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Research Policy Snapshot

Understanding Social Distrust in Quebec

Bridgman, Aengus & CRDCN. "Understanding Social Distrust in Quebec." *CRDCN research-policy snapshots*. January 2023
<http://hdl.handle.net/11375/28243>

What the researcher(s) did

The researchers use the Canadian General Social Survey (2003, 2008, 2013) linked with precise neighbourhood-level linguistic measures from the Canadian censuses (2001, 2006, 2011) to evaluate trends in social trust in Quebec as they compare with the rest of Canada and across generations, and examine the role of bilingualism and linguistic homogeneity.

What the researcher(s) found

Francophone Canadians residing in Quebec are identified as a particularly low-trusting group, (expressing 30% of generalized trust, compared to 60% across Canada), but generalized trust is declining among younger Canadians, while it remains relatively stable among young Quebecers. The researchers also find that individual linguistic ability and linguistic heterogeneity in neighbourhoods are important correlates of trust and that among francophone populations, social distrust is found most in unilingual homogenous communities.

RDC Datasets used

Canadian General Social Survey (2003, 2008 and 2013) and the Canadian Census (2001, 2006, 2011)

Policy areas this research can inform

- Languages
- Population and demography
- Society and community

Policy implications of this research

This research provides insight into the influence of linguistic cleavages on generalized trust in Canada and Quebec and contributes to discussions about developing mutual trust in multilingual societies. It challenges the widely held idea that diversity erodes generalized trust by demonstrating that increasing linguistic homogeneity at the neighbourhood level is associated with lower overall levels of trust among francophones. Plus, findings on the correlation of contextual linguistic diversity and bilingualism with trust and generational changes in generalized trust can inform trust-generating programs and policies that seek to bridge gaps between groups and cultivate a more cohesive and trusting country.

Read the full article

Bridgman, A., Nadeau, R., & Stolle, D. (2022). A Distinct Society? Understanding Social Distrust in Quebec. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 55(1), 107-127. doi:10.1017/S0008423921000780

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