

Losing Elections for Standing for your Values? The Electoral Consequences of a Court Ruling on the Niqab Ban in Canada

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Abstract

Integration-based concerns have heavily influenced politics and political contests across the developed world in recent years. However, the 2015 Canadian Federal Election saw these issues only emerge with an unexpected and important court ruling on the wearing of the niqab during citizenship ceremonies. We theorize and empirically test the process by which such an exogenous event is endogenized through a campaign and ultimately can influence the outcome of the election. We show that the exogenous event and responses by parties and the media, when interacted with crystallized political predispositions, resulted in a gradual, but sizable decline in support for the leading New Democratic Party (NDP). We estimate the effect of the ruling on vote intention using a difference-in-differences strategy. A complementary extension employing text-as-data approaches clarifies the diffusion mechanism and allows us to show that steadily increasing media attention primed these issues and negatively associated them with the NDP.

The dynamics of electoral contests are notoriously difficult to unpack. Voters are bombarded by messaging from political parties, media and their social network for an extended period of time. Given the density of this informational environment, disentangling the effect of any single communication, issue, or event from the others is challenging. How are researchers to know if a particular campaign event was decisive or even consequential for an electoral outcome? Two promising areas of research can shed light on this question: field experiments and natural experiments. In this paper, we focus on the latter, where we join a burgeoning scholarship which has exploited exogenous campaign events to show when and how a particular event influences voters.

We examine the connection between events that occur during campaign periods and electoral outcomes and theorize when, why, and how events matter. We argue that, with few exceptions, events alone do not change minds but rather it is the way that the media and political actors treat events that can influence vote decisions. It is this “black box” of exogenous campaign events that is the subject of this article.

To illustrate our argument, we examine the case of the 2015 Canadian Federal Election. While integration-based concerns have heavily influenced politics and political contests across the developed world in recent years, the 2015 election saw these issues only emerge when an unexpected and important court ruling placed them centrally in the campaign. One month before the election, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled against the government and affirmed the right of a would-be citizen to take an Oath of Citizenship with her face veiled by a niqab.

We show that the exogenous niqab ruling and subsequent choices made by parties and those covering the campaign, when interacted with political predispositions, resulted in a gradual but sizable decline in support for the leading New Democratic Party (NDP). We estimate between a 0.4 and 0.6 percentage point daily drop in the NDP’s support during the second half of the campaign in Quebec, a predominantly French-speaking province with a history of secularism and voters who hold crystallized opinions on the issue. We estimate the effect of the court ruling using a difference-in-differences strategy using the Canadian Election Study. A complimentary extension using media coverage

clarifies the diffusion mechanism and allows us to show that steadily increasing media attention, alongside strong and negative associations with the NDP, primed the niqab issue.

Our paper provides one main and two supplementary contributions. First, we theorize how exogenous campaign events come to inform vote decisions through a media mechanism, especially in cases where the acquisition of information by voters is expected to be gradual. Second, it applies and tests the theory using a new type of campaign event: a court ruling. Third, it contributes to the literature on the electoral relevance of immigration and integration-based concerns.

Studying the effects of campaigns and campaign events

There is a long-standing debate about whether campaigns matter for the outcome of elections (Holbrook 1996). Some argue that campaigns have minimal effects; one school holds that elections are generally predictable with parsimonious high accuracy forecasting models precluding a significant role for the campaign, while another conceives of campaigns as competitions between actors with relatively similar resources where the efforts of each party cancel each other out (see the discussion in Bartels 2006). A more campaign-sympathetic account is that the campaign brings the *fundamentals* of the election to the voters (Erikson and Wlezien 2012) through processes such as learning, priming, and persuasion (Hillygus 2010). The fundamentals are a set of economic and political circumstances known long before the election and include internal (partisan and issue predispositions) and external dimensions (the state of the economy or the popularity of the incumbent).

One way in which fundamentals are brought to voters is through campaign events (Johnston and Brady 2006; Shaw 1999). In both the United States and Canada, debates are the prototypical campaign events and Hillygus and Jackman (2003) show that they can be influential (see also Blais and Boyer 1996; Gidengil and Everitt 2000; Blais et al. 2003). But campaign events can also include a broader range of activities. Erikson and Wlezien (2012) focus on regularized processes and conceive of campaign events as political “shocks”, but emphasize those such as highly visible conventions and debates,

campaign visits, speeches, advertising campaigns, and partisan mobilization efforts. Shaw (1999) privileges the informational role of campaigns and sees a campaign event as any occurrence that conveys distinct political information about candidates to the electorate. Our take is more aligned with Shaw's emphasis on the mechanism by which campaign events matter: they provide additional information to voters.

