Sponsorship scandal was making major headlines (CBC 2006), a period which was marked by important concerns over a democratic deficit in Canada and important institutional reforms were being proposed[262] (Aucoin and Turnbull 2003; Policy Options 2004; Free and Radcliffe 2009; Ruderman and Nevitte 2015; Geddes 2016). As I begin to dig even deeper and start to unpack this broader picture a bit more, the findings get even interesting as the subnational comparisons appear to be even more nuanced.

Consider for instance, the parallel findings reported for Quebecers, where the results immediately begin to raise important questions. As one might expect, considering the long line of scholarship and inquiry pointing to Quebec's power struggles with the Canadian federation (Gagnon and Iacovino 2007; Laforest 2010), Quebecers' and their governments' efforts to distinguish[263] themselves from an Anglophone Canadian majority (LeDuc 1977; McRoberts 1977; Smiley 1978; Fenwick 1981; Howard 1991; Rousseau 1992; Balthazar 1995; Rocher 2014) and long-documented reporting of Quebecers' tendency to be more disaffected with the way Canadian democracy works compared to other Canadians (for instance: Kornberg, Clarke, and Stewart 1979; Kornberg and Clarke 1994; Howe and Northup 2000; Nadeau 2002; LeDuc and Pammett 2014), Figure 5.6 confirms that Quebecers are indeed somewhat less positive when it comes to outlooks toward the workings of Canadian democracy than other Canadians.

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[258] This feeling may of course be mitigated by whether the individual considers having "won" in the election, although there is also some research that warns of the interpretation of the "winner-loser gap" in explaining satisfaction following an election. These authors suggest that other elements may or may not be at play in driving satisfaction after an election, including who is forming government for instance, although these other drivers have not been fully tested yet (Daoust, Plescia, and Blais 2021). Others suggest that national identity may also mitigate satisfaction following an election, not just winning or losing (Plescia, Daoust, and Blais 2021).

[259] With the same results, regardless of the data collection mode (phone or online).

[260] Satisfaction decreases from 77% in the 2008 PEp survey to 64% in the 2019 PEp survey.

[261] When comparing post-election numbers between 2004 and 2019, satisfaction among non-Quebecers was actually even lower in 2019. By 2021, while satisfaction increased to 72%, this is still only 4 points higher than it was immediately after the 2004 election a period over which, according to the same CES data, the "scale and durability of citizen anger about the sponsorship scandal" was ever present and significant (Ruderman and Nevitte 2015, 892) and led, in part, to the dissolution of the Liberal government under Paul Martin and the success of Harper's Conservatives in 2006 (CBC 2006).

[262] For instance, the *Federal Accountability Act* (2006)

[263] Including a "distinct" society agenda in the Quebec political domain (O'Neal 1995; see also Tannahill and Kanji 2016a). Although, there are mixed findings on this. In the late 80s for instance, Johnston and Blais (1988), found that identification with the provincial political community in Quebec did not *necessarily* decrease identification (measured as feelings about Canada and Quebec) with the Canadian one. In other words, just because the society is distinct in its values and strives for explicit recognition of that distinction, does not automatically translate into more negative views about the national community (or presumably, the way democracy works in that community).

That is, up until 2017 at least where both CES and PCSP data consistently suggest that Quebecers were less (or at times almost equally) satisfied with the workings of Canadian democracy in general than other Canadians. At various times from 2004 to 2015, as few as half of Quebecers indicated that they were at all satisfied with Canadian democracy[264].

Another important finding of note here, goes counter to what we might expect given the history of Quebec-Canada relations. That is, after 2017, the CES data indicate that Quebecers are more satisfied with the workings of Canadian democracy than non-Quebecers in the rest of Canada. In other words, satisfaction with the workings of Canadian democracy in Quebec increased by 11% between 2004 and 2019 (according to post-election phone surveys) and by over 20% from 2011 and 2015, to 2019 (according to campaign-period phone surveys).

In short, these regionally-divided data suggest not only that between one quarter and one third of Canadians outside of Quebec are not generally satisfied with the workings of Canadian democracy (consistently since 2008, whether during election campaigns or outside of them[265]), but also that Canadians outside of Quebec, according to the most recent evidence, are generally less satisfied with the workings of Canadian democracy than Quebecers (by as much as 13%[266]). This finding suggests that, consistent with other recent work, satisfaction with the way democracy works in Canada may be suffering significantly in other regions of the country[267].

Additionally, when we look more carefully at the *degree* of satisfaction that Canadians express, as revealed by looking exclusively at the results for those who indicate that they are "very satisfied" with the workings of their democracy (illustrated by the lighter blue and red lines), another surprising finding emerges. Indeed, it is striking, to say the least, that in a democracy that is consistently ranked as being among the best in the world (according to EIU and Freedom House measures), that never more than one in five Canadians expresses being *very* satisfied with the way that this democracy is working, whether they live in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada (the proportion expressing they are very satisfied ranges from 7% of Quebecers during the 2004 and 2011 elections, to 20% of non-Quebecers during the 2015 election campaign). In fact, such a finding might suggest that citizens are actually more discerning and critical about the quality of their democracy than previously expected[268]. Rather, citizens may be evaluating their democracy more thoroughly, similar to the objective evaluations contained in more rigorous assessments of Canadian democracy as applied by V-Dem, for instance[269].

Moreover, although for the most part the evidence for Quebecers indicates that this group in the past were generally less inclined to be very satisfied with the workings of Canadian

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[264] During campaign period surveys, Quebecers satisfaction (at least some satisfaction) with Canadian democracy ranges from a low of 48% in 2004, to a high of 63% in 2008. There are spikes in satisfaction with Canadian democracy following election campaigns where the data are available in 2004 (66%), 2006 (80%), and 2008 (70%). This post-election effect is not observed to the same degree for Quebecers in 2019 (going from 74% during the campaign period on phone surveys to 77% post-election, and from 76% during the campaign period on online surveys to 77% post-election).

[265] In 2017, the PCSP were conducted outside of the federal election campaign and the results are similar (with 72% of non-Quebecers expressing some satisfaction).

[266] In 2019, after the national election.

[267] See, again, the findings from Parkin (2020) who reports that Albertans are becoming increasingly discontent with Canadian democracy.

[268] Considering that our expectations and findings on trends in satisfaction have been generally derived by combining survey responses of levels of satisfaction together "very satisfied" and "fairly satisfied", as discussed above.

[269] Where Canada drops from 7th worldwide on EIU and Freedom House measures to 19th on V-Dem indicators.

democracy than other Canadians[270], the more recent data show that Quebecers are in fact more content (i.e., very satisfied) with the workings of Canadian democracy (ranging from 16% to 18% following the 2019 election), compared to Canadians living outside of Quebec (around 13% to 14%)[271]. Of course, whether or not this is a trend that is likely to persist into the future is still to be seen. Nonetheless, these results do convey a great deal about the fluctuating mood of Canadians over time, the shifting patterns in regime support between regions, and the important effects that our decisions about how we choose to interpret our data can have on our assessments of support for the political system (whether it is generally doing okay, or if we have more to worry about)[272].

When I turn to look more closely at what citizens think about the workings of their democracy at different levels of government, the findings once again reveal added complexity. It is important to point out here first, that with the exception of the Making Electoral Democracy Work project, which asks citizens from Quebec and Ontario about their satisfaction with democracy at the provincial level (Blais 2010; Stephenson et al. 2010; Blais and Kostelka 2016) and the original waves of the Comparative Provincial Election Project (J. J. Wesley et al. 2015; J. J. Wesley 2016) from which the PCSP emerged, I have yet to come across any other studies that ask citizens what they think of the workings of their democracies at different levels of government[273].

Instead, studies of Canadian democracy that distinguish between levels of government when tapping support generally only question Canadians about their confidence in government at either the provincial or federal level (the CES, for example). In other contexts, such as across the European Union, for example, conclusions about the state of democracy are also drawn using questions that tap citizen assessment of institutions at the supranational level (for example, satisfaction with the European Parliament (European Parliament 2023; European Social Survey (ESS) 2014)[274]. In the US, several studies have also examined satisfaction with institutions such as congress (Kohut et al. 2009) or state versus local governments (McCarthy 2018). However, here in Canada, at this point, only the PCSP in 2017 (and earlier, the CPEP) has asked citizens across all of Canada to distinguish between how they view the workings of their democracy at different levels of government[275] using questions that directly tap regime support (support for democracy) and not just support for regime institutions (such as governments of parliaments). Figure 5.7 digs into what these cross-level data suggest about regime support[276] reveal, starting

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[270] Always lower than other Canadians, except after the 2006 election campaign where the proportions of Quebecers and non-Quebecers who were very satisfied was equal (19%).

[271] Consistent with what was reported above for recent years when looking at general satisfaction, combining the two top satisfaction categories.

[272] As suggested by some in the context of the democratic 'crisis' debate.

[273] Something that Mebs Kanji and I have reported on using our Quebec PCSP data over the last several years (Kanji and Tannahill 2017a; 2014a; Tannahill, Kanji, and Courchesne 2023).

[274] See also, the recent work by Steenvoorden and van der Meer (2021) who break down the potential linkages between satisfaction at the local and national levels in the Netherlands in 2016.

[275] Pollara Strategic Insights has recently released data on changing satisfaction levels with municipal governments (not democracy) since the start of the pandemic (Pollara Strategic Insights 2022). Note, again, that the MEDW project (or what I have found published so far), only looks at subnational regime satisfaction among Quebecers and Ontarians.

[276] Certainly, we would expect that because the institutions (i.e., legislatures, parties, civil services, and political authorities) are not the same, the political authorities involved are not the same, and the agendas, although they may overlap at times, are also likely to vary, that the way Canadians evaluate the workings of their democracy at these different levels of government is not likely to be the same.

with an overview of how satisfied Quebecers are with the workings of their democracy at different levels of government, including the municipal, provincial, and federal levels.

Figure 5.7 – Support for Political Regime: Satisfaction across Democracies – Quebecers

Data: Political Communities Survey Project: CPEP 2012 (n=1,287), CPEP 2014 (n=1,535), PCS 2017 (n=1,099)
PCSP Question: "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in... 'Canada', 'Quebec', 'Your city/town'."
Categories: "Very satisfied" "Fairly satisfied". Response groupings: "At least some satisfaction" includes "Very satisfied" or "Fairly satisfied". "Very satisfied" includes "Very satisfied".

Once again, the data suggest that outlooks toward political objects in societies that have complex political structures are likely to vary in notable ways, but that general degrees of satisfaction in the way democracy works, regardless of the level of government, never surpass about 80%, and in some cases falls as low as 53%.

The evidence reported in Figure 5.7, for instance, reveals that general satisfaction with the way that democracies work locally, tends to be consistently higher[277] (2012: 69%, 2014: 79%, and 2017: 68%) than general satisfaction with the workings of democracy either provincially (2012: 65%, 2014: 69%, and 2017: 59%)[278] or federally (2012: 53%, 2014: 61%, and 2017: 67%)[279].

Also, there are various cross-time patterns that appear. For instance, general satisfaction with the way democracy works at the federal level would appear to have risen from 2012 (53%) to 2017 (67%) by 14%, whereas general satisfaction with the workings of provincial democracy dropped by 10% from 2014 (69%) to 2017 (59%). The end result, according to the most recent evidence, is that one third of Quebecers are generally not very satisfied (or not at all satisfied) with the way their democracies work at the federal and municipal levels. Whereas almost 40% are not very satisfied (or not at all satisfied) with the way that their province's democracy works.

Moreover, the results are even less encouraging when we consider just the proportion of Quebecers who are completely satisfied with the way their democracy works at either the municipal, the provincial, or the federal level. That is, the results in this figure indicate that no more than 10 to 12% of Quebecers are ever *very* satisfied with the workings of their democracy at the federal level. No more than 13 to 14% of Quebecers are ever very satisfied with the workings of their democracy at the municipal levels and, according to the most recent evidence,

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[277] This is consistent with what some other studies have found in other contexts when evaluating *institutions* at the local versus the state level (McCarthy 2018).

[278] The findings reported by MEDW suggest, similarly, that Quebecers generally only rate their provincial democracy between 5 and 6 out of 10 (Blais and Kostelka 2016).

[279] The MEDW data (Ibid) also suggest that satisfaction with national democracy is higher for Quebecers than satisfaction with provincial democracy (although still between 5 and 6 out of 10).

less than 10% of Quebecers (7%) are very satisfied with the workings of their democracy at the provincial level, which represents a 6% decline is support from 2012. The disaggregated findings within the Canadian state, therefore, are far from consistent and the differences are hardly trivial.

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Political Regime – Satisfaction with Democracy
Summary of Some Key Findings

All Canadians
- Across time, there are significant fluctuations in general satisfaction with democracy due to measurement differences;
- Very few Canadians are ever very satisfied with democracy;
- A significant proportion of Canadians are not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the workings of their democracy.

Quebecers vs. Rest of Canadians (ROC)
- General satisfaction with Canadian democracy has historically been higher and more consistent among non-Quebecers than among Quebecers;
- At various times, virtually half of Quebecers have been not very satisfied (or not at all satisfied) with Canadian democracy;
- In recent years, general satisfaction with Canadian democracy has risen among Quebecers and declined among non-Quebecers;
- By 2019 Quebecers were more satisfied with Canadian democracy than non-Quebecers ;
- Yet, never more than one in five Canadians, whether within or outside of Quebec, are ever very satisfied with democracy.

Quebecers only – across levels
- Very few Quebecers are ever very satisfied with democracy at any level of government;
- By 2017, general satisfaction with Canadian democracy among Quebecers had risen while satisfaction with Quebec's democracy had sunken lower than satisfaction with democracy at either the federal or the municipal level;
- Municipal democracies are the most favored among Quebecers.

Takeaways
- Satisfaction with democracy among Canadians does not seem to be as consistently strong as Canadian democracy's consistently strong objective rankings might lead one to believe;
- There are clear within-country variations in outlooks toward the workings of democracy in Canada;
- There are clear variations in how satisfied Quebecers are with democracy at different levels of government;
- Satisfaction with federal democracy is higher among Quebecers than non-Quebecers in recent years;
- Quebecers' satisfaction with provincial democracy has declined in more recent years.

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In summary, the findings presented on regime support so far suggest that there are significant proportions of Canadians who are not very satisfied (or not at all satisfied) with the workings of their democracy and much fewer still who are very satisfied. Also, there are notable variations

that appear across different territorial contexts, meaning specifically that Canadians who live outside of Quebec, at least according to the more recent evidence, seem even less satisfied with the workings of Canadian democracy than those who live in Quebec. Which, again, is striking given the historical differences between these contexts. Lastly, there are also variations in the degrees of satisfaction that citizens have in the workings of their democracy at different levels of government. Indeed, it is notable that in this respect, the most recent PCSP data suggest that Quebecers are much less satisfied with the workings of their provincial democracy than they are with democracy at the federal level or within their municipalities.

Measuring satisfaction levels with the perceived workings of democracy is no longer the only way that we (as researchers) attempt to tap into citizens' regime support. Other alternative indicators, for instance, that have more recently been introduced to evaluate regime support which ask citizens directly about "how democratically" they feel their country is being governed. Some have also used this indicator as a more direct assessment of democratic performance (using WVS data from 2005-2006, see for instance: Nevitte and White 2012; or Norris 2011)[280].

Figure 5.8 – Support for Political Regime: Evaluation of Degree of Democraticness – Canada vs. Other Countries
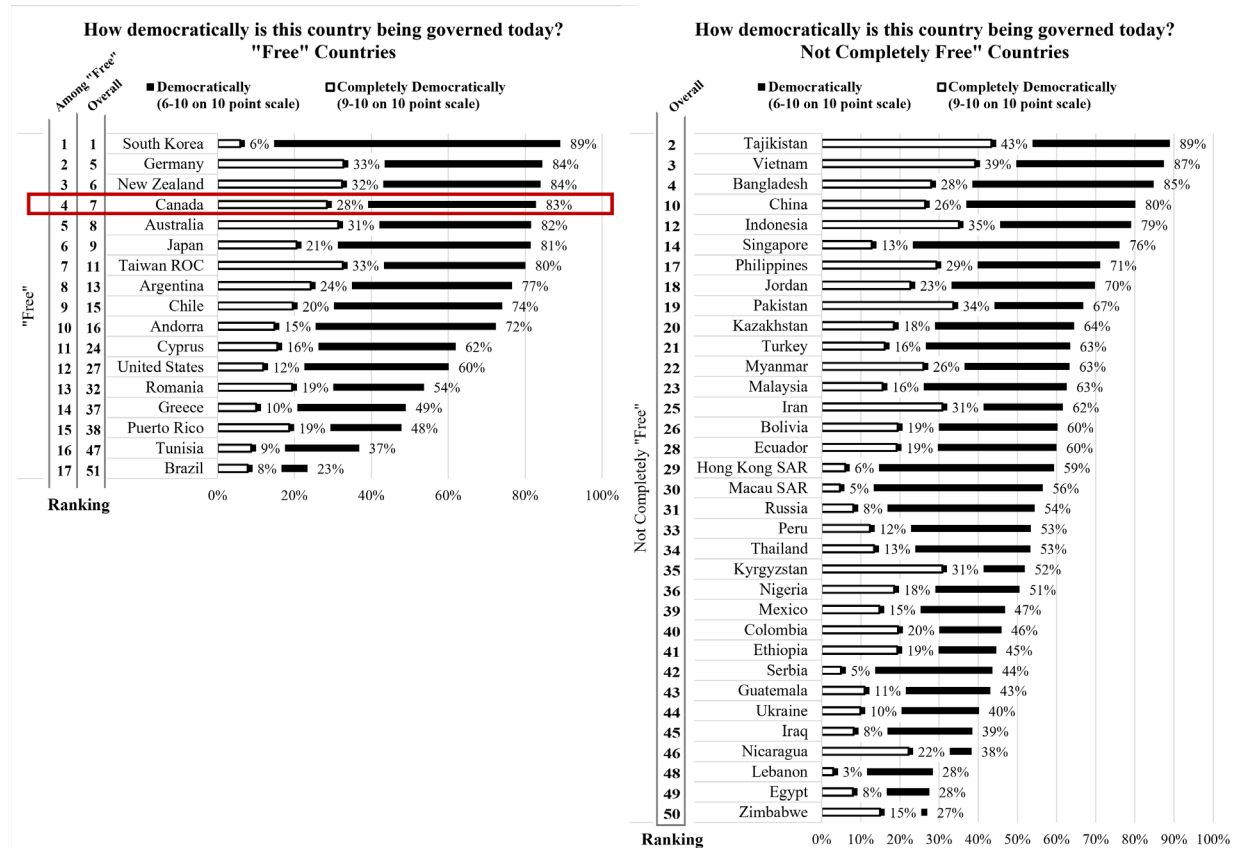
Source: World Values Survey 2017-2020 (n=74,982) WVS Question: "And how democratically is this country being governed today? Again using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that it is "not at all democratic" and 10 means that it is "completely democratic," what position would you choose? "Freedom" is determined based on Freedom House's 2020 Freedom Index (Freedom House 2020b)

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[280] More specifically, Norris uses this measure to report on democratic satisfaction (2011, 248).

The findings reported in Figure 5.8, which come from the 2017-2020 round of the World Values Surveys carried out in 51 countries (Haerpfer et al. 2020), indicate that according to this particular measure, Canada ranks 7th overall out of the countries surveyed[281] (according to the 2020 data) and where 83% of Canadians evaluate Canada as being governed democratically (i.e., that is they provide a score of at least 6 or more on a scale ranging from 1 to 10 for this question). While this measure is based on the most general interpretation[282] of the concept of "democratic", given no definition or baseline comparable threshold is provided to respondents, the results in Canada would appear to stand out relative to other democratic states. For instance, the United States, by comparison, comes in at number 27 of the 51 countries, with only 60% of Americans surveyed indicating that their country is being governed democratically (using, of course, the same broad interpretation and 10-point measurement scale). When I exclude countries that are not considered "free" according to the Freedom House 2020 index, Canada moves even higher up on this ranking to 4th place and the US moves to 12th (of the 17 "free" countries).

To better understand this particular indicator of support for the political regime measured in this way, we introduced it to the first round of 2012 PCSP (Kanji 2012b). We then investigated and reported Quebecers' assessments of how democratically their political communities were being governed in practice – primarily, at that time, to gather preliminary feedback on the new measures that we were experimenting with and testing (Kanji and Tannahill 2013d; 2014d; 2014a). Since then, we have replicated this line of questioning over consecutive rounds of the PCSP (Kanji 2014; Kanji and Tannahill 2017b) and the results have helped to reinforce the reliability and validity of what we have come to understand so far, provided a valuable comparison point between our own data collection instrument and one that is well recognized and established, but it has also allowed us to dig a little deeper into the state of regime support either inside or outside Quebec than what we would have been able to do if we relied only on the WVS for responses on this question.

More specifically, using the cross-time evidence that has now accumulated on account of repeated iterations of the WVS (R. F. Inglehart et al. 2020)[283] and the PCSP, I was able to dig further into how Canadians have changed over time when it comes to their views on how democratically they think their national political community is being governed.

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[281] If I use mean scores of responses on this question instead (as Norris (2011, 90) and Nevitte and White (2012, 60) did), Canada also comes in at 7th place (with a mean score of 7.31/10). This is an improvement from the 13th place Canada had in 2006 (based on Norris' analysis of the WVS data: 70.7/100). It should be noted, however, that the 2017-2020 data reported in Figure 5.8 exclude "free" countries like Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, and Finland, all of which outranked Canada in the 2005-2007 data reported by Norris. So, this 7th place ranking may be even lower if these other countries' data were to b included here.

[282] Based on individual respondents' conceptions of what "democratic" means to them. A potentially better way of asking this question in the future might be to also ask respondents how they think their own country ranks to others in terms of its democraticness. For instance, although some other countries included in these results are not considered "free" according to Freedom House, on this particular WVS indicator the positive views of Canadians are outranked by citizens views of democracy in non-free countries like Tajikistan, Vietnam, and Bangladesh.

[283] In the WVS, although it was conducted in Canada all the way back to 1982, this question was only asked in the 2006 and 2020 waves.

Figure 5.9 – Support for Political Regime: Evaluation of Degree of Democraticness – Canada

How democratically is this country/the following community being governed today? - among all Canadians and (among Quebecers)

Sources: World Values Surveys (WVS) 2006 (n=2,070) and 2020 (4,018); Political Communities Survey Project: CPEP 2012 (n=1,289), CPEP 2014 (n=1,544), PCS 2017 (n=6,014)
WVS Question: "And how democratically is Canada being governed today? Again using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that it is "not at all democratic" and 10 means that it is "completely democratic," what position would you choose?
PCSP Question: "How democratically is the following community being governed today? Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'not at all democratic' and 10 means 'completely democratic', what would you say about... 'your city/town', 'province', 'Canada'.

As illustrated in Figure 5.9, despite the fact that several of the objective worldwide rankings (presented earlier) and results from the WVS could, on the surface, portray Canada to be one of the most democratic countries in the world, with a pretty stable ranking at the top compared to other democracies. However, the results for Quebecers compared to all Canadians[284], as well as the countrywide results added from the PCSP (in 2017), reveal that public perceptions tend instead to fluctuate over time – as we saw on the previous regime support measure – depending on whether we look at just Quebecers or at all Canadians.

To elaborate on this, the figure above lays out, using the same question, the perceptions of all Canadians (in red) compared to those of just Quebecers (in blue) on the two timepoints available in the WVS[285]. First, this cross-time evidence suggests that there has been only a slight improvement over the last 15 years in the proportion of Canadians indicating that they themselves think that their country is governed democratically[286], from 2006 (81%) to 2020 (83%). Meanwhile, when looking at the 2017 PCSP results on the same question (in between the two WVS timepoints), I also find that the proportion of those who report Canada to be governed less than democratically may have reached as high as 26% in 2017 (i.e., 74% of Canadians

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[284] This is different from the Quebec vs. ROC analyses presented in Figure 5.6 for instance, because I wanted to show how isolating for subgroups within the population (in this case Quebec), can change the story from what is typically presented using these data in cross-national interpretations (where Canada is treated as a single "homogeneous" case).

[285] Those reported by Norris (2011), Nevitte and White (2012) from 2006 and those reported in Figure 5.8 above.

[286] Based on scores of 6 or above, out of 10, displayed by the solid bars. Scores of 9 or 10 out of 10 are displayed by the hollow bars, scores of 10 on 10 are reported through the hatched bars.

reported that they felt that Canada was being governed democratically at this time, compared to 19% in 2006 and 17% in 2020)[287].

When I isolate the analysis to look at just Quebecers, it appears, once again, that responses to this question also fluctuate across time. In 2006 for instance, the evidence from the WVS indicates that 77% of Quebecers felt that their country was being governed democratically. In 2012, this proportion (based on the 2012 PCS data) declined to a low of 67%, where one in three Quebecers at the time expressed that they perceived Canada to be not entirely democratic[288]. Similar to my findings on satisfaction with Canadian democracy, the data collected over the course of the next 8 years (from 2012 to 2020) suggests that the proportion of Quebecers who feel as though Canada is being governed democratically may be on the rise (2014: 72%, 2017: 75%, 2020: 86%), despite this dip in 2012. Of course, it would be difficult at this time, knowing what little we do about past trends, to predict how long this upswing in support will last, however, if the results from the previous measure (satisfaction with democracy) is any indication, it appears as if Canadian democracy according to Quebecers may be improving, at least slightly.

The remaining evidence reported in Figure 5.9 also suggest that perceptions of how democratically a political community is being governed are likely to vary across different levels of government (just like satisfaction). Although the WVS do not provide questions that tap evaluations of the democraticness at subnational levels, the 2017 data from the PCSP, show that whereas 74% of Canadians thought at the time that the Canadian political community was being governed democratically, and 72% thought that their municipal political community was being governed democratically, only 66% of Canadians during that same time felt that their provincial communities were being governed democratically. This means, similar to the low support that Canadian democracy received among Quebecers in 2012, the 2017 results suggest that only one in three judge their provinces to be governed democratically. In other words, the lower levels of democratic satisfaction that my earlier analysis revealed among Quebecers toward their provincial democracy may reflect an even broader sentiment that exists across the country for all Canadians[289].

Similar to the general mood portrayed by the previous satisfaction findings, the evidence in this case consistently shows that the proportion of Canadians who seem extremely enthusiastic about the workings of their democracy is rather limited. That is, the proportion of Canadians expressing a high degree of support, who think that their political communities are being governed either very or completely democratically (i.e., that is they provide a rating of either 9 or 10/10 on the response scale provided) never exceeds more than 35% and sometimes falls below

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[287] Note that the range of possible response categories in the WVS differs very slightly from the PCSP conducted in 2017 (there are no differences with the 2012 and 2014 categories of the PCSP). In the case of the WVS and earlier rounds of the PCSP, the response categories range from 1 to 10, while in the 2017 PCS data, the categories range from 0 to 10. Within this additional category "0", there are 173 respondents (3% of Canadians) expressing extreme negative views. On the other hand, like the WVS, about 1 to 2 % of the sample fall into the category "1". Although there is no way to test this empirically after the fact, it is possible that having a category "0" provided respondents with a more extreme alternative and spread responses over 11 groupings instead of 10. When I remove those who responded "0", the proportions draw closer to those found in the WVS in 2006 and 2020 (reaching 76% instead of 74%). This said, the fluctuation observed between the timepoints, reflected in the 2017 PCSP data remain undeniable (and significant t-test difference of means reveals p<0.0001).

[288] In 2012, 18% of respondents in Quebec scored Canadian democracy below 5 on the 0/1 to 10-point scale. In 2014, this dropped to 8% but in 2017 it rose again to 15%.

[289] Of course, I will need to test this proposition much more thoroughly before I can be confident in such a claim, which I do in the next chapter.

10%. In other words, when more rigorous standards for the degree of "democraticness" are applied (i.e. a higher threshold on a 10-point scale), certain challenge areas are revealed. Additionally, when relying solely on aggregate objective rankings (ignoring what citizens themselves think), one extremely important element of the regime support story is largely untold, that is that proportions of Canadians (according to both my PCSP data and the more famous WVS) do not think Canada is being governed completely democratically. Also, when we look only at aggregate cross-national comparisons, we may mask important subnational realities – including that certain political communities (such as the provinces) may be worse off than others in the eyes of the public. All of this, I would argue, at least demands further and deeper investigation.

Figure 5.10 – Support for Political Regime: Democracy as a Regime Type
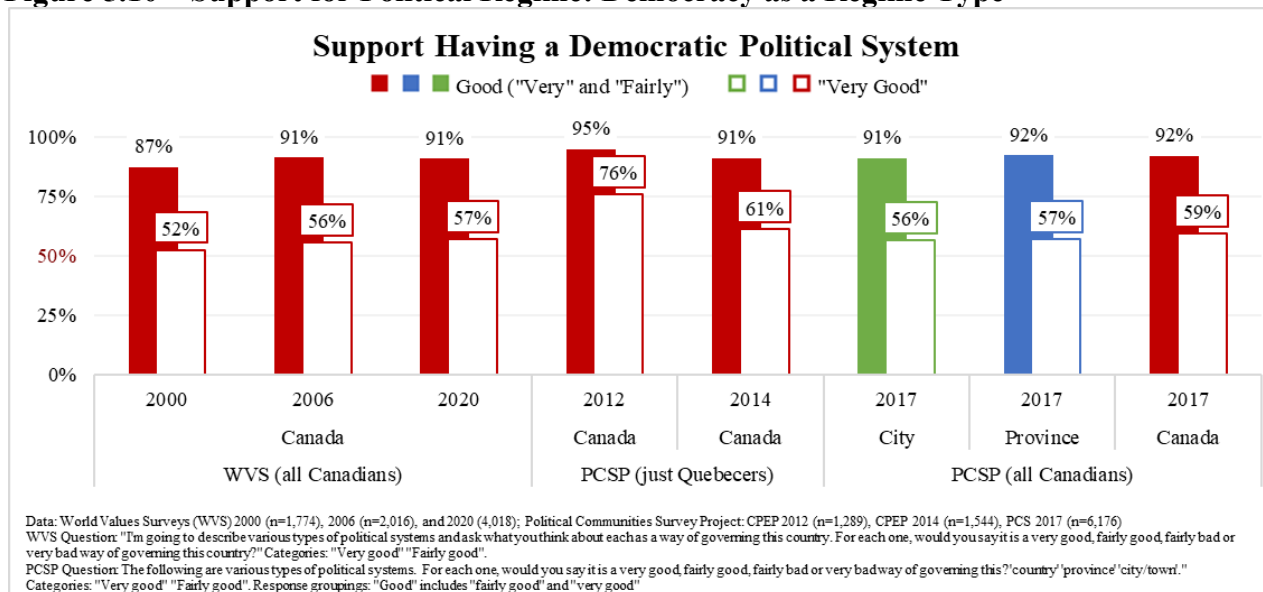
One additional point that I would like to raise here prior to moving on to the next section, stems from yet another relatively recent alternative measure that attempts to get at citizens' support for democracy as a regime type and as a way of governing a country (or community). The results produced by this measure, in my view, are also relevant to consider given that they reinforce, once again, the need for more in-depth research. For instance, the evidence reported in Figure 5.10 shows that despite all of the evidence reported above about democratic satisfaction (or lack thereof), and the perceived democraticness of various political communities (or absence thereof), Canadians remain generally quite supportive of democracy as a regime type to govern their political communities[290], regardless of where they reside or whether it is at the local, provincial, or federal level.

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[290] A finding which is commonly reported, again in the context of the democratic 'crisis' discussion, and although various evaluations of democracy are often examined, affective assessments of the value of democracy as a *way of governing* is rarely contested. This said, thanks to additional measures in the WVS that tap orientations toward alternatives to democratic rule, several scholars have demonstrated that outright commitment to democracy is not always entirely clear-cut. As Norris finds, when alternatives are presented to respondents, the results "generated a less overwhelming consensus than simply monitoring direct or overt approval of democracy" (2011, 95; see also, the work by Foa and Mounk 2016).

Note too, according to Figure 5.10, that the distinction appearing between those who strongly favour democracy as a way of governing ("very good") and those who favour it more generally (either "fairly good" *or* "very good"). If our developing inclination thus far, was to assume perhaps that Canadian respondents are simply less inclined to express extreme enthusiasm when asked about their levels of democratic support (through strong positive response, isolated at the response category extremes), these findings suggest otherwise. Indeed, these results clearly demonstrate that when the question relates to something that respondents can really 'get behind', survey respondents are by no means hesitant or reluctant to lend strong high degrees of support[291]. Consistently, the evidence in this case (regardless of the data source, the timepoint, the segment of the population examined, or the levels of government assessed) shows that more than half (at least 52%) and sometimes as many as three in four Canadians (up to 76%) strongly support a democratic system of governance. A finding such as this one should at least help to reassure us, that if more Canadians were in fact further enthused with how well their democracies were *actually* working or thought their democratic systems at various levels were truly democratic, they would be unlikely to hold back on expressing their enthusiasm.

This said, despite high scores demonstrated in Figure 5.10 on affective orientations toward democracy as a way of governing, perhaps a more striking finding from my research to date, which is *not* reflected in this particular figure[292], is that Canadians are not entirely committed to "democracy" as the only way of governing their political systems. By this I mean that the evidence from my earlier investigations of Quebecers in 2012 (Kanji and Tannahill 2014a), as well as my more recent analysis of Canadians more generally (Tannahill, Kanji, and Courchesne 2023), suggests that although Canadians are generally quite supportive of democracy as a good regime arrangement to govern their political communities, whether at the local, provincial or federal level, they are also willing to consider other governance styles. There are, in other words, interesting variations in responses that emerge when respondents in Quebec and Canada are asked about other forms of governance besides democracy[293].

For instance, when asked about having only experts' rule, or a strong leader who would not need to bother with elections, or even having the army rule, significant numbers of Quebecers and Canadians do not outright reject these alternatives. In fact, the preliminary data from Quebec, suggested that only about half of our survey respondents were entirely "committed democrats"[294] (Kanji and Tannahill 2014a; see also Wike et al. 2017). This variation in democratic conviction, reveals again, a need to probe further and deeper into Canadians' democratic and political support. In the next chapter, I do this by digging further into Canadians' commitment to democracy and the contrast of viewpoints that emerge when we offer respondents regime alternatives to choose from.

Political Institutions

As I move from an investigation of baseline support for more diffuse political objects to more specific ones, my focus turns to the analysis of Canadians' outlooks toward their political

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[291] Choosing the top option that this is a "very good" way of governing this country.

[292] But that I will dig into in Chapter 6, which is consistent again with Norris' findings (2011), as well as those published by Foa and Mounk (2016).

[293] See the results reported in Figure 6.5.

[294] A category used to represent those who indicate that (when provided alternatives) democracy was the *only* way to govern their province, city, or country. Inglehart and Welzel also refer to these as "'solid' democrats" (2005, 264–68)

institutions (in this chapter, their governments). This is an exploration that I first started several years ago as we began to disseminate the results of the first rounds of the PCSP (Kanji and Tannahill 2013a; 2013b). In these analyses of our 2012 data, our goal was to investigate how Quebecers' support for government varied across different levels (the municipal, provincial, and federal), how government institutions compared to other non-governmental institutions, and how support for government institutions differed across Canadian provinces. Sure enough, the findings of these preliminary analyses revealed clear differences in political support across the levels of government being evaluated, the types of institutions being assessed, and the provincial contexts in which respondents were surveyed.

The primary contribution of this work was its uniqueness in demonstrating real variation across institution types and levels of government, comparisons that had never been systematically examined or tested in the past due to the lack of survey data available to do so in Canada. That is, as I explained in more detail in Chapter 2, most national and cross-national public opinion accounts of citizens' support for political institutions have tended to focus primarily on only one, or a small mix of institutions, and typically only on one level of government (generally the national level). In fact, the tendency to ask cross-level questions about government performance, seems to have declined in recent years for surveys such as Environics (through their *Focus Canada* surveys) – who, up until 2009 regularly asked Canadians about their satisfaction with both the federal government and their provincial ones (Ontario Council of University Libraries 2023). In earlier years (up until the mid-1990s), other polls like Decima Quarterly, also tapped attitudes about the specific responsibilities of various governments[295] and more recently the CES[296], like the PCSP, have included a line of questioning that capture citizens' evaluative assessments of two levels of government (i.e., they now ask two separate questions: one pertaining to confidence in the 'provincial' government and another about confidence in the 'federal' government)[297]. All of this said, peer-reviewed academic accounts of the findings on responses to these questions still remain quite limited. Meanwhile, cross-national studies of support for institutions like the WVS, still only ask about confidence in "the government", without specifying which government respondents are meant to assess[298].

In the pages that follow therefore, I lay out where we stand in terms of our current understanding of Canadians' outlooks toward their political institutions, starting with Canadians' confidence levels in their "federal" government (as asked more directly in both the CES and PCSP surveys), and to demonstrate how these orientations have varied over the early 21st century. I compare Quebecers and non-Quebecers in their views about the federal government

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[295] Appendix A1 contains more details on the types of questions asked by each of these surveys and the years in which they were included. Although these data (from Environics and Decima) for example, I have yet to come across any studies that systematically analyze the variations these surveys discovered over the years that these questions were asked.

[296] In earlier years, the CES also asked questions about provincial party identification, voting habits, and feelings of like or dislike toward provincial parties. They also asked respondents to express their feelings about the provincial government on a 100-point thermometer scale, similar to the community support feelings thermometer (the Odesi Scholars Portal provides access to all of these past surveys through the Ontario Council of University Libraries 2023).

[297] Since 2019, Democracy Checkup, through the Consortium on Electoral Democracy (C-Dem) have also included questions that tap satisfaction with governments at different levels, and more recently the handling of the pandemic by governments at these different levels (for instance: Harell et al. 2023).

[298] Presumably given that the WVS are cross-national surveys, "the government" must refer to the national government, however, without specifying there is no way to know for sure what respondents might be thinking about when answering this question.

and point out (as I did above for satisfaction with democracy) how the response categories made available to survey respondents when answering questions can potentially have important effects on how we interpret support variations. I also unpack government support a little further by illustrating the variations that emerge when looking at support for governments at different levels, while also drawing some initial contextual speculations about why these variations may be occurring (at least in the Quebec context).

The first key point to note here (see Figure 5.11) is that as I move from measuring support for the most diffuse objects (such as being a member of the Canadian political community, outlooks toward the Canadian political system, and evaluations of the democratic regime) to the more specific ones, support levels tend generally to shift lower and the overall story of political support appears less and less rosy, not unlike what the literature would lead us to expect[299].

Figure 5.11 – Specific vs. Diffuse Support

Specific vs. Diffuse Political Support - among all Canadians

Data for "Confidence": Canadian Election Studies (CES) MB 2008 (n=1,904), MB 2011 (n=1,537), MB 2015 (n=1,284), Post-Election, online survey (PEo) 2019 (n=5,094) 2021 (n=15,069); Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP) PCS 2017 (n=5,970). Data for "Pride": Americas Barometers 2008 (n=2,032), 2010 (n=1,500), 2014 (n=1,517), 2019 (n=1,508), 2021 (n=2,201); Political Communities Survey Project 2017 (n=6,731). Data for "Satisfaction": Canadian Election Studies (CES) Post-Election, phone survey (PEp) 2008 (n=3,611), Campaign Period, phone survey (CPp) 2011 (n=4,206), CPp 2015 (n=4,076), Post-Election, online survey (PEo) 2019 (n=10,170), PEo 2021 (n=20,386); Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP) PCS 2017 (n=6,306).
CES and PCSP Confidence Questions: "Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following institutions.... The federal government'." CES Categories: "A great deal" "Quite a lot". PCSP Categories: "A lot of confidence" "Some confidence". Response groupings: "At least some confidence" includes "A great deal, A lot of confidence" or "Quite a lot, Some confidence". Notes: Cross-Canada data not available for PCSP in 2012 and 2014. Response categories differ slightly between PCSP versus the CES. See previous illustrations for pride and confidence questions.

To begin, the evidence in Figure 5.11 suggests that Canadians tend generally to be more positive about their democratic regime[300], and more likely to express pride in their Canadian political community (or the Canadian political system) than they are to offer positive evaluations of their federal government. Given these lower levels of support for specific system objects (in this case, governments), it is not so surprising that investigations of political support tend to focus heavily on investigations of support for institutions (and what drives such negative assessments) or that the within-country polls carried out by firms like Environics tend to probe support at this level

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[299] Confirming what several other prominent scholars in the area have suggested (again, as outlined in Chapters 2 and 3), and the validity of the PCSP data for tapping assessments about these different objects.
[300] Based on how satisfied they say they are with Canadian democracy (according to both the CES and the PCSP).

more so than they explore attitudes toward democracy as a whole or the political community[301]. So, what do these popular measures of confidence, collected to date, tell us about the Canadian public and their orientations toward their political system?

Beyond the systematic gap between assessments of the community and regime compared to those of the federal government, another core point to take away from the data reported in Figure 5.11, is the large proportion of Canadians who state that they have no confidence in their government. That is, even during peak times of institutional support – which according to these data also tend to coincide with periods with majority federal governments from 2010 to 2017[302] – no more than 62% of Canadians indicate that they have confidence in their federal government. On the other hand, nearly 40% (i.e., 38%) do not.

In fact, this evidence suggests that on more than one occasion, more than a majority of Canadians do not have confidence in their federal government, even after a brand new government is elected[303]. Moreover, when it comes to those who claim that they are 'very confident' in their federal government, the cross-time data reveal that the proportion ranges from a low of 4% to a high of 11%, regardless of when the survey is conducted[304].

If this was the amount of confidence that we had in an engineering firm that was commissioned to design and build a bridge in our jurisdiction, we would probably look for another firm to do the job before sending our family or friends across that bridge. Ironically, the federal government is in fact the constitutional authority responsible for building and maintaining the bridges that span all major waterways in this country[305]. If so few of us have confidence in them, even after voting in replacements, why are we not more worried about crossing these bridges? Are there simply no better alternatives? Are we doomed to accept mediocrity, that most of us will just never have much confidence in our democratically elected governments? At the very least, if we are curious to know how so many successive federal governments continuously and consistently underwhelm citizens, we ought at least to look more deeply into the political support data (beyond just confidence in federal governments, for instance) where and when they are available, to parse out more thoroughly what these data say about the true extent of this specific political support problem.

One possibility for instance is that these seemingly dismal attitudes are mitigated by higher confidence in other governments, who make up for some of the perceived failures of federal governments. Alternatively, these low confidence levels may simply be driven by a subset of the

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[301] A cursory search in Google Scholar, for example, comparing results for the terms "confidence in government" versus "satisfaction with democracy", including "Canada" to refine the search to this particular context, and isolating for just the last 20 years (2000 to 2020), reveals 5,240 results for "confidence in government", more than twice as many as "satisfaction with democracy", at 2,060. This said, "national pride", which has much higher support overall than both these objects when searched using the same parameters, returns a whopping 20,900 results – presumably due to the overlap in our understanding and use of measurements of pride in the community as an indicator of political object, or pride as identifying oneself as part of a broader national community (and the importance of this for understanding the social fabric and ties that bind society (Soroka, Johnston, and Banting 2007; J. E. Cameron and Berry 2008; Raney and Berdahl 2011; Bühlmann and Hänni 2012)).

[302] Which represents another avenue for further investigation (see, for example Gagnier 2011).

[303] As reported by the post-election CES mailback and online surveys. Similar to satisfaction with democracy (Kolln and Aarts 2015), we might assume that following an election (where underperforming governments are voted out), that confidence in government could increase, even if only temporarily.

[304] Either post-election through the CES, or online in between national elections through the PCSP.

[305] See for example, the Government of Canada (2020; 2023b; and Cannon 2007).

population who are particularly disgruntled with the federal government[306] on account of how they have been treated over time. Consider for example, Quebecers and especially separatists, nationalists, and sovereigntists, who may not have all that much faith in the federal government to adequately protect their interests. That is, are these findings indicative of a broader, more generalizable concern, or should we be limiting the scope of our investigation to a particular group of people and territorial context? In subsequent chapters, I start controlling for such traditional political divisions (for instance between separatists and non-separatists) but for now, I begin by digging deeper into the broader regional difference found in Canada between Quebecers and other Canadians. In Figure 5.12, I do this by exploring how Quebecers compare to other Canadians when it comes to the degree of confidence that they specify having in the 'federal' government.

Figure 5.12 – Support for Political Institutions: High Degree of Confidence in Government – Quebecers vs. Other Canadians

Data: Canadian Election Studies (CES) Mailback survey (MB) 2004 (n=1,628), MB 2008 (n=1,904), MB 2011 (n=1,537), MB 2015 (n=1,284), Post-Election, online survey (PEo) 2019 (n=5,094) 2021 (n=15,069); Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP) PCS 2017 (n=5,970).
CES and PCSP Questions: "Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following [institutions].... The federal government'." CES Categories: responses include "A great deal". PCSP Categories: responses include "A lot of confidence". Notes: Cross-Canada data not available for PCSP in 2012 and 2014.

The data reported in Figure 5.12 reveal the proportion of Quebecers and other Canadians who have a high degree of confidence (who say they are "very" confident) in their federal government. The results for the two groups in this case virtually overlap, and they are telling in a variety of respects. Indeed, even during the most optimistic times (in 2017), these data suggest that no more than 12% of Quebecers and 14% of other Canadians ever express a lot of confidence in the federal government. Thus, while it is certainly true, that strong levels of institutional confidence have fluctuated slightly over the course of the last 2 decades or so, it is also true that those who are willing to say that they are extremely confident in the federal government have also consistently remained quite low, and the differences between Quebecers and non-Quebecers in this respect are quite minimal (the two major groups generally fluctuate consistently in their support levels).

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[306] Another possibility is that assessments of government confidence are not enough to fully understand attitudes toward this institution. People may choose to express negativity toward the federal government but, when it comes to the specific jobs the government does or is responsible for (such as building infrastructure), they may be somewhat more forgiving, or even quite supportive. I will explore this possibility in Chapter 6.

This said, although levels of strong confidence in the federal government have not seen any major and sustained uptick overall, similar to the results reported earlier, it is in fact Quebecers (at least according to these more recent CES data) who are marginally higher in their levels of confidence in the federal government compared to other Canadians (2019: 7% vs 4%, 2021: 8% vs. 6%). The difference, while it is still quite small, remains rather counterintuitive, given the Canadian political community's historical evolution and the jurisdictional push and pull that typically goes on between the federal level of government and the provincial level in Quebec[307].

Consider too, these the temporary high points in confidence levels demonstrated by the 2012 and 2017 PCSP surveys in Figure 5.12, may be due once again, to slight differences in question/response category wording[308]. That is, in the case of the PCSP, the highest degree of confidence that respondents could express, when asked to evaluate the federal government, was "a lot of confidence". In the CES, on the other hand, the highest degree of confidence that respondents could express was "a great deal". Although these top response categories seem quite similar, the potential distorting effects of variations in response category wording should not be ignored, as I demonstrated above for questions tapping satisfaction with democracy.

This concern becomes even more apparent when we compare the second "highest" category (or degree) of confidence that respondents were able to select with regards to the federal government (see Table 5.1) across the different surveys – the CES and PCSP – that I have employed in this analysis. That is, in the CES, the second highest response category was "quite a lot", whereas in the PCSs, the second highest category is only "some confidence". Certainly, if given the choice between expressing "a great deal" and "quite a lot" of confidence in a person or institution, the distinction in one's mind might not be as clear nor the same as if one was given the choice between expressing "a lot" or "some" confidence. Alternatively, when comparing our understanding of what the second highest confidence response categories represent between the two surveys, it is more difficult to be sure that the categories are capturing the same sentiment: is it the same to say "I have quite a lot of confidence" as it is to say "I have some confidence"?[309]

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[307] Of course, the data in this analysis still do not distinguish between Francophone and Anglophone Quebecers for example, or between Quebec nationalists, separatists, or federalists (as I will do in Chapter 6). It may also be that Quebecers, in recent years, feel more "represented' by the federal government than other Canadians. While I will not tap broad perceptions of 'representation' and their effect on assessments of the federal government, in Chapter 8 I will look at the effect that evaluations of the jobs done by government and federal representatives, as well as other performance measures (including cynicism, voting for the winning political party, and perceptions of the ethical and honest behavior by authorities) have on assessments of federal institutions (both legislatures and governments), as well as whether these regional differences still hold up when all of these other factors are taken into account.

[308] This said, while 2012 shows an uptick in support for the federal government among Quebecers on the PCSP, the same rise is not observed in 2014. This suggests that, although category wording differences may plausibly be influencing these variations, it is not likely to be the only factor at play.

[309] Conversely, the response categories for lower confidence levels in the CES are more similar to those of the PCSP. The CES taps lower confidence using the response categories "not very much" and "none at all", while in the PCSP they are tapped using "not a lot of confidence" and "no confidence at all".

Table 5.1 – Confidence in Government – Survey Questions and Response Categories

		Survey (mode)	
		CES (mailback and online)	**PCSP** (online)
Question		Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following: 'Federal government'	Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following institutions: 'The federal government'
Response Categories		- *A great deal*	- *A lot of confidence*
		- *Quite a lot*	- *Some confidence*
		- *Not very much*	- *Not a lot of confidence*
		- *None at all*	- *No confidence at all*

These categories are clearly not the same, and thus, it is quite plausible that the higher degree of confidence reported in Figure 5.12 derived from responses on the PCSP surveys may be due (at least in part) to a clearer distinction perceived by respondents between the categories "a lot" and "some" in the questionnaires compared to those in the CES between "a great deal" and "quite a lot". Of course, this claim would require more direct testing, which is not currently possible beyond just an observation based on a single PCSP timepoint for all of Canada (and three timepoints for Quebec). However, these distinctions have highlighted the need to pay closer attention when making sweeping cross-country claims based on cross-time and cross-survey evidence, just like the meaning ascribed to different response categories on the satisfaction with democracy question did[310].

For the present analysis, given that there may be some discrepancies in respondents' understandings of the top two *positive* response categories, the next set of results reported in Figure 5.13, draw instead on the results from across both the PCSP and CES surveys for those respondents who selected from one or the other of the bottom two response categories. By employing more similar response categories, the evidence of cross-time discrepancies between Quebecers and non-Quebecers on the *lack* of confidence that they express in the federal government is arguably more reliable and the distinctions in support levels between the two groups (Quebecers versus non-Quebecers) start to emerge as quite clear-cut[311].

That is, for most of the last two decades, from 2004 on, these findings suggest that Quebecers are consistently less confident in the federal government than Canadians who reside elsewhere in the country. This said, the differences between the two groups were not all that vast. Furthermore, by 2015 there emerges a slight shift in assessments, which grows quite significantly by 2019.

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[310] Thus, as we planned the next round of PCSP data collection, we have incorporated a series of "standards" tests which will be administered for the first time alongside our questionnaire. We have also further revised any inconsistencies in question wording and response category wording that may have been overlooked in previous rounds. I also suggest that such distinctions should be more carefully considered in the collection of future rounds of the CES (as well as the WVS, who use the same response categories as the CES).

[311] Although differences in response categories (even though they are less extreme) still exist and should not be ignored.

Figure 5.13 – Support for Political Institutions: Lack of Confidence in Government – Quebecers vs. Other Canadians

Data: Canadian Election Studies (CES) Mailback survey (MB) 2004 (n=1,628), MB 2008 (n=1,904), MB 2011 (n=1,537), MB 2015 (n=1,284), Post-Election, online survey (PEo) 2019 (n=5,094) 2021 (n=15,069); Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP) PCS 2017 (n=5,970).
CES and PCSP Questions: "Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following [institutions].... 'The federal government'."
CES Response Categories: Responses include "Not very much" "None at all". PCSP Response Categories: Responses include "Not a lot of confidence" "No confidence at all".

Notably, the data in Figure 5.13 reveal that, since 2019, non-Quebecers are more likely to express lower confidence levels in the federal government than Quebecers (in 2019, 65% of non-Quebecers have little to no confidence, compared to 47% of Quebecers; in 2021, 61% of non-Quebecers have little to no confidence, compared to 48% of Quebecers). Furthermore, the gaps between Quebecers and non-Quebecers in their confidence levels are much greater (between 13 and 18 points) than in the past (between 2 and 7 points).

By focusing on support differences between these two groups of Canadians, another important finding emerges. Unlike what we would've expected from the Canada-wide findings reported in Figure 5.11 – which suggested a cross-time increase in confidence levels in the federal government overall from 2008 to 2015 (from 47% to 62%) with subsequent fluctuations from 2017 to 2021 (dropping to 38%, then increasing slightly to 43%) – these latter findings in Figure 5.13 reveal that the greatest drop in confidence is actually found among non-Quebecers. In particular, this group seems to have grown exceedingly less confident (65% lacked confidence in 2019 and 61% in 2021, an increase from 34% in 2017 and 38% in 2015), at a faster pace, than Quebecers (47% lacked confidence in 2019 and 48% in 2021, an increase from 38% in 2017 and 35% in 2015). Indeed, the most recent evidence suggests that non-Quebecers are not all that much more confident in the federal government these days than they were around the height of the sponsorship scandal when about two thirds of both Quebecers and non-Quebecers lacked any confidence in the federal government (67% of non-Quebecers and 62% of Quebecers lacked confidence in 2004).

Another major takeaway from all of this, which I pointed to at the start of this section, is that although the groups vary, and Quebecers now appear to be more confident in the federal government than non-Quebecers, there are significant proportions of Canadians (both Quebecers and non-Quebecers) from across the country who express no more than a low degree of confidence in the federal government. And for a democracy considered to be among the best in the world, and a country in which people are not hesitant to express their strong degree of enthusiasm for things they can truly get behind (such as democracy as a system of governance),

these results are certainly nowhere near as positive as one might expect. Indeed, they do not match the higher EIU and Freedom House assessments of the country, and might be a closer reflection of some of the more rigorous assessments of our governance system provided by the country experts responsible for the V-Dem democracy indicators and reports (Varieties of Democracy 2020; Coppedge et al. 2021; 2023).

But how do these results for the federal government compare to assessments of governments? Can we be reassured that although confidence in the federal government is consistently quite low across regions in Canada, that citizens are at least perceiving other levels of government to be taking over where the national level falls short? For instance, are Canadians as pessimistic about their provincial governments? While cross-national surveys and objective assessments of democracy provided by EIU, Freedom House, and V-Dem do not provide the data to answer this question, the CES and the PCSP do.

Figure 5.14 – Support for Political Institutions: Confidence Across Governments – Quebecers vs. Other Canadians

Data: Canadian Election Studies (CES) Mailback survey (MB) 2004 (n=340), MB 2008 (n=388), MB 2011 (n=356), MB 2015 (n=241), Post-Election, online survey (PEo) 2019 (n=842) 2021 (n=14,647); Political Communities Survey Project: CPEP 2012 (n=1,279), CPEP 2014 (n=1,544), PCS 2017 (n=542)
CES and PCSP Question: "Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following institutions.... 'The provincial government'". CES response categories included: "A great deal" and "Quite a lot". PCSP response categories included: "A lot of confidence" and "Some confidence".

In some ways, the results reported here in Figure 5.14, are not that different from those reported for the federal government in the previous figures presented in this section. Between 2004 and 2017, the evidence indicates that from 45% to 55% of Quebecers, and between 40% and 56% of non-Quebecers, expressed confidence in their respective provincial governments. And while the cross-time evidence in both cases suggested a gradual increase in confidence (for Quebecers: +5% and for non-Quebecers: +16%), the bulk of the results still consistently show that significant proportions of Canadians in both Quebec and elsewhere in the country (about half) did not have very much confidence in their provincial governments for most of this period.

Furthermore, the more recent trends in the data are particularly intriguing, especially when it comes to demonstrating the distinctions in political support for provincial governments that

have developed over time. For instance, in Quebec, the evidence indicates that confidence levels in the provincial government have skyrocketed (+21%), from 50% in 2017 to 71% in 2021. Thus, even though some 30% of Quebecers are still not very confident in their provincial government, it may be that certain moves by the provincial government in this province (such as pieces of legislation like Bill 21 and 96, designed to maintain and strengthen Quebec values and culture[312] – or the Quebec government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic[313]), may have actually helped to improve Quebecers' confidence in their provincial government.

Conversely, elsewhere in the country, the evidence shows confidence levels in provincial governments have plummeted (about -20%) from 56% in 2017, to 34% in 2019 and 38% in 2021. And while it is plausible that at least some of this drastic reduction in support may be fueled by general perceptions of how other Premiers and governments outside of Quebec handled the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic (Angus Reid Institute 2021)[314], it is also possible that such low levels of confidence may be reflective of a broader problem of political support that demands a more detailed investigation than is possible if we rely solely on the questions being asked in existing polls and surveys.

For one, the complexity of the Canadian political system may be partly to blame for fluctuations in perceptions of governments. This said, higher support for local governments may also help temper more pervasive negative assessments of upper levels. Certainly, where responsibilities are spread across multiple levels of government, it may be necessary to also dig more carefully into how confidence levels in municipal governments differs from assessments of larger governments at both the provincial and national levels (see also, for example Steenvoorden and van der Meer 2021)[315]. If perceptions of governments across all levels do indeed differ (beyond just provincially and federally, to include municipally as well), understanding why this is happening may help us to better contend with support problems in the future. For instance, are certain governments doing a better job of handling public demands? Can one level perhaps learn[316] from the others?

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[312] Although there are clearly differing opinions within Quebec on the acceptability of such legislation (Bock-Côté 2021; Magder 2021; Plante 2021; Radio Canada 2022; Lurie 2023).

[313] Some have suggested that Legault avoided major criticisms of his government's handling of the pandemic, not because Quebec fared any better than other provinces, but because his government was better at diverting the blame or shutting criticisms down entirely (for instance, Montpetit 2021). While positive assessments of the Quebec government were apparent in these 2021 data, it will be useful to see if these confidence levels have been maintained more recently, given the shift in assessments of Legault and his government handling of the pandemic in the early months of 2022 (Renfrew 2022; Hendry and Benjamin 2022) as well as reports of systemic racism within the provincial healthcare system (Derfel 2022).

[314] Again, the testing of the effect of evaluative object performance of lower-level objects on higher level ones (in this case the effects of performance evaluations of authorities on support for government, or the impact of evaluations of the jobs being done by governments on broad-gauged support for the institution), will be examined in Chapter 8.

[315] Steenvoorden and van der Meer (2021) conduct analyses in the European context of the drivers of support for local and national governments. They find that evaluations of performance do have significant effects on support for governments and that these differ across levels but also that perceptions of governments are complex across levels, also depending on "political sophistication" and, to some extent, on "local embeddedness".

[316] In Chapter 6, I will lay out how a variety of assessments of government (and other institutions) differ across levels. By looking at these differences on other assessments, we can get one step closer to answering such questions. And, as the PCSP questionnaires evolve and expand, we are moving closer to pinpointing specific areas where different governments may improve.

Figure 5.15 – Support for Political Institutions: Confidence Across Governments – Quebecers

Data: Political Communities Survey Project: CPEP 2012 (n=1,279), CPEP 2014 (n=1,544), PCS 2017 (n=542)
PCSP Question: "Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following institutions....'The federal government', 'The provincial government', 'The municipal government'."
Categories: "A lot of confidence" "Some confidence".
Response groupings: "At least some confidence" includes "A lot of confidence" or "Some confidence". "'A lot' of confidence" includes "A lot of confidence"

The evidence in Figure 5.15 for Quebec[317], at first glance, certainly seems to suggest that this may be the case. More specifically, the findings reported here, which draw solely on the PCSP data, tell a slightly more positive story for municipal governments in Quebec than it does for the federal or provincial governments. For all three timepoints that I have data for in this case, the results indicate that confidence levels in municipal governments tend generally to be among the highest, relative to other governments.

In both 2012 and 2014, for instance, Quebecers indicated that they had more confidence in their municipal governments (62% and 72% respectively), than in the federal (48% and 50%, respectively) and provincial (60% and 59%, respectively) governments. In 2012 – a period following the exposure of deep corruption in the construction industry in the province with allegations and accusations of ties between public officials and the mafia (Patriquin 2010; Canadian Press 2011; Cedilot and Noel 2011), including at the local level – the margin between Quebecers' outlooks toward their municipal governments versus their provincial governments

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[317] I look only at Quebec now, across time, because the PCSP were not carried out in other provinces prior to 2017, with the exception of the CPEP surveys (the PCSP in its early form). I have chosen not to include the results of these provincial surveys in the discussion here in order to keep the data reporting as simple as possible. This said, findings from the analyses of these surveys, administered between 2011 and 2014 in each province immediately following the provincial elections in each province, do reveal significant variations in support for governments across levels with confidence in the federal government consistently lower than any other level of government across all 10 provinces. Support for the provincial government is higher than support for any other level of government across all provinces except in British Columbia, New Brunswick, and Alberta. The lowest support for the federal government is found in Quebec (2012: 48%). For the ROC, average federal government support is higher (2011-2014: 57%) with support highest in Saskatchewan (2011: 67%). Confidence in the provincial government does not differ much between Quebec (66%) and the ROC in general (68%), however the variations between provinces are quite vast, with provincial government confidence lowest in British Columbia (2013: 53%) and highest in Newfoundland (2011: 81%). Confidence in the municipal government in Quebec is lower (64%) than for the average across the ROC (71%). Among other provinces, support for the municipal government is lowest in Ontario (2011: 60%) and highest in Alberta (2012: 78%). Because these surveys were carried out immediately following provincial elections, we cannot say for sure which provincial government respondents are evaluating when answering the question, which might explain the broad variation between provinces on the question tapping confidence at the provincial level. We mitigate some of this lack of clarity in the PCSP from 2017 by administering it in between federal elections, and not immediately following any provincial election (although data collection did occur starting about two months after the general elections in British Columbia and Nova Scotia).

was quite small (2%), but the gap in confidence between the federal government and these lower levels was somewhat larger (12-14%), suggesting perhaps that confidence at the federal level was hit harder than at the municipal and local levels.

By 2014, however, while confidence in the provincial and federal levels did not shift much (up 2 points federally, and down 1 point in the province), it appears as if local governments may have recovered more significantly in the eyes of the public from the wave of allegations of misbehaviors by local officials (confidence increases by 10%, the confidence margin with the provincial government grows to 13 points, with the federal government to 22 points[318]). Indeed, it appears as if a major shift was underway in the way Quebecers evaluated their local governments compared to the others. However, by 2017, the tides turned again. While, overall, levels of public confidence in municipal governments remained higher than their confidence in the provincial government, local confidence levels underwent quite a sizeable drop (down 13 points to only 59%) – likely due in part to final reports of corruption produced by the Charbonneau commission of inquiry into corruption in the construction industry in Quebec (CBC 2015b; Patriquin 2015; Allard Prize 2017). In fact, by this time, a gradual climb in Quebecers' confidence with the federal government – following a change in government from Conservatives to Liberals under Justin Trudeau[319] – combined with a drop in confidence in municipal governments, meant the gap in support between these two levels was barely noticeable (only 3%) compared to prior years.

Of course, when we look retrospectively at what happened along the timeline in Canada and specifically in Quebec, we can certainly point to a variety of possible reasons for why support for different governments have fluctuated over time. However, despite these fluctuations, the various important and damning events, the occasional extreme drops in general confidence, or gaps in confidence across different levels of government, what remains quite constant are the proportions of Canadians who indicate that they are very confident in any one level of government. Specifically, regardless of how much general confidence increases (due to increases in those who say they have "some" confidence[320]), one thing remains quite clear and consistent over time. That is, the proportions of Quebecers expressing "a lot of confidence" in any level of government are consistently below 13% (at its highest point).

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[318] As the Charbonneau commission was underway, testimonies were being released that confirmed construction firms were not just "pump[ing] money into the coffers of provincial and municipal parties" but federal parties were receiving large 'donations' as well (Blatchford 2013).

[319] Trudeau's success in Quebec in 2015 was clear, as he won 40 seats from the NDP in the province, promising reforms such as electoral and Senate reform that Quebecers could really get behind (Canadian Press 2015; CBC 2015a). Around the time of the PCSP survey, Trudeau was also standing up to Premier Philippe Couillard, refusing to go down the path of reopening the Canadian constitution (McGregor 2017). Although our data do reveal that Quebecers would not necessarily agree with refusing to reopen the constitution for Quebec (64% of our respondents agreed in our survey that "given an acceptable agreement…Quebec should someday endorse the Constitution of Canada", compared to 19% who disagreed), feelings about the federal Liberals at the time may have still been somewhat 'sunny ways'. Although things started to take a sharp downturn immediately after our data collection was completed in September 2017, when Trudeau's approval ratings in Quebec (according to Angus Reid's *Trudeau Tracker*) went from consistently above 60 points (on 100), to 48 points in December and as low as 37 points in March of the following year (Angus Reid Institute 2023b; see also McKelvey and DeJong 2021).

[320] Or declines in proportions who say "not a lot" or "no confidence at all".

Political Institutions – Confidence in Government
Summary of Findings

All Canadians

- As we move from measuring support for the most diffuse objects (such as being a member of the Canadian political community, the Canadian political system, and the democratic regime) to more specific objects, support levels tend generally to shift lower and the overall story of political support tends to become seemingly more problematic;
- Even during peak times of institutional support, no more than 62% of Canadians indicate that they have confidence in their federal government, which implies that nearly 40% (i.e., 38%) do not;
- Very few Canadians (never more than 11%) are ever highly confident in their federal government.

Quebecers vs. Rest of Canadians (ROC)

- Even during the most optimistic times, these data suggest that no more than 12% of Quebecers and 14% of other Canadians ever express a lot of confidence in the federal government;
- For most of the latter two decades, from 2004 on, these findings suggest that it was Quebecers who were consistently less confident in the federal government than other Canadians who reside elsewhere in the country;
- The more recent evidence indicates that it is now non-Quebecers who are much less confident in the federal government than Quebecers (in 2019, the corresponding results are 65% versus 47%, and in 2021, the corresponding results are 61% versus 48%), and the differences in this case are more significant than in the past;
- Also, the bulk of the results consistently show that significant proportions of Canadians in both Quebec and elsewhere (about half) in the country do not have very much confidence in their provincial governments;
- In Quebec, the evidence indicates that confidence levels in the provincial government have literally skyrocketed by 21%, from 50% in 2017 to 71% in 2021;
- Conversely, elsewhere in the country, the evidence shows confidence levels in provincial governments has plummeted from 56% in 2017 to 34% in 2019 and 38% in 2021.

Quebecers only – across levels

- The data suggest that confidence levels for municipal governments tend generally to be among the highest, relative to other governments;
- Even at the municipal level, the data are pretty much similar relative to findings from other surveys and other years, in that the proportions of Quebecers expressing 'a lot of confidence' in any level of government are consistently below a high of 13%.

Takeaways

- Significant proportions of Canadians are not confident in their governments;
- There are clear variations in how confident Quebecers (and other Canadians) are with different levels of government;
- Confidence in municipal governments tends to be among the highest relative to other governments.

Regardless of the historical narratives that we assign to each of the fluctuations in support that we might observe on these popular measures of government support, there is clearly something

more deep-seated at play here when it comes to citizens' likelihood of expressing strong confidence in any level of government. And while simple measures of confidence are helpful, they are not enough to figure out what is truly responsible (at least in the eyes of the citizens being asked)[321], instead, we need to continue digging.

In short, based on what I have presented to this point, I would suggest that whether we are looking at governments, democracy in general, or political communities, none of these findings are entirely what we might hope for from citizens, given Canada's otherwise high world ranking as a top democracy. Indeed, these results indicate that Canadians' own assessments of the different objects within their political system, from the most diffuse to more specific levels, are by no means stellar, and in some cases even strikingly poor (such as non-Quebecers' drop in confidence in their provincial governments, for instance – or even Quebecers' generally low likelihood of expressing a lot of confidence in any level of government). But, as the corruption story has revealed in Quebec, some of these problems may be due, at least in part, to the ways in which authorities are perceived to behave – i.e., in the ways Canadians evaluate the political authorities who run and steer these political systems. That is, what do Canadians generally think about their politicians? Certainly, any baseline understanding of the scope of the political support problem also requires an overview of what we know so far about support for the system's key political authorities.

Political Authorities
Because the amount of cross-time data available for analysis from other surveys that examine support for authorities are rather limited[322] and pertain mostly to the federal level[323], I focus initially in this chapter on examining satisfaction levels with the performance of the federal

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[321] Again, in the next chapter, I will be looking at other measures of institutional support. In this next section, I will also explore evaluations of authorities at different levels. Beyond assessments tapped in different ways, the direct effect of each of these events on government support cannot be directly tested. It is reasonable to assume, for instance, that if certain individuals do not pay any attention at all to the media headlines about corruption in the province, they may not have such negative views about governments and rely instead on their personal experiences of the job these governments are doing when expressing their confidence levels. Alternatively, some respondents may be so cynical about politics that it doesn't matter which level of government they are assessing, they might evaluate all of them in an equally negative light. These are just some of the potential explanations that I introduced in Chapter 3 and that I will test against a broader range of institutional support measures in Chapter 8.

[322] Surprisingly, although national election studies and firms such as Angus Reid with tools like the *Trudeau Tracker* have monitored feelings about different political authorities based on like or dislike indicators or approval ratings (usually at the federal level), few that I have found, provide consistent cross-time measures that tap evaluative assessments of these authorities, especially at lower levels of government. Environics' *Focus Canada* series is one exception, asking questions such as "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [name] is handling his job as Premier of [Province]?", however, data on provincial authority assessments seem to only be available for public download and analysis until about 2009 (Ontario Council of University Libraries 2023). From 2010, the public survey data from Environics do not include questions relating to governance at the subnational level, nor do they ask specific questions (that I have found publicly available for analysis) about specific authorities.

[323] Or on questions about politicians in general. For example, drawing from national election studies from 1955 to 1995, Dalton (2004a, 28) shows that across six major democracies (including Canada, France, the USA, Austria, Germany, and Sweden), citizens increasingly feel that *politicians* do not care what they think. This general question is generally used across election studies as well as the WVS and helps to tap efficacy (as discussed in Chapter 3).

government *under* different Prime Ministers over time[324], using data from the Canadian Election studies. The first question that I have chosen to present findings on here is often used to evaluate both governments *and* political authorities. The core question in this case typically asks survey respondents about how satisfied they are with the performance of a government under the helm of a particular leader. Again, because more direct and comparable cross-time survey evidence relating specifically to politicians in general is harder to come by, I begin here by looking at the evidence that is available. Doing this helps me to gain some longitudinal insights, even if these insights are derived from less than ideal indicators.

In this case, I then dig deeper into assessments of the performance of other governments under their leaders, using data from the CES since 2019 (that also ask about Premiers) and the PCSP (which include questions about mayors as well).

Figure 5.16 – Support for Political Authorities: Satisfaction with Performance

Data: Canadian Election Studies (CES) Campaign Period, phone survey (CPp) 2004 (n=3,760), CPp 2006 (n=3,924), CPp 2008 (n=3,143), CPp 2011 (n=4,213), CPp 2015 (n=4,079), Campaign Period, online survey (CPo) 2015 (n=6,739), CPp 2019 (n=3,960), CPo 2019 (n=37,148); Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP) PCS 2017 (n=9,227).
CES and PCSP Questions: "How satisfied are you with the performance of…'the federal government under [Prime Minister]'."Very satisfied" "Fairly satisfied". Response groupings: "At least some satisfaction" includes "Very satisfied" or "Fairly satisfied". Notes: Cross-Canada data not available for PCSP in 2012 and 2014.

The most immediate point to note here (see Figure 5.16) is that satisfaction with political leaders across the board, during the period spanning from 2004 to 2019 tends to hover around or even dip below the 50% mark (on multiple occasions). And while I do not believe that averages across the board below 50% are all that surprising (given that all electors are unlikely to vote for the same candidate), I do not think that it is sufficient to say that these ratings are "acceptable" or even "good enough". Rather, figuring out what keeps these numbers so low, even after leaders have had a chance to prove themselves to those who did not vote for them, or even determining

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[324] Rather than direct assessments of the political authorities themselves. Direct measures of political authorities, using survey questions that only tap the authorities, without mentioning the broader political object within which they function (government), are rarer. Where they do exist, they are either more affective in nature (asking about feelings of like or dislike of specific party leaders), or more specific (various waves of the CES, for instance ask about individual leadership qualities or "impressions" such as intelligence, strength, and trustworthiness).

what might help ratings to tick above 50% on occasion, can certainly be a worthwhile exercise[325].

On the acceptability of such scores, I would say that if these were the sorts of grades that I had received on any of my many report cards over time, neither my parents nor I would be convinced (I'm sure) that I was working hard enough. Of course, it stands to reason that pleasing a series of teachers over one's lifetime may not be as difficult a task as impressing entire electorates. Still, if we were to look to a more comparable example, such as a major publicly traded corporation for example, we would certainly find that if a CEO were to receive approval ratings like these from their shareholders, it would not take long before they would find themselves having to look for another job (for instance, Whitehouse 2021; Sandle 2022)[326]. Indeed, even political leaders who undergo leadership reviews and receive ratings like this from their own party members are probably advised and feel compelled to pass the torch on to someone else (Mitchell 2022; Bennett 2022).

Furthermore, while consistently low grades from Canadian citizens are not necessarily surprising and the cross-time evidence suggests that ratings above 50% are more often outliers and rarely the norm, it is not as if higher ratings are not *possible.* Notably, recent experiences have shown that certain leaders (such as Premiers Legault (in Quebec) and Ford (in Ontario) during the early phases of the pandemic, for instance), can in fact derive much higher public satisfaction ratings (Berthiaume 2020) depending on how they do their job or the type of crisis they are responding to (Grenier 2020a). In fact, as I will demonstrate below, depending on the level of government, some elected representatives may consistently derive quite positive assessment from those they represent. Yet, nationally, this does not ever seem to be the case.

In at least one instance, the data reported above even suggest that only about a third of Canadians (36%) expressed satisfaction with the federal government under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper. This evaluation, of course, is likely influenced in part by timing, as the survey that revealed such low satisfaction ratings was conducted right before Mr. Harper was replaced by Mr. Trudeau in 2015. This particularly low rating may also suggest, in part, that results gathered as part of an online survey, as I have pointed out above, may reveal even more harsh assessments, given that the respondents may feel at greater liberty to be candid in their responses than other respondents who, during alternative timepoints, were surveyed by live interviewers over the phone[327].

Furthermore, while the support that Prime Ministers received according to those who stated they were "somewhat" satisfied (including those that say they are either "very" or "fairly" satisfied) ranged over the time period between 36 and 55%, one especially striking finding that

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[325] If for nothing else but to advise politicians looking to secure their political futures or new candidates entering the game. Although, as I will show in Chapter 8, understanding what impacts variations in support for authorities may be crucial as such evaluations of the performance of these leaders and elected representatives also have broader more systemic effects on the ways in which citizens' view other more diffuse objects in the political system.

[326] Although there are also arguments that suggest that, over the long run when shareholders have less power over the firing of CEOs (where CEOs, perhaps feel "safer" or at least somewhat sheltered from the whims of shareholders), the results are that boards that are better able to resist the will of "misguided shareholders" will retain better performing executives (see Fisman et al. 2014).

[327] Responses to online surveys versus phone surveys conducted with an interviewer have been shown to produce more negative assessments in certain circumstance, such as assessments of politicians (Keeter 2015). Others have suggested that, when "social desirability" of certain responses is taken into account, there may also be differences in responses across these survey modes, with some suggesting that online surveys may produce more "truthful" responses (Hopper 2010) thanks to the absence of any interviewer effect (this, again, depends on the questions being asked, for example: M. K. Jones et al. 2016).

these cross-time data also reveal is that very few (never more than 11%), since 2004, ever say they are "very" satisfied with the federal government under any of the leaders this government has had. In fact, the evidence reported above indicates that, even during campaigns when a leader is re-elected (Paul Martin in 2004, Stephen Harper in 2008 and 2011, Justin Trudeau in 2019) less than 9% of Canadians ever said immediately prior to that re-election that they were very satisfied with the performance of that incumbent leader. Regardless of whether we believe low ratings are unavoidable, or what may be causing fluctuations at different timepoints, these findings are quite striking. Surely, these are hardly the kinds of leadership evaluations that one would expect to see in one of the world's top ranked democracies.

In the US, for example, (rated lower than Canada on objective democracy measures: 31st according to V-Dem and 35th according to the EIU) ratings of American leaders across these same time periods ranged from similar lows compared to our "somewhat satisfied" group (with George W. Bush as low as 27 points in September 2008 leading up to the election he lost in November of that year) up to highs far exceeding anything Canada sees for any of its leaders over this period (Barack Obama received approval scores up to 76 points in the early months after his election in 2008)[328]. Notably, the scores that most resemble Canada's in terms of their levels and consistency over time[329] are the ones that Donald Trump received over the course of his entire presidency (ranging from a low of 33% to a high of 48%) or to those of Harry Truman during his second term in office[330].

