



This is Maggie.

All trademarks appearing are registered trademarks of FMR Corp.



Confused over Québécois? You're not alone, poll shows

Dec. 9, 2006. 01:00 AM

SEAN GORDON

QUEBEC BUREAU CHIEF

Star Columnists

[Graham Fraser](#)

[Richard Gwyn](#)

[Chantal Hebert](#)

[James Travers](#)

[Ian Urquhart](#)

[Thomas Walkom](#)

OTTAWA—The definition and understanding of the term "Québécois" shifts according to whether you live in Quebec or the rest of Canada, according to an EKOS poll.

Canadians outside Quebec believe the term refers to old-stock francophones, whereas residents of the province consider it an all-encompassing definition for all who live there.

The poll, conducted by EKOS Research Associates for the *Star* and *La Presse*, found 62 per cent of those surveyed in Quebec believe it applies to all who live in the province, while 24 per cent say it refers to "any francophone living in Quebec."

In the rest of Canada, 37 per cent believe the term "Québécois" refers to anyone living in Quebec, and an identical percentage believe it refers to any francophone living in Quebec.

A smaller percentage of respondents — 9 per cent in Quebec and 15 per cent in the rest of Canada — believe the definition refers only to francophones whose ancestors came directly from France.

On Nov. 27, the Commons overwhelming passed a motion formally recognizing "les Québécois" as a nation within a united Canada. But the motion caused some confusion as to the exact definition of Québécois.

"We have a term that's been introduced into the national debate that is at best confusing and at worst mischievous and corrosive ... not only do we not agree on what it means, we don't agree on whether more power for Quebec is a good or bad idea," said Frank Graves, president of EKOS.

Graves' research agrees with theories advanced by some Quebec observers and pundits, to the effect that English Canada's conception of the Québécois reality fits with what most denizens of the province consider an outdated view: a predominantly French-speaking Catholic of European extraction.

He said the results are "mildly surprising" in that Quebecers' conception of themselves appears to have evolved over the past decade, since the province considered itself a "distinct society."

"Québécois now equals a civic identity of all Quebecers living in the province. It's not seen as an ethno-cultural concept," Graves said.

Beyond the etymological debate, English Canadians are more likely to believe the federal government's recognition of "les Québécois" as a nation will result in increased powers for Quebec — an outcome that is broadly viewed as a bad thing.

By contrast, respondents in Quebec are more skeptical that last month's Commons motion will affect the balance of federal-provincial power, although increased powers for Quebec are seen as a positive development within the province.

Tag and Save

[Tag and save](#) this article to your Del.icio.us favourites.

[What is Del.icio.us?](#)

POWERED BY  **del.icio.us**

The poll also suggests the whole issue of Quebec's national status may be a political liability for the Conservatives.

Given the attention in Quebec to top-of-mind issues like the environment and the conflict in Afghanistan, the nation resolution hasn't allowed the Tories to make any headway in the province.

Graves said the data buttress the opinion the voting public in Quebec largely expects Conservatives — the party of Meech Lake — to recognize Quebecers as a "nation," although it is more likely to be impressed by Liberals making a similar gesture, given the party's historical reticence to do so.

If anything, Graves said, the "nation" resolution risks provoking a backlash in English Canada while doing little to move the political needle in Quebec.

Graves also said the days of politicians using language that means one thing in Quebec and something else in the rest of Canada — a tactic popularized by the late Quebec premier Robert Bourassa — are likely gone.

The survey polled 1,022 people Dec. 5-6. Results are considered accurate within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.



[Get great home delivery subscription deals here!](#)

[FAQs](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Webmaster](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [My Subscription](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [Webmaking Blog](#)

[Home](#) | [GTA](#) | [Business](#) | [Waymoresports](#) | [A&E](#) | [Life](#)

Legal Notice: Copyright Toronto Star Newspapers Limited. All rights reserved. Distribution, transmission or republication of any material from www.thestar.com is strictly prohibited without the prior written permission of Toronto Star Newspapers Limited. For information please contact us using our [webmaster form](#). www.thestar.com online since 1996.