Shaw's broad typology of major campaign events includes: a) messages (prospective, retrospective, valence, character/attack); b) party activities (convention, debates, and party unity); c) mistakes (scandals and blunders); and d) outside occurrences (national or international events). We place our examination of a court case within this fourth type of campaign event—an outside occurrence—which includes national or international non-campaign events that draw media attention. A tradition already exists in political science that looks at events beyond the control of politicians and evaluates their electoral consequences. The events that have been most heavily examined are high-impact ones such as major terrorist attacks and natural disasters. Through exploiting surveys in the field at the time of these events, scholars have evaluated their total and immediate effect (see for example Legewie 2013; Balcells and Torrats-Espinosa 2018; Eady and Breton 2019). However, this work has paid less attention to the diffusion mechanism by which voters become aware of the events and are primed to place the issues centrally in their electoral evaluations. Here, we are interested in *priming effects*, defined by Iyengar and Kinder (2010) as the power of the media to make certain issues more salient to the voters and to increase the issues' potential to influence vote decisions.

Often, the scale of the event is so large that the diffusion and priming are assumed, but even in those cases, the framing of the event is not self-evident, and the evolution of the effects over time receives limited attention. We draw upon several studies below to show the limits of existing strategies covering terrorist attacks and natural disasters.

Balcells and Torrats-Espinosa (2018) examine terrorist attacks in Spain and demonstrate that attacks increase electoral participation but do not affect incumbent party vote. However, they only look at the immediate effect of the events and restrict their analysis on the role of the media to only proving that the coverage of the events was immediate

and massive. With a similar research design, Legewie (2013) shows that two terrorist attacks (one in Bali in 2002 and the other in Madrid in 2004) influence citizen's short-term perception of immigrants; however, the effect is moderated by respondents' context (level of unemployment, size of the immigration population in their region, and personal contact with immigrants). The role of the media is not directly addressed and instead the author assumes immediate diffusion and impact of the information. Bali (2007) also analyzes the electoral effect of the Madrid bombing terrorist attack that took place just before Spain's 2004 national elections. She finds that the attack mobilized citizens who were less likely to participate in politics alongside centrist and leftist voters. She conceives of the terrorist attack as an information shock that primed security issues and increased their salience, which led voters to focus their attention on the right-wing government's unpopular foreign policy and handling of the attack. Although she discusses the potential mechanism of influence, it is not tested empirically.

Similar implicit reliance on media diffusion exists in studies focusing on natural disasters. For example, Healy and Malhotra (2009) argue that voters reward the incumbent for delivering disaster relief spending, but not for investing in disaster preparedness spending. They rely heavily upon a diffusion mechanism and specifically media priming for their argument but do not integrate media coverage data into their analysis. How voters come to be aware of the extent of the damage, as well as preparedness and relief spending (what the authors describe as one of the processes driving their behavior), is not integrated into the modelling strategy. Bechtel and Hainmueller (2011) similarly demonstrate that the incumbent's massive policy response to a major natural disaster increased the party vote share in the German 2002 Federal Election and the reward carried over to the subsequent election, albeit in a reduced form. Their argument and mechanism imply that all voters have direct access to information about relief spending (e.g. through their network or personal experience), but this is not empirically demonstrated and the role of the media is mentioned only in passing.

The literature reviewed above has reasons to assume that the entire subject population is made immediately aware of the event, but this is not the case for all exogenous

events and, even for major ones, immediate and complete diffusion is only part of the story. Both the evolution of the effect and framing are consequential to understanding how voters will react (Chong and Druckman 2007). Theorizing how, why, and under what conditions these events matter requires scholars to show how an event that occurs independently of the campaigns becomes prominent and part of the voters' electoral calculations. Understanding how exactly the media intervenes in a dynamic process that also includes the voters with their political predispositions, the exogenous event, and the reactions of the candidates/political parties is critical. Hillygus and Jackman (2003) show that the media provides a filter through which campaign events can influence voter behavior and further explore the potential mechanisms of this influence. Specifically, they show that through the processes of learning (increasing the voter's knowledge of the candidates and issues) and priming (making a topic salient for voters and central to their voting decisions), the media produces persuasion effects, which could mean a change of vote choice (Hillygus 2010). This work is aligned with that of many others who have persuasively shown that most campaign information reaches voters through mass media and that voter preferences shift in reaction to their media consumption during a campaign (Druckman 2004; Brady and Johnston 2006; Holbrook 1996; Bartels 1993).