The questions asked in these polls, although they are not the same as those asked in the PCSP and CES, nor are their methodologies directly comparable, still serve to demonstrate that approvals (whether of a leader or of the government being led by a particular leader) can in fact vary quite significantly – and in Canada, these numbers rarely go very high and often are much lower than our American counterparts (on Angus Reid's more comparable Leader Approval ratings (Angus Reid Institute 2023a), for example, the highest Trudeau has ever reached is 65 points)[331] but his ratings most often sit below 50 points (sometimes even dropping as low as 31% approval immediately prior to his re-election in 2019). According to a compilation of similar leader approval ratings assembled by Eric Grenier (CBC 2021), this recent tendency in Canada for low approval ratings is not new. In fact, of the 11 Prime Ministers for whom data are available[332], five of them (throughout their entire tenure) never received a rating higher than 56

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[328] These scores are based on approval ratings assembled by the Roper Center for Public Opinion (Roper Center for Public Opinion Research 2023). Polls included in these ratings are assembled from a variety of sources including various media outlets such as ABC, CNN, Fox News, NBC and the Wall Street Journal, Politico, CBS and the New York Times, as well as polling firms such as Gallup Organization and Pew, and other polls such as Harris Insights and Analytics, American Research Group, and Quinnipiac University.

[329] For Canada between 2004 and 2019, for the US over the course of Trump's presidency from 2017 to 2019 (more recent data from the CES show that, even in 2021, only 44% of Canadians were somewhat satisfied with Trudeau, while only 6% were very satisfied).

[330] In his first term from 1953 to 1956, Eisenhower consistently had approval ratings that hovered between 65 and 75%, dropping below 60% only two times. Even in his second term, he generally always had over 50% approval (again with only two time point exceptions). Two Roosevelt terms tell a similar story, sometimes even hitting approval higher than 80%. Truman's story is somewhat different, with a high of 87% approval at the start of his first term, yet he experienced two significant drops in both 1946 and 1948 to around 33%, recovering to over 60% in 1947 and 1949 before his re-election. His second term began at just under 60% but tanked shortly after in early 1950 and remaining below 35% until the end of his term in 1952.

[331] In June 2016, less than a year after his first election victory in October 2015.

[332] Assembled from polls collected by Angus Reid, Campaign Research, Forum Research, and Léger.

points at their peak[333]. This said, higher ratings are not impossible, as Trudeau showed in 2016. These earlier ratings do indeed reveal that a handful of federal leaders managed to break the 55-56 point ceiling: Jean Chrétien achieved the highest rating on record with 66 points in September 1994, Steven Harper reached 61 points in March 2006[334], Brian Mulroney reached a high of 61 points in June 1985[335], and John Diefenbaker hit a high of 64 points in June 1958[336] – yet, none has ever come close to the ratings that leaders to the south have managed to achieve.

So, how bad is authority support in Canada, do all Canadians more or less see eye to eye? Are these dismal federal authority ratings in Canada generalizable across different territorial contexts? Using more detailed evidence, do Quebecers and non-Quebecers, for instance, differ in their assessments of their political leaders?

Figure 5.17 – Support for Political Authorities: Dissatisfaction with Performance – Quebecers vs. Other Canadians

Data: Canadian Election Studies (CES) Campaign Period, phone survey (CPp) 2004 (n=3,760), CPp 2006 (n=3,924), CPp 2008 (n=3,143), CPp 2011 (n=4,213), CPp 2015 (n=4,079), Campaign Period, online survey (CPo) 2015 (n=6,739), CPp 2019 (n=3,960), CPo 2019 (n=37,148); Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP) PCS 2017 (n=9,227). CES and PCSP Questions: "How satisfied are you with the performance of…'the federal government under [Prime Minister]'." Categories: Responses include "Not very satisfied" or "Not at all satisfied", "Not satisfied at all".

According to findings from the CES and the PCSP surveys reported in Figure 5.17, it is quite clear that there are differences between Quebecers and the rest of Canadians. Yet, it may also be true that some of these differences are gradually dissipating over time. For instance, the evidence from 2004 to 2017, consistently show Quebecers to be more *dis*satisfied with the performance of federal leaders than non-Quebecers. Moreover, the dissatisfaction gaps in most cases are quite significant and range from a low of 10% (in 2015) to a high of 23% (in 2011). Note, however, that in 2017, the gap between Quebecers and non-Quebecers disappears. In fact, by 2019, the tables have turned, and it is now Quebecers who appear to be slightly more satisfied with the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau (by about 5 to 8%), compared to non-Quebecers. It is conceivable, of course, that the same contextual effects that may have influenced differences between Quebecers and other Canadians on orientations toward the federal government are also playing out when it comes to assessments of the Prime Minister. These higher support levels for

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[333] Paul Martin hit a maximum of 56 points in September 2004, Kim Campbell managed to reach 53 points in July 1993 of her very short term, Joe Clark never managed a rating higher than 32 points, Pierre Elliot Trudeau maxed out at 55 points in September 1972, and Lester B. Pearson received a maximum of 56 points in January 1966.
[334] Immediately following his election victory on January 23, 2006.
[335] One year after he took over from Pierre Trudeau in June 1984.
[336] Three months after his second re-election.

the federal government under Trudeau in Quebec might also be at least partly explained by the fact that Trudeau is a native-born Quebecer whose last name is *Trudeau*[337] (Kanji, Salari, and Tannahill 2012).

All this said however, and despite the fact that the most recent evidence suggests that nearly 6 in 10 non-Quebecers (57 to 58%) are currently dissatisfied with their government's performance under Justin Trudeau, the evidence from 2019 also reveal that, even though they are less dissatisfied than non-Quebecers, just over half of Quebecers (53%) remain dissatisfied overall with the performance of government under the current Prime Minister. This is no small proportion and it ultimately suggests that unfavourable perceptions of political authorities may be a characteristic that is more generalizable than not, both generally and across different territorial contexts within the Canadian state.

But are these findings on federal authorities generalizable for leaders at all levels? A quick return to Angus Reid's (2023a) leader approval ratings since 2018, suggests that there may be more to this authority support story than what the federal numbers suggest. At the very least, Premiers may be more well-liked than Prime Ministers[338]. To dig into this a little further, my next set of findings reveals the variations in support for authorities that are possible to observe across all three levels of government and across four different Premiers in Quebec (since 2012).

With this gradually developing pool of data, I am now able to determine whether unfavourable perceptions of political leaders are in fact generalizable across all leaders (as the cross-time federal level data for Canada might have suggested). For the first time, it is now possible to explore how Quebecers assess not only their Prime Ministers, but also their mayors as well as their Premiers. Moreover, for comparative purposes, new questions in the 2019 and 2021 versions of the CES now allow me to also crosscheck data between two different survey projects on these provincial level authority measures. Such comparisons help to reinforce the integrity of the findings derived from the PCSP by stacking the findings from this study up against those of more established (Kanji, Bilodeau, and Scotto 2012) cross-national (and cross-time) survey instruments[339].

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[337] An effect that carries even more weight for non-French speaking Quebecers. According to a survey conducted in 2021 by Léger: "Quebec non-francophones made it clear their fond memories of Pierre Trudeau remain undimmed, giving him a 93-per-cent favourability rating compared with 77 per cent for Trudeau and just 47 per cent for Legault" (Montreal Gazette 2021).

[338] In June 2020, immediately following the pandemic shutdowns (and at a time when a few of these Premiers were quite visible to citizens, conducting regular news briefings (Grenier 2020b)), the four Premiers for whom data are available all rated above 65 points: Scott Moe in Saskatchewan had 65% approval, Doug Ford in Ontario had 69%, François Legault in Quebec had 77%, and Blain Higgs in New Brunswick had 80%. Since that time, the only provincial leader to come close to these ratings again was Tim Houston in Nova Scotia in March 2022 (less than a year after his re-election in August 2021).

[339] Offering an opportunity for a basic assessment of the reliability and validity of the findings from both major surveys (the PCSP and the CES – on surveys that were conducted consecutively, all using similar methodologies).

Figure 5.18 – Support for Political Authorities: Satisfaction with Performance Across Levels of Government – Quebecers

Data: Canadian Election Studies (CES) Campaign Period, online survey (CPo) 2019 (n=770);Canadian Election Studies (CES) Campaign Period, online survey (CPo) 2019 (n=770) 2021 (n=20,434); Political Communities Survey Project: CPEP 2012 (n=1,275), CPEP 2014 (n=1,532), PCS 2017 (n=1,110)
CES and PCSP Questions: "How satisfied are you with the performance of…'the federal government under [Prime Minister]', 'the provincial government under [Premier]', 'your municipal government under the current leadership' (PCSP only).""."Very satisfied" "Fairly satisfied". Response groupings: "At least some satisfaction" includes "Very satisfied" or "Fairly satisfied".

The first key finding to note, reported in Figure 5.18, is that there are clearly significant variations in how Quebecers evaluate their different leaders across the three levels of government in the province. That is, based on these cross-time surveys conducted by both the CES and the PCSP, it is possible to say with much greater confidence that Quebecers clearly do not assess all of their political leaders (at different levels of government) in the same ways. In fact, what these data consistently show is that Quebecers' evaluations of their municipal leaders tend in, most instances, to stand out as being much more positive than their evaluations of leaders at either the federal or provincial levels. And generally, these findings suggest that 60% or more of Quebecers are typically satisfied with the performance of their municipal leaders.

Relatively speaking, the findings for both the federal and provincial levels of government indicate that Quebecers tend typically to not be as satisfied with the performance of these higher-level government leaders, regardless of the leader in charge[340]. The evidence also suggests that Quebecers do not always favor a leader at the provincial level over one at the federal level. Indeed, in some instances such as 2014 and 2017, Quebecers' evaluations of the Prime Minister at the federal level were more favorable than their evaluations of their provincial governments'

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[340] At least where I have PCSP data to show differences across the three levels (until 2017). The CES, unfortunately, does not ask about satisfaction with municipal governments under the leadership of their mayors.

performance under their respective Premiers[341]. And the findings from 2012 (41%), 2019 (69%), and 2021 (76%) especially, indicate that Quebecers' evaluations of the performance of their provincial Premiers at these different times were better than their perceptions of the two different Prime Ministers (Harper, 2012: 34%; Trudeau, 2019: 47%, 2021: 44%). Indeed, the most recent evidence pertaining to Premier Legault in Quebec are exceptional in that the current Premier's satisfaction ratings are higher than those for any other political authority examined over the 9-year period (except for mayors in 2014, which were also at 76%) – numbers that, unlike what we might have expected looking only at federal leader assessments, are not unlike some of the highly favorable ratings of some US Presidents.

So, it may well be, at least based on what I am able to derive at this preliminary stage of the investigation, that political authorities at lower levels of government are generally perceived as performing better than those at the provincial or federal levels and that some leaders may be perceived as doing a better job than others, regardless of the level of government that we consider. While a finding like this may not be extremely groundbreaking, nor surprising, such differences in assessments are rarely examined. Furthermore, given that support for authorities at lower levels in the political system (especially if allowed to persist over time) can theoretically start to eat away at more diffuse levels of satisfaction and attachment to the political community in general[342], the understanding of what is going should certainly at least be explored. For one, are these very low levels of authority and government support in fact detracting from democratic satisfaction and community support? And, if some authorities are successful at capturing greater levels of satisfaction from their populations, what precisely are these publics perceiving authorities to be doing that helps improve their views so much?[343]

Still, regardless of these intriguing variations and cross-level and cross-authority insights, what is also clear from the preliminary baseline evidence presented here, is that very few Quebecers, regardless of the levels of government or time frame considered, are ever willing to express satisfaction with a great deal of conviction (i.e. to state that they are "very" satisfied). For most of the five time points, the evidence indicates that less than 15% of Quebecers ever express a high degree of strong satisfaction (either with Premiers or Prime Ministers). In some cases, this proportion drops as low as 5% (for Harper in 2014). Municipal leaders garner a larger

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[341] Assessments of Harper's performance in 2014 were slightly higher (36% reported at least some satisfaction – either "very" or "fairly" satisfied) than assessments of Pauline Marois performance (31% were at least somewhat satisfied) – of course the 2014 PCSP surveys were carried out immediately after the 2014 election in Quebec when Marois was replaced by Philippe Couillard. In 2017, Quebecers rated the federal government under Trudeau at 58% compared to Couillard's 39% – at the time Trudeau had been in office for two years and Couillard for three. Some of the same explanations for such discrepancies as those presented in the institutions section above can surely be tied to these variations (differences based on the timing of reports of corruption and testimonies released from the Charbonneau inquiry, the Trudeau effect and how the Prime Minister "handled" discussions about reopening the constitution, not to mention differences that might exist simply based on the various perceptions of different language groups or between nationalist, separatist, or federalist Quebecers). Again, while tying these univariate cross-time snapshots to particular events might be useful in building a narrative of what *may* explain variations in support for these different leaders, to gain a more direct understanding of what is driving variations in support for these different objects requires a more systematic analysis of individual-level factors and group differences, which I will carry out and discuss in Chapters 7 and 8.

[342] See the discussion in Chapter 3.

[343] Both these questions are tested and discussed in Chapter 8. In Chapter 6, I also examine a variety of other questions that tap object performance at different levels, identifying some of the areas in which different authorities, various levels of government, various jobs done by these governments, and certain aspects of democracy may be performing well or falling short.

degree of satisfaction from Quebecers (reaching 18% in 2014). Yet, the more recent evidence from Quebec also suggests that these federal and (to a lesser extent) municipal satisfaction numbers may not reflect the fate for all leaders going forward. In fact, even before the high support levels that the Premier received in Quebec during the pandemic, proportions of Quebecers who were "very satisfied" with the provincial government under Legault reached 25% in 2019. One year into the pandemic, the proportion of all Quebecers surveyed by the CES who said that they were *very* satisfied even reached 36%. This said, these proportions are far from perfect, broaching on mediocre at best[344], however, they do suggest that different factors are clearly at play in driving these important variations, that observing political support across all objects (including authorities) is a worthwhile exercise, and that achieving higher scores is *entirely* possible.

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[344] And this was only in 2021 for the Premier, in the midst of the pandemic, a number which, according to more recent data, has now dropped significantly (Renfrew 2022).

Political Authorities – Satisfaction with Performance under a Particular Leader
Summary of Findings

All Canadians
- It is not all that encouraging, to find that typically around half, or in many cases even less than half of Canadians, indicate that they are satisfied with the performance of the federal government under the direction of a particular Prime Minister;
- Fewer than 10% of Canadians ever say that they are very satisfied with the performance of a particular federal government under the direction of its leader.

Quebecers vs. Rest of Canadians (ROC)
- There are some differences that emerge between Quebecers and the rest of Canadians when it comes to their ratings of the federal government under the guidance of the Prime Minister, but it is also true that those differences may be dissipating over time;
- The most recent evidence suggests that nearly 6 in 10 non-Quebecers (57 to 58%) are currently dissatisfied with their government's performance under the current Prime minister;
- Until 2017, Quebecers were generally less satisfied than other Canadians but by 2019, dissatisfaction with the Prime Minister drops slightly lower for Quebecers than for other Canadians;
- Still, the most recent evidence from 2019 indicates that even though they may be less dissatisfied than non-Quebecers, about half of Quebecers (53%) still indicate that they are dissatisfied it the performance of their current government under the guidance of the current Prime minister.

Quebecers only – across levels
- There are clearly significant variations in how Quebecers evaluate their different leaders across different levels of government;
- Quebecers are consistently more satisfied overall with their municipal leader over the provincial or federal leader;
- The evidence suggests that it is not always the case that Quebecers tend to be more satisfied with the performance of their provincial government under a provincial Premier than they are of the performance of the federal government under a federal Prime Minister;
- Very few Quebecers, regardless of the levels of government or time frame considered, ever indicate that they are very satisfied with the performance of their respective political authorities.

Takeaways
- Very few Canadians are ever satisfied with a federal political leader (generally below half of all Canadians) and even fewer are very satisfied;
- Satisfaction with municipal leaders is usually higher than satisfaction with leaders at other levels;
- There are clear variations in how satisfied Quebecers (and Canadians) are with different leaders and there is evidence to suggest that satisfaction with leaders at different levels of government fluctuate separately over time.

Conclusion

In 2022, the Economist Intelligence Unit released their latest report on the state of democracy in the world. According to this report and their Democracy Index, democracy in North America has sustained a drop in its overall rankings. Even more worrying for us here at home in Canada is that, according to this report:

> "the sharp decline in the North America average score in 2021 was driven mainly by a deterioration in Canada, whose score fell by 0.37 points to 8.87. New survey data show a worrying trend of disaffection among Canada's citizens with traditional democratic institutions and increased levels of support for non-democratic alternatives, such as rule by experts or the military. Canada's citizens feel that they have little control over their lives, a sentiment that has been compounded by pandemic-related restrictions on individual freedoms. Canada's worsening score raises questions about whether it might begin to suffer from some of the same afflictions as its US neighbour, such as extremely low levels of public trust in political parties and government institutions." (Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2022, 11)

Reports such as these point to important and worrying trends when it comes to the health of our democracy in Canada. Yet, without delving in and digging deeper and more systematically into the detailed evidence, keeping in our sights the bigger systemic picture, we will fall short in ever moving beyond the current cursory, broad-based, and somewhat abstract understanding of the general trends in support fluctuations over time. Certainly, if we wish to begin addressing some of the challenges of democratic support starting in this country – at least in terms of figuring out why citizens, as an important and central part of democracy, are growing increasingly "disaffected" as the EIU report warns – a more detailed approach is necessary in order to fully grasp where some of the most important problems lie, and someday tackle and overcome some of the stressors of factors that seem to be increasingly threatening satisfaction with our current system of governance and all its parts, or that challenge the perceived health of our political communities and their decision-making systems.

      In this chapter, I have presented an empirical review of the data currently available (and most consistently analyzed both in Canada and cross-nationally) when seeking to understand political support in Canada. I have also taken these common analyses one small step forward, beyond what is typically provided in the literature, delving more deeply into the available evidence on some of the most commonly used empirical measures. That is, I have tried to stitch together a baseline set of findings, demonstrating that, when we pay greater attention to the accruing cross-time data, the subtleties in question wording, the degree and intensity of support that is granted or withheld, as well as the territorial context and level of government at which support is measured, we start to see important patterns and variations that emerge that we either do not, or may not, immediately see when we look solely at the cross-sectional data or focus mainly on the broad-gaged cross-country comparisons and trends. That is, when we start the more complicated process of piecing different snippets of the available data within societies together and to build a big picture systemic story, the reward may well be that we start to derive greater clarity and perceive intricacies that would otherwise have been missed.

      More specifically, the findings from the various analyses I provided in this chapter reveal several important added insights. First, when looking at the evidence across time, it becomes clear that the Canadian results on public perceptions of their political system reveal that support is neither as stable nor as high as the literature on diffuse democratic support would typically suggest, or that traditional objective measures would indicate. Depending on how pride and satisfaction levels are evaluated, for instance, important fluctuations emerge.

For instance, when it comes to those who express a strong conviction in their assessments of diffuse objects (i.e. they have a lot of pride in their political community, or are very satisfied with the workings of their democracy), the data suggest that pride levels, in fact, tend to vary over time and in some years even drop below 50% and the proportion of Canadians across the board who are willing to say they are very satisfied with the workings of their democracy is never higher than 20%. Also, if we ignore distinctions in question wording (for instance, between assessments of pride in one's own national identity compared to pride in the political community) our conclusions about support for the most diffuse object in the political system may even be entirely inaccurate (for example, while national pride may not be so problematic, pride in Canada is more of an issue).

The findings presented in this chapter are certainly not consistent with what we might expect to see in a country that regularly ranks highly on objective cross-country democracy rankings. That is, in one of the world's so-called "top" democracies we might expect to see more citizens consistently expressing both higher levels of pride in their political communities and in the workings of their democracy. Instead – more in line with what the recent EIU report and more rigorous democracy measures such as the Varieties of Democracy indices might lead us to expect – over the last twenty years or so, both pride in the Canadian political community and satisfaction with the workings of democracy have declined for Canadians as a whole, and perceptions of other objects have remained consistently low (although these observations also reveal important cross-level and cross-territory fluctuations that we should seek to better understand and learn from).

More specifically, as focus shifts to support for political objects such as the authorities and institutions responsible for decision-making, the cross-time data suggest that Canadians may be consistently underwhelmed, and the intensity with which they are willing to offer their support is especially low. This said, the Canadian case also offers an important and worthwhile test site to observe support, as significant variations in assessments of all objects can be observed not only between two major subsections of the population (Quebecers and other Canadians) but also across levels of government. These variations provide an important laboratory where we can dig deeper (using more pointed questions and parsing out our analysis of the population into even smaller groups) to determine what citizens perceive to be going wrong in certain areas and for certain governments, but also what may be going right. In other words, despite extremely low specific object support, there are reasons to be optimistic.

All this said, despite all this chapter has shown in terms of what existing studies have amassed to date, and how the PCSP can contribute a subnational and cross-level twist on our understanding the political support story, it is still reasonable for some to be skeptical about the political support questions that I have presented so far (pride in community, satisfaction with democracy, confidence in government, satisfaction with government under various leaders). In fact, it could be argued that such measures do not provide the kind of in-depth understanding of what is *really* going on. In fact, although these broad indicators are among the most common in cross-national and national surveys – and they are often used by polling firms and the media when telling stories about trends in political support over time (Environics Institute 2017; Angus

Reid 2022; Pollara Strategic Insights 2022; Renfrew 2022)[345], by governments reporting internally or to the public (Sims 2001; Cotter 2015), or even by polling firms and the media reporting on academic survey results (A. Parkin 2019; Coughlan 2020; A. Parkin 2020) – they clearly only tell part of the story. And while they may be useful for revealing trends and fluctuations over time or across some levels of government or some groups, they still fall short when it comes to figuring out more precisely which challenges our democracies may be facing today, and why (at least insofar as what citizens think).

In essence, what I would conclude from this baseline review, is that there is good reason to suppose that there may indeed be a political support problem in Canada (certainly, when it comes to certain aspects of our political system – or when we measure support in that system in certain ways). If we are to make sense of the full nature and extent of this problem, we need to dig deeper and look more systematically at even more detailed measures and instruments that are aimed more directly at gathering evidence from a larger sample of Canadians, across the country, as well as within territorial contexts. Indeed, as this preliminary baseline analysis has shown, there are important cross-time, cross-territorial, cross-level, cross-object, *and* even within object variations that emerge and should not be ignored. Before seeking to derive solutions to the political support problem (through major system changes or reforms) in response to any 'crisis' that certain triggers[346] may be signalling, it is necessary, I believe, to assess more detailed and reliable evidence to deconstruct the true scope of any support problem that might exist, by more fully analysing its nature and its extent[347].

In the next chapter, I continue this exploration by expanding significantly on the four more common baseline measures and assessments of various objects presented above (and each of their variants) by drawing on the results of an even more expansive list of questions, uniquely asked by the PCSP during our 2017 wave of data collection.

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[345] Some do, of course, dig a little deeper, for instance both Angus Reid (2022)and Pollara (2022) looks at satisfaction with municipal governments or satisfaction with the range and quality of the services provided by these governments. However, outside of supplying cross-time trends with speculations about the causes of increasing or decreasing confidence, very few (if any) ever attempt to systematically parse out the many possible drivers of shifting government assessments or to test them empirically.

[346] This analogy of triggers versus stressors is discussed in Chapter 2. In this case, some triggers may be identified by declines based off cross-national objective democracy evaluations (that use voter turnout as an indicator of democratic health, for instance) but they ignore the underlying stressors (for instance, individual experiences with democracy) that might be causing these declines.

[347] After establishing the scope in nature and extent in Chapters 6 and 7, I then explore the stressors (whether supply-side or demand-side factors) that may be driving these variations.

> "Most scholars agree that the survival of democracies rests on a broad and
> deep foundation of support among the citizenry. Democracies lacking such
> a foundation of legitimacy are at risk. Political systems, and in particular
> democracies, that are ineffective in meeting public expectations over long
> periods of time can lose their legitimacy, with consequent danger to the
> regime. As broad theoretical assertions, at a high level of abstraction, this
> chain of reasoning is largely accepted by systems analysts and democratic
> theorists alike. But operationalization and measurement of concepts as well
> as sufficient historical and comparative data to test the key linkages, have
> proved largely elusive." (Klingemann 1998, 6; 1999, 32–33)

Chapter 6: Scope of the Political Support Problem: Determining its true Nature and Extent

Introduction

Having established a baseline understanding of Canadians' support for an array of diffuse and
specific objects – using a number of general measures commonly reported in the literature and
fairly regularly employed in more broad-gauged values and election surveys – and developed a
better appreciation of the need to look more deeply into the Canadian political support problem
(as far as it exists), this next chapter presents the findings from my deeper assessment of political
support using a fuller spectrum of new measures that I have helped to design and compile as part
of the PCSP.

First, to get a more precise understanding about the scope of the support problem in
Canada, I dig into the *nature* of the problem by drawing on more refined evaluative and affective
measures in the PCSP designed specifically for this purpose[348]. Secondly, to better understand
the real *extent* of any issues that may exist, I also assess the ways in which results on each of
these indicators differ when looking at various levels of government and when comparing
territorial contexts. In the next chapter (Chapter 7) I will then expand the analysis even more, to
also consider any differences in political support that might exist across traditional groups. By
using this approach, I hope to develop both a deeper and more precise understanding of the true
substance of the political support problem in Canada, as well as a more careful assessment of the
degree to which the problem permeates throughout the Canadian political infrastructure and
throughout Canada's diverse society more broadly[349].

As the spectrum of indicators that I employ in this analysis grows, keeping track of the
ground that is being covered can become increasingly challenging. As such, at the start of each
section in this chapter, I provide tables that summarize each of the affective and evaluative

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[348] And that have been tested and retested in the Canadian context (Kanji 2012b; 2014; J. J. Wesley et al. 2015;
Kanji and Tannahill 2017b). The findings from these earlier waves of the PCSP have been presented in a variety of
venues (Kanji, Salari, and Tannahill 2012; Kanji and Tannahill 2013d; 2013b; 2013a; 2014d; 2014b; 2014e; 2014a;
2014f; 2014c; 2015b; 2015a; Kanji, Tannahill, and Hopkins 2015; Kanji, Tannahill, and McGrandle 2015;
Tannahill, Kanji, and McGrandle 2015; Tannahill and Kanji 2016a; 2016b; 2016c), since then we have also started
disseminating our findings from analyses of the 2017 data (Tannahill, Kanji, and Courchesne 2023; Courchesne,
Kanji, and Tannahill 2023).

[349] A snapshot that is only now possible thanks to the more specific questions included in the 2017 wave of the
PCSP (and which will be used and even further expanded in future waves as well, starting in 2023).

indicators that are examined for each respective political object that I explore[350]. Additionally, at the end of each section, I provide a summary figure, or a political support 'score card', which helps to review the results for each object that has been analyzed, using the aggregated multidimensional indicators[351] of support that I have compiled. As other scholars and studies have suggested[352], by employing composite indicators in the latter portions of my analyses (built upon indicators that I first parse out in careful detail in each section), I am able to present a more robust and complete summary compilation of complex concepts and evidence than is otherwise as succinctly possible through the presentation of multiple single indicators and several disparate pieces of insight[353].

Going forward, one major limitation to keep in mind is that the data for these more in-depth analyses are only available, for the time being, for one timepoint: 2017. This means that no cross-time conclusions can be drawn at this stage[354]. This said, although these data only offer a snapshot at one moment in time, the analyses of these data that I am about to present in this chapter, provide a much more systematic and complete understanding of the way in which Canadians view their political system than has been possible in the past, they set the groundwork for the cross-group differences that will be examined in the next chapter, they elaborate on several of the supply side explanations commonly blamed for support problems (object performance evaluations), and they establish the dependent variables upon which I will test other competing explanations in Chapter 8.

Recalling our Theoretical Expectations

Before launching into the empirical results, Figure 6.1 (building upon the earlier figure presented in Chapter 2, Figure 2.1) lists, from the most specific to the most diffuse, the four main political objects covered in the last chapter and that I plan to dig into over the course of the remaining analyses in this project. It also provides some examples of the sorts of affective and evaluative measures that are tapped through the PCSP[355] and offers summary assessments of what earlier studies conducted across multiple advanced industrial democracies have generally tended to conclude about the state of citizens' support for their political authorities, institutions, regimes,

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[350] When conducting multivariate analyses in the remaining chapters, I will also be mainly employing these new multidimensional indicators to measure affective support for each object. As the theory has anticipated, I will also be testing the extent of the effect of evaluative support, using these multidimensional indicators, on both affective assessments of the same objects as well as on affective orientations toward more diffuse ones.

[351] For questions and operationalization of all the additive indices used throughout this study, see Appendices A1 and A2.

[352] The use of additive indices of this kind is not new. Examples include famous measures such as the post-materialism and cognitive mobilization scales, made popular by renowned scholars such as Ronald Inglehart (1977) and Russel Dalton (2007; see also Donovan 2017). Such measures have not only become staples in analyses of public opinion, but they are also used extensively as objective qualifications of democracy more generally (see for example Beetham 1994; Beetham et al. 2008; Beetham 2012) – as demonstrated by the EIU, Freedom House and V-Dem indicators presented in the previous chapter. Unlike these traditional objective aggregate measures, however, the composite indicators that I create here are built solely on citizens perceptions and cover a vast array of assessments, both affective and evaluative. New approaches also include the employment of machine learning to create more accurate and complete indicators to asses democracies (see Gründler and Krieger 2016; 2021).

[353] For a more in-depth discussion of the value, as well as the dangers, of using composite indicators, see the European Commission's technical report on "Tools for Composite Indicators Building" (Nardo et al. 2005)

[354] Thus, explaining variation based on historical events at various moments in time is not possible here. Macro-level society or system-wide factors may be possible to examine as new waves of data are amassed going forward (which will allow me to compare Canada to other countries as well).

[355] For a full list of questions employed by previous studies compared to those used by the PCSP, see Appendix A1.

and political communities. These summary assessments[356], like the analyses presented in Chapter 5, provide a baseline synthesis of the broad conclusions on how support for each object is said to vary. As I proceed through the investigations in this chapter, I will gauge the new evidence and interpretations that emerge against these conclusions that have been compiled and synthesized from the past[357]. In cases where previous studies have yet to provide systematic conclusions or expectations, I have marked support levels as "TBD" (to be determined).

Figure 6.1 – Political Support – Variations to Expect and Others to Explore

Political Community	Political Regime	Institutions	Authorities		
High **support**	*High* **support**	**Support** *TBD*	**Support** *TBD*	**Affective**	
• *Pride in political community* • Patriotism • Feelings/Identity	• *Democracy as a way of governing* • Democratic principles	• Feelings about institutions (like/dislike)	• Feelings about authorities (like/dislike)	"acceptance or identification"	Political Support
Support *TBD*	*Varied* **support**	*Declining* **support**	*Mixed* **support**	**Evaluative**	
• Evaluations of how well the community is working	• Satisfaction with democracy • Satisfaction with aspects of democracy • Evaluation of the degree of democraticness	• Confidence in government and institutions • Assessments of job being done • Assessments of say government has or how much money they waste	• Satisfaction with performance of authorities • Confidence in authorities • Assessments of job being done	"judgement about performance or appropriateness"	

Diffuse ←————————————————————————→ Specific

First, Figure 6.1 denotes that past research on advanced democracies mainly suggest that affective public support for objects at the diffuse level tend generally to be quite high. As I have demonstrated in previous chapters, the indicators used to draw these conclusions have most often been derived from measures of national pride (pride in the community as well as national identity, or pride in being part of the community) [358]. On occasion, other measures have also been employed, such as questions that ask about patriotism, the willingness to fight for one's country, and feelings of affection (like or dislike) toward a political community. Conversely, evaluative support for one's political community, in terms of assessments of how well communities are working, have yet to be tested[359].

Other diffuse level orientations that have been relied on heavily in the past are outlooks toward democracy as a way of governing or assessments of various regime principles. Here again, the bulk of the cross-national and cross-time findings more or less suggest that affective assessments on these diffuse measures of democratic regime support tend often to be relatively high (Clarke, Kornberg, and Stewart 1984; Norris 1999a; Dalton 2004a). This said, the baseline investigation provided in the previous chapter indicates that there are some important

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[356] This summary is similar to the one found in Norris (1999a, 10) but expands on her presentation by distinguishing between evaluative and affective assessments. I have also *italicized* the measures for which baseline results have already been presented.

[357] This approach provides a variety of touchpoints against which we can gauge how our understanding of the nature and extent of the political support problem may be evolving thanks to the new measures of support introduced by the PCSP.

[358] I demonstrated the empirical distinctions between pride in being Canadian versus pride in Canada in Chapter 5. I also provided a discussion of identity and some of the ways in which it has been used in the political support literature in Chapter 3.

[359] Again, see Chapter 2 for more details.

methodological, cross-level, and cross-contextual differences still to consider. When we shift from affective to evaluative measures of democracy and regime principles, support according to the literature, and corroborated by the baseline analyses presented in the previous chapter, becomes more varied. Evaluative assessments of the political regime are generally based on judgements of satisfaction with democracy or assessments of the degree of democraticness of one's country.

These evaluative assessments of the regime are commonly used but also frequently contested, with some arguing that they may be misleading our understanding of citizens orientations toward democracy. More specifically, criticisms of this sort are often based on reasoning that citizens may not know what they are evaluating when being asked about "democracy", that these views lack sophistication or consistency (Canache, Mondak, and Seligson 2001; C. J. Anderson 2002; Poses and Revilla 2022)[360], or that they suffer from the same bias that more affective measures of democracy have, where democracy is seen as some *ideal* and thus unlikely to be contested (Norris 1999a). While more rare[361], systematic studies that explore citizens' evaluations of specific *aspects* of democracy are beginning to emerge and the findings they unearth are helping to compensate for this supposed lack of sophistication in citizens' evaluations of democracy as a general concept by parsing out evaluations of democracy into the various rights, benefits, and procedures that it promises (Kanji and Tannahill 2017a)[362].

Shifting further down the spectrum toward more specific political objects such as institutions and authorities, the literature remains rather quiet about any conclusions on affective support. Except for political party (Dalton 2004a) and leader approval polls, affective assessments of governments or other system institutions, or even other system authorities (such as representatives in other houses of parliament, or even non-elected actors such as judges or even civil servants) remain largely untapped and thus our expectations on variations in support for these objects remain to be determined. Evaluative orientations toward authorities and institutions, on the other hand, are more common. Findings on support based on such assessments often warn of dangerous "downward spirals" in support[363]. Others suggest that, while evaluations of institutions are on a general decline, evaluations of authorities are more mixed (Norris 1999a; see also Keele 2005; Kanji and Doyle 2009).

In short, if we wish to better understand where some of these objects are falling short and pinpoint areas that require improvement in order to reverse downward trends in support, or learn from areas that are perceived as doing quite well, more detailed questions are required. This chapter will proceed sequentially through the analysis of questions tapping both affective and

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[360] For a recent review of the literature and data used to tap this general satisfaction with democracy measure, see also Valgarðsson and Devine (2022).

[361] LeDuc and Pammett (2014) present results on assessments of several aspects of democracy drawn from the 2012 Samara Citizen Survey, see Footnote 59 in Chapter 2 above.

[362] By introducing more specific aspects of democracy when questioning citizens (for instance, evaluations of: the protection of rights and freedoms, the judicial review of laws, or political representation) it is conceivable that our results will be more accurate as these *aspects* may be more familiar and less subject to variations in interpretation that are introduced when using broad concepts such as 'democracy'. Of course, with this comes the challenge of maintaining certain distinctions between assessments of elements within the decision-making body and the outputs produced by the system, as mapped out in Chapter 2. This is why "evaluative" assessments are considered distinct from affective ones, as they incorporate an element of the output (or supply-) side of the support equation, as further elaborated in Chapter 3 (object performance).

[363] Dalton (2004a) demonstrates declines in Canada for both authorities and governments and variations in other countries, see Chapter 2 for further discussion on this.

evaluative support for each political object, starting with the most diffuse, the political community.

Findings
Political Community
Table 6.1 – Measures of Support for Political Community

Affective Assessments	Evaluative Assessments
· *Pride in political community*	· Evaluations of how well the community is working
· Patriotism toward political community	
· Feelings toward political community	

In the previous chapter, I presented some results on the level of pride Quebecers and Canadians felt toward their political communities across time and across levels of government (from the municipal level to the country level). Pride levels are examined here once again in Figure 6.2, this time in contrast with several other potential affective measures of support for political community[364], such as patriotism and basic feelings of like and dislike toward the political community, as listed in Table 6.1.

Recall from the previous chapter, that pride levels (particularly pride in a Canadian identity) were generally quite high in Canada when we looked at the simple contrast between those who were either "proud" or "not proud". This said however, there were clear variations, for instance, when we took into account differences in question wording (where pride *in* Canada is lower than pride in *being* Canadian), across political communities, between Quebecers and other Canadians, and even between those who expressed "quite a lot" and those who expressed "a great deal" of pride. Furthermore, if we were to compare pride levels across different country contexts, as I did with assessments of the degree of democraticness (see Figure 5.8), analysis of the most recent wave of the WVS reveals that Canadians actually rank two thirds of the way down the list (in 34th spot out of 51) of countries surveyed between 2017 and 2020 [365]. Thus, considering that we rank among the top democracies in the world on many objective measures, this so called "top billing" certainly does not seem to be consistently reflected in how and what all citizens think, and not relative to the degrees of pride citizens express in other states[366].

It seems clear, therefore, that pride alone (despite its more common use in support discussions to date) provides only one facet of the views citizens might hold about their political

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[364] Given the contested interpretations of words such as "pride" and the feelings that may be associated with such a term (Sullivan 2007 who reviews the various ways in which Wittgenstein's approach to pride has been applied to understanding feelings and emotions; see also Di Rosa 2022), bringing in other affective measures is necessary to gain a more rounded picture of affective community support. Doing this can also help to avoid some of the pitfalls presented by possibly skewed or inconsistent definitions and interpretations, both by researchers and by survey respondents, of terms such as "pride" (some of which were also demonstrated empirically in Chapter 5). Similar challenges to those of the concept of pride can be pitted against concepts such as "confidence", which I will begin to address in the institutions section below.

[365] This finding is not illustrated here but is drawn from the WVS' pooled 2017-2020 data file (Haerpfer et al. 2020). While this indicator gives us some idea of where Canada stands compared to other countries (the US is fourth from the bottom), it is of course, not ideal. Firstly, many of the countries it is being compared to are considered either only "partly free" or "not free" at all. Not to mention this particular wave of the WVS was only conducted in 51 countries, which is far from a complete list. Most importantly, however, one single indicator of support for political community is insufficient to gain a full perspective on the state of support for this object, as will be illustrated below.

[366] This is consistent with the discrepancy identified by Loat and MacMillan (2014, 2; referenced also by Samara Canada 2015)

community and depending on how it is measured, when it is measured, and who is being asked, the results may differ quite drastically. Therefore, to broaden and round out our understanding and more fully clarify our interpretations of the true state of diffuse support – starting in Canada – I introduce a few other focal points for observation of public opinion (and feelings). These extra indicators, in my view, should help to build our understanding of the state of citizens' support for political communities by incorporating additional affective assessments (such as patriotism and a basic feelings indicator ranging from dislike to like for a political community) as well as a new evaluative measure of political community which taps an aspect that has yet to be investigated directly[367]: that is, citizens' perceptions of how well political communities are actually working.

To simplify this analysis as much as possible, I am interested here primarily in contrasting and examining the basic distinction between "positive" and "negative" outlooks. In some cases, such as pride, response categories[368] provide clear cut differences between either positive or negative responses and therefore respondents can be categorized quite easily according to whether they fall into one or the other of the two camps – that is they either have pride in the political community or they do not[369]. In other cases, such as affective assessments of patriotism or basic feelings of like or dislike, as well as evaluative assessments of how well the community is working, the range of potential response categories is much broader (ranging from 0 to 10 for patriotism and evaluations of how the community is working, and from 0 to 100 for feelings about the community). In these cases, I consider those who fall above the halfway point on these respective ranges to have 'positive' assessments of the community (i.e., they feel patriotic about it, like it, or think it is working) and those who fall below the halfway point are considered as

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[367] This can be measured, according to Klingemann (1998) by tapping whether orientations toward the community would be influenced by choosing "to maximize employment opportunities by emigrating" to that community (8). This, in my view, is not directly tapping evaluative support for the *political* community though, rather it is a measure of all the benefits (including climate, family, and a multitude of other potential factors). Dalton proposes tapping the instrumental evaluation of this object similarly with "Best nation to live in". This measure is rarely used though, it is employed, for instance by the US News Best Countries ranking. According to this ranking, last year Canada came in 3rd overall (Neira 2022). I propose, instead, to use a more unmediated measure that taps evaluations of the community directly (based on perceptions of its performance).

[368] See the full listing of response categories in Appendix A1. Respondents who were unwilling to provide either a "positive" or "negative" answer to this question, were given the option to opt out of answering by selecting either "I don't know" or "I'd rather not say". Between 1% and 2.4% of the entire sample (representing 78 to 114 respondents), selected one or the other of these opt-out responses. These respondents are excluded from the findings reported in Figure 6.2. If a large enough sample of such respondents were available, it may be possible in the future to also figure out what characteristics are most likely to lead to such a response.

[369] I acknowledge here that distinctions such as these are not so clear cut when thinking emotionally about pride or even patriotism and like or dislike. Furthermore, this snapshot (at one time point in 2017) cannot capture all of the possible effects that can impact these assessments throughout any given day, month or over a lifetime for a single respondent. This said, as researchers who chose to employ surveys to better understand and "know" the social world around us, there is a certain degree of variability and bias that we must accept but also actively seek to reduce (Choi and Pak 2004; Archer and Berdahl 2011; Šimundić 2013; Schumm 2021). Not only do I try to tackle some of this bias and variability by assembling a variety of object assessments, building toward more complete composite measures of community support (and other objects as well) – moving beyond what others have relied upon in the past – these surveys are also increasingly drawing upon larger sample sizes which provide for more accurate representations of these feelings and opinions, while also triangulating cross-level assessments by asking the same questions about different objects (as opposed to employing different methods to get at assessments of the same concept (Campbell et al. 2020)). This form of triangulation does not just offer comparability but also provides us with greater confidence on the generalizability and even the accuracy of such measures.

having negative views toward the community (i.e., they do not feel patriotic toward it, they dislike it, or they think it is not working).

When respondents select a number that falls right in the middle of the range, I categorize them as having neither positive nor negative views, but rather offering a neutral or noncommitted viewpoint. To simplify the results demonstration as much as possible[370] and present a more dichotomous picture of whether Canadians are either more positive or more negative, I have opted to omit these "neutral" feelings from the results presented in Figure 6.2[371].

Figure 6.2 – Support for Political Community – All Canadians

Variations in CANADIANS' Support for Political Community Across Levels of Government
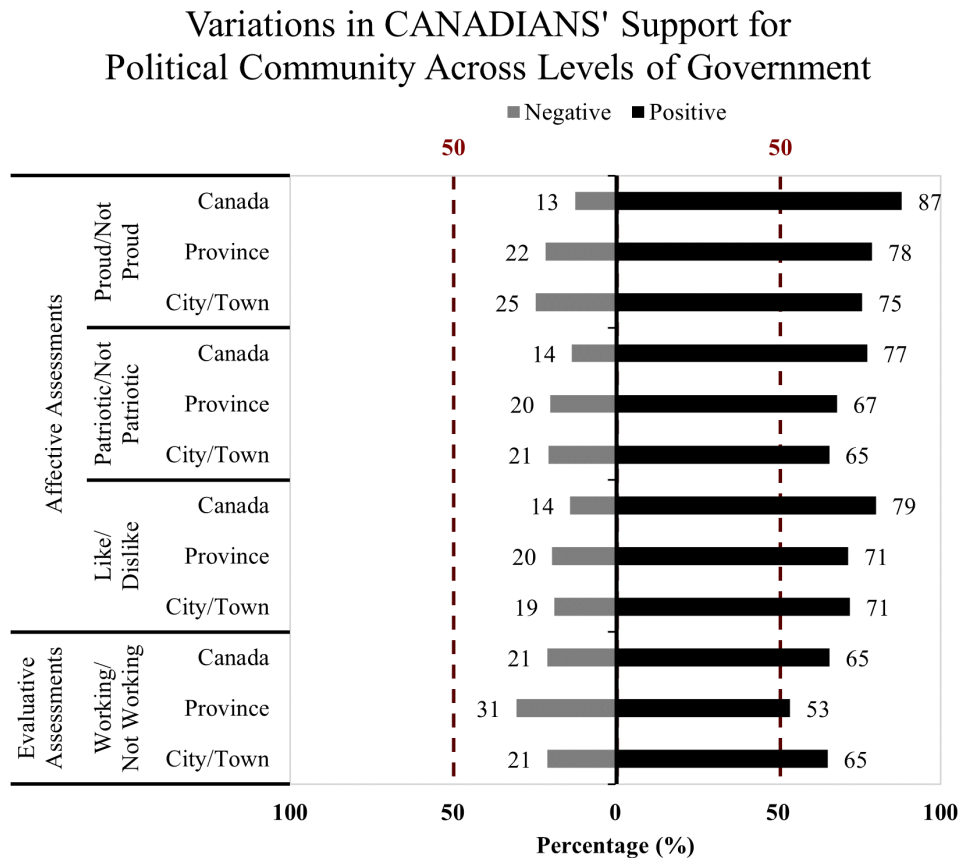
Source: PCSP 2017
Sample sizes for each analysis range from 6,215 to 6,731. Question wording for each of these measures can be found in Appendix A1.

In this figure, the first, and perhaps most important observation is that most Canadians (always over 50%) exhibit positive outlooks toward their political community regardless of which level of government is being assessed. Indeed, the same interpretation applies regardless of whether

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[370] Especially given the already extensive number of indicators and the significant amount of data that are being presented.

[371] On all indicators (including patriotism, like/dislike, and working well) across levels those who report "neutral" feelings represent between 6% and 14% of the total sample. Leaving these respondents out, also provides for a clearer comparison with the pride question which does not have a "neutral" category, just an opt-out possibility. When constructing the multidimensional additive indices, these responses are not excluded as they provide useful information of where respondents fall on a range from low to high.

we employ an affective or evaluative assessment measure. This said, there are still important variations that appear such as those that emerge when comparing the results across levels of government and across assessment types.

For instance, on all three affective measures of community support, Canadians surveyed were more likely to express support for the Canadian political community than for their provincial or municipal ones. That is, the Canadian respondents to these surveys expressed having greater pride in Canada (87% vs. 78% pride in the province and 75% pride in their city or town), they were more patriotic towards the national community (77% vs. 67 and 65 respectively for the province and city or town) and they were more likely to express affective feelings of "like" toward Canada than they were toward their provincial or municipal communities (at 79% vs. 71% for both the provincial and municipal community).

When we look beyond affective assessments, captured by questions that tap more deep-seated or intrinsic emotions or feelings, and look instead at how Canadians' evaluations of how well they think their respective political communities are working, the results become notably more measured (especially at the federal and provincial levels) as well as more distinct. In this sense, they are also perhaps more revealing of the true nature of support for political communities. For instance, contrary to what we usually expect based on what previous studies have shown, nearly a third of Canadians expressed that they feel their provincial political community is not working well (with only 53% expressing that the community is working well), while they are slightly more positive about the workings of both their municipal and national communities (both sitting at 65% support).

In other words, these results suggest overall that, although the affective assessments that respondents provided of their various political communities (especially at the federal level) tended typically to be fairly high, their evaluative assessments of how well they think their respective political communities are working tend to be less favourable, particularly when it comes to their federal and provincial communities. It becomes clear in observing these findings, therefore, that while there are important consistencies (affective support is usually over 65%), there are also previously under-examined variations to note and consider (across levels of government and assessment types) in order to gain a better understanding of support and potentially contend with variations in support across different political communities in Canada.

Figure 6.3 helps to parse out this variation a bit further, by controlling for differences in territorial context, unpacking and presenting a side-by-side picture of the assessments of survey respondents in Quebecers compared to those in the rest of Canada.

Figure 6.3 – Support for Political Community – Quebecers vs. other Canadians
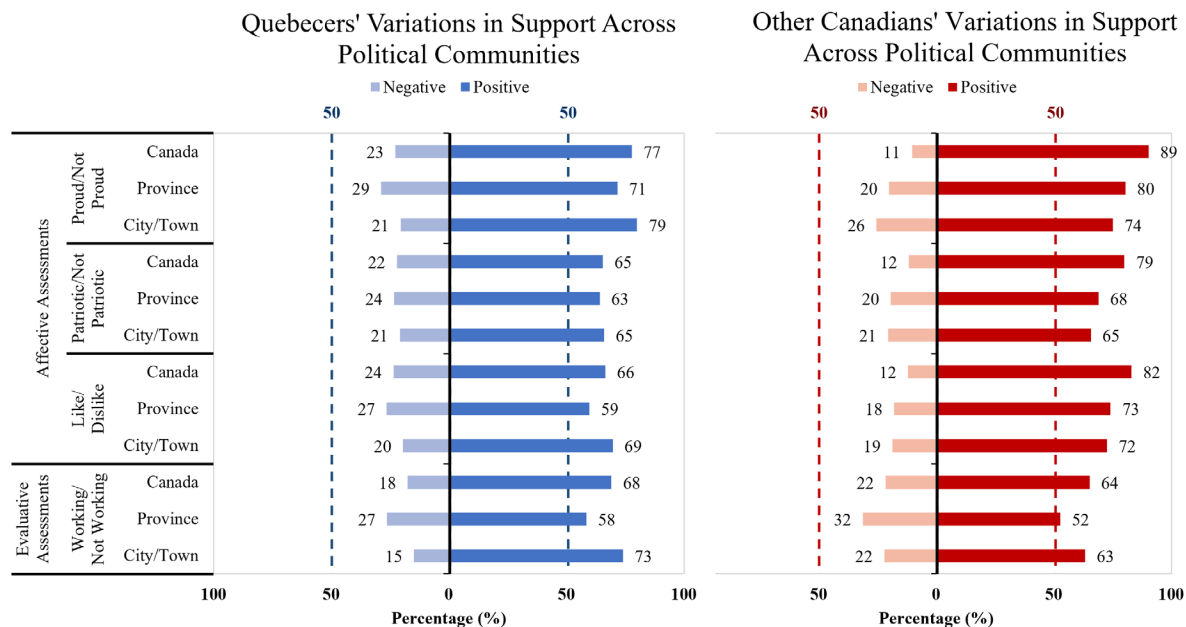
Source: PCSP 2017
Sample sizes for each analysis range from 1,072 to 1,177 for Quebec and from 5,137 to 5,554 for the ROC. Question wording for each of these measures can be found in Appendix A1.

Note again, when I compare these Quebecers to other Canadians on the various affective and evaluative measures of community support, the evidence reveals that support for different levels of government varies between the two groups. Indeed, had we ignored this added examination of the distinction between these two territorial contexts, we may have concluded (as we did in the previous figure) that affective support for the Canadian political community is consistently stronger than support for lower-level communities, regardless of the way it is assessed by citizens (either pride, patriotism, or like/dislike). When the distinction between these two territorial contexts is introduced, however, we see that the Quebecers we surveyed are slightly different than other Canadians in how they assess their respective political communities.

Of course, finding a difference between Quebecers and non-Quebecers on community support, given the province's long history of struggles over distinct status and national recognition, would not be that surprising. What is more surprising, is that the findings from 2017 reveal that these cross-territorial, cross-community differences go counter to what has been previously observed (Kornberg and Clarke 1983). Rather than higher support among non-Quebecers for the Canadian community compared to Quebecers, I find that, like other Canadians, Quebecers' support for the Canadian political community is consistently higher than support for the provincial political community across all affective and evaluative measures of support.

Not only do these finding go against what earlier research has suggested, it also represents a shift from the more recent evidence discovered in 2012 (Kanji, Tannahill, and Hopkins

2015)[372]. By 2017, this shift in affective support in Quebec that I discovered in the previous chapter based on differences in community pride, now seems to be consistently occurring across affective measures as well as evaluative ones. Moreover, these findings indicate that Quebecers are generally more supportive of their local communities than either their federal or provincial ones. Meanwhile, other Canadians support their national political community more than their provincial and local ones.

It is also interesting to note that, although Quebecers are less supportive of the national community generally (ranging from 65% to 77%) compared to other Canadians (ranging from 79% to 89%) across all the affective measures, Quebecers' evaluative assessments of how well the Canadian community is working appear to be better than Canadians' evaluations (68% of Quebecers evaluate the Canadian political community as working well, compared to 64% of other Canadians). Although this gap is small, when it is taken together with the affective shift in public perceptions identified above[373], it reveals not only that certain actions or events may be having diffuse consequences on views of the Canadian community[374], but also that efforts to garner increased national attachments among one group (Quebecers) we may be harming attachments among another group (other Canadians)[375].

Before moving into the next phases of the analysis then, consider first the summary of these findings presented in Figure 6.4, which represents the first of many score cards[376] to be presented in this chapter that help to consolidate and make sense of my more detailed analyses and results on these many survey questions. These score cards may be conceived as various component parts of an overall citizens' report card (which is included in Appendix B1, Table B1.1), based on their combined affective and evaluative assessments of various core political objects in their political system. My main aim with this initial score card, for instance, is to summarize the results on all the questions presented so far that tap Canadians' assessments of

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[372] According to our 2012 data, we found that support for the provincial community was higher among Quebecers than support for the Canadian political community. In 2012, we did not ask about patriotism but the results on pride (as I showed in the previous chapter) had Quebec respondents indicating greater pride in the provincial community compared to the national one, alongside higher affective feelings based on the like/dislike thermometer scale, as well as a higher proportion expressing a provincial rather than national identity (based on a territorial identity question: "how much do you identify with").

[373] Also, when the feelings thermometer alone for all Canadians is compared to those from the 1993, 1997 and 2004-2006 CES results, the recent 2017 PCSP data also reveal that the average (mean) score on this measure has dropped significantly over the years, returning to the level it was at in 1993 (64 points on 100).

[374] Previous conclusions that diffuse support is more resistant to erosion (Easton 1965b; Dalton 1999; 2004a), may have been largely due to our reliance in the past on incomplete measurements of support derived from affective measures alone, which have clearly been camouflaging what may actually be going on in reality.

[375] Direct drivers of support at this level are not tested in this chapter (see Chapter 8 instead). This said, it is possible to speculate some reasons for these differences. For example, efforts to appease Quebecers (Smiley 1978; Blake 2020; Coyne 2021) or build national unity (such as asymmetric federalism) may pay off for some groups but may not always be deriving the most desired outcomes equally for all Canadians (Brock 2008; Gagnon 2009).

[376] Universities tend to categorize an A+ as exceeding expectations, an A- as excellent. B is generally categorized as "good", while a C would be considered only "satisfactory" or somewhat "competent" (see, for example: Dalhousie University 2023; Concordia University 2023b; 2023c; University of Western Ontario 2023). Further, several programs, especially at the graduate level, do not allow for more than one C grade on a transcript (called the 'C Rule'), if any at all (Concordia University 2023a; University of Toronto 2019).

their political communities and translate these survey results into grades[377]. I have done this by aggregating results for each of the single indicators into a series of measures (additive indices) that not only help to summarize a large amount of information but also provide more fully specified and robust measures of support than any single indicator alone[378].

More specifically, the graph in Figure 6.4 represents the combined (or aggregated) views of Canadians across the spectrum of political community assessments (combining individual assessments of pride, patriotism, like/dislike, as well as evaluations of the workings of various communities), both "generally" (combining cross-level assessments) and across each level of government, as well as compares affective assessments to evaluative ones. Not only do such combined measures provide a way of conveniently summarizing the detailed results from many single indicators, highlighting any nuances that might exist across different assessment types, and levels of government[379], it also provides a more broadly accessible and relatable narrative[380].

Figure 6.4 – Political Community Score Card – All Canadians
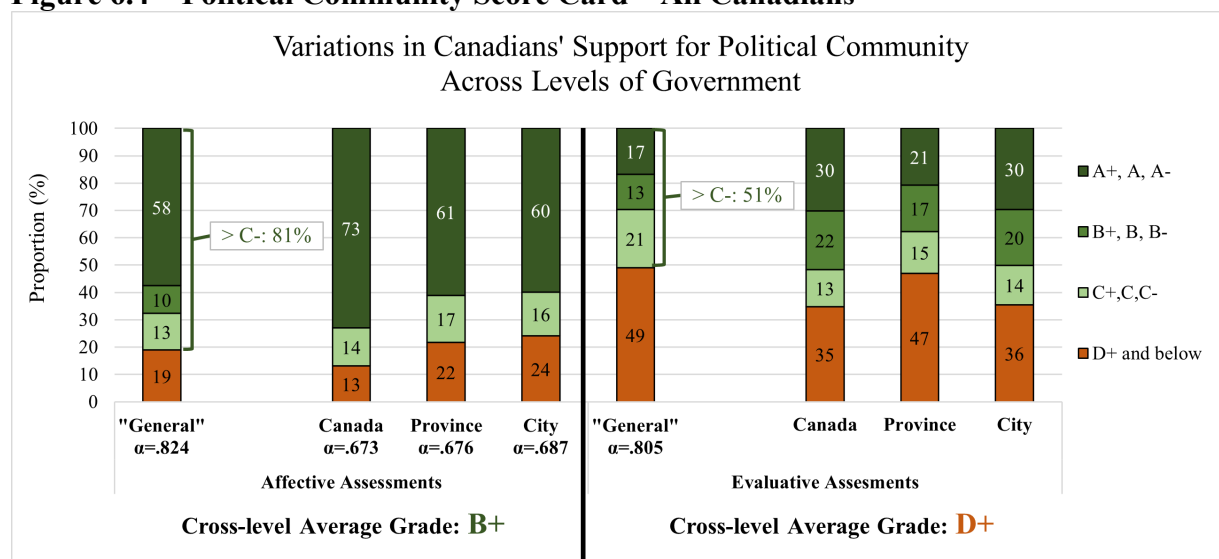
Source: Political Communities Survey Project 2017 (n=5,440)
PCSP Question Categories/Dimensions (see Appendices A1 and A2 for wording and operationalization):
- Affective support: Degree of pride, patriotism, feelings of like toward political communities (additive indices).
- Evaluative support: Evaluations of how well communities are working (single indicators).
"General" is a cross-level cumulative additive index of object assessments across all three levels of government. For additive indices, see Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability statistics for each measure.

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[377] It is important that I point out here that I am not the one assigning grades, based on my own assessment on these objects. Rather, I am using a standard grading scheme to summarize the scores each object receives. The assessors in this case are the Canadian respondents to the PCSP surveys. This approach is not unique, even among academic studies of democracy in Canada, see for example the Democracy 360 reports by Samara (2015; 2017; 2019).

[378] As Eisinga, Grotenhuis and Pelzer (2012, 637) point out "the use of multiple, heterogeneous indicators enhances construct validity in the sense that it increases the likelihood of adequately identifying the construct of interest". In other words, through the compilation of responses to a variety of questions all tapping orientations toward the same object (using multiple concept measures or variables to tap a single concept), we get closer to the goal of "measuring" support, as far as it is possible to do, using public opinion data gathered through survey research.

[379] And in Appendix B1 Table B1.1, across groups (Quebecers vs. other Canadians).

[380] Again, democracy report cards are not a new concept (see for instance Samara Canada 2015; 2017; 2019; Democracy Watch 2022). This is, however, the first time that such a grading scheme has been used to assess the entire political system and all its political objects across such a broad array of questions.

The first point to note based on these results, is that a majority of Canadians in these surveys (when views toward all levels are combined) give their political communities in "general" passing grades (that is a grade[381] of C- or more). When looking only at affective cross-level assessments, more than a majority of Canadians (58%) assess their various political communities at an A- level or better, while 19% affectively assess their political communities as being less than satisfactory (i.e., below a C- level of support). This said, when broken down across levels of government, the aggregated indices of pride, patriotism, and like/dislike also suggest that there is quite a bit of variation across these different levels (similar to what the evidence showed earlier). Although the findings reveal more A grade support for the federal community (73%) than for the provincial or municipal ones (60%), the average grade on affective support that Canadians allocate to their political communities (federal, provincial and local) combined turns out to be around a B+.

As was also revealed when looking at the findings for each survey question separately, this score card also shows that, regardless of the community being assessed, affective grades are consistently higher than evaluative ones. More specifically, when it comes to evaluative assessments, only 17% of Canadians evaluate the workings of their political communities (federal, provincial, and municipal combined) at the standard of an A- grade or better. Meanwhile, around half of those surveyed (51%) evaluated their political communities combined as working below a C- level. Not only do these results suggest that positive evaluations of political communities may be harder to come by than positive affective feelings, they also demonstrate that Canadians' evaluations of their communities are consistently low across each community separately. In other words, regardless of whether we look at the municipal, provincial, or federal level, the average grade given by all respondents is a D+, which is an entire two grade points lower than their cumulative affective grade. Despite this D+ average across levels, harsh evaluations of political communities are especially pronounced at the provincial level, where almost half (47%) of the Canadians surveyed evaluated the workings of their respective provincial political communities at a D+ grade level or lower (while 21% evaluated their provincial community at an A- or higher). Scores are slightly better for evaluations of the federal and local communities, where 30% gave an A grade and about 35% gave each level a D+ or below.

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[381] Grades in this and all upcoming score cards are derived as follows: Fail=F: 49.99% and below; Less than Satisfactory=D- : 50% to 52.99%, D : 53% to 56.99%, D+ : 57% to 59.99%; Satisfactory=C- : 60% to 62.99%, C : 63% to 66.99%, C+ : 67% to 69.99%; Good=B-: 70% to 72.99%, B : 73% to 76.99%, B+ : 77% to 79.99%; Excellent=A- : 80% to 84.99%, A : 85% to 89.99%, A+ : 90% and above.

Political Regime (and Principles)
Table 6.2 – Measures of Support for Political Regime

Affective Assessments	Evaluative Assessments
· Democracy as a way of governing	· *Satisfaction with democracy*
· Democracy vs. other ways of governing	· Evaluation of degree of democraticness
· Support for various democratic principles	· Satisfaction with various aspects of democracy

The previous chapter presented results of several baseline analyses using common indicators of political regime support in Canada. Among other things, this evidence showed consistent indications of fluctuation in support and variation depending on whether we observe support based on questions that tap how democratic the regime is evaluated to be (measures of "democraticness") compared to assessments of democratic satisfaction, as well as cursory affective assessments of democracy as a way of governing. While support for democracy as a way of governing the regime was quite high, the results of this preliminary analysis also revealed some significant indications of dissatisfaction with the workings (and democraticness) of democracy along with mostly lukewarm degrees of satisfaction generally.

Table 6.2 lists some alternative measures of political regime support, in addition to those reported in Chapter 5. As with the elaborated measures presented for community support, these questions, and the findings on them, all serve to move us closer to gaining a more complete picture of the true nature and extent of support for democracy in Canada. Unlike the basic approach I took with the political community indicators, several of the measures of regime support examined here required a more nuanced interpretation (looking, for instance, at differences between non-democrats and committed democrats). As such, the response categories that I report extend beyond just the differences on two extremes (positive versus negative) that I used in the political communities analyses reported in Figure 6.2 and Figure 6.3 above. Rather, they include several other subcategories of support which are labelled accordingly in Figure 6.5.

The first thing to note is the degree of variation that can be observed when looking at a variety of different questions that all tap political support for the same object. Indeed, the need to deepen and expand our probe[382] becomes especially evident when I look at how the results on the questions explored in the previous chapter compare (to each other, as well as) to the other alternative assessments included here. Indeed, if we were to rely solely on one or two handpicked baseline indicators (the ones most used in the literature so far), without digging any deeper, we may be tempted to conclude, for instance, that democracy as a regime option does not appear to be under any particular degree of stress, at any level of government, particularly when we look solely at whether Canadians think "democracy is a good way of governing".

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[382] To be more aware of differences, depending on how we tap support.

Figure 6.5 – Support for Political Regime – All Canadians

Variations in CANADIANS' Support for Political Regime Across Levels of Government
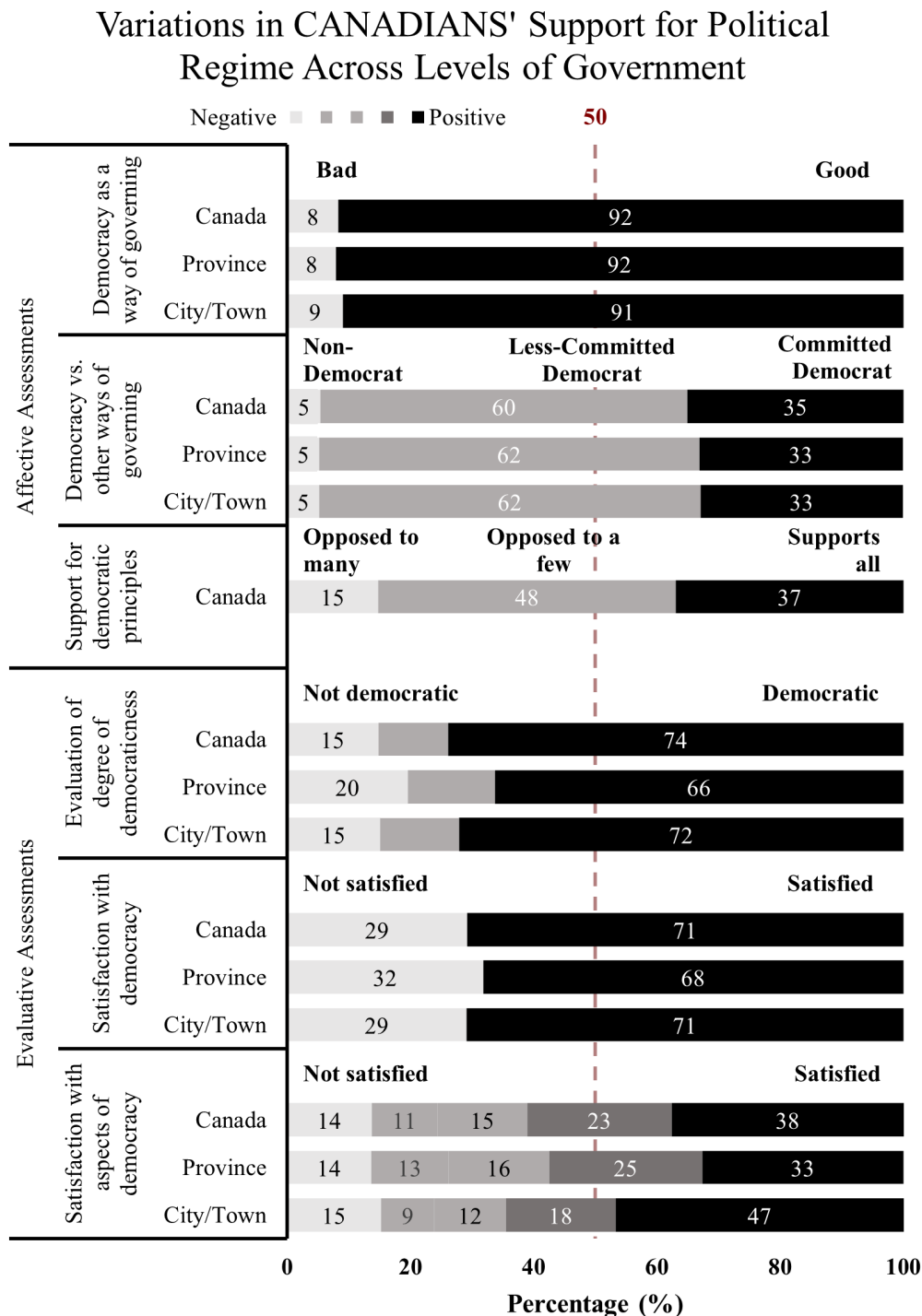
Source: PCSP 2017
Sample sizes for each analysis range from 4,792 to 6,289. Question wording for each measure and operationalization of any indices can be found in Appendices A1 and A2.

That is, as already demonstrated in Figure 5.10 in the previous chapter, the evidence on this measure consistently shows that between 91% and 92% of Canadians generally think that democracy is a good way of governing, at the federal, provincial and local levels. In other words,

were we to draw conclusions and make recommendations based solely on this one affective indicator that taps mostly the "moral" acceptance, or "appropriateness" of democracy as a political regime (Klingemann 1998, 8), we may be glossing over some of the important perception nuances that present when using alternative measures. Even at this more diffuse level, like with community support, where the literature is still pretty consistent in their conclusions that there is no "crisis" of democracy, that support levels tend consistently to be quite stable and robust. Evidence of the benefit of employing alternative measures thus begins to emerge as we make our way through these new results in Figure 6.5.

Consider, for instance, the following. It is one thing to say (based on the evidence) that Canadians conclusively indicate that a particular regime type (in this case, democracy) is a good way of governing. But what happens to this perspective when such exclusive affective assessments are contrasted against perceptions of other regime alternatives? A more rigorous assessment, in other words, would be to look at the extent to which the public are faithful to democracy and nothing else. In other words, what is their commitment to democracy when asked to also consider other forms of governance or regime types[383]? When asked in this way, more committed democrats would presumably eschew other less democratic governance possibilities. These empirical results, however, suggest that Canadians' commitment to democracy as the ideal form that governance should take, does not prevent them from considering other governance possibilities. Indeed, these findings indicate less absolute loyalty or commitment to democracy than what many have previously reported (Klingemann 1999; Dalton 2004a; Norris 2011; Nevitte and White 2012)[384].

More specifically, my evidence shows that, while democracy remains the most preferred system of governance across all levels of government in Canada, only about one third of Canadians are *completely committed* to democracy (33 to 35%) – meaning that they think democracy is the only form of government that is good, and all other options are bad, regardless of the level of government that is being considered. What is even more surprising, is the proportion of Canadians who believe that, while democracy is good, they are at the same time also willing to accept other forms of governance – whether having unelected experts make decisions, or having a leader who does not need to bother with legislatures or elections, or even having the army rule the country, province, or city. An astounding 60% to 62% of Canadians actually fall within this category across all levels of government. In other words, the evidence does not suggest that Canadians unilaterally support democracy alone as being the only good

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[383] Wike (2017) elaborate on democracy in this way; as we did in our earlier examinations in Quebec (Kanji and Tannahill 2014a).

[384] Dalton claims (2004a, 41), based on affective assessments of democracy, that according to WVS and European Values Survey data for western democracies (Canada included) that "support for the idea of democracy is nearly universal". While Nevitte and White (2012, 59) contend that "regardless of the national setting, citizens generally express a strong commitment to democracy". Norris (2011, 95) concludes, (also employing WVS data, and including Canada) that even though there are some variations in approval of democracy when compared to other forms that "the results continue to confirm the widespread appeal of the idea of democracy as well as the public's widespread rejection of autocratic forms of government". Klingemann (1999, 43) suggests that "those who support democracy as a form of government but also give a poor score to current performance […] may well constitute a potential force for improving rather than for abandoning the democratic experiment". Certainly, signalling areas for improvement is part of the democratic exercise, but it appears, from my analysis that despite strong support for democracy as an ideal, even when compared to other forms according to earlier WVS data, may in fact be waning. In fact, these PCSP data (and the findings from other more recent WVS studies (Foa and Mounk 2016)), suggest that some may actually be starting to turn off from the experiment entirely (or are at least becoming less committed to seeing it through.

way of governing. Instead, a significant proportion of Canadians also openly indicate that less democratic (and more autocratic or technocratic) regime types would also be good for governing their societies. This may be (at the very least), a manifestation of the growing frustration that Canadians have with their political system, something that is evident even at presumably more "resistant" diffuse levels of the political system.

To help dig further into assessments of democracy, to better deduce the extent to which Canadians remain loyal to democracy as a preferred form of governance, I turn next to look more directly at Canadians' support for the various principles that are foundational to democracy here in Canada (see Figure 6.6 for a listing of these principles). Such indicators are used more often in the context of evaluating the objective "quality" of our democracy (Beetham et al. 2008), as they represent many of the core "values" that underlie our political system (Dalton 1998; see also Dahl 1971) [385]. The PSCP asks Canadians to assess these principles directly by noting whether they support or oppose them.

The range of principles that are included in this line of questioning is quite extensive[386] and spans from the principle of the rule of law to that of federalism, also including questions that tap support for the principle of retaining a monarch as our Head of state[387]. Beginning with the aggregated evidence, the data overall (reported in Figure 6.5) reveal that only 15% of Canadians say that they oppose many (a third or more) of these core principles. This would suggest that most Canadians are supportive of a majority of the core principles that underpin their democracy. But how supportive are they? Only 37% of Canadians indicate that they fully support all the underlying principles of our democracy they are asked about. Meanwhile, just under half (48%) respond that they support several (at least 8 out of the 10 principles), or that they oppose only a few[388]. On balance, therefore, these data would lead us to conclude that not all Canadians are supportive of all the underlying principles of our democracy, while most are opposed to only a few. The key point again is that there is evidence of variation even at the most diffuse levels of support that can only be more fully understood if we ask citizens what they think about their democratic principles rather than just how they report their loyalty to democracy generally.

In other words, for the purposes of developing a better understanding of the nature of political support in Canada (and regime support more specifically), it is relevant to probe such indicators more deeply rather than generally concluding that regime support remains quite high (or high enough) across the board. For instance, when looking to the future to determine what principles work for Canadian democracy and which ones require re-examination or reinvigoration, these data provide much more substance to do so (as I elaborate on more in Figure 6.6).

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[385] While, at this stage, these regime principles are not exactly the same as those proposed by Dahl (2000, 38): "a complex body of enforceable rights and opportunities: to participate in electing representatives; to freedom of expression, inquiry, discussion, and deliberation in the widest sense; to form associations with others for inquiry and political action; rights and opportunities to citizenship; and more"), they do represent a broad set of regime principles that are especially important in the Canadian context and that encompass each of the rights and opportunities that he proposes to be important (through the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, for instance).
[386] We have expanded this list even further in the recent wave of the survey, building on the questions to cover an even broader range of principles.
[387] There can certainly be discrepancies here in terms of the knowledge respondents have about each of these principles and so, when asking the questions in the survey, we also included definitions of each principle (see Figure 6.6).
[388] In the multivariate analyses to follow, when using support for regime principles, I have kept the full spectrum of variation (accounting for variation in the intensity of support as well as just support vs. not support).

When considering the more detailed evidence reported in Figure 6.6, overall support for most of the democratic principles for which we surveyed is generally high (ranging from 87% to 93%), the only exception being: having the Queen's representative serve as the Head of State (44%)[389]. This is clearly one principle that a majority of Canadians in our surveys do not support, which is likely part of the same broad wave of republicanism currently confronting several Commonwealth states (Aziz 2021). On the other hand, the top two most supported underlying principles of Canadian democracy are the rule of law and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (93% support overall for each).

Figure 6.6 – Support for Regime Principles – All Canadians

Canadians' Support for Regime Principles
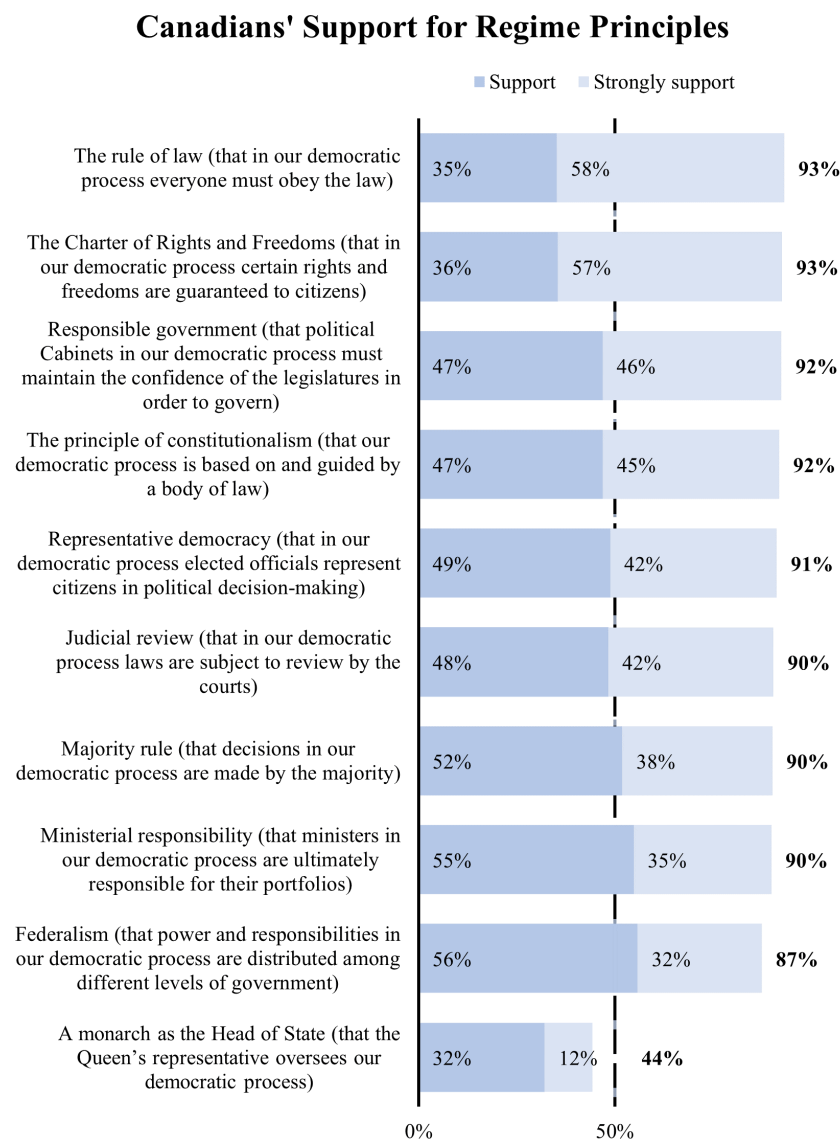
Source: PCSP 2017
Sample sizes for each analysis range from 5,540 to 6,118. Full question wording and response categories on these indicators can be found in Appendix A1.

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[389] Recalling, of course, that this survey was conducted in 2017 when Queen Elizabeth was still alive.

Although variation in overall support levels for each of these principles may not (at least on the surface) seem to vary extensively – where at the highest end aggregate support for the rule of law is at 93% and, above support for a monarch, at the lowest end support for the distribution of power and responsibility in Canada across levels of government through the principle of federalism is at 87% (a variance across principles of just 6 points) – the intensity with which support for each of these principles is expressed, is notably different. On the one hand, nearly 60% of Canadians state that they strongly support principles such as the rule of law (58%) and the Charter of Rights (57%), while only about a third strongly support the principles of majority rule (38%), ministerial responsibility (35%) or federalism (32%). Meanwhile, there is relatively strong support for other core principles[390] such as responsible government (46%), constitutionalism (45%), representative democracy (42%) and even judicial review (42%)[391]. Distinctions such as these are quite important, as they highlight the nuance that exists in diffuse support overall and in citizens' commitments to the values that underpin our democracy (which contrasts with general assessments that tap only whether democracy is a good or bad thing, or whether citizens are generally "satisfied" with it). They may also help to better inform debates over initiatives such as (for instance) the enactment of new charters that further enshrine certain orientations or beliefs about how our societies should be governed[392].

To dig deeper into such nuances in regime support, I turn now from affective orientations to the evaluative assessments of citizens as reported in Figure 6.5. As previously demonstrated, the data show that, on other popular indicators such as evaluations of the democraticness of the Canadian political system, overall about three out of four respondents assess the country (74%) and their city (72%) as being governed fairly democratically, while at the provincial level support average out around 66%. Likewise, 71% of Canadians indicate that they are satisfied with the workings of their federal and municipal democracies, whereas 68% are satisfied with the workings of their provincial democracy.

To gain more insight into what Canadians may be thinking when expressing opinions on the democraticness of their political systems, we also asked respondents what they thought of the workings of specific aspects of democracies at different levels, ranging from satisfaction with the protection of rights and freedoms to elections and voting[393]. Not surprisingly, and in keeping with the general pattern that seems to be emerging, when I examine such detailed findings, a more nuanced picture is formed.

When looking generally at those who are most satisfied with the different aspects of democracy that they are asked about, the evidence indicates that satisfaction varies quite significantly across different levels of government, ranging from 65% who are most satisfied with the particular aspects of democracy that they are asked about at the municipal level, to 61% and 58% who are similarly the most satisfied with the aspects of democracy that they are asked

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[390] In Appendix B3, Table B3.7, I provide the findings on what factors are most responsible for explaining regime support (in the form of support for only a few versus support for many of the regime's principles).

[391] This last finding may differ from what some opponents of "judicial activism" might lead us to believe – for a brief discussion of the state of the debate around judicial activism in Canada, see for instance the article by University of Alberta law professor Sanjeev Anand (2006).

[392] I am thinking here about any proposals for constitutional change or moves such as the implementation of the Quebec Charter of Values (Kanji and Tannahill 2014f; University of Toronto Libraries 2015). Unfortunately, for the moment, these data are limited to only 10 principles at the federal level and do not allow me to dig deeper into support for democratic principles structuring our democracies at other levels of government.

[393] For a full list of aspects, see Figure 6.8 where I compare Quebecers and other Canadians on their satisfaction with each of these aspects across all levels of government.

about at the federal and provincial levels[394]. Not all Canadians, in other words, say that they are highly satisfied with the aspects of democracy that they are asked about. And even fewer (33% provincially, 38% federally, and 47% municipally) are ever *very* satisfied with these different aspects. Moreover, when I look at those on the other end of this spectrum who are satisfied with only a few aspects (12 to 16%) or dissatisfied with most (9 to 13%) or all aspects (14 to 15%), the results indicate similarly that there is quite a range in support levels. Notably, when low satisfaction levels are combined, 36% to 43% of Canadians fall within the lower end of the spectrum (lower three satisfaction groups) depending on the level of government being observed (local: 36%, provincial: 43%, and federal: 40%).

In short, when I compare Canadians' overall responses to more detailed prompts on either their more orientations toward democracy as a way of governing or their levels of satisfaction with the way it is working, the data suggest that probing more sophisticated questions provides us with a considerably more measured perspective of regime support. For one, affective assessments of democracy and support for its underlying values are generally more positive overall than evaluations of the performance of democracies across the federal system. This said, even affective assessments, when we apply more stringent measures, are showing some cracks in democracy's otherwise "flawless" façade. Furthermore, when we dig into evaluations of democracy, regardless of whether we consider the most general evaluative measures or more intricate ones, the findings are the essentially the same. Not all Canadians in our surveys evaluate their governing regime, the workings of these regimes, or the different aspects of these democracies in the same way. In fact, the evidence clearly shows that there are consistently significant disparities in how Canadians evaluate their democracy overall, as well as across different levels of government. And when it comes to pinpointing evaluations of specific aspects within each of those political systems, regime support may in fact be floundering.

Of course, just like community support differed between territorial contexts in Canada, it is reasonable to expect that further variation might exist between Quebecers and other Canadians in the way citizens view their democratic regimes at different levels.

At first glance, when placed side-by-side (as seen in Figure 6.7), Quebecers and other Canadians seem generally quite similar, particularly when it comes to their committed support for democracy as being a "good" way of governing, regardless of the level of government. However, there are also some important differences in both the affective and evaluative assessments of these two groups that appear and are worth discussing.

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[394] This is based on how satisfied respondents are with 20 different aspects of democracy at the federal and provincial levels, and 17 different aspects of democracy at the municipal level.

Figure 6.7 – Support for Political Regime – Quebecers vs. Other Canadians
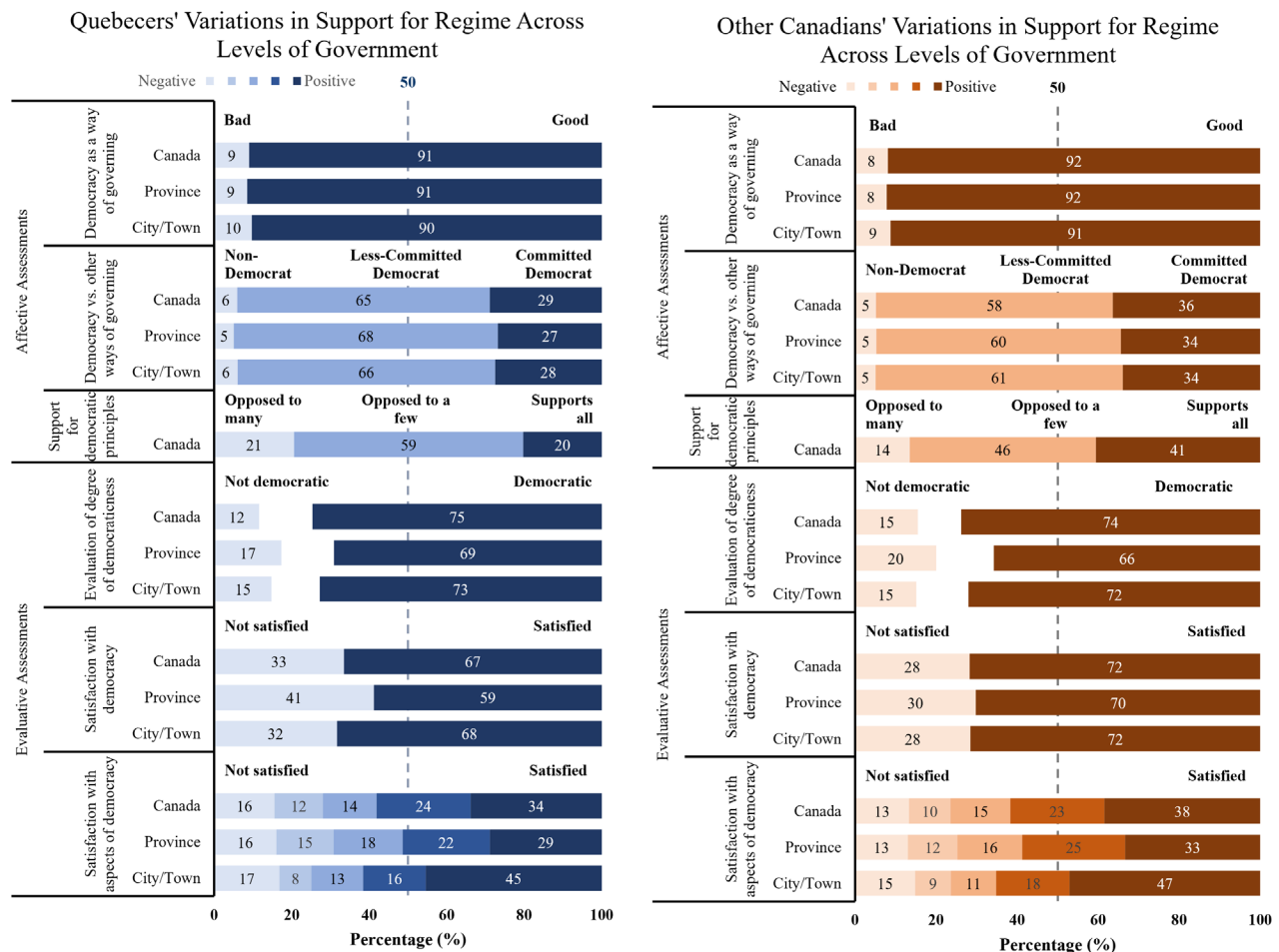
Source: PCSP 2017
Sample sizes for each analysis range from 860 to 1,099 for Quebec and from 3,932 to 5,207 for ROC. Question wording for each measure and operationalization of any indices can be found in Appendices A1 and A2.

The first is the consistently smaller number of Quebecers who express commitment to democracy as the only way of governing at all three levels, rejecting any other form of governance. Here the evidence shows that a larger proportion of Quebecers (compared to non-Quebecers) are willing to consider other types of regimes for governing Canada (65% vs. 58%), their province (68% vs. 60%) or their city or town (66% vs. 61%). This said, while present and statistically significant[395], these differences are not extreme, ranging only between about five and eight percentage points.

On support for specific democratic principles, on the other hand, the gaps in support between Quebecers and other Canadians are not only significant[396], but they are also quite a bit larger. Here the results show that just over 40% of the Canadians surveyed outside of Quebec

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[395] Based on Chi-Square tests where the Chi2 p-value of the differences between the two groups are at least $p<0.001$ on all three questions.
[396] Chi2 p-value $p<0.000$.

support all the core principles on which our democracy is grounded, while only 20% of Quebecers feel the same way[397].

As I shift from affective assessments to evaluative ones, the evidence points once again to Quebecers as tending generally to be more negative about democracy than other Canadians. While, overall, Quebecers evaluate their regimes at each level of government to be virtually as democratic as other Canadians (the differences are quite small, between one and three percentage points), their levels of satisfaction, both in general as well as with specific aspects of democracy, tend to be even lower across all three levels of government, compared to other Canadians. This difference in support is most pronounced at the provincial level, where Quebecers turn out to be less satisfied with democracy in their province (59% are satisfied) than other Canadians (70% are satisfied). The evidence also shows that Quebecers are less satisfied with their federal and municipal democracies (67% and 68%) than Canadians outside of Quebec (72%). Furthermore, while Quebecers are especially less satisfied with the various aspects of democracy that they are asked about at the provincial level (51%) compared to other Canadians (58%), they also tend generally to be less satisfied with specific aspects of democracy federally (58% vs. 61%) and locally (61% vs. 65%) as well.

It is worthwhile, therefore, to look even more closely at how Canadians' perspectives on these different aspects of democracy are generally distributed to figure out exactly where perceptions of these democracies are suffering the most.

As Dahl (2000, 36–37) pointed out years ago:

> "It is ironical, if not downright shocking, that amid the enormous amount of survey data about democratic institutions, political participation, attitudes, ideologies, beliefs, and what-not, we have astoundingly little evidence in answer to a seemingly simple question: When people say they support democracy, what is it that they wish to support? So far as I am aware, the evidence is sparse on the ground."

To help fill this gap in our understanding which remains to this day, the next figure offers an overview of my more dedicated attempt to measure what Canadians do in fact support about democracy, and how Quebecers differ from other Canadians. The findings laid out in Figure 6.8 provide a bit more insight into what specific aspects of democracy are most problematic for these two groups of Canadians, and which are not.

As usual, a key point to start with here is that across all three levels of government, there are significant variations in how satisfied both Quebecers and Canadians in other provinces are with different aspects of their democracy, and support for various areas of democracy tends generally to be greater at the municipal and federal levels than at the provincial one. By this I mean simply that the proportion of aspects on which there is more than a majority of popular support according to our surveys carried out both in Quebec and in other parts of Canada is generally greatest at the municipal level (Quebecers: 88%, non-Quebecers: 82%), followed by the federal level (Quebecers: 65%, non-Quebecers: 60%) and then the provincial level (Quebecers: 40%, non-Quebecers: 55%). In addition, these findings suggest (as was the case above) that non-Quebecers are generally more satisfied with these different aspects of democracy than Quebecers, regardless of the level of government that we examine.

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[397] Again, these are the same core regime principles that are listed in Figure 5.6 for all Canadians where 'opposed to many' represents those who oppose at least 3, opposed to a few represents those who are opposed to only one or two, and supports all represents those who respond that they support all 10 principles.

Figure 6.8 – Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Democracy – Quebecers vs. Other Canadians
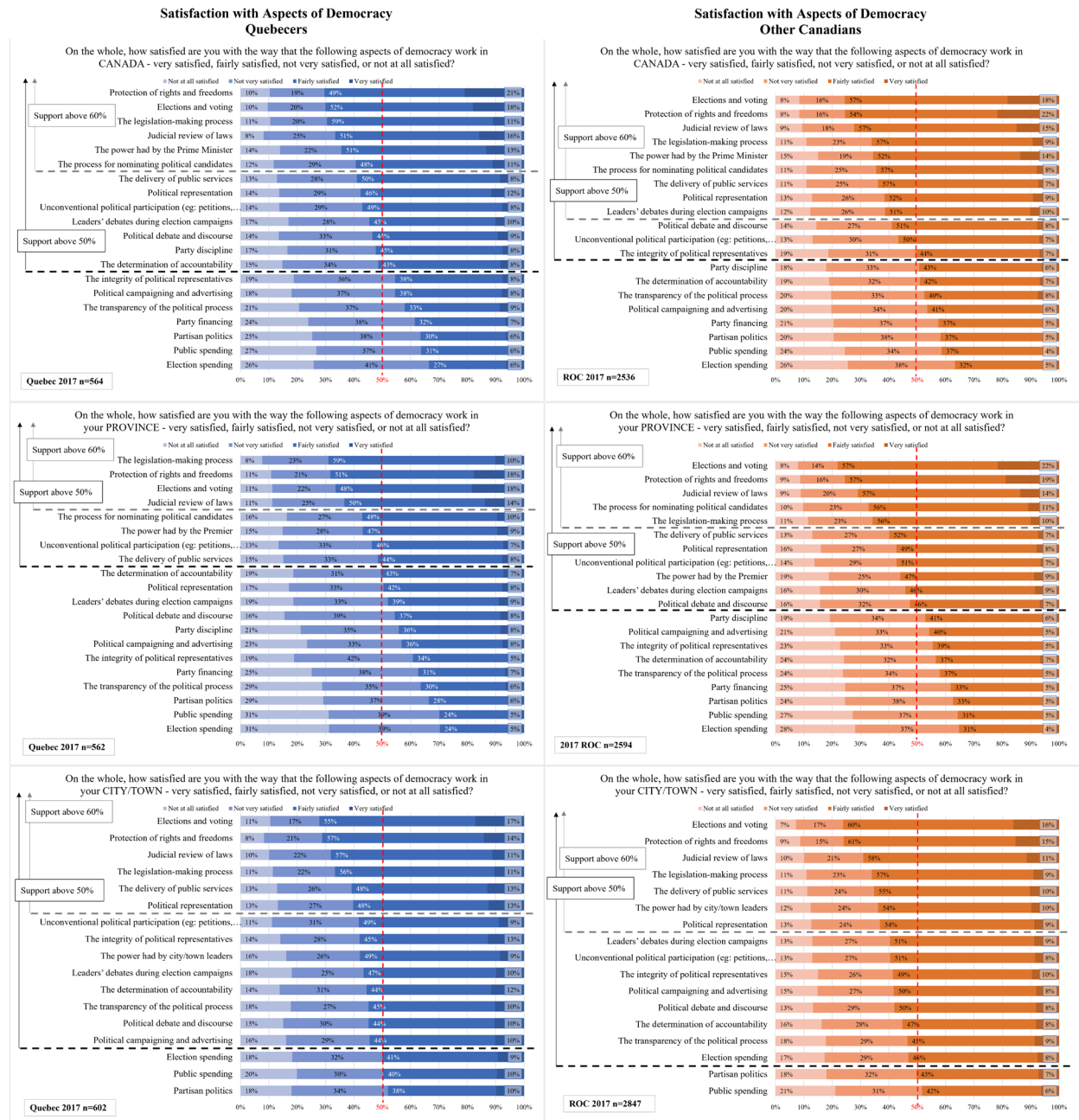
Source: PCSP 2017.

Other interesting insights emerge for three levels of government as well. For instance, there is consistent evidence of sharp differences between the aspects of democracy that Quebecers and non-Quebecers are most satisfied with and those that they are less satisfied with. The key aspects that both Quebecers and non-Quebecers seem most consistently satisfied with are elections and voting (Quebecers, federal: 70%, provincial: 66%, municipal: 72%; non-Quebecers: federal: 75%, provincial: 79%, municipal: 76%), the protection of rights and freedoms (Quebecers, federal: 70%, provincial: 69%, municipal: 76%; non-Quebecers: federal: 76%, provincial: 76%,

municipal: 76%), the judicial review of laws (Quebecers, federal: 67%, provincial: 64%, municipal: 68%; non-Quebecers: federal: 72%, provincial: 71%, municipal: 69%), and the legislation-making process (Quebecers, federal: 70%, provincial: 69%, municipal: 67%; non-Quebecers: federal: 66%, provincial: 66%, municipal: 66%).

Conversely, the aspects that both Quebecers and those outside of Quebec seem consistently to be the least satisfied with at all three levels of government are aspects of the political process such as public spending (Quebecers, federal: 37%, provincial: 29%, municipal: 50%; non-Quebecers: federal: 41%, provincial: 36%, municipal: 48%), and election spending (Quebecers, federal: 33%, provincial: 29%, municipal: 50%; non-Quebecers: federal: 37%, provincial: 35%, municipal: 54%), as well as more "political" components such as partisan politics (Quebecers, federal: 36%, provincial: 34%, municipal: 48%; non-Quebecers: federal: 42%, provincial: 38%, municipal: 50%).

This is not to say of course, that there are no other substantive differences that emerge. In fact, the evidence clearly shows a gradient of support and that characteristics of the political system that are typically criticized, such as the concentration of power at the center[398] of each level of government or the political representation[399] that citizens perceive they are receiving at each level, are not necessarily the areas that they think are among the most problematic (over 55% across all levels are consistently satisfied with the level of power that leaders have, and, with the exception of the representation that Quebecers (49%) feel they receive at the provincial level, over 57% are consistently satisfied with representation). In other words, although not perfect, support in these areas is generally higher than in other areas.

What is often seen as more troublesome, relatively speaking, is the politicking, in the form of debates and discourse, party discipline, and the political campaigning and advertising that occurs across various levels of government (i.e., support levels in each of these cases tend generally to be lower, where 41% to 57% in both groups report being dissatisfied)[400]. Other aspects of democracy relating to the political process are also more problematic for some across all three levels of government. These areas include transparency (ranging from 45% to 63% dissatisfied)[401] and perceptions of the integrity of political representatives within it (41% to 61% are dissatisfied)[402], as well as the way in which accountability is determined (44% to 56% are dissatisfied).

These more detailed findings, are helpful for a variety of reasons. Not only do they reveal more of the nuance and complexity that exists in Canadians' perspectives and evaluations of the workings of their democracies, but they also reinforce the value and need to probe deeper beyond just basic orientations toward the workings of democracy overall. Digging deeper in this way

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[398] Despite what some prominent academics have suggested based on their own evaluations of some of these characteristics of Canadian democracy (for instance Savoie 1999; 2015; 2019)

[399] More recent analyses of representation at the federal level (MPs) show that the 2019 election improved representation generally. However, when it comes to demographic representation, certain groups do still remain underrepresented in the Canadian House of Commons (Black and Griffith 2022).

[400] Elements of our democracy that have tended to be highlighted as problematic more so by people who have actual lived experience on the inside of politics (for instance: Rae 2015; Samara Canada 2018; Kanji and Tannahill 2024).

[401] Something that was perhaps only starting to make headlines at the time of our survey (I. Young 2016; Bronskill 2017; Holman 2021; I. Young 2021) but has since been the focus of much greater attention (Government of Canada 2018)and criticism (Information Commissioner of Canada 2020; Bronskill 2023; 2023).

[402] Something that political scientists may still be struggling to effectively define and measure (J. Rose and Heywood 2013).

offers clearer insights on the true nature of political support in Canada and where exactly some of its core challenges may lie.

One takeaway here are the generally high levels of satisfaction that all Canadians, including both Quebecers and other Canadians, express with their elections and voting – an area where significant efforts have been geared in the past, particularly when it comes to discussions around electoral reforms, both federally as well as provincially (Carty 2004; Courtney 2012; Chong 2016; Baker and Dance 2017) and where significant efforts to actualize such reforms have been made (Law Commission of Canada 2004; McElroy 2018; House of Commons 2015; Special Committee on Electoral Reform 2016). Notably, in Figure 6.8, elections and voting are at the top of the list[403] of specific aspects that Canadians are the most satisfied with, across all three levels of government. Although Quebecers differ slightly from other Canadians on where elections and voting rank compared to other aspects of democracy at the federal and provincial levels, even for Quebecers this aspect still ranks second overall federally and third overall provincially[404].

In other words, despite the attention given to the importance of reforming the way votes translated into seats in our current electoral system during the 2015 federal election campaign (Kheiriddin 2017) up until the final report of the *Special Committee on Electoral Reform* in 2016, it was ultimately concluded, as the PCSP survey in 2017 confirmed and the earlier survey carried out in 2014 in Quebec could have predicted (Tannahill, Kanji, and McGrandle 2015), that elections and voting are not the democratic issue that both Quebecers and other Canadians alike think is most problematic. A point that, based on a series of public consultations[405], Mr. Trudeau subsequently came to also conclude and subsequently pulled back on (Joanna Smith 2017).

These results and the electoral reform example help to reinforce the need to tap public perceptions in more depth, to flesh out and improve our understanding of what the public want. Furthermore, if we ignore the importance or relevance of nuances in public perceptions and support in democracies (Mann and Dionne Jr. 2003; Claassen 2020), we risk overlooking more important and pertinent trouble spots (focusing on triggers rather than stressors). More specifically, if governments rely primarily on general level expert opinions of what is troubling democracies, reforms aimed at targeting these trouble spots could be entirely disconnected from public demands[406]. In turn, if we are to value public input when proposing reforms, more refined

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[403] Where, at all levels and for both groups, over 60% were satisfied with the way elections and voting were working. This may, conceivably be an indication that respondents in 2017 were perhaps tired of hearing about electoral reform or were convinced by the Special Committee's work and final report. Yet, our earlier data from the 2014 PCSP in Quebec had similar results – suggesting instead that the focus in 2015 on electoral reform may have been misguided from the start (or at least was doomed to face low levels of citizen support, based on their opinions that there were not any problems with this particular aspect of democracy).

[404] Elections and voting for non-Quebecers is seen as performing even better than the protection of rights and freedoms. Quebecers, on the other hand, are slightly more satisfied with the protection of rights and freedoms than they are with elections and voting at both the federal and provincial levels. I look forward to conducting this analysis again using 2023 data as the defence of rights and freedoms (Kanji and Tannahill 2015b; Banerjee 2019) has been hotly contested in Quebec since these data were collected in 2017.

[405] Through a series of Town Hall meetings (for example: Millington 2016; House of Commons 2016a) as well as a series of meetings, 575 briefs, and 731 witness statements (including statements from several academics and polling firms) (all of which are accessible here: House of Commons 2016b).

[406] Other gaps have also been proposed to exist between elites (i.e. politicians and decision-makers) and the public. Kertzer (2022)offers a recent discussion of some of the gaps in our understanding (and measurement) of elite versus mass opinion and behavior. He suggests that the way in which the gap is studied to date can be blamed for much of the variation in conclusions about whether a gap actually exists.

measures will be necessary to fully capture the nuances in these opinions. By not paying direct attention to the areas where citizens on the ground have the greatest concerns, we risk pursuing dead-end reforms, feeding the patient (democracy) medications for the wrong ailment.

By tapping into Canadians' perspectives toward more specific aspects and unpacking more traditional general measures of satisfaction with democracy, it becomes possible to isolate and eventually pinpoint and target specific areas for change and reform – or redirect where attention is being focused, toward areas that may have much greater impact when seeking to satisfy citizens. For instance, the evidence here from 2017 shows that Canadians may be the most dissatisfied with aspects such as election spending and partisan politics, the transparency of the political process, as well as the integrity of political representatives (consistently, 50% or more are not satisfied[407] with these aspects)[408].

It will be especially interesting to see as we collect our data in 2023, whether these perceptions have changed at all, considering that some of these issues have in fact been directly addressed (for instance, the *Elections Modernization Act* was enacted to limit pre-election spending (2018; Legislative Services Branch 2018; Scheel 2019)). Meanwhile, other issues such as public spending, transparency, and integrity may still be issues in the eyes of the public, especially considering accusations that many of the federal governments "transparency provisions" have dwindled in their effectiveness (Bronskill 2017; 2023), that large amounts of public funds across governments are argued to have been wasted during the COVID-19 pandemic (Macdonald 2021; P. S. Taylor 2022; Coulton 2023; Fuss and Hill 2023), that high profile ethics and integrity violations seem to go largely under punished (Gilmore 2019), or that ethics rules in place for years continue to be ignored by politicians (Nardi 2023).

In order to summarize the findings on support for the political regime, as I did earlier for community support, Figure 6.9 offers another score card, this time comparing affective and evaluative assessments of democracy (the Canadian political regime) across levels of government for all Canadians using multidimensional additive indices that consolidate and report the grades that our respondents would assign to each of the democratic regime indicators that are available in the 2017 PCSP and that I just reviewed above.

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[407] With about 20% to 30% of both groups of Canadians expressing extreme dissatisfaction ("not at all satisfied") with election and public spending across all levels of government and similar proportions extremely dissatisfied with partisan politics, transparency, and integrity at both the provincial and federal levels.

[408] The overlap here between political objects (for example, between partisan politics as a process and the culprits: parties and political actors) that leads to much of the lack of clarity and inconsistencies in studies of political support, starts to become increasingly apparent. This is why, keeping the mapping of political support in mind when designing survey questions and conducting such analyses is so crucial. Such distinctions would arguably also be extremely helpful when carrying out other types of analyses of the political system as well. If, for example, expert analyses of the benefits and drawbacks of electoral reform had focused more attention on the behaviors of elected representatives once in office as opposed to just on the processes of first-past-the-post elections or the principles of equality of voice (or one-person-one-vote) (for just some examples: McCulloch 2016; Broadbent Institute 2016; Broadbent, Himelfarb, and Hugh Segal 2016; Karimi 2019), would the government that was elected have spent so much energy and political will making promises to change an electoral system that citizens themselves largely did not feel was actually broken at all?

Figure 6.9 – Support for Political Regime Score Card – All Canadians
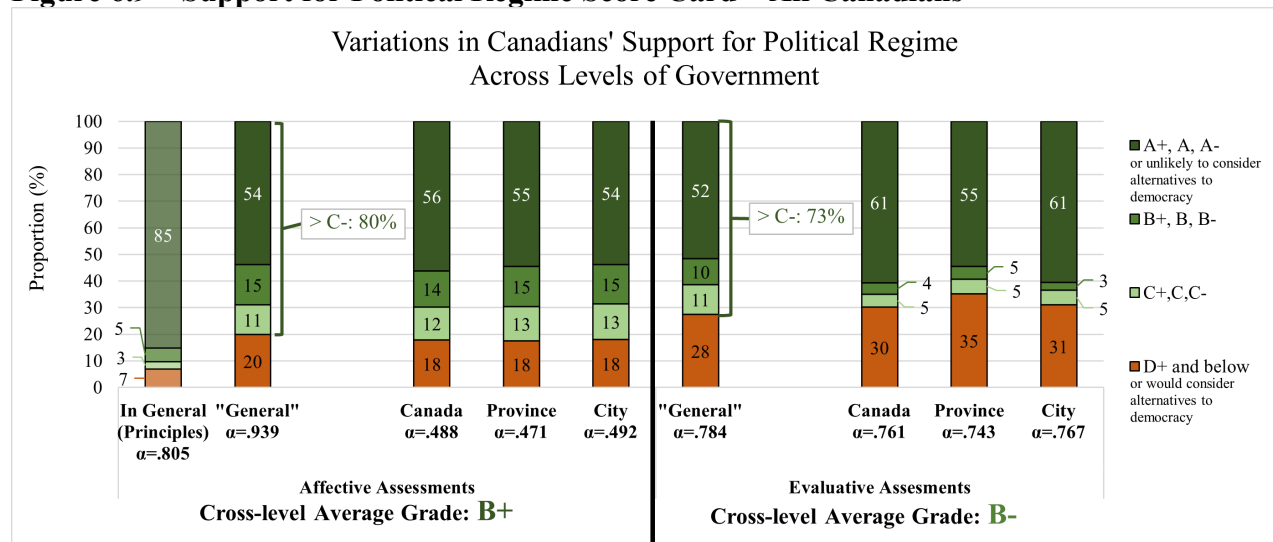
Source: Political Communities Survey Project 2017 (n=5,440)
PCSP Question Categories/Dimensions (see Appendices A1 and A2 for wording and operationalization):
- Affective support: Support democracy as a way of governing vs. other regime types (additive and computed indices); Support principles of democracy in general (additive index of principles – no cross-level available);
- Evaluative support: Evaluation of degree of democraticness, satisfaction with democracy generally, and satisfaction with different aspects of democracy specifically (additive indices).
"General" is a cross-level cumulative additive index of object assessments across all three levels of government. For additive indices, see Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability statistics for each measure.

Overall, this figure illustrates that, similar to their overall affective outlooks toward their political communities (where 81% scored their communities at C- or above), between 73% and 80% of Canadians give democracy at all levels a passing grade of at least a C- (i.e. a score of 60/100 or better), both in terms of their affective acceptance and their evaluative judgements. On support for democracy versus some other form of governing the regime, a large majority (80%) would give democracy as a way of governing a passing grade[409]. Moreover, 85% of citizens would grade Canada's core regime principles with an A- or higher.

As I reported above when looking separately at each affective and evaluative indicator, the composite measures also show that combined affective assessments turn out to be better than the evaluative ones (the proportion of D+ grades is about 10% higher overall on the evaluative assessments than on the affective ones). This means that although 7% would grade Canada's democratic principles with a D+ or less, and about 20% might consider alternatives to democracy, a slightly larger proportion (approximately 30%) of Canadians evaluate their democracy as less than satisfactory. Furthermore, although affective assessments of democracy based on these composite measures do not vary much across levels, the cumulative evidence on

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[409] This scale is based on a range that is created from responses to four regime type questions and ranges from 0 to 100 where 0 means that all other regime types are good and democracy is bad, compared to 100 where only democracy is good and all other regime types are bad. On support for democracy versus some other form of governing the regime, interpretation of this "grade" becomes a bit more difficult simply because of the way the measure is calculated. In this case, the grade of A or above represents those that generally would choose democracy as a way of governing and no other regime (this group consists, as we saw previously of between 54% and 56% of all Canadians regardless of the level of government). Meanwhile, about 18% would fall below a D+, wherein they would be highly likely to accept some other form of governing over having a democratic regime.

evaluations of democratic performance reveals that perceptions in 2017 of provincial democracies among all Canadians in our surveys were more negative than evaluations of other levels (with 35% giving their provincial democracy a D+ or less).

Meanwhile, despite this 5-point difference between evaluations of provincial democracies versus federal and municipal ones, respondents' assessments are quite consistent across all three levels of government. Notably, just over half of Canadians both affectively and evaluatively assess their regime at an A- level or better. This said, due to the large proportion of other respondents who would assign rather poor grades to the way their democracies work, the overall averages of consolidated affective and evaluative assessments end up falling below the A range (affective support: B+; evaluative support: B-). On evaluations, this is not as bad as the D+ average that Canadians gave to their political communities, but the B- grade still points to performance problems that may require attention.

Once again, as demonstrated for political community and when breaking down more popular baseline indicators of diffuse support, the real story of fluctuations in the storehouses of diffuse support is actually quite a bit more varied and complex than what prior theorizing, cross-national expert-driven objective system evaluations, as well as empirical reporting on popular public opinion indicators may have previously led us to expect. Certainly, according to common grading standards, these support levels are not ideal, receiving only a "B grade"[410] at best. As I move through these analyses, looking at support for core political institutions and authorities, these variations and complexities (as we might expect) become even more pronounced, more nuance emerges, and greater support challenges come to light.

Political Institutions
Table 6.3 – Measures of Support for Political Institutions

Affective Assessments	Evaluative Assessments
· Feelings toward various institutions	· *Confidence in government*
	· Confidence in various institutions
	· Evaluation of how well governments at different levels are working together
	· Evaluations of how good of a job various institutions are doing overall
	· Evaluations of the various specific jobs government has done

As I did for the preceding assessments of community and of the political regime, I begin here by highlighting the precise questions that I will employ to examine the concept of institutional support (see Table 6.3). Again, my goal here is to build on the baseline assessment of support for institutions that I began in the previous chapter, by introducing not only a variety of different institutions (beyond just governments), but also by introducing additional assessment measures both affective (indicators that tap respondent's feelings of like or dislike toward various institutions) and evaluative (indicators that evaluate how well institutions are performing overall, their performance on specific jobs, as well citizens perceive governments at different levels to be working together).

Findings in the previous chapter focused solely on confidence in government. As discussed, this measurement of support for political institutions is one of the most widely used,

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[410] "B grade" is not failing or less than satisfactory, nor is it excellent or exceeding any expectation. Indeed, "B grade" is simply satisfactory and no more – just average. This may of course be *enough* for some, however, as an "objectively" top tier democracy I would assume we would expect much better.

especially among professional research institutions as well as by governments themselves when evaluating public perceptions of the political system[411]. The popularity of the measure is exemplified by how frequently it is reported on by major research centers and polling firms such as the Pew Research Center (Bell 2022), Environics and Gallup (Environics Institute 2017; A. Parkin 2019), and even major organizations such as the OECD (2023), among others. In addition, as already demonstrated in Chapter 5, major national and international surveys conducted as part of the World Values Surveys project and a variety of national election studies over the years have also relied consistently on this measure to tap government support.

When I presented my own analysis of the data on this indicator from the Canadian context, the results revealed consistently low levels of support for governments (when compared to more diffuse objects) from at least 2004 to 2021, with some variation over time and between Quebec and the rest of Canada as well as clear differences in evaluations of governments across different levels. Like other studies, my findings also revealed that support for this political object, based on a single confidence (or trust) indicator, is declining and potentially showing signs of growing stress, particularly for certain groups (for instance, in the most recent 2021 surveys, confidence in the federal and provincial governments among non-Quebecers has returned to an all-time low not seen since the sponsorship scandal in 2004).

Of course, despite these clear signs of varying support, based this measure, it is important to also point out that, just like relying only on community pride or satisfaction with democracy in general, reliance on a single indicator to draw conclusions about support for any political object, may be misleading (or at least, incomplete). Indeed, interpretations of support for institutions may be even more muddied than discussions of diffuse support.

For one, the wording of support measures used in the context of support for institutions and authorities, seems to be particularly convoluted. For example, the distinctions between "confidence" in institutions and "trust" in institutions, are sometimes referred to as being essentially "interchangeable" (Sims 2001) while others argue that the two concepts must be interpreted as entirely "distinct" (Cotter 2015, 4)[412]. Most often, however, no acknowledgement at all is made of the varying ways in which a concept such as institutional confidence[413] can be defined, what the dynamics of "trust" in representatives, governments or institutions are (or even

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[411] Although the latter seem less inclined to explore such perceptions, at least publicly, with any great depth. For more on this, see the discussion in Chapter 3 under "Output Evaluations".

[412] As Cotter (2015, 4) explains, for example: "while some research on perceptions of institutions uses the terms confidence and trust interchangeably, the two are related, but distinct concepts […] confidence is related to perceptions the institution's ability to perform its duties, while trust is related to actions, interpersonal experiences and expectations, and perceptions of integrity".

[413] A study by Curtice and Scholes (2021) offers just one example of this tendency. These authors draw on findings from a variety of surveys conducted in Britain dating all the way back to the 70s, discussing the "level of trust and confidence in how Britain is governed", yet, as far as I can tell, none of the survey questions that they draw on ever use the word "confidence" when asking the public their opinion of government, only "trust" – a feeling which, according to some, can only be assigned to individuals, not institutions.

why they matter[414]), or how question wording may affect its interpretation by survey respondents or even the researchers drawing conclusions from these public opinions. The same limitations in interpretation can be tied to the objects themselves. For instance, studies of support for "government" are frequently based on questions that actually tap orientations toward political authorities, where reporting and discussions of confidence in governments are derived from questions that tap cynicism with the individual behaviors of politicians and not direct assessments of governments more generally[415].

Additionally, when referring to "governments" in surveys, as I showed in Chapter 5 with data from the WVS, *which* government respondents are assessing when answering the survey questions is left entirely unspecified and thus subject to both respondent and researcher interpretation. Not only can such questions be further clarified as I showed in the previous chapter by asking about perceptions of governments across levels of government, we can also achieve a more complete understanding of institutional support in the political system, by looking at the support accorded to other core institutions contributing to the system's functioning (for some examples, see: Cotter 2015; Perry 2021; H. E. Brady and Kent 2022).

In short, while trends in support for institutions based on measures that tap "confidence in government" have revealed that this core institution is potentially suffering from significant losses of support from citizens in recent years, such conclusions remain lacking in specificity. One way to improve on this is, would be to more accurately report on support, paying attention to the concepts being measured based on the wording used in the surveys we analyze. Another would be to strive to be more conscious of possible interpretations as we design future data collection instruments. Yet another way would be to generate "thicker" conceptions of support for this object (political institutions) by building multifaceted understandings of both the nature

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[414] As Barbalet (2009, 370) points out, the concept of "trust" in the context of orientations toward government is based on a variety of mechanisms and a relationship that ultimately define citizen actions (for example, abiding by system rules based on a belief in the legitimacy of that system). He states, for instance, that: "when it is asked whether citizens trust their government […] the question concerns legitimacy (belief that the government has the right to do something), or performance (belief that economic growth, social welfare, or some other economic or social good might result from particular practices or policies)". He suggests, however, that to fully tap these dynamics, we may be better served by employing "other terms", or in my case, other questions, that more precisely capture the sentiment underlying support. That is, questions that allow us to begin tapping both the perceived legitimacy and evaluations of the performance of institutions that help to support a strong "trustee" relationship between citizens and their political system (from Locke 1963, as described by Barbalet).

[415] Drawing again, for example, on the British study by Curtice and Scholes (2021), rather than asking questions such as "how much confidence do you have in", conclusions about confidence are based on questions that tap perceptions of efficacy and cynicism toward politicians: such as "Generally speaking those we elect as MPs lose touch with people pretty quickly"; "Parties are only interested in people's votes, not in their opinions"; "It doesn't really matter which party is in power, in the end things go on much the same"; trust in authorities: "Trust Politicians to tell the truth in a tight corner"; evaluations of government decision-making: "Trust government to place needs of the nation above the interests of their party"; or perceptions of whether the system of government could be improved: "Present system of governing Britain… Could not be improved/Could be improved in small ways/Could be improved quite a lot/A great deal"; and what looks like one question about trust in government: "Trust government just about always/most of the time". Rather than evaluating the object: government, in my view, these questions actually tap a variety of possible explanations for variations in government support and not clear-cut institutional support itself.

and extent of support through the administration of instruments that tap support for the same general object, but in a variety of different ways[416].

To illustrate this approach, I turn first to Figure 6.10 where I present the findings from our surveys of Canadians that ask about their support (in a variety of ways) for a number of core system institutions. First, the evidence here suggests quite clearly that there are significant variations in the way that Canadians view their system's institutions. On affective assessments, for instance, there is a very apparent gradient of support that emerges. That is, among the governing institutions (i.e. the many core institutions that are at the center of governing in Canada but that are not necessarily "political") that Canadians like the most are courts (54%) and the civil service (50%), these are followed next by more political institutions like governments (46%) and legislatures (45%), and lastly, by political parties (34%).

This evidence indicates that affective support, when we get to more specific levels in the political system, is suffering, particularly when it comes to some of the system's core governing institutions. Indeed, for political parties, the evidence shows that as many as two thirds of Canadians either dislike or are indifferent[417] in their outlooks toward them. In the case of the most affectively supported institutions, which in this case are courts and the civil service, the evidence also suggests that nearly half the population (between 46% and 50%) either dislikes or are neutral in their feelings toward them. What does this say about the state of a democratic regime, when 50% or more of the population it serves do not like their core governing institutions (or have any feeling about them at all)[418]? At the very least, it points to a pretty major popularity deficit when it comes to the core institutional pillars of our political system.

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[416] The CES only contains questions that tap affective "feelings" toward different political parties (Liberals, vs. Conservatives, vs. Greens, etc.). As far as I can tell, no other surveys look at affective orientations toward institutions, nor do any tap evaluative assessments of legislatures, especially not across levels of government. When it comes to evaluative assessments, on the other hand, the CES includes questions that tap confidence in provincial governments (as shown in Chapter 4), but not municipal ones. They also ask about a few other non-political institutions such as the media, courts, public schools, the public service, the police, the armed forces, as well as organized religion (Stephenson et al. 2022). Earlier waves of the CES also asked about unions and big business (Blais et al. 2000).

[417] The neutral category represents those who selected the precise center category (50) on a 100-point thermometer scale. The proportion of individuals who select this "neutral" center is far higher than it is for political communities (those who were neutral on this question ranged from 6% to 9%).

[418] Of course, despite its use by other scholars in assessing affective support for other political objects (such as political community) or even for one particular democratic institution (political parties), this "feeling" thermometer is not necessarily ideal. Nonetheless, such a measure can at least help us to *start* unpacking and shining a light on the state of affective support for institutions more broadly, an orientation not typically reported on in the general literature on political support. Better questions that might be asked in future surveys to more fully unpack affective institution support could be, for instance "do you feel that the [level] government is legitimate"? Of course, such an alternative question would also come with its own issues (for instance, are respondents thinking about the legitimacy of how the government was elected, the legitimacy of the individuals within that government, etc.).

Figure 6.10 – Support for All Governing Institutions – All Canadians

Variations in CANADIANS' Support for Institutions
Across Levels of Government

Negative ▫ ▪ ▪ ▪ ■ Positive   **50**

			Negative	Neutral	Positive
Affective Assessments	**Feelings toward Institutions**		**Dislike**	**Neutral**	**Like**
		Governments	34	20	46
		Legislatures	34	21	45
		Courts	30	16	54
		Civil Service	34	16	50
		Political Parties	43	24	34
Evaluative Assessments	**Confidence in**	Governments	**Not Confident**		**Confident**
		Federal	34		66
		Provincial	45		55
		Municipal	35		65
	Legis-latures	Federal	31		69
		Provincial	37		63
		Municipal	37		63
	Courts	Federal courts	26		74
		Provincial courts	28		72
		Administrative tribunals	45		55
	Civil Service	Federal	31		69
		Provincial	33		67
		Municipal	31		69
	Political Parties	Federal	42		58
		Provincial	48		52
	Overall Job Being Done by	Governments	**Not Good**		**Good**
		Federal	41		59
		Provincial	53		47
		Municipal	37		63
	Legis-latures	Federal	39		61
		Provincial	47		53
		Municipal	36		64
	Courts	Federal Courts	29		71
		Provincial Courts	34		66
		Administrative Tribunals	45		55
	Civil Service	Federal	35		65
		Provincial	34		66
		Municipal	32		68
	Political Parties	Federal	49		51
		Provincial	56		44
	Evaluations of the various specific jobs government has done Incl. Health		**Not Good**		**Good**
		Federal	19	32	41 / 8
		Provincial	25	36	33 / 6
		Municipal	15	29	46 / 9
	Excl. Health	Federal	19	30	43 / 8
		Provincial	25	36	33 / 6
		Municipal	15	28	47 / 9
	Evaluation of how well governments at different levels are working together		**Not Working**	**Neutral**	**Working**
		Municipal - Federal	27	19	55
		Municipal - Provincial	24	17	59
		Provincial - Federal	28	17	56
		Municipal - Municipal	20	17	63
		Provincial - Provincial	26	18	56

Source: PCSP 2017
Sample sizes for each analysis range from 1,660 to 6,197. Question wording for each measure and operationalization of indices can be found in Appendices A1 and A2.

Another major takeaway from this illustration are the differences in institutional evaluations that appear across different levels of government. Before delving into these differences, it is important to mention first that, according to the Canadians' we surveyed, their confidence evaluations of governing institutions tend to be generally better than their affective assessments[419]. This finding would suggest that even though they may not like their government institutions all that much, many Canadians still maintain a certain degree of confidence in them. Although, in most cases, the evidence does show that there are still about three, and in some cases four, out of ten Canadians who are not confident in their core government institutions, and that this is quite consistent across all three levels of government.

This said, among the most consistent findings, I find that Canadians frequently tend to be more confident in their federal government institutions than they are in their institutions at other levels of government. For instance, some of the evidence in this case suggests that Canadians are more confident in their federal (66%) and municipal (65%) governments, than they are in their provincial governments (55%). Likewise, Canadians are more confident in their federal legislatures (69%) than they are in their respective provincial (63%) or municipal (63%) legislatures. When it comes to political parties, the evidence reveals that Canadians are slightly more confident in their federal political parties (58%) than they are in their provincial ones (52%). Thus, it is also relevant to note that, relative to their governments and legislatures, the evidence clearly confirms that Canadians tend to be less confident in political parties.

On the other hand, Canadians are generally the most confident overall in courts and the civil service. Here, I find that 74% of the Canadians surveyed express confidence in their federal courts and 72% have confidence in provincial ones. Exceptionally, however, are administrative tribunals at the municipal levels. This is potentially due to the likelihood that respondents have had more frequent, and perhaps unpleasant, direct experiences with these lower-level courts[420]. The evidence here suggests that only 55% of Canadians are confident in administrative tribunals. Lastly, when it comes to the civil service, the institution which is likely to be the one with the most direct contact with citizens, my surveys show that nearly 7 in 10 (69%) Canadians have some confidence in their federal and local civil service and 67% express confidence in the provincial civil service.

A key point to reemphasize here is that, regardless of whether views are measured using affective assessment indicators or evaluative confidence measures, governments, legislatures, and political parties are consistently perceived in a less positive light by Canadians than the courts and the civil service. So, what does that say about Canadians' support for their core governing institutions? What I would suggest here is that, when trying to better understand what may be "troubling" Canadian citizens about the political system overall, it is possible that perception problems stem from the more "political" parts of the political system – a distinction that might seem obvious but that remains underacknowledged by many of the major cross-national studies that look at public support for "government" or evaluations of governing

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[419] This might be due in part to the fact that confidence questions may actually be tapping more deep-rooted feelings about institutions. It could be argued, for instance, that "confidence" is more of an affective indicator of support, rather than an evaluative one.

[420] Municipal courts are likely more frequently attended by the average citizen looking to contest parking or traffic violation tickets, or in conflicts with municipalities on regulations, fees, taxes or penalties (see for instance, Éducaloi 2023).

institutions[421]. Certainly, when diagnosing the problem, focusing only on government as a general category of institutions might miss the nuance that exists between institutions that are more political in composition and internal functioning compared to those that are not[422].

Indeed, according to these data, the non-political elements of the system, those that the public may see as more directly serving their interests (through direct interaction without partisan political distortions) – such as courts, through their protection of individual rights, and the civil service, through the benefits they deliver – are not perceived to be as problematic as those institutions that tend to be more fiercely political or with whom they do not necessarily interact except at election time (or during times of elevated scrutiny or crises, such as during the pandemic or when governments are under fire by opposition parties or protesters). So, when public opinion surveys ask citizens to comment about "the government" (as the WVS do generally) or even about the "federal" or "provincial" governments (as the CES does), perhaps they still miss some of this "political/non-political" distinction and its potential relevance for stories of political support overall. As I have shown, it is only when respondents are asked explicitly about various core government institutions, being given the option to assess *both* governments generally, as well as legislatures, parties, courts, and the civil service separately (along with other institutions as well, when possible), that we start to see how views may be distinct and, in fact, vary quite significantly.

In short, based on the results reported in Figure 6.10, core governing institutions, it seems, are where some of our more apparent perception problems lie – particularly institutions that are seen as being more political. To remedy this, we cannot simply take the *political* out of the political system. That is, politics constitutes the very stuff of our political system. It is where representation and voice, dialogue, discussion, debate, and fair and procedural decision-making, along with the determination of equal and just outputs play out most actively (Muirhead and Rosenblum 2020) and governments, legislatures and political parties are where much of this politicking takes place. So, to begin to remedy these perception problems, as was discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 and will be tested in Chapter 8, it becomes even more important to determine what drives negative assessments of these institutions. Through the review of the literature to date, and the analyses that will follow here, it becomes possible to say with greater confidence that there are certain specific political behaviours and actions (or misbehaviors and misconduct) that require the most attention. In other words, as will be revealed, it is not necessary, nor perhaps desirable, to *remove* the politics from the political system and its core governing institutions or maybe even to reform the institutions at all, but work can certainly be done to improve how we *do* politics, making them less corrosive and more tolerable, improving the conduct of individual authorities and representatives, and helping them to become more effective.

Another way to further develop our understanding of what may be especially problematic when it comes to perceptions of core governing institutions, is to parse out and look more

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[421] For a discussion of this and the focus generally by the literature instead on areas such as performance on the economy or declining levels of interpersonal trust, rather than on the behavior of public officials, see Pharr (2000). Her analysis focuses on Japan to conclude that "reports of officials' misconduct are by far the single best predictor at any given point in time of confidence in government over the past two decades" (p.199). The distinction between policy performance and authorities' "deportment in carrying out their duties on behalf of the citizens they serve" is an important one, which has yet to be examined in the Canadian context.
[422] Just as focusing on only the economy, trust, or policy performance of authorities while in government might miss the important effects that perceptions of partisan political behaviors or misconduct might have on evaluations of the system's institutions (as Pharr suggests).

directly at evaluations of job performance. In this case, the PCSP surveys provide considerably more insight than anything we have had access to in the past[423], using a new dedicated job performance indicator.

The first key point to note here again, based on the Figure 6.10 findings, is that the core governing institutions that are consistently perceived to be doing the least effective job, according to Canadians, are the political ones. There are also some important variations that emerge in sharper focus across different levels of government as well. For instance, approximately 6 out of 10 of the Canadians we surveyed think that their federal (59%) and municipal (63%) governments are doing a good job. Compare that to 47% who feel the same way about their provincial governments. Similarly, about 6 in 10 Canadians feel that their federal (61%) and municipal (64%) legislatures are doing a good job, as compared to 53% of Canadians who feel that their provincial legislatures are doing a good job. And, only about half of the Canadians surveyed felt that their federal (51%) political parties are doing a good job, compared to 44% who feel that their respective provincial parties are doing a good job. As far as our more political governing institutions are concerned, it is clearly at the provincial level where the worst performance evaluations emerge, whereas municipal legislatures and governments, as well as federal political parties (compared to provincial ones) are seen by citizens to be performing the best.

In terms of non-political core government institutions, evaluations are generally a bit better. That is, the results show that 71% of Canadians see their federal courts as doing a good job. By comparison, 66% of Canadians evaluate their provincial courts as doing a good job. And again, possibly because most of their direct experiences are likely going to be with administrative tribunals at the municipal levels, only 55% of Canadians evaluate these lower-level courts as doing a good job[424]. Still, this is the only exceptional finding in this case. Conversely the findings for evaluations of the civil service are considerably more consistent and positive, regardless of the levels of government examined. That is, nearly two out of three Canadians see their federal (65%), provincial (66%), and municipal (68%) civil service organizations as doing a good job. All of this helps to further reinforce the findings and speculations raised above about certain government institutions, especially the more political ones, at certain levels of government (i.e., at the provincial level), being consistently evaluated as inferior to others, possibly (at least in part) because they are not perceived to be performing as well as others. And in all cases, the evidence indicates that there are significant segments of the Canadian population who feel that their core government institutions, regardless of the level of government or type of institution being considered, are not doing a good job (from 29% to 56%).

Digging a little deeper still, our PCSP surveys also asked Canadians to evaluate a vast range of more specific jobs that governments (in particular) are responsible for (these can be considered to fall within the 'output evaluations' dimension of supply-side performance assessments as discussed in Chapter 3), as well as how well different levels of government are at working together (assessments which fall more within the purview of 'object performance'). In

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[423] With the exception of surveys conducted by Environics, see Appendix A1

[424] Given that the key hypothesis for such differences is grounded in the "closeness" of municipal governments (see, for example: Fitzgerald and Wolak 2016) compared to higher level ones (where direct experiences with institutions at lower levels may drive higher support) combined with the differing assessments our analyses have revealed (where municipal government evaluations are higher yet evaluations of non-political municipal institution are lower), we have incorporated a variety of questions in our next round of surveys that will allow us to determine the extent of respondents' contact with these different institutions at different levels of government (as well as a component that taps the quality of these interactions).

the last two segments of Figure 6.10 above, where I report the results of this additional analysis, I find that, once again, important variations emerge and perhaps even some cause for more serious concern.

Note first, that when it came time to ask Canadians directly about a variety of functions that governments typically fulfill, we drew their attention to an extensive collection of government jobs, ranging from improving one's quality of life to managing debt and dealing with inequality and poverty (see Figure 6.13 for a complete list of all 13 areas that we tapped). What I found by and large is that, as far as citizens are concerned, governments appear to be failing quite consistently across the board.

One of the most important failures, according to these data, is on health care. This finding, was recently reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, when the state of our health care system was put on full display and admittedly deemed to be at the root of most of our governments' decision-making and implementation of precautionary and protective coping strategies (Hendry and Benjamin 2022). In fact, the state of our health care system, has been on alert now (it seems) for some time according to reports that have been consecutively compiled and issued on the quality of this system (see for example Moir and Barua 2022), Yet, it is only recently, post-pandemic, where governments (perhaps now that the problem can no longer be ignored) seem to have shifted into a higher gear by focusing more squarely on the issue and allocating more strategic thinking and federal resources toward the problem (Brend 2022).

Meanwhile, much like a canary in the mine, the Canadian public (according to our surveys conducted back in 2017) were already on to the weakness of governments' handling of health care a full three years before the spotlight was turned on to the true extent of the strains faced by our public health care system (as will be unpacked and discussed in more detail in Figure 6.13 below). In fact, two in every three of the Canadians surveyed (between 63% and 66%) reported thinking that either the provincial or federal governments were doing a bad job at bettering health care services.

But health care is not the only area of concern. When I tally a variety of other jobs that governments are responsible for as shown in Figure 6.10, these surveys show that no more than 6% to 9% of Canadians think that governments at any level are doing a top-notch job. Conversely, 4 to 6 out of 10 Canadians indicate that the federal (51%), provincial (61%) and municipal (44%) governments are doing a bad job.

To reduce the possible negative impact that health care evaluations were having on these aggregated job evaluation measures, I also conducted this same analysis, excluding evaluations of health care from the aggregate measure. The results reported in Figure 6.10 (excl. health) suggest that, Canadians' overall assessments of job performance improved only ever so slightly, and that the findings still suggest that only about 6% to 9% of Canadians think that governments at any level are doing a top job in all the areas that they were asked about. Moreover, the proportion of Canadians who evaluate the various jobs as not being done well do not change much at all (federal: 49%; provincial: 61%; municipal: 43%). So, although perceptions of performance on health care were very low at the time of our surveys, even when we look solely at non-health care related government job performance, the findings are still far from stellar.

To build this current line of investigation out a bit more, I turn briefly to some cross-time data that I have from Quebec only[425]. The evidence reported in Figure 6.11 below lays out the extent to which the Quebecers we surveyed evaluated their provincial government as either

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[425] Because this is where (as mentioned previously) the PCS were first pilot tested in 2012 and 2014, prior to the full PCSP being administered across Canada in 2017.

getting better or worse at carrying out a variety of specific jobs[426]. The key point to focus on here is whether the cross-time findings on job performance show any reason to believe that evaluations of government job performance may actually be on an upward trajectory. In other words, whether the dismal government job performance ratings (particularly at the provincial level) that appear in 2017 are only part of a temporary transitional period or reflective of a more serious trend. Is there any compelling evidence of improvements in evaluations of the jobs that governments (in this case the provincial government) are doing?

Figure 6.11 – Change in Evaluations of Jobs Done by Provincial Government – Quebec
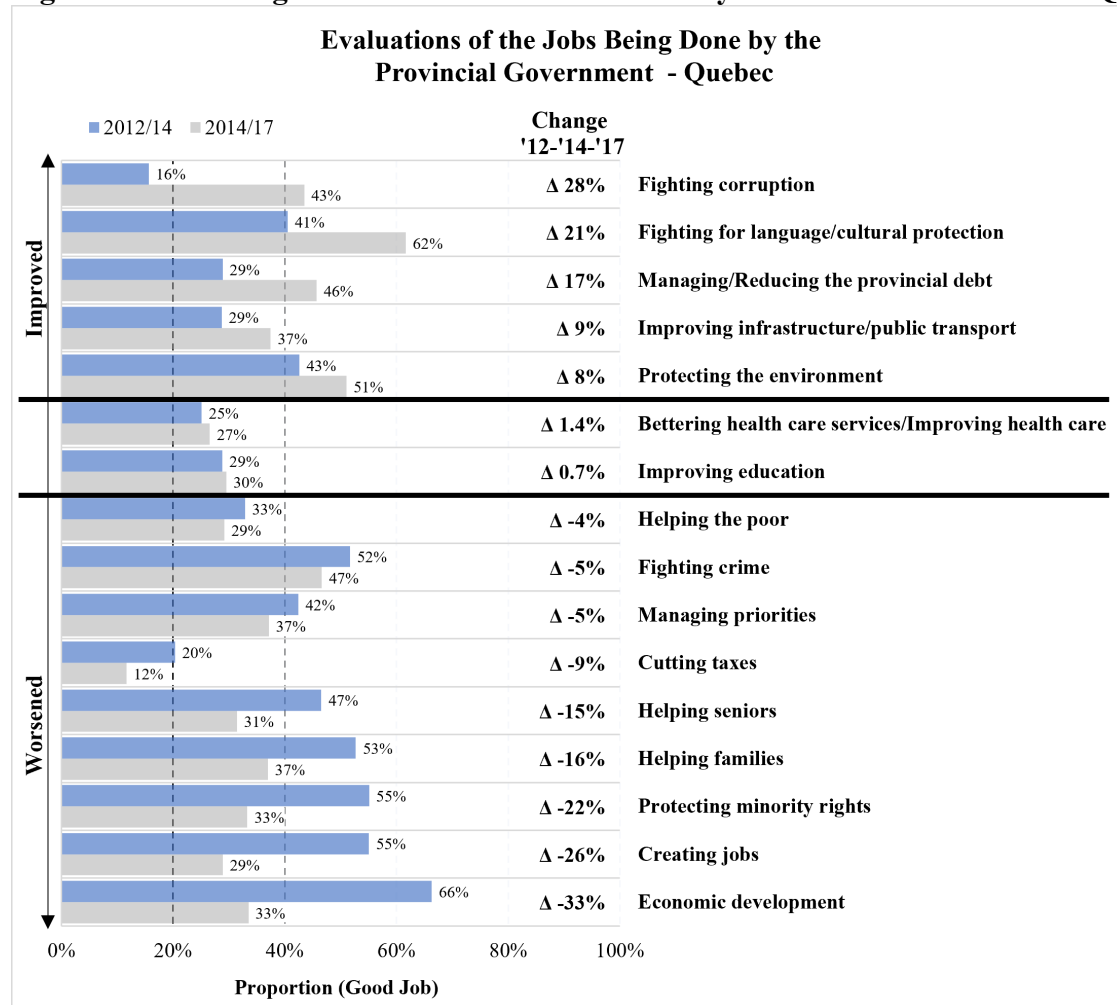
Sources: PCSP: CPEP 2012 (n=1,286), CPEP 2014 (n=1,544), PCPS 2017 (n=633)
Note: Date ranges for changes in evaluations of jobs done vary between 2012-2014, 2014-2017, and 2012-2017, depending on when the questions were asked in these surveys. Responses reflect changes in proportions of respondents that indicated that the provincial government has done either a 'Very good' or a 'Good/Quite good' job. Specific question wording and response category wording can be found in Appendix A1.

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[426] Considering that we adapted and grew the list of questions being asked over the three survey waves, the list of jobs that I examine in this case is not exactly the same as the ones on which the preceding discussion is based (all specific jobs included in the aggregate measures in Figure 6.10 are displayed in Figure 6.13). This said, there are considerable overlaps and the point that I would like to emphasize here does not necessarily require an exact comparison on each specific job.

Unfortunately, what the cursory data in this case reveal is that, of the 16 specific government jobs that we consistently probed over the last three survey waves in Quebec (a period of five years), only five showed any signs of improvements when it comes to citizens' job performance evaluations. The key areas in which the Quebec government was perceived as performing better were in fighting corruption (+28%), fighting for language/cultural protection (+21%), managing/reducing the provincial debt (+17%), improving infrastructure/public transport (+9%) and protecting the environment (+8%). In two other areas, evaluations of the Quebec provincial government's job performance stayed virtually the same, improving by only about 1%. These included the areas of health care (+1.4%) and education (+0.7%).

Probably the most striking finding here, by far, is that for most of the job areas that we asked about, Quebecers' evaluations of their government performance consistently declined over time. That is, Quebecers' evaluations of the provincial government's performance in nine key job areas got worse over time (ranging from a decline of 4% to 33%). In particular, the specific job areas in which the provincial government is perceived to be faltering on are helping the poor (-4%), fighting crime (-5%), managing priorities (-5%), cutting taxes (-9%), helping seniors (-15%), helping families (-16%), protecting minority rights (-22%), creating jobs (-26%) and developing the economy (-33%). Moreover, in the case of the latter 6 areas in particular, the deterioration in perceived job performance has been particularly stark over a relatively short period of time.

This said, not all the findings are bad. When looking at the public's perceptions of the jobs done by the provincial government in Quebec over the period from 2012 to 2017, the data also reveal that the public saw improvements in the provincial government's tackling of corruption, the protection of language and culture, managing debt, and dealing with infrastructure, public transit, and the environment. Improvements in these areas, however, do not conceal the governments failures to improve significantly in the areas of health care and education. In effect, in these areas, no more than 25 to 30% of Quebecers feel that their provincial government is doing a good job and views on government performance in both of these areas improved only very slightly over time. Indeed, in most areas having to do directly with handling personal welfare and improvement, government performance appears to be perceived as being either mediocre, static, or getting worse.

Consider for instance that the evidence shows that there has been a major drop in the proportion of Quebecers who feel that consecutive provincial governments[427] have been doing a good job serving the more vulnerable groups in society, such as the poor, seniors, families, and minorities. When it comes to helping seniors, families, and minorities, in 2012 about half (between 47% and 55%) of Quebecers felt the government was doing a good job. Only 2 years later, however, in 2014, this proportion of support dropped significantly (to between 31% and 37%). And although the cross-time drop in performance evaluations on helping the poor was not as large (4 points), the proportion of those thinking that the government was doing a good job on this file was already low to begin with (going from only 33% down to 29%), similar to performance evaluations on health and education.

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[427] With the transition from Jean Charest's Liberal government in 2012 to Pauline Marois' Parti Québécois or from Marois' PQ government back to a Liberal government under Philippe Couillard in 2014 (who held office during the 2017 survey wave and was replaced by a Coalition Avenir Quebec government in 2018 under François Legault). It certainly possible that these dismal job performance numbers are at least partly to blame for the three government transitions over the five-year period from 2012 to 2017.

The findings relating to law and order, as well as priority management are not that different. In 2012, over half of Quebecers thought that the provincial government was doing a good job at addressing crime (at 52%), but by 2014 the proportion who felt the same had dropped below half to 47%. Likewise, the proportion of Quebecers who feel that their provincial government does a good job of managing priorities has declined from 42% to 37%. Furthermore, even more significant cross-time drops in job performance evaluations are evident when it comes to the economy. Here the proportion of Quebecers who feel that their provincial government does a good job of both creating jobs (from 55% to 29%) and of economic development (from 66% to 33%) has declined considerably more. And when it comes to cutting taxes, an already low perception of government performance (20%) dropped even lower (to only 12%).

Thus, it is not just that political institutions, and governments in particular, are consistently seen as underperforming, but also that they are seen as doing so in areas that are directly meaningful, such as personal welfare, and in ways that may even restrict people's capacity to improve their lot. Indeed, it appears (at least according to our survey respondents from 2012 to 2017) that the Quebec governments in place during this period were perceived as working against the grain of what many need, including better health care, better education, better financial support, better personal security, better legal equality, and better opportunities for economic growth.

One last way in which we considered institutional performance in our surveys (returning one last time to Figure 6.10) was by asking citizens how they perceived inter-institutional interactions between governments. That is, what do Canadians think not just about how their government institutions perform and the specific jobs that they carry out, but also about how they interact and work together. As we might expect, differences do appear in these data when it comes to how the public evaluate different levels of government working together, and at least two key findings stand out.

The first is that not all Canadians think that their different levels of government are working well together. On the surface at least, this is not very surprising, as we would expect that not everyone would be entirely happy with the state of their inter-governmental relations and interactions, especially given the rocky historical evolution of Canadian federalism (A. Brady 1938; Banting 1982; C. Taylor 1993; Bakvis and Skogstad 2008). What is more striking perhaps, is the extent of the variation that is evident in this case. That is, the evidence lends support to the claim that there are significant proportions of Canadians who do not think that their inter-governmental relations and interactions are in good working order. Generally, between 24% and 28% of Canadians feel this way. The only exception to this, and the second key finding in this case are inter-municipal government interactions. That is, unlike interactions that involve the federal and provincial governments, interactions between municipal governments seem to be viewed most positively (63% say these are working well together).

In short, the overall point is clear. What these latter findings suggest is that, not only do citizens perceive different levels of government working in different ways, but they also see inter-governmental relations and interactions between these governments as a potentially serious source of stress. Overall, when looking at confidence as I did in the previous chapter, the more detailed evidence on a variety of affective and performance questions, as well as the changes over time in perceptions of provincial government performance in Quebec, Canadians may be signalling, through these surveys, important failures (even over the course of changing governments). These trends also show that, over time, there is the potential for governments to improve. Why performance on these files is generally perceived so negatively, or what drove

improvements in some areas compared to others, remains to be examined[428]. However, the findings on job performance presented so far provide a first step toward better understanding the nature of variations in support for the system's institutions and a clue as to what may be underlying public perceptions.

As the PSCP has evolved, we have sought to make headway on this understanding by improving our approach to questioning citizens on their perceptions of Canada's core governing institutions. The investigation provided here reveals some of the merits of asking these deeper and more pointed questions. In particular it shows not only that citizens offer distinctive perspectives depending on the questions that they are asked, but also that evaluations of government institutions should include considerations of the variety of institutions that exist within the political system as well as a deeper assessment of how each of these institutions are carrying out the jobs that they are responsible for, in as much detail as is possible (and consistently over time)[429].

To begin unpacking some of the variation that I have identified so far for institutional support, I consider in this next analysis the extent to which different territorial contexts might partly reflect competing interests in the Canadian contexts and the extent to which citizens might perceive these varying interests to be adequately dealt with or resolved. In other words, it is plausible that inadequate outcomes (together with other factors) may compel citizens from different territorial contexts to have varying assessments and evaluations of different institutions at different levels of government, due (at least in part) to the discrepancies, depending on where they live, in the benefits and losses that they perceive to receive from different levels of government. Figure 6.12 starts to dissect some of these differences.

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[428] As I mentioned in Chapter 5, in the remaining analyses I will not look at how evaluations or affective assessments changed over time and what historical events might have contributed to this. In Chapters 7 and 8, however, I will start digging into why some citizens are more positive about certain aspects of the political system (or more negative) and start to unpack the ways in which some of these negative performance evaluations may be driving affective feelings about the community or shifts in commitment to democracy as a way of governing.

[429] In the same way that governments (Government of Canada 2010), independent offices (Office of the Auditor General of Canada Government of Canada 2019; Information Commissioner of Canada 2020; Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner 2020), and academics (Poland et al. 1974; Dobuzinskis and Howlett 2018) carry out government performance evaluations.

Figure 6.12 – Support for All Political Institutions – Quebecers vs. other Canadians

Quebecers' Variations in Support for Institutions Across Levels of Government

Negative ▪ ▪ ▪ ■Positive

Affective Assessments — Feelings toward Institutions

	Dislike	Neutral	Like
Governments	45	20	35
Legislatures	44	21	36
Courts	35	16	48
Civil Service	44	16	40
Political Parties	51	21	28

Confidence in

		Not Confident	Confident
Governments	Federal	38	62
	Provincial	50	50
	Municipal	41	59
Legislatures	Federal	36	64
	Provincial	37	63
	Municipal	39	61
Courts	Federal courts	27	73
	Provincial courts	32	68
	Administrative tribunals	36	64
Civil Service	Federal	38	62
	Provincial	43	57
	Municipal	34	66
Political Parties	Federal	49	51
	Provincial	57	43

Evaluative Assessments — Overall Job Being Done by

		Not Good	Good
Governments	Federal	40	60
	Provincial	54	46
	Municipal	36	64
Legislatures	Federal	42	58
	Provincial	45	55
	Municipal	33	67
Courts	Federal Courts	39	61
	Provincial Courts	38	62
	Administrative Tribunals	30	70
Civil Service	Federal	39	61
	Provincial	44	56
	Municipal	40	60
Political Parties	Federal	51	49
	Provincial	55	45

Evaluations of the various specific jobs government has done

		Not Good			Good
Incl. Health	Federal	17	35	40	8
	Provincial	23	41	29	6
	Municipal	14	29	46	11
Excl. Health	Federal	17	33	42	8
	Provincial	22	40	31	7
	Municipal	15	28	46	11

Evaluation of how well governments at different levels are working together

	Not Working	Neutral	Working
Municipal - Federal	22	18	59
Municipal - Provincial	24	18	58
Provincial - Federal	24	18	58
Municipal - Municipal	16	14	70
Provincial - Provincial	22	17	61

Percentage (%)

Other Canadians' Variations in Support for Institutions Across Levels of Government

Negative ▪ ▪ ▪ ■Positive

Affective Assessments — Feelings toward Institutions

	Dislike	Neutral	Like
Governments	32	20	48
Legislatures	32	21	47
Courts	28	16	56
Civil Service	31	17	52
Political Parties	41	24	35

Confidence in

		Not Confident	Confident
Governments	Federal	34	66
	Provincial	44	56
	Municipal	34	66
Legislatures	Federal	30	70
	Provincial	37	63
	Municipal	36	64
Courts	Federal courts	26	74
	Provincial courts	27	73
	Administrative tribunals	47	53
Civil Service	Federal	29	71
	Provincial	31	69
	Municipal	30	70
Political Parties	Federal	40	60
	Provincial	45	55

Evaluative Assessments — Overall Job Being Done by

		Not Good	Good
Governments	Federal	41	59
	Provincial	53	47
	Municipal	37	63
Legislatures	Federal	39	61
	Provincial	48	52
	Municipal	37	63
Courts	Federal Courts	28	72
	Provincial Courts	33	67
	Administrative Tribunals	46	54
Civil Service	Federal	34	66
	Provincial	32	68
	Municipal	31	69
Political Parties	Federal	48	52
	Provincial	57	43

Evaluations of the various specific jobs government has done

		Not Good			Good
Incl. Health	Federal	20	31	42	8
	Provincial	25	35	33	6
	Municipal	16	29	46	9
Excl. Health	Federal	20	30	43	8
	Provincial	22	40	31	7
	Municipal	15	28	47	9

Evaluation of how well governments at different levels are working together

	Not Working	Neutral	Working
Municipal - Federal	43	21	37
Municipal - Provincial	23	18	59
Provincial - Federal	44	20	36
Municipal - Municipal	23	20	57
Provincial - Provincial	34	21	45

Percentage (%)

Source: PCSP 2017
Sample sizes for each analysis range from 373 to 1,121 for Quebec and from 1,280 to 5,076 for ROC. Question wording for each measure and operationalization of any indices can be found in Appendices A1 and A2.

In general, the assessments of Quebecers and other Canadians, when pitted against each other in Figure 6.12, are not too dissimilar from those I found when looking at Canada as a whole. That is, the narrative overall is quite similar, but there are also relevant distinctions that emerge. As we saw previously for all Canadians combined, the less political government institutions,

specifically the courts and the civil service, are generally more well-liked than governments, legislatures, and political parties (the more political government institutions), in both Quebec and other regions of the country, although it is notable to find that our survey respondents in Quebec tended to be more negatively disposed to each of these institutions (from 35% for the courts to 51% for political parties) than are other Canadians (from 31% for the civil service to 41% for political parties). So, not unlike what the results in Figure 6.10 suggested, it is not necessarily the case that all Canadians affectively assess their government institutions in the same ways. Indeed, there are also clear and consistent variations across different territorial contexts.

Moreover, when I look at evaluative assessments across different levels of government, I also find similar patterns to those observed when looking at all Canadians, wherein respondents are both more confident generally in their government institutions than they are affectively disposed, and in their federal institutions than they are in provincial institutions, even in Quebec. This is probably not something that would have been expected, at least not before being exposed to the results provided by this study, which seems to be progressively painting Quebecers as being more pro-Canadian in several respects than even non-Quebecers. (both according to the PCSP data and the earlier CES data presented in Chapter 5). Also, the evidence indicates that municipal institutions, particularly in Quebec, tend to be evaluated more positively (both in terms of confidence evaluations and job performance broadly speaking) than provincial ones, except in certain instances, such as the case of general confidence levels in legislatures and administrative tribunals.

To get a better sense of what these job performance numbers represent, the data reported in Figure 6.13 unpacks the aggregated government performance evaluations from Figure 6.12 on a variety of specific jobs across different levels of government for both Quebecers and other Canadians (similar to the results presented for Quebecers in Figure 6.11, but without reporting changes over time).

Note first that each block of data in this case is sorted from the most positive assessments to the most negative. Probably one of the most intriguing findings in this case is how respondents evaluate their governments' handling of emergencies and crises, a question which we asked for the first time in 2017. Over 50% of respondents across both territorial contexts evaluate governments at all levels (the federal, provincial, and municipal) as doing either a "good" or "very good" job of handling emergencies and crises. Of course, this is particularly relevant here because it is an evaluation conducted prior to one of the most important crises to hit Canada and the world more generally in recent history – the COVID-19 pandemic. A follow up survey, since this responsiveness was deeply tested, will surely provide interesting and important comparisons to pick apart.

Figure 6.13 – Evaluations of Jobs Done by All Governments – Quebecers vs. other Canadians
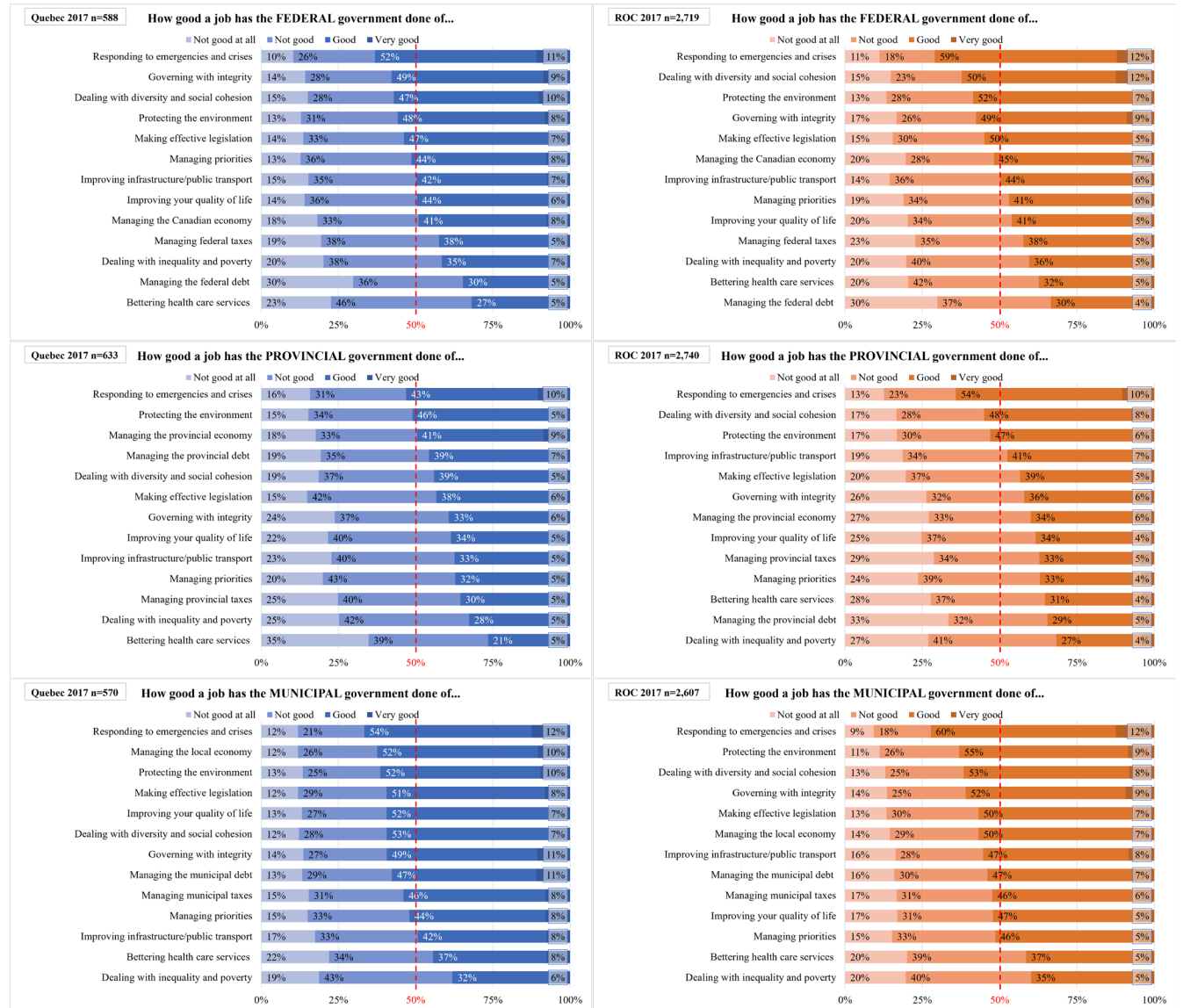
Source: PCSP 2017
Sample sizes for each analysis range from 570 to 633 for Quebec and from 2,607 to 2,740 for ROC.

Indeed, although the majority of both Quebecers and non-Quebecers may have evaluated governments as doing a pretty good job of handling emergencies back in 2017, this result may be very different today, especially after the governing complications and challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and considering the major regional disparities that unfolded within Canada, even across municipalities (see, for example OECD 2020). Only the new data that we will be collecting in the latter part of 2023 will be able to say whether such views remain consistent after governments at all levels were more clearly tested over the last three years by an actual health emergency and crisis. I would certainly expect these results to change in telling ways and it is something I plan to pay particular attention to.

Another revealing finding of note in Figure 6.13 is the consistency with which both Quebecers and non-Quebecers rank all governments near the very bottom in terms of their handling of inequality and poverty, as well as the job they have done bettering health care services. On the health services file, which all levels of government have some hand in (Fierlbeck et al. 2020), between 56% and 74% of Quebecers rate all levels of government as doing a bad job. Similarly, between 59% and 65% of other Canadians rate all levels of government as doing poorly when it comes to better health care service. Likewise, between 58% to 67% of Quebecers and 60% and 68% of non-Quebecers rate each of their governments as doing a bad job on dealing with inequality and poverty. These findings are not unlike those reported earlier when looking at how well the provincial government has been handling society's most vulnerable groups (including the poor, families, seniors, and minorities). In this case, what these findings add is that the perceived problem of government performance on personal welfare (in particular) may not be isolated to just Quebec and the provincial government there, but rather, it may be more generalizable for all Canadians and applicable to all levels of government.

Moreover, what the preceding analyses of core government institutions and more specific job areas also reveal is that, just like citizens make clear distinctions between institutions when they are assessing them (both in the degree to which they accept these institutions and in the way they judge the performance of these different institutions) when given the added opportunity to assess the specific jobs that their different levels of government are doing, they can also be quite discerning[430]. For instance, other than what I have pointed out already, the evidence in Figure 6.13 shows some core differences that emerge between Quebecers and non-Quebecers when it comes to evaluations of debt management. That is, in 2017 Quebecers were more supportive of their provincial government's ability to manage the provincial debt (46%) than non-Quebecers (34%).

That said however, Quebecers were also more critical of the provincial government's ability to deal with diversity and social cohesion (56%) than are non-Quebecers of their respective governments (45%), which is not surprising, for instance, given how long cultural accommodation discussions have gone on in Quebec, eventually culminating in the passing of Bill 21 (Ballingall 2019; Sheedy 2019). The evidence here also reveals that Quebecers are more critical of their provincial government's ability to improve infrastructure and public transport (63%) when compared to non-Quebecers (53%), again not so surprising given the state of infrastructure and public transport in Quebec (Brox 2012; Postmedia 2015; CBC News 2018; Bruemmer 2019; Lapierre 2022)[431].

Finally, in providing a broader assessment of the findings, the overall distinctions in evaluations in job performance between levels of government are also clear. Of the 13 jobs respondents were questioned on, more than 50 percent of both Quebecers and other Canadians evaluate the municipal government to be doing a good job on at least 11 of the jobs (excluding health care and dealing with inequality and poverty). By comparison, at least 50 percent in the

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[430] In 2021, Abacus data (the firm responsible for collecting the PCSP data in all three waves) conducted a survey to determine how much Canadians know about politics in this country. The questions they asked revealed that, although about a third of Canadians often get the answers wrong, two thirds and sometimes even three quarters of respondents get these political knowledge questions right (Coletto and Anderson 2021). Our own question in 2017 that tapped knowledge about which government is responsible for education and health care, also revealed that about 70% of respondents were knowledgeable enough to provide the correct answer.

[431] Something that the federal and provincial government in Quebec are now working to address through bilateral funding agreements starting with $1 billion in 2016 and another $7 billion in 2018 (Infrastructure Canada 2018; see also Gouvernement du Québec 2022; 2023).

two groups evaluate the federal government to be doing well on only six to seven of the thirteen jobs – with only a slight discrepancy between the two groups on two jobs: managing priorities (where the majority, 52%, of Quebecers think the federal government is doing a good job, compared to only 47% of other Canadians) and on managing the economy (where 52% of other Canadians think the federal government is doing a good job, compared to 49% of Quebecers).

At the provincial level, the overall results are drastically different. That is, a majority of the Quebecers and other Canadians surveyed agreed that their own provincial governments are doing a good job in only three of the 13 areas. They are also similar on two of the three jobs they think are being done well – i.e., both groups think that their provinces at the time responded well to emergencies (53% in Quebec; 64% in the ROC) and that they were doing okay at protecting the environment (51% in Quebec; 53% in the ROC). They differ, however, on the third job that they think each of their provincial governments are doing well on. That is, 50% of Quebecers said the provincial government is doing a good job of handling the economy (whereas 60% of other Canadians would disagree, reporting that they thought their own provincial government was doing a bad job of managing the provincial economy). Meanwhile, non-Quebecers said that their provincial governments were doing a reasonable job of dealing with diversity and social cohesion (56%), while only 44% of Quebecers expressed feeling the same about Quebec (as also shown in Figure 6.11 above).

Moving back then to Figure 6.12, a final important distinction that emerges between Quebecers and other Canadians when looking across institutional assessment measures, is the difference in how well these two groups see the various levels of government working together. When these two territorial contexts are split out, a key difference emerges, which goes counter to what we might have expected, wherein we find that Quebecers are generally more positive about intergovernmental relations between all levels of government compared to other Canadians. That is, between 58% and 70% of Quebecers see all levels of government working well together, compared to only 36% to 59%. In fact, Canadians outside of Quebec, see intergovernmental relations with the federal government as being in particularly bad shape (only 36-37% think relations between the federal and either the provincial or municipal governments are working well). The only exception are perceptions of municipal-provincial relations, in this case the two groups differ very little, both evaluating these inter-governmental relationships as working equally well (58-59%).

This finding suggests, perhaps, that the asymmetric approach to federalism (Gagnon 2009), particularly when it comes to dealings with Quebec, is having a positive effect on Quebecers' evaluations of inter-governmental relations. While the same cannot be said for perceptions toward federalism in other parts of the country. In Chapters 7 and 8, I will dig into these data further in order to better understand where some of these failures might be occurring, to determine what might be driving these important variations in political support that emerge across different territorial contexts as the findings as Figure 6.12 suggest.

In sum, Canadians' affective and evaluative orientations toward their core governing institutions are far from exemplary (see Figure 6.14). The overall grades that Canadians would allocate to their political institutions, based on a variety of assessments, are markedly low. Considering (again) Canada's generally solid ranking as one of the world's leading democracies, and the federal government's own tendency to bolster "Canada's democratic institutions and practices [as] viewed by many around the world as a model to emulate" (Government of Canada 2004), admitting (and responding to) the need to consult with citizens and adapt these institutions (Government of Canada 2022), one would expect that Canadians might have much stronger

positive views about their core government institutions – at least if they were to perceive these adaptations[432] as going well. The results suggest otherwise[433].

Figure 6.14 – Support for Political Institutions Score Cards – All Canadians
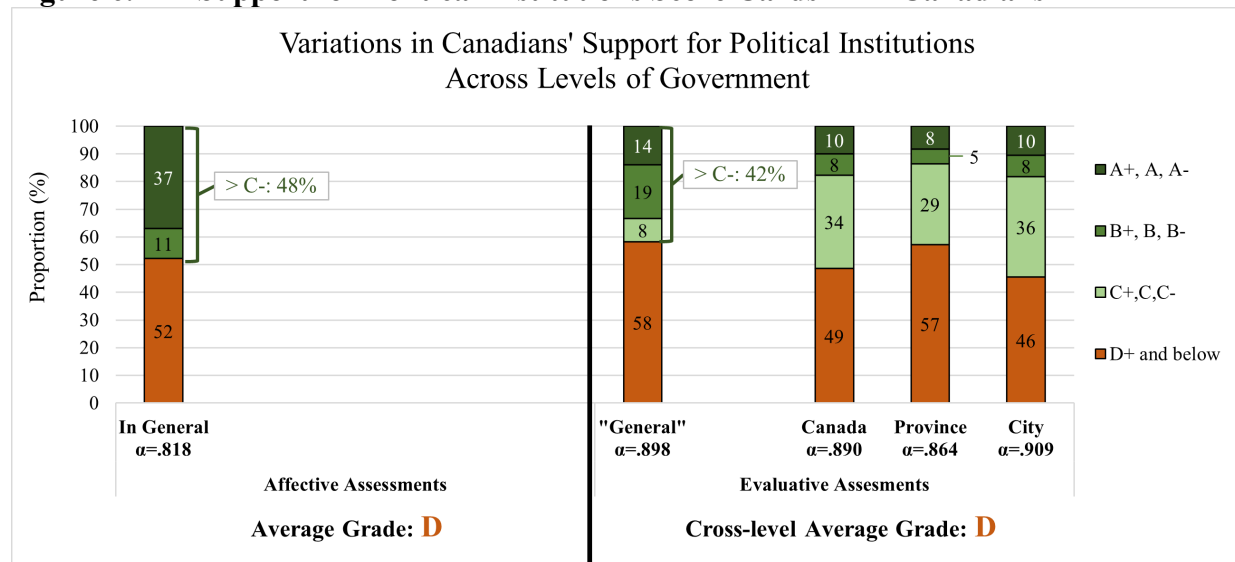
Source: Political Communities Survey Project 2017 (n=4,258)
PCSP Question Categories/Dimensions (see Appendices A1 and A2 for wording and operationalization):
- Affective support: Feelings toward governments and legislatures in general, not across levels (additive index of two institutions);
- Evaluative support: Confidence in various institutions and evaluations of job being done by governments and legislatures (additive indices).
Assessments of political parties are excluded as inclusion skews results toward 'low support' and cross-level comparison is unavailable. "General" is a cross-level cumulative additive index of object assessments across all three levels of government. For additive indices, see Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability statistics for each measure.

For instance, more than a majority of Canadians (52%) affectively assess their core government institutions (including governments and legislatures) at a D+ or below. Conversely, only 37% of Canadians affectively assess their core government institutions at an A- (80%) level or more. The average affective assessment grade that Canadians give their core government institutions, therefore, is no higher than a D, which qualifies as below satisfactory on most grading scales.

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[432] A major area where focus could be paid in the future would be to complement this analysis of public perceptions of government institutions, measuring the extent to which governments do in fact adapt not just through policy change (Soroka and Wlezien 2010), but through institutional change. One way to determine whether publics respond to such adaptations (and become more positive) would be to analyze and detail the ways in which core democratic institutions at all levels of government in Canada have adapted (summarizing the major improvements and the forces that instigated these improvements) and measure public awareness and evaluations of these adaptations. I have not come across such a systematic analysis so far (except: Kanji and Tannahill 2024 who incorporate contributions from experts that outline the various changes Canadian democratic institutions have undergone over the 150 years since confederation; and Goodyear-Grant and Hanniman 2019 whose authors look at Senate and Electoral reform, language policy, indigenous governance and intergovernmental relations).Wesley's (2016)contributors also incorporated brief sections in each of their chapters summarizing unique characteristics of the political institutions of each of the provinces and territories in Canada, with some also mentioning major institutional changes that have occurred.
[433] In Chapters 7 and 8, I will systematically test why our respondents give these scores (comparing the effects of perceived performance to other demand-side factors).

Likewise, 58% of Canadians evaluate their core government institutions generally across all levels at a standard of D+ or less. And, at each level separately, between 42% and 54% of Canadians would give either Canada, their province, or their own city or town a satisfactory grade when evaluating the jobs their core government institutions are doing and the confidence that they have in them at each of these levels. Note also that there are very few A grade evaluations here at all and that the evaluations are particularly low at the provincial level. Note also that the average evaluation grade Canadians would give their core government institutions is, again, no more than a D[434].

Political Authorities
Table 6.4 – Measures of Support for Political Authorities

Affective Assessments	Evaluative Assessments
· Feelings toward various specific authorities and groups of authorities	· *Satisfaction with performance under a particular leader* · Satisfaction with performance under a particular elected representative · Confidence in various specific authorities and groups of authorities · Evaluations of how good of a job various groups of authorities are doing overall

The analysis on political authorities in the previous chapter focused mainly on satisfaction with the performance of government under a particular leader – an indicator, once again, common to the literature. To this, as outlined above in Table 6.4, I have added several other measures, including evaluative assessments of other authorities (such as elected representatives, civil servants, judges, Senators, and politicians more generally, just to name a few), evaluations of the jobs various authorities are doing, confidence measures, and affective assessment measures.

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[434] This is even lower than what the Samara Democracy 360 report card (2019) revealed for the "leadership" category (going from a D in 2015 to a C in both 2017 and 2019), which consisted of evaluations of leaders and MPs as well as political parties, and measures of diversity in the federal House of Commons and provincial and territorial legislatures.

Figure 6.15 – Support for All Political Authorities – All Canadians

Variations in CANADIANS' Support for Authorities
Across Levels of Government and Type
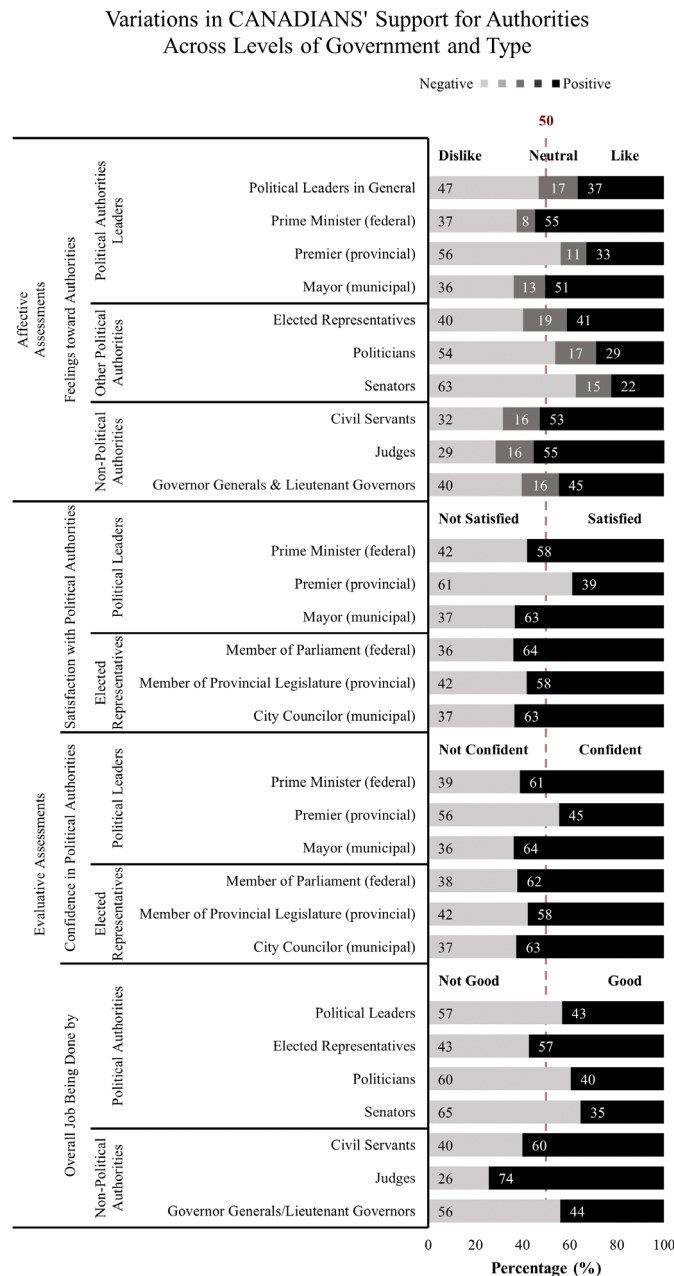
Source: PCSP 2017
Sample sizes for each analysis range from 1,955 to 6,405. Question wording for each measure and operationalization of any indices can be found in Appendices A1 and A2.

The first key point to note in Figure 6.15 is the variation that exists among Canadians when it comes to their affective assessments of different political authorities. A logical place to begin is with politicians as a general category. The evidence in this case indicates that, when asked about "politicians" in general our Canadian respondents overall did not express a great deal of positivity. That is, more than half (54%) indicated that they dislike politicians in general and just under 30% say that they like politicians. Which is not altogether surprising, given the "dirty" connotation that both the words "politics" and "politicians" have developed (Klain 1955;

Rosenstein 2022)[435]. The figures do improve somewhat when the focus sharpens a bit, and we ask about political leaders in general. In this case, just under half (47%) say that they dislike political leaders in general while just over one in three Canadians (37%) say that they like political leaders overall.

Like what the findings indicated for just Quebecers in Chapter 5, the results in Figure 6.15 present even more discrepancies when looking at how Canadians feel overall about different leaders at various levels of government. That is, Canadians express feeling more positively about political leaders at some levels of government than they do for others (i.e., the Prime Minister or various Premiers and Mayors). For instance, the Prime Minister (liked by 55%) and mayors (liked by 51%) are by far the two most preferred political leaders in the Canadian case. By comparison, however, only 33% indicate that they like their Premiers at the provincial level. Thus, again, it appears that there are clear differences in how Canadians feel[436] about politicians in general, and in how they affectively support their political leaders at different levels of government. The findings to this point suggest that Canadians in our surveys feel the greatest discontent with politicians in general as well as toward political leaders at the provincial level.

When we look, on the other hand, at assessments of elected representatives in general, the evidence suggests that Canadians like these representatives more than they admit to liking politicians, or even political leaders in general. That is, 41% of the Canadians we surveyed said that they like their elected representatives, which is 12% more than those who say that they like politicians in general, and slightly more than those who say that they like political leaders in general (4%). So, while elected representatives are clearly not the most disliked politician group in general in Canada, they are also not in the same popularity league as certain specific political leaders (i.e. the Prime Minister or the respondent's city or town mayor). Meanwhile, the most disliked politicians for all Canadians at the time of the surveys were, by far, senators[437]. That is, nearly two thirds of Canadians (63%) indicated that they dislike senators and only one in five (22%) said that they like them.

By comparison, the way that Canadians feel toward their non-political authorities is also distinct and relevant. For instance, civil servants and judges seem to be as popular as the most liked political leaders, such as the Prime Minister and mayors. That is, more than half of Canadians say that they like their judges (55%) and civil servants (53%) and when it comes to our symbolic representatives of the Crown (our Governor General and Lieutenant Governors), perspectives are virtually split. More specifically, 45% of Canadians indicate that they like the

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[435] Early on, Klain argues that this distaste developed (at least in America) not just because politics may be associated with corrupt behavior, but because choosing politics as a vocation was seen as taking the easy route, away from *hard* work in pursuit of wealth: "could any honest man have an interest in public office? None at all, except the second-raters, the impractical and eccentric sort, the lazy and unaspiring" (Klain 1955, 464). This, combined with ongoing societal declines in deference to any individual representing hierarchical "authority" (Nevitte 1996; R. Inglehart 1999; Nevitte 2014), may be largely to blame for such negative attitudes toward an entire group of individuals, whose choice of career (especially if you would ask them directly (for example: Spellings 2016; Taber 2016)) is actually one of sacrifice and a desire to serve the greater public good.

[436] Similar to affective assessment of institutions, to fully tap the "moral" component of affective orientations toward authorities, it will be helpful in future survey waves to incorporate questions that ask, for example, "do you feel that [leader name] is a legitimate leader".

[437] Which, given the scandals surrounding senators' expenses leading up to our data collection (Kanji and Tannahill 2015c; CBC 2016) is not altogether too surprising. Although, at the time of the survey, important changes were already underway (Macfarlane 2019) in the Senate (including a shift away from strict partisanship in the chamber and a new merit-based Senate appointment process). As we go into the next round of data collection, it will be interesting to see if these very low affective scores have improved.

symbolic representatives of the crown and 40% say they dislike them. A finding that is not entirely surprising, given that, when asked if they supported having a monarch as the Head of state, a majority 56% stated that they did not support this Canadian democratic regime principle (see Figure 6.6). This said, it remains striking to find that our Governor General and Lieutenant Governors (whose very existence depends on this largely unsupported principle) are more well-liked by Canadians than provincial Premiers, elected representative, or senators.

In brief, when it comes to affective authority assessments, these surveys revealed that there are significant proportions of Canadians who do not like any of the individuals acting on their behalf in service to our democracies – whether they are politically elected (36% to 56% dislike), politically or non-politically appointed (40% to 63% are disliked), or entirely non-political or partisan (29% to 32% are disliked). A finding like this suggests that, even when the "political" side of public service is removed, a deep deficit still remains in affective authority support in Canada. Suggesting perhaps, that the fluctuating (but consistently negative) assessments of incoming and outgoing politicians may be extending beyond the oversimplified sentiment that all politicians are "dirty", spreading to encompass also the non-elected (but also non-partisan) professional servants of these political systems (Savoie 2003)[438].

Shifting now from affective to evaluative assessments, it is surprising to find that the results improve somewhat, suggesting that, despite the fact that political and non-political authorities are not exceedingly well-liked, Canadians still maintain a certain degree of confidence and satisfaction in their abilities to get the job done[439].

First, the findings show once again, that there are variations that emerge across different levels of government when it comes to evaluations of political leaders. For instance, 58% of Canadians express some degree of satisfaction in the Prime Minister and 61% say that they are confident in the Prime Minister's abilities. Slightly more (63% and 64%) indicate that they are satisfied and confident in their mayors. However, only 39% of Canadians indicate that they are satisfied with their Premier and only 45% indicate that they are confident in his or her abilities.

Likewise, the results in Figure 6.15 for different elected representatives are also varied. They show that, although not all our Canadian respondents indicated that they very much liked their elected representatives, they are generally more satisfied with and confident in them. Indeed, at the federal level, 64% of Canadians are satisfied with their Member of Parliament and 62% are confident in the abilities of these representatives. Similarly, 63% of Canadians feel the same way about their own city councillors. By comparison, slightly fewer (58%) of Canadians express both satisfaction and confidence in elected members within their province's legislature. Thus, for the most part, the evidence indicates that at the municipal and federal levels, Canadians are as satisfied with and confident in their elected representatives as they are in their political leaders. The only exception here can be observed at the provincial level, where Canadians are

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[438] As Savoie suggests (2003), and as is reflected by the Canadian Government, the work of the public service and public servants "is essential to Canada's well-being and the enduring strength of […] Canadian democracy, [as they] uphold the public trust" (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2011; see also 2003). In the US, these servants of the state have even referred been referred to as "guardians of process" (Stoss 2023), those individuals who carry with them long institutional memories and some resistance to the whims of rotating political agendas.

[439] Which might also tie into the idea that, while politics are seen as 'dirty', they are also seen as a necessary evil. And, as long as performance is there, these individuals can at least be tolerated. This speaks again to the trusteeship argument (J. Fox and Shotts 2009; Bowler 2017), that a willingness to give up power to a representative depends on that representative's demonstration of both a *minimum* degree of legitimacy (affective support) and a modicum of capacity to perform their duties (evaluative support) (Barbalet 2009).

more satisfied with and confident in their elected representatives in their provincial legislatures than they are with their Premiers.

All this said, like their evaluations of their political leaders, the evidence overall also shows that there are significant proportions of Canadians who are neither satisfied with nor confident in the abilities of their political representatives either (whether it is their Member of Parliament at 36% or 38%, their Member of their provinces legislature at 42%, or their city or town councillor at 37%) – suggesting that not all the pressure is being applied solely to leaders, but to political actors across the board[440]. The final set of results reported in Figure 6.15 help to develop this claim further by contrasting Canadians' evaluations of the performance of these various political authorities to non-political ones, through assessments of the job these various groups of individuals are doing. Here the results are a bit more critical, and in some cases, they vary somewhat from those reported above. For instance, the evidence shows that only 40% of Canadians say that politicians in general are doing a good job. Meanwhile, Canadians' evaluations of the job performance of their elected representatives turn out to be better than their evaluations of leaders. That is, less than half of Canadians (43%) say that their political leaders are doing a good job, whereas 57% say they feel that same way about their elected representatives. Still, none of this compares to the dismal job performance evaluations received by Canadian senators. In all, only 35% of Canadians said they thought that senators are doing a good job[441].

By comparison, the job performance of Canada's non-political authorities seems to be evaluated in a much more positive light, at least as far as civil servants and judges are concerned. That is, the results in this case show that 60% of Canadians evaluate their civil servants as doing a good job and that three in four Canadians (74%) feel the same way about their judges. Conversely however, only 44% of Canadians feel positively about the job performance of the Governor General and their Lieutenant Governors.

In brief, these findings clearly demonstrate that when evaluating Canadians' outlooks toward their political authorities, we need to probe deeply and in greater detail to get a fuller picture of the true nature of political support. When we dig deeper and ask more questions, the evidence reveals that Canadians have varied affective and evaluative orientations toward their political authorities and that while non-political authorities, such as judges and civil servants, are perceived more positively than political ones, they are not immune to negative perceptions. Indeed, there are significant proportions of Canadians who carry deep and cross-cutting negative outlooks toward all their system's authorities, but do all Canadians evaluate their political authorities in similar ways? Or are there any notable cross-territorial differences that emerge?

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[440] A group which (beyond evaluations of MPs (Nevitte and White 2012; Ruderman 2014)) are often excluded from analyses of political support.

[441] An assessment that is not much aided by the scandalous behaviour of a handful of individuals that dominate headlines more so than any reports of the key role that this group of individuals actually plays in the Canadian democratic process (E. McCoy, Nanos, and 2018 2018; Fraser 2024; Robert 2024) – a reality that the Senate itself began addressing in 2019 by regularly televising their sessions (Government Representative Office (GRO) 2023), although the extent to which this particular action has had any effect on public awareness of the Senate's roles and responsibilities is to be determined.

Figure 6.16 – Support for All Political Authorities – Quebecers vs. Other Canadians

Quebecers' Variations in Support for Authorities Across Levels of Government and Type

Other Canadians' Variations in Support for Authorities Across Levels of Government and Type

Negative ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪Positive

Affective Assessments — Feelings toward Authorities

Quebecers

		Dislike	Neutral	Like
Political Authorities	Leaders			
	Political Leaders in General	51	18	31
	Prime Minister (federal)	37	10	52
	Premier (provincial)	59	11	29
	Mayor (municipal)	39	14	47
Other Political Authorities	Elected Representatives	45	18	37
	Politicians	57	18	26
	Senators	68	14	18
Non-Political Authorities	Civil Servants	42	16	42
	Judges	31	14	54
	Governor Generals & Lieutenant Governors	63	14	24

Other Canadians

		Dislike	Neutral	Like
Political Authorities	Leaders			
	Political Leaders in General	46	16	38
	Prime Minister (federal)	37	7	55
	Premier (provincial)	56	11	34
	Mayor (municipal)	36	13	51
Other Political Authorities	Elected Representatives	39	19	42
	Politicians	53	17	29
	Senators	61	15	23
Non-Political Authorities	Civil Servants	29	15	55
	Judges	28	16	56
	Governor Generals & Lieutenant Governors	34	16	49

Satisfaction with Political Authorities — Not Satisfied / Satisfied

Quebecers

		Not Satisfied	Satisfied
Political Leaders	Prime Minister (federal)	42	58
	Premier (provincial)	61	39
	Mayor (municipal)	37	63
Elected Representatives	Member of Parliament (federal)	38	62
	Member of Provincial Legislature (provincial)	42	58
	City Councilor (municipal)	36	64

Other Canadians

		Not Satisfied	Satisfied
Political Leaders	Prime Minister (federal)	42	58
	Premier (provincial)	61	39
	Mayor (municipal)	37	63
Elected Representatives	Member of Parliament (federal)	35	65
	Member of Provincial Legislature (provincial)	42	58
	City Councilor (municipal)	37	63

Evaluative Assessments — Confidence in Political Authorities — Not Confident / Confident

Quebecers

		Not Confident	Confident
Political Leaders	Prime Minister (federal)	40	60
	Premier (provincial)	57	43
	Mayor (municipal)	38	62
Elected Representatives	Member of Parliament (federal)	40	60
	Member of Provincial Legislature (provincial)	44	56
	City Councilor (municipal)	37	63

Other Canadians

		Not Confident	Confident
Political Leaders	Prime Minister (federal)	39	61
	Premier (provincial)	55	45
	Mayor (municipal)	36	64
Elected Representatives	Member of Parliament (federal)	37	63
	Member of Provincial Legislature (provincial)	42	58
	City Councilor (municipal)	37	63

Overall Job Being Done by — Not Good / Good

Quebecers

		Not Good	Good
Political Authorities	Political Leaders	57	43
	Elected Representatives	43	57
	Politicians	60	40
	Senators	65	35
Non-Political Authorities	Civil Servants	40	60
	Judges	26	74
	Governor Generals/Lieutenant Governors	56	44

Other Canadians

		Not Good	Good
Political Authorities	Political Leaders	54	46
	Elected Representatives	44	56
	Politicians	59	41
	Senators	65	35
Non-Political Authorities	Civil Servants	29	71
	Judges	30	70
	Governor Generals/Lieutenant Governors	28	72

Percentage (%) — 0 20 40 60 80 100

Source: PCSP 2017
Sample sizes for each analysis range from 352 to 1,110 for Quebec and from 1,603 to 5,295 for ROC. Question wording for each measure and operationalization of any indices can be found in Appendices A1 and A2.

To break down these variations even further, the next set of results present the differences in affective and evaluative assessments across two key territorial contexts in Canada. The first major point to note here is that, according to the findings illustrated in Figure 6.16, Quebecers in general have slightly less positive affective assessments of their political authorities than non-Quebecers. This finding applies to both political and non-political authorities alike, although in the case of the latter, there are two particularly notable differences that emerge. That is, Quebecers, according to this evidence, have much stronger dislike for their civil servants (42%) compared to non-Quebecers (29%). Additionally, and perhaps not surprisingly given Quebec's

historic experience with the Crown and English Canada (Reichert 2013; Serebrin 2022b), Quebecer's feelings about the Governor General and their Lieutenant Governor are far more negative than those of non-Quebecers. Indeed, the differences between Quebecers (63% dislike them) and non-Quebecers (34% dislike them) in their views toward the Governor General and their provinces' Lieutenant Governors are especially stark.

Beyond affective assessments of political authorities, the preceding patterns that I identified for Canada as a whole are essentially the same when it comes to the cross-territorial variations in evaluations between Quebecers and non-Quebecers (on all confidence and satisfaction measures for both leaders and elected representatives as well as evaluations of the jobs being done by political authorities). That is, the evidence here suggests that evaluations by both Quebecers and non-Quebecers of their political authorities are quite similar, except when it comes to their evaluations of civil servants. Again, the data in this instance show that compared to non-Quebecers, Quebecers are more likely to evaluate civil servants as doing a bad job (40% vs. 29%). Furthermore, as with affective assessments, the distinction between Quebecers and non-Quebecers' in their evaluative assessments of the Governor General and their provinces' Lieutenant Governors are also particularly notable (56% of Quebecers think they are doing a bad job compared to 28% of non-Quebecers).

To summarize the degree of variation in support for political authorities in Canada, again for all Canadians, as I did in the previous sections, Figure 6.17 provides a score card based on the additive indices of both the affective and evaluative indicators discussed here.

Figure 6.17 – Support for Political Authorities Score Cards – All Canadians
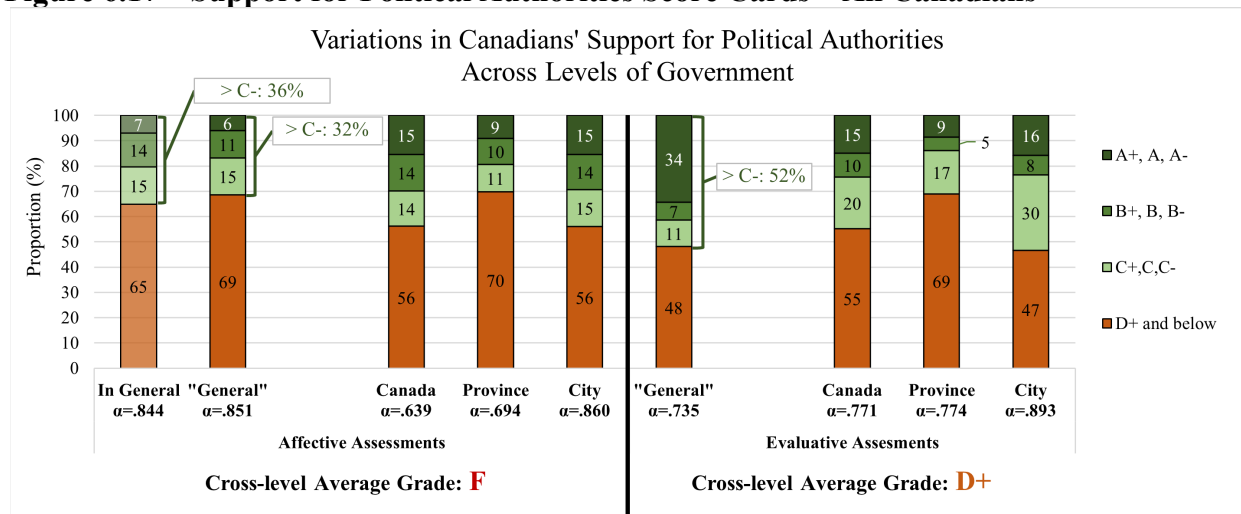
Source: Political Communities Survey Project 2017 (n=5,172)
PCSP Question Categories/Dimensions (see Appendices A1 and A2 for wording and operationalization):
- Affective support: Feelings toward leaders and elected representatives – asked both *in general* and at each level of government (additive indices);
- Evaluative support: Satisfaction with and confidence in leaders and elected representatives (additive indices). Assessments of politicians and Senators are excluded as inclusion skews results toward 'low support' and cross-level comparison is unavailable. "General" is a cross-level cumulative additive index of object assessments across all three levels of government. For additive indices, see Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability statistics for each measure.

These summary and additive indices reveal that, in terms of how much the Canadians we interviewed like their political authorities, including both their leaders and elected representatives, only about one in three Canadians would affectively assess their political

authorities in general (36%) or across different levels of government (32%) at a C- grade level or better. Moreover, less than one in ten Canadians would affectively assess their political authorities at an A- grade standard or better. Instead, the bulk of Canadians (more than 60%), affectively assess their political authorities at a D+ standard or less. As indicated above, these assessments are particularly dismal at the provincial level (where 7 in 10 Canadians rate their provincial political authorities at a D+ standard or less). Overall, when taken together, the cumulative cross-level average that Canadians give their political authorities, based on their affective assessments of these authorities, amounts to no better than a failing F grade.

On the other hand, based on their evaluative assessments, more than half of Canadians (52%) give their political authorities a C- grade level or more[442] and one in three Canadians (34%) would give their political authorities an overall evaluation grade of A- or better. Once again, however, these evaluation grades are much lower at the provincial level than they are at either the federal or municipal levels. Furthermore, 47% to 69% of the respondents in our surveys evaluated their political authorities at a D+ grade level or below across each of the three levels of government. In sum, the average evaluation grade that Canadians gave their political authorities overall, based on their cumulated support across the spectrum of evaluative indicators and across all three levels of government, is no better than a D+.

Before closing this chapter, it should be noted here that, despite the differences that might exist between political and non-political actors, the assessments of authorities going forward in this analysis (as I have included in the score card illustration) will include only political authorities. The reason for this is mostly data driven. In 2017, while other types of authorities were tapped for the first time using the extensive questions illustrated above, support for these authorities were not tapped in detail across levels of government. Rather, support for them was only recorded using a single affective measure (feelings) and a single evaluative measure (evaluation of job done in general). As this was the first round of data collection on non-political authorities, our goal was to first determine whether there were differences in opinions when looking at authorities of various types generally. Now that these findings (according to the analyses presented above) have revealed clear distinctions in assessments, both affective and evaluative, the next round of data collection in 2023 has added measures that allow us to also tap affective assessments of elected representatives at all three levels of government, in addition to new questions asking respondents to provide affective and evaluative assessments of other non-political authorities as well, including civil servants and judges, at all three levels of government. Also, in the next round of the PCSP, we plan to incorporate for the first time, an expanded list of authorities, including those from other sectors in society (such as, for instance, business and civil society leaders, banking and monetary policy leaders, police, etc.).

Conclusion
This chapter continued the investigation into the nature of political support and offered a first look into the extent of the variation in support that may be observed when we take special care to look in more detail, ask more questions, and cast our net more broadly. When referring back to Figure 6.1, it is now possible, with slightly more confidence, to flesh out the picture of political

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[442] Which is similar to the grade of "C" that Samara's two most recent democracy report cards gave to political leaders and Members of Parliament (Samara Canada 2017; 2019). This said, by employing additional questions and compiling additive indices based on a larger number of indicators that tap a spectrum of assessments, the report card that I present here reveals itself to be much more varied (with extremely low lows, some highs, and a cross-level average of D+ that I feel is more reflective of the true nature of support for this particular object among Canadians).

support in Canada (with the insights that I have gained after each of the analyses conducted in this chapter), by incorporating more evidence based on a variety of affective and evaluative measures, by referring to consistencies and inconsistencies between Quebecers and other Canadians, by identifying which levels of government are experiencing more trouble than others, and by incorporating the results generated by various aggregated and more comprehensive measure of political support. Table 6.5 summarizes these new insights by laying out each of the political objects that I examined, the support for them as previously cumulated and understood in the literature, and the new insights about support gained from the analyses presented in this chapter as well as the score card results that I have derived and compiled based on the preceding analyses[443].

One major takeaway from all of this is the clear finding that political support in Canada, objectively considered by several panels of experts (including Freedom House and the EIU) to be a top-tier democracy, is by no means "high," even at more diffuse levels. In fact, when I take into consideration both the nature and extent of public support expressed for the Canadian political community and the democratic regime (using different measures, looking across levels of government, and identifying differences across major territorial groups) the results are "varied" and tending more toward a "B grade" at best. This finding may indeed start to explain why more rigorous objective evaluations incorporated into expert reviews produced by Varieties of Democracy, for example, start to rank Canada lower on the list of top-performing countries. It certainly starts to point to the fact that citizens across Canada's levels of democracy are not oblivious to some of the failures of their political systems. And, like evaluations of the health care, public perceptions of the job performance of governments might serve as an early warning system that should be paid attention to when seeking to improve our democracies.

Key to better understanding how to improve, would be to look at evaluative assessments, which tend to be slightly less positive in what they suggest about regime support, and particularly less positive in what they suggest about perceptions toward the workings of different political communities. Variations in diffuse support across levels of government may also be noteworthy and provide us with clues into where things may be going well, compared to where they may be falling short. Here, Canadians are notably less positive in their outlooks toward the workings of their provincial communities compared to the national community or municipal ones. Even in Quebec, where the evidence suggests that Quebecers are generally less affectively supportive of all political communities than other Canadians[444], in their evaluative assessments they are similar to non-Quebecers in that they tend generally to view the workings of the Canadian community (as well as their municipalities) more positively than they do the workings of their own province.

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[443] For the full report card, listing the grades that each object received, across levels of government, for all of Canada and for both Quebecers and non-Quebecers, see Table B1.1 in Appendix B1.

[444] More recent findings on affective pride the Canadian political community from the Americas Barometers (illustrated in the previous chapter) had revealed that pride in Canada among Quebecers may be rising, while among non-Quebecers it dropped from 2017 to 2021. The evaluative measures of support for the community presented here from 2017 might represent a precursor to the affective pride levels seen in these more recent ABs data.

Table 6.5 – Scope of PS Problem: Reflecting on Previous Findings

Political Objects	Assessments	
	Affective Assessments	**Evaluative Assessments**

Community	*High* Support →
	Nature: (B+) Good
	Extent: *Varied* Support
	- Differences between measures
	  o Pride higher than patriotism or feelings.
	- Differences across levels of government
	  o All Canadians less supportive of province.
	- Differences between Quebec and ROC
	  o Quebecers less supportive of all political communities than other Canadians.
		Support *TBD* →
		Nature: (D+) Less than Satisfactory
		Extent: *Varied* Support
		- Differences between measures
		  o Evaluative support lower than affective support.
		- Differences across levels of government
		  o Support for provincial level is lowest among all Canadians.
		- Differences between Quebec and ROC
		  o Support across levels of government is higher in Quebec than in ROC.

Regime	*High* Support →
	Nature: (B+) Good
	Extent: *Varied* Support
	- Differences between measures
	  o Democratic regime as a good way of governing is always high;
	  o Commitment to democracy and support for principles reveals important variation and areas for concern.
	- Differences across levels of government
	  o All Canadians most committed to democracy at federal level but overall little variation across levels.
	- Differences between Quebec and ROC
	  o Quebecers support fewer principles and are less committed democrats than other Canadians.
		Varied Support →
		Nature: (B-) Good
		Extent: *Varied* Support
		- Differences between measures
		  o Evaluative support lower than affective support;
		  o Evaluations of specific aspects of democracy reveal significant problems.
		- Differences across levels of government
		  o All Canadians less supportive of province and most supportive of specific aspects in city/town.
		- Differences between Quebec and ROC
		  o Quebecers similar to ROC on evaluations of democraticness (only slightly less positive);
		  o Quebecers less satisfied than other Canadians in general and with specific aspects across levels.

Institutions	Support *TBD* →
	Nature: (D) Less than Satisfactory
	Extent: *Varied* Support
	- Differences between measures
	  o Non-political institutions are more well-liked than political ones but all quite low, especially political parties.
	- Differences across levels of government
	  o Only general institutions assessed (NA).
	- Differences between Quebec and ROC
	  o Quebecers less supportive across all institutions than other Canadians.
		Declining Support →
		Nature: (D) Less than Satisfactory
		Extent: *Varied* Support
		- Differences between measures
		  o Confidence measures are higher than evaluations of jobs overall and specific jobs;
		  o Evaluations of specific jobs reveal even more significant problems.
		- Differences across levels of government
		  o Generally federal and municipal levels evaluated more positively than provincial (except courts).
		- Differences between Quebec and ROC
		  o Both groups are quite similar except in evaluations of municipal courts and workings of federalism (Quebecers more positive on both).

Authorities	Support *TBD* →
	Nature: (F) Fail
	Extent: *Varied* Support
	- Differences between measures
	  o Non-political authorities are more well-liked than political ones but all quite low
	- Differences across levels of government
	  o Prime Minister is the most liked;
	  o Premiers are the least liked.
	- Differences between Quebec and ROC
	  o Quebecers are slightly more negative overall (especially with civil servants as well as Governor General and Lieutenant Governors) but vary across types of authorities in the same way as other Canadians.
		Mixed Support →
		Nature: (D+) Less than Satisfactory
		Extent: *Varied* Support
		- Differences between measures
		  o Non-political authorities evaluated more positively than political ones but all quite low (except judges);
		  o Satisfaction and confidence in elected representatives (in provinces) is higher than in political leaders.
		- Differences across levels of government
		  o Federal and municipal political authorities are evaluated more positively than provincial ones.
		- Differences between Quebec and ROC
		  o Quebecers are similar to other Canadians on evaluations of political authorities;
		  o Quebecers are more negative about non-"political" authorities like civil servants and Governor General/Lieutenant Governors.

Furthermore, despite regime support also being posited in the literature as being generally quite high, expanded measures of support and examination across levels, as well as comparisons between Quebecers and other Canadians, reveal that affective support levels among the Canadians that we surveyed are quite varied, and that evaluative support may in fact be facing important problems. More specifically, the findings reveal that democracy as "the preferred" regime may be suffering a loss of some of its acclaimed legitimacy. Additionally, although they are generally quite similar, Quebecers are less in favor of the principles governing Canadian democracy and less satisfied with the overall workings of their federal, provincial, and municipal democracies.

Meanwhile, one of the most striking conclusions about the regime is that perceptions of the workings of certain aspects of democracy are often less than satisfactory (on average quite a bit lower than satisfaction overall), and particularly at the provincial level for both Quebecers and non-Quebecers. Moreover, while my examination into satisfaction with specific facets of democracy reveals that the popular areas of focus that several experts tend to draw attention to when evaluating Canadian democracy – such as elections and voting, the delivery of various benefits and services, political representation, or even the concentration of power at the center – are not necessarily the areas that citizens themselves see as most problematic. In fact, many of these areas are perceived to be doing quite well. Meanwhile, perceptions of the politicking (in the form of partisan politics, campaigning, party financing, and party discipline) as well as the political process (in the form of transparency, integrity, and both public and election spending) seem to be inflicting the most damage to citizens' views of their democracies and how well they are perceived to be working.

The perceived hangups with the "political" side of things becomes even more pronounced when looking at institutions and authorities more directly. While previous studies have not provided too much guidance when it comes to expectations of the affective assessments that more specific levels of the political system might receive (with the exception of political party affinities) they have pointed quite extensively to declining evaluative support, at least in terms of evaluations based on measures that tap "confidence" in various institutions. The preceding analyses provide some illumination on the question of affective support by building on this pool of institutional support assessments first in the form of feelings about various institutions. In particular, the findings from my analyses reveal that political institutions (such as governments, legislatures, and political parties) are suffering more from the public's disaffection than non-political ones (such as the civil service and the courts).

Moreover, when I dig into evaluative assessments, adding to the breadth of data that already exist on levels of confidence in institutions, my analyses of other indicators reveal that all institutions are suffering to some degree in terms of negative public perceptions, but that political institutions such as political parties, governments, and legislatures are worse off than the civil service and courts. Furthermore, cross-level analyses of the perceptions that Canadians have of these institutions also reveal that provinces are in far worse shape overall. Additionally, despite Quebecers being less likely to like or accept their political institutions compared to other Canadians, they are not that dissimilar in their evaluations of these institutions (with only a few exceptions). Meanwhile, Quebecers are more positive than non-Quebecers in their evaluations of administrative tribunals at the municipal level as well as in the way in which they view federalism to be working between the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government as well as between different provincial governments. Notably, the most important takeaway from these analyses of institutions, is that Canadians' overall affective and evaluative perspectives on

the variety of institutions that make our democracies function, are consistently less than satisfactory.

Likewise, similar problems are especially evident when it comes to assessments of authorities. Affective measures of authorities, from what I can tell, are generally used to tap orientations toward specific political authorities in the literature, namely political leaders (including leadership likeability assessments or approval ratings) and are typically confined to studies that seek to understanding leadership qualities or explain voting behavior. Systematic empirical investigations that look across a variety of authorities (both political and non-political) are typically not what we find – despite indications that political actors might be the most problematic political objects overall and that failing trust in these individuals could be seriously damaging democracy (Van der Meer 2017). Instead, many studies frequently rely solely on evaluative measures of support for authorities and conclude rather broadly that such assessments are varied and that public support for politicians (mostly) is quite mixed. Other tendencies when it comes to interpretations of perceptions of "politics" and those that practice it, are to not be overly surprised or concerned when assessments of these individuals are negative, and (beyond their extensive study in the context of voting behavior research) in the field of political support research, orientations toward authorities are generally underexplained (instead cynicism toward authorities or perceptions of corruption are tapped only as an explanation for support for other objects, while affective assessments of different authorities are rarely contrasted and few, if any, ever examine what drives such low affective feelings).

My analysis thus builds on what I believe to be a limitation in the field to date which undervalues the importance of studying support for authorities. I contribute here (like for other objects) by providing a broader review of affective feelings toward a variety of authorities, both political and non-political so that, in the next chapters I can assess some of the reasons why support for these individuals, to whom we delegate so much of our important political decision-making, is so low. Beyond affective assessments of these different authorities, the analyses in this chapter also included the investigation of an expanded set of evaluative measures.

The key finding that the analysis of these indicators unearthed is that, regardless of the type of assessment, political authorities (either political leaders or other political authorities such as elected representatives, senators, or politicians in general) are disliked and assessed more harshly than non-political ones (such as civil servants and judges), which is similar to what I found for institutions (comparing political and non-political institutions). Furthermore, among political authorities, political leaders in general receive less support than elected representatives in general. Also, politicians and senators in general are the least well-liked of all authorities on the platform of Canadian politics. In addition, I find that federal and municipal leaders are more well-liked than provincial ones[445].

Meanwhile, when it comes to distinguishing between affective and evaluative assessments, I also found that, unlike other political objects, evaluative assessments of political authorities (including satisfaction, confidence and evaluations of the jobs being done) generally tend to be more positive than affective assessments (of like or dislike). Also, within these evaluative assessments, elected representatives are perceived as doing a better job than political leaders, politicians in general, or senators. Also, at the provincial level in particular, confidence and satisfaction levels in members of legislatures exceed confidence and satisfaction levels in

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[445] Although according to the 2021 CES (as demonstrated in the previous chapter), for Quebec this has recently shifted, where support for Premier Legault following his election in 2018 was much higher than support for Justin Trudeau. The new round of PCSP data collection in 2023 will be able to confirm whether or not this trend persists.

leaders. Furthermore, although Quebecers and other Canadians are generally quite similar in the way their evaluations vary across authorities, there are a couple of important cross-contextual variations that stand out. Notably, Quebecers not only dislike civil servants and representatives of the crown more than do other Canadians, but they also evaluate the job performance of these two groups of authorities more harshly. By and large, however, the most significant message that stands out here about Canadians' perceptions of their political authorities, is that overall, they are severely disliked (in fact, equated with being failures) and seen as consistently underperforming or delivering at a level that is far below satisfactory. And, just like pursuing a better understanding of why support for other system objects might vary, I content that an investigation of the factors driving support for authorities is also worthwhile.

In the next chapter, given the prevalence of a "deep diversity" in Canadian society (C. Taylor 1997), and the importance of diversity to the study and understanding of Canadian politics (M. Smith 2009), I begin delving into what might explain variations in support by first investigating the extent to which support for these various objects differs (i.e. is observable, relevant, or significant) across the prominent groups that traditionally divide Canadian society: including language, where one was born (Canada or elsewhere), or political orientations toward federalism and sovereignty (for Quebecers).

Chapter 7: Scope of the Political Support Problem: Digging Deeper across other Traditional Divides

Introduction

Given the diversity in language, origins, and certain key political mindsets present in this country (such as on national unity and specifically the enduring issue of Quebec's independence), it is reasonable to expect that certain groups on either side of such traditional divides, and consequently on either side of various winning and losing political outcomes, may be more disaffected with how well their political system serves them, compared to others.

However, beyond differences between Quebecers and other Canadians (as I dug into in Chapter 6), few studies in the Canadian context have systematically explored the ways in which support varies across any of the other traditional divides that typically characterize the politics in this country[446]. Does the complex nature of political support observed throughout the previous chapters consistently transcend different groups in Canadian society? Moreover, do the cross-group comparisons reveal any notable discrepancies? This chapter is not intended to be a long diversion that explores the origins of *why* some of these groups may be more disaffected than others. It is intended only to provide another snapshot of *how* support differs between them. As such it is purposely kept shorter than the others. The main purpose of this chapter is to build on and slightly extend the narrative of complexity and diversity initiated in the preceding chapters and to serve as a transition into the next phase of the analysis presented in Chapter 8, where I evaluate the extent to which these traditional group differences or divides compare to other theoretically posited explanations of support that I introduced in Chapter 3.

The first set of findings illustrated in this chapter, serve to outline (when looking at the responses of Canadians from across the country) the impact of language and origin differences, as well as the effect of differences in political views surrounding Quebec independence, on support for community, regime, institutions, and authorities generally. The second set of findings introduced in this chapter display the variations that occur when looking separately across each of the different levels of government, offering a synopsis of the ways in which traditional group divisions may affect support for different objects at each of the three levels of government – federal, provincial and municipal – using more holistic measures of support[447].

As previously discussed, most assessments of political support in the literature tend to be derived from general support questions that either do not specify a particular level of government, or that look only at the national or federal level. In the case of the "general"

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[446] As I discussed in Chapter 2 and began demonstrating in Chapter 5 using the data that have been available to researchers studying the Canadian context so far.

[447] For example, when tapping evaluations of democracy, instead of asking "how satisfied are you with democracy in general", I suggest that future analyses use measures that combine evaluations of a variety of specific aspects of democracy, asked across all levels of government.

assessments in this chapter, and in the remaining analyses in this project, I draw on measures[448] that I created by combining assessments (evaluative vs. affective) about all three levels of government using various additive indices. These general assessments were first presented in the score card figures in Chapter 6 and will be used as the dependent variables throughout this chapter as well as in Chapter 8[449]. General assessments calculated in this way are more reflective of the true nature of "general" support because they account, within a single measure, for all the variance that might exist within an individual respondents' assessment of a particular political object[450].

In other words, these new indicators allow me to offer a more accurate portrayal of the concept of "general support", by capturing views of each object across all three levels of government (simultaneously drawing from responses to multiple evaluative or affective support questions). These indicators also potentially mitigate the amount of error in our measurement of the concept of support, and our resulting understanding, that might be introduced when we ask more general survey questions (for instance, instead of questioning citizens about their support "in general" and hoping that they are not thinking about just one level of government when providing their response).

Nature & Extent – Variations Across Traditional Groups

As the preceding chapters made clear, there are considerable variations in political support that are evident depending on who we survey. Specifically, Quebecers and non-Quebecers have different orientations toward the political system, perceiving governance in this country differently across levels of government. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, given long-standing or traditional differences that have developed across and between these territorial contexts, that depending on citizens' backgrounds and historic experiences they may also view parts of the political system in different ways.

Language and cultural differences, for instance, have been posited to affect belonging and the opportunities available to citizens (Picot 2008; Soroka, Johnston, and Banting 2007). Also, important value differences have been demonstrated to exist between Canadian and non-Canadian born citizens (Kanji 2012a). Furthermore, traditionally opposing views about the unity of the political system itself might drive greater cynicism and disillusionment with certain

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[448] Unless otherwise noted, "general" assessments are created by combining cross-level assessments on a variety of measures tapping either affective or evaluative assessments. "General" evaluative assessments are created in this way (combining multiple evaluative indicators) for all objects. "General" affective assessments created in this way are only possible for the community, regime, and authorities. General affective assessments of institutions, on the other hand, are based on questions that tap general assessments of these objects, not cross-level general assessments (i.e. governments and legislatures in general, not a combination of responses to questions asking about institutions at all three levels). Generating an additive index for institutions using cross-level indicators was not possible due to the absence of questions in this round of the PCSP.

[449] Details of the way these additive indices are constructed may be found in Appendix A2.

[450] Thanks to the inclusion of responses about all three levels of government asked about in different ways. For example, by adding together responses about pride, patriotism, and like/dislike for each of the three political communities, the measure of the concept of "general" affective support for the political community more accurately captures the range in possible orientations toward this object as illustrated in Chapter 6. In other words, this new "general" community support indicator now accounts for the fluctuations in support that could be introduced by different question interpretations or individual subjective meanings, that might be caused by choosing one question to tap support over another (for instance, someone might feel a great deal of pride but not be patriotic at all), or by asking about only one political community versus another (or even by asking about political communities in general, and ending up with some respondents who are thinking about different things when answering the question).

political communities more than others (Kornberg and Clarke 1992). But to what extent have such differences become embedded within the fabric of Canadian society and permeate into the ways in which citizens support their various political communities, the regime, their institutions, and their political authorities?

Given the deep diversity that exists within Canadian society, including differences in language, contrasting viewpoints on the separation of Quebec from Canada (or greater Quebec independence), and the large immigrant population that makes up Canadian society, any responsive system should endeavour to keep track of how different groups perceive the political system to be meeting their expectations (Dahl 1971; Meisel 1976; Linde and Peters 2020). Indeed, the different ways in which each of these groups either receives or perceives the numerous inducements generated by their political system (in the form of services, opportunities, or even limitations and restrictions), or their perceptions of the objects that produce these inducements, may be affected and driven in different ways. The consequences of which, at the very least, need to be better understood, in case they require attention.

To determine the true extent of any disconnect between what a diverse public wants and what they perceive they are receiving, therefore, it becomes necessary to establish whether different groups are indeed experiencing their political systems in different ways. As such, my analyses turn now to the examination of the extent to which support varies, not just across levels of government and different territorial contexts as was shown in the previous chapters, but also across various important traditional groups that have long existed in Canada: including different language groups, immigrants vs. native born Canadians, and those who may be more inclined to want to keep Canada together (federalists and the ROC) vs. those who would prefer greater independence for Quebec (separatists, sovereigntists and nationalists).

Traditional groupings in these analyses are created based on responses to several questions (see a full listing in Appendix A2). For instance, across Canada, respondents were asked about their mother tongue, responses to which do not necessarily correlate directly with variations in territorial context examined in the preceding two chapters. That is, responses to this question were coded into three groups, "English", "French", and "Allophone" (those who expressed neither French nor English as their mother tongue), that are scattered and distributed in varying ways across different parts of this country. Also, respondents were asked about where they were born. These responses were grouped into two categories, those who were born in Canada and those who were not (these were marked as "immigrants")[451]. In addition, the third set of groups that I examine here is created based on responses to a question asked only in Quebec which taps political orientations toward national unity, asking whether respondents consider themselves to be a nationalist[452], separatist, sovereigntist, or federalist. In this case, my coding of the responses to this question are intended to compare "Quebec nationalists" and "independentists" (sovereigntists or separatists) to groups who see themselves as "federalists in Quebec" or who are located outside of Quebec (and thus, not asked this question).

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[451] Note that all respondents are citizens, as this was a requirement for inclusion in the survey.

[452] These indicators are based simply on self-categorization according to the labels of nationalist, separatist, sovereigntist or federalist but, for the purposes of this project, do not dig deeper into what each of these labels may mean to those who are selecting them. This is certainly an important avenue for further consideration in future waves of the PCSP. For a discussion of the variations in understandings of Quebec nationalism, for instance, as well as how this understanding may differ greatly in recent years from its original foundations and expressions, see Salée (2022)

The first illustration in Figure 7.1 provides an overview of the ways in which these traditional groupings intersect[453] with both affective acceptance of various political objects and evaluative judgments about these objects. Comparing the effect of traditional group differences on these measures in this way allows us to step back a little bit and observe a snapshot of whether, in fact, various groups do perceive their political system in different ways – regardless of the way in which we ask the political support questions.

The first finding of note here is the different impact that traditional groups have on affective assessments versus the impact they have on evaluative judgements. As can be seen at first glance, differing language and immigration status for all Canadians, as well as political orientations toward national unity and greater Quebec independence, are more likely to have significant effects on affective assessments (illustrated by blue bars on the left) than they do on evaluative assessments (illustrated using orange bars on the right). This suggests that the evaluative assessments of various political objects by different groups are actually quite similar (i.e. there are few statistically significant differences in how they evaluate political objects). Also, the results indicate that group differences tend to impact affective assessments of political objects more so than they impact evaluations of them (i.e. there are more statistically significant group effects when looking at affective assessments). None of this is to suggest, however, that political support does not differ across different traditional group divides or that we should not be concerned about what these variations might suggest.

Indeed, when looking at support in general (across levels of government, not at each level separately), the findings suggest that the territorial community in which one lives is far more likely to significantly impact overall acceptance of political communities as well as the extent to which respondents like their political institutions or authorities. More specifically, when it comes to the differences between Quebecers and other Canadians, these results show that Quebecers express less affective support overall toward political communities (-.08), institutions (-.13), and authorities (-.04) than other Canadians. More specifically, Quebecers have less tendency than non-Quebecers to express feeling pride, patriotism or affection (like/dislike) toward their political communities and institutions, regardless of what language they speak, where they were born, or even their views on federalism or sovereignty. Also, the evidence shows that Quebecers are more negative than other Canadians when it comes to affective feelings about leaders and elected representatives.

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[453] In cases where there are no significant differences between groups that appear (or the differences are not statistically significant), the results are simply excluded from the illustrations. I have done this simply to keep this detailed analysis as uncluttered and as straightforward as possible.

Figure 7.1 – Extent: General Support Across Traditional Groups – Affective vs. Evaluative Assessments – All of Canada
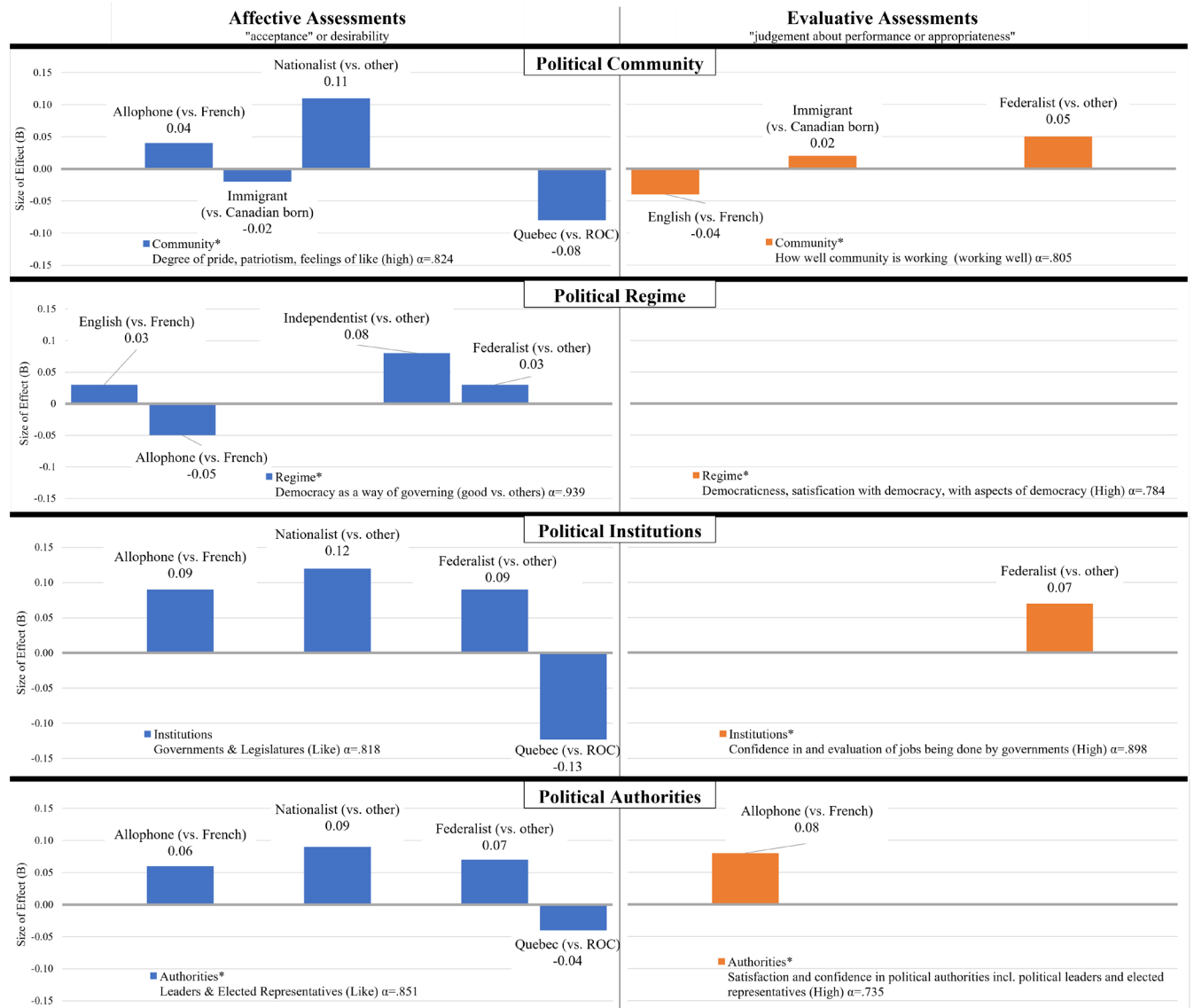
Source: PCSP 2017

Notes: Based on OLS regressions of each traditional group against both affective and evaluative measures of political support. Sample sizes for each analysis range from 1,759 to 6,178. Objects marked with an asterisk (*) represent "general" assessments of objects that were created, where available, by adding responses across three levels of government (rather than relying only a single question that asks about support for the object "in general" without specifying a level of government). Question wording for indicators included in each of these indices can be found in Appendix A1. Operationalization of each of these object indices and question wording for traditional group categories can be found in Appendix A2. Note that "Independentists" represents those who are either sovereigntist or separatist. Full regression results can be found in Appendix B2, Table B2.2.

These analyses also show important variations within Quebec. That is, federalists (.07 and .09) and nationalists (.09 and .12) in Quebec have a greater tendency to like political authorities and institutions overall, across all levels of government, relative to Canadians in other parts of the country. Also, nationalists are more affectively predisposed toward their political communities overall (.11) than Canadians in other parts of the country. These results also indicate that federalists (.03) and independentists (.08) in Quebec are more likely than others in Canada to see democracy as being a good way of governing, compared to alternatives (such as army rule, having experts make decisions, or elites that do not need to consult through regular elections).

    These analyses also indicate that affective assessments vary significantly by language[454]. That is, Allophones have more positive affective outlooks toward their various political communities (.04), institutions (.09) and political authorities (.06) than French speakers. Conversely, French speakers have more positive outlooks overall toward democracy as a way of governing than Allophones (-.05). While English speakers are more affectively predisposed toward democracy as a way of governing than French speakers (.03). When it comes to differences in affective assessments across the immigrant/native-born Canadian divide, there is only one significant finding that stands out and it suggests that immigrants are less affectively supportive of their respective political communities (-.02) than native-born Canadians. Otherwise, these analyses reveal that where respondents were born (either within or outside of Canada) has no effect on affective orientations toward any other object.

    When it comes to evaluative assessments, the evidence of significant groups differences that stand out, as mentioned, is not as extensive. This said however, even after controlling for differences in territorial context, the findings reveal that there are significant differences in evaluative assessments of political communities and authorities depending on respondents' mother tongue, differences in origin only influence overall evaluations of political communities, and political orientations toward national unity have some effect on evaluative judgements about how well communities and institutions are working. More specifically, when it comes to evaluations of the way in which various political objects are performing, Allophones are generally more positive about the performance of political leaders and elected representatives (.08) than French speakers, while Anglophones are generally less positive in their evaluations of how well political communities are working (-.04) compared to Francophones.

    The evidence also suggests that, when controlling for other group differences, immigrants tend to be more positive about the workings of political communities (.02) than native-born Canadians. Moreover, the analyses reveal that federalists in Quebec are more likely than other Canadians in the rest of the country to think that political communities are working well (.05). Also, these same federalists in Quebec are more likely to express that political institutions (.07) are performing well, compared to Canadians in the rest of the country.

    These findings help to further reinforce the importance of looking at support across levels of government and highlight that, when deciding how we are going to assess the political system, not only do important distinctions appear across territorial contexts, even within these different contexts, further group distinctions appear. Additionally, the way citizens are asked to assess the

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[454] When conducting regression analyses using nominal variables like language that are unranked, it is necessary to create "dummy" variables. These variables allow me to include groups in the analysis, but the interpretation requires that there always be a baseline category from which all other categories are compared. In this case, Francophones are the baseline category where I compare Anglophones to Francophones, and Allophones to Francophones. I could have set the analysis up instead as Francophones and Allophones vs Anglophones as well. The results would have been the same, only the interpretation of the findings are slightly different.

objects in their system (whether based on affective feelings of acceptance or desirability, or more performance-based evaluations) can also have serious consequences for the interpretations that we draw. In the Canadian case at least, according to these survey data, it appears as if group differences have more consistent and powerful effects on affective acceptance of political objects than they do on judgements about their performance. In other words, if we look only at affective judgements about the political system, we might conclude that groups vary significantly in their assessments and that no other explanations are necessary (for example, negative assessments of the political system in Canada are due largely to differences between Quebec and the rest of Canadians). On the other hand, if we rely solely on assessments derived through questions that ask how well a particular political object is performing, we might conclude that any support problem that does exist is rather uniform across groups (where evaluations are either low or high but that all groups evaluate the political system in the same way) – or that, regardless of the group, evaluations and "judgements about performance or appropriateness" do not change.

Either way, looking at only one type of assessment when figuring out whether group differences matter (just like looking at only one question within a particular assessment type) has the potential to mislead us in our conclusions on the state of political support, the scope of any problem that exists, or the challenges that group differences may pose to democracy. In short, what this analysis has helped to demonstrate is that by using more elaborated (holistic) measures of support, and by observing variations across types of assessments, territorial contexts, and group divides, we can make more sophisticated conclusions about political support and stand a better chance at making inroads when seeking to target specific areas for improvement[455].

As mentioned, the measures employed in the analyses presented in Figure 7.1 above provide a snapshot of how support varies when we look at support in "general", using aggregated measures that combine (wherever possible) various affective versus evaluative assessments of all levels of government. This approach can be useful for developing a more profound understanding of the overall state of the political support problem in a multi-level system of governance, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter. However, as was also illustrated, there may be certain instances where, despite the gains that a holistic understanding of political support provides, simply combining support measures across levels of government (just like asking about support generally, without understanding the particulars of each level of government), may also conceal important distinctions between these levels that could well require uneven and/or different types of attention.

The next section provides an illustration of how, if we rely solely on these aggregated measures of political support, we might also unwittingly obscure variations that exist across

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[455] These are not specific policy or reform recommendations at this point. Instead, these group differences reveal that there are certain factors that might be especially relevant for certain groups in determining their levels of support, which should be explored to better understand why. For instance, allophones are more likely to have deeper affective orientations toward political communities, institutions, and authorities, but may be more likely to support alternative ways of governing our political system. Meanwhile, performance perceptions appear to vary quite consistently across groups in Canada (with a few exceptions), which might suggest that performance problems cannot necessarily be blamed on the fact that different groups are experiencing democracy differently (with some winning and some losing) but rather that the grades being given by citizens on the performance of their system's objects are rather consistent across these groups. In other words, where the system's objects are perceived to be failing (especially authorities and institutions), these failures are being perceived rather consistently across the board (again, with some exceptions as described above).

levels of government[456]. By comparing the general findings on affective support for different objects, to the affective support that can be observed across levels of government I hope to make the case both for more robust and complex measures of support as well as for a careful, granular presentation of the support picture. By contrasting the two approaches (the top-level big picture results on the new aggregated indicators compared to the cross-level results on these same indicators), I am able to point out some group differences that may be missed by choosing one approach over the other. I am also able to further outline the extent to which traditional groups differ from each other, depending on which level of government they are assessing, confirming that traditional divides may still be an important piece to consider when sorting out the overall political support puzzle in the Canadian case[457].

Nature & Extent – Variations Across Traditional Groups – Across Levels of Government
Each of the analyses that I have conducted and reported to this point have revealed at least some variations in support for political objects across different levels of government. Moreover, one of the major results of this more detailed investigation thus far has been the uncovering of what may be an emerging pattern. That is, these findings have generally shown that political support at the provincial level tends to be lower than support at the national and municipal levels. Furthermore, these cross-level variations appear relatively consistent regardless of the type of assessment (whether affective or evaluative) or the measures used to tap support (including, for instance, indicators that tap satisfaction with democracy or the job being done overall by various institutions, to evaluations of specific aspects of democracy or specific jobs being done by each government).

The preceding analyses have also repeatedly pointed to differences between Quebecers and other Canadians, although these differences have not always been as stark. Nor have they varied consistently in the ways that we might have previously expected, given traditional narratives and accounts of historical divides. Still, to further test how consistent these general findings are, and expand our understanding of whether traditional group divides may be responsible for varying support, this next set of analyses controls for the same traditional groupings examined above, but probes deeper to determine whether there are any additional differences that may be evident and statistically relevant across levels of government.

In the remainder of this chapter and in Chapter 8[458], discussions of distinctions between groups are based on differences derived from affective support measures only[459]. As discussed, these affective expressions of support are the system orientations that are considered to be most deep-seated and stable. They are the storehouses of support that are (at least theoretically) most resistant to everyday fluctuations in performance. As previous work has demonstrated, evaluative assessments of objects can (and may well) fluctuate over time but sentiments such as pride and patriotism, moral judgments about the 'goodness' or 'rightness' of a particular type of

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[456] My purpose in doing this is to highlight that, as we build more fully specified (aggregated) indicators of support – even if they are more robust than indicators based on just one question, or more holistic than assessments at just one level – it is important that we not lose sight of the cross-level variations that also exists (just like I outlined in Chapter 6, the possible variations in individual indicators that make up these aggregated measures). In other words, no matter how tempting it might be to simply present a parsimonious quick picture based on these new indicators, I believe it is important that we still present the granular pieces of how the aggregated support measures vary across all objects, across all levels, and across (in this case) across the various groups.

[457] A piece that I continue to assess and built upon in Chapter 8.

[458] As well as the object assessments upon which I will test the variety of possible explanations.

[459] Affective support indicators become the dependent variables in the remainder of the analyses.

regime, or feelings of like or dislike, are potentially more deep-seated and therefore both implied and expected to be the most enduring and long-lasting (Kornberg and Clarke 1983; Dalton 2004a). In my effort to determine the full extent of the support problem through variations in affective support, I am not abandoning the investigation of evaluative assessments. Rather, these evaluative object performance assessments shift into the driver's seat[460], returning in Chapter 8 where I systematically analyze what drives affective support to vary the way that it does[461].

When shifting the focus to look primarily at affective assessments of political objects in this next analysis, it is important to note one minor limitation. While the PCSP surveys questioned respondents about their affective orientations toward all four objects in general[462], we only included affective assessment indicators that tapped orientations across levels for three of the objects (community, regime, and authorities) – with affective orientations toward institutions asked about in general only (not across levels)[463]. Although this is a limitation when looking to compare group assessments across all objects at different levels, I will show in Chapter 8 that this limitation can be overcome for the purpose of the explanatory analyses[464].

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[460] Evaluative support indicators join other explanatory variables in the remainder of the analyses.

[461] In these final analyses I examine the extent to which fluctuating and distinct evaluations of each political object help to explain variance in otherwise deep-seated affective orientations, while holding constant any other theoretically posited drivers of support variation as outlined in Chapter 3. In other words, how do evaluations stand up against other prominent theoretical explanations of political support while also examining (more directly) how evaluative assessments of more specific objects (like authorities and institutions) may also percolate upward and influence affective assessments of more diffuse ones (such as the regime and community). This will be done by through analyses that control for a more fully specified collection of theoretically plausible alternative explanations (beyond just traditional groups) – all explanations are also listed and operationalized in Appendix A2.

[462] Where affective assessments of each are tapped either generally (without specifying a level of government) or can be derived by building a "general" assessment through the compilation of assessments of all three levels.

[463] Using a 100-point thermometer that taps feelings toward legislatures and governments (courts, the civil service, and political parties are excluded for the additive index used here).

[464] Affective assessments of institutions will be measured across levels of government in the upcoming round of the PCSP to be fielded in 2023, and I will be able to incorporate and test them relatively shortly. For now, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 8, I am able to achieve at least some cross-level understanding on institutional support thanks to the inclusion, in the 2017 PCSP, of evaluative assessments across levels of government as well as several other related explanatory variables that are measured across different levels.

Figure 7.2 – Extent: Support Across Levels of Government and Across Traditional Groups – Affective Assessments – All of Canada
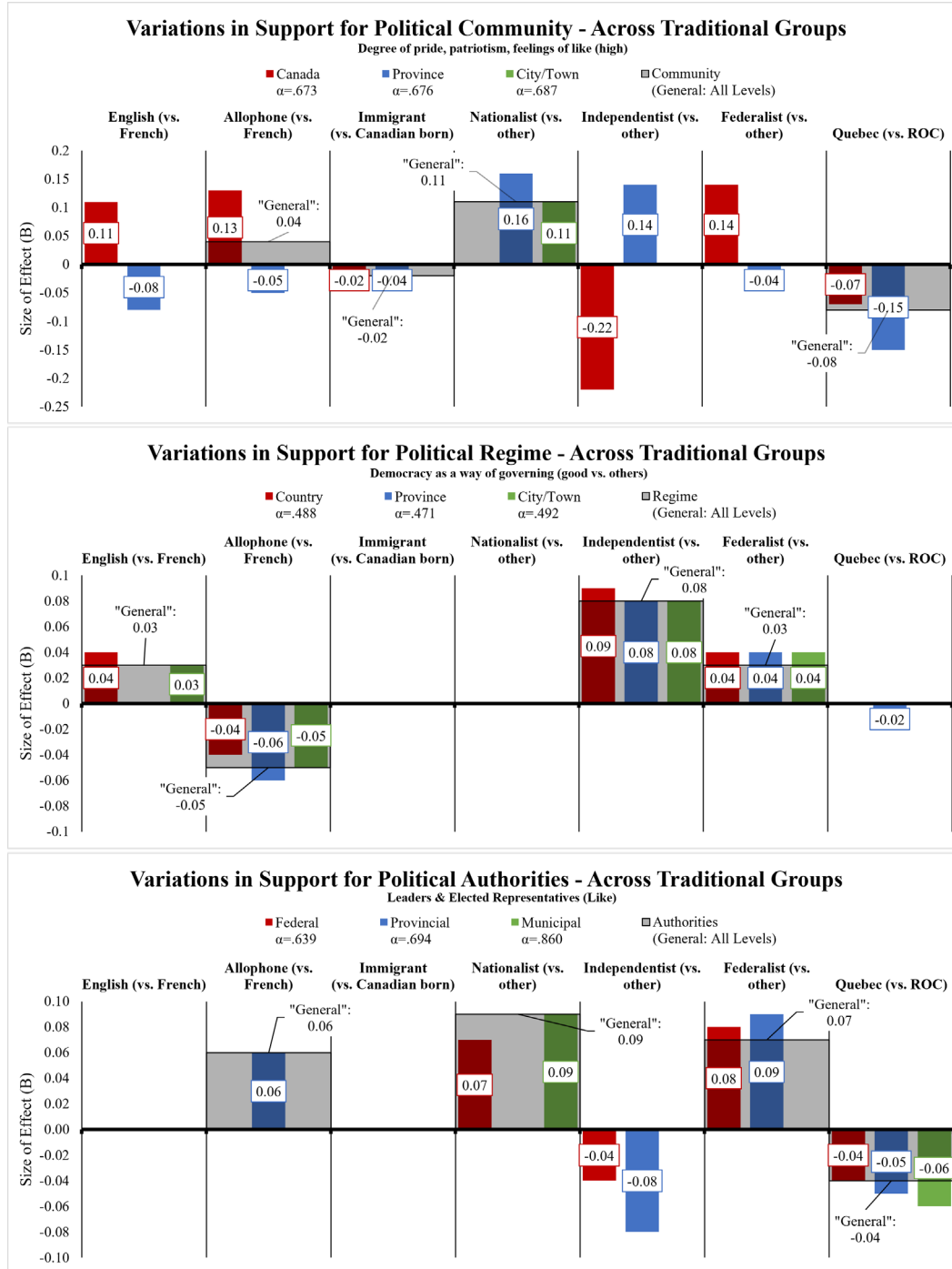
Source: PCSP 2017

Notes: Based on OLS regressions measuring the effect of each traditional group against affective measures of political support (the effect of these groups on evaluative support can be found in Table B2.4 in the Appendix). There are no cross-level results for institutions as questions tapping affective assessments of political institutions are not yet available in the PCSP. Sample sizes for each analysis range from 4,060 to 5,067. Question wording for indicators included in each of these indices can be found in Appendix A1. Operationalization of each of these object indices and question wording for traditional group categories can be found in Appendix A2. Full regression results can be found in Appendix B2, Table B2.3.

Alongside these unpacked, cross-level results presented in Figure 7.2, I have kept, for comparison purposes, the results on "general" affective assessments (marked by grey bars) presented in the previous section (which are based on the cross-level aggregated indicators of affective support as displayed in Figure 7.1)[465]. The analyses presented reveal how differences across various traditional social divides based on language differences, point of origin differences, and variations in views toward national unity and greater Quebec independence influence affective support for three main political objects (political communities, regime, and authorities) across three different levels of government (federal, provincial, and municipal).

Generally, these findings reveal that, even after controlling for differences in basic territorial contexts, there are a variety of other important group distinctions that appear when investigating affective political support for objects at different levels of government. These differences are at least on par, if not greater in magnitude than the group effects that were detected on the aggregated cross-level measures of affective political support examined in Figure 7.1. Indeed, such distinctions may further complicate the political support story in Canada and conceivably any potential strategy that might be devised to address any problem areas that appear.

As before, I begin by briefly outlining the basic variations in affective political support that are attributable solely to differences in territorial contexts[466], as these contribute to developing a better overall understand of the distribution of political support in the Canadian context. The data in this case show that Quebecers differ significantly from other Canadians in terms of their lower affective support for their political communities at the national (-.07) and provincial levels (-.15), in their lower affective support for their provincial democracy (-.02), and in terms of their lower levels of affective support for their political leaders and elected representatives at all three levels of government (from -.04 to -.06).

What these findings reinforce right off the bat is the earlier claim that there are significant differences in affective support levels for different political objects between Quebecers and Canadians who reside in other provinces. Additionally, these differences between Quebecers and non-Quebecers exist independent of the effect of other important traditional group differences such as language, place of birth, and orientations toward federalism, Quebec nationalism, and independence. That is, Quebecers tend systematically to be less affectively disposed toward political objects across most levels of government (authorities at all levels, the provincial and

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[465] As mentioned, because the 2017 PCSP wave did not include questions tapping feelings toward political institutions at different levels of government, this object is excluded here. To get an idea of whether any cross-level variations for institutions do exist, a brief look at assessments of evaluative measures (in Table B2.4) reveals traditional groupings influence support for institutions at different levels of government in only a few ways. First, language has a significant effect on institutional support only at the provincial level. Here, Allophones (.09) and Anglophones (.07) report being overall more confident and happier with the job being done by their provincial governments than Francophones. When looking at affective assessments, only Allophones stood out as more positive about their institutions in general. Meanwhile, these language groups do not differ significantly in their evaluations of the federal and municipal governments. Second, the analysis reveals that in Quebec, Federalists evaluate their federal (.12) and municipal (.10) governments more positively than independentists (which is similar to the way they 'feel' about institutions generally). This said, political orientations toward federalism and sovereignty have no significant effect on evaluations of the provincial government in Quebec. Finally, among all Canadians, immigrants and Canadian-born citizens do not differ significantly when it comes to how they evaluate their political institutions at all levels, nor do Quebecers differ overall from other Canadians, despite being less likely to "like" political institutions generally.

[466] In this case, variations driven by contextual territorial context are measured while controlling for possible variations that are introduced based on traditional group differences.

federal political communities, and democracy as a way of governing the province) compared to citizens in other provinces regardless of the language they speak, where they were born, or their political orientations toward federalism and Quebec independence. In all cases the evidence shows that Quebecers are consistently less supportive of their own provincial political community, regime, and authorities than are Canadians in other provinces.

Despite these territorial differences, however, higher negativity among Quebecers compared to other Canadians toward various political objects (whether toward authorities or communities, or the tendency to accept non-democratic forms of governing) remains underexplained (or explained only by territorial boundaries, which cannot be an explanation in and of itself without some other underlying force[467]). Indeed, despite inclusion of other traditional group differences, the persistence of a strong territorial effect suggests that my analyses require even more digging for other potential causes for variations in support (which happens in Chapter 8).

This is not to say that longstanding traditional divides, including political orientations toward sovereignty in Quebec, do not help to explain at least some of the variations I observe in political support. Indeed, views on federalism and sovereignty do, to a certain extent, drive some of the support variations observed for each of the political objects under investigation here (as was observed when looking at support in general). The effect of these orientations can also be felt across each level of government, and sometimes they even play out in different ways depending on the level being observed.

For instance, the evidence in Figure 7.2 shows that federalists in Quebec are more likely to affectively support the federal political community (.14) and slightly less likely to support their provincial political community (-.04) compared to Canadians in other provinces. These nuances were altogether wiped out when looking only at the aggregated cross-level data reported in Figure 7.1. Note too, that independentists express less pride, patriotism, and affection toward Canada (-.22) and more toward Quebec (.14) than Canadians in other provinces, which is yet another finding that was muted by the aggregated evidence. Additionally, the more detailed cross-level investigation reveals that nationalists in Quebec have strong affective sentiments overall, expressing more pride, patriotism and liking for their provincial (.16) and municipal (.11) communities than Canadians elsewhere in the country.

These differences in affective feelings about communities would require additional digging to figure out exactly what is going on. For instance, the findings reported here do not suggest immediately that nationalists are more negative about the Canadian community than other Canadians, differences are only observed in their views of their provinces and municipalities (suggesting that, for nationalists, support for a strong Quebec does not necessarily mean a rejection of Canada). Meanwhile, independentists dislike the Canadian political community far more than other Canadians, but they do not differ in their assessments of their municipal communities compared to other Canadians. The evidence also suggests that federalists and independentists in Quebec share certain views when it comes to regime support. That is, both groups are more supportive of democracy as a way of governing than Canadians in other parts of the country (independentists: .08 to .09; federalists: .04), while nationalists do not differ from other Canadians in their views about how to govern the regime.

Cross-level differences in outlooks toward greater independence in Quebec also emerge as important determinants of affective support for political authorities at different levels of

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[467] As Henderson (2004) describes, these differences cannot be based solely on "provincial boundaries", they are more likely based in the diverse subcultures that exist in these different areas.

government. For instance, the evidence shows that federalists in Quebec tend to like their federal (.08) and provincial (.09) leaders and elected representatives more than Canadians elsewhere. Also, nationalists in Quebec like their federal (.07) and municipal (.09) leaders more than Canadians in other provinces. Independentists on the other hand, dislike their federal (-.04) and provincial (-.08) leaders more than Canadians in other parts of the country. Keep in mind too, that these significant differences remain after controlling for basic territorial, language, and immigration effects. This means that such group distinctions, based on differences in political dispositions, stand out even after considering the basic possibility that variations are due simply to differences in political cultures between Quebec and the rest of Canada, or in individual cultural differences based on language or place of birth.

Drawing back to the aggregated cross-level analysis presented in Figure 7.1, it is also important to note here a few examples of exactly how the more detailed cross-level findings can help to improve our overall understanding and (in the future) our potential response effectiveness. Consider, for instance, that were we to ignore differences in the more detailed cross-level findings as presented in Figure 7.2, we might have concluded, that nationalists were more positive about communities at all levels (when the link is only with municipal and provincial community support) or that both nationalists and federalists are more positive about the authorities working at all levels of government (the effect is only present for both groups when it comes to federal authorities, and differs when looking at other authorities)[468]. Meanwhile, we may have concluded that feelings about independence or federalism do not matter at all when it comes to community support or that independentists do not differ from others in their feelings about authorities. However, as I have shown, this is clearly not the case and that not all expressions of support play out in the same way for all political groups across all levels. The most important takeaway here is that, based on these variations, figuring out why support variations (beyond political orientation) are occurring becomes even more crucial. In other words, the stresses that are potentially being manifested through greater identification with nationalism or independence, could have important consequences when it comes to the legitimacy of different governments and the future of national unity, and political orientation toward these movements on their own are not sufficient to figure out what is truly at the root.

Turning now to look at differences based on mother tongue and origin of birth, the evidence is also telling, however more so in the case of language than it is for immigration status. For example, when it comes to language, Anglophones and Allophones are quite similar in their views toward the national and provincial political community compared to Francophones. Indeed, the evidence suggests that the two other language groups are consistently more supportive of the federal political community (.11 and .13) and less supportive of the provincial political community (-.08 and -.05) than Francophones. The evidence also shows that English speakers from our surveys are more affectively disposed toward democracy as a way of governing at the federal (.04) and municipal (.03) levels than French speakers. In addition, Allophones were less likely to support democracy as a way of governing all three levels

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[468] Whereas nationalists do not differ from other Canadians in their support for provincial authorities, only national and municipal ones. Meanwhile, federalists in Quebec, like nationalists, are more supportive of federal authorities compared to other Canadians, they are also more supportive of provincial authorities compared to other Canadians yet they do not differ significantly in their views toward municipal authorities.

compared to Francophones (-.04 to -.06) [469]. Despite being more disposed to democratic alternatives, however, Allophones also tend to like their provincial political leaders and elected representatives more so than Francophones (.06) and they do not differ significantly from Anglophones.

One may be inclined to think that the findings for Allophones are linked in some way to the findings for immigrants considering there may be a connection between being Allophone and being born outside of Canada. This may, of course, certainly be the case for several of the respondents to these surveys[470]. This said, however, and considering the way in which these analyses are carried out[471], I do find that a small but significant difference appears in affective outlooks between immigrants and native-born Canadians when it comes to views toward community. Here, immigrants are slightly less affectively supportive of their federal (-.02) and provincial (-.04) political communities than native-born Canadians. Meanwhile, given the lack of any significant effect, the evidence comparing immigrants' perceptions to those of native-born Canadians suggests that, when language is held constant, the two groups are otherwise mostly similar when it comes to their affective outlooks toward different political objects across levels of government.

Had I stopped after looking only at the aggregated cross-level support for the political community and for the regime in "general", as I did in Figure 7.1, many of these distinctions would have remained masked. For instance, when it comes to affective support for the political community, the aggregated cross-level analysis suggested that Anglophones were not significantly different from Francophones, whereas in Figure 7.2 we see that they are (Canada: .11; province: -.08). In the same vein, while Allophones were previously demonstrated to be overall more positive about their political communities compared to Francophones (.04), when looking at the disaggregated evidence across different levels, I discover that this applies only to the federal community (.13), and that in fact, similar to Anglophones, Allophones are actually more negative about their provincial community (-.05) compared to French-speaking Canadians.

Likewise, when it comes to assessments of how good it is to govern democratically relative to some other way, the previous aggregated cross-level findings may have led us to believe simply that Anglophones are more likely to favour democracy compared to Francophones (or even Allophones[472]). However, when comparing support at different levels of government, the disaggregated findings illustrate instead that this is mostly the case at the federal (.04) and municipal (.03) levels, and that the provincial levels results are a bit more distinct (wherein Anglophones and Francophones actually do not differ). Discrepancies such as these suggest, not only that we should be cautious not to ignore or brush over cross-level differences in multilevel governance situations, but also, that diverse societies with complicated historical experiences are

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[469] I also ran the analysis using Anglophones as the base category for comparison to determine if any distinctions emerged. For all language differences, where Allophones differ from Francophones, they differ in the same way (either more positive or more negative) when compared to Anglophones.

[470] The Cramer's V measure of association between these two variables reveals a relationship that is statistically significant but moderate enough to suggest that they are not perfectly collinear (.529***). In other words, not all Allophones are also immigrant and vice versa – suggesting that it remains worthwhile to look at the effect of each characteristic separately and that each may have significant independent effects on variations in support.

[471] Given that these analyses are based on OLS regressions that reveal the effects of each characteristic independent of variations in another, and that the measure of association between these two variables is only .529, it is possible to say that the effect of language (being Allophone) is not necessarily neutralizing any effect that immigration status may independently exert on support (due to any multicollinearity between the two variables).

[472] Again, based on the analysis using Anglophones as the baseline category.

likely to also contain important group differences (some of which may even be more recent manifestations) across more or less embedded divides, that need to be considered, investigated and better understood , certainly if we are to make effective inroads in contending with any problem of political support that may be present. In addition, it is also relevant to mention here that isolating for different levels of government is equally as important as aggregating all levels of government when formulating general measures of support. Likewise, while the examination of a more robust "general" or cumulative cross-level assessment of support is preferable to simple or non-specific assessments, creation and use of such measures of general support does not eliminate the need for attention to the subnational variations as well.

In short, as with all other object assessments and consistent with the findings of each of the analyses so far in this project, not only do the indicators used matter significantly, the groups observed, and the focus of those observations are of utmost importance in order to gain a complete, holistic, and concrete understanding of exactly what is going on when assessing any political system. In a more applied sense, if for instance we were to attempt to influence citizens on their feelings about the political system, such as if the federal government were looking to improve sentiments of pride in Canada, or if the provincial government were beginning to fear increasing rejection of democratic ideals for governing and needed to react, or even if Independentist leaders were looking to grow support for separatism among Nationalist Quebecers, what the results of this analysis seem to suggest is that the approach may need to differ (more or less) depending on the object, the type of sentiment (affective or evaluative), the level of government, the region of the country or the group being targeted.. This is useful information to have in order to improve our overall chances of success on any such initiatives in the future[473].

Conclusion

Despite its shorter length, the results of the analyses presented within this chapter have been illuminating not necessarily in what they directly show about group effects on support (i.e. which groups support what), but rather in emphasizing and justifying where (and how) we need look for differences. Primarily, demonstrating that systematic differences in political support outlooks between groups and across levels of government exist, helps to drive home the importance of including more subnational granular assessments when looking at political support, especially in complex heterogeneous societies like Canada with multi-level governance systems and long historical cultural and political differences.

This said, when it comes to how much of the variation in political support is explained solely by traditional group and territorial differences, the scope is rather limited. According to each of the analyses presented in this chapter, the proportion of the variation in political support outlooks explained by each of these traditional groupings alone across different levels of government ranges generally from less than one percent to around six percent (according to the R-squared coefficients in each regression equation reported). This suggests that controlling for factors such as territory of residence, language, country of birth, and political orientations toward nationalism, separatism, or federalism, by themselves are only likely to help in better locating or targeting various pockets of potential trouble spots, but they are not likely (in and of themselves) to provide the necessary substantive material that will be required to develop more effective

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[473] Again, these are not prescriptions as to *what* we should do to address these things. This simply provides guidance on *where* to look and a warning against more carefully figuring out the problem before trying to implement "solutions".

strategies that are most capable of making more significant inroads toward actually grappling with and minimizing any problems (identified by variations in political support outlooks) that might exist. In other words, I expect that something very important may be at play within these different group contexts, that likely is more directly responsible for variations in political support (and that may also be driving some of the political orientations that appear significant as well), something that has not yet been tapped.

Furthermore, when it comes to targeting areas of concern, looking at traditional group divides might (as I said) highlight where support may be most problematic, but these group differences do little to tell us how we might address the problems these groups perceive. In attempting to increase community attachments or support for democracy as a way of governing, for instance, we cannot force Canadians into a new mother tongue or simply stop immigration altogether[474]. Not only would such approaches take time for any substantial effect to occur, they would likely also be met with significant resistance and might even have negative effects in other areas (such as on the economy or even future social cohesion)[475]. Instead, there are a variety of other areas which may be more readily targeted, that may even have more significant and lasting effects. It is to this investigation that I turn to in the next chapter.

Beyond group differences, there are a variety of other prominent theoretically relevant and empirically substantiated explanations for variations in political support that have been tabled to date. To get an even better sense, therefore, of what it is that might be driving variations in political support in Canada and how we might address any serious problems in political support that may be growing, the next chapter expands the scope of this project even further by testing a variety of the explanations for waning support that were reviewed in Chapter 3. Moreover, in these analyses I also control for basic group differences, as well as several new identity-based controls, which I think may provide even more robust insights into the real magnitude of groups-based influences on variations in political support. As well, I include tests of all these explanations on the entire spectrum of specific to diffuse political objects, across all levels of government including each the municipal, provincial, and federal levels.

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[474] The merits of such policies, of course, come with their own debates and, as the next chapter will show, there may still be cases where such drastic approaches could potentially have effects on support (mostly on support for community and the regime at the federal and provincial levels). However, as the next chapter will also show, there are several other areas in which we might more easily focus efforts that could have even greater impacts. In other words, language and immigration status may still be significant drivers of diffuse support at the federal and provincial levels, however, other factors such as how well these communities are working, and the responsiveness and behaviors of the authorities working within them are much more powerful predictors – and, in turn, areas where change could be address.

[475] Again, Quebec stands out as a prime example of a context in which the state has taken a hard line on language and immigration policy (even drawing on the Charters' Notwithstanding Clause to push such policies forward (Norman 2018; Brosseau and Roy 2018; Serebrin 2022a)) and where such policies continue to be the center of heated debate, criticism, and resistance (Proulx 2018; Shingler 2019; Magder 2021; Lurie 2023; The Canadian Press 2023).

Chapter 8: Explaining Political Support – In Practice

Introduction

In this chapter, I start by delving into a discussion of the effect of identity on political support, beyond just differences across traditional demographic and political outlook groupings as tested in Chapter 7. My aim here is to look at identity in a way that has not been included in other studies of political support to date. I first set the stage for this discussion by providing an example of how identity has been mobilized in politics in recent years, followed by an overview of the way in which identity is distributed across Canada according to my 2017 PCSP data and a discussion of how identifications that are often treated as mutually exclusive (such as social class) are often overlapping. This then leads me to present an analysis of the ways in which individuals who share different identities tend to group together, followed by a brief overview of how these identity groupings influence political support directly.

In the remaining sections of the chapter, I then move to test all the theoretically posited explanations for variations in political support, both on the demand-side and the supply-side, including my newly elaborated evaluative assessment measures, the classic/traditional group divisions included in Chapter 7, and the new identity clusters introduced below. In essence, what the backend of this chapter and the analyses included in it present is a detailed and systematic analysis of the primary determinants of political support across the entire Canadian political system, using not just detailed support measures of various political objects (both affective *and* evaluative), but also incorporating an investigation of all levels of government and a broad-range of Canadian diversity measures stemming from a variety of different traditional and non-traditional societal divides.

Testing Explanations – Introducing Identity

As indicated above, I would like to start this chapter by pointing to what I consider to be a recent and prominent example of identity group mobilization in the Canadian case. I do this mainly to reinforce plausibility, to help to make the case that identity affiliations exist in Canada and that they are likely politicized, mobilized and played out, even in instances where the past literature would seem to have written such possibilities off as mostly irrelevant in the Canadian case. More specifically, the literature suggests that social class is a weak driver of party support in Canada (Polacko, Kiss, and Graefe 2022), but references to various identity groups, based on social class divisions, are increasingly being utilized by more political parties in an attempt to draw attention, prime, attract, and mobilize political support (Liberal Party of Canada 2015; T. Parkin 2021; 2022; Tasker 2022b).

Recall for instance, that during both the 2015 and the 2019 federal election campaigns, the Liberals made regular direct references to social class. Making explicit efforts to mobilize voters around class lines (to achieve greater political support for their own party), they made promises to "strengthen the middle class and those working hard to join it", calling this effort "much more than a slogan" (Wilkinson 2019). More recently, the Conservatives seem to be catching on and taking a page from the Liberal platform playbook (as well as the former NDP playbook for that matter) by making their own more explicit efforts to speak directly to and mobilize the "working" class (Hemmadi 2017; T. Parkin 2021).

Numbers wise at least, the Liberals were not off the mark in thinking that targeting the middle class (and those working to join it, i.e. the working class), would reach a great number of

Canadians. Indeed, according to the results displayed in Table 8.1, in 2000, 2006 and, most recently in 2020, the findings suggest that not only do Canadians self-categorize according to class, but that slightly more than a third self-assessed as falling within the category of 'lower middle class' (34% in 2000 and 2006, 39% in 2020) and another third assessed themselves as upper middle class (28%, in 2000 and 37% in 2020).

Table 8.1 – Canadians' Social Class Self-Categorization – 2000 to 2020

Social class	2000	Δ →	2006	Δ →	2020
Upper class	1%	-	1%	+1	2%
Upper middle class	28%	+3	31%	+6	37%
Lower middle class	34%	-	34%	+5	39%
Working class	33%	-3	30%	-13	17%
Lower class	5%	-	5%	-	5%
n=	1,866		2,068		4,018

World Values Surveys (WVS) 2000, 2006, and 2020 (R. F. Inglehart et al. 2020)
WVS Question: "People sometimes describe themselves as belonging to the working class, the middle class, or the upper or lower class. Would you describe yourself as belonging to the…" Categories: "Upper class", "Upper middle class", "Lower middle class", "Working class", "Lower class".

The balance of Canadians described themselves as falling within the categories of either 'lower' or 'working class' (38% in 2000 and 22% in 2020) or 'upper class' (29% in 2000 and 39% in 2020). In this respect then, speaking directly to the middle class (and those aspiring to be middle class) and trying to mobilize this group for political support seemed like a strong move.

Not only did this group represent a large portion of Canadians prior to the 2015 campaign (most Canadians in 2000 and 2006 – more than 90% – self categorized themselves as either middle or working class), but research from EKOS (Graves 2016) also reveals that an important change had occurred over the period from 2000 to 2016. In 2000, 67% saw themselves and their household as 'middle class', yet by 2012 to 2016 this proportion had dropped to around 47-48%. Furthermore, right around the time of the start of the Liberal's first mandate, it was revealed that 40% of Canadians who categorized themselves as 'working class' when the surveys were conducted in 2016 had previously, 10 years earlier, self-categorized as 'middle class' (Graves 2017)[476]. This significant downward shift from middle class to working class, clearly represented an important demographic of potentially disgruntled voters who, whether the Liberal party was aware of it or not, may have been especially open to identity group (particularly social class related) priming and mobilization (Klar 2013)[477]. Moreover, to the extent that the WVS data are

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[476] EKOS bases their results on responses to the question "would you describe you and your household as poor, working class, middle class, or upper class?". They are not included in Table 8.1 as findings for each category are not available, they mainly report proportions self-categorizing as middle class.
[477] Klar (2013) discusses the effect of identity priming in this way (in the United States, using parenthood as the identity being primed) and the types of rhetoric that may be especially successful in winning over the maximum number of voters. My foray into this question is simply illustrative and I am not testing the types of priming or the intentions of the Liberals, I simply wish to demonstrate the extent to which mobilization of a group sharing certain characteristics (economic or social) may have had important effects on the way in which a majority of Canadians later claim to identify.

comparable to, and help to build off of what EKOS has reported, the evidence provided in Table 8.1 indicates that by 2020 the 'upper middle class' category had grown considerably, to more than double (37%) that of the 'working class' (17%) and by nearly 10% from 2000. So, although the WVS data do not provide insights into whether those who more recently consider themselves middle class had previously self-categorized as working class, they do suggest that after 5 years under a Liberal government, many Canadians may feel that their social class position has indeed improved. For instance, compared to 2006, these data indicate that the middle class category has grown by 11 points to represent 76% of Canadians, while the working class has decreased by 13 points to represent 17% of Canadians.

It is possible of course, that these data simply reflect the greater salience of the 'middle class' group in the minds of Canadians that has come from increased references to social class in the political rhetoric used by the Liberals, as well as other political parties, over the years since 2015, and their resulting inclination to want to be a part of the fold. Either way, my PCSP data suggest that this heightened social class related priming within the political realm may have, in effect, helped to activate and mobilize a previously dormant and insignificant economic stratification into a more embedded and politically charged identity delineation along class lines (Proudfoot 2019) that further complicates (texturizes) the identity group structure (fabric) that exists within Canadian society and that is likely citizen determined, fluid, and even redetermined from time-to-time.

More specifically, when looking at identity affiliations more directly, using a question worded more specifically around identification with a group rather than self-categorization within the group based on social class (which may itself be more directly driven by education, income, or other factors)[478], my results (based on data from the PCSP) indicate that, despite clear distinctions in proportions of Canadians falling into separate class categories (especially lower class versus middle class), a large number actually identify with both groups. So, regardless of how successful the Liberals were in shifting Canadians' self-assessed class-based position from one social class to another, it is possible that their priming of class may have (at the very least) had an important effect of alerting and heightening citizens' awareness of their social class-based identities and thereby encouraging them to observe the politics within and outcomes from the political domain from a more class-based perspective. Moreover, depending on how these citizens feel they fared and the ways in which they perceived the consequences, it is certainly conceivable that their identity group affiliations may in fact help to shape their outlooks toward and support for different political objects.

In order to eventually test this possibility, however, I need first to gain a better perspective of the overall structure and distribution of Canadians' identity affiliations. To do this, I turn now to a more considered examination of the most recent data from the 2017 PCSP.

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[478] See again, the most recent EKOS report on social class for a demonstration of the demographic indicators associated with various social class categories as well as the other factors that individuals may personally associate with the middle class (Graves 2017).

Figure 8.1 – Identity Groups in Canada (2017)

Exclusive/No Identity	Distribution of Identities	Cross-Cutting Identities

Class

Identify with:
None: **10%**
Only one: **21%**

- Elites — **12** → 6%
- The middle class — **73** → 58%
- The working class — **71** → 26%
- The poor — 39

Language

Identify with:
None: **34%**
Only one: **40%**

- Anglophones — 53 → 17%
- Francophones — 29 → 11%
- Allophones — 21

In-Groups

Identify with:
None: **11%**
Only one: **15%**

- People who are your own age — 71 → 45%
- People from your country of birth — 70
- People of your cultural-ethnic background — 62 → Three or more: **55%** All : **27%**
- People of your faith — 42

Other Groups

Identify with:
None: **20%**
Only one: **18%**

- Environmentalists — 43
- Immigrants — 37
- Entrepreneurs — 35
- Visible minorities — 33
- Feminists — 32 → At least two: **62%**
- Federalists — 29
- Unions — 24
- The LGBTQ community — 21
- First Nations-Inuit-Métis — 20

Quebec

Identify with:
None: **23%**
Only one: **39%**

- Québécois — 70 → 29%
- Nationalists — 34 → 15%
- Sovereigntists — 26 → 17%
- Separatists — 22

Proportion (%) 0 20 40 60 80 100

Data: Political Communities Survey Project 2017 (n=2,669).
Question: "How much do you identify with each of the following?".
Responses illustrated represent those that indicated "A great deal" or "Quite a lot".

My assumption here, of course, is that Canadians likely have different and indeed multiple (sometimes even cross-cutting) identity affiliations. In this survey we asked Canadians "do you identify with…" and provided a series of identity groups for respondents to go through and select from. In addition, respondents were provided with a spectrum on which to express identification, ranging from "not at all" (indicating no identification) to "a great deal" (indicating a great deal of identification with the group being considered). In other words, respondents to our surveys were given the opportunity not only to express whether they identify with a variety of relevant identity groups even if they are not technically 'members' of those groups per se. They were also given the opportunity to describe the intensity of their affiliations. They were also given the option to select more than one identity group within a particular category, such as different social classes, that other surveys consider to be mutually exclusive (i.e. other categorizations of social class would force respondents to fall within only one group: upper class/elite, upper/lower/middle class, working class, or poor). The PCSP, on the other hand, allowed respondents to express their identity affiliations liberally, without any imposed restrictions.

The first important point to note based on the findings reported in Figure 8.1, is that the social class based identities that have been explicitly mobilized for political gain in recent times stand out as among the most prominent across the country as a whole – i.e., identification with the working and middle classes emerge consistently as among the most commonly shared identities (the middle class at 73%, and the working class at 71%), even when looking across all provinces (see Table B3.1 in the Appendix)[479]. This finding again, is in direct contrast to what the literature has traditionally suggested about Canadians' ambivalence to identify along class lines. Of course, without evidence on the proportion of Canadians who not only considered themselves to be part of this particular class but also *identified* with these particular groups in previous years[480], it is not possible for me test directly whether these identity groups were indeed made more salient and top-of-mind to Canadians as a result of constant reference to them by political parties, the Liberals especially, or if these identities were already quite prominent prior to 2015. Nonetheless, the results still serve to demonstrate that identity, either as a driver for mobilization or as an outcome of mobilization, may potentially be an important factor in the complex matrix of political support and thus, should not be ignored.

Second, while the data from EKOS suggest that 47% of Canadians self-*categorized* as 'middle class' in 2016, the data on identity affiliations from the PCSP suggest that during a similar time period (in 2017), 73% *identified* with the 'middle class'. Similarly, when looking at the distinction between language based on mother tongue (see Figure 4.1) versus language as an identity, contrasts also appear. Indeed, even though 71% of the respondents in 2017 were English-speaking, only 53% identified with Anglophones. Likewise, despite 15% stating French as their mother tongue, 29% stated that they identified with Francophones. Also, although only 14% of the survey were Allophones (whose mother tongues was neither French or English), 21% expressed that they identify with Allophones. A similar effect also appears when looking at immigration status. While only 14% of those included in this round of the PCSP said they were born outside of Canada, 37% express that they identify with immigrants. So, what these findings

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[479] With two exceptions: Manitoba where identification with the middle class is tied with identification with others within their own age group (at 76%), while working class comes in third at 73%; and Newfoundland and Labrador, where identification with others born in the same country comes in first (79%), with people of the same age group (77%) coming in second, and the working class (69%) coming in third.
[480] In 2012 and 2014 for Quebec, other identity questions were asked but class questions were included for the first time in 2017 only.

clearly seem to suggest is that one's socio-demographic traits do not necessarily overlap directly with their identifications (or perhaps how they might empathize or feel some other social connection to a particular group), which is an important justification for why I think it is important to look at the effects of demographic differences apart from the effects of identity orientations.

This brings me then, to the third point, which is that these identities need not be mutually exclusive either. In fact, only 21% of Canadians, according to this evidence, say that they identify with only one specific social class group. Conversely, the findings indicated that 58% identify with *both* the working class *and* the middle class. Moreover, a quarter of respondents (26%) identify with three of these class groups and 6% identify with all four. Interestingly too, where other surveys would've forced respondents into one of these class categories, by asking about identity in this way the data also reveal that 10% do not identify according to any class category at all.

Fourth, when we look at language, a characteristic which has traditionally been second behind religion in Canada for determining political choice (Polacko, Kiss, and Graefe 2022; see also, Lijphart 1979), the 2017 PCSP data reveal that even fewer Canadians identify with language groups than they do with the working and middle classes. That is, nearly a third (34%) indicate that they do not identify with any language group, which is more than 20% higher than the proportion of Canadian who do not identify with a social class grouping. Furthermore, among those that do identify according to language, these data suggest that most identify with Anglophones (53%), while 29% identify with Francophones, and 21% identify with Allophones.

Yet, similar to the class identifications, not all Canadians' language identifications are exclusive to one group. Indeed, about 40% of Canadians identify with just one language group[481], which is double the proportion of Canadians who identify with just one social class group. By comparison however, there are 17% of Canadians who identify with both Francophones and Anglophones, and 11% identify with all three language groups[482]. So, in all there are almost 30% of Canadians who identify with more than one language group, which is only 10% fewer than those who identify solely with one language group.

A fifth finding of note here is the degree to which Canadians vary in the way they identify with the different groups that overlap with their own demographic characteristics (ingroups), such as age, country of birth, cultural-ethnic background, and faith. Within these ingroup identities, most Canadians identify with those who are of the same age as themselves (71%)[483]. This group represents as many as those who identify with the working class, and almost as many as those who identify with the middle class. Clearly, this finding shows that generational identification is important to many Canadians. Similarly, 70% of Canadians express that they

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[481] Possibly because they have been historically primed and mobilized for a much longer period of time and because the type of priming applied has been more divisive or "threatening" in nature. Klar (2013, 1110; referencing the work by Steele 2011) refers to this as a "threat prime [which] raises the salience of a given identity when a group is made to believe that there is a credible threat against their group's interest" and finds this to be the most powerful priming tool in shifting public opinion.

[482] Whether or not heightened priming of stratifications along class lines or along linguistic divides in Canadian society have in fact increased the cross-class or cross-language identity cleavages, or even helped bring them closer together, especially in the context of greater social cohesion and its effect on political support, is certainly an interesting and important area for further analysis.

[483] This is consistent across age groups among 18 to 29 year olds (68%), 30 to 44 year olds (65%), but even more so among those aged 45 to 60 (74%) and those 61 and over (76%).

identify with people from their own country of birth[484]. Moreover, 62% express that they identify with people from their own cultural or ethnic group[485]. Also, fewer than half of Canadians (42%) identify with others who share the same faith as them, a finding which might be expected given the decline in religiosity[486] among Canadians in recent decades, which is also reflected in the drop in religion's effect on political choice compared to generations past (Wilkins-Laflamme 2016).

Note too, that this tendency to identify with ingroups, similar to class and language, is also likely to be cross-cutting, in that individuals who identify with one group, are also likely to identify with another. More specifically, only 11% of Canadians say that they do not identify based on any of these characteristics at all, and 15% say that they identify with only one ingroup. On the other hand, 45% of those who identify with others of the same age, also identify with others of the same country of birth as well as the same cultural or ethnic background. Even more (55%) identify with others based on three of these four characteristics (age, country, culture, or faith), while 27% of Canadians identify with others on all four dimensions.

When it comes to other groups, the sixth finding of note here is that, in addition to their various class, language and in-group affiliations, Canadians also identify with a variety of other groups that center around various causes or issues, such as environmentalists: 43% or feminists: 32%. Moreover, there are those who identify with various other minority groups such as immigrants: 37% visible minorities: 33%, First Nations, Inuit, or Métis: 20%, and the LGBTQ community: 21%. As well, there are others who identify with certain political (federalists: 29%) or business- and labour-oriented groups (entrepreneurs: 35%; unions: 24%). Furthermore, here like in other cases above, I find that while 20% of Canadians say that they do not identify with any of these other groups, 18% indicate that they identify with at least one, and 62% say that they identify with at least two or more.

Lastly, the seventh key finding to emerge from Figure 8.1 is pertinent only to Quebec. Not surprisingly, the results here suggest that among Quebecers, cultural and political identities remain relevant. That is, 70% of Quebecers identify as Québécois, 34% as nationalists, 26% as sovereigntists, and 22% as separatists. Also similar to all the other identity groupings examined thus far, these findings also indicate that there are a portion of Quebecers (23%) who do not identify with any of these groupings (either Québécois, nationalist, sovereigntist, or separatist), 39% who identify with only one group of these groups, 15% who identify with all of them, 29% who identify with both Québécois and nationalists, and only 17% identify with both sovereigntists and separatists.

These results therefore, for both Quebec and all of Canada, lend further support to the idea that Canadian society is not only diverse but also contains a vibrant, diverse and intertwined identity structure (at least according to the evidence collected through the PCSP). This diverse

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[484] There is no significant variation between age groups on this question (according to the Chi2 p-value=.222). There are significant differences, however, between native-born and foreign-born Canadians. Where native-born Canadians identify more with others born in Canada (72%), while immigrants identify less with people born in the same country as themselves (62%).

[485] There is no significant variation on this question (according to the Chi2 p-value=.229) between those born in Canada and those born elsewhere.

[486] Identification with people of one's own faith is directly correlated with how important religion is to them (Tau-B of .447 p<.000), where 88% of those who state that religion is 'very important' to them identify with people of their own faith. On the other hand, only 21% of those who state that religion is 'very unimportant' identify with people of their own faith. While the proportion is much lower, it is nonetheless interesting that even for those who state that religion is unimportant in their lives, ingroup faith remains an important group identity.

mosaic of identities helps to further the proposition that group association and varying identity group experiences may be an important area where we might locate variations in support, especially if certain groups are in fact experiencing the political world in different ways[487]. It also suggests that identity affinity might capture a "we-ness" factor that is not otherwise captured through the traditional use of demographic controls, otherwise typical in political support models.

The full picture provided by these identity distributions[488] could certainly be the object of a dissertation in and of itself, especially once the next round of data for the 2023 PCSP are collected[489]. This said, with my primary focus in this last part of the dissertation being on what potentially drives variations in political support, I am concerned here mainly with the way in which identity, either mobilized or not, may (or not) play a part in the story.

Often times, as is made evident by scholarly works on policy communities (see, for example, Hornung, Bandelow, and Vogeler 2019), evolving work on intersectionality (Settles and Buchanan 2014), as well as the results from the analyses just described, people's identity affiliations are not mutually exclusive nor unidimensional, but rather they are multifaceted, interconnected, intertwined, and complex[490]. Consider for instance, the diversity and the multiplicity in the identity affiliations that Canadians surveyed by the PCSP expressed, even when it comes to groups based on social class and language (in the case of the latter, for instance, it is perhaps easier to imagine how one individual may speak and thus identify with multiple languages or how an individual who grew up with parents from two different class backgrounds might identify with more than one social class).

Consequently, it is this multifaceted, interconnected, intertwined and complex nature of the Canadian identity structure represented in the evidence above that leads me to take my quest to better understand and best represent the Canadian identity story one step further, by digging still deeper to see if there are any noticeable patterns in how Canadians' various identity affiliations inter-relate and group together. The end goal of course, is not just to see if there are any relevant patterns that emerge, but also to test whether they may be useful to incorporate into our investigation of the determinants of political support.

In other words, by exploring how identities group together, I am able to move one step closer toward potentially developing a clearer picture of how 'common identities,' as Easton (1957) suggests, or "identity clusters" shape outlooks, preferences and behavior (B. R. O. Anderson 1991; Pavlenko and Norton 2007), and might in turn influence political support and perceptions of the political system. In short, identity groupings or clusters, to the extent that they exist in any systematic way, can help to better make sense of key swathes of the social fabric that

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[487] Based on the varying ways groups and membership in them might shape how the political world is viewed or the benefits one perceives that they (or others they empathize with) receive from it (Staerklé, Alain, and Spini 2011).

[488] Notably, I have excluded any discussion of the strength of identifications within each group – presenting only results based on those who identify either 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot'. Another interesting approach to this analysis would include discussion of those who expressly state that they do not identify 'at all' with particular groups or to look at just those who identify 'a great deal'. Another interesting study might also further elaborate on the extent to which demographics and categorizations according to class, gender, language, or other traits directly overlap with identification along those same lines.

[489] Which includes an even more expanded set of identity questions and new ways of tapping identity which we hope will help to better capture the degree to which identity directly impacts thought, preferences, and actions.

[490] For some discussion on this, see for instance Werbner's (2013) distinction between negative identity or the compounding of inequalities that are the subject of intersectionality research contrasted with positive identities that may co-exist within a particular individual as "multiple identities" activated in different contexts.

bind the Canadian community, in the sense of measuring how significant clusters of individuals view themselves and their needs and demands, as well as how much they feel connected to or associated with other members of the community. These associations may thus, in turn, provide more relevant and robust determinants of the degree to which common identities and their outlooks and evaluations matter in explaining variations in political support, or represent a challenge to democracy.

In an attempt to determine which identity groups tend to cluster most prominently together within Canadian society, I exposed all of the separate identities tapped in Figure 8.1 above to an exploratory factor analysis, which is designed to determine if there are any systematic intercorrelations that emerge in the way Canadians' express their identity affiliations. Figure 8.2 below displays how these various identity groupings emerge, by circling those identity affiliations whose factor loadings are the most robustly intertwined (i.e., where individuals' identity affiliations are the most highly intercorrelated). A key point to note here is that the identity affiliations that are excluded from the resulting identity cluster patterns depicted in Figure 8.2 (i.e., not circled), are those that did not robustly correlate with any particular group, and thus I have set them aside for the time-being for the purposes of this preliminary Canada-wide analysis[491]. At a later point, in a follow-up analysis, I plan to return once again to the entire collection of identity affiliations to dig deeper still into the various (more distinct) identity clusters that emerge in different subnational contexts such as in Quebec and the rest of Canada more specifically and to probe their more particular effects on political support in more detail.

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[491] Identity group questions with factor loadings under .5 were thus excluded when creating clusters. Three groups were excluded across Canada, Quebec, and ROC): the middle class (which is highly correlated with the working class), unions (which does not seem to consistently correlate with any other group), and entrepreneurs (which is highly correlated with the elite). When creating these identity clusters for all identity groups with low loadings, I also excluded: the poor, environmentalists, and feminists. Also excluded were identities asked about only in Quebec (Québécois, separatist, sovereigntist, nationalist).

Figure 8.2 – Identity Groupings in Canada
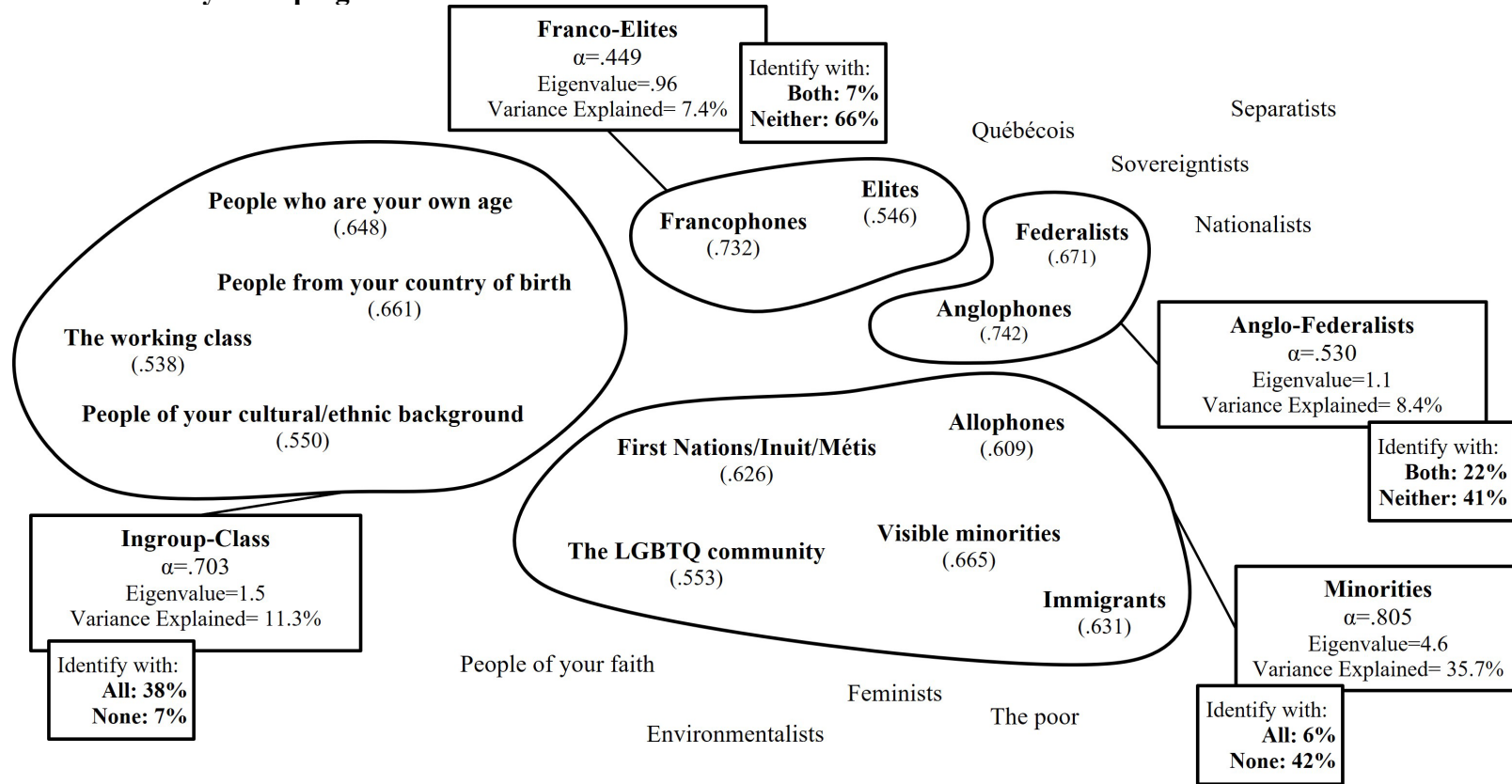
Source: PCSP 2017

The Cronbach's alpha (α) provides a measure of the reliability for the indicators included within the additive index for each identity cluster. Under each individual identity group, I have also included, in parentheses, the factor loading extraction values, or communalities, from the Principle Component Analysis (PCA) of all identity groups. While the Eigenvalue for the grouping "Franco-elites" is slightly less than 1 (it is .96) and the Cronbach's alpha is low (below .7), all PCA loadings are over .5. For the "Anglo-federalists" cluster (also with a low α), the Eigenvalue is greater than 1 and all factor loadings are over .5.

For the purposes of this analysis, let's turn to look at the results for Canada as a whole. The first key point to note is that four major identity groupings (or clusters) emerge. In this first cut of the analysis, I have opted to label these four identity clusters as follows: the Ingroup-Class cluster, the Franco-elites cluster, the Anglo-federalists cluster, and the Minorities cluster. My reasons for choosing these labels are outlined in what follows.

Within the ingroup-class cluster for instance, fall those Canadians who identify most with people of their own age, their own country of birth and their own ethnic or cultural background, as well as those who identify most with the working class. Consequently, I have opted to label this group as the "ingroup-class" cluster. As an interesting sidenote, it is relevant to mention here that evidence from other contexts (Amnesty International 2017; J. McCoy and Somer 2019; Simonovits, McCoy, and Littvay 2022), at least, suggests that these identities may be among the most readily and easily mobilized politically (typically through basic rhetorical references to us-versus-them)[492]. It is also important to mention here that, based on the results illustrated in Figure 8.1, it is clear that large portions of the Canadian population affiliate with these identities. As such, it is not surprising to find that when clustered together, the cumulative evidence indicates that 38% of Canadians identify with all of the individual identity groups included within this cluster, while only 7% of Canadians do not identify with any of them.

This brings me then to the second identity cluster that emerges for the Canadian population as a whole according to our surveys. This group I have labeled as the "minorities" cluster as it is made up of those who identify with various minority communities within Canada, such as: Allophones, immigrants, visible minorities, the LGBTQ community, and with First Nations, Inuit, or Métis. In addition, I have chosen the label "minorities" based not just on the proportion that these groups make up in the Canadian population, but also due to the proportion of Canadians who identify with these groups according to the survey: from 20% to 37%, as seen in Figure 8.1. Overall, therefore, it is relevant to say that this is one of the least fully populated identity clusters for the full Canadian sample that I employ going forward, with only 6% of the population identifying with all these groups and 42% not identifying with any of them.

Moving on, the third and fourth identity clusters that emerge for Canada are what I label as the "Franco-elites" and "Anglo-federalists" clusters. In the first cluster, among all Canadians, only 7% identify with both Francophones and elites, while 66% identify with neither. On the other hand, in the second cluster, my results reveal that within all of Canada, 22% identify with both Anglophones and federalists while 41% identify with neither. Moreover, while the Anglophone-federalist cluster may make more immediate sense, especially given the historical evolution, and cultural and political differences between Quebec and Canada, my explanation for the emergence of the Franco-elites cluster is somewhat more speculative at this stage[493]. Still, for the time being, I have chosen to stick with this particular collection of identity clusters for the purpose of these remaining analyses, at least until I have more data from the next round of the PSCP and more detailed results from a Quebec specific analysis, both of which should allow me to say something even more concrete about the make-up of the Canadian identity cluster structure in the future.

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[492] It is worth noting, that, just like in Canada with political slogans targeting the "middle class", in other contexts such as the European Union, divides along class lines continue to be mobilized to a certain extent by political parties (Ares 2022) where rhetoric may also be quite nationalistic or "us versus them" in nature (Star Editorial Board 2017).

[493] The clustering here is driven more by non-identification than by identification. So, this and perhaps other groups (like Anglo-federalists), could in the future be more aptly coded and labeled "Non-Franco-Non-elites" and "Non-Anglo-Non-federalists".

For now, at least, one possible reason that I can offer for why, when looking at the evidence for Canada as a whole, identification with Francophones clusters with those who identify with the upper echelons is because of the higher-level employment opportunities (especially in the public sector) that become available to those who can communicate in French, outside of Quebec, as bilingual Canadians. In other words, members of this particular identity cluster, perhaps, are more likely to also identify with elites because they are more likely to hold senior or government positions, in part due to their bilingualism (Riga 2022; Sachdeva 2022). As Jack Jedwab (2013) concluded according to the National Household Survey data from 2011, "29 per cent of federal employees [were] Francophone, including 32 per cent of management-level jobs", despite Francophones representing only 21% to 22% of the Canadian population outside of Quebec during the same time period (as also shown in Figure 3.1). In fact, even within Quebec, not only do Francophones "dominate the public service" (Dyer 2013), they have (to a certain extent) successfully broken down the historical domination of Anglophone elites over the French working class in the province (Jedwab 2013).

In order to further demonstrate the extent to which the identity clusters that I plan to employ for the Canada-wide analysis are in fact reliable (i.e. the degree to which the identity affiliations within each of these clusters are robustly inter-connected) and to justify the creation of multidimensional indicators that I employ in the remainder of my analysis, I have also included the Cronbach's alpha reliability statistics for these four main identity clusters. For the most part, what these reliability statistics suggest is that there is good reason (statistically, based on correlations between these identities, or a tendency when identifying with one, to also identify with another) to suppose that the breadth of possible identity patterns present in the sample, based on the identifications of individual, can be reliably captured through the creation of these clusters. In other words, based on conventional standards, I can be quite confident that the identities within each of these clusters are inter-twined and that the empirical constructs (the new identity variables that I create from them) adequately represent the identity patterns described within[494].

More specifically, these reliability coefficients also suggest that, to the extent that people are being truthful[495] when answering these identity questions, that we can be confident that these identity clusters and the multidimensional empirical measures that I have created based on them, accurately reflect and represent some of the most significant identity patterns contained within Canadian society, based on the sample collected by the PCSP. In fact, in all, the combined evidence from the exploratory factor analysis says that these four clusters account for more than 60% of the variation represented by distinct group affiliations. What these Cronbach's alpha coefficients also suggest is that the strongest inter-identity group associations can be found among the various identity affiliations represented in the minorities cluster (α=.805) as well as in the ingroup-class cluster (α=.703). The reliability coefficients for the two remaining clusters, however, are admittedly somewhat weaker than the rest (Anglo-federalists α=.530, Franco-elites α=.449), but that is more than likely due, at this stage, to the fact that each of these clusters only incorporate two distinct measures of different identity affiliations (Rammstedt and Beierlein

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[494] This approach to identifying identity clusters and measurement of the reliability of each cluster is similar to that employed by Hooper (1976).

[495] And at this point, we have no reason to believe that the variation in Canadians identity affiliations reported in Figure 8.1 are simply attributable to random chance.

2014)[496] and that, although identification with each of the groups within the two clusters are often coexistent, these individual identities may also frequently be mutually exclusive and distinct.

In short, there are good theoretical and empirical reasons to move forward with my Canada-wide analysis of the determinants of variations in political support using the identity group concepts and measures as I have outlined them here, using the 2017 PCSP data[497]. While adjustments can certainly be made in the future, based on subsequent theoretical and empirical work, for now these groupings provide a strong attempt at determining the extent to which identity politics can factor into variations in political support levels across objects in Canada.

The next step in this analysis, involves testing the direct effect of these identity affiliations on political support, without controlling for any other potential explanations (again to establish the plausibility that identity clusters can indeed have an effect on support). Figure 8.3 presents an overview of the effect that claiming identity affiliations within a particular cluster (ingroups and the working class, minorities, Franco-elites and/or Anglo-federalists) versus not identifying with any group within that cluster, has on affective assessments of government authorities, institutions, the political regime, and the political community. The general multidimensional indicators of support that I use here are those that were originally introduced in Chapter 6. I also bring back the top-level report card grades derived for each (see the first column reported in Figure 8.3) which allows me to speak to the ways in which the overall affective support levels in Canada vary when looking across different identity groups.

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[496] To account for this, I also observed both the Pearson correlation coefficients (r_p) for the variables in each of the two clusters and ran the Spearman-Brown (r_{sb}) test for reliability (Eisinga, Grotenhuis, and Pelzer 2012). For the Franco-elites cluster, the Spearman-Brown reliability test revealed r_{sb}=.464 while the Pearson's coefficient revealed r_p=.302 p<.000. For the Anglo-federalists cluster, r_{sb}=.532 and r_p=.362 p<.000. The Spearman-Brown tests reveal similar results to the Chronbach's alpha, while the Pearson's correlations reveal moderate and statistically significant relationships between these identities in each of the two identity clusters.

[497] Nonetheless, in the future, I also plan to carry out much more in-depth work on identities and the various identity structures that may exist within the different subnational contexts that are relevant to examine within Canadian society. Moreover, I plan to dig more deeply, using more questions and additional data points, into the overlap between what the theory might suggest about the existence of various identity clusters and how they play out empirically. With larger sample sizes and more extensive identity questions, along with a deeper understanding of the theoretical expectations for identity clustering, I may make slightly altered choices (beyond those bases simply in statistical factor loadings as I do here). I am quite confident that the core logic and makeup of the identity structures outlined here, and some of the key clusters contained within this overall structure, will remain constant through repeated data collection and more theoretically (rather than just empirically) driven clustering.

Figure 8.3 – Political Support Across Identity Groupings

Variations in Affective Assessments of Political Objects - Across Identity Groupings
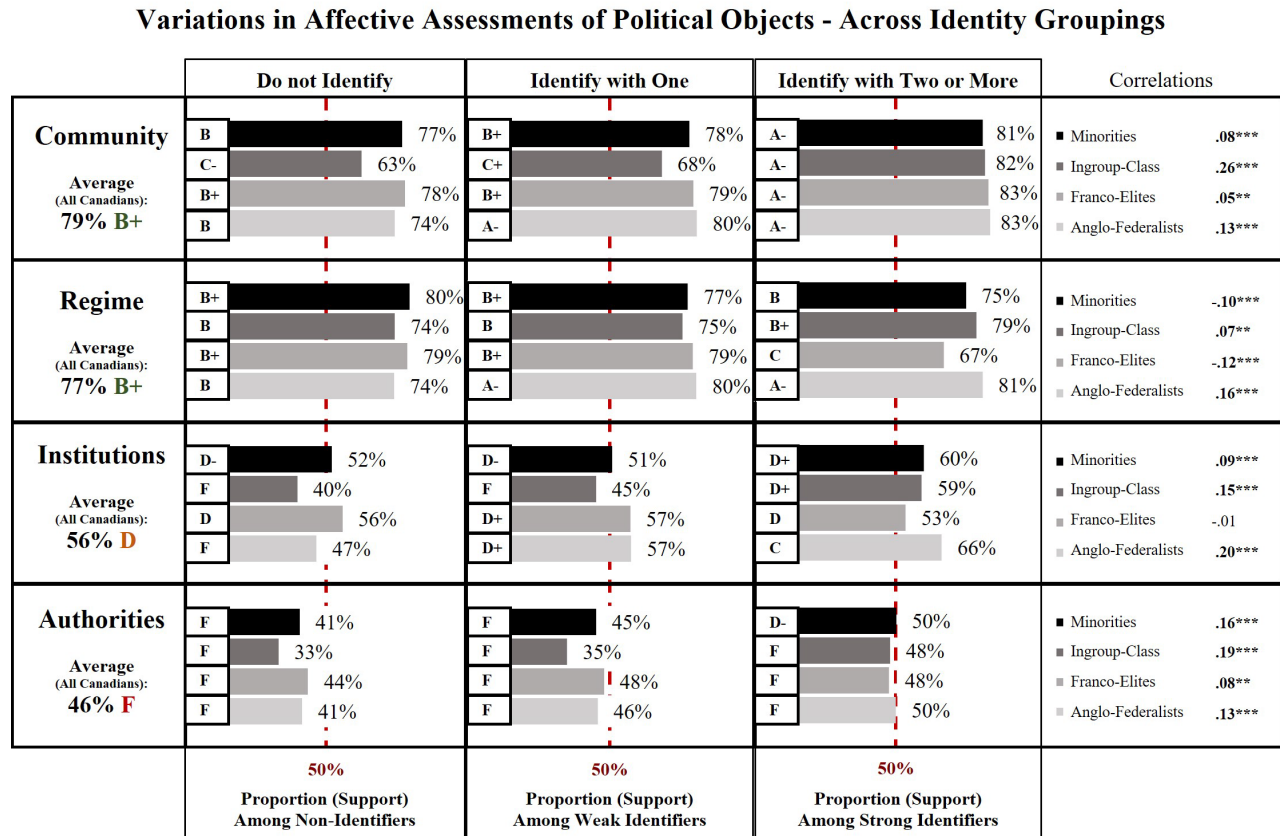
Source: Political Communities Survey Project 2017 (n=1,477 to 2,332). Affective measures for community, regime and authorities are based on cross-level additive "general" indices. Index for regime measures commitment to democracy over other forms of governing. Affective measure of institutions includes feelings about governments and legislatures in general. Measure for authorities includes feelings about leaders and elected representatives. Question wording for indicators included in each of these object support indices can be found in Appendix A1. Operationalization of each of the object indices and identity clusters as well as question wording for identity clusters can be found in Appendix A2. Correlation values represent Pearson's correlation coefficients (r_p) of association between each identity cluster indicator and support for each object (using full range indicators). Proportions and grades for "Non-Identifiers" (do not identify with any group in the cluster) vs. "Weak Identifiers" (identify with only one group) vs. "Strong Identifiers" (identify with at least two groups in the cluster) are based on mean affective support scores for each object.
Significance based on difference of means (identify with two or more vs. do not identify), independent sample t-tests: *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001.

The first point to note based on the results reported above, is that identification with different clusters does have a statistically significant impact on the extent to which political support varies across all political objects. There is no one identity cluster that seems to stand out more than the others as consistently having the most powerful effects on various objects of political support –

or being consistently more positive (or negative) compared to all the others[498], however, for each of the identity clusters examined, there are several observable and significant differences in the way identifiers perceive various political objects when compared to non-identifiers[499].

   With only a few exceptions, the results indicate overall that identifiers with any group tend to be more supportive of different political objects than non-identifiers. This may suggest that the political system may be perceived as being more responsive to individuals with stronger interrelated identities (or groups of connected and mobilized citizens) than to individuals with weaker social ties (non-identifiers). Of course, this remains to be more directly tested in the future. This said, as reported before for the general population, even when looking across different identity group clusters, support levels overall tend to wane as we move downward from support for more diffuse level political objects to the more specific level ones. Moreover, when looking at differences across identity group clusters, in most cases support levels appear fairly similar to the results for the population as a whole: tending to be no better than a B-grade at more diffuse levels. Meanwhile, for more specific levels, support is consistently below satisfactory (D+ and below)[500].

   One notable difference that is worth mentioning here is that stronger identifiers with group clusters, in general, tend to rate their political communities more positively (A- across those who identify with two or more groups) than the general Canadian population overall (B+)[501]. Again, this may indicate that these identifiers perceive their political communities as being more responsive to their needs, but this again would need to be tested more directly[502].

   Turning to look more deeply into the effects of identification with the different clusters, I find first that the more specific evidence relating to the ingroup-class cluster reveals that this particular collection of identities has significant positive effects across all four political objects. For instance, Canadians who identify with the working class and who have various in-group affiliations, are more likely to support their political communities (mean score of 82%: A-) than those who do not identify with the working class or various ingroups (63%: C-). This is a difference of nearly 20 points. Identifiers within this cluster are also more likely than non-

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[498] The significance of these relationships is tested using difference of means t-tests inferential statistics. Pearson's correlation (r_p) measures are also used to determine the strength of these relationships. In some cases, these effects may be small, such as assessments of political communities (r_p=.05) or political authorities (r_p=.08) among those who identify as Francophone or elite, or views on the political regime (r_p=-.10) or institutions (r_p=.09) among those who identify with minorities. However, when examined more carefully, important nuances emerge. Indeed, for each of the identity clusters, even if sometimes small, there are significant differences in the way identifiers view various political objects compared to non-identifiers (with the exception of Franco-elites and their assessments of institutions).

[499] In Appendix B3, Table B3.2, I have included results of my analysis of the effect of increasing identification on support for each object. This analysis also reveals that, depending on both the identity cluster itself as well as the number of identities claimed within these clusters, there are varying effects (both positive and negative) on support for the various objects. To capture this nuance, in remaining analyses I have kept the maximum amount of variation possible in all indicators (both the object assessments and the identity clusters).

[500] With the exception of support for institutions among those who identify with both Anglophones and federalists (achieving a C grade).

[501] When looking at support for the political community, identifiers with *either* Anglophones *or* federalists are also more likely to give this object an A-.

[502] Which I will do following the next round of data collection (where I will also examine this effect in other countries).

identifiers to support having a democracy over some other form of governing[503] (79%: B+ compared to 74%: B), to have a greater tendency to like the system's governmental institutions (59%: D compared to 40%: F – a difference of 19 points) and to like their leaders and elected representatives (48%: F compared to 33%: F – a difference of 15 points).

Based on these results, it is reasonable to deduce that, generally, the more one affiliates with various ingroups and the working class, the more supportive they tend to be about a variety of political objects. Such a finding suggests again that, for these group affiliates, governments and the political system may be perceived to be more sympathetic to their needs and demands and that may be why they tend to be more supportive overall compared to non-identifiers. There may of course be other reasons for this as well, which would need to be further explored[504]. Such an analysis may provide greater insights into why affiliates of this particular cluster affectively assess the Canadian political community at an A- level whereas the average assessment among the general population tends to be a B+. For now, it is relevant to find that such identity affiliations have significant effects on political support. This is not to say, however, that affiliates of the ingroup-class cluster are as highly supportive of all political objects. Certainly, this is not the case when looking at political objects at more specific levels. Indeed, as I mentioned above, at these levels political support (even among strong identifiers) remains mostly unsatisfactory, similar to the findings for the general population.

Moving next to the Franco-elites cluster, I find that, similar to the ingroups-class cluster, those who identify with both of these groups are more positive about their political communities (83%: A- compared to non-identifiers at 78%: B+) as well as their authorities (48% compared to non-identifiers at 44%: both F). However, they are not as positive about their political regime (67%: C compared to 79%: B+), which suggests that they are more open to the prospects of other nondemocratic approaches to governance than those who do not affiliate with this cluster. In fact, it is also important to note here, that although identifiers with the Franco-elite cluster support democracy more than some other type of regime[505], they do so less than the affiliates in any other identity cluster (or the general population for that matter) and this turns out to be the most robust link with political support for this particular cluster (r_p=-.12). Furthermore, while identification within the Franco-elites cluster has no significant effect on support for government

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[503] On support for democracy versus some other form of governing the regime, interpretation of this "grade" becomes a bit more difficult simply because of the way the measure is calculated. Here the grade is a reflection of commitment to democracy as opposed to a range from fail (F) through to satisfactory (C), good (B) or excellent (A). In the case of this measure of regime, therefore, a grade of A or above would represent those that generally would choose democracy as a way of governing and no other regime type.

[504] Again, in the future, using the next round of PCSP data.

[505] An interesting finding that emerges when looking at the differences across degrees of identification with this clust (as displayed in more detail in Table B3.2 in the Appendix), is that although identification with only one of the two groups included in the Franco-elite identity cluster (either Francophone *or* elite) has no effect on assessments of democracy as a way of governing (consistent at 79%: B+), a strong negative drop occurs (decrease by 11.9 points) when observing support among those who identify with *both* of these groups. Similarly, when compared to Canadians in general those who identify with just one of these groups are slightly more positive (+.1.9 points) about democracy as a way of governing (79% compared to 77%: B+), while those who identify with both of these groups are 10 percent more likely to support an alternative regime type to democracy compared to all Canadians.

institutions[506], and identifiers within this cluster do not differ greatly from Canadians in general, as with the regime support is also lower for institutions among identifiers within this cluster than it is among identifiers with any other cluster[507]. This suggests that, while affiliates with the Franco-elites cluster may be more likely to consider altering our current governance regime, identifiers in this cluster are not significantly more likely to dislike their current governments or legislatures compared to non-identifiers. However, they are somewhat less supportive of these institutions compared to Canadians who identify strongly with other clusters.

I also find clear demarcations in support across the system's political objects when I look at Anglo-federalist identifiers. Unlike the Franco-elite cluster, where identification decreased support for a democratic regime and led to lower institutional support, an increasing degree of identification with Anglophones and federalists strengthens support across all political objects[508]. That is, when compared to non-identifiers, Anglo-federalists are significantly more likely (r_p=.13) to express pride, patriotism and feelings of attachment to their political communities (83% on average: A-, compared to 74%: B). Moreover, the effect of this identity grouping on commitments to democracy is also robust (r_p=.16) and identifiers within this cluster rank almost as highly on their commitment to democracy (81%: A- among identifiers compared to 74%: B among non-identifiers) as they do in their assessments of their political communities. Anglo-federalists are also the most positive group when expressing their feelings about their political institutions (66%: C, r_p=.20 compared to 47%: F among non-identifiers), more so than affiliates in all other identification clusters. Also, Anglo-federalists are more likely to assess their political authorities more positively than non-identifiers (50% compared to 41%: both groups still at an F grade).

The last important cluster to consider is the minorities cluster, which consists of those who claim to affiliate with various minority groups in Canadian society, as opposed to those who do not. Like the findings for the Franco-elites cluster, the results here are not always consistent. I find, for instance, that those who affiliate with minorities are significantly more likely to support their political communities (81%: A-) compared to non-identifiers (77%: B). The same effect is observed when looking at support for authorities and government institutions. Among those who identify with minorities, for instance, support for authorities goes from 41% for non-identifiers, to 45% for those who identify with just one minority group (+4), to 50% among those who identify with two or more minority groups (+9). Likewise, when looking at support for institutions among those who identify with minorities, I find that support is lower among non-identifiers (52%: D-), and highest among identifiers (60%: D+). This said, identifying with one or more minority groups actually has a negative effect on support for the political regime. That

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[506] This is based on the independent sample t-test of the differences between groups. When looking more carefully (using the findings illustrated in Table B3.2 in the Appendix) I find that identification with only one of these two groups has a positive influence on outlooks toward institutions (+1.4 when compared to non-identifiers, +1.1 when compared to all Canadians), however, identification with both groups within the cluster has a negative effect (-2.3 compared to non-identifiers and -2.7 compared to all Canadians).

[507] 53%: D, compared to D+ (59-60%) for minorities and ingroup-class cluster identifiers and a C (66%) among Anglo-federalists.

[508] The effect of identification is also consistently positive (see Table B3.2 again), where, when compared to non-identifiers, identification with only one of the two groups within this cluster has a positive effect on support (community: +6; regime: +6.1; institutions: +10.9; authorities: +4.3), and identification with both has an even greater compounding positive effect (community: +9.1; regime: +6.7; institutions: +19.7; authorities: +8.5). This is also consistent when comparing identifiers (from identification with either Anglophones or federalists to identification with both) to Canadians overall (community: +1.7 to +4.8; regime: +3.2 to +3.7; institutions: +1.3 to +10.2; authorities: +.3 to +4.5).

is, among those who identify with minorities, support for democracy goes from 80% (B+) among non-identifiers, to 75% (B) among those who identify with two or more minority groups (-5). As with Franco-elite identifiers, this may potentially be because affiliates of minority groups are more open to considering alternative ways in which to supplement or alter their political regimes compared to non-identifiers.

Just like traditional group differences, although identity groupings help paint a more complex picture of the extent of variation in political support in Canada, they still do not provide us with a clear understanding of *why* support might vary across groups. Thus, I turn now ("to the event we have all been waiting for"[509]) to an examination of how each of these distinctions – between those who identify with a particular group and those who do not, between different traditional group divides as presented in Chapter 7, and between territorial groups from either Quebec or the rest of Canada – all hold up against other factors that have been frequently associated with variations in support.

In the next section I present a series of multivariate analyses designed to better decipher between the competing effects of various theoretically relevant and plausible explanations of affective political support. These analyses are more rigorous than any that have been conducted in the past as they pit each of these identity clusters against each other, while also examining the possible effects that sociocultural factors (demand-side factors), perceptions/evaluations of performance (supply-side factors), and other demographic and contextual factors (as presented in Chapter 3) have on support for all political objects both generally and across different levels (i.e., the federal, provincial and municipal levels).

Testing Explanations and Specific to Diffuse Effects – General Support
The full set of findings for the analyses presented in this section can be found in Appendix B3 (Table B3.3 to Table B3.6). I have generated a series of summary graphs, which contain only the significant results from these analyses and assembled them here in Figure 8.4. My hope is that the summary of key findings reported here will help to highlight more efficiently, in as clear a way as possible, how the multitude of explanatory factors described above and in the preceding chapters, impact affective support across various political objects in the Canadian case.

Before I begin to make my way through these results, however, let's take a moment to review the full gamut of explanatory variables that I have outlined at various points in the preceding chapters which may be relevant when accounting for variations in political support. I will then dig into how I have tried to simultaneously, and systematically, investigate each of them in the following analyses. Recall first that the supply-side explanations for political support consist of two groups of factors: the more standard object "performance explanations" (that are driven by perceptions of the honesty and integrity of authorities, political cynicism, and winning or losing in elections); and various "specific/evaluative support measures" (which are derived from people's evaluative assessments of various political objects and their outputs, from the most specific to the most diffuse). Both variants of the most prominent supply-side explanations contend that people's perceptions of how a political system and its core institutions and

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[509] Often studies will jump directly to this test (the final regression analyses), without taking the time to step through and properly understand or build out the variations that exist on each of the concepts included within the regression model. As I have already explained, I have taken this time up to this point to fully unpack each and every concept prior to jumping into the big prize analysis so that I can demonstrate why a systematic, fine-tuned, granular approach is so necessary and how to go about more fully specifying these models in the future.

authorities perform (whether the behaviors themselves or the outputs each object produces) are relevant in accounting for variations in political support.

Demand-side factors are also deemed theoretically to be important in accounting for variations in political support. These include broad-gauged societal transformations such as "sociocultural/value explanations" (which includes developments such as changing levels of cognitive mobilization, the expansion of the internal versus external efficacy gap, the inter-generational shift from materialist to post-materialist values, and decline in deference toward authority or shifting patterns of interpersonal trust) as well as the varying effects that might result from "media exposure" to a changing sources (either traditional media or online). Demand-side factors also include a consideration of the impact that differences across traditionally relevant and embedded group divides ("traditional groups") might have (which in Canada include the French-English language divide, the immigrant-native born Canadian divide, and the national unity divide between those who want greater independence for Quebec or federalists who support strong intergovernmental distribution of political powers)[510]. Also, important to consider here, and new to the demand-side argument, are differences in identities through "identity groupings" or affiliations as well as the intensity of identity politics (which for the purposes of this analysis, is captured by variations in identity affiliations with the four main identity clusters presented above[511]). Lastly, as is typical in most investigations of this sort, I also incorporate into the following analyses a group of control indicators to help account for more basic variations in "demographics and disposition" (including gender, age, income and subjective well-being (personal disposition)).

With all of this in mind then, let's turn to the evidence at hand. As can be seen in the summary of findings presented in Figure 8.4 below, despite the wide variety of plausible supply and demand-side, as well as demographic and personal disposition variables that were simultaneously tested as part of this overall investigation, the first important finding is that only a handful of factors emerge as being significant and robust drivers of variations in affective political support in the Canadian case. Also, there are important (statistically significant) and systematic patterns (across objects) that emerge that are likely to be useful when it comes to developing and deriving plausible and viable strategies (in the future) that may be better targeted at contending with and improving low levels of political support.

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[510] It should be noted that the measures for nationalist, federalist, independentist (which do not emerge as significant in explaining support for any of the objects – thanks to the impact of the other factors included in the models) are slightly different here compared to previous analyses. Rather than including a measure for independentist, I have left this out. The result is that the categories of nationalist and federalist should be interpreted as being compared to "other" which includes Quebecers who are independentist as well as Quebecers and other Canadians who either chose not to select any category, not to answer this question, or who were not asked. Due to the small effect and small size of the "independentist" group, exclusion of the category has not made any difference to the overall analysis.

[511] That I have just empirically determined to co-exist in Canada (according to my surveys) – the minorities cluster, the ingroup-class cluster, the Franco-elites cluster, and the Anglo-federalists cluster.

Figure 8.4 – Explaining Political Support – Drivers of Variation in General Affective Support across Political Objects – All of Canada
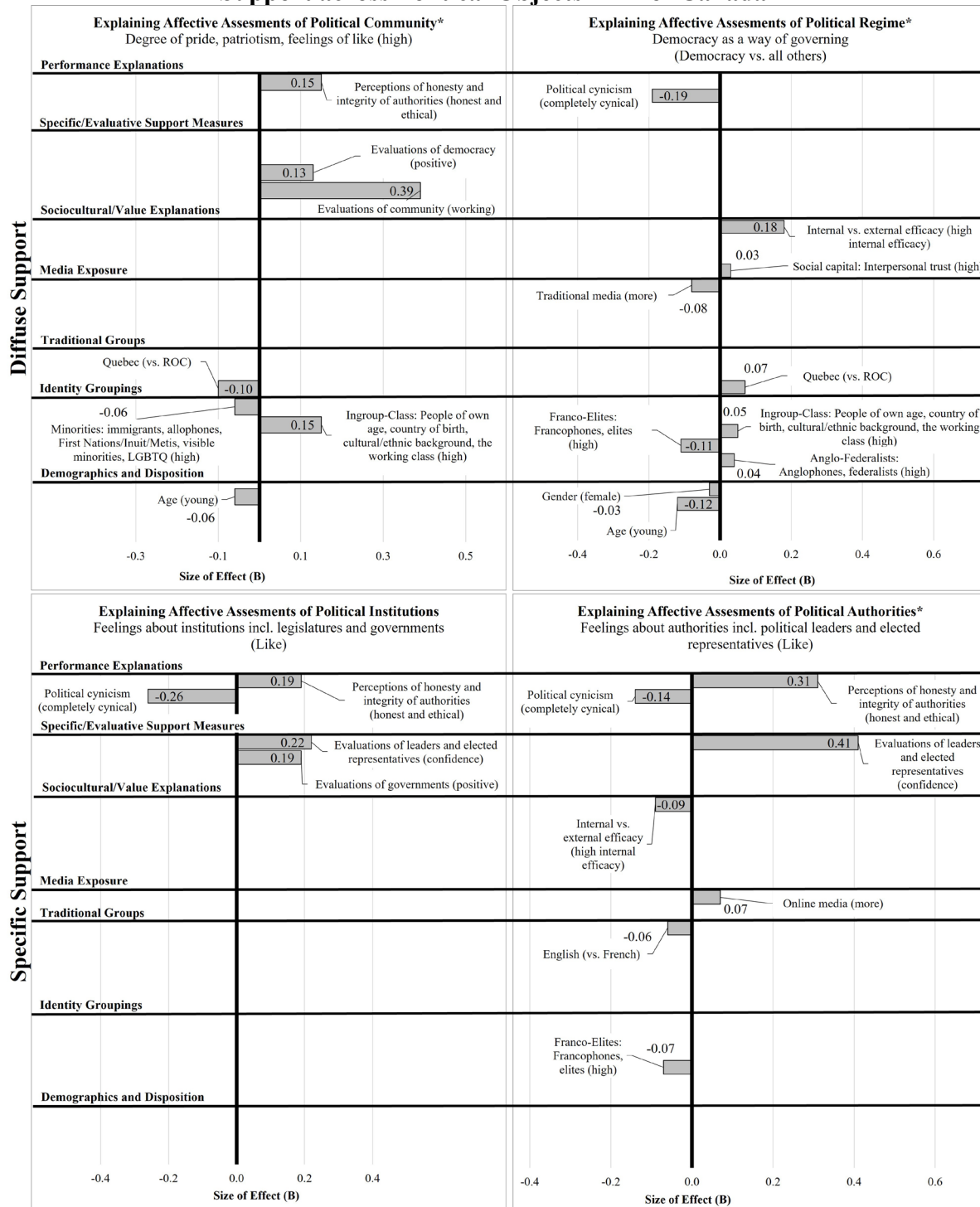
Source: PCSP 2017

Notes: Based on OLS regressions of all theoretically relevant explanations against affective measures of political support. Objects marked with an asterisk (*) represent general assessments of objects that were created by adding responses across three levels of government. Sample sizes for each analysis range from 220 to 711. Explanations with no significant effect are excluded from the figure. Full regression results can be found in Appendix B3, Table B3.3 to Table B3.6.

The next major observation that can be made when assessing the results displayed in Figure 8.4, is that, as we move from the most specific level (where I examine affective outlooks toward political authorities and institutions, illustrated by the two lower graphs) to more diffuse levels (where I examine affective outlooks toward regime and community, displayed in the two upper graphs), the number and type of factors influencing political support vary[512]. One key finding stands out above all else: that assessments of the supply provided by the political system systematically appear to be the most consistent and important drivers of variations in affective support across all political objects. In other words, the way in which people perceive the political system to be performing matters for overall system support. Which is to say that performance has important implications for maintaining the legitimacy of the political system as a whole.

In particular, the perceived performance of political authorities (both the perceived calibre of the job they are doing and the perceived integrity of their work) consistently impacts citizens' acceptance of all political objects within the decision-making body of their democratic system, regardless of whether respondents voted for the winning or losing party in recent elections[513]. More specifically, perceived performance (and top-down supply) has consistently strong and statistically significant (net independent) effects on support for both political authorities and political institutions at the most specific levels. Furthermore, as assessments move from these specific levels to more diffuse ones, performance also remains the strongest driver of supporting (and remaining committed to) a democratic political regime and feeling pride, patriotism, and affection for political communities.

Looking even more closely at the detailed evidence, my analyses reveal that among supply-side factors, political cynicism is one of the performance indicators that stands out as among the strongest and most consistent in explaining variations in support for authorities, for core government institutions, and for maintaining a strong commitment to a democratic mode of governance. This measure of political cynicism is derived from questions that ask respondents to agree or disagree with a series of sentiments, tapping their views on the performance and relevance of those individuals and organizations that represent them and their interests, including "most politicians are corrupt", "parties buy elections and votes", "politicians say anything to get elected", "governments don't really care about the people", and "even if I participate in politics, it will make no difference in my life".

Important to note here, is that according to these data[514], on average, most Canadians (51%) sit at a 6 or higher on the aggregated cynicism scale ranging from 0 to 10, where 0 is the "least cynical" and 10 is the "most cynical". Moreover, what the results in Figure 8.4 show specifically is that that higher levels of cynicism drive Canadians to dislike not only their leaders and elected representatives (-.14)[515], but also to dislike their legislatures and governments (-.26). In addition, and perhaps even more worrying, it impacts citizens' commitments to the democratic

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[512] These factors and their effects (including those that are not significant and are therefore excluded from this figure) can be found in the full regression tables in the appendix.

[513] Note that among the supply-side performance explanations, winning or losing in elections is never a significant driver of support, unlike what may have been previously expected. Like previous studies, this indicator is built using vote choice. It expands on these prior measures by including vote choice not only during one election, but tapping vote choice in two separate federal elections as well as one provincial one.

[514] This is consistent with popular rhetoric by our politicians in recent years (Global News 2019), as well as in other studies on the topic (Fortier 2003; Davies 2008; Illing and Gershberg 2022).

[515] Note: the coefficients reported are all B coefficient results of my regression analyses. The variables in these analyses are all standardized to run from 0 to 1, which in turn provides B coefficients that I am able to interpret more clearly as well as in relation to each other, both within each regression analyses and across analyses.

political regime (-.19). Indeed, in the latter two cases, the evidence even suggests that cynicism may be the most powerful driver of affective assessments of core government institutions and commitment to the democratic political regime.

Still for some, the prevalence of cynicism may not appear so troubling, as cynicism has been suggested (in the literature) to simply be a side-effect of greater political knowledge or an important driver of increased engagement (Citrin 1974; see also Eisinger 1999; Davies 2008; Koerth 2019). Citrin (1974, 974–75) states, for instance, that "allegiance to the political system…does not preclude criticism of specific policies, authorities, or institutions; many people readily combine intense patriotic sentiments with cynicism about politicians". As a consequence, he suggests that cynicism with authorities can "coexist" (Ibid) with support for the system. My results, however, provide an alternative empirical vantage point which might lend more perspective to this story.

That is, my evidence suggests that even after controlling for factors such as rising levels of cognitive mobilization (growing political awareness and interest)[516], cynicism has broad and consistently negative net independent consequences not just for affective support for specific objects such as political authorities, but also for core government institutions, such as legislatures and governments, as well as for people's commitment to the democratic regime itself. Indeed, in the case of the latter, the evidence in Figure 8.4 suggests that cynicism is the only factor exerting significant supply-side force on support for the democratic regime, which suggests that (the likely accruing and) negative effects of the public's cynical viewpoints may outweigh the effects of other more positive and coexisting performance/support related counter effects. Thus, given the independence and pervasiveness of cynicism's effect, not just on support for authorities and institutions, but also on views toward democracy itself as a way of governing, it would be both prudent and wise to think twice before brushing off the severity of political cynicism or negative perceptions of politics and our delegated representatives. Certainly, if we are concerned with what might in fact be challenging our democratic political system, these data and results reveal that determining what is at the root of public cynicism, and seeking to address it, will be a crucial place to start.

The effect of object performance and the individual behaviors of political representatives does not stop at cynicism though. In addition to cynicism, my analyses reveal another important supply-side factor which both powerfully and rather consistently predicts affective assessments of the political system (across authorities, institutions, and the political community), that is ethics and perceptions of the honesty and integrity of authorities. In this analysis, this indicator is operationalized using a question that asks respondents to evaluate their political leaders and elected representatives on a scale from zero to ten, where zero is "completely dishonest and unethical" and 10 is "completely honest and ethical". Moreover, unique to this analysis, I tap perceptions toward the honesty and integrity of a variety of political authorities by combining evaluations of both political leaders and elected representatives across all three levels of government, rather than just politicians in general or within some unspecified level of government (so as to account for any cross-cutting and far-reaching sentiments that may prevail as well).

This aggregated measure of perceptions toward the honesty and integrity of political authorities across all levels of the democratic system, reveals that Canadians, on average, rate the honesty and integrity of their political authorities as a 6.5 on ten-point scale that goes from

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[516] Which, according to these models, is not a significant driver of support on its own.

dishonest and unethical (0) to honest and ethical (10). If we were to convert this result into a grade based on average support, it would suggest that Canadians see their political leaders and elected representatives as performing at no greater than a C level when it comes to their honesty and integrity. Moreover, the effects of these evaluations of the honesty and integrity of our political authorities on Canadians' affective support for various objects in our political system are striking.

For instance, perceptions relating to the ethical behaviour of our political authorities turn out to be the second most important explanatory driver of affective assessments of political authorities (.31) and the top driver of affective support for the political community (.15). Moreover, perceptions toward the honesty and integrity of political authorities are also one of the top three drivers of affective support for core government institutions (.19). In each of these cases, the results suggest that the more Canadians perceive their political authorities as being dishonest and lacking in integrity, the less likely they are to affectively support any of their political representatives, their governments or legislatures, or their various political communities.

This latter finding in particular is especially concerning because accrued stocks of political support are said, in the literature, to be stored at the diffuse level and to be relatively immune to short-term variations in more specific levels of political support – unless of course, the failings of specific objects perpetuate consistently over time (Easton 1975; Kornberg and Clarke 1983; 1992; Dalton 1999). My analysis indicates that both public cynicism and perceptions of ethical conduct are significantly and directly linked to measures of diffuse political support – affective assessments toward the political regime and community – which suggests the negative consequences of these two performance factors measured at the specific levels may already be having far-reaching and diffuse effects in the Canadian case. While the proportion of respondents perceiving failures in the integrity of their political authorities, or feeling highly cynical about them, may not be so surprising – given the number and repeated pattern of ethical breaches that we have seen from our political authorities in Canada over time,[517], and the number of references and warnings that we have had about rising rates of public cynicism[518] – the impact of these perceived ethical failures and high cynicism on the political system's legitimacy and stability, should be cause for concern.

Yet another important finding relating to the supply-side determinants of political support, is the consistently robust effect of evaluative assessments of the various political objects. In particular, the evidence in this case shows that for authorities, institutions, and political communities, evaluations of the performance of various political objects stand out as important drivers of affective support. Note for instance, that affective assessments of political authorities are driven most powerfully by the confidence levels that Canadians have in their political leaders and elected representatives (.41). That is, the more confident Canadians are in their political leaders and elected representatives, the more likely they are to have higher levels of affective support for any of them (to "like" them).

The same applies for affective support of core government institutions. That is, the second most powerful determinant of affective support for our legislatures and governments is the amount of confidence that Canadians place in their political leaders and elected representatives

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[517] In 2017 for example, around the time of when our survey was administered, Trudeau's behaviour in accepting a vacation on the private island of an old family friend, the Aga Khan, was being highly publicized and was under investigation by the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner (Kirkup 2017).

[518] As Ian Capstick, Bob Rae, and Justice John Gomery have all alluded to in their contributions to our forthcoming edited volume (Kanji and Tannahill 2024).

(.22), followed by their confidence and evaluations of the outputs they are producing (through evaluations of the jobs that their governments are doing (.19)). In other words, the more confident Canadians are in their political leaders, elected representatives, and governments and the more they think their governments are working well, the more likely they are to affectively support core government institutions more generally (again, to "like" them). Thus, if we want to build more stable storehouses of affective support for both political authorities (as our delegated representatives) and government institutions (where our interests are being translated into laws and policy), we could go a considerable distance encouraging political authorities to adopt and demonstrate a more virtuous approach to carrying out their duties, by seeking ways to reduce public cynicism, and by pinpointing areas for improving the performance and outputs (both real and perceived) of political leaders, elected representatives and governments[519].

Furthermore, at the most diffuse level, there is also evidence that shows that both evaluations of the workings of democracy (.13) and the workings of political communities (.39) can have positive effects on affective support for these political communities. In fact, out of all the determinants of affective community support, the latter (evaluations of how well the community is working[520]) has the most powerful influence of all the factors that I examine. So, in this case, what these findings clearly add is that more positive evaluations of the workings of democracy, as well as the workings of political communities (through improved collaborations between these communities, perhaps[521]) can go a considerable distance toward bettering affective outlooks toward our political communities.

Moreover, it is also important to mention here again that when looking systematically at the impact of evaluative assessments on affective ones, these analyses demonstrate the strong and consistent effect that evaluations of lower-level (or more specific) objects can have on higher level (or more diffuse) ones, which is something that has been posited as theoretically plausible (Easton 1975; Kornberg and Clarke 1983; 1992; Dalton 1999) but as yet never been consistently confirmed (Dahl 2000) or empirically tested across different political objects. Through the many analyses that I have conducted for this study, I am inclined (at this stage) to confirm in principle

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[519] Some of these things will be easier than others. For instance, determining the performance and output failures and successes can be done (as I did in Chapter 6) by digging deeper, asking the public questions about their perceptions of performance on a variety of key jobs (adding to the analysis also, experiences with policy outputs). As I will discuss in the Conclusion, other ways will include capturing the perceptions of other segments of the political system (including elites, civil society leaders, and marginalized members of society). When it comes to ethics and integrity, while there are rules in place to govern these behaviors, it seems as if we are still falling short – whether this is an issue of awareness or something more profound, would remain to be determined. On cynicism, while politics and politicians have long been perceived as "dirty" as I mentioned in a previous comment, we might start to ask ourselves more seriously *where* these feelings of cynicism are coming from and why we are okay with allowing them to persist. Certainly, if their effects are harmful for system support (as these analyses are beginning to show), it may at least be worthwhile to take a second look.

[520] As outlined in Appendix A1 and A2, this evaluative measure of community support is based on cumulative responses to the question for all three political communities: "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means 'working extremely well' and 0 means 'not working well at all', how well do you think the following political communities are working".

[521] Analysis of this question (not shown here) reveals that there is a clear and consistent link between evaluations of the working relationships between levels of government and evaluations of how well communities are working. Over 60% of all respondents that express that governments at different levels are not working well together give a grade of F (less than 50 out of 100) in their evaluations of how well communities are working (correlation between these indicators also reveals a strong and significant association).

(based on my data) that support likely percolates upward from the most specific objects to the most diffuse[522].

For instance, as indicated above, I find that when it comes to explaining affective orientations toward core government institutions, evaluations of authorities matter even more than evaluations of the work that institutions, such as governments are doing. Similarly, when it comes to affective assessments of political communities, evaluations and satisfaction with the workings of the regime (based on evaluations of how democratic governance regimes at different levels are perceived to be and satisfaction generally as well as with specific aspects as illustrated in Figure 6.8) are strong and significant determinants of that support, even after controlling for evaluations of how well those communities are working.

Before moving on, it is important to mention here one limitation in these "general" cross-level cumulative findings. When looking at affective support for the political regime, I was unable (at this stage) to test or determine whether institutional evaluations have a significant effect (due to the sample deficiency[523]). This said, as shown above, these analyses nonetheless revealed that evaluations of authorities (measured as cynicism toward these authorities[524]) are the most important driver of commitment to democracy or support for having a democratic regime over some other form of governance[525]. I would suggest, therefore, that in this first round, using more robust "general" measures, that when observing the diffusion of specific evaluations on broader system legitimacy that there is preliminary evidence indicating that evaluations of specific political objects, such as political authorities, do indeed matter immensely and that they are exerting significant upward and corroding influence on more diffuse political support.

I turn now to consider what these results suggest about the relevance of demand-side arguments for affective political support. When included in these analyses and pitted against citizens' perceptions of the performance and behaviors of different political objects and evaluations of the jobs and outputs these objects are producing, the key finding here is that,

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[522] Cross-time panel data and pointed causality questions would be especially useful in this regard. In our 2017 survey we included a limited number of such causality questions, for instance agreeing with one of the following two statements "My perceptions of politicians and political institutions shape my overall views on how democracy works" or "My overall perceptions of how democracy works shape my views of politicians and political institutions." The results on this question revealed that, of those who selected a preference, the majority (62%) stated that specific views about authorities and institutions, influence their diffuse perceptions of democracy. These questions have been refined for the next round of data collection in order to improve precision.

[523] Unfortunately, due to the way in which questions were asked in the 2017 survey (where not all institution-related questions were asked to all respondents), I am unable to provide a reliable test of the effect of evaluative assessments of institutions on either the regime or the community. This said, when isolating for different levels of government, it is possible to include this measure and the results reveal that evaluations of institutions do indeed have a positive effect on support for more diffuse political objects (see Figure 8.6).

[524] The specific evaluative indicator for "evaluations of leaders and elected representatives" does not emerge as significant here, however, a correlation test of these evaluations against the "political cynicism" measure does reveal that these two supply-side assessments of political authorities are quite similar (r_p=.747***). When I remove the measure of political cynicism from the regression, however, "evaluations of democracy" emerges as the only significant supply-side explanation. This would suggest that when it comes to assessments of the regime, evaluations of the most specific objects (authorities) matter only once negative perceptions of performance have transformed into more potentially more deep-rooted feelings of cynicism. But when this occurs, cynicism even outweighs evaluative assessments of the regime when explaining support for a democratic way of governing ourselves.

[525] A little further down in this chapter, I will compare the effect of these same explanations on political regime measured as support for regime principles – rather than support for democracy as a way of governing the regime. Doing so in this way reveals that evaluations of democracy do in fact have a significant and strong effect on affective assessments of regime principles.

although important, demand-side arguments are not nearly as straightforward nor as consistent in explaining political support.

For example, the first set of demand-side factors in the support puzzle that are commonly discussed are the various sociocultural and value change explanations. In these analyses, I find that while efficacy and to a lesser extent, interpersonal trust, do arise as important characteristics shaping political support, these sociocultural factors are significant only when looking at support for the political regime (in which case both efficacy and trust are important) and, to a degree, for political authorities (in which case only efficacy seems to matter).

More specifically, at the regime level, the evidence in Figure 8.4 shows that having a high internal-external efficacy gap – or the perception that you have more to offer than what you are receiving from the political system – does not hurt affective political support. Rather, it drives individuals to form a deeper commitment to democracy as a way of governing (.18) and less inclined to favour some other type of regime. What this says even more directly is that the more individuals value having a say in government decisions, combined with a greater sense of understanding of what is going on (high internal efficacy) as well as a feeling that elites are out of touch or don't care (low external efficacy), the more they are likely to value a regime that promotes rule 'of the people, by the people' over one that gives up even more control to what they perceive to be out-of-touch elites.

On the other hand, this finding is also shocking in that it suggests that, where the public feel that politics and government are too complicated or that they don't have a say while also assessing politicians as caring what people think and staying in touch with the people, they are more inclined to also be willing to experiment and supplement democracy with alternative governance options that are akin to giving authorities even more control (either through experts deciding, strong leaders without legislatures or elections, and even through army rule[526]). Consistently, and perhaps less surprising given that efficacy also includes a direct assessment of political elites, I find also that having higher levels of internal efficacy combined with lower levels of external efficacy is likely to drive citizens to dislike their political leaders and elected representatives at all levels of government (-.09). In short then, what these findings seem to suggest overall is that the so-called efficacy gap may be good for maintaining a commitment to democracy, but it makes it more difficult for political authorities to be liked by the publics that they serve.

The second demand-side sociocultural factor that emerges as important in my analyses is the effect of inter-personal trust. This factor, however, matters only for support for democracy as a regime. According to these data, having high interpersonal trust, tapped using a simple measure that asks whether respondents think that most people can be trusted, has a positive effect on support for democracy as a way of governing (.03). In other words, the more citizens think that others can be trusted in general, the more they think that including those others in the decision-making body is a good thing. Alternatively, the less citizens perceive that others may be trusted, the less democracy is seen as the only way to govern society.

Of course, the low magnitude of this finding would not be problematic if we lived in a society where the majority of people believe that others can be trusted. Unfortunately, however, in the Canadian case, according to our data, only 41% believe that most people can be trusted, the remaining 59% feel that we need to be very careful when dealing with others. Moreover, elsewhere, the social fabric (interpersonal trust) that makes up our healthy democratic society,

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[526] In support for these alternatives, army rule has the lowest support and so, support for alternative regime types is mostly driven by support for rule by experts instead of governments or leaders without parliaments or elections.

has been shown to be eroding (Sethi and Martyn 2022; and Lenard's chapter in Kanji and Tannahill 2024). So, if we are to hope that democracy will remain the preferred way to govern this society in the future, we may need to address this erosion more directly, in addition to the other factors already mentioned such as public cynicism, the lack of ethical conduct from our political authorities and the perceived low-grade performance of our political authorities, institutions, regime and political communities.[527]. All of this said, my results show that, like the effects of efficacy orientations, interpersonal trust matters only in a limited sense for regime support. Indeed, as mentioned at the start of this discussion, sociocultural factors overall seem to take a backburner to the perceived performance of the relevant objects in our political system, when it comes to explaining variations in political support. Thus, any efforts to address these particular demand-side trust issues, for example, are not likely to have the same kind of deep effects that a more concerted and direct focus on supply-side shortcomings could achieve.

Digging deeper still into the pool of demand-side explanations, another factor that I tested here is the effect of media exposure on political support. As mentioned previously in Chapter 3, there are competing theories about the effect media may have on support, whether positive or negative (see, for example Norris 2000a; 2000b). Here, I have tested specifically for the effect of exposure to the traditional news media, versus exposure to the non-traditional online news media. My analysis of the attention paid to these different types of news sources reveals, that when it comes to support for a democratic way of governing, attention to traditional news has a negative effect (-.08). In other words, the more the public pay attention to news on the radio, tv, and in the newspapers, the less likely they are to remain committed solely to democracy as a viable way of governing, and the more likely they are to also consider experimenting with alternative forms of governance.

Surprisingly, what this finding reveals (based on preliminary indicators of media attention) is that, despite much of the negativity that new social and online media are being blamed for[528], the challenge for democracy may in fact rest in more frequent exposure to news through traditional sources[529] which seem to be turning people away from democracy the most, or at least making them less inclined to remain committed to democracy in the more traditional sense (Mounk 2018; Mounk and Foa 2018). Also surprisingly, I find that when it comes to support for authorities, attention paid to online (non-traditional) news media actually has a positive effect – wherein greater attention to online news sources (including national, local, and international news sources as well as email, websites and social media) increases Canadians positive feelings about their leaders and elected representatives (.07). It could be of course, that the effect of online news consumption is also affected by algorithms that bias the news feeds that people are exposed to (Jolly 2014; Lua 2022). There is definitely more digging to be done here before we can be more certain about the true nature of the online news consumption effect on political support (including measures, for instance, that also tap content and not just source). And while the results from these surveys and analyses do not reveal that the media is the primary or

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[527] See for example, the case of the United States, where many believe that addressing trust declines will help to fix societal issues (Rainie, Keeter, and Perrin 2019)

[528] As both Carole MacNeil and former Justice John Gomery argue in our forthcoming volume (Kanji and Tannahill 2024).

[529] Of course, it may well be that these "traditional" news sources (tv, radio, newspapers) are increasingly contaminated by negativity, biased interpretations of events, and increasing focus on infotainment rather than quality reporting in order to maintain viewership (B. N. Anand 2017; Coletto and Anderson 2017; Public Policy Forum 2017; Fenlon 2021; Maliszewski 2021; Public Policy Forum 2022).

strongest source of challenges facing our political system, attention to the media's effects should not be taken off the table yet.

The next set of factors that I included in this analysis, still on the demand-side of the support story, were different measures of traditional group divides (as analyzed in Chapter 7). Although I do find that language differences are significant for explaining support for authorities (i.e., Anglophones tend to like their authorities less than Francophones, -.06), these more broad-gauged and fully specified models (still referring to Figure 8.4) have the more general effect of washing out traditional group divide effects. This is likely due to the fact that sentiments traditionally captured by focusing on language, immigration status, or political orientations toward federalism and national unity, are actually captured more directly in other ways (in part through contextual differences, by various identity affiliations[530], or by the multitude of other explanations included in these models[531]).

Consider for instance, that at the diffuse levels (i.e., at the regime and community levels), only the context control indicator for Quebec versus the rest of Canada turns out to remain significant, as opposed to the "traditional group" divides over language, point of origin or national unity analysed and discussed in Chapter 7. Still, what these related findings do show is that Quebecers as a society are more supportive of a democratic regime compared to other Canadians (.07), but they are less affectionate toward their political communities overall (-.10)[532]. While this finding may have something to do with Quebec's unique power when it comes to collective decision-making in the Canadian political community, resulting in a variety of asymmetrical benefits for the province (Gagnon 2009) it would be necessary to replicate this same analysis looking only at Quebecers[533], and to examine each job evaluation separately, which I plan to do in more detail in future work.

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[530] As demonstrated by the larger (standardized variable) B coefficients discussed throughout.

[531] It is possible, for instance, that orientations toward federalism and national unity are driven by performance as well as by varying sociocultural values. As such, these political orientations fall out of the model (failing to derive significant coefficients) and are replaced by other factors that tell us more about what is underlying variations in support.

[532] While I do not include any in-depth discussion here of other provinces except insofar as the comparison between Quebecers and other Canadians, preliminary analysis does reveal that the explanations that appear as significant using only the Quebec vs. ROC control are consistent when controlling for all other provinces as well. Also consistent with what is presented in this chapter, the specific differences between Quebec and other provinces only exist when looking at overall orientations toward diffuse objects. Namely Quebecers are less supportive of their political communities compared to Canadians in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario. On the other hand, they are more supportive of either having a democratic political regime or of our democracy's current regime principles compared to British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario, as well as Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The results of this analysis can be found in Appendix B3, Table B3.9.

[533] Unfortunately, despite the larger cross-Canada sample in the 2017 PCSP, the number of respondents within Quebec who answered all the questions necessary to run this same analysis is insufficient (between 111 and 198 respondents). Nonetheless, when I do run these analyses for just Quebec, despite the low number of respondents, some significant findings emerge. When it comes to community support, perceptions of how well communities are working are the most significant drivers of pride, patriotism, and affection both generally and at all three levels of government. Evaluations of democracy and its various aspects (or outputs) matter second-most when assessing only the provincial community. On determining what is most powerful in explaining support for democracy vs. some other regime among Quebecers, the strongest determinant for selecting a democratic regime at the federal level is age (where young people are less likely to support a democratic way of governing) followed by attention to online news (where consumers of online news are more favourable toward democracy). When choosing democracy at the provincial level, higher internal efficacy is most powerful. When choosing democracy at the municipal level, those with greater cynicism are more likely to consider alternatives.

Related to group divides, I also included in these evaluative models the various identity clusters that I described earlier in this chapter. The logic of course is that, just as traditionally embedded group differences (between Anglophones and Francophones, immigrants and native-born Canadians as well as federalists and Quebec independentists), may help to account for variations in political support (which the bulk of the evidence in this chapter now seems to deny in favour of other factors), so too might varying and competing group identity affiliations, particularly in a context such as Canada, where identity politics are often depicted as being alive and well (Cairns and Williams 1986; C. Taylor 1997; Beiner 2003; Banting and Kymlicka 2006; Tully 2006; Eisenberg 2006; Kymlicka 2007; Chambers 2012).

Not so surprisingly, the results here are more significant than they are for basic group divides, likely because identity affiliations go one step further in depicting the potential for group influence than do traditional demographic or political orientation group differences[534]. That is those who identify with a group indicate that they see themselves as part of the group that they identify with, whereas basic group divides merely capture group membership, which may have broad level effects on political support (as demonstrated in Chapter 7) but when stacked up against more specific affinities, characteristics, and evaluations, seem to have less political relevance. Indeed, what the evidence shows in this case is that, in most cases traditional group effects are insignificant, while identity affiliations are powerful enough to take second place to various performance measures in driving political support at the most diffuse level (i.e., the community). Moreover, identity affiliations also have varying effects on support for choosing a democratic way of governing and to a lesser extent, affiliations with one identity cluster in particular drives support for authorities as well.

Not only do these data empirically demonstrate, for the first time in any systematic way, that more complex ways of tapping identity can be important in better understanding why support for objects in the political system may vary, they also show that different identity group affiliations can influence support in different ways. According to these data, for instance, those who identify as Anglophone and Federalist (.04), or who identify with people of their own age, country, cultural or ethnic background, or even the working class (.05), are more likely to support a democratic political regime over other governance approaches (even after controlling for all the other theoretically relevant factors I have discussed so far). Affiliations with this identity cluster are also more likely to positively affect attachment to different political communities (.15). Conversely of course, those who do not identify with these groups, are more likely to support an alternative regime to democracy or to have less pride or feel less patriotic or affectionate overall toward their communities[535].

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[534] Through inclusion of greater diversity in potential group identities and a component of empathetic tendency, beyond just demographic group characterization, provided by the way questions are asked "how much do you identify with" and through the construction of the identity clusters used here (as described in the previous section).
[535] This could potentially be driven by feelings of being more isolated, disconnected, unheard, or not included in the political process, or reflected in the political communities. While I have identified potential group clusters that matter for support, more digging is still required to better understanding why certain identity clusters are more favourable toward their communities and democracy as a way of governing, while others are less so. To do this will require boosted samples among individuals who consider themselves to fall within these categories (including, for example, larger samples of individuals who do not identify strongly as federalists). As I show below, it would also be beneficial to collect responses from a larger of individuals who identify with a variety of minority groups, considering the significant effect this also has on support for political communities. With such samples, it would be possible to run these same analyses to determine exactly what components of their democratic political systems they see as most problematic (this will also be possible to dig into further through one on one interviews – as I will discuss in the Conclusion).

Add to this also that at the most diffuse level, I find that among those that we surveyed, those who identify with minorities of different types are less likely to feel positively about their political communities (-.06) compared to those who do not identify with minorities, possibly because this group, likely because of their limited numbers and thus lack of comparable political influence, do not feel that their needs and demands are as adequately recognized or responded to by their political communities. That said, another interesting finding that emerges here is that those who identify with the Francophones and elites cluster are more likely to be open to experimenting with more non-democratic and alternative forms of governing (-.11) as compared to non-identifiers. Identifiers within this cluster are also less supportive of their political leaders and elected representatives (-.017). Consequently, it is likely that these two affective outlooks go together, and that it is the lack of affection for political authorities for these affiliates (at least partly) that drives their desire to want to explore other governance approaches.

As explained previously, this is one of the first times that identity affiliations have been empirically tested as potential determinants of political support and the results presented above are based on models that use identity clusters (as already described) to provide a preliminary analysis of the effect that various cross-cutting and inter-twined identifications may have on political support. Recall that the logic that drives this approach is that most citizens are likely multiple identifiers and that identity clusters likely provide a more realistic picture of the current social fabric of Canadian society. Thus, operationalizing identity in this way helps to capture some of the complex effects that varying identity affiliations may have on political support (by capturing degrees of interconnection within group clusters).

This said, these clusters do not determine the effect that affiliation with (or affinity toward) specific groups necessarily have on political support – in other words, how greater identification with a single group compared to any other can drive assessments of the system. Thus, I also ran these models using separate measures that tap affiliations with independent identity groups (without these clusters). The results of these tests are included in Appendix B3 (Table B3.8). What they demonstrate and add to this discussion is that, although grouping identities into clusters provides for a broad assessment of the impact of that cross-cutting and complex identity affiliations can have on political support, it also may camouflage some important differences that emerge between groups when we conduct more detailed explorations[536].

For instance, whereas support for political communities was lower for individuals who identified with multiple minority groups and higher for those who identified with multiple groups within the ingroup-class cluster, the analysis of identities left un-clustered (where identification with only one group is allowed to vary at a time) reveals that community support is higher for the working class and for entrepreneurs, but lower for individuals who identify with unions, which suggests that the latter may feel more disconnected from their political communities than the former, possibly because they don't always feel as supported politically.

Likewise, when it comes to support for democracy, holding multiple ingroup affiliations or Anglo-federalist identities both had positive effects on support, while affiliations with the

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[536] Community: identification with entrepreneurs (.08) and the working class (.08) has a positive effect on support for community generally, while identification with unions has a negative effect on support (-.09). Regime: those who identify as Anglophone are more likely to support democracy as a way of governing compared to those who do not identify with this group (.05). Meanwhile, those who identify with elites (-.16), with unions (-.05), or with visible minorities (-.09) are more likely to support alternatives to democracy. Institutions: identification with unions is the only identity grouping that influences support for institutions and it does so in a positive way (.16). Authorities: identifying with First Nations, Inuit or Métis has a negative effect of support for political authorities overall (-.09), while identifying with the LGBTQ community has a positive effect (.11).

Franco-elites cluster resulted in less commitment to democracy. When looking at non-clustered single identity effects, however, it appears that identifying with Anglophones is what really impacts support for democracy over some other way of governing. While respondents who identify only with unions, visible minorities, or with elites are more inclined to be willing to consider alternative governance approaches in addition to democracy.

Moreover, whereas no clustered identities appeared significant in driving affective support for government institutions, in the de-clustered analyses, I find that identification with unions can have a positive effect on support for legislatures and governments. Lastly, while identifying with both Francophones and elites was the only identity cluster to impact support for authorities, when looking at the independent effects of affiliations with separate groups, I also found that identifiers with First Nations, Inuit or Métis are less supportive of leaders and elected representatives at different levels of government, while Canadians who identify with the LGBTQ community are much more likely to support these authorities.

Overall, what these findings suggest clearly is that identity affiliations, whether in aggregate and complex clusters, or with distinct groups, matter when accounting for variations in political support, even after controlling for an extensive variety of alternative, and theoretically more prominent explanations. What these results also suggest is that important variations exist, both across identity clusters and across individual groups, and that as a result more detailed investigation is certainly necessary to gain an even more sturdy understanding of the dynamics and the mechanics of the effects of identity affiliations, which is the scope of another separate project and one that I intend to pursue. For now however, what I would say is that, in addition to the other performance-oriented factors that I have suggested are necessary to consider when attempting to react to variations in political support, among the demand-side factors, identity emerges as something to pay particular attention to in the future, more consistently and robustly (in some cases), than other sociocultural and value change explanations as well as basic group divides based on language, place of birth, or the national unity debate.

Finally, when it comes to 'other factors' that may drive differences in political support, these models reveal that certain demographic variations also matter, but only at the diffuse levels. For instance, the evidence indicates that young people are less likely to be committed solely to democracy as a way of governing (-.12) and less likely to affectively support political communities (-.06) compared to older generations. The extent that this is an inter-generational change and not a lifestyle effect is something that deserves more investigation, particularly given the disconnect that some suggest may be growing between younger generations and democratic politics (Howe 2010b). To a lesser extent, my evidence also shows that women are more likely to consider alternative regime types to democracy (-.03) compared to men although this is the only

significant finding of its kind to emerge for gender differences[537]. Meanwhile, people's personal dispositions do not seem to have any significant effect on affect support for any of these political objects.

In short, these analyses have revealed that, based on a systematic explanatory analysis of affective support for different political objects generally, across all different levels of government combined, supply-side factors turn out to be the most consistent and pervasive drivers of variations in affective political support, particularly at more specific levels. In particular, perceived performance evaluations are key, especially the ethical conduct of political authorities, the impact of cynical viewpoints and the below-grade performance and output delivery of political authorities, government institutions, and the democratic process. Moreover, what this evidence also suggests is that assessments of the performance and abilities of specific political objects may indeed percolate upward and detract from more diffuse storehouses of affective political support for the democratic regime as well as from affinities and attachments to the entire political communities.

Furthermore, while this evidence also suggests that demand-side factors matter for explaining variations in affective political support, they matter less consistently and are not as robust. Still, there are certain sociocultural factors that do emerge as being relevant and that merit further consideration, such as the gap in efficacy between citizens' own perceived contributions to the political system and how responsive they feel politicians are to these contributions, as well as the degree of social capital that they have based on their levels of trust in other members of society.

Additionally, beyond simple traditional group divides, this analysis revealed that variations in identity affiliations both in their more complex aggregate forms as well as in their more individual group effects, emerge as being among the most consistently significant demand-side determinants to consider. Suggesting at the very least that such differences should not be ignored

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[537] On the surface, this might seem to go counter to what we may have previously expected about men and women in how they react to politics (at least if we are looking at the United States and trends in which men seem to be more likely to engage in violent revolt in the name of fighting against the "establishment"). Of course, it is also possible that the men who are engaging in such violent acts are not revolting against democracy at all, but rather that they are reacting to other things such as their own "hostility toward women" or a "sense of racial threat", neither of which are being measured or tested here (Kleinfeld 2021). However, when we consider what "support for democracy as a way of governing" in these models is actually measuring (commitment to democracy vs other forms of governing such as army rule, experts deciding, and leaders that do not need to bother with legislatures – *not* the tendency to engage in anti-system behavior), the finding could help us to better understand why it is that some men might resort to anti-system behavior, acting out against what they perceive to be a democratic reality that is counter to what they perceive as "ideal" (maybe they feel that democracy is not meeting this ideal). Meanwhile, if women are more likely to support alternatives to more representative traditional forms of democracy (such as perceiving that experts deciding is a good thing or that more powerful leaders with less powerful legislatures can be useful), then it might explain why they are not as likely to revolt (because they may be perceiving the more authoritarian shift in democracy as something that is acceptable)? But these models are not testing whether men or women think their political system is moving away from their perceived ideal, rather, they are testing which ideal they think is better (controlling for perceptions of perceived performance and how well democracies are living up to the "ideal"). The findings of this ultimately suggest, therefore, that even when controlling for how well democracy is meeting the individual ideal that each respondent has in their minds, women still emerge as having different views from men on what democracy *should* look like (with coefficient of .03). And when I run the analysis to determine whether men are more likely than women to be satisfied with democracy or to find it to be democratic, the difference between the two groups in their assessments are not statistically significant – so women might accept an alternative, but they are not more likely to be dissatisfied with the current status quo (the average score on 10 for both groups are .72 and .73) .

in future research. Gaining a better understanding of the dynamics and mechanics of identity affiliations and the intersection between the democratic political system and identity politics will also likely be important for improving and maintaining affective political support, particularly it seems, at the more diffuse levels.

There are also some more sporadic findings that emerge here which are important to keep in mind going forward. The first is that when controlling for differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada, I found evidence to suggest that diffuse level political support varies based on context (even after controlling for all other factors). Also, young people in particular consistently present lower levels of affective political support at the diffuse levels compared to older generations. Each of these findings I believe also deserve more investigation in the future.

As has been demonstrated throughout this project so far, looking solely at affective support for political objects in general may ignore crucial variations that emerge when we look at affective support for political objects across different levels of government. Therefore, in the last section of this analysis I dig one last time into each of the three levels of government to determine whether the effects discussed here are consistent across levels or if they differ, as well as where such differences appear and what they suggest.

**Testing Explanations and Specific to Diffuse Effects – Support Across Levels**
Figure 8.5 presents the results for a disaggregated analysis that looks at the determinants of affective political support for political authorities and government institutions the three levels of government – municipal, provincial and federal[538]. The first major finding to note here is that, consistently with the aggregated findings presented above, supply-side factors continue to stand out as the most consistent and among the most robust determinants for affective support for leaders and elected representatives, as well as legislatures and governments, across virtually all levels of government. Also, these findings suggest that various demand-side explanations reappear as being significant, even if they are generally less powerful compared to supply-side explanations[539].

By parcelling out the analyses across different levels of government, unlike supply-side explanations, the effects of various demand-side explanations also appear to differ depending on whether we are looking at the provincial, municipal, or federal level. Nonetheless, the effects of these demand-side factors seem, as before, not only to be less consistent but also often less robust when looking specifically at affective support for authorities and institutions, and to a degree when looking at support for political communities (as will be demonstrated in Figure 8.6). They do, however, become more prevalent when looking at support for the political regime (Figure 8.6).

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[538] Explanatory variables where questions are asked specifically about different levels of government include measures of honesty and integrity, winning/losing in elections, evaluations of authorities, institutions, regime, and community, cognitive mobilization, and the efficacy gap. See Appendix A1 and A2 for question wordings across levels.
[539] With the exception of attitudes toward democracy as a way of governing the regime, where certain demand-side factors can be as powerful if not stronger than supply-side drivers in determining commitments to democracy.

Figure 8.5 – Explaining PS – Drivers of Variation in Affective Support for Specific Political Objects – Across Levels of Government

	Explaining Affective Assessments of Political Institutions - Across Levels of Government* Feelings about institutions incl. legislatures and governments (Like)	Explaining Affective Assessments of Political Authorities - Across Levels of Government Feelings about authorities incl. political leaders and elected representatives (Like)

Legend: ■ Canada ■ Province ■ City/Town

Performance Explanations
- Perceptions of honesty and integrity of authorities (honest and…) — 0.15
- Political cynicism (completely cynical) — -0.44, -0.35, -0.28 / 0.16, 0.16 | 0.26, 0.25, 0.30
- Winning or losing in politics (winner) — 0.12, 0.13 | -0.18, -0.13, -0.14

Specific/Evaluative Support Measures
- Evaluations of leaders and elected representatives (confidence) —
- Evaluations of governments (positive) — 0.31, 0.25 | 0.49, 0.42, 0.39

Sociocultural/Value Explanations
- Cognitive mobilization (high) — 0.10
- Internal vs. external efficacy (high internal efficacy) — -0.19
- Post-materialism (high)
- Deference: Respect for authority (a good thing)
- Social capital: Interpersonal trust (high) — 0.04

Media Exposure
- Traditional media (more)
- Online media (more) — 0.09

Traditional Groups
- English (vs. French)
- Allophone (vs. French) — -0.10
- Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)
- Nationalist (vs. other) — 0.16
- Federalist (vs. other) — 0.14
- Quebec (vs. ROC) — -0.12

Identity Groupings
- Minorities: immigrants, allophones, First Nations/Inuit/Metis,…
- Ingroup-Class: People of own age, country of birth,…
- Franco-Elites: Francophones, elites (high) — -0.11
- Anglo-Federalists: Anglophones, federalists (high) — -0.09, -0.06

Demographics and Disposition
- Gender (female)
- Age (young)
- Income (high) — 0.14, 0.14
- Personal disposition (positive) — 0.10

Size of Effect (B)   Size of Effect (B)

Source: PCSP 2017

Notes: Based on OLS regressions of all theoretically relevant explanations against affective measures of political support. Sample sizes for each analysis range from 550 to 874. Explanations with no significant effect are excluded from the figure. Objects marked with an asterisk (*) represent general assessments of objects that were only available at the general level (where a cross-level assessment was not otherwise available). Variation across levels of government is attained using explanatory variables measured across levels (incl. integrity, winning and losing in elections, confidence in authorities, evaluations of governments, cognitive mobilization, and efficacy). Full regression results, along with the B coefficients for the size of the effects, can be found in Appendix B3 Table B3.5 to Table B3.6.

More specifically, in the previous analysis (looking at "general" support), I found that supply-side factors were the strongest (and in the case of institutions, the only) explanation for variations in affective assessments of specific objects. In these cross-level models, performance assessments, based on measures of confidence and job evaluations, as well as assessments of the honesty and integrity of authorities and various measures of political cynicism, all still remain consistently strong and significant when accounting for affective political support for political authorities and various government institutions across different levels of government. While voting for the winning party during any election has no significant effect on outlooks[540].

Looking first at people's affective support for various political authorities, I find that, across all three levels of government, Canadians' levels of confidence in leaders and elected representatives (between .39 and .49), their perceptions about the honesty and integrity of their political authorities (between .25 and .30), as well as the degree of cynicism that they have developed about their political authorities and government institutions (between -.13 and -.18) turn out to be among the most important determinants of their affective support for their various political authorities[541]. That is, the more virtuous they see their political authorities as being, the less cynical they are about their political authorities and government institutions, and the more confident they are about the work that their political authorities are doing, the more inclined they are to like their political authorities at all three levels of government.

There are of course, as one would expect given differences in context and personalities, also some notable cross-level variations that emerge. For instance, ethics seem to be slightly more important municipally than at other government levels. Public cynicism seems to be slightly more relevant at the federal level. And confidence in the performance of political authorities seems to matter most at higher levels of government but less so at lower levels.

Also consistent with the findings for affective assessments of political institutions in general, when looking across all three levels of government, Canadians' evaluations of their political authorities, their assessments of their honesty and integrity (between .15 and .16), as well as their levels of cynicism about these individuals and certain core governmental institutions (between -.28 and -.44) have some of the most consistent and most powerful effects on affective support for legislatures and governments.

This said, however, it is noteworthy to point out that while assessments of integrity and honesty, as well as feelings of cynicism have consistent effects across all three levels of government, confidence, and the perceptions of job performance of leaders and elected representatives, matters only at the federal (.12) and provincial (.13) levels. This suggests that people who lose confidence in authorities within their municipalities, or perceive them to be underdelivering, do not necessarily lose more deep-seated storehouses of support for legislatures and governments in general[542] any more than those who maintain higher levels of confidence in the institutions functioning at these levels.

More specifically, what these findings suggest in general is that more positive evaluations of the honesty and integrity of political authorities lead to more affective support for core government

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[540] Winning or losing in various elections continues to remain insignificant in determining support (for the "Canada" models, this is based on vote choice in two federal elections; in the "Province" analysis, this is based on vote choice in one provincial election; in the "City/Town models, this is based on the same cross-level win/lose variable used in the "general" analyses in the previous section, that includes vote choice in two federal elections and one provincial one).
[541] This is consistent when looking at just political leaders as well.
[542] As noted below Figure 8.5, affective assessments of governments and legislatures across levels (municipal, provincial, federal) were not asked in the 2017 PCSP. These interpretations are, therefore, based on municipal level variations in the explanatory variables only.

institutions, as do lower levels of public cynicism about the workings of political authorities and certain institutions. In addition, affective support for core government institutions is also threatened when evaluations of government performance (as determined by confidence levels and job evaluations) turn negative, particularly, at the federal and municipal levels, but not at the provincial level. In addition, some other variations that appear here suggest that political cynicism matters most for the municipal level and less so for the federal level and that evaluations of the performance of governments at the municipal level also appear to matter somewhat more for affective support for core government institutions than evaluations of the performance of institutions at the federal level[543].

Turning now to the demand-side factors, I find once again that these are not the most consistent nor robust determinants of either affective support for political authorities or for core government institutions. However, as before, there are some sociocultural, group-based, identity driven, and demographic factors that emerge as being significant and more or less influential. Moreover, what becomes more apparent now than before is that demand-side factors seem to matter more at the municipal level than at other levels of government, particularly when it comes to accounting for variations in affective support for political authorities. More specifically, what the evidence shows in this case is that the larger the efficacy gap (where internal efficacy is high), the less likely people are to like their municipal leaders and elected representatives (-.19), whereas the use of online media for news consumption has a positive effect (.09) on affective support for these local authorities.

Moreover, the evidence also shows that speaking English as a mother tongue has a negative effect on support for authorities at the municipal level, while identification with Francophones and elites also has a negative effect on feelings about both municipal authorities (-.06) as well as federal ones (-.09)[544]. Furthermore, as far as accounting for variations in affective support for political authorities is concerned, personal disposition (feeling happy and satisfied with one's life and personal financial situation) emerges for the first time as a positive driver (.10) of support for authorities at the municipal level (a factor that, when looking at only affective support for political authorities more generally, did not appear).

As I move upward to look more closely at the demand-side determinants of affective assessments of governments and legislatures in general, I find that, where demand-side factors were previously irrelevant, they do not remain that way when we unpack and examine affective support across different levels of government[545]. Indeed, what I find in this case is that there are some significant cross-level effects that emerge. In fact, similar to what the results showed for affective assessments for political authorities above, I find signs of certain sociocultural, group-based,

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[543] This said, these differences are based on comparing coefficients between three regression models (displayed on the left side of Figure 8.5) which allow me to assess the amount of variance in the dependent variable in each model explained by these explanatory factors (for instance, evaluations of municipal government performance accounts for 31% of the variance in affective assessments of institutions, while federal government performance accounts for 25%). This is not an ideal approach and to determine how assessments of different levels compare to each other in driving general affective support for institutions, I would need to run each of these explanations separately in the same analysis. Unfortunately, however, at this time doing so results in too low of a sample size to confirm this with confidence. Nonetheless it is sufficient to demonstrate that performance of different levels can impact affective support in different ways and that not all governments are challenging democracy to the same degree.

[544] These findings may be influenced by the predicaments of minority language groups both inside and outside Quebec, but that is something that requires additional investigation in the future.

[545] Where available (in all supply-side determinants) as well as in cognitive mobilization and efficacy.

identity-related, and demographic effects. However, the results, once again, are neither very consistent, nor the most robust.

First, the evidence shows that those who are more cognitively mobile (as measured by education levels attained and interest in national politics), are more likely to be more affectively supportive of their legislatures and governments, as is the case also with those who are more trusting of others. In addition, when it comes to basic group differences, the analysis reveals that Quebecers with nationalist political orientations are more likely than others to support core government institutions (within Quebec) when evaluations of provincial (.14) and municipal (.16) factors are held constant, whereas Quebecers in general are less likely than other Canadians to affectively support their core government institutions when municipal level factors are controlled for.

Furthermore, the analyses conducted for different levels of government show that those who identify with the Franco-elites cluster are less likely to affectively support their legislatures and governments, when provincial variations are held constant, than those who do not. Moreover, whereas it was otherwise insignificant when looking at affective support for institutions using the aggregated data, I find that personal disposition influences support for institutions generally when I control for other effects at only the federal (.14) and municipal levels (.14). More specifically, what the evidence shows in each of these cases is that the more positive and happy one is about their life and financial situation, the more likely they are to affectively support their core government institutions[546].

The major takeaways from these more detailed cross-level analyses of specific objects are that, when we look at political support only generally (for the political system as a whole and not for different levels of government), we may miss some of the more fine grained differences that occur, especially when it comes to the varying demand-side effects, which although not very consistent or robust even when examined across different levels of government, may provide more helpful insights when seeking to tackle political support problems or for carving out potential follow up trajectories of research.

Another important insight that stems from this more detailed investigation is that, despite these fluctuating demand-side effects on support for specific objects, the impact of supply-side performance perceptions and object evaluations is consistent and strong, and it can be observed and generalized across levels. When it comes to accounting for variations in affective political support for both political authorities and government institutions, performance perceptions are key. Their effects, in all their variations – be it perceptions about the ethical conduct of political authorities, or cynical viewpoints about political authorities and institutions, or confidence levels in and job evaluations of the work that political authorities and institutions do – consistently turn out to be important determinants of affective support for specific political objects across all three levels of government.

In other words, these data suggest for the first time in a more systematic and detailed way that, despite what many have pointed to in the past as challenges to democracy based simply on a changing, more attentive public with new priorities, the real stresses when it comes to specific support are the ways in which these publics (despite their changing nature) are perceiving the political system's objects to be behaving while in office, responding to their demands, and delivering on their expectations. More specifically, these findings suggest that when it comes to affective support for authorities, integrity and confidence are key. Also, where confidence and

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[546] As long as cross-level assessments are not included in the analysis. In other words, if only evaluations of one level of government is controlled for at a time.

evaluations of government performance are held constant, cynicism remains strong primary driving force for negative assessments of governing institutions. Such a finding indicates that, even if job performance is improved perceptions of integrity and cynicism towards politics can (and will) continue to erode support.

These data also help to lend further support for the proposition that political support at specific levels is not isolated to assessments of authorities and their misbehaviors, where these individuals may be expelled, and replacements brought in. Rather, this more detailed evidence reveals that addressing cynicism, and ethical conduct are crucial to maintaining storehouses of support that help to guarantee the stability of political institutions – that support and evaluations of specific actors (their actions and behaviors) within the political system consistently and powerfully percolate upward exerting more pervasive and potentially detrimental effects on support at more diffuse levels. More specifically, the evidence here confirms that performance evaluations of political authorities have a consistent and robust effect, across levels, on affective support for institutions, even more than performance evaluations and assessments of the outputs that governments are producing. If these performance evaluations are good, the stability of institutions may be preserved, however, if they are bad (which Chapter 6 has shown to be quite consistently the case), we may have more to be concerned about.

This brings me then to my next set of analyses, in which I continue to explore the effects of each of these variants of both the supply- and demand-side explanations, as well as others, on affective support for a democratic political regime at each the federal, provincial, and municipal levels, as well as affective support for political communities at each level. The results of these analyses are laid out here in Figure 8.6 below.

Figure 8.6 – Explaining PS – Drivers of Variation in Affective Support for Diffuse Political Objects – Across Levels of Government
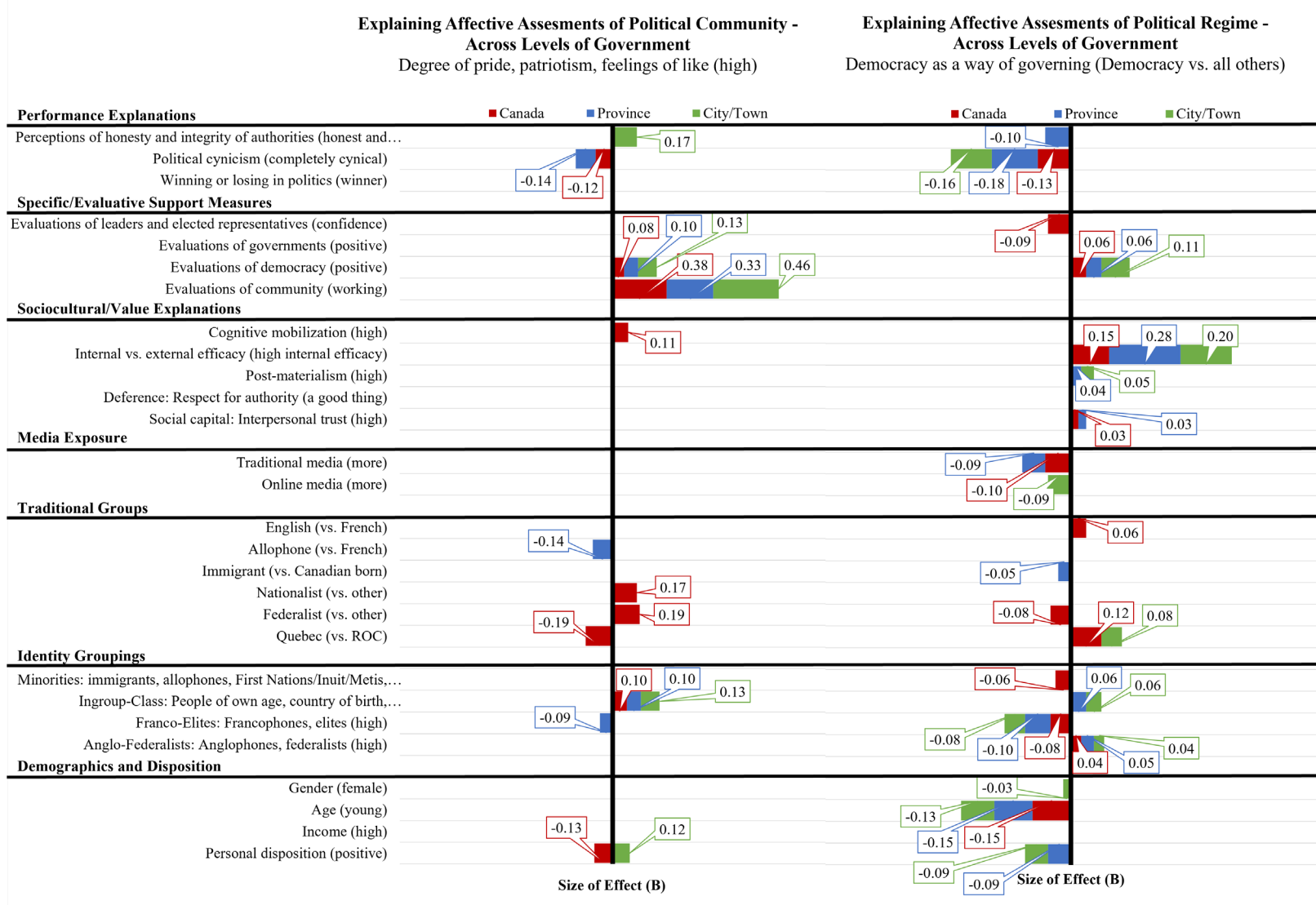
Explaining Affective Assesments of Political Community -
Across Levels of Government
Degree of pride, patriotism, feelings of like (high)

Explaining Affective Assesments of Political Regime -
Across Levels of Government
Democracy as a way of governing (Democracy vs. all others)

Source: PCSP 2017

Notes: Based on OLS regressions of all theoretically relevant explanations against affective measures of political support. Sample sizes for each analysis range from 567 to 626. Explanations with no significant effect are excluded from the figure. Full regression results can be found in Appendix B3 Table B3.3 to Table B3.4.

Note first, that as we move upward to examine affective support toward more diffuse political objects, supply-side performance assessments and object evaluations remain pivotal when determining what best explains variations in affective feelings about our political regimes and communities, regardless of whether we look at the federal, provincial, or municipal levels. That is, they are some of the most consistent and robust effects that emerge. This said however, there are also some important cross-level distinctions that a appear and reveal that performance evaluations at more diffuse levels matter in slightly different ways than they do at more specific levels. Furthermore, there are more signs to suggest that demand-side factors, as well as various group and demographic background-related factors likely matter more often, across different levels of government, at more diffuse levels than at more specific ones (particularly when it comes to accounting for variations in affective support for the political regime, or commitment to democracy). Still, there are also significant differences that appear when observing how these effects play out.

    To dig into these observations, I start by looking more closely at the drivers of affective support for the political community, as the results are somewhat more straightforward than those that emerge for the political regime[547]. An important takeaway from these models, is the consistently significant effect that various supply-side factors, including different performance and evaluative support measures, have on affective attachments to the community. Similar to the results I presented earlier on support for political communities more generally, these cross-level analyses confirm yet again that evaluations of how well communities are working is the top driver of affective support at the community level, across all communities – municipal (.46); provincial (.33); and federal (.38).

    Moreover, these models show that evaluations[548] of how well democracies are working, across different levels are consistently relevant, at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. This is also consistent with the earlier findings presented in the analysis of support for political communities generally. These results reinforce that specific support matters for maintaining higher levels of diffuse support across all three levels of government. Note, however, that in this case, evaluations of the workings of democracy do not matter as much as the evaluations of the workings of political communities themselves. Yet they do remain significant, even after accounting for the latter. This is highly relevant in further solidifying the cumulating evidence that points to the importance of support for specific political objects (through object performance and output evaluations) in sustaining support for the more diffuse ones (assessments that are deemed responsible for system legitimacy and stability).

    Consider too that the evidence here shows that perceptions of the ethical misconduct of political authorities and built-up cynicism toward political authorities and institutions can also have important negative consequences for affective outlooks toward different political communities. Again, this suggests that support for specific political objects matters for maintaining support for more diffuse political objects, even though the effects are neither as consistent across all levels of government nor as powerful as the effects that evaluations of the workings of political communities themselves have on affective assessments.

    More specifically, these findings show that, although the general-level analysis suggested that perceptions of the honesty and integrity of authorities were among the topmost important drivers of support for the community, the cross-level analysis suggests that the story is slightly

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[547] This is support for the regime based on commitment to democracy as a way of governing versus all other forms.
[548] Based on evaluations of the democraticness of each level as well as satisfaction with democracy (both generally and with different aspects) at each level.

different. That is, I find here that while the honesty and integrity of mayors and municipal councillors does indeed continue to be the second strongest driver of support for the municipal political community (.17), at the federal and provincial levels, it is political cynicism about federal (-.12) and provincial (-.14) political authorities and institutions that actually emerges as the only other significant performance explanation (stronger even than evaluations of the workings of democracy).

This distinction, although it may seem tangential, provides important insights about what types of performance need to be specifically targeted to improve affective community support for different levels of government, and these are insights that were previously concealed when only looking at political support for community at the general level (in which case only ethical considerations, broadly speaking, appeared to be a key priority). Moreover, the areas to target when honesty and integrity appear to be the problem may be slightly more obvious, whereas addressing problems relating to political cynicism[549] may be a bit more complex, involving the need to improve politicians' and parties' behaviours more broadly, as well as paying attention and figuring out the causes and remedies for more deep-rooted feelings of disillusionment.

Looking at affective support for political communities across different levels of government also demonstrates that there are important cross-level nuances when it comes to the effects had by different demand-side explanations that are also not as evident when looking only generally at affective support for political communities overall and which may require different approaches if attempts at improvement are to be made.

First, while the general analysis revealed that sociocultural arguments had no effect on community support, these disaggregated models reveal that cognitive mobilization does indeed have an effect on affective community support, but only at the federal level (.11). In other words, what this more detailed investigation shows is that more educated Canadians who have greater interest in federal politics also have a greater tendency to feel greater affection toward the Canadian political community. This effect may also have the opposite effect, however, wherein lower levels of education and disinterest may be harming national-level community support, emphasizing overall the relevance that improved education and interest in politics may have when it comes to improving affective support for the federal political community.

The value of such a finding lies in its specificity in pinpointing areas for greater attention and improvement. In the past, education has been seen as something that might improve political participation and civic engagement (R. Inglehart 1990), and while it has been showed to be linked in certain contexts to a more general sense of disaffection or "political climate" (Alaminos and Penalva 2012), it has never been demonstrated that greater education and interest may also be closely tied to pride, patriotism, or attachment to the community. Not only does this potentially make a case for finding ways to use education and foster political discussion, it also helps to nuance our understanding (and resulting interventions) by highlighting that similar approaches for improving community support may not have equal effects across the board, and that targeting education and political interest as a way to improve support for the most diffuse political object may not always fix perceptions of what is most problematic across all levels. For instance, greater education and discussion of municipal politics is not significantly tied to community attachment, instead other factors such as happiness, in-group identity, evaluations of the way democracy and the community at this level are working, and perceptions that political representatives are behaving ethically, are all far more important.

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[549] Questions used to tap cynicism include perceptions of corruption, that politicians say anything to get elected, that parties buy elections and votes, that governments don't care, and that participation in politics makes no difference.

Another important finding to draw from this analysis, is that, even across different communities, other sociocultural factors tied to modernization and commonly blamed for democratic disaffection (including greater internal over external efficacy, changing materialist values, declining deference to authority and changing patterns of interpersonal trust) remain insignificant in determining diffuse support. Instead, group-based differences and identity affiliations turn out to have a more significant impact on affective support for various political communities, just as they did in the more general results. This said, the findings from the cross-level analyses are far more nuanced than what the "general" community support model alone would have led us to believe.

For instance, in the previous analyses of general affective support for political communities in Canada, the ingroup-class identity cluster emerged as a relatively strong determinant of feelings about community. These new cross-level models confirm this effect, where identifying with the working class and other members of one's own identity groups (age, country, ethnic/cultural background) remains a significant driver of community support at all levels of government (from .10 to .13). This said however, the effect of identification with various minority groups, which was small but significant in the previous general analysis for affective support for political communities, disappears when the investigation is disaggregated. Instead, in this more nuanced analysis, identification with Francophones and elites emerges as having a negative effect (-.09) on support for the political community at the provincial level, whereas this particular identity cluster had no relevance whatsoever when examining affective support for political communities overall[550].

Also, when it comes to basic traditional group differences, this investigation shows that they matter at certain levels of government and for certain political communities more so than they appeared to matter in the more general investigation of affective support of political communities overall. In particular, this analysis directs the previous relevance of the divide between Quebecers and non-Quebecers squarely at affective political support at the federal level. That is, these results show not only that Quebecers like the federal political community less than non-Quebecers (-.19)[551], but that this disaffection is likely driven primarily by sovereigntists, as opposed to nationalists (.17) and federalists (.19)[552]. Moreover, when compared to Francophones, this evidence also shows that Allophones are generally less supportive of their provincial political communities (-.14). This effect may help to partly account for why identification with the minorities[553] cluster as a whole becomes insignificant in this particular model, as Allophones are a core minority group contained within that cluster and while

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[550] Again, if seeking to address support, therefore, depending on what it is that we wish to accomplish (whether to foster greater community attachments across the board, or just those in certain provinces) a different approach will be necessary (and a different target group may be the focus of such an approach).

[551] This is similar to the simple cross-contextual differences reveled between Quebecers and non-Quebecers in Chapter 7 (where Quebecers show less affection toward both the federal and their provincial communities compared other Canadians, despite more positive evaluations of how well these communities are working). It also further clarifies the finding from Figure 8.5 (where Quebecers emerged as more negative toward all communities in "general").

[552] While this model does not include a control for 'independentist' like the last one (in Chapter 6), additional analysis (not displayed here) reveals that the strong effects of Quebec nationalism or federalism among Quebecers are actually due to the powerful effect that supporting independence has on orientations toward the federal community. In a regression run with all three controls, the explanatory power of either "nationalist" or "federalist" falls out and are replaced by the strong (-.24) and significant negative effect of considering oneself "independentist".

[553] Which includes identification with Allophones, rather than speaking a language other than English or French as one's mother tongue.

identification (or even empathizing) with Allophones and other minority groups may be damaging deeper storehouses of support generally, *being* an Allophone in this country is an even more powerful driver of low provincial community support[554]. Pinpointing why this is happening will be an important area for future research[555] but for now, this goes to show once again, how important it is to look deeper and more carefully across levels when conducting investigations of this kind (as well as when potentially applying policy responses). Indeed, without conducting this more detailed cross-level investigation, these more nuanced findings may have been entirely overlooked.

Finally, when it comes to demographics, basic differences in background characteristics and the effects relating to personal disposition, the previous general analysis of affective support for political communities overall showed that young people are less likely to support their political communities than their elders. When we unpack this analysis to look separately at the drivers of affective support for different subnational political communities within Canada, the findings show that age is no longer as important as personal disposition. And here the results are not consistent in that they suggest that positive perceptions of one's own life, happiness and economic well-being are linked to more positive views of the municipal community (.12), but more negative views of the federal political community (-13). This may have to do with which level of government people see as being more responsible for their current lot in life. As one of the first analyses of support that include personal disposition, finding cross-level differences is illuminating[556]. Once again however, more careful analysis would be required to parse out the reasons for such significant and opposite effects. For instance, our future surveys will explore personal disposition further, while also questioning respondents about their personal and direct experiences with specific policy outputs at various levels of government.

Having considered the results pertaining to the most relevant cross-level determinants of affective support for federal, provincial, and municipal political communities, I turn now to look more carefully at the various drivers of affective support for the federal, provincial and municipal democratic regimes. When examining affective support for democracy in Canada as a whole, the earlier more general investigation showed that political cynicism was the only significant and robust performance-related determinant of maintaining a commitment to

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[554] This suggests perhaps that the experience of being an Allophone in Canada is even more important in determining provincial support than being an ally to minority groups including Allophones. The Quebec provincial government's efforts to target (Oakes and Peled 2017) this particular language group, therefore, is not altogether surprising and the experience of being an Allophone might be damaging provincial community support – but only for Allophones themselves, not necessarily for those who identify with them or with other minority groups. It is clear from these data that Canadians' whose mother tongue is not English or French are far less supportive of their provincial communities, however, any efforts that might encourage new language learning, while it might help provincial community support to a degree (this would need to be unpacked even further), if these policy efforts are not also combined with greater efforts at improving democratic outputs, the workings of the political community, and reducing cynicism, then pride, patriotism and attachment to the province is not likely to move all that much.

[555] In the next round of PCSP surveys, we will also be conducting interviews with marginalized Canadians. This will involve both online surveys and face-to-face interviews not only with lower income Canadians, but also a variety of individuals from a number of different backgrounds and minority groups (including indigenous Canadians and immigrants).

[556] Norris is one exception (Norris 2011). The federal government here in Canada have also recently acknowledged the importance of measuring output success "beyond" just GDP, to also include indicators of quality of life and to include consideration of these things in how they make policy decisions (Department of Finance Canada 2021). Others have also investigated the effects of political conditions (for examples: Frey and Al-Roumi 1999; Barber, McNeely, and Spellings 2012) on quality of life (where disposition is used instead as a dependent variable) rather than as a potential driver of variations in support.

democratic rule over other forms of less democratic governance, such as authoritarian rule, expert rule, or army rule. This analysis once again confirms that cynicism has a negative effect on affective support for democracy at all three levels of government, and that it has an even greater effect at the provincial (-.18) and municipal (-.16) levels than at the federal level (-.13). In all three cases however, the basic finding is the same: when all other explanations are held constant, the more cynical Canadians become about their politics, the less inclined they are to remain committed solely to democratic rule and the more open they will be to other governance options.

In addition, this more detailed investigation also shows that improving perceptions of the integrity of political authorities may help to solidify support for democracy at the provincial level (-.10), while greater deficits in confidence in political leaders and elected representatives detracts from support for democracy at the federal level (-.09). Moreover, these results indicate that evaluations of the workings of democracy are key at all three levels of government. That is, the more positively citizens assess the workings of their democracies, particularly at the municipal level (.11, with .06 at the provincial and federal levels), the more likely they are to affectively support a democratic regime over other alternative, less democratic approaches. This finding is especially revealing and concerning (when also considering the low grades presented in preceding chapters) as it demonstrates that the way different democracies perform on various tasks (such as: legislation-making and representation, the protection of rights and freedoms or maintaining the transparency of the political process and public spending, etc.,) can have significant, pervasive, and detrimental effects on the degree to which publics remain committed to a democratic political regime in all political contexts, in addition to more diffuse attachments to all political communities.

All these findings lend further support to the relevance of the performance argument in explaining variations in political support and they show, once again, that support for more specific objects percolates upward, influencing support for more diffuse ones. That is, when the performance of more specific objects is perceived to be suffering – whether in terms of perceptions of ethical failures, the development and heightening of cynical viewpoints, or even failing grades given to the work being done by political leaders and elected representatives – all have significant implications on more diffuse support for democracy across different levels of government, even after taking into account the effects of various other theoretically relevant factors – including satisfaction and evaluations of the workings of specific aspects of democracy and how well they are meeting the democratic expectations of citizens, but also the many demand-side dimensions within these democracies.

When it comes to demand-side effects, conducting the detailed analysis across different levels of government confirms that societal changes may still have significant consequences on the future of democratic support and our commitments to democracy but also that some of these effects may play out differently depending on where we focus our analyses. For instance, like the preceding investigation of affective support for democracy in Canada generally, this disaggregated investigation confirms that the efficacy gap is relevant for determining affective support for democracy across all three levels of government. The more Canadians think that they have something to contribute combined with the feeling that their contribution is being ignored, the less likely they are to remain strongly committed to democratic rule and the more likely they may be to consider other governing formulas. Note that these findings are particularly strong at the provincial (.28) and municipal (.20) levels and less so at the federal (.15) level.

In addition, these findings also show that shifting post-materialist values along with changing levels of inter-personal trust are likely to be important considerations as well, when it comes to maintaining a strong commitment to democracy at different levels of government. What this suggests is that in addition to improved perceptions of performance (both specific and diffuse), at least some thought needs to be given to better aligning democracies with the changes taking place in societies (Malloy 2023). Based on these results, it may be time for us to step back slightly and reassess whether democracy in its current form is both meeting the needs of its publics (through its performance and outputs), but also if the way it is defined by those publics in terms of the principles on which it is based and its purpose are also serving them as well as they could be[557]. In particular, this evidence shows that post-materialists are more inclined to be committed to democracy at both the provincial (.04) and municipal (.05) levels. Meanwhile, Canadians with higher social capital, who are more trusting of others, are more likely to support democracy at the federal and provincial levels (.03).

Another demand-side factor that emerges as being significant here is the one pertaining to media effects. When looking initially at the factors that drive affective support for the political regime in Canada, I found that attention to traditional news had a significant and negative impact on support for a democratic political system. Not surprisingly, the disaggregated results present a more refined perspective. That is, traditional news media consumption and exposure has a negative effect on commitment to democracy particularly at the federal (-.10) and provincial (-.09) levels, whereas online news consumption has a negative effect on commitment to democracy at the local level (-.09). This makes sense given the financial hit that traditional media outlets at local levels have been taking since advertising revenue has steadily been gravitating away from newspapers, radio or even television, toward online sources (Public Policy Forum 2017; 2022; MacNeil 2024). This said, a more careful approach to understanding other factors (such as the content of different sources) will offer even greater insight going forward. This analysis has built on the media malaise/virtuous circle hypothesis (Norris 2000a) by demonstrating that media can indeed have an effect on support. This effect, however, might be lost if we ignore subnational variations within contexts (as many cross-national studies do). It also raises new and perhaps even more important questions about the varying effects that new (and old) media can have, beyond just how citizens evaluate democracy and their satisfaction with it (Ceron 2015; Wike et al. 2022; MacNeil 2024), but also on people's commitment to democracy itself[558].

Although traditional group differences (based on language, place of birth and views on Quebec independence) did not emerge as significant drivers of commitment to democracy on the

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[557] Malloy (2023) suggests that an assessment requires a distinction between "governance" and "representation". Similarly, here I am suggesting refinements in our understanding of perceptions of governance versus perceptions of representation, but also refinement in our *definition* of the purpose that democracy serves according to citizens. In my future work, this will involve digging deeper into what democracy means to citizens, what they see its purpose as being, as well as what other stakeholders view its purpose to be (including political and societal elites, as well as civil society leaders, and more marginalized members of society as well). For example, why is it that materialists and less-trusting individuals are not as committed to democracy? And what can be done to improve the overall congruence between the state and the underlying values of the society it governs?

[558] As I have mentioned in previous comments (see Chapter 3), these data do not yet focus on media content or bias. However, given the effect that media can in fact have on democratic commitment, as I have demonstrated based on these data, the need for greater examination is made especially pressing. One important avenue will be in linking perceptions of performance based on where the public are getting their information (whether through various biased or unbiased media sources, or through personal experience) and to determine the resulting influence on commitments to democracy.

"general" indicator discussed in Figure 8.5, when I isolate the effects of these other explanations at each level of government, a few significant findings do emerge that deserve some consideration. For instance, speaking English (.06) as one's mother tongue (as compared to French) seems to have a positive effect on support for a democratic regime at the federal level. Being an immigrant (-.05) as opposed to a native-born Canadian, detracts from democratic support at the provincial level. Also, being a federalist in Quebec (as opposed to in the rest of Canada)[559] detracts from affective support for democracy federally (-.08), despite being tied to greater attachment to the federal community. Furthermore, despite less attachments to the federal community among Quebecers, these same respondents are also generally more likely to be committed to democracy at both the federal (.12) and municipal (.08) levels than other Canadians[560]. Each of these findings provide a potential opening for further lines investigation, through which to also probe for ways that affective democratic support could be improved. The first step in doing this would be to isolate these analyses, looking at commitments to democracy (and what drives these commitments) among Anglophones, among immigrants, among federalists in Quebec, and among Canadians in other provinces[561].

In terms of identity affiliations, the preceding investigation into the determinants of affective support of democracy in Canada overall certainly hinted that identity politics may be partly to blame for variations in overall regime support in Canada. In particular, the previous more general investigation showed that affiliations with certain identity clusters, such as the ingroup-class cluster and the Anglo-federalist cluster had positive effects on affective support for Canadian democracy, whereas affiliations with the Franco-elite cluster had negative consequences on commitment to democratic government in Canada. These disaggregated findings help to add more grist to the potential relevance of this argument by confirming the significance of the latter two findings across all three levels of government. Moreover, these findings add that ties to the Franco-elites cluster have slightly more robust effects across all three levels of government (municipal and federal: -.08; provincial: -.10) than do ties to the Anglo-federalist cluster (municipal and federal: .04; provincial: .05). These results also add to our understanding by demonstrating that ties to the ingroup-class identity cluster have positive effects on democratic support at the provincial and municipal levels (.06), but not federally. In addition, these findings show that ties to the minorities' identity cluster have negative implications for affective democratic support at the federal level (-.06).

All these effects help to pinpoint particular stress points that may be generated when the dynamics of identity politics come head-to-head with the limited capacities of democracy to deliver for these groups, and the resulting consequences this has on support for democracy as a

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[559] This result may be due in part to the effect that the new identity grouping Anglo-federalist exerts on the old traditional group "federalist" indicator – wherein any variation in "federalist" should now be considered as independent of any variation in identification *with* federalists. It may also be due to the federalist-independentist/other distinction provided by the coding of this variable. According to this coding, both non-Quebecers (not asked this question) as well as independentists, non-nationalists, and non-federalists, are all included in the "other" category. In other words, all "others" here are more likely to value democracy over some other form of governing at the federal level. In a separate analysis (not shown here), I have added a control for independentist which reveals no significant change in this effect – in other words, the effect of "federalist" is not due only to the difference between federalists and independentists.
[560] These contrasting results for the federal level, between attachments to the community and attitudes toward democracy as a way of governing, may be reflective of a closer link between these two more diffuse support indicators which is worthy of further investigation.
[561] Something that will be possible as I move forward, where I imagine a study that uses these same data as well as new waves, and isolate my analyses to these groups only.

way of governing across levels of government over time. The sheer number of significant findings when it comes to the effects that identity *can* have on commitments to democracy, like the effects of various supply- and other demand-side factors, suggest that democratic commitment is an important area for further investigation, beyond what I am able to present here. Indeed, Canadians' commitment to democratic rule is not immune to fluctuations and significant diversity in the Canadian context may be at least partially to blame for varying support. This said, commitment to democracy has been largely taken for granted and its causes generally overlooked. My findings suggest that this is one area where more attention should be focused in the future.

Turning lastly to basic demographic and background differences, I find that, unlike the broader picture presented when I examined the determinants of general assessments of democratic rule, gender turns out to matter only for municipal democracies (-.03)[562]. That is, women are less likely to be committed solely to democracy, particularly at the local level, than are men[563]. Also, as before, age turns out once again to be significant, but these results also confirm that this age effect is systematic and quite strong across all levels of government. In other words, younger Canadians are systematically less likely to be fully committed to only democratic rule at all three levels of government (municipal: -.13; provincial and federal: -.15).

When it comes to personal disposition, the disaggregated evidence suggests that happiness, as well as life and financial satisfaction, while not significantly tied to commitments to democracy when looked at "generally", these outlooks are negatively linked to support for democracy at the provincial and municipal levels (-.09) with no significant effects of disposition on commitment to democracy at the federal level. Given these negative effects of disposition on commitments to democracy at the provincial and municipal levels, combined with what I pointed out previously (where disposition drives more positive attachments to the local community but more negative outlooks toward the federal one), this factor may be another area in need of additional investigation that involves a more direct assessment of experiences with different levels of government and perhaps even a more elaborated measures of disposition, feelings of satisfaction with life, embeddedness in family and the social community, and various personality characteristics (Mondak and Halperin 2008)[564].

Conclusion

In this chapter I explored a multitude of possible explanations for why support for objects in the political system may vary. From supply-side factors such as the ethical conduct, public cynicism, and various job output performance measures, confidence and object evaluations to demand-side factors consisting of the sociocultural mix of Canadian society shaping the needs and expectations that feed into the democratic process.

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[562] Although, the effect was still strong enough to reveal a relationship when examining all factors across all levels combined.

[563] This does not tell us anything about likelihood to vote or engage in protest, simply a commitment to democracy versus other forms. To determine how this changes political behavior, further analysis is required.

[564] Here is an area where we might borrow in future studies from other fields. Anderson (M. R. Anderson 2010b; 2010a), for instance, draws from psychology by applying a broader set of indicators to "sense of community" based on work done by McMillan and Chavis (1986) as well as major personality traits (Mondak and Halperin 2008). In our next rounds of surveys, we will be tapping similar perceptions and feelings of embeddedness, as well as personality traits and other disposition questions that tap life satisfaction and experiences with specific things such as mental health, work-life balance, family, and others.

This, and the chapters leading up to this one, have revealed that deriving an understanding of political support and what drives it requires careful and elaborate (deep and detailed) analyses and caution in jumping to potentially short-sighted conclusions and recommendations. Indeed, while it may be tempting to look at a basic measure of overall satisfaction with democracy and conclude that all is well in the Canadian case, as many have, such an approach would be missing much of what challenges this analysis suggests lie below the surface. Clearly, we should not lose sight of the bigger picture (the system as a whole and the most popular measures), but we should also consider looking more deeply and systematically and asking more pointed and direct questions. By doing this, we will obtain the kinds of detailed evidence that we need to unpack and uncover the full nature and extent of the political support problem, testing the nature of the problem across multiple measures, different political objects, and levels of government, while also seeking to determine the generalizability and extent of such problems across territorial contexts, groups, identity clusters, and demographic backgrounds. By investing more seriously and more often in this type of extensive and holistic investigative approach to understanding the political system through repeated probes like the one that I have provided here, carving out an alternative vantage point to the one we have become used to seeing up until now, we will start to hone in even more precisely on the major challenges (or stresses) that our democracies are undergoing and that I have started to uncover here, and be able to more confidently address them in the future.

Applying this approach, I have demonstrated based on the PCSP's first major cross-country timepoint, that despite the top billing that Canadian democracy typically gets on the world stage, Canadians do not necessarily think all is well. Rather, the reality indicates that several areas appear to be quite problematic. The evidence presented throughout the preceding chapters reveal systematic patterns of below-grade affective and evaluative support for different specific and diffuse political objects, including various political authorities, government institutions, the workings of different aspects of democracy, regime principles, as well as the overall political community. The evidence is also striking in its consistency across alternative measures, levels of government, territorial contexts, and groups. Furthermore, it shows several signs to support the claim that problems with (or low-grade support for) political objects at specific levels (i.e., with political authorities, government institutions, and the workings of democracy) are not just benign or par for the course, nor are they likely to be easily washed away by changes in government, particularly if sustained and ingrained for extended periods of time. That is, there is systematic evidence that demonstrates that more specific outlooks toward authorities and institutions can (and do) detract from more diffuse levels of commitment to a democratic regime as a way of governing at all levels of government, as well as attachments and feelings of pride or patriotism toward our various political communities.

When it comes to explanatory evidence of the challenges facing democracy, the culprits we can now point to as most likely driving these phenomena are remarkable in their overall consistency and robustness. Not only does the evidence point to areas that, despite what we may

have previously expected, are *not* the primary source of disaffection[565], they also reveal the directions that we should turn to improve (and hopefully reverse) some of these key political support problems. In particular, the evidence clearly shows that improving public perceptions of political performance is key.

These analyses allow us to conclude with greater sureness that performance, through confidence and evaluations of job performance are a major source of stress, across levels, when it comes to affective support across the political system. Meanwhile, even where performance is held constant (for instance, where confidence and evaluations of job performance for respondents are high), cynicism still stands out as a primary driving force for negative assessments of the political system, from authorities all the way up to political communities. Such a finding suggests that adaptations and improvements to job performance may not be enough, that perceptions of integrity and cynicism, regardless of performance, will continue to corrode support. To actively work toward securing public support, therefore, it will be important to focus on building and maintaining higher degrees of public confidence in political authorities and government institutions and the work that they do (to chip away at cynicism)[566], but it will be especially crucial that we also seek to find ways to reduce levels of public cynicism directly, and to encourage political authorities to take even more involved roles and more deliberate actions to reduce instances (and perceptions) of ethical misconduct.

In other words, rather than accepting cynicism as "given" or even a healthy characteristic of democratic systems (Baggini 2013), my research shows that such cynicism can be quite unhealthy for democracy. Based on my findings, I believe that scholars of democracy would go a long way in improving democratic health if we were to start focusing more attention on why cynicism is so high and how we might actively seek to reduce it. One place we might start looking, is to more carefully dissect the link between cynicism and low support for various performance outputs such as those identified in Chapter 6, including the way politicians behave toward each other: in the way that they debate, campaign and advertise; as well as in how they carry out their duties while in office: determining and assigning accountability, and ensuring and promoting transparency of the political process. Furthermore, rather than simply policing for misconduct (Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner 2023), I have found that these authorities could go a long way in improving public perceptions if they were to act in ways that champion ethics and integrity, behaving as role models of ethical conduct (Gächter and Renner 2018), rather than caricatures of misbehavior (Rabidoux 2010)[567].

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[565] This includes society's shifting patterns of deference to authority, which are not significant according to these models, likely because deference may simply be a trigger or a symptom of the bigger performance problem. Another factor that is not significant in any of the models is the effect that winning or losing when voting during elections might have, despite its prominence in studies of satisfaction with democracy. Traditional divides between Quebecers and other Canadians on language and orientations toward federalism are also commonly pointed to as stress points. As I showed in Chapter 7, these are divisions that can influence support, however, when controlling for other factors such as the behavior of political authorities and evaluations of job outputs of all objects, the effects of traditional divides no longer emerge as powerfully or as consistently.

[566] Especially as the work of democracy's institutions continuously changes and the challenges become increasingly complex. It is about performance, but it is also about how politicians behave and how citizens perceive them to represent their demands. Understanding this dynamic will be crucial for its improvement (Malloy 2023) and as I show here, targeting cynicism and integrity, better understanding why perceptions of these are so negative (beyond demand-side changes and perceptions of output performance) will be an important place to start.

[567] This responsibility lies with those doing the work (politicians), but also with academics studying this work and discussing it, as well as with the media and the way it which the work is being portrayed.

Of course, a lot of this work ultimately depends on the willingness of the supply-side authorities and institutions to want to improve, but part of the burden might also lie in citizens' willingness to adjust their expectations (as well as on researchers to better determine those expectations). At the very least, the conclusions provided here tell us a great deal about the primary nature of the problem and begin pointing to a few directions in which we might turn to improve perceptions of performance[568]. These conclusions also suggest that, especially when it comes to views about democracy as a way of governing, we may need to focus more work on better understanding and, possibly even adapting, what democracy means to different segments of society and the purpose that it serves. Indeed, while commitment to democracy has been largely taken for granted and its causes generally overlooked, my findings have revealed that Canadians' commitment to democratic rule is not immune to fluctuations and that identity diversity may be partly to blame for variations in such commitments. This particular finding represents another important area for future research.

In short, the analyses in this chapter have revealed that support is not straightforward and simple solutions will not suffice. Furthermore, if we focus solely on one side of the coin, either the supply-side or the demand-side, we may overlook important nuances which will undermine the remedies that we apply. Additionally, if we only measure support in one way, if we only tap certain facets on either the demand-side or supply-side, or if we only focus on support generally and do not dig into different levels in multilevel governance systems, we miss some of the very essential variations that actually exist. This is just the first cut of a more holistic and granular approach to understanding political support. It has confirmed, however, that any future analysis, and as a result, any recommendations for attention or reform, should include determined subnational analyses, attention to all facets of support and a clear accounting of all potentially important influences. In short, simply concluding that democracy is not in trouble, or that a changing society is solely to blame for varying levels of support, is insufficient. As a complex machine, our political system requires more mindfulness to the details by those who observe and assess it, as well as managers who are more up to the task of managing it.

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[568] Specific performance evaluations and conclusions are laid out in Chapter 6.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Despite the absence of a 'crisis' according to the academic literature (Klingemann and Fuchs 1995), a common theme that many media articles and pundits seem to be returning to more and more frequently is: "is democracy broken?" (Coyne and Wells 2009; Caron 2016; Subramanian 2019; Murphy 2022; Yakabuski 2023). This theme, it appears, has become even more prevalent in the current context of an aging and relentless global pandemic (Tumilty 2020). The only difference is that, in the current context, the theme seems to be laced with combative and divisive rhetoric over the implementation of new public health measures and the degree to which government directives are in effect democratic, competent, likely to be properly thought-through, targeted and effective in their intent, or just, particularly when it comes to equal and global distribution and respect for people's rights and freedoms (Soupcoff 2020).

Yet pandemic-related qualms are not all we are hearing about in recent years. In fact, some of the claims of poor performance or failures to represent all Canadians equally are evident in the actions (or failures to act) of political authorities and institutions in other areas as well. These include, just to name a few, the "shameless" manipulation of citizens to gain electoral support (McParland 2022), ongoing failures at reconciliation for some of the most marginalized members of Canadian society (Vega 2022), and the documented attempts at (and failures to respond to) foreign influence on our elected representatives and institutions (Fife and Chase 2023). One thing is for sure, the public are not oblivious to the failures of political authorities to behave ethically, to serve all Canadians equally, or to manage and protect our democratic institutions (Selley 2022) and the objective measures (or even the cross-national survey evidence) that allow us to compare ourselves to other democracies are not sufficient to figure out exactly what may be going wrong and where. Although they serve to pinpoint where the political system may be falling short, the information provided by such resources can only go so far in helping us to figure out how to improve the system (and its outputs) for all members of society.

Of course, shedding light on system failures (and the complexity with which they present themselves, at least in the eyes of the public) is one way to make sure that issues are addressed and that democracy is perhaps improved as a result, my findings throughout this project have also demonstrated that identifying failures and fixing them may not be as straightforward as identifying declining levels of democratic satisfaction, or even relying on the system to do what the system does, which is to provide citizens an opportunity to vote in new representatives or parties that will better represent their interests and demands. Even system reform efforts such as changing our voting system, may not have the outcomes that we hope, simply because they may be addressing the wrong problem at its core. Indeed, what my research has demonstrated is that the effect of poor performance not only influences how the public feel about their representatives and governments in the short term[569], evaluations of these actors and institutions can have important and detrimental effects on support for democracy as a way of governing and our political communities more broadly. And therefore, voting them out, or changing how we elect them, may have little effect at all if those who replace the 'rascals' are equally underwhelming in how they behave and perform. The preliminary evidence that I have presented so far, is mostly clear. If we address the wrong problems (such as, say, fixing the electoral system instead of

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[569] Of course, whether this effect is consistent over time has yet to be determined, and I plan to delve into this in future iterations of this study.

improving the ethical conduct of politicians), we may have more serious problems on our hands in the future.

Meanwhile, this "crisis of confidence" is not exclusive to Canada, and the lessons from this dissertation may help to break down this political support problem in other contexts as well. As I outlined in my review of the existing literature on political support, much of the work on the crisis of democracy originated in the United States and despite claims that this crisis was overstated (Fuchs 1993; Klingemann and Fuchs 1995), more recent public sentiment tends to indicate that even the most powerful democracies may still have a lot to worry about (Pew Research Center 2022; Rainie, Keeter, and Perrin 2019; Karmis and Rocher 2018). Of course, there may not yet be any outright crisis that results in the overthrow of our entire democratic system[570], but as I have shown in the Canadian case according to the Canadian public, there are areas that we can focus on that could yield important improvements both in perceptions of the system's institutions as well as on views toward the democratic system and community more generally[571].

To do this, in this project, I conducted an extensive and thorough analysis of public opinion data collected as part of the Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP) as well as analyses of data available from other projects such as the Americas Barometers, the Canadian Election Studies, and the World Values Surveys. The opinions reported here draw from surveys dating all the way back to 1982 (for pride levels across Canada) ranging to 2021 (for confidence, satisfaction, and pride). However, the majority of the more in-depth and novel analyses that I conducted here drew exclusively from the data collected as part of the PCSP project that started in 2012[572]. The PCSP has so far comprised of surveys conducted within Quebec (in 2012 and 2014) and, for the first time, across all Canadian provinces (in 2017). Not only were the data collection rounds of the PCSP unique in the range of questions included in them, which were all designed with this particular project in mind, each wave of the PCSP surveys were also progressively tested and subsequent surveys were fine-tuned in order to achieve the highest possible level of detail in the analysis of political support in Canada[573].

In this project, I set out to achieve three objectives: to establish, based on these data, what (if anything) might be most problematic about the political system from the perspective of Canadians, what challenges are most likely to blame for variations in support, and the implications of fluctuating support for authorities and institutions on more foundational attachments to democracy and political communities more generally[574]. I did this by first laying out what political support is according to the literature and what the state of our understanding of

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[570] Although some might argue that groups have tried, for example, both here (during the trucker convoy) and in the United States (during the storming of the Capital following Donald Trump's defeat to Joe Biden).

[571] Citizen views (based on public opinion data conducted during specific time periods) cannot, obviously, help us to fix all the problems that may or may not be challenging democracies. They are, however, an important place to start and to build from going forward (see the "Next Steps" section below, for example).

[572] Originally alongside the Comparative Provincial Election Project (CPEP).

[573] Thanks to the ongoing utility of these data and successful funding of this project by both SSHRC and FRQSC, we are going into the field again in 2023 with another cross-Canada survey.

[574] Again, always with the caveat that the data and findings presented here are but a first cut at mapping political support more systemically and systematically, analysing the scope of the support problem in terms of its nature and extent, digging deeper into what one survey can tell us about support across objects, levels of government and groups, figuring out what these same data can say about common theoretical explanations for support variations and how they measure up to each other, and determining the more pervasive effects of fluctuations in support for authorities and institutions on more deep-seated commitments to democracy as a way of governing and feelings about the political communities that structure our conceptions of ourselves and how we are governed.

political support has been so far. I then provided a broad-based overview of political support in Canada to establish a baseline understanding, including discussions and comparisons to the Quebec context. From there, I proceeded to dig further into the complexity of the political support problem by parcelling out variations in terms of the nature of political support across a variety of objects and indicators as well as its extent across groups (traditionally relevant in Canada including language, origin, and political orientation), across levels of government (municipal, provincial, and federal), and across territorial contexts (namely between Quebec and the rest of Canada).

Where I established that variations exist in support for various objects of the political system (authorities, institutions, the democratic regime, and the political community), I then sought to explain why these variations are occurring by first introducing the range of determinants that exist in our understanding of support so far, which fall within two commonly used theoretical categories emerging on the one hand from the supply-side of the political system and, on the other, from the demand-side. I also built on this previous understanding of demands by introducing a preliminary discussion of the influence of identity and the effect that identity clustering might have in also shaping political demands. This then took me into a first cut yet novel assessment, based on the available data, of the various identities and identity clusters that exist in Canada[575]. My analyses then shifted to an investigation of the varying effects that identity can also have on political support, with the understanding that identity and identity group mobilization might further complicate the demands that feed into the political system and the resulting system's ability to meet those demands. Finally, I proceeded to pit the two main arguments (supply-side and demand-side) against each other to determine which have the greatest impact on support across all political objects, all levels of government, and across contexts.

Last, I endeavoured to better understand whether the legitimacy given to the political system in the form of support for its representatives and institutions has more far-reaching consequences on other system-legitimating opinions, such as support for democracy as a legitimate form of governing our regimes and feelings of attachment to the political community more broadly. To do this, I incorporated into my final analyses an assessment of the effect of specific evaluations of lower-level political objects (authorities and institutions) on higher level diffuse objects (the regime and community), while controlling for all other relevant and plausible explanations across levels of government and different territorial contexts (Quebec compared to the rest of Canada).

Due to the nature of this study, its scope and its complexity, several conclusions have emerged which I will lay out briefly below. First, I will review what I found and what we can learn from these new understandings. I will then provide an overview of the core challenges that I faced in completing this project, the rewards that have emerged, and the next steps[576] for me and for this study moving forward into the future.

What I found and what we can learn from it

Our Understanding on the Scope of Political Support – So Far

When I began this project, the need for a strong foundational understanding of political support was clear. Through my review and synthesis of over 60 years of literature on this subject, I found

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[575] According to the questions that I asked in the 2017 PCSP. As mentioned, this identity investigation will be expanded in the next waves of surveys, based on what I found here.

[576] I Appendix B4, Table B4.1, I have outlined key areas where I plan to focus more attention in my research going forward as well as specific approaches for doing so.

that achieving this understanding would only be possible through a broad-based deep dive into the question of support for different political objects through the use of a variety of measures, examining views of the political system and its various objects at different levels of government, across territorial contexts, and across a variety of traditional groups and an extensive array of identity groups. By doing this, I have been able to better understand the nature of political support in Canada and in Quebec, and the extent to which this support varies. I have also gained a clearer sense of why it is so important to dig more deeply into political support and the many ways in which it might fluctuate across objects, across levels of government and across territorial contexts and groups. I argued in this study that without properly understanding public opinion about the political system through analyses of the *support* of citizens, we may fail to properly address some of the key areas that give the political system its legitimacy and allow it to survive and flourish. Furthermore, I now have conviction beyond a doubt that there is no "one" easy fix[577] when it comes to the major problems our democracy here at home and elsewhere in the world may be facing now and may face in the future.

The answer to whether there is, in fact, a political support problem is far more complicated than just "yes" or "no". Indeed, the answer is that "it depends". On the surface, this answer may not be quite as satisfactory as we might wish, as we tend to like more clear-cut and definitive responses to major questions. However, the pursuit of this question has revealed something that is far more satisfactory than a clear-cut yes/no response. This project has exposed a complex picture of political support and a road map for how to tackle our understanding of it. It has uncovered the importance of digging deeper and more systematically when seeking to address the challenges that our democracy (and others) may be facing.

More specifically, it has revealed that both support and our understanding of it "depends" on a variety of very important things. These things include a consideration of the nature of support: in terms of the objects in the political system and attention to various aspects of each of these objects when assessing support (i.e. more detailed elements within each object, more careful measures, and careful distinctions between types of opinions or assessments). They also include a consideration of the extent of support: in terms of differences that might exist across levels of government within the system (the municipal, provincial, or federal level), acknowledgement and assessments of the variance that might occur across territorial contexts (i.e. Canada as a whole or specific regions), as well as the different experiences and expressions of support within the multitude of groups that make up a society (either traditional groups or other mobilized or excluded identity groups). Considering these very important complexities and nuances in this project has revealed a variety of conclusions about the nature and extent of the political support problem as well as lessons about how we should continue to observe and measure, as well as potentially address any problems going forward.

My Findings on the Nature of Support

My first major finding, when it comes to the nature of support in Canada, was that our understanding of the extent of the support problem is quite limited, and my data reveal that the issue may in fact be more pervasive at diffuse levels than we previously thought. More specifically, when I dug into the available cross-time evidence on a series of indicators drawn from several different sources, it became clear that, for Canadians at least, diffuse democratic

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[577] It may be tempting, for sure, to come up with a list of ideas on how to "fix" democracy (Drutman et al. 2022), but failing to step back, dig deep, and rethink the way we have looked at this problem in the past, will ultimately do nothing to turn us off of the same path we are already on.

support is neither as stable nor as high as the literature on support as well more "objective" expert rankings of democracy (such as Freedom House) might expect. More specifically, my analyses revealed overall that diffuse support is generally declining in Canada over time. Yet, depending on how pride and satisfaction levels are measured, for instance, important fluctuations emerge. Indeed, when more stringent standards are applied and more detailed questions are asked, I find that when it comes to assessments of these diffuse political objects (the political community and the regime), pride in the Canadian community tends to vary over time, sometimes dropping below 50%, while the proportion who are very satisfied with the workings of Canadian democracy is never higher than 20%. Notably too, my results revealed that pride in Canada and satisfaction with the way democracy is working have both declined overall. Thus, despite expectations derived from the literature of generally high support at the most diffuse levels, my findings suggest that pride in political community appears to be under stress among all Canadians and that satisfaction with democracy does not seem to be as consistently strong as Canada's objective rankings might lead us to believe.

Meanwhile, as I moved from measuring support for the most diffuse objects to more specific ones (such as support for institutions and authorities), my findings suggested that support levels tend generally to shift even lower, and the overall story of political support appears even graver. As my preliminary analyses of baseline indicators revealed, even during peak times of institutional support, the cross-time evidence suggests that never more than 62% of Canadians indicate having confidence in their federal government, and very few (never more than 11%) ever say that they are highly confident in their federal government. This means that significant proportions of Canadians typically indicate that they have a low degree of confidence in the federal government (40% or more). Furthermore, my evidence clearly suggests that significant proportions of Canadians are not satisfied with their national government leaders either, and that very few are ever very satisfied even following the election of new governments and representatives.

As I dug deeper into the nature of support, I also found it important to look beyond the typical baseline support indicators used in the literature to date (such as indicators that measure federal support only). Thus, I set out to draw clearer distinctions between affective (more feelings based) support indicators, which are said to be more deep-seated, and evaluative (judgement-based) support indicators, which may fluctuate based on real-time perceptions of the performance of various objects. Looking at the differences in support based on these affective versus evaluative assessments, I found that evaluative assessments tend generally to be slightly less positive in what they suggest about regime support, and particularly less positive in what they suggest about perceptions toward the workings of different political communities. In fact, the results demonstrated that, regardless of whether we look at evaluative assessments or more deep-seated (and presumably) stable measures, the results across this expanded set of indicators confirm what my baseline analyses suggested, which is that support is not "high". Rather even at the most diffuse levels, support is quite varied and tending, at best, toward a "B grade". Meanwhile, when it comes to support for authorities and institutions, these political representatives, governments and legislatures are receiving failing grades across the board.

More specifically, within my expanded analysis of the 2017 PCSP data, using a broader array of support indicators I drew some especially noteworthy conclusions about the nature of political support and the challenges our democracy seems to be facing. Most striking was the revelation that democracy, as "the preferred" regime, may be suffering a loss of some of its acclaimed legitimacy. This was made especially clear through the large number of Canadians

who express less commitment to democracy as a way of governing, in that they are likely to consider alternatives such as strong leaders who don't need to bother with elections, accept unelected experts to make decisions for us, or even consider army rule (although this was far less common).

When digging deeper into evaluations of the workings of democracy, one of the most striking conclusions was that perceptions of the workings of various aspects of democracy are also generally less than satisfactory (averaging a B- and sometimes dipping as low as a C). Investigation into satisfaction with specific facets of democracy revealed that perceptions of the delivery of democratic inducements in the form of services or benefits, or even the concentration of power at the center are not so problematic to Canadians. However, perceptions of the politicking carried out by institutions and authorities as part of the democratic process seem to be inflicting a great deal of damage to the publics' views of their democracies and how well they are working.   Most problematic among these aspects of democracy included both public and election spending, party financing and politics, and the transparency of the political process (with variations in the severity of dissatisfaction with each of these aspects across levels of government).

These hangups with the "political" side of things become even more pronounced when looking at institutions and authorities more directly. For instance, it became clear from analyses of support for different types of institutions, that while all institutions are suffering to some degree, political institutions (such as governments, legislatures, and political parties) are suffering far more from the public's disaffection than non-political ones (such as the civil service and the courts). Similarly, regardless of the type of assessment (whether evaluative or affective), political authorities (either political leaders or other political authorities such as elected representatives, senators, or politicians in general) are disliked and assessed more harshly than non-political ones (such as civil servants and judges). The most important takeaway from these analyses of institutions and the political actors that work within them, is that Canadians' overall affective and evaluative perspectives on the current status quo are consistently less than satisfactory (never more than a D, and usually an F).

My Findings on the Extent of Support

Meanwhile, in terms of the extent of the support problem and how pervasive it may be across Canada, I also found that there are clear variations between Quebecers and non-Quebecers. The first important observation that I made was that across time, despite a general decline in pride among all Canadians, Quebecers have become prouder of Canada than other Canadians. Furthermore, since 2015, their satisfaction levels (unlike other Canadians) have actually increased to a point where they are now more satisfied with the workings of Canadian democracy[578] than non-Quebecers – both findings are quite striking considering the history of Quebec-Canada relations and findings from the past (Kornberg and Clarke 1992).

This said, although Quebecers in recent years (according to these Americas Barometers and Canadian Election Studies data) expressed more pride in the Canadian community and greater general satisfaction with Canadian democracy compared to non-Quebecers, when I supplemented the investigation with my additional measures of support, the picture became a bit more complex. Although my data from which I derive these additional measures are from earlier years (up to 2017), when diffuse support for Canada among Quebecers was still lower than

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[578] According to 2021 data from the Americas Barometers.

among other Canadians[579], I was also able supplement our understanding of support by demonstrating that conclusions about the state of support can differ drastically depending on how respondents are asked to assess different objects. For instance, although Quebecers in 2017 tended to express less support compared to other Canadians when it comes to general feelings about the Canadian political community (including assessments of pride, patriotism, and like or dislike), I found that they were also more likely to evaluate the Canadian community to be working well compared to other Canadians – which may have been a precursor to the improvements in Canadian pride that we see in more recent years. Furthermore, while satisfaction with Canadian democracy and perceptions of certain federal authorities and institutions were generally lower among Quebecers compared to other Canadians, the divergences across a variety of indicators were not always vast and, in some cases, almost indistinguishable.

Of course, assessments at the federal level are only one part of the bigger picture of political support. Indeed, when I split my analyses to observe variations across levels of government using these expanded and more rigorous measures of support, additional interesting nuances emerged[580]. First, I found that objects at the provincial level are generally assessed more negatively (based on both affective and evaluative measures[581]) compared to federal or municipal level ones. This finding was often consistent for all Canadians and across territorial contexts (Quebecers vs. non-Quebecers) when looking at evaluations of these different levels. However, they differed slightly when observing affective feelings among non-Quebecers. Here, although non-Quebecers' evaluations of their municipal and federal authorities, institutions, regimes, and communities were all generally on par with each other and more positive than their evaluations of the provincial level, when it came to their affective feelings non-Quebecers expressed less positivity about their communities, regimes, and authorities at both the provincial and municipal levels than they did for their federal ones.

Not only did a larger within-province sample provided by the PCSP datasets allow me to dig deeper into differences across levels, between territorial contexts, and across assessment types, but these data also provided me with the opportunity for the first time, to explore the extent of the political support problem by observing variations that might exist across various traditional groups as well as, in my later analyses, across identity groups. Although the analysis and discussion of traditional differences across groups was a bit shorter than the others, one of the most important takeaways was the demonstration of the value and importance of data collection that taps support subnationally, with large enough samples and broad enough question sets that allow for granular assessments across groups. In these analyses, although I found that traditional groupings such as territory of residence, language, country of birth, and political orientations toward nationalism, separatism, or federalism do (to a degree) influence support, the effects of these traditional group differences were not the most striking takeaway. Of course, by themselves such differences may be useful for better locating or targeting certain trouble spots, however, the explanatory power of such group differences was revealed to be quite minimal. Instead, the major takeaway from my observations of differences across traditional groups was that the necessary substantive material needed to better understand why support varies the way it

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[579] Prior to the 2019 uptick.
[580] These are summarized in the Report Card in Appendix B1, Table B1.1
[581] Quebecers affective views of regime and authorities do not differ drastically across levels, however their affective assessments of the political community at the provincial level are more negative than at other levels, similar to their evaluative assessments of objects at all levels.

does, was yet to be revealed, which served to transition my analysis into the next objective which was to figure out (if it is not traditional group differences) what else is responsible for driving variations in support.

My Findings on the Drivers of Support & the Effects of Specific Evaluations on Diffuse Attachments

Based on the two major lines of inquiry that I had laid out at the start of the thesis according to the literature (demand- and supply-side), I delved into a discussion and analysis of the varying identity groupings that appear in Canada according to the most recent round of PCSP surveys. This analysis, in its preliminary stages, revealed four major identity group clusters in Canada including a minorities cluster, ingroup-class cluster, Franco-elites cluster, and Anglo-federalists cluster. In examining the effect of identification within each of these clusters on support, I found that there were indeed important variations across groupings. Perhaps the most striking finding, however, which justified inclusion of identity in the next phases of my analyses, was the significant effect that identification with groups had on support (compared to those who do not identify with these groups).

More specifically, I found that Canadians who identified within any of these clusters were more supportive across all political objects than those who did not. The only exceptions to this were observed at the level of the political regime. Here, I found instead that while those who identified with other Canadians according to their own ingroups and class or with Anglophones and federalists were more favourable toward democracy as a way of governing, Canadians who identified with minorities or with Francophones and elites were actually less committed democrats compared to those who did not identify with these groups. The results of this analysis, beyond the specific effects that identity clustering has on political support, also revealed the need to pay close attention to identity when conducting analyses of these kinds in the future and the importance of expanding our understanding of the various dynamics through which identity might play out in our political system, how it is mobilized by politicians, and how different individual and cross-cutting identities might help to shape the way citizens perceive their system's various objects and its outputs, as well as (potentially) the core purpose that democracy is perceived to serve according to these different groups.

Finally, I turned to the big money questions: What shapes political support? And what are the more profound effects (if any) of fluctuations in evaluations of how well the political system's authorities and institutions are doing on diffuse support for democracy and the political community more broadly? To do this, I operationalized and measured the effect of each of the various theoretically posited explanations from both the supply-side[582] of the political system and the demand-side[583], to determine which ones best accounted for the variations in affective attachments to the system's objects.

On the one hand, the results of these analyses suggested that demand-side factors – often referred to as some of the more important factors shaping attitudes toward politics generally and various objects in the political system in particular – do matter for explaining variations in affective political support. However, the effects of these factors are not as robust as we may have expected and are far less consistent or powerful in explaining support variations compared to other supply-side indicators. For instance, certain sociocultural factors, such as the efficacy gap

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[582] Including perceptions of object performance and output evaluations.
[583] From more common sociocultural value change effects, to media exposure, traditional group effects and demographics, to the new identity grouping indicators I introduced for the first time in this project.

and interpersonal trust levels, did emerge as relevant drivers of support and deserving of future investigation, especially when it comes to explaining commitments to democracy as a way of governing. This said, drivers such as post-materialism, deference, and cognitive mobilization did not factor significantly as powerful explanations for why affective political support may vary. Instead, other demand-side characteristics emerged.

More specifically, beyond basic traditional group divides (which tended to fall out of the models when the models were more fully specified), my analyses revealed that variations in identity affiliations, both single identity effects and the influence of attachments to certain group clusters, emerged as being more consistently significant drivers of support. The major takeaway of which suggests, again, the need to further consider and understand these identity structures (and inter-identity group affinities) going forward, especially the ways in which identity politics serve to either improve or detract from affective attachments to democracy as a way of governing and to political communities more generally, but also the reasons why certain identity groups are more disaffected than others (i.e. what specific experiences they have with the political system, and where these experiences are falling short).

Another key takeaway here was that, even when we construct more robust additive measures to tap support concepts and make sure to fully specify our explanatory models, if we focus only on political support generally (combining support across all levels, and across indicators, and do not also look at the specific variations across levels of government), we may still miss some of the more fine-grained differences that can occur. The most notable variations that we may overlook are those, again, on the demand-side of the equation, Specifically, factors relating to identity. These cross-level models revealed first and foremost that any attempts at addressing political support (or improving public perceptions of the political system) within each of these subnational contexts will require tailored approaches considerate also of various demographic and identity group differences, depending on the subnational level being targeted. Until we dig deeper into these identity effects to determine why they are having such an effect on diffuse level attachments, however, I believe it is necessary to hold off on proposing group-specific solutions to tackle support problems.

While demand-side factors revealed important effects without necessarily pointing to clear solutions, the supply-side investigation brought us a little closer to pinpointing areas that are clearly falling short. Notably, the cross-level analyses revealed similar and consistent results to the general level models when it came to the influence of supply-side factors (including perceptions of the honesty and integrity of public officials, cynicism about politics, and evaluations of the jobs done by authorities, or the outputs delivered by institutions). The most robust finding from these analyses – which had started to emerge as a plausible factor when looking at basic variations in evaluative assessments of the system's objects in earlier chapters – was that the system's supply is failing to satisfy citizens across the board. Indeed, when determining what best explains more deep-seated problems of affective support across objects, controlling for other explanatory factor variations (such as value differences, media exposure, traditional and identity group differences, and demographics), the performance of these objects in terms output delivery stood out as most consistently and powerfully to blame.

As the earlier analyses had shown, shortcomings in these areas that were especially problematic across levels according to my 2017 data included perceptions of how well the democratic system is working in terms of its political processes, including public spending, election spending, transparency, and the determination of accountability. Other areas for significant concern fell on the "politicking" side, including dissatisfaction with partisan politics,

debates and discourse, party discipline, and the political campaigning and advertising that occurs across different levels of government. When it came to specific outputs, not only did many Canadians perceive federal and provincial governments to be failing in how well they worked together[584], but many also disapproved of the handling of specific files such as how well governments have managed to deal with inequality and poverty, as well as the job governments are doing of improving health care services. Of course, cross-time assessments on these indicators will help determine whether any improvements have been made.

In addition to specific evaluative assessments (including confidence in authorities and institutions, and evaluations of how well they are doing their jobs), however, another important driver emerged on the supply-side. Here I found that cynicism and perceptions of the behaviors of political authorities in terms of their honesty and integrity, were also strong and significant drivers of variations in affective support levels across all objects. And while such a finding about the effects of cynicism and perceptions of unethical behavior may not be, on the surface, altogether surprising, the consistent and robust effect of this factor on support even when controlling for variation in output performance, is notable. For example, not only does cynicism powerfully impact attachments to the system's objects, even when all other factors are held constant (for instance where output performance is otherwise acceptable) these negative attitudes continue to erode system support. In other words, tackling job performance on its own may not be enough. Certainly, addressing public confidence in political authorities and government institutions and the work that they do will help chip away at cynicism, however, tackling this cynicism head on may also be necessary. One way to do this, will be to investigate the more direct links between performance and cynicism. Another will be to figure out ways, beyond simply policing misconduct, to encourage political authorities to act as champions or role models of ethics and integrity rather than just taking them to task when they fail.

Lastly, my analyses revealed that paying attention to what is challenging democracy, while not completely straightforward, may be absolutely crucial for the survival of the political system (democracy and the way it is understood), or the long-term maintenance of political communities (from the local to the national level). More specifically, on the more profound effects of fluctuations in short term specific support on deep-seated commitments to democracy and attachments to community, I found that evaluations of performance are key, especially when it comes to evaluations of the behaviors and actions of political authorities (on commitments to democracy) and the work that political communities are doing (on pride, patriotism and attachments to these communities). In other words, this evidence reveals that voting out political authorities that are not performing well, or reforming institutions that seem to be failing in their delivery of benefits and services to the public, may not be enough to maintain system support in the long term. Instead, it suggests that assessments of the actions and abilities of specific objects (namely authorities and institutions) tend to percolate upward and detract from more diffuse storehouses of affective political support for the democratic regime as well as from affinities with entire political communities. Of course, repeating my analyses over time (especially given recent evidence of improvements in satisfaction and community support among Quebecers), will be pivotal in further confirming this claim.

To summarize, what I found was that the political support picture is quite multifaceted, but it is possible, through repeated, systematic, in-depth, and careful analyses, to parse out the multitude of complexities at play. I would conclude that the core and resounding takeaway from

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[584] More so for Canadians outside of Quebec and on relations between the federal government and both the municipal and provincial levels.

this analysis has been that the main problems in our system result from the ways in which those in power use politics. In other words, across the board, the public's perceptions of the honesty and integrity of their political representatives and the ways in which these representatives behave and deliver on expectations are inconsistent with what the public want or perceive to be acceptable. If we do not begin to address some of these challenges, my research suggests that it is at least plausible that certain segments of the population who are the most cynical and dissatisfied, and who feel the most ignored, may not just vote these people out (or stop voting at all)[585], they may detach from their political communities[586] and potentially even demand alternative, less democratic, ways to govern it.

The findings and conclusions that I have presented here do not provide specific solutions, but they do go a long way toward establishing a more generalizable understanding of the problem, while also advocating for a more fine-tuned approach to parsing out that problem, also paying careful attention to the factors that are not generalizable (for certain groups, in certain contexts, on certain assessments of the system). Each system is different, and the social fabric of every society varies. Consequently, our focus to date on major cross-national variations and attempts to make major sweeping generalizations can continue, but they should be carried out with caution. Furthermore, we should be more careful when relying on major expert assessments of democracy's objective characteristics, as they may hide what lies below the surface according to the individuals these democracies are meant to serve. In the Canadian context, I have highlighted important areas of focus, but before any solutions can be derived, I believe that more evaluation is necessary. Like any social system, our democracy is alive and constantly changing (as are the publics it serves and the representatives that serve them). As such, it requires constant evaluation, that is also more careful and refined, so that it can be continuously adapted and maintained.

Challenges, Rewards and Next Steps
The Challenges & Rewards
The first and most important logistical challenge that may be obvious when thinking about a study entitled "democracy's challenges" is whether such a monumental task of understanding democracy and all its trials is even possible. Indeed, can anyone draw real conclusions about democracy considering its complexity and, more practically, the space and time available as part of a PhD dissertation? Indeed, what this project has taught me is that, while I do not have a complete grasp of all that can and should be said about the challenges facing our democracy today and going forward[587], I do feel that I have made significant inroads at least insofar as understanding what citizens think these challenges are. Certainly, using what I have learned here I can see a clear path ahead of me for many fruitful years of research on this subject, both within the Canadian context and in other contexts as well.

Through work with my PhD supervisor, not only did I have the opportunity to develop the instruments used throughout this analysis, I was also able to assist in the ethics processes of the various waves of this major project and the design and administration of several successful major grants and collaborations, the scope of which, as far as I know, is outside of any typical

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[585] As some of my initial findings from parallel analyses that I have been conducting have demonstrated.

[586] Insofar as pride, patriotism and attachment can be tied to potential for community change – as we may be seeing through more recent proposals such as Wexit (Fawcett 2022), or what we saw in Quebec during the referenda of 1980 and 1995 (Kornberg and Clarke 1983; 1992; Clarke, Kornberg, and Wearing 2000).

[587] For instance, I have largely ignored the question of what democracy *should* be.

dissertation. As a core collaborator in the PCSP project, I took part in the collection, compilation, cleanup, analysis, and subsequent revision of all of the data collection instruments, as well as the major funding applications that made the PCSP possible and from which my dissertation and other projects are now emerging.

In addition to involvement in all phases of the PCSP, I also took part in generating and disseminating important preliminary results, teaching undergraduate and graduate students, as well coediting a major edited volume that explores the state of Canadian democracy through the perspectives of a variety of prominent public officials, civil society leaders, pundits, and academics. The various phases in my dissertation journey, therefore, with all that they entailed, placed me in a unique position not only to be quite confident in the validity of the data that I am drawing on and thus the strength of the findings presented in this dissertation, but also in the position I now find myself. Throughout this journey, I have established important professional connections, funding experience, and a far-reaching research agenda to move forward with upon my graduation. I am also pleased to say not only that the next phase of this research has already acquired ethics approval for the new round of data collection to begin in October 2023, but we have also established a major cross-country partnership and secured the funding to carry it out.

Beyond my experiences overall, the breadth of this study and the type of analysis required, also presented other challenges. As was discussed in-depth in throughout this project, any analysis of political support requires a great deal of data as well as in-depth and varied measures. While the PCSP, throughout the various waves, expanded on the breadth, depth and variation in measures, the findings of this study have also identified some limitations. Certainly, while I have expanded on the many important aspects of political support that needed to be better understood through elaboration of the various components of political support (different objects, levels of government, and groups as well as the many possible explanations and consequences) and the different ways support and legitimacy may be measured, this is just the beginning. Indeed, although this study provided for an expansive, broad-based understanding of political support that has never been undertaken before, there were also limitations in terms of what I was able to find, due to scope of the substantive content of the survey instrument employed.

First, in figuring out the state of political support across time and across contexts, this study has made but a small dent in amassing all that might be available for analysis. While my first few chapters delved into the political support literature, laid out common indicators used in existing studies, and justified the indicators that have been collected as part of the PCSP and analysed in this dissertation, an even more expansive study might seek out all the indicators used to measure support (as they are listed in Appendix A1) and compile them into a single dataset that includes data from across studies as well as findings from across publications. Such a meta-analysis of all cross-time, cross-country and cross-indicator findings, would likely prove extremely useful, not only in saying more about the state of the political support problem worldwide, but also in providing even more substantiation in the development of future PCSPs. Of course, such an investigation would constitute a massive project and, while I have made significant inroads here, it would require many more pages and much more time.

Second, more could be done when collecting new data to further parse out exactly what citizens are thinking. For instance, based on the finding that performance matters most in deriving political support, the expanded data that I have used here still does not include enough to know *exactly* what part of performance is most problematic. For instance, we know now that the behavior and actions of politicians matter, but what exactly is making the public most cynical about this behavior? We know that the honesty and integrity of political authorities is important

for Canadians when thinking about their political system, but what solutions will be the most viable and impactful when addressing and seeking to improve perceptions of these individuals and their behaviors?

Another area in this study that could benefit from greater exploration would be to delve deeper into the specific outputs of the political system as there may be important insights to gather when it comes to differences in performance (or supply-side) assessments between perceptions of the performance of specific objects and perceptions of specific policy outputs. Such an exploration would provide even greater insights, beyond the general jobs that governments are doing overall in various policy areas, into the varying views that Canadians have about specific policies and how they might be impacting their lives. Additional questions to support an expansion of the question sets in these areas would be very helpful.

In addition to better understanding specific behaviors and actions of political authorities, as well as the reception by the public of various system outputs, another area which would benefit from further elaboration would be in measuring assessments of the regime itself as well as its underlying aspects and principles. While the most recent wave of the PCSP included an expansive list of aspects for respondents to evaluate, these could be extended even more to better understand, for instance, why certain groups seem to be willing to support alternatives to democracy[588]. Similarly, regime principles that were introduced to the PCSP questionnaires in 2014 and followed up in 2017 were restricted to principles governing the regime at the federal level only and consisted of only 10 core democratic principles. Not only could these principles be expanded further (along the lines of the various principles often tapped in objective measures of democracy), but we would also benefit from a deeper understanding of the variations that might exist across levels of government when it comes to these same principles.

Furthermore, on the more technical side of this project, when creating multidimensional indicators of political support, each indicator was created using the questions that were available and, in some cases, only where sample sizes were large enough. It is reasonable to assume that due to these limitations my findings may exclude certain important facets of support simply because of the limitations of the data. For instance, I included evaluations of performance of only political authorities in each of the multivariate analyses in the latter chapters, whereas, if the samples had permitted, I would have also included evaluations of non-political authorities to determine whether assessments of their performance had similar effects on system support. Additionally, when assembling the additive indices, each component of support was given equal value. While it is a good start, further thought and analysis may be necessary to determine whether each component of these additive indices *should* be given equal weight in the final measurements (see, for example Nardo et al. 2005). Such an analysis could constitute a methodological investigation on its own.

Third, when it comes to carrying out my analyses, some additional ventures should be considered. Indeed, due to space and time limitations, while I was able to look systematically at support across levels of government, for example, I could not look further into how assessments at one level might result in differences in support at other levels (Steenvoorden and van der Meer 2021). Indeed, in the Canadian federal context, an investigation of this nature might provide further insight into the interconnected nature of federalism and important motivations for

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[588] Such as the many core democratic values as outlined by Dahl (1971) and others (Almond and Verba 1963; Lijphart 1977; Verba 2006), those that are also evaluated by academic experts in constructing objective measures of democracy such as the polyarchy index in the Varieties of Democracy project..

different levels of government to make greater efforts to work together as opposed to pit themselves against each other.

Fourth, in terms of its reach, this project also did not include *all* Canadians, as surveys of this type do not tend to reach more vulnerable segments of the population, for various reasons. When it comes to what the system is able to supply, perceptions of this supply are likely to fall differently on citizens facing different economic, social, cognitive or even medical realities (Yale University 2023). And considering that managing inequality and poverty was one area that Canadians in our surveys perceived governments to be consistently falling short on, investigating this area would surely provide important insights. Furthermore, although this project was able to demonstrate that identification with certain groups matters when it comes to how citizens perceive the political system as a result of where they "sit" in society, I was not able to tap into the more complex dynamics of these identities, or to identify more specifically some of the important realities and challenges that these different subsections of the population may face.

In addition to specific groups of Canadians, due mostly to space and time limitations, my analysis also excluded any major discussion of the cross-territorial differences in Canada beyond just Quebec versus the rest of Canadians. An analysis of the cross-territorial differences was done (see Table B3.9), however, the discussion of the findings of the analysis was only included as a brief footnote (532) in Chapter 8. A full discussion of the state of support in this country within each of the provinces would likely be enough to produce a book length manuscript on its own. Furthermore, unlike the Quebec context where I have data that have been tested and retested over a period of over five years, prior to delving into these other provinces I would wish to collect at least one more round of subnational data across Canada in each of the provinces in order to speak with more confidence about any cross-national trends or differences that might appear. In a related vein, the analyses also exclude any discussion of political support in the northern territories. This omission is due entirely to the fact that data have not been collected in the territories, in part because of limitations in the amount of funding that has been available so far for data collection.

Beyond cross-territorial and group differences between citizens, the results of my research have also demonstrated that important distinctions may be observed based on perceptions of society's leaders and political elite. One interesting observation beyond elite performance, was that those who identify with elites can have differing opinions of the political system compared to other segments of society. Other studies have similarly shown that politicians, for instance, do perceive political performance differently from everyday citizens and some of them rate this performance even more harshly (see for instance, Gerson 2014). Yet, while a general population survey of the type conducted online in 2017 may potentially reach a handful of leaders or political elites, any sample of this group is insufficient to draw clear conclusions about what 'elites'[589] may think in any detail that would allow me to also contrast their views to those of the general public.

This disconnect between citizens and their leaders is clearly an important one but the gap in their views, preferences, and priorities has yet to be unpacked. As my results demonstrated throughout this project, performance is a crucial element in the political support puzzle, yet it is rarely unpacked or discussed in any systematic and productive way, in the context of the bigger political support picture. One avenue that will be especially fruitful in the next phase of this research will be to determine exactly how elites (those who govern) and the public (those who

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[589] Nor does the identity group as it is currently included in these 2017 surveys clearly define what kind of elite identity we are dealing with, be it political, economic or other.

are governed) differ in their perceptions of performance and where it is succeeding or failing. An exercise such as this should not aim to point fingers or create sensational media stories, but to make real and lasting improvements for the sake of the system's stability and the production of equal democratic outputs for all.

Next Steps

Thanks to all that I have learned, and the challenges and opportunities along the way, I am confident as I move into the next phase of my research and academic journey having the tools and understanding that I expect I will need. In fact, the next step in this project has already begun. Over the next few months, through a new collaboration with scholars from three other countries, the United States, Britain, and Poland, we will be going into the field again. The new and revised instruments that will be employed in the field will cover a broader portion of the population with different backgrounds and an expanded set of questions that probe deeper based on what has been learned so far. In addition, through the collaboration, the next phase also casts a wider net to include political systems outside of just Canada's. More specifically, this new project includes both quantitative surveys, as have been conducted so far under the PCSP, as well as in-depth interviews that we have already begun to carry out in civil society organizations starting here at home in Montreal. Partners have also been conducting similar civil society interviews in organizations in three other major metropolitan areas in the US, the UK and Poland as well as comparable general population surveys[590] for each of their countries.

First, the new wave of this PCSP survey that will be carried out in Canada, with shorter versions in other countries, will address limitations identified in this project in terms of its substantive scope by including more variables that dig in more depth into performance as the most significant driver of political support. These will include questions that tap orientations toward more aspects of democracy, assessments of more objects within the political system (including other types of authorities)[591], more aspects of citizens' lived experiences, and a broader scope of policy effects and perceptions of the system's outputs. It will also dig deeper into the potential consequences of political support that I was unable to discuss in depth in this project and which are rarely explored in the context of political support (outside of voting). These consequences include compliance, participation (both traditional and non-traditional), demands for political change and reform, as well as broader societal cohesion.

The new wave of surveys will also tap citizens' perceptions of the system's capacity to adapt to varying situations. This last component, adaptive capacity, promises to be especially fruitful and, based on my findings about performance, extremely necessary. And while I believe that by using interviews and surveys, we can draw conclusions about what needs to be done, if we do not also assess the capacity of the system to address these needs, any solutions we propose may never see the light of day. In fact, before solutions can even be suggested, capacity and the limitations on this capacity should be better understood. We need only look at the health care system in this country to find the perfect example of how solutions without capacity are dead in

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[590] Employing the same, but slightly shorter, general PCSP questionnaire that we will be using here in Canada.

[591] Other authorities include, for instance, news media personalities, business leaders, journalists, experts/pollsters/pundits, influencers/opinion leaders, union leaders, interest/advocacy group leaders, civil society leaders, indigenous community leaders/chiefs, leaders of minority groups, health sector leaders, world leaders, American leaders, military leaders, police chiefs, banking and monetary policy leaders. Many of these will also be tapped across levels of government.

the water[592]. Thus, through the next phases of the PCSP project, we will also be conducting one-on-one interviews with elites (both civil society leaders which have already begun and elected representatives) to determine where they believe, based on their privileged vantage points in positions of leadership, our system has the capacity to respond to societal needs and where it is lacking.

As identified in the challenges, certain limitations in the reach of this project also became clear. To address this, the next phases of this research will be to reach outside of the general population in Canada to include not only one-one-one interviews with elites, but also a larger sample of online surveys of political elites at all levels of government from across the country (both politicians and public servants). By doing this, I will be able to start filling the gap in understanding the disconnect between citizens and the political elite that govern them or are tasked to deliver benefits and services. In addition to this group, through collaboration with the international partners identified earlier, we will also be expanding the reach of this research and our understanding of societal demands and system outputs. This will involve (in addition to interviews with civil society organization leaders which aim to determine their views on the benefits produced by our political system) a component that aims to better understand the needs and demands of the most vulnerable, and an assessment of how well the system has adapted to demands in times of real crisis (i.e. the pandemic). Data collection in this project will also include surveys of a large sample of patrons of various civil society organizations, the more marginalized or vulnerable members of our societies in each of the four democratic countries both in North America and Europe[593].

Clearly, from the challenges outlined in the previous section and the findings throughout this project, there are many areas to explore to gain a better grasp of the real challenges facing democracy. In Appendix B4, Table B4.1, I have summarized many of these areas that I flagged above in three categories (the state of political support, the questions, and the sample) along with ideas for how each area can (and will) be tackled in the future.

In Closing
In assessing the challenges facing democracy in Canada, I have found that the 150-plus year experiment with democracy has not been a complete failure (also see Kanji and Tannahill 2024),

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[592] Research on adaptive capacity is popular in the field of health care systems (J. E. Anderson et al. 2020; Lyng et al. 2022; University of British Columbia 2022) and also extensively in the field of research into responses to climate change (L. Jones, Ludi, and Levine 2010; Brooks and Adger 2015; Paterson 2015; Vallury et al. 2022).

[593] The first phase in getting a more broad-based understanding of the challenges faced by vulnerable Canadians (and their potentially different demands on the political system) will be to conduct interviews with civil society organizations that serve these populations. The findings from these interviews will not only help to better understand the capacity of governments to deliver for these groups, but also the capacity of the organizations themselves (as an extension of society's social safety net) to meet the needs and demands of such vulnerable groups. The next phase after that, which is also funded and will likely commence in 2024, will be to tap the perceptions of this segment of citizens directly in all countries through both face-to-face interviews and online surveys. It is conceivable also, based on what these next phases discover, that other methodologies be employed to dig deeper into this full system analysis. Such additional approaches may include: in-depth analyses of the types of data collection governments carry out into the interests, demands, and perceptions of their publics; content analyses of a variety of information sources (including various types of media) to assess the ways in which the political system is portrayed to the public and how its outputs are framed. The key point to keep in mind in carrying out any of these studies, however, is that in searching for generalizations, we should be sure not to lose sight of the big picture, that we conduct our investigations in a way that does not take for granted or glaze over the important complexities and many interconnected parts throughout political systems and throughout the contexts in which they function.

but it is beginning to show its cracks, at least in the eyes of those it serves. Despite high scores on objective measures of democracy, Canadians themselves might remain unimpressed. And despite the ability to vote underperforming elites out of office or reforming the way institutions work, the effort to impress citizens needs to be stepped up. This effort will require a shift in the way politicians do politics, the way institutions structure those politics, and attention to the long-term effects on the health of democracy that 'politicking' and misbehavior produces.

Even more importantly, as this project has shown, as those in charge of analyzing and drawing conclusions about the political system, it is our responsibility to make sure that any theorizing about this system avoids glossing over problems that exist by concluding that things are "not that bad". We should also abstain from limiting our understanding and resulting recommendations by focusing on just one area of the system at a time (say looking only at trust, or only at satisfaction with democracy). To be truly responsible experts and influencers on the path our democracies will take going forward, I believe we need to think both more broadly and systemically as well as more systematically.

In other words, in order to make a worthwhile and impactful contribution to understanding democracy (or any political system for that matter), any approaches to the study of these political (and social) systems require acknowledgement and attention to the insights that only in-depth, systematic, and cross-cutting analyses can provide – paying attention to the views of those that democracy serves, as well as expanding our scope to include all contributing members of the political system. Democracy is not a fixed system, it is one that will be forever changing and adapting – to the context, to its members, and to the many challenges that will inevitably emerge over time, and it is our responsibility as observers to keep up. This is no easy task, and it will be one that is ongoing. The more we discover, the more we will need to explore (as this dissertation has clearly shown). But that is what makes it exciting and worthwhile – and 'nothing worthwhile is ever easy'!

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APPENDIX A1 – Measuring Political Support (Taxonomy) – Expanding the Scope

Assessment Type	Dimension	Indicators used Elsewhere[594]	PCSP Questions used in this Project
Political Community			
Affective[595]	**Identity**	WVS: "How proud are you to be a [citizen of this country]?" ABs: "To what extent are you proud of being a Canadian?"	Not asked in PCSP *Taps pride in one's identity rather than in the political system (distinction illustrated in Chapter 5)*
	Pride	ABs: "To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of Canada?"	"How much pride do you take in each of the following?" • Your city/town • Your province • Canada
	Patriotism	YouGov and various news poll series: "How patriotic toward the [United States] would you consider yourself to be?"	"On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means 'extremely patriotic' and 0 means 'not at all patriotic', how patriotic do you feel about the following political communities" • Your city/town • Your province • Canada
	Feelings toward various communities (Like/Dislike)	CES: "How do you feel about […]" • Canada • Province	"Using a 100-point scale, where 0 means that you "really dislike" the community or group and 100 means that you "really like" it, how do you feel about the following?" • Your city/town • Your province • Canada
Evaluative[596]	**Workings/ Performance**	Not asked elsewhere	"On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means 'working extremely well' and 0 means 'not working well at all', how well do you think the following political communities are working" • Your city/town • Your province • Canada

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[594] Some of these are found in Klingemann's chapter in Norris (1999) where he lists commonly used indicators of political support as have been available in surveys such as the World Values Survey (conducted over many years and across hundreds of countries). In this project, as Dalton did in the same book, I split out these objects between affective assessments and evaluative assessments (Dalton lists them as "affective orientations" and "instrumental evaluations").

[595] The "questions" Dalton (1999) categorizes here are "National pride" and "National identity. It may also be tapped using questions like "Of course we all hope that there will not be another war, but if it were to come to that, would you be willing to fight for your country?". However, such a question may also carry normative value judgements about war itself, for instance. I do not use this measure in this study for that reason. My analysis of this question in the various waves of the WVS, reveals that proportions of Canadians who said they were willing to fight for Canada went from 64% in 1982 to 59% in 2006, then dropped to 42% in 2020.

[596] Dalton (1999) categorizes this dimension using the question "Best nation to live in" which is rarely used in the political support literature, and I do not believe directly taps evaluations of this object. I propose, instead, to use a more unmediated measure that taps evaluations of the community directly (based on perceptions of its performance).

Political Regime[597]			
Affective	**Democracy as a way of governing & Democracy vs. other ways of governing**	WVS, PEW Research Center: "I am going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country" • Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with legislatures and elections • Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country • Having the army rule • Having a democratic political system	The following are various types of political systems. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing this [country/ province/city/town]? • Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with legislatures and elections • Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the [country/ province/city/town] • Having the army rule • Having a democratic political system
		WVS: "I am going to read off some things that people sometimes say about a democratic system. Could you please tell me if you…agree…Democracy may have many problems but it's better than any other form of government." ABs: "…democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?"	Not asked in PCSP *It is possible to tap this dimension, creating a range of commitment to democracy based on responses to the questions above (from supports only a democratic political system, to supports all other governing forms, but not a democratic system).*
	Principles[598]	Afrobarometers: "Many things may be desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. If you have to choose only one of the things that I am going to read, which one would you choose as the most essential characteristic of democracy? Equality, fair elections, etc…"	"Canadian democracy is grounded in a variety of core principles. For each of the following can you indicate whether you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose" • The principle of constitutionalism (that our democratic process is based on and guided by a body of law) • A monarch as the Head of State (that the Queen's representative oversees our democratic process)

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[597] Several of the authors cited here may split regime principles into "regime norms and procedures" and "regime institutions", where institutions are part of the "regime" object (for instance Fuchs 1993, Klingemann 1998, Dalton 1999, Norris 1999) or even add "regime performance". In my work I look at regime as its own object, separate from the regime's institutions and include assessments of both democracy as a type of regime, as well as assessments of specific regime principles. Some authors also differ on the place democracy as the "best form of government" under instrumental evaluations (Dalton 1999). I am of the opinion that this is more of a moral judgment (of its "goodness") or normative assessment (that it "ought" to be the way we govern ourselves), a preference for democracy as a type of regime rather than some other form of governing. I place it, therefore, in the camp of affective assessments, while judgements about the performance of this particular regime type fit squarely into evaluative assessments of the regime.

[598] These have also been referred to as "Democratic values" or "Participatory norms" (Dalton 1999)

		WVS: "Many things may be desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. Use this scale where 1 means 'not at all an essential characteristic of democracy' and 10 means it definitely is 'an essential characteristic of democracy'…Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor, Religious authorities ultimately interpret the laws, People choose their leaders in free elections, etc…"	• Federalism (that power and responsibilities in our democratic process are distributed among different levels of government) • Responsible government (that political Cabinets in our democratic process must maintain the confidence of the legislatures in order to govern) • Ministerial responsibility (that ministers in our democratic process are ultimately responsible for their portfolios) • Majority rule (that decisions in our democratic process are made by the majority) • Representative democracy (that in our democratic process elected officials represent citizens in political decision-making) • The Charter of Rights and Freedoms (that in our democratic process certain rights and freedoms are guaranteed to citizens) • The rule of law (that in our democratic process everyone must obey the law) • Judicial review (that in our democratic process laws are subject to review by the courts) *So far, asked only for Canada (see future waves of the PCSP)*
Evaluative[599]	**Satisfaction with Democracy**	ABs: "In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works/functions in (country)" CES: "On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Canada?" WVS (2000): "On the whole are you very satisfied, rather satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy is developing in our country?" WVS (2020): "On a scale from 1 to 10 where "1" is "not satisfied at all" and "10" is "completely satisfied", how satisfied are you with how the political system is	"On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country/ province/city/town]" *For a discussion of some important variations in how this question is asked, see Chapter 5.*

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[599] The examples of common indicators for regime performance and regime institutions are not separated here, as the distinctions between questions that tap these orientations are often conflated. In the case of Klingemann's listing, for instance, no distinction is made. I believe, for example, that the interpretation of the question "People have different views about the system for governing this country" or "[how] satisfied with the way democracy works in Canada" should be very different from more specific questions about "how much confidence you have in…Parliament" yet in his listings, Klingemann groups them together.

		functioning in your country these days?"	
	Evaluation of the degree of democraticness	WVS: "And how democratically is (country) being governed today? Again using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that it is "not at all democratic" and 10 means that it is "completely democratic," what position would you choose?"	"How democratically is the following community being governed today? Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'not at all democratic' and 10 means 'completely democratic', what would you say about" • Your city/town • Your province • Canada *Note: The 2017 PCSP for the first time, included a follow up question "What is the main reason you feel the way you do?" Due to time limitations and the extensive recoding that would be required to interpret the responses, this question is not analyzed in this project.*
	General regime performance	WVS and European Values Surveys: 'People have different views about the system for governing this country. Here is a scale for rating how well things are going: (1) means very bad and (10) means very good. Where on this scale would you put the political system as it is today?' *Only asked in the US once (1995) and in Europe (1995-1999)*[600]	Not asked in PCSP *The use of the word "system" in this question is very ambiguous. Perceptions of regime performance can instead be tapped using satisfaction in general, evaluations of the degree of democraticness, and satisfaction with specific aspects of democracy.*
	Satisfaction with various aspects of democracy	WVS: "How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays in this country?" PEW Research Center: "Does this statement describe (survey country) very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not well at all?" Rights are protected, courts treat people fairly, elected officials care, people have a chance to improve their standard of living, etc… *Questions are not asked consistently across years, only tap one or two aspects* (Howe and Northup 2000)*, measure cynicism more than evaluations of democracy, or only ask the opinions of elites or experts (Stepanova 2005; Marland 2020; Elections Canada 2020)*	On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way the following aspects of democracy work in [your city/town, province, Canada] – very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied? • Elections and voting • Election spending • Political campaigning and advertising • Leaders' debates during election campaigns • Party financing • Party discipline • Partisan politics • Protection of rights and freedoms • Judicial review of laws • Political representation • The legislation-making process • The integrity of political representatives • Public spending • Political debate and discourse • The delivery of public services • Unconventional political participation (eg: petitions, demonstrations, etc.) • The transparency of the political process

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[600] See Klingemann, Fuchs and Zielonka (2006)

			• The process for nominating political candidates • The power had by the Premier • The determination of accountability
Institutions			
Affective	**Feelings toward various institutions (Like/Dislike)**	CES: "We'd like to know what you think about each of our political parties. After the name of a political party, please rate it on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly dislike that party and 10 means that you strongly like that party." CES (1979, 1974-1980): "How do you feel about…the government of this province of (province)?...about the government of Canada?" C-Dem (Provincial and Territorial Election Study), since 2020 in BC, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan: "How do you feel about the [province] political parties? – [Party name]" *No other systematic affective measures of support for institutions exists (other than political parties), as far as I can tell.*	"Using a 100-point scale, where 0 means that you 'really dislike' it and 100 means that you 'really like' it, how do you feel about the following?" • Legislatures • Courts • Governments • The civil service • Political parties *Like the CES, questions that tap feelings about individual political parties are also asked in the PCSP. These parties also include provincial political parties across provinces. Analysis of these individual parties is not included in this project.*
Evaluative	**Confidence in various institutions (including governments)**	WVS: "I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them" • The Parliament • The Government CES: "Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following" • The federal governments • Your provincial or territorial government *The CES appears to be the only cross-country survey in Canada that have consistently included an evaluative measure of confidence in the subnational government (province), although prior to 1984, these measures of*	"Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following institutions" • The municipal government • The provincial government • The federal government • Federal political parties • Provincial political parties • Municipal civil service • Provincial civil service • Federal civil service • Your municipal council • The provincial legislature • Parliament • Administrative tribunals • Provincial courts • Military courts • Federal courts • The Supreme Court • The Senate • The House of Commons

		government were more affective in nature, see above. *Focus Ontario (Environics) do contain questions that ask about satisfaction with the provincial government in Ontario (going as far back as the 1980s from what I can tell).* *The General Social Survey has a question about confidence in the federal parliament.* *More recently, Democracy Checkup (since 2019), part of C-Dem, has been asking Canadians how confident they are in the provincial government and in the federal government.* *In 2000, the WVS asked about "the government in (Capital City)". Both the CES and the WVS also ask about other institutions such as courts, religion, armed forces, public schools, big business, labour unions, public service, police, elections Canada.*	*Other than the CES (that ask about provincial government), no other cross-national surveys, that I can tell, have consistently asked about municipal governments. None ask either about courts, parties or civil service at other levels of government.*
	Evaluations of how good of a job various institutions are doing overall	Environics: "Would you say that [the federal/your provincial/your municipal] government today is: ...generally working, working, with major problems, broken but…etc." *Only findings available on this question are from 2014[601], however, Environics have consistently asked (since at least the 1990s) about various governments' handling of a variety of files:* Environics: "Do you approve of the way your provincial government is handling: [issue]" "Please tell me if you think each of the following services in [your municipality] is excellent, good, adequate, fair, or poor" *They have also tapped general satisfaction with the federal government:*	"How good of a job are the following groups and institutions doing overall?" - The municipal government - The provincial government - The federal government - Federal political parties - Provincial political parties - Municipal civil service - Provincial civil service - Federal civil service - Your municipal council - The provincial legislature - Parliament - Administrative tribunals - Provincial courts - Military courts - Federal courts - The Supreme Court - The Senate - The House of Commons *Other than the Environics survey (that asks generally about the through levels of government), no other cross-national surveys, that I can tell, have consistently asked about the*

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[601] This seems to only be conducted in one year (Environics Institute 2014), unless follow up survey findings have not yet been published.

		Environics: "Now for some questions on Canadian politics and government. Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the present federal government in Ottawa?" *CROP, over the 90s and 2000s also asked on various occasions about satisfaction with the provincial and federal governments.* *Decima Quarterly surveys (from 1980 to 1995) also asked about both the provincial and federal governments' handling of specific issues:* Decima Quarterly (for example): "Please tell me, for each of these responsibilities, whether you think your provincial government is doing a good job or a poor job. Would you say your provincial government is doing a good job or a poor job in [responsibility]".	*jobs various governments are doing, or about the jobs done by other institutions (such as courts, parties or civil service), and certainly not about these other institutions at other levels of government.*
	Evaluations of the various specific jobs government has done	WVS: "How you feel about the national parliament/government in your country?" • Overall, the parliament/government is competent and efficient • The parliament/government usually carries out its duties poorly • The parliament/government usually acts in its own interests • The parliament/government wants to do its best to serve the country • The parliament/government is generally free of corruption • The parliament/government's work is open and transparent Environics: "How good a job do you believe [the federal/your provincial/your municipal] government is doing in terms of each of the following: • Protecting privacy of personal information	"How good a job has the [level of government] government done of..." • Improving your quality of life • Managing the [municipal/provincial/federal] debt • Protecting the environment • Managing [municipal/provincial/federal] taxes • Managing the [municipal/provincial/federal] economy • Governing with integrity • Managing priorities • Making effective legislation • Improving infrastructure/public transport • Dealing with inequality and poverty • Dealing with diversity and social cohesion • Bettering health care services • Responding to emergencies and crises

		- Making effective use of the latest electronic technology in the delivery of information and services - Being publicly accountable to citizens for decisions and policies - Providing public services in the most cost-efficient way possible - Actively consulting with citizens and other sectors - Making publicly available the non-confidential research and statistics it collects *As with the previous question from Environics, only findings available on this question are from 2014 although there are cross-time data from Environics on handling of a variety of issues.*	
	Evaluation of how well governments at different levels are working together	Environics: "How good a job do you believe [the federal/your provincial/your municipal] government is doing in terms of each of the following" Working constructively with other levels of government *As with the previous question from Environics, only findings available on this question are from 2014 although there are cross-time data from Environics on handling of a variety of issues.*	"On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means 'working extremely well' and 0 means 'not working well at all', how would you rate the working relationships between…" - municipal and provincial governments - provincial and federal governments - municipal and federal governments - provincial and provincial governments - municipal and municipal governments
		Authorities	
Affective	**Feelings toward various specific authorities and groups of authorities**	CES: "And what do you think of the party leaders? After the name of a party leader, please rate them on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly dislike that party leader and 10 means that you strongly like that party leader" *Survey lists all federal party leaders. Affective assessments of leaders at other levels of government, other elected representatives, or other authorities not asked elsewhere* C-Dem (Provincial and Territorial Election Study), since 2020 in BC, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan:	"Using a 100-point scale, where 0 means that you "really dislike" the community or group and 100 means that you "really like" it, how do you feel about the following?" - Politicians - Civil Servants - Political leaders - Elected representatives - Senators - Judges - Governor Generals and Lieutenant Generals "Using a 100-point scale, where 0 means that you "really dislike" the individual and 100 means that you "really like" the individual, how do you feel about the following people?" - The leader of your city/town - Jean Charest - Pauline Marois

		“how do you feel about the provincial party leaders below? – [Provincial party leaders]” and “Using the same scale, how do you feel about the candidates in your local riding? [provincial party] candidate in your riding”	• Philippe Couillard • François Legault • Stephen Harper • Justin Trudeau • Your city councillor • Your representative in the provincial legislature • Your MP *Other individuals asked about in the PCSP include specific leaders of opposition parties across levels, specific governor generals, etc. These are not included in the analyses in this project.*
Evaluative	**Satisfaction with performance under a particular leader**	WVS 2020: “How satisfied are you with the following? The way the local authorities are solving the region’s affairs” *The use of the words “local” and “region” in this question is very ambiguous.* WVS (previous years)‘How satisfied are you with how the people now in national office are handling the country's affairs?’[602] ABs: “Speaking in general of the current government/ administration, how would you rate the job performance of Prime Minister [name]?” CES: “How satisfied are you with the performance of…'the federal government under [Prime Minister]]', 'the provincial government under [Premier]'” Abacus[603]: “Overall do you approve or disapprove of the job the federal government led by Justin Trudeau is doing?”	“How satisfied are you with the performance of the [level of government] government under [leader]” • Municipal government, the current leadership • Provincial government, Jean Charest • Provincial government, Pauline Marois • Provincial government, Philippe Couillard • Provincial government, François Legault • Federal government, Stephen Harper • Federal government, Justin Trudeau
	Satisfaction with elected representatives	Not asked elsewhere	“How satisfied are you with the performance of your” • City councillor • Elected representative from the provincial legislature/your MNA • Current MP

[602] Again, Klingemann places this question under ‘regime performance’, whereas it is quite clear that this question is more specifically tapping orientations toward political authorities. Of course, the specific political authorities that respondents are thinking of when answering this question may not necessarily be clear and makes interpretation quite difficult.

[603] These data are not publicly available and it is not clear whether the question has been asked systematically over time. For the results on this question from 2019, see Anderson and Coletto (2019)

	Confidence in various specific authorities and groups of authorities (leaders and elected representatives)	Not asked elsewhere	"Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following political authorities" • The leader of your city/town • The Premier of your province • The Prime Minister • Your city councillor • Your representative from the provincial legislature • Your MP
	Evaluations of how good of a job various groups of authorities are doing overall	Environics' (Focus Canada): "Please tell me if you approve or disapprove of the way the following party leaders are doing their jobs [federal party leader] " and "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [name] is handling his job as Premier of [Province]?" *These are only available until 2009. From 2010, the public survey data from Environics do not include questions relating to governance at the subnational level, nor do they seem to ask about specific political authorities.* Environics: "are people in government genuinely trying to do their best for people they represent?" *These more specific Environics questions seem to only have been asked in 2014*[604] *Otherwise, evaluative assessments of leaders at other levels of government, other elected representatives, or other authorities do not seem to be systematically asked elsewhere.*	"How good of a job are the following groups and institutions doing overall?" • Politicians • Civil servants • Political leaders • Elected representatives • Senators • Judges • Governor Generals/Lieutenant Governors

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[604] See Environics (2014). The Manning Foundation along with André Turcotte, also conducted a survey to evaluate how politicians assess themselves. They found that their assessments of themselves are worse than the publics' (Gerson 2014; Manning and Turcotte 2014). As far as I can tell, none of these data are publicly available, nor are the specific question wordings.

APPENDIX A2 – Operationalization
Additive Indices, Explanatory Variables, and Controls

Affective Support Measures [Analyses included in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8]
For a listing of variables included under each of the "dimensions" listed here, see Appendix A1 above.
Political Community (low → high)
-   Indicators for each level are computed from responses on all questions for the following
    dimensions at each level separately (Canada, province, city/town)
    - o   Pride
    - o   Patriotism
    - o   Feelings toward various communities (Like/Dislike)
-   "General"/Cross-level indicator computes together the cross-level indicators for each of the three
    levels (Canada, province, city/town).

Political Regime – Core democratic principles (supports none/few → supports many/all)
-   No cross-level indicator is available for this measure.
-   "In General" indicator computes together responses to political object on each of the questions
    listed under the following dimension (Canada only):
    - o   Principles
    Note: variable used in regression analyses maintain full variation from low (supports none) to
    high (supports all), while the variables displayed in Chapter 6 group respondents into three main
    categories: opposed to many (oppose three or more), opposed to a few (opposed to one or two),
    support all (do not oppose any).

Political Regime – Democracy as a way of governing
-   Indicators for each level are original single indicator "Having a democratic political system" at
    each level separately (this country, this province, this city/town)
-   General indicator computes together the cross-level indicators for each of the three levels (this
    country, this province, this city/town).

Political Regime – Democracy vs. other ways of governing (all other forms → just democracy)
-   Indicators for each level are computed from responses on four questions for the dimension
    "Democracy as a way of governing" at each level separately (Canada, province, city/town)
    - o   Step 1: Using various conditional statements, create three variables:
        - ▪   One for those who support democracy and no other form;
        - ▪   One for those who support all other forms but not democracy;
        - ▪   One for those who support democracy as well as at least one other forms.
    - o   Step 2: Using various conditional statements, combine three variables together to create
        one variable that ranges from low (non-democrat: supports all other forms, but not
        democracy) to middle (less-committed democrat: supports democracy as well as at least
        one other form), to high (committed democrat: supports only democracy and no other
        forms).
-   "General"/Cross-level indicator computes together the cross-level indicators for each of the three
    levels (Canada, province, city/town).

Note: variables used in regression analyses maintain full variation from low to high (including variation across intensity of assessments of different forms), while the variables displayed in Chapter 6 group respondents into three main categories (non-, less-committed, and committed democrat).

Political Institutions – Feelings about all institutions (dislike → like)
- No cross-level indicator is available for this measure.
- General indicators reflect responses on the following questions tapping the dimension "Feelings toward various institutions (Like/Dislike)":
    - "Legislatures"
    - "Courts"
    - "Governments"
    - "The civil service"

Political Institutions – Feelings about institutions incl. legislatures and governments (dislike → like)
- No cross-level indicator is available for this measure.
- "In General" indicator is computed from responses on the following questions tapping the dimension "Feelings toward various institutions (Like/Dislike)":
    - "Legislatures"
    - "Governments"

Political Authorities – Feelings all authorities (dislike → like)
- General indicators reflect responses on the following questions tapping the dimension "Feelings toward various specific authorities and groups of authorities":
    - "Politicians"
    - "Civil Servants"
    - "Political leaders"
    - "Elected representatives"
    - "Senators"
    - "Judges"
    - "Governor Generals and Lieutenant Generals"

Political Authorities – Feelings about authorities incl. political leaders and elected representatives (dislike → like)
- Indicators for each level (for 2017) are computed from responses on the following questions tapping the dimension "Feelings toward various specific authorities and groups of authorities" at each level separately (federal, provincial municipal):
    - Federal: "Justin Trudeau" + "Your MP"
    - Provincial: "François Legault" + "Your representative in the provincial legislature"
    - Municipal: "The leader of your city/town" + "Your city councillor"
- "In General" indicator is computed from responses on the following questions tapping the dimension "Feelings toward various specific authorities and groups of authorities":
    - "Political leaders"
    - "Elected representatives"
- "General"/Cross-level indicator computes together the cross-level indicators of feelings toward specific authorities for each of the three levels (federal, provincial municipal).

Specific/Evaluative Support Measures

For a listing of variables included under each of the "dimensions" listed here, see Appendix A1 above.

Evaluative Assessments of Community (not working → working)

- Indicators for each level are original single indicator "Workings/Performance" at each level separately (Canada, your province, your city/town)
- "General"/Cross-level cumulative indicator computes together the cross-level indicators for each of the three levels (Canada, your province, your city/town).

Evaluative Assessments of Political Regime (negative → positive)

- Indicators for each level are computed from responses on all questions for the following dimensions at each level separately (Canada, province, city/town)
    - Satisfaction with Democracy
        - Dissatisfied (negative): either "not very satisfied" or "not at all satisfied";
        - Satisfied (positive): either "fairly satisfied" or "very satisfied".
    - Evaluation of the degree of democraticness
    - Satisfaction with various aspects of democracy (additive index of all aspects)
        - Dissatisfied (negative): dissatisfied with all aspects they are asked about;
        - Satisfied (positive): satisfied with all aspects they are asked about.
- "General"/Cross-level cumulative indicator computes together the cross-level indicators for each of the three levels (Canada, your province, your city/town).

Note: variables used in regression analyses maintain full variation from negative to positive (including variation across intensity of evaluations/response categories), while the variables displayed in Chapter 6 group respondents into fewer categories (ex: categories of satisfaction with aspects of democracy ranging from "not satisfied" to "satisfied", or contrasts between "not satisfied" with democracy in general vs "satisfied" or between "not democratic" vs. "democratic").

Evaluative Assessments of Institutions (negative → positive)

- Indicators for each level used in report card are computed from responses on all questions for the following dimensions at each level separately (federal, provincial, municipal)
    - Confidence in governments and legislatures
    - Evaluations of how good of a job governments and legislatures are doing overall
    - Evaluations of the various specific jobs governments have done
- "General"/Cross-level cumulative indicator used in report card computes together the cross-level indicators for each of the three levels (federal, provincial, municipal).

Note: variables used in regression analyses ("Evaluations of governments (positive)") includes three dimensions above but for governments only (excluding legislatures). Due to the way questions were asked in this survey, including cross-level additive indices for evaluative assessments of both institutions (as used in the report cards) reduces the sample size too significantly.

Overall Job Being Done (bad job → good job)

- No cross-level indicators are available (not asked at different levels of government).
- Variations in support graphs from Chapter 6 include responses on the following questions tapping the dimension "Evaluations of how good of a job various groups of authorities are doing overall":
    - "Politicians"
    - "Civil servants"
    - "Political leaders"

- o "Elected representatives"
- o "Senators"
- o "Judges"
- o "Governor Generals/Lieutenant Governors"

Evaluative Assessments of Political Authorities (negative → positive)
- Indicators for each level used in report card are computed from responses on all questions for the following dimensions at each level separately (federal, provincial, municipal)
    - o Satisfaction with performance under a particular leader
    - o Satisfaction with elected representatives
    - o Confidence in various specific authorities and groups of authorities (leaders and elected representatives only)
- "General"/ Cross-level cumulative indicator used in report card computes together the cross-level indicators for each of the three levels (Canada, your province, your city/town).

Note: variables used in regression analyses ("Evaluations of leaders and elected representatives (confidence)") includes only "confidence" in leaders and "confidence" in elected representatives. Due to the way questions were asked in this survey, including cross-level additive indices for evaluative assessments of authorities (as used in the report cards) reduces the sample size too significantly.

Consequences [Results of analyses of these questions not included here]
Compliance: Justifiable to break rules (none are ever justifiable → all are always justifiable)
"On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means it's "never justifiable" and 10 means it's "always justifiable", how justifiable are the following"
- General indicator computes responses to:
    - o "Jay walking"
    - o "Not stopping at a stop sign when there's no one around"
    - o "Avoiding paying GST/HST"
    - o "Cheating on your income taxes"
    - o "Not paying the fare on public transit"
    - o "Not paying for parking at the parking meter"
    - o "Taking advantage of health care or social services whenever possible, even when it is not necessary"

Capital: Social Trust (do not trust at all → trust completely)
Note: this measure is similar to "social capital" used under "sociocultural/value explanations" but far more detailed.
"And now, we would like to ask you how much you trust people from various groups. Could you tell us for each whether you trust people from this group completely, somewhat, not very much or not at all?
- General indicator computes responses to:
    - o "Your family"
    - o "People from your neighbourhood"
    - o "People you know personally"
    - o "People you meet for the first time"
    - o "People of another religion"
    - o "People who speak another language"
    - o "People from another generation"

- o "People in another income bracket"
- o "People from another province"

Capital: Confidence in Authorities (low confidence → high confidence)
See computation of general measure for "Evaluations of leaders and elected representatives (confidence)"

Capital: Confidence in Institutions (low confidence → high confidence)
- General indicator computes together responses for each of the three levels (federal, provincial, municipal) on the dimension "Confidence in various institutions (including governments)" for each of the following institutions:
  - o "The municipal government"
  - o "The provincial government"
  - o "The federal government"
  - o "Municipal civil service"
  - o "Provincial civil service"
  - o "Federal civil service"
  - o "Your municipal council"
  - o "The provincial legislature"
  - o "Parliament"
  - o "Administrative tribunals"
  - o "Provincial courts"
  - o "Federal courts"

Contribution: Traditional Political Participation (did not vote in any → voted in all)
- General indicator computes responses on questions about voting in three elections (two federal and one provincial):
  - o "Did you vote in the 2015 federal election?"
  - o "Did you vote in the 2011 federal election?"
  - o "Did you vote in the recent PROVINCIAL election held on [date]]?"

Contribution: Non-traditional Political Participation (have not done → have done)
"For each of the following, please indicate whether you have done any of these things, whether you might do it, or whether you would never under any circumstances do it"
- Indicator for legal political participation computes responses to:
  - o "Sign a petition"
  - o "Join a boycott"
  - o "Attend a peaceful demonstration or march"
  - o "Join a strike"
  - o "Join an interest group or social movement for political reasons"
  - o "Provide funding or support for a political cause"
- Indicator for "illegal" political participation computes responses to:
  - o "Damage property for political reasons"
  - o "Engage in violence for political reasons"
- General indicator computes responses to all non-traditional participation types.

Change: Desire for Reform (reforms are not necessary → reforms are necessary)
"On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means "not at all necessary" and 10 means "very necessary", how necessary do you think it is to reform the way that the following institutions work"
- General indicator computes responses to:
    o "Legislatures"
    o "Political parties"
    o "Courts"
    o "The civil service"
    o "Governments"
    o "The electoral system"
    o "The Senate"
    o "The House of Commons"

Change: Support Alternative to Democracy (all are bad → all are good)
- General indicator computes together responses for each of the three levels (country, province, city/town) on the dimension "Democracy as a way of governing" for each of the following:
    o "Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections"
    o "Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country"
    o "Having the army rule"

Community: Territorial Identity
"How much do you identify with each of the following?"
- Responses to each identity group are first recoded as:
    o Do not identify includes those who selected: "Not very much" or "Not at all"
    o Includes those who selected: "Quite a lot" or "A great deal"
- Indicator generated by computing responses on the following identity sub-questions:
    o "Your city/town"
    o "{{Province}}"
    o "Canada"
    o "Your region in {{Province}}"
    o "Your community/neighbourhood"

Traditional Groups [analyses included in Chapters 7 and 8]
English (vs. French)
- "What is your mother tongue?" consists of two categories:
    o Those who selected "French"
    o Those who selected "English"

Allophone (vs. French)
- "What is your mother tongue?"
    o Those who selected "French"
    o Those who selected "Spanish", "Chinese", or "Other, please specify"

Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)
- "In which country were you born?" consists of two categories
    o Those who selected "Canada"

      o   Those who selected "Other, please specify"

Nationalist (vs. other)
- "In general, do you usually consider yourself a Québec nationalist, separatist, sovereigntist, federalist, something else, or none of these?" consists of two categories:
  - Nationalist: Those who selected "Québec Nationalist"
  - Other: Those who selected "Separatist", "Sovereigntist", or "Other", those who did not respond, and those who were not asked (outside Quebec)

Independentist (vs. other)
- "In general, do you usually consider yourself a Québec nationalist, separatist, sovereigntist, federalist, something else, or none of these?" consists of two categories:
  - Independentist: Those who selected "Separatist" of "Sovereigntist"
  - Other: Those who selected "Québec Nationalist", "Federalist" or "Other", those who did not respond, and those who were not asked (outside Quebec)

Federalist (vs. other)
- "In general, do you usually consider yourself a Québec nationalist, separatist, sovereigntist, federalist, something else, or none of these?" consists of two categories:
  - Federalist: Those who selected "Federalist"
  - Other: Those who selected "Separatist", "Sovereigntist", or "Other", those who did not respond, and those who were not asked (outside Quebec)

Quebec (vs. ROC)
- "Which province or region do you live in?" consists of two categories:
  - A Those who selected "Alberta", "British Columbia", "Manitoba", "New Brunswick", "Newfoundland and Labrador", "Nova Scotia", "Ontario", "Prince Edward Island", or "Saskatchewan"
  - Those who selected "Quebec"

Performance Explanations [analyses included in Chapter 8]
Perceptions of honesty and integrity of authorities (dishonest and unethical → honest and ethical)
"On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'completely dishonest and unethical' and 10 is 'completely honest and ethical', how would you rate the honesty and ethical standards of the following these days? Select a number between 0 (completely dishonest and unethical) and 10 (completely honest and ethical)":
- Cross-level indicators are computed as follows:
  - Federal computes responses to:
    - "The Prime Minister"
    - "Your MP"
  - Provincial computes responses to:
    - "The Premier of your province"
    - "Your representative from the provincial legislature"
  - Municipal computes responses to:
    - "The leader of your city/town"
    - "Your city councillor"
- General indicator computes together the cross-level indicators for each of the three levels (Canada, your province, your city/town).

Political Cynicism (not cynical at all ➔ completely cynical)
"For each statement below, please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree"
- No cross-level indicator is available for this measure.
- General indicator computes responses to:
    o Most politicians are corrupt
    o Parties buy elections and votes
    o Politicians say anything to get elected
    o Governments don't really care about the people
    o Even if I participate in politics, it will make no difference in my life

Winning or losing in politics (loser ➔ winner)
- Cross-level indicators are computed as follows:
    o Federal computes responses on two elections.
      Range is: lost in both elections, won/lost in one election, won in both elections:
        ▪ "Which party did you vote for? [if yes on "did you vote in the 2015 federal election]": 'winner' if selected "The Liberal Party of Canada", otherwise 'loser'.
        ▪ "Which party did you vote for? [if yes on "did you vote in the 2011 federal election]": 'winner' if selected "The Conservative Party of Canada", otherwise 'loser'.
    o Provincial computes responses on one election
      Range is: lost in one election, won in one election:
        ▪ "Which party did you vote for? [if yes on "First, did you vote in the recent PROVINCIAL election held on [date]]": 'winner' if selected party that won in that election, otherwise 'loser'.
    o No municipal voting available, municipal indicator is the same as the general indicator.
- General indicator computes together the cross-level indicators for the federal and provincial levels:
    o Range is: lost in all three elections, lost in two elections/won in one election, lost in one election/won in two elections, won in all three elections:

Sociocultural/Value Explanations [analyses included in Chapter 8]
Cognitive mobilization (low ➔ high)
- Cross-level indicators compute responses to the following questions:
    o General education question (same question included in each cross-level indicator): "What is the highest level of education you have completed?" – computed into four groups (some elementary/secondary/high school, completed secondary/high school=0) (some CEGEP, some technical, community college, completed CEGEP, technical, community college=.33) (some university, Bachelor's degree=.66) (Master's degree, Professional degree or doctorate=1)
    o Responses to interest in politics at each level separately: "Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means "no interest at all" and 10 means "a great deal of interest", how interested are you in FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL/MUNICIPAL politics generally?" – computed into four groups (0,1,2=0) (3,4,5=.33) (6,7,8=.66) (9,10=1)
- General indicator computes together the responses on the education question + responses on all interest in politics measures (for each of the three levels) combined as one measure.

Internal vs. External Efficacy (high external efficacy/low internal → high internal efficacy/low external

- Cross-level indicators are computed from responses on four questions for each level separately (federal, provincial, municipal)
    - Step 1: Combine responses to the following external efficacy questions:
        - "I don't think they (federal/provincial/municipal politicians) care much what people like me think"
        - "Generally, those elected to office (at the federal/provincial/municipal level) soon lose touch with the people"
    - Step 2: Combine responses to the following internal efficacy questions:
        - "Sometimes politics and government (at the federal/provincial/municipal level) seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on"
        - "People like me don't have any say about what government (at the federal/provincial/municipal level) does"
    - Step 3: Subtracts responses on the additive indices of external efficacy from the responses on the additive indices of internal efficacy.
- General indicator computes together the cross-level indicators for each of the three levels (Canada, province, city/town).

Post-materialism (high materialist values → high post materialist values)
"People sometimes talk about what the aims of this country should be for the next ten years. Would you please say which one of these you, yourself, consider the most important:"
- No cross-level indicator is available for this measure.
- General indicator uses conditional statements to create a variable that includes three categories:
    - High materialist values=those who say only materialist values are 1st and 2nd most important:
        - "Maintaining order in the nation"
        - "Fighting rising prices"
    - High post-materialist values=those who say only post-materialist values are 1st and 2nd most important
        - "Giving people more say in important government decisions"
        - "Protecting freedom of speech"
    - Mixed values=those who said a combination of both materialist and post-materialist values were 1st and 2nd most important.

Deference: Respect for authority (a bad thing → a good thing)
"Is greater respect for authority in the future a good thing, a bad thing, or you don't mind either way"
- No cross-level indicator is available for this measure.
- General indicator generated from response on this one indicator and consists of three categories (Bad thing=0) (Don't mind either way=.5) (Good thing=1)

Social capital: Interpersonal trust (low → high)
"Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?"
- No cross-level indicator is available for this measure.

- General indicator generated from response on this one indicator and consists of two categories (We need to be very careful=low) (Most people can be trusted=high)

Media Exposure [analyses included in Chapter 8]
"People get their political information from a variety of sources. How often do you turn to the following sources to gain information about politics and elections?"
- No cross-level indicators are available for these measures.

Traditional (less/never → more/often)
- General indicator generated by computing responses to questions about the following sources ranging from less attention to these sources to more (Never=0) (Seldom=.33) (Often=.66) (All the time=1):
  - "TV news programs"
  - "TV talk show programs"
  - "Radio news programs"
  - "Radio talk show programs"
  - "National newspapers"
  - "Local newspapers"
  - "Print tabloids"
  - "Print magazines"

Online media (less/never → more/often)
- General indicator generated by computing responses to questions about the following sources ranging from less attention to these sources to more (Never=0) (Seldom=.33) (Often=.66) (All the time=1):
  - "Online national news sources"
  - "Online local news sources"
  - "Online international news source"
  - "Email"
  - "Facebook"
  - "Twitter"
  - "Other websites"
  - "Blogs"

Identity [analyses included in Chapter 8]
- "How much do you identify with each of the following?" Response categories include: "A great deal", "Quite a lot", "Not very much", and "Not at all"
  - The middle class
  - The working class
  - People who are your own age
  - People from your country of birth
  - Québécois
  - People of your cultural-ethnic background
  - Anglophones
  - Environmentalists
  - People of your faith
  - The poor
  - Immigrants
  - Entrepreneurs
  - Nationalists
  - Visible minorities
  - Feminists
  - Francophones
  - Federalists
  - Sovereigntists
  - Unions

- o Separatists
- o Allophones
- o The LGBTQ community
- o First Nations-Inuit-Métis
- o Elites

Identity Groupings/Clusters [analyses included in Chapter 8]
- Responses to each identity group are first recoded as:
  - o Do not identify includes those who selected: "Not very much" or "Not at all"
  - o Includes those who selected: "Quite a lot" or "A great deal"
- Full-range indicators used for regression analyses and correlation tests are generated by computing responses on the identity sub-questions listed within each of the clusters below (maximizing sample to include all respondents who answered at least one of all possible questions asked within the cluster)
- Indicator contrasting those who "Identity" vs. those who "Do not identify" are generated by computing responses on the identity sub-questions listed within each of the clusters below. "Identify" represents those who responded "Quite a lot" or "A great deal" on at least one of the sub-questions. "Do not identify" represents those who responded "Not very much" or "Not at all" to all sub-questions.

Minorities (do not identify with any: low → identify with many: high)
  - o "Immigrants"
  - o "Allophones"
  - o "First Nations/Inuit/Metis"
  - o "Visible minorities"
  - o "The LGBTQ community"

Ingroup-Class (do not identify with any: low → identify with many: high)
- Indicator generated by computing responses on the following identity sub-questions:
  - o "People of your own age"
  - o "People from your country of birth"
  - o "People of your cultural/ethnic background"
  - o "The working class"

Franco-Elites (do not identify with any: low → identify with many: high)
- Indicator generated by computing responses on the following identity sub-questions:
  - o "Francophones"
  - o "Elites"

Anglo-Federalists (do not identify with any: low → identify with many: high)
- Indicator generated by computing responses on the following identity sub-questions:
  - o "Anglophones"
  - o "Federalists"

Demographics and Disposition [analyses included in Chapter 8]
Gender (female vs. male or other)
- "Are you..." consists of two categories:
  - o Those who selected "Male"
  - o Those who selected "Female"

Age (older → younger)
- "Which age group do you fall into":
    - "18 to 29"
    - "30 to 44"
    - "45 to 60"
    - "61 and over"

Income (low → high)
- "And now what was your last year's total household income before taxes. That includes income FROM ALL SOURCES such as savings, pensions, rent, as well as wages. Was it…":
    - "...less than $20,000"
    - "...between $20,001 and $30,000"
    - "...between $30,001 and $40,000"
    - "...between $40,001 and $50,000"
    - "...between $50,001 and $60,000"
    - "...between $60,001 and $70,000"
    - "...between $70,001 and $80,000"
    - "...between $80,001 and $90,000"
    - "...between $90,001 and $100,000"
    - "...more than $100,000"

Personal disposition (negative → positive)
- General indicator generated by computing responses to the following three questions (ranges from (negative=not at all happy/satisfied on all) to (positive=extremely happy/satisfied on all):
    - "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means "not at all happy" and 10 means 'extremely happy', how happy would you say you are these days?"
    - "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'extremely satisfied', how satisfied are you with life in general?"
    - "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'extremely satisfied', how satisfied are you with your personal financial situation?"

APPENDIX B1 – Scope of the Canadian PS Problem: Determining its True Nature and Extent

Table B1.1 – Nature and Extent: Report Card – Affective vs. Evaluative Assessments – All of Canada (and Quebec vs. Rest of Canada)

REPORT CARD

Political Object	Average Grade (Affective)			Average Grade (Evaluative)		
	All of Canada	Just Quebec	Rest of Canada	All of Canada	Just Quebec	Rest of Canada
Community						
Canada	A-	B	A	C-	C	D+
Province	B	C+	B+	D	D+	D-
City/Town	B	B	B	C-	C	D+
Cross-level cumulative	**B+**	**B**	**B+**	**D+**	**C-**	**D+**
Regime						
Country	B+	B	B+	B-	B-	B
Province	B	B	B	C+	C	C+
City/Town	B	B	B	B	B-	B
Cross-level cumulative	**B+**	**B**	**B+**	**B-**	**B-**	**B-**
Institutions						
Federal				D	D	D
Provincial				F	F	D-
Municipal				D	D	D
General/Cross-level cumulative	**D**	**F**	**D+**	**D**	**F**	**D**
Authorities						
Federal	F	F	D-	D	D	D
Provincial	F	F	F	F	F	F
Municipal	F	F	F	D	D	D
General/Cross-level cumulative	**F**	**F**	**F**	**D+**	**D+**	**D+**
ALL OBJECTS[1]						
Federal	B-	C	B-	C-	C-	C-
Provincial	C	C-	C	D	D	D
Municipal	C	C	C	C-	C-	C-
General/Cross-level cumulative	**C**	**D+**	**C**	**C-**	**D+**	**C-**
DIFFUSE OBJECTS						
Federal	A-	B	A-	C	C+	C
Provincial	B	B-	B+	C-	C-	C-
Municipal	B	B	B	C	C+	C
General/Cross-level cumulative	**B+**	**B**	**B+**	**C**	**C**	**C**
SPECIFIC OBJECTS[2]						
Federal				D	D	D
Provincial				F	F	F
Municipal				D	D	D
General/Cross-level cumulative	**D-**	**F**	**D-**	**D**	**F**	**D+**

Notes: F : 49.99% and below, D- : 50% to 52.99%, D : 53% to 56.99%, D+ : 57% to 59.99%, C- : 60% to 62.99%, C : 63% to 66.99%, C+ : 67% to 69.99%, B- : 70% to 72.99%, B : 73% to 76.99%, B+ : 77% to 79.99%, A- : 80% to 84.99%, A : 85% to 89.99%, A+ : 90% and above

General affective measures for authorities and institutions are based on responses to questions about authorities and institutions in general, they are not computed based on assessements of objects at all three levels seperately (unlike the cross-level cumulative measures for community and regime). All evaluative measures (for all objects) are computed based on assessments of objects at all three levels added together.

[1] Cross-level average for affective assessments of "all objects" excludes institutions (where cross-level grades are not available).

[2] Average grades at each level for affective assessments of "specific objects" not available due to lack of cross-level assessement of institutions.

APPENDIX B2 – Scope of the PS Problem: Determining the Extent (Across Traditional Groups)

Table B2.2 – Extent: General Support Across Traditional Groups – Affective vs. Evaluative Assessments – All of Canada

	General (Cross-level)								
			Affective					Evaluative	
	Community*	Regime*	Institutions	Authorities*	Authorities	Community*	Regime*	Institutions*	Authorities*
	Degree of pride, patriotism, feelings of like "general" cumulative cross-level (high)	Democracy as a way of governing "general" cumulative cross-level (good vs. others)	Governments & Legislatures in general (Like)	Leaders & Elected Representatives "general" cumulative cross-level (Like)	Leaders & Elected Representatives in general (Like)	How well community is working "general" cumulative cross-level (working well)	Democraticness, satisfaction with democracy, with aspects of democracy "general" cumulative cross-level (High)	Confidence in and evaluation of jobs being done by governments "general" cumulative cross-level (High)	Satisfaction and confidence in political authorities incl. political leaders and elected representatives "general" cumulative cross-level (High)
Determinants	B (SE)					B (SE)			
Traditional Groups									
English (vs. French)	.00 (.01)	**.03 (.01) ****	.03 (.03)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	**-.04 (.01) *****	.00 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Allophone (vs. French)	**.04 (.02) ***	**-.05 (.01) *****	**.09 (.03) ****	**.06 (.02) ****	**.04 (.02) ***	.01 (.01)	.04 (.02)	.03 (.03)	**.08 (.03) ****
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	**-.02 (.01) ***	-.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	**.02 (.01) ***	.02 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Nationalist (vs. other)	**.11 (.03) *****	.03 (.02)	**.12 (.05) ***	**.09 (.03) ***	**.06 (.03) ***	.03 (.02)	.03 (.03)	.03 (.05)	.00 (.05)
Independentist (vs. other)	-.02 (.03)	**.08 (.02) *****	.01 (.05)	-.01 (.04)	.00 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.05 (.04)	.01 (.05)	-.06 (.05)
Federalist (vs. other)	.04 (.02)	**.03 (.02) ***	**.09 (.04) ***	**.07 (.03) ****	**.07 (.02) ****	**.05 (.02) ****	.05 (.02)	**.07 (.03) ***	.05 (.03)
Quebec (vs. ROC)	**-.08 (.01) *****	-.01 (.01)	**-.13 (.03) *****	**-.04 (.02) ***	**-.05 (.02) ****	.02 (.01)	-.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Constant	.80 (.01) ***	.76 (.01) ***	.55 (.03) ***	.45 (.02) ***	.44 (.02) ***	.60 (.01) ***	.72 (.02) ***	.73 (.02) ***	.56 (.02) ***
R^2	.016	.030	.020	.011	.006	.021	.006	.005	.006
n	5,626	4,858	4,340	3,532	5,429	6,178	4,663	1,759	3,655

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001
Source: PCSP 2017   *General assessment is additive index of 3 levels of government

Tannahill, Kerry

Table B2.3 – Extent: Affective Support Across Traditional Groups – Across Levels of Government – All of Canada

Affective Assessments

Determinants Traditional Groups	Community Degree of pride, patriotism, feelings of like (high)	Regime Democracy as a way of governing (good vs. others)	Canada Institutions Governments & Legislatures (Like)	Authorities Leaders & Elected Representatives (Like)	Authorities Just Leader - Trudeau (Like)
	B (SE)				
English (vs. French)	**.11 (.01) *** **	**.04 (.01) *** **		.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Allophone (vs. French)	**.13 (.02) *** **	**-.04 (.01) ** **		.04 (.02)	**.05 (.02) ***
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	**-.02 (.01) ***	-.01 (.01)		.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)
Nationalist (vs. other)	.05 (.03)	.04 (.02)		**.07 (.04) ***	.04 (.04)
Independentist (vs. other)	**-.22 (.03) *** **	**.09 (.02) *** **		-.04 (.04)	**-.12 (.04) ** **
Federalist (vs. other)	**.14 (.02) *** **	**.04 (.02) ***		**.08 (.03) ** **	**.07 (.03) ***
Quebec (vs. ROC)	**-.07 (.02) *** **	-.01 (.01)		**-.04 (.02) ***	.00 (.02)
Constant	.76 (.01) ***	.75 (.01) ***		.49 (.02) ***	.50 (.02) ***
R^2	.067	.026		.008	.005
n	5,867	5,258		4,458	5,839

Determinants Traditional Groups	Community Degree of pride, patriotism, feelings of like (high)	Regime Democracy as a way of governing (good vs. others)	Province Institutions Governments & Legislatures (Like)	Authorities Leaders & Elected Representatives (Like)	Authorities Just Leader - Premiers (Like)
	B (SE)				
English (vs. French)	**-.08 (.02) *** **	.02 (.01)		.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Allophone (vs. French)	**-.05 (.02) ***	**-.06 (.01) *** **		**.06 (.02) ** **	**.06 (.02) ** **
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	**-.04 (.01) ** **	-.01 (.01)		.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Nationalist (vs. other)	**.16 (.04) *** **	.03 (.02)		.06 (.04)	.00 (.04)
Independentist (vs. other)	**.14 (.04) *** **	**.08 (.02) *** **		**-.08 (.04) ***	**-.15 (.04) *** **
Federalist (vs. other)	-.04 (.03)	**.04 (.02) ***		**.09 (.03) ** **	**.14 (.03) *** **
Quebec (vs. ROC)	**-.15 (.02) *** **	**-.02 (.01) ***		**-.05 (.02) ** **	-.03 (.02)
Constant	.86 (.02) ***	.77 (.01) ***		.41 (.02) ***	**.35 (.02) *** **
R^2	.022	.026		.014	.015
n	5,803	5,141		4,060	5,241

Determinants Traditional Groups	Community Degree of pride, patriotism, feelings of like (high)	Regime Democracy as a way of governing (good vs. others)	City/Town Institutions Governments & Legislatures (Like)	Authorities Leaders & Elected Representatives (Like)	Authorities Just Leader - Mayors (Like)
	B (SE)				
English (vs. French)	-.03 (.02)	**.03 (.01) ** **		-.02 (.02)	-.03 (.02)
Allophone (vs. French)	.04 (.02)	**-.05 (.01) *** **		.03 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	-.02 (.01)	-.02 (.01)		.00 (.02)	-.01 (.02)
Nationalist (vs. other)	**.11 (.04) ** **	.02 (.02)		**.09 (.04) ***	**.10 (.04) ** **
Independentist (vs. other)	.03 (.04)	**.08 (.02) *** **		.05 (.04)	.06 (.04)
Federalist (vs. other)	.01 (.03)	**.04 (.02) ***		.03 (.03)	.04 (.03)
Quebec (vs. ROC)	-.02 (.02)	-.01 (.01)		**-.06 (.02) ** **	**-.07 (.02) *** **
Constant	.77 (.02) ***	.75 (.01) ***		**.51 (.02) *** **	**.54 (.02) *** **
R^2	.005	.025		.006	.005
n	5,781	5,280		4,127	5,041

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001
Source: PCSP 2017

Tannahill, Kerry

Table B2.4 – Extent: Evaluative Support Across Traditional Groups – Across Levels of Government – All of Canada

Evaluative Assessments

Canada

Determinants Traditional Groups	Community How well community is working (working well)	Regime Democraticness, satisfaction with democracy, with aspects of democracy (High)	Institutions Confidence in and evaluation of jobs being done by governments (High)	Authorities Satisfaction and confidence in political authorities incl. political leaders and elected representatives (High)
	B (SE)			
English (vs. French)	.00 (.01)	.03 (.02)	.03 (.04)	.01 (.02)
Allophone (vs. French)	**.04 (.02) ***	**.06 (.02) ***	.02 (.04)	.04 (.03)
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	**.03 (.01) ****	**.03 (.01) ***	.03 (.03)	.03 (.02)
Nationalist (vs. neither Nationalist or Federalist)	-.03 (.02)	-.04 (.03)	-.04 (.07)	-.06 (.04)
Federalist (vs. neither Nationalist or Federalist)	**.07 (.02) *****	**.10 (.03) *****	**.12 (.05) ***	**.07 (.04) ***
Quebec (vs. ROC)	**.03 (.01) ***	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.04)	-.01 (.02)
Constant	.59 (.01) ***	.69 (.02) ***	.49 (.04) ***	.60 (.02) ***
R^2	.013	.008	.010	.005
n	6,526	5,628	1,089	4,659

Province

Determinants Traditional Groups	Community How well community is working (working well)	Regime Democraticness, satisfaction with democracy, with aspects of democracy (High)	Institutions Confidence in and evaluation of jobs being done by governments (High)	Authorities Satisfaction and confidence in political authorities incl. political leaders and elected representatives (High)
	B (SE)			
English (vs. French)	**-.07 (.01) *****	-.01 (.02)	**.07 (.03) ***	.04 (.02)
Allophone (vs. French)	-.01 (.02)	.03 (.02)	**.09 (.04) ***	**.13 (.03) *****
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	**.03 (.01) ****	**.04 (.01) ***	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Nationalist (vs. neither Nationalist or Federalist)	.01 (.02)	-.01 (.03)	.05 (.05)	**-.08 (.04) ***
Federalist (vs. neither Nationalist or Federalist)	**.05 (.02) ***	**.06 (.03) ***	.07 (.04)	**.09 (.04) ***
Quebec (vs. ROC)	-.01 (.01)	**-.05 (.02) ****	.04 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Constant	.59 (.01) ***	.70 (.02) ***	.41 (.03) ***	**.46 (.02) *****
R^2	.017	.007	.010	.012
n	6,482	5,561	1,191	4,467

City/Town

Determinants Traditional Groups	Community How well community is working (working well)	Regime Democraticness, satisfaction with democracy, with aspects of democracy (High)	Institutions Confidence in and evaluation of jobs being done by governments (High)	Authorities Satisfaction and confidence in political authorities incl. political leaders and elected representatives (High)
	B (SE)			
English (vs. French)	**-.05 (.01) *****	-.01 (.02)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.03)
Allophone (vs. French)	-.01 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.02 (.04)	.04 (.03)
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Nationalist (vs. neither Nationalist or Federalist)	**.05 (.02) ***	**.07 (.03) ***	.02 (.06)	.08 (.04)
Federalist (vs. neither Nationalist or Federalist)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.03)	**.10 (.04) ***	.00 (.04)
Quebec (vs. ROC)	**.03 (.01) ***	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.03)	.00 (.03)
Constant	**.64 (.01) *****	.73 (.02) ***	.55 (.03) ***	**.63 (.03) *****
R^2	.020	.002	.007	.001
n	6,452	5,260	1,120	5,580

*$p<.05$ **$p<.01$ ***$p<.001$
Source: PCSP 2017

APPENDIX B3 – Explaining Political Support

Table B3.1 – Identity Distribution – Proportion (%) of Identities Across All Canadian Provinces

Group Identity		Quebec	Alberta	British Columbia	Manitoba	New Brunswick	Newfoundland and Labrador	Nova Scotia	Ontario	Prince Edward Island	Saskatchewan	All of Canada
Class	Elites	19.3	11.7	8.7	7.3	9.9	1.7	15.3	11.5	5.3	8.1	11.8
	The middle class	78.3	76.0	71.2	73.4	78.3	62.9	67.7	71.0	71.4	68.8	73.1
	The working class	63.8	76.8	66.7	75.7	75.7	68.8	80.0	72.4	75.0	81.4	71.3
	The poor	40.8	37.7	32.9	42.1	50.0	38.7	46.2	38.6	55.0	34.5	38.6
In-groups	People who are your own age	71.3	72.6	69.8	76.2	75.4	76.6	64.7	70.0	57.1	70.8	71.1
	People from your country of birth	70.7	73.7	69.1	65.6	78.2	79.4	71.0	67.8	61.9	66.4	70.1
	People of your cultural-ethnic background	69.0	63.2	61.8	50.0	63.6	60.9	58.0	61.3	45.0	59.3	62.1
	People of your faith	41.3	44.5	36.6	49.4	48.1	39.3	33.3	44.9	47.4	50.4	42.4
Language	Anglophones	42.1	55.7	53.2	59.6	72.8	46.4	62.0	55.5	70.0	53.4	53.5
	Francophones	75.1	15.6	13.8	20.6	38.9	8.1	20.5	19.4	15.8	12.9	29.3
	Allophones	30.8	15.1	15.8	18.3	31.3	13.6	11.8	18.7	7.7	19.8	20.8
Other	Environmentalists	47.1	34.4	42.6	43.6	46.4	37.5	39.8	47.0	42.9	32.6	42.6
	Immigrants	26.3	41.8	40.3	33.1	24.1	25.8	34.4	47.1	35.0	27.3	36.6
	Entrepreneurs	37.0	34.6	34.9	40.1	40.4	25.4	29.9	35.5	30.0	27.7	35.1
	Visible minorities	26.5	33.7	36.5	33.5	31.9	19.4	33.9	38.9	33.3	26.4	33.1
	Feminists	31.3	27.0	32.6	31.7	34.9	34.9	32.5	35.1	40.0	25.9	31.8
	Federalists	40.0	25.3	25.5	26.7	26.0	16.7	21.5	31.9	12.5	21.0	29.2
	Unions	20.4	22.8	25.9	23.9	26.2	21.3	29.8	24.4	15.0	24.1	23.9
	The LGBTQ community	18.6	17.3	20.0	21.0	28.0	22.0	24.2	23.3	22.2	20.1	20.7
	First Nations-Inuit-Métis	22.7	19.7	15.6	27.9	25.0	16.4	21.8	21.1	20.0	19.1	20.4
Quebec	Québécois	70.4										
	Nationalists	34.2										
	Sovereigntists	26.6										
	Separatists	21.8										
% who identify with at least half (all groups):		35.2	31.8	33.9	33.7	42.7	25.0	34.8	36.5	23.8	27.4	34.1
% who identify with at least half (excl. in-groups):		27.1	24.1	25.7	29.0	33.3	17.2	27.4	29.7	23.8	24.0	26.9
% who identify with at least half (in-groups only):		75.8	76.9	71.5	72.0	76.7	81.3	68.1	71.0	71.4	76.0	73.6
n=		520	381	610	193	117	64	135	529	21	146	2,716

Data: Political Communities Survey Project 2017
PCSP Question: "How much do you identify with each of the following?" Responses illustrated represent those that indicated that they identify "A great deal" or "Quite a lot".

Table B3.2 – Identity Effects on Political Support – Proportion (%) Changes in Affective Support by Cluster (and within cluster) Identification – All of Canada

	Effect of Increasing Identification							
	Community Degree of pride, patriotism, feelings of like (Support is high)		**Regime** Democracy as a way of governing (Supports democracy vs. other regime types)		**Institutions** Feelings about institutions incl. legislatures and governments (Support is high)		**Authorities** Feelings about authorities incl. political leaders and elected representatives (Support is high)	
All of Canada (average)	78.6		77.0		56.1		45.5	
Identity Clusters **Degree of Identification**	vs. non-identifiers	vs. all Canadians	vs. non-identifiers	vs. all Canadians	vs. non-identifiers	vs. all Canadians	vs. non-identifiers	vs. all Canadians
Minorities — **Baseline (average - do not identify)**	76.9		79.6		51.9		40.5	
Only one	+.8	-.9	-2.3	+.2	-1.1	-5.3	+4.7	-.2
Two or more	+4.0	+2.3	-4.7	-2.2	+7.9	+3.7	+9.6	+4.6
Ingroup-Class — **Baseline (average - do not identify)**	62.6		74.4		39.7		33.1	
Only one	+5.5	-10.5	+1.0	-1.7	+5.5	-10.9	+2.0	-10.4
Two or more	+19.0	+3.0	+4.2	+1.5	+19.5	+3.1	+14.9	+2.5
Franco-Elites — **Baseline (average - do not identify)**	78.0		78.8		55.8		43.6	
Only one	+1.1	+.4	+.2	+1.9	+1.4	+1.1	+4.4	+2.5
Both	+5.0	+4.3	-11.9	-10.1	-2.3	-2.7	+4.0	+2.1
Anglo-Federalists — **Baseline (average - do not identify)**	74.3		74.1		46.5		41.5	
Only one	+6.0	+1.7	+6.1	+3.2	+10.9	+1.3	+4.3	+.3
Both	+9.1	+4.8	+6.7	+3.7	+19.7	+10.2	+8.5	+4.5
n=	5,784		5,002		4,449		3,635	

Data: Political Communities Survey Project 2017

Notes: Within degrees of identification, "only one" represents those who identify 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' with only one of the groups included in the identity cluster and 'not very much' or 'not at all' with all others. The category "two or more" represents those who identify 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' with at least two of the identities included in the cluster. "Both" is relevant only for clusters made up of only two identity groups (Franco-elites and Anglo-federalists) and represents those who identify 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' with both identities included in the cluster. Baseline represents the average support level among those who expressly state that they do not identify 'very much' or 'at all' with any of the groups within the cluster.

Table B3.3 – Explaining Variations in Support for Political Community – General and Across Levels – All of Canada

Determinants	Affective Support Political Community Degree of pride, patriotism, feelings of like (high) General B (SE)	Affective Support Political Community Degree of pride, patriotism, feelings of like (high) Canada B (SE)	Province B (SE)	City/Town B (SE)
Performance Explanations				
Perceptions of honesty and integrity of authorities (honest and ethical)	**.15 (.05) **	.05 (.05)	.04 (.06)	**.17 (.06) **
Political cynicism (completely cynical)	-.04 (.04)	**-.12 (.05) ***	**-.14 (.05) **	-.02 (.05)
Winning or losing in politics (winner)	.02 (.03)	.04 (.03)	-.03 (.02)	.01 (.04)
Specific/Evaluative Support Measures				
Evaluations of leaders and elected representatives (confidence)	-.05 (.06)	-.10 (.06)	.07 (.06)	-.03 (.06)
Evaluations of governments (positive)	------	.04 (.11)	-.14 (.13)	.18 (.13)
Evaluations of democracy (positive)	**.13 (.04) **	**.08 (.04) ***	**.10 (.05) ***	**.13 (.05) **
Evaluations of community (working)	**.39 (.05) ****	**.38 (.05) ****	**.33 (.05) ****	**.46 (.06) ****
Sociocultural/Value Explanations				
Cognitive mobilization (high)	.09 (.04)	**.11 (.05) ***	.09 (.06)	.02 (.05)
Internal vs. external efficacy (high internal efficacy)	.05 (.05)	.02 (.07)	.09 (.09)	.18 (.09)
Post-materialism (high)	-.03 (.02)	-.02 (.03)	-.05 (.04)	-.02 (.03)
Deference: Respect for authority (a good thing)	.01 (.02)	.04 (.03)	.04 (.04)	-.02 (.03)
Social capital: Interpersonal trust (high)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.03 (.02)
Media Exposure				
Traditional (more)	.08 (.05)	.03 (.06)	.07 (.07)	.09 (.06)
Online media (more)	-.01 (.04)	-.04 (.05)	.04 (.06)	-.05 (.06)
Traditional Groups				
English (vs. French)	-.06 (.03)	.05 (.04)	-.10 (.05)	-.08 (.05)
Allophone (vs. French)	-.07 (.04)	.07 (.05)	**-.14 (.06) ***	-.03 (.05)
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	.04 (.02)	-.03 (.03)	.06 (.04)	.05 (.03)
Nationalist (vs. other)	.04 (.04)	**.17 (.05) **	.05 (.06)	.02 (.06)
Federalist (vs. other)	-.03 (.04)	**.19 (.04) ****	-.09 (.05)	-.02 (.05)
Quebec (vs. ROC)	**-.10 (.04) ***	**-.19 (.04) ****	-.06 (.06)	-.09 (.06)
Identity Groupings				
Minorities: immigrants, allophones, First Nations/Inuit/Metis, visible minorities, LGBTQ (high)	**-.06 (.03) ***	-.06 (.03)	-.04 (.04)	-.05 (.04)
Ingroup-Class: People of own age, country of birth, cultural/ethnic background, the working class (high)	**.15 (.03) ****	**.10 (.03) ***	**.10 (.04) ***	**.13 (.04) ****
Franco-Elites: Francophones, elites (high)	-.05 (.03)	-.05 (.04)	**-.09 (.04) ***	-.02 (.04)
Anglo-Federalists: Anglophones, federalists (high)	.00 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.00 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Demographics and Disposition				
Gender (female)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	-.02 (.02)
Age (young)	**-.06 (.03) ***	-.03 (.03)	-.07 (.04)	-.05 (.04)
Income (high)	.01 (.02)	.04 (.03)	.01 (.04)	-.06 (.03)
Personal disposition (positive)	.01 (.05)	**-.13 (.06) ***	.05 (.07)	**.12 (.06) ***
Constant	**.29 (.07) ****	**.48 (.11) ****	**.55 (.14) ****	.03 (.13)
R^2	.446	.358	.294	.449
n	711	626	624	583

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001
Source: PCSP 2017

Table B3.4 – Explaining Variations in Support for Political Regime – General and Across Levels – All of Canada

Determinants	Affective Support Political Regime Democracy as a way of governing (Democracy vs. all others)	Affective Support Political Regime Democracy as a way of governing (Democracy vs. all others)		
	General B (SE)	**Canada** B (SE)	**Province** B (SE)	**City/Town** B (SE)
Performance Explanations				
Perceptions of honesty and integrity of authorities (honest and ethical)	-.04 (.04)	.04 (.04)	**-.10 (.03) ****	-.04 (.04)
Political cynicism (completely cynical)	**-.19 (.03) *****	**-.13 (.03) *****	**-.18 (.03) *****	**-.16 (.03) *****
Winning or losing in politics (winner)	-.02 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)	-.03 (.02)
Specific/Evaluative Support Measures				
Evaluations of leaders and elected representatives (confidence)	-.05 (.04)	**-.09 (.04) ***	.00 (.04)	-.06 (.04)
Evaluations of governments (positive)	------	.04 (.08)	.07 (.08)	.12 (.08)
Evaluations of democracy (positive)	.05 (.03)	**.06 (.03) ***	**.06 (.03) ***	**.11 (.03) *****
Sociocultural/Value Explanations				
Cognitive mobilization (high)	.05 (.03)	.06 (.03)	.06 (.03)	.06 (.03)
Internal vs. external efficacy (high internal efficacy)	**.18 (.04) *****	**.15 (.05) ****	**.28 (.05) *****	**.20 (.06) ****
Post-materialism (high)	.03 (.02)	.04 (.02)	**.04 (.02) ***	**.05 (.02) ***
Deference: Respect for authority (a good thing)	.01 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Social capital: Interpersonal trust (high)	**.03 (.01) ****	**.03 (.01) ***	**.03 (.01) ***	.01 (.01)
Media Exposure				
Traditional (more)	**-.08 (.04) ***	**-.10 (.04) ****	**-.09 (.04) ***	-.05 (.04)
Online media (more)	-.05 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.04 (.04)	**-.09 (.04) ***
Traditional Groups				
English (vs. French)	.00 (.03)	**.06 (.03) ***	-.03 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Allophone (vs. French)	-.05 (.03)	-.01 (.03)	-.01 (.03)	-.04 (.04)
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	-.02 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	**-.05 (.02) ***	-.02 (.02)
Nationalist (vs. other)	-.02 (.03)	-.05 (.04)	-.02 (.03)	.00 (.04)
Federalist (vs. other)	-.05 (.03)	**-.08 (.03) ***	-.04 (.03)	-.04 (.03)
Quebec (vs. ROC)	**.07 (.03) ***	**.12 (.03) *****	.05 (.03)	**.08 (.04) ***
Identity Groupings				
Minorities: immigrants, allophones, First Nations/Inuit/Metis, visible minorities, LGBTQ (high)	-.02 (.02)	**-.06 (.02) ****	-.04 (.02)	-.03 (.02)
Ingroup-Class: People of own age, country of birth, cultural/ethnic background, the working class (high)	**.05 (.02) ****	.04 (.02)	**.06 (.02) ***	**.06 (.02) ****
Franco-Elites: Francophones, elites (high)	**-.11 (.02) *****	**-.08 (.03) ****	**-.10 (.03) *****	**-.08 (.03) ****
Anglo-Federalists: Anglophones, federalists (high)	**.04 (.02) ****	**.04 (.02) ***	**.05 (.02) ****	**.04 (.02) ***
Demographics and Disposition				
Gender (female)	**-.03 (.01) ***	-.02 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	**-.03 (.01) ***
Age (young)	**-.12 (.02) *****	**-.15 (.02) *****	**-.15 (.02) *****	**-.13 (.02) *****
Income (high)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)
Personal disposition (positive)	-.02 (.03)	-.01 (.04)	**-.09 (.04) ***	**-.09 (.04) ***
Constant	**.86 (.05) *****	**.76 (.08) *****	**.80 (.08) *****	**.74 (.08) *****
R^2	.368	.310	.351	.292
n	676	609	601	567

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001
Source: PCSP 2017

Table B3.5 – Explaining Variations in Support for Political Institutions – General and Across Levels – All of Canada

Determinants	Affective Support Political Institutions — Feelings about institutions incl. legislatures and governments (Like) — General — B (SE) — DV/IVs are general measures	Affective Support Political Institutions — Feelings about institutions incl. legislatures and governments (Like)		
		Canada B (SE)	Province B (SE)	City/Town B (SE)
		DV is general measure/IVs are specific measures		
Performance Explanations				
Perceptions of honesty and integrity of authorities (honest and ethical)	**.19 (.09) ***	**.16 (.05) ***	**.16 (.05) ***	**.15 (.05) ***
Political cynicism (completely cynical)	**-.26 (.07) ****	**-.28 (.05) ****	**-.35 (.05) ****	**-.44 (.04) ****
Winning or losing in politics (winner)	-.04 (.05)	-.05 (.03)	-.03 (.02)	.03 (.03)
Specific/Evaluative Support Measures				
Evaluations of leaders and elected representatives (confidence)	**.22 (.10) ***	**.12 (.05) ***	**.13 (.05) ***	.01 (.05)
Evaluations of governments (positive)	**.19 (.09) ***	**.25 (.10) ***	-.05 (.11)	**.31 (.11) ***
Sociocultural/Value Explanations				
Cognitive mobilization (high)	.12 (.08)	**.10 (.05) ***	.06 (.05)	.04 (.05)
Internal vs. external efficacy (high internal efficacy)	.16 (.10)	-.04 (.07)	.03 (.07)	.08 (.08)
Post-materialism (high)	.00 (.04)	.04 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.01 (.03)
Deference: Respect for authority (a good thing)	.01 (.04)	.04 (.03)	.03 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Social capital: Interpersonal trust (high)	.03 (.03)	**.04 (.02) ***	.03 (.02)	.03 (.02)
Media Exposure				
Traditional (more)	.01 (.09)	-.05 (.05)	.01 (.06)	-.02 (.06)
Online media (more)	.03 (.07)	.01 (.05)	.03 (.05)	.03 (.05)
Traditional Groups				
English (vs. French)	-.03 (.07)	.02 (.04)	-.03 (.05)	-.01 (.04)
Allophone (vs. French)	.06 (.08)	.07 (.04)	.00 (.05)	.08 (.05)
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	-.09 (.06)	-.02 (.03)	-.01 (.03)	-.01 (.03)
Nationalist (vs. other)	.14 (.09)	.08 (.05)	**.14 (.05) ***	**.16 (.06) ***
Federalist (vs. other)	.02 (.08)	.02 (.04)	.00 (.05)	.05 (.05)
Quebec (vs. ROC)	-.09 (.08)	-.06 (.04)	-.06 (.05)	**-.12 (.05) ***
Identity Groupings				
Minorities: immigrants, allophones, First Nations/Inuit/Metis, visible minorities, LGBTQ (high)	-.04 (.05)	-.02 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.00 (.03)
Ingroup-Class: People of own age, country of birth, cultural/ethnic background, the working class (high)	.05 (.05)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.00 (.03)
Franco-Elites: Francophones, elites (high)	-.04 (.06)	-.03 (.03)	**-.11 (.04) ***	-.01 (.04)
Anglo-Federalists: Anglophones, federalists (high)	.04 (.04)	.02 (.02)	.04 (.03)	.03 (.02)
Demographics and Disposition				
Gender (female)	-.01 (.03)	-.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Age (young)	-.04 (.05)	-.01 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.03)
Income (high)	-.03 (.04)	.01 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.00 (.03)
Personal disposition (positive)	.14 (.08)	**.14 (.05) ***	.09 (.06)	**.14 (.05) ***
Constant	.02 (.16)	.13 (.11)	**.46 (.11) ****	**.24 (.11) ***
R^2	.465	.424	.358	.411
n	220	593	586	550

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001
Source: PCSP 2017. Note: there is no cross-level measure available for institutions (not asked). Cross-level analyses include IVs across levels only.

Table B3.6 – Explaining Variations in Support for Political Authorities – General and Across Levels – All of Canada

Determinants	Affective Support Political Authorities Feelings about authorities incl. political leaders and elected General B (SE)	Affective Support Political Authorities Feelings about authorities incl. political leaders and elected representatives (Like) Canada B (SE)	Province B (SE)	City/Town B (SE)	Affective Support Leaders Feelings about political leaders (Like) Canada B (SE)	Province B (SE)	City/Town B (SE)
					Trudeau	Premier	Mayor
Performance Explanations							
Perceptions of honesty and integrity of authorities (honest and ethical)	**.31 (.04) *****	**.26 (.03) *****	**.25 (.03) *****	**.30 (.04) *****	**.30 (.04) *****	**.26 (.04) *****	**.30 (.04) *****
Political cynicism (completely cynical)	**-.14 (.03) *****	**-.14 (.03) *****	**-.13 (.03) *****	**-.18 (.04) *****	**-.22 (.04) *****	**-.09 (.04) ***	**-.20 (.04) *****
Winning or losing in politics (winner)	-.03 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	.00 (.01)	-.02 (.03)	.00 (.03)	**.06 (.02) *****	-.01 (.03)
Specific/Evaluative Support Measures							
Evaluations of leaders and elected representatives (confidence)	**.41 (.05) *****	**.49 (.04) *****	**.42 (.04) *****	**.39 (.04) *****	**.58 (.05) *****	**.52 (.05) *****	**.43 (.05) *****
Sociocultural/Value Explanations							
Cognitive mobilization (high)	-.07 (.04)	-.03 (.03)	-.06 (.04)	-.02 (.04)	-.01 (.04)	-.02 (.04)	.00 (.04)
Internal vs. external efficacy (high internal efficacy)	**-.09 (.04) ***	-.08 (.05)	-.06 (.05)	**-.19 (.06) ****	-.09 (.07)	-.09 (.07)	**-.18 (.07) ***
Post-materialism (high)	-.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	.00 (.03)	.03 (.03)	-.04 (.03)
Deference: Respect for authority (a good thing)	-.03 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	**-.07 (.03) ****	-.04 (.03)	-.02 (.03)
Social capital: Interpersonal trust (high)	.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Media Exposure							
Traditional (more)	-.02 (.04)	-.03 (.04)	.03 (.04)	-.07 (.05)	-.10 (.05)	.05 (.05)	-.02 (.05)
Online media (more)	**.07 (.04) ***	.07 (.03)	.05 (.04)	**.09 (.04) ***	.00 (.04)	.00 (.04)	.06 (.05)
Traditional Groups							
English (vs. French)	**-.06 (.03) ***	-.03 (.03)	-.04 (.03)	**-.10 (.03) ****	-.01 (.03)	-.07 (.04)	**-.08 (.04) ***
Allophone (vs. French)	-.02 (.03)	.00 (.03)	-.02 (.04)	-.07 (.04)	.02 (.04)	-.05 (.04)	-.02 (.04)
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	.00 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.03)	-.03 (.03)	.02 (.03)	-.03 (.03)
Nationalist (vs. other)	.06 (.04)	.04 (.04)	.05 (.04)	.04 (.04)	.05 (.05)	.08 (.05)	.06 (.05)
Federalist (vs. other)	.02 (.04)	.00 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.04)	.00 (.04)	**.10 (.04) ***	.03 (.04)
Quebec (vs. ROC)	-.06 (.04)	-.02 (.03)	-.07 (.04)	-.04 (.04)	.01 (.04)	**-.12 (.04) ****	-.03 (.05)
Identity Groupings							
Minorities: immigrants, allophones, First Nations/Inuit/Metis, visible minorities, LGBTQ (high)	.00 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	.02 (.03)	.03 (.03)	-.05 (.03)	-.01 (.03)
Ingroup-Class: People of own age, country of birth, cultural/ethnic background, the working class (high)	.03 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.04 (.03)	-.03 (.03)	-.01 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Franco-Elites: Francophones, elites (high)	**-.07 (.03) ****	**-.06 (.03) ***	-.04 (.03)	**-.09 (.03) ****	-.03 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.05 (.03)
Anglo-Federalists: Anglophones, federalists (high)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)
Demographics and Disposition							
Gender (female)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	-.01 (.02)
Age (young)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.03 (.02)	-.01 (.03)	**.06 (.03) ***	.02 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Income (high)	.03 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.01 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Personal disposition (positive)	.07 (.04)	.05 (.04)	.04 (.04)	**.10 (.05) ***	.01 (.05)	-.03 (.05)	.09 (.05)
Constant	**.22 (.07) ****	**.19 (.07) ****	**.17 (.07) ***	**.30 (.08) *****	**.24 (.08) ****	.13 (.08)	**.28 (.08) ****
R²	.608	.614	.572	.565	.569	.520	.526
n	634	874	809	734	940	920	797

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Source: PCSP 2017 Note: General DV consists of additive index using questions that tap support for leaders and elected representatives across all levels.

Table B3.7 – Explaining Variations in Support for Regime Principles – General and Federal Level – All of Canada

Determinants	Affective Support Political Regime Core democratic principles (Supports many) **General** **B (SE)**	Affective Support Political Regime Core democratic principles (Supports many) **Canada** **B (SE)**
Performance Explanations		
Perceptions of honesty and integrity of authorities (honest and ethical)	-.05 (.04)	-.05 (.03)
Political cynicism (completely cynical)	.04 (.03)	.01 (.03)
Winning or losing in politics (winner)	-.01 (.02)	-.03 (.02)
Specific/Evaluative Support Measures		
Evaluations of leaders and elected representatives (confidence)	.03 (.05)	.05 (.03)
Evaluations of federal government (positive)	**.19 (.08)** *	.08 (.07)
Evaluations of democracy (positive)	**.13 (.04)** ***	**.07 (.03)** **
Sociocultural/Value Explanations		
Cognitive mobilization (high)	.05 (.04)	**.08 (.03)** *
Internal vs. external efficacy (high internal efficacy)	.05 (.04)	.05 (.04)
Post-materialism (high)	.04 (.02)	.03 (.02)
Deference: Respect for authority (a good thing)	**.07 (.02)** ***	**.08 (.02)** ***
Social capital: Interpersonal trust (high)	**.03 (.01)** **	**.05 (.01)** ***
Media Exposure		
Traditional (more)	-.06 (.04)	-.05 (.03)
Online media (more)	-.02 (.03)	.00 (.03)
Traditional Groups		
English (vs. French)	**.07 (.03)** *	**.06 (.02)** **
Allophone (vs. French)	.05 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	**.04 (.02)** *	.02 (.02)
Nationalist (vs. independentist)	.02 (.04)	.01 (.03)
Federalist (vs. independentist)	-.04 (.03)	-.02 (.03)
Quebec (vs. ROC)	.01 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Identity Groupings		
Minorities: immigrants, allophones, First Nations/Inuit/Metis, visible minorities, LGBTQ (high)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Ingroup-Class: People of own age, country of birth, cultural/ethnic background, the working class (high)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Franco-Elites: Francophones, elites (high)	-.01 (.03)	-.04 (.02)
Anglo-Federalists: Anglophones, federalists (high)	**.05 (.02)** **	**.05 (.02)** ***
Demographics and Disposition		
Gender (female)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Age (young)	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)
Income (high)	-.03 (.02)	-.03 (.02)
Personal disposition (positive)	.01 (.04)	.04 (.03)
Constant	**.47 (.08)** ***	**.54 (.07)** ***
R^2	.270	.225
n	471	594

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001
Source: PCSP 2017 Note: DV Principles the same for both analyses. In Canada-level analysis, federal level IVs used. In General-level analysis cumulative cross-level indicators are used wherever possible (except evaluations of government).

This analysis is not discussed in the text above, so I have included a brief discussion here:

As Dahl (2000) suggest, in order to have a better understanding of what may be driving support for democracy, we should seek to more carefully understand not just commitment to democracy as a general concept, but also commitment or support for its underlying values and principles (i.e. the "rights and opportunities" available to citizens, thanks to democracy.

When assessing principles, controlling for general evaluations of democracy across levels of government (the model on the left), general evaluations stand out as the second strongest driver of support for democratic principles (.13). This said, this effect is slightly smaller (.07) compared to other explanations when controlling only for evaluations of democracy at the federal level (the model on the right). This finding suggests that, by compounding the effects of evaluations of democracy at other subnational levels with those of the national level, the resulting effect on affective assessments of

Canadian democratic principles is greater than if we look only at evaluations of federal democracy.

Other supply-side factors that are significant and robust are evaluations of the federal government. Where evaluations of the federal government are positive, support for regime principles increases (.19). This effect is the strongest driver of regime support but can only be observed when controlling for the cross-level effects of other explanations and disappears when we ignore subnational-level variations in other factors. Notably, when these cross-level effects are left out, we may even be misled into concluding that demand-side factors are more important in driving support for the regime than supply-side effects.

Among these demand-side factors, I find that the general model on the left reveals that deference toward authorities at all levels of government (.07) is the third most important determinant of support for Canadian regime principles (after evaluations of democracy). On the other hand, if we do not control for the effects of subnational variations, I find that deference toward federal authority (.08) is the greatest driver of support for various federal regime principles alongside education and interest in federal politics (cognitive mobilization: .08).

In both models, greater inter-personal trust (cross-level: .03; federal only: .05) can have a positive impact on the way Canadians feel about their governing principles. This effect of social capital, however, when other subnational variations are included, is quite a bit smaller than any of the other explanations, including traditional groups and identity differences.

Among traditional group differences, I find in this analysis that when not controlling for cross-level factors, differences in support for regime principles only appear when comparing Anglophones to Francophones (.06) or for those who identify with Anglophones and federalists (.05) versus those who do not. On the other hand, when controlling for factors measured across all levels, while these language and identity groups remain significance (English: .07; Anglo-federalists: .05), I also find that immigrants have a greater tendency to be supportive of federal regime principles (.04) compared to native-born Canadians.

Table B3.8 – Explaining Variations in Support – Across all Identities – All of Canada

Determinants	Affective Support			
	Community B (SE)	Regime B (SE)	Institutions B (SE)	Authorities B (SE)
Performance Explanations				
Perceptions of honesty and integrity of authorities (honest and ethical)	.09 (.06)	-.02 (.04)	.03 (.13)	**.28 (.06) ***
Political cynicism (completely cynical)	-.06 (.05)	**-.20 (.03) ***	**-.25 (.10) *	**-.37 (.05) ***
Winning or losing in politics (winner)	.01 (.03)	-.04 (.03)	.03 (.07)	.00 (.04)
Specific/Evaluative Support Measures				
Evaluations of leaders and elected representatives (confidence)	-.02 (.07)	-.04 (.05)	**.33 (.14) *	**.29 (.07) ***
Evaluations of governments (positive)	---	---	.25 (.14)	---
Evaluations of democracy (positive)	**.18 (.05) **	.03 (.04)	---	---
Evaluations of community (working)	**.47 (.07) ***	---	---	---
Sociocultural/Value Explanations				
Cognitive mobilization (high)	.01 (.06)	.02 (.04)	.12 (.11)	.05 (.06)
Internal vs. external efficacy (high internal efficacy)	.09 (.06)	**.19 (.04) ***	.13 (.14)	.03 (.06)
Post-materialism (high)	**-.07 (.03) *	.03 (.02)	.09 (.06)	.00 (.03)
Deference: Respect for authority (a good thing)	-.01 (.03)	-.01 (.02)	.07 (.06)	-.02 (.03)
Social capital: Interpersonal trust (high)	.00 (.02)	.03 (.01)	.02 (.04)	-.02 (.02)
Media Exposure				
Traditional (more)	.06 (.06)	-.02 (.04)	-.09 (.13)	.00 (.06)
Online media (more)	-.04 (.05)	-.06 (.04)	.01 (.09)	.05 (.05)
Traditional Groups				
English (vs. French)	-.03 (.04)	.02 (.03)	.04 (.10)	-.04 (.04)
Allophone (vs. French)	-.03 (.05)	-.02 (.04)	.10 (.12)	.00 (.05)
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	**.09 (.03) **	-.01 (.02)	-.06 (.07)	.01 (.03)
Nationalist (vs. other)	.03 (.05)	-.01 (.04)	.12 (.10)	.00 (.05)
Federalist (vs. other)	-.05 (.05)	-.02 (.03)	.07 (.11)	.00 (.05)
Quebec (vs. ROC)	**-.10 (.05) *	.05 (.04)	-.10 (.11)	-.02 (.05)
Individual Identities				
Francophones	.02 (.04)	-.02 (.03)	.05 (.09)	-.04 (.04)
Anglophones	-.02 (.03)	**.05 (.02) *	-.13 (.07)	-.01 (.03)
Immigrants	-.06 (.04)	.05 (.03)	.06 (.09)	.02 (.04)
Federalists	.00 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.03 (.09)	.00 (.04)
Allophones	.02 (.04)	.00 (.03)	.08 (.09)	-.04 (.04)
Environmentalists	-.02 (.04)	-.01 (.03)	-.12 (.08)	.00 (.04)
Elites	-.06 (.04)	**-.16 (.03) ***	.07 (.08)	.02 (.04)
The middle class	.02 (.04)	.01 (.03)	.11 (.09)	-.05 (.04)
The poor	.04 (.04)	-.02 (.03)	.04 (.09)	.03 (.04)
Feminists	.04 (.04)	.03 (.03)	.12 (.09)	-.07 (.04)
First Nations-Inuit-Métis	-.02 (.04)	.05 (.03)	-.09 (.10)	**-.09 (.05) *
The working class	**.08 (.04) *	.03 (.03)	.00 (.08)	.04 (.04)
Entrepreneurs	**.08 (.03) *	.00 (.03)	.05 (.07)	.01 (.04)
Unions	**-.09 (.03) **	**-.05 (.02) *	**.16 (.07) *	.03 (.03)
Visible minorities	-.02 (.04)	**-.09 (.03) **	-.12 (.09)	-.02 (.04)
The LGBTQ community	.01 (.04)	.01 (.03)	-.03 (.07)	**.11 (.04) **
People of your faith	.01 (.03)	-.02 (.02)	-.09 (.09)	.03 (.03)
People from your country of birth	.04 (.04)	.02 (.03)	.08 (.08)	-.01 (.04)
People who are your own age	.06 (.04)	.01 (.03)	-.01 (.09)	.01 (.04)
People of your cultural-ethnic background	-.06 (.04)	.03 (.03)	.10 (.08)	-.04 (.04)
Demographics and Disposition				
Gender (female)	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.03 (.04)	.01 (.02)
Age (young)	-.05 (.04)	**-.10 (.03) ***	-.07 (.07)	-.04 (.04)
Income (high)	.01 (.03)	.02 (.02)	-.10 (.06)	.07 (.03)
Personal disposition (positive)	.04 (.06)	-.01 (.04)	.15 (.14)	.10 (.06)
Constant	**.28 (.09) **	**.82 (.07) ***	-.19 (.24)	**.25 (.10) *
R^2	.471	.388	.451	.460
n	493	478	147	520

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001
Source: PCSP 2017

Table B3.9 – Explaining Variations in Support – Across all Provinces – All of Canada

	Affective Support				
	Community	**Regime Principles**	**Democratic Regime**	**Institutions**	**Authorities**
Determinants	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)
Performance Explanations					
Perceptions of honesty and integrity of authorities (honest and ethical)	**.14 (.05) ****	-.04 (.04)	-.04 (.04)	**.18 (.09) ***	**.31 (.05) *****
Political cynicism (completely cynical)	-.04 (.04)	-.02 (.03)	**-.19 (.03) *****	**-.25 (.08) ****	**-.37 (.04) *****
Winning or losing in politics (winner)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.03 (.05)	.00 (.03)
Specific/Evaluative Support Measures					
Evaluations of leaders and elected representatives (confidence)	-.04 (.06)	**.09 (.04) ***	-.05 (.04)	**.24 (.10) ***	**.23 (.06) *****
Evaluations of governments (positive)	**.13 (.04) ****	---	---	**.22 (.09) ***	---
Evaluations of democracy (positive)	**.39 (.05) *****	**.10 (.03) ****	.05 (.03)	---	---
Sociocultural/Value Explanations					
Cognitive mobilization (high)	.08 (.04)	.05 (.04)	.05 (.03)	.15 (.08)	-.01 (.05)
Internal vs. external efficacy (high internal efficacy)	.05 (.05)	.06 (.04)	**.19 (.04) *****	.16 (.10)	.02 (.05)
Post-materialism (high)	-.03 (.02)	**.04 (.02) ***	.03 (.02)	.01 (.05)	-.01 (.03)
Deference: Respect for authority (a good thing)	.01 (.02)	**.09 (.02) *****	.01 (.02)	.01 (.05)	-.02 (.02)
Social capital: Interpersonal trust (high)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.01)	**.03 (.01) ***	.03 (.03)	-.02 (.02)
Media Exposure					
Traditional (more)	.08 (.05)	-.04 (.04)	-.07 (.04)	.01 (.09)	.04 (.05)
Online media (more)	.00 (.04)	-.03 (.03)	-.05 (.03)	.04 (.07)	.06 (.04)
Traditional Groups					
English (vs. French)	-.07 (.03)	**.07 (.03) ***	.00 (.03)	-.05 (.07)	-.01 (.04)
Allophone (vs. French)	-.08 (.04)	**.07 (.03) ***	-.05 (.03)	.04 (.08)	.02 (.04)
Immigrant (vs. Canadian born)	.04 (.02)	.03 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.10 (.06)	-.01 (.03)
Nationalist (vs. independentist)	.04 (.04)	-.04 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	.14 (.09)	.02 (.05)
Federalist (vs. independentist)	-.03 (.04)	**-.08 (.03) ****	-.05 (.03)	.02 (.08)	-.01 (.04)
Regional Varations (vs. Quebec)					
British Columbia	**.13 (.04) ****	**-.07 (.03) ***	**-.07 (.03) ***	.11 (.09)	.02 (.05)
Alberta	**.11 (.04) ****	-.04 (.04)	**-.07 (.03) ***	.10 (.09)	.00 (.05)
Saskatchewan	.07 (.05)	**-.08 (.04) ***	**-.07 (.03) ***	.05 (.10)	.04 (.05)
Manitoba	**.12 (.05) ***	**-.09 (.04) ***	-.07 (.04)	.13 (.10)	.05 (.05)
Ontario	**.09 (.04) ***	**-.07 (.03) ***	**-.08 (.03) ***	.08 (.08)	.03 (.04)
New Brunswick	.10 (.05)	-.08 (.04)	**-.09 (.04) ***	.13 (.11)	-.01 (.05)
Newfoundland and Labrador	.08 (.06)	**-.13 (.05) ****	**-.13 (.04) ****	.01 (.13)	.01 (.07)
Prince Edward Island	.08 (.05)	-.07 (.04)	-.01 (.04)	.13 (.10)	-.05 (.05)
Nova Scotia	.09 (.08)	-.04 (.07)	-.08 (.06)	.30 (.16)	.01 (.09)
Identity Groupings					
Minorities: immigrants, allophones, First Nations/Inuit/Metis, visible minorities, LGBTQ (high)	**-.06 (.03) ***	.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.04 (.05)	-.01 (.03)
Ingroup-Class: People of own age, country of birth, cultural/ethnic background, the working class (high)	**.15 (.03) *****	.01 (.02)	**.05 (.02) ****	.06 (.05)	-.04 (.03)
Franco-Elites: Francophones, elites (high)	-.06 (.03)	-.03 (.02)	**-.12 (.02) *****	-.05 (.06)	-.04 (.03)
Anglo-Federalists: Anglophones, federalists (high)	.00 (.02)	**.04 (.02) ****	**.04 (.02) ****	.04 (.04)	.01 (.02)
Demographics and Disposition					
Gender (female)	-.01 (.02)	.02 (.01)	**-.02 (.01) ***	-.01 (.03)	.00 (.02)
Age (young)	**-.06 (.03) ***	**-.05 (.02) ***	**-.13 (.02) *****	-.04 (.05)	-.01 (.03)
Income (high)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	-.02 (.05)	.05 (.03)
Personal disposition (positive)	.01 (.05)	.02 (.04)	-.02 (.03)	.14 (.09)	.07 (.05)
Constant	**.19 (.07) ****	**.63 (.06) *****	**.92 (.05) *****	-.13 (.16)	**.28 (.08) *****
R^2	.446	.182	.371	.460	.448
n	711	684	676	220	764

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001
Source: PCSP 2017

APPENDIX B4 – Next Steps

Table B4.1 – Where This Research is Going

Area of Focus	Approach
The state of political support	
While I have provided a broad review of the literature and much of the available Canadian data on political support, the state of political support can be even more systematically understood.	To do this it would be necessary to conduct a meta-analysis of all political support literature and all political support questions tapped throughout time across all contexts. This review could lead also to the assembly of an archive of support data collected both in Canada and worldwide over time. This is something that I hope to carry out slowly over the next several years alongside my other projects.
My analyses have revealed that support can also vary across a number of non-political components of the system, which might have significant effects on the ways in which citizens engage with the system and perceive it to be functioning (for instance, orientations toward civil servants, judges and other non-political actors). I included a discussion of variations in support for these authorities but excluded them from the explanatory analyses due to a lack of sufficient data in the 2017 surveys.	In future rounds of data collection, we are including questions that tap a much broader range of institutions and actors that function in and around the governance system. These include measures that examine support for institutions across levels (courts at all levels, local, provincial, and national police forces, as well as the military) and institutions just outside of the governing structures (including the media, civil society organizations, and business). Questions will also explore assessments of journalists, interest group leaders, pollsters, pundits, and academics, as well as leaders in other areas such as community leaders, minority group leaders, Indigenous leaders, business leaders, and world leaders.
The substantive understanding	
We know now that performance matters, but what aspects of performance? We need to ask more questions, digging deeper into the performance of individuals and institutions.	I will delve deeper into cynicism by expanding the questions in the next survey wave to dig into both general and political cynicism as carry out a broader analysis of well-being and personal disposition.
	To better understand the aspects of honesty and integrity that the public perceive to be falling short our next wave of data collection includes and expanded set of questions. I will also carry out a more systematic assessment of actual ethics and integrity breaches at all levels of government as well as more broadly in other areas of our society.
	Carry out a more careful assessment of policy outputs and how these policies are being received. The next round of surveys includes questions that tap individual experiences with specific policies (for example, the use of healthcare services and specific evaluations of those experiences). I

	will also be digging more carefully in to the literature on policy performance.
Performance matters but does the system have the capacity to respond? We need to dig deeper, beyond performance, into perceptions of the system's capacity to respond to public demands and meet expectations.	As part of the next wave of data collection, we have included questions that tap public perceptions of the capacities of the system to respond. I will also expand the scope of our understanding of adaptive capacity by carrying out a review of the literature on this subject. This review and data collection will dig deeper by analyzing capacity in a variety of areas (including assessments of both the impetus and the ability to adapt and change). We will also be carrying out elite interviews on the topic (see below under "The sample").
We know a little more about citizens' evaluative and affective assessments of the regime, but what about the normative components of democracy?	In the future, I will conduct a more careful review of the normative and empirical democratic literature to assemble a more expansive list of the research into the debates over various democratic values and principles, as well as the scope of characteristics that may be assessed in a study of political support. Some of this work has already been done and the next round of surveys includes an expanded set of questions that tap evaluations of how well these various characteristics are being met as well as an opportunity for respondents to provide their affective assessments of the moral value or worth of some of these characteristics.
More methodological work is required to better understand the effects of assessments between levels of government, political and non-political realms, and the causal direction of attitudes across objects. For instance, do assessments of the performance experienced at the local level influence attitudes toward the political system generally? Do assessments of the political world influence views about non-political experiences? What is the true nature of the effect of assessments of specific political objects on diffuse ones and what is the extent of the feedback from the supply-side back into demands?	One major way in which some of these questions could be answered would be through the inclusion of more pointed questions that reach beyond just "political" support into other areas. Another way would be to ask questions that specifically tap causal relationships. Each of these will be done in the next wave of surveys.

Another method would be to incorporate a panel component into future surveys that allow the tracking of political support and public opinion over time. This will depend on future funding. |
| To further determine the implications of political support problems for the system's overall | The data already collected include questions that tap opinions and behaviours related to each of these consequences. The operationalization of the consequences |

legitimacy and survival, we need to dig deeper into the consequences of waning political support. This includes assessments of the actual variations in society in levels of compliance, trust, political participation both in traditional and non-traditional forms, contributions and participation in society in non-political ways (for instance engagement in civil society groups and various social gatherings), demands for political and societal reforms, and changing patterns of identification.	indicators have been outlined in Appendix A2 to offer a clue to those reading this project into what types of questions are available and have already been analyzed (even though these analyses are not included). New waves of data collection (starting this year) also include an expanded array of questions relating to compliance, participation, trust, demands for change, and identity.
The sample	
We know more about the general population but lack an in-depth understanding of the opinions of more vulnerable members of society as well as citizens in hard-to-reach areas.	Surveys will be conducted in civil society organizations with individuals who are often considered to be more "vulnerable" and are typically left out from large-scale data collection exercises. Boosted samples could also be collected in the territories as well as in rural communities.
The discussions in this project have excluded an in-depth discussion of cross-national variations between provinces and regions.	This can be done using the data we currently have as well as additional surveys with larger regional samples.
Members of society in leadership positions have unique vantage points on the performance of the system, what the system may need, and its capacity to respond. Considering that it is also clear that elites (especially political ones) are often seen as a source of performance problems, a better understanding of these elite opinions would be highly beneficial.	The scope of the data collection is being expanded to include perceptions of those in leadership positions as well as in government. This will include a survey of political elites as well as society leaders, including civil society leaders, and in the future, opinion leaders and business leaders.
Canadian findings are useful for this context, but greater work is needed to determine the generalizability of these lessons.	The scope of the data collection is being expanded to include other countries to better understand the generalizability of any phenomena that are occurring in the Canadian context.