Following the literature, we posit that the exogenous event is endogenized through a media mechanism: through a spike in coverage, the media increases the salience of a topic and primes it for the voters. However, this takes place in a setting in which the voters' preferences and the parties' positions must also be factored in. In the next section, we argue that an issue related to religious symbols and integration will be important for voters and priming such issues is likely to be successful. An attention to the mechanisms of priming will continue to build the groundwork for our theorizing about the endogenization of exogenous campaign events.

Electoral relevance of religious symbols

The niqab court decision is not only an exogenous campaign event, but also an event that touches upon concerns surrounding religious symbols and integration. Religion and integration concerns have been shown to be influential in electoral settings (Freeman et

al. 2013), largely in relation to a specific target group—Muslims in mature democracies. For example, Obama’s race and his imagined Muslim faith were influential in the 2008 American presidential election (Kam and Kinder 2012). An increasing racial and ethnic polarization within the parties and a focus on campaign issues that tap into Americans’ racial, ethnic, and social identities and attitudes were also consequential in the 2016 presidential elections (Sides et al. 2017). Lajevardi and Abrajano (2018) argue that the anti-Muslim sentiment is a strong and significant predictor of supporting Trump, even when controlling for other relevant variables (see also Tesler (2018)). These concerns are not found only in the United States, with Morgan (2017) tracing the emergence of similar issues in France and Cutts et al. (2011) in the United Kingdom.

While religion and integration clearly matter, the precise mechanisms by which these issues impact vote choice are less clear. Kam and Kinder (2012) argue that ethnocentrism, understood as a deep-seated psychological predisposition that partitions the world into in-groups and out-groups, plays a significant and substantial role. For Mendelberg (2001), implicit racial appeals, but not explicit ones, prime racial resentment in opinion formation. This view is, however, contested by Huber and Lapinski (2006), who, in an experimental setting, find that implicit appeals are no more effective than explicit ones in priming racial resentment in opinion formation. Another perspective is offered by Tesler (2013), who finds that ‘old-fashioned racism’ returned as a prominent political force under Obama.

The role and impact of information can help us make sense of these diverse mechanisms with the aid of the distinction made between priming and opinion change. For Tesler (2015), crystallized attitudes (linked to party identification, racial prejudice, ethnic/religious identity, and basic values) are primed by new information, while less crystallized preferences (i.e. mass opinion about public policy) could potentially be subject to opinion change. An opinion change occurred recently in the United States with Trump’s travel ban from select Muslim-majority countries; as the public’s opinion was not well formed, the media coverage of the topic led to opinion change among Americans (Collingwood et al. 2018). Given this distinction, it makes sense for political elites to project their opinion on voters, but the success of such endeavor depends on how crystallized the opin-

ion on the topic is. A key element of crystallization in the United States is partisanship, whereas in the Canadian context, there is strong evidence that of much weaker party cues and more flexible partisanship (Clarke and Stewart 1987; Bélanger and Stephenson 2011). Thus, other identities and attitudes are likely to be more important.

Opposition to the Muslim headscarf in advanced democracies has crystallized in recent years. Helbling (2014, 243) shows that although attitudes towards Muslims are “positive overall” in Western Europe, large majorities oppose the wearing of the Muslim headscarf. To explain this difference, he focuses on state-level characteristics alongside individual-level xenophobic attitudes, liberal values, and religiosity. He finds that: 1) while religious people are more likely to have negative attitudes towards Muslims, they are generally more sympathetic to the rules that allow them to practice their religion; and 2) liberal people are tolerant of Muslims, but are less supportive of legislation to protect religious practices, as they associate them with illiberal values they associate with Islam.

Canada has received commendations for welcoming and accommodating immigrants and has a comparatively successful history of religious minority and immigrant integration (Wright and Bloemraad 2012). However, Canadian political and media discourses have increasingly focused on Muslim women and, in particular, veiling in recent years (Feder 2018). Veiling has proven proven to be the loci of larger national conversations about multi- and inter-culturalism, immigration, and integration in Canada (Kassam and Mustafa 2017).

Within Canada, residents of the province of Quebec hold the strongest and most crystallized opinions on integration and religion. Quebecers, particularly the majority French-speaking population, have a history of secularism and are the least religious Canadians. This secularism and lack of religiosity have been directly tied to low levels of support for religious accommodation. Dufresne et al. (2018) find that when asked about whether more should be done to accommodate religious minorities in Canada, only 13% of Quebecers agree whereas 38% of other Canadians do. The unique relationship of Quebecers to organized religion also has led progressive Quebecers to be more likely to express strong support for restrictions on minority religious symbols in the public sphere.

Turgeon et al. (2019) find that an individual index of liberal values composed of opinions on access to abortion, support for gender-equality, support for gay marriage, support for assisted suicide, and the decriminalization of prostitution is strongly correlated with attitudes towards public displays of religion. In Quebec, being liberal on these other positions is associated with opposition towards public displays of religion, whereas in the rest of Canada the opposite is true. The similarity of position towards public displays of religion for those on both the left and right of the political spectrum drives the overall higher levels of opposition in Quebec. Others have similarly found that feminist attitudes are correlated with opposition to religious symbols in Quebec (O’Neill et al. 2015). Beyond individual opinion, there has been a strong push for a secularism law by all major political parties in Quebec over the past two decades. Recently the Coalition Avenir Québec have proposed C-21 which bans public employees in positions of authority from wearing clothing or items deemed religious symbols. There has been no such law tabled anywhere in the rest of Canada. When compared to the rest of Canada, Quebec is thus fertile ground for studying the electoral impact of religious symbols and integration related issues. Moreover, given the crystallized public opinion on the niqab across Canada, and the particularly negative attitudes in Quebec, we expect that the media coverage of this particular campaign event will prime the issue among Quebec voters.

The black box of exogenous campaign events

Terrorist attacks and natural disasters generally elicit immediate and massive media coverage (Balcells and Torrats-Espinosa 2018), which makes the evaluation of their immediate effects plausible. Other exogenous events of smaller magnitude (e.g. a court ruling, a natural disaster of a limited proportion) require more effort in specifying the way in which they come to influence the voters’ political attitudes and behavior; as has already been discussed in the literature (Wlezien and Soroka 2018), the role of the media is essential, especially when the effect is expected to take time to occur. Informed by the literature reviewed above, we theorize about the ways in which campaign events come to inform vote decisions, with key steps (and their application to the 2015 Canadian case) shown in Figure 1.

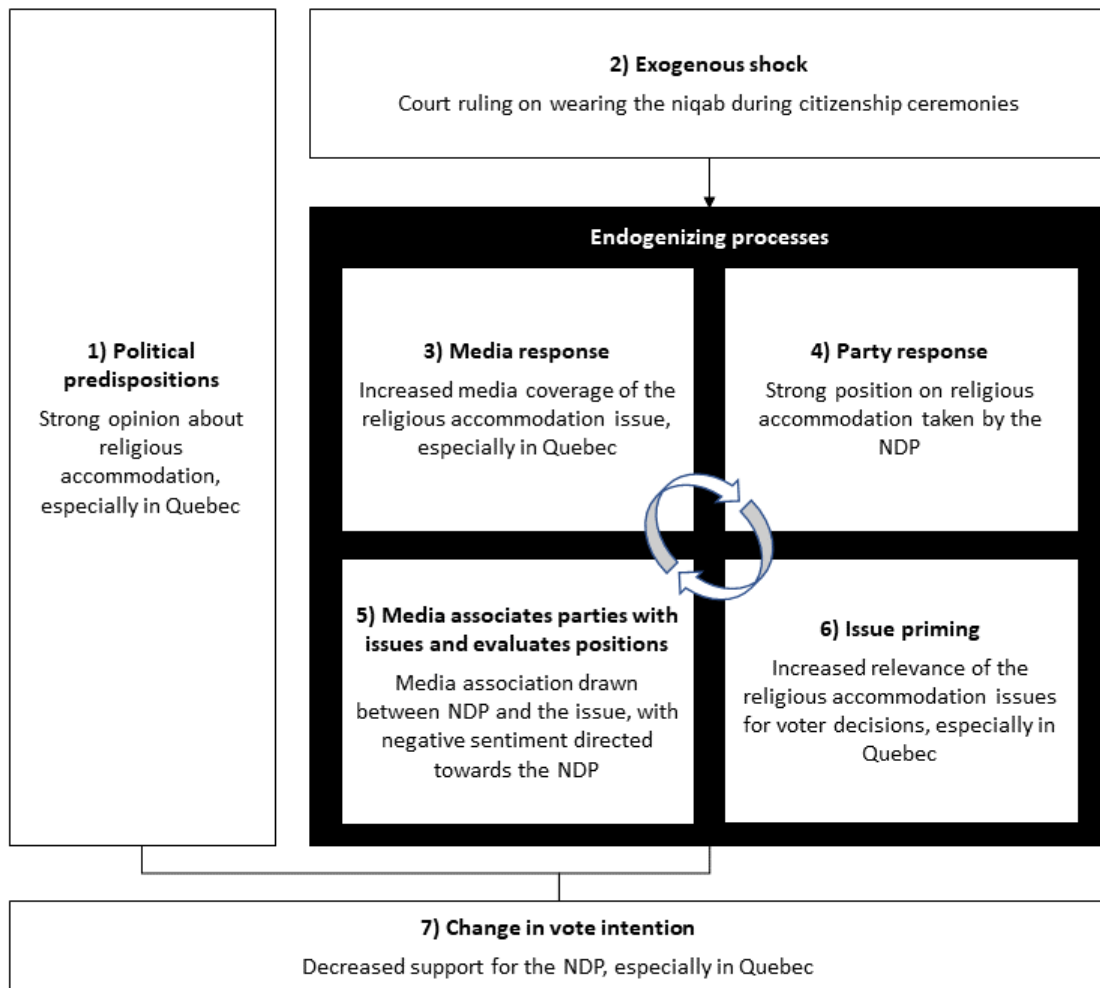


Figure 1: Understanding the electoral consequences of exogenous campaign events

The first step is represented by the voters' political predispositions—conceived as part of the *fundamentals* (Erikson and Wlezien 2012)—they could include partisanship or crystallized political attitudes. The exogenous event is the second step and the literature often models the direct link between it and the electoral outcome of interest. However, it is the process of endogenization of the exogenous event (steps 3-6) that needs thicker theoretical thinking. We posit that endogenization happens through the interplay of four processes. First, the media coverage of the event increases its salience and brings the issue to the voters. Second and similarly, the positions and actions of the political actors contribute to more coverage, salience, and to issue priming. Third, the media keeps the topic on the public agenda by connecting the overall fate of the race with the specific issue—reflecting to some extent shifts of opinion in the population (Wlezien and Soroka 2018). Fourth, the issue becomes primed—not only do voters learn about the event as it

is publicized and politicized by the media and political actors, but the issue may become central to their decisions. There is a feedback loop between these four elements; as the issue becomes primed and central to voters' evaluations, the media and parties must continue to engage. In the end, the interaction between political predispositions and the event endogenization process influences vote intention. It must be said that the entire dynamic hinges on the character of the issue related to the event and the extent to which the issue is crystallized (Tesler 2015). Voters may respond by adopting party positions but they may alternatively adjust their preferences based on previous attitudes; effort must therefore be put into understanding the strength or crystallization of existing attitudes to anticipate how such a process will play out. Lenz (2009) makes this distinction between priming, on the one hand, and learning and opinion change, on the other. In the next section, after describing the context of the 2015 Canadian Federal Election, we will show how the theory plays out in this setting and derive our expectations to be tested.

The context of the 2015 Canadian Federal Election

Against the background of Quebec distinctiveness within Canada, the 2015 Federal Election provides a unique opportunity to study the effect of a religious symbols and integration shock during the campaign. The campaign was a highly competitive one, with each of the three major political parties, the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC), the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC), and the NDP leading in the polls at some point during the last month of the campaign. The CPC, led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, had held power since 2006 but was weighed down by low approval rating and strong negative partisanship. Meanwhile, the NDP had achieved its best performance ever in the previous 2011 election and was, at least initially, understood to be the front-runner of the campaign; they also held a particularly strong lead in Quebec. The LPC, for their part, has historically been the best-performing federal party and their 2011 performance was far below expectations with them dropping to third place for the first time since Canadian Confederation in 1867. The election began in a fairly straightforward way, with parties jockeying for ownership over the issue that was widely considered to be the most important: the economy.

By September 14th, the three parties were polling roughly equally on the national level with around 30% of decided voters each, and the NDP continued to enjoy historical highs in the province of Quebec. Then, on September 15th, 2015, the Federal Court of Appeal released a court ruling that affirmed the right for women to wear the niqab during an oath of citizenship ceremony. The day after, the Prime Minister from the CPC stated that the government would appeal the decision. Over the following week, Thomas Mulcair, the leader of the NDP, clarified the party's position as against any sort of ban of the niqab both in public and during the citizenship ceremony. On September 24th, the results of a government poll conducted the previous March were released which showed that 93% of the Quebec population indicated support for a ban.¹

On the same day, the first French language debate took place, where the leader of the NDP was attacked for his position by the leaders of the other parties. Two weeks later, the Federal Court of Appeal refused to suspend the ruling, and Ishaq took her citizenship oath wearing a niqab. Two weeks after that, Ishaq voted in a federal election which handed the NDP a major defeat with the LPC winning a majority government. Many observers noted that the niqab ruling coincided with a change in fortunes for the NDP. For the evolution of the NDP vote intention across the campaign, both in Canada and in Quebec, see Appendix A.

Much of the post-election analysis has focused on the NDP's poor performance in Quebec, where they lost the majority of their seats. There are several reasons for this focus. First, the NDP made an electoral breakthrough in Quebec in 2011, picking up an additional 45 seats in the province in what has been called the "orange wave" (Fournier et al. 2013). This was the first time the NDP had achieved significant electoral success in the province and thus the party did not have a lengthy relationship with their Quebec-based voters. This unusual circumstance meant that Quebec, which has historically supported the LPC (Johnston 2017), was a major site of political contestation during the election. All other major parties, along with the Bloc Québécois (the BQ is a regional Quebec-based party), felt that they could make gains in the province at the expense of the NDP.

¹See Appendix O for CES results which show 78% of Quebecers held this opinion.

Second, as described above, Quebecers have a strong and crystallized opinion on this issue—they strongly opposed the NDP position on this topic.

But was the introduction of the niqab issue into the campaign truly exogenous? In March 2015, there had been a debate in the House of Commons on wearing a face-covering during the citizenship oath, and the ruling Conservative Party had some polling which indicated that Canadians generally agreed with their position and not that of the other major parties. Thus, Canadians were already aware of the issue, many held clear positions towards issues of religious accommodation and the Conservative Party saw the niqab as a key issue that could help them mobilize support. Given this threat to exogeneity, further work is needed to demonstrate the plausibility of the exogeneity of the court case.

There are three primary pieces of evidence for this exogeneity. First, the niqab was not initially considered an important issue during the 2015 campaign. The first leadership debate took place on August 6th and did not include a single mention of the niqab. Each election, The National Post produces detailed summaries of major party platforms. They did so on the first day of the campaign, and did not mention the niqab nor any party's policy on wearing it during citizenship ceremonies. Moreover, the sense among the media and pollsters and those commenting on the election was that there was only one issue on the mind of voters: the economy.² Second, commentators from a broad range of political backgrounds have since noted how the niqab issue was unexpected, coincidental, and sudden in the campaign. A former director of CPC campaigns, Tom Flanagan, stated the niqab was an external factor and was “suddenly propelled to the fore by an unexpected decision from the bench of the federal court” (Flanagan 2015). Zunera Ishaq's legal advisor in her court challenge later stated “by sheer coincidence... the niqab ban was set down by the court case in the middle of the campaign” (Macklin 2017). These statements, and many others by a broad range of commentators, point towards the court ruling being the main factor in the rise of prominence of the niqab

²See <http://angusreid.org/federal-election-2015-august26/> and <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-election-2015-grenier-podcast-aug26-1.3204891> (Retrieved: 11/05/2019).

debate. Third, print media attention directed towards the niqab was virtually absent in the pre-court ruling period. Figure 2 presents a 7-day rolling average of media attention directed towards the economy and the niqab in Quebec and in the rest of Canada from one month before the campaign to election day.³

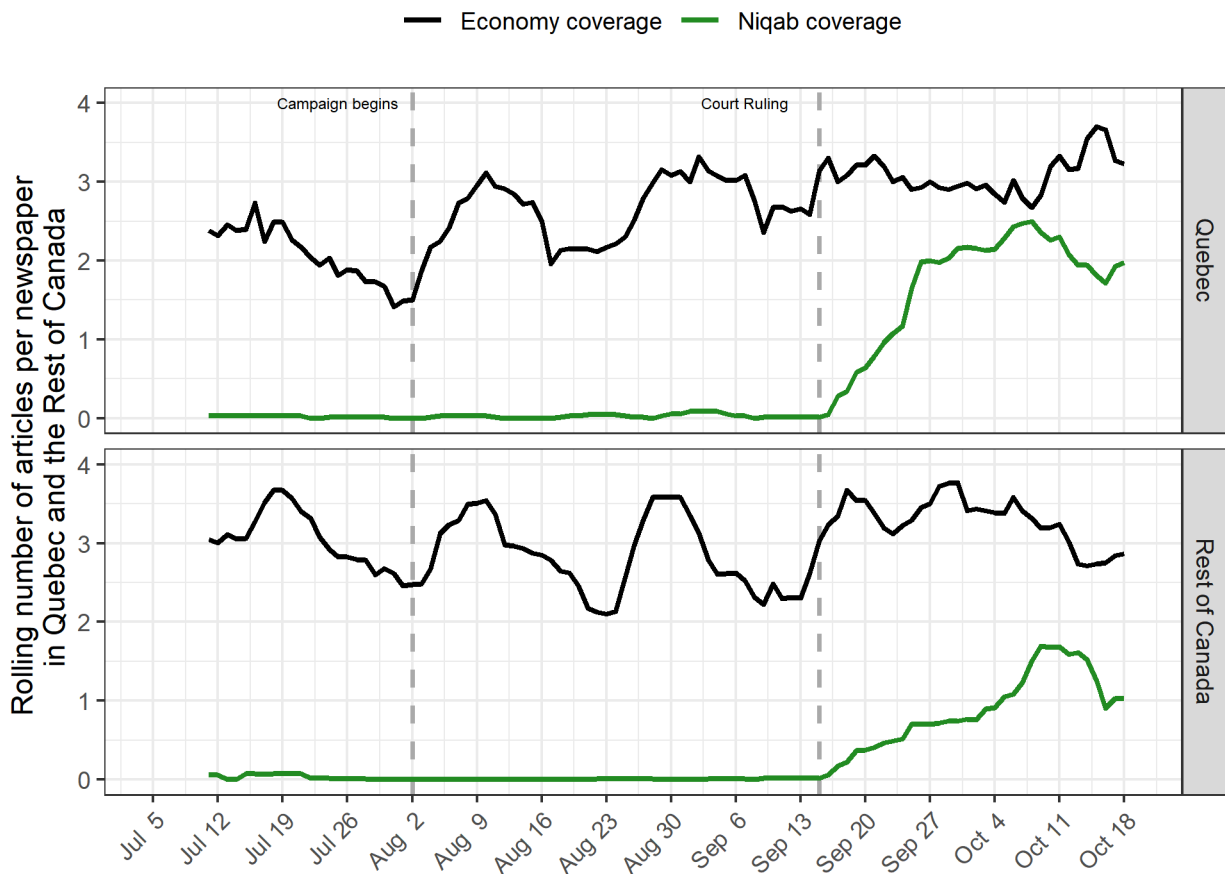


Figure 2: Media coverage in Quebec and the rest of Canada during the 2015 campaign (7-day rolling average)

The sharp discontinuity in media coverage after the September 15th date provides compelling evidence that the court ruling was in fact an outside shock to the campaign. In the week prior to the court ruling, niqab coverage was negligible, and national polls placed the three major political parties roughly at parity with the NDP holding a slight

³A full list of sources and descriptive statistics on the media coverage is available in Appendix B. We also provide additional evidence in the form of a Google Trend plot which shows negligible interest in the niqab in Quebec in the pre-court ruling period (see Appendix E).

lead in Quebec. Four weeks later, media discussion of the niqab issue was at an all-time high, and NDP support had dropped across Canada but particularly in Quebec. Given the exogenous event during the 2015 Canadian federal election, the hypothesized role of campaign effects, and the strong opposition and high-salience of the niqab issue in Quebec, we expect evidence of each of the processes found in Figure 1.

We have already demonstrated that strong political predispositions (1) and an exogenous shock (2) were present. The media coverage shown in Figure 2 indicates a strong media response to the issue (3) (for a more formal statistical treatment see Appendix C). The party response (4) occurred with several NDP comments between September 15th and 23rd as described above and the issue appearing in numerous leader debates where the NDP leader was attacked on this issue. As shown in detail further below, the media strongly associated the topic with the NDP (5). Coupled with voter predispositions (1), (2-6) lead to issue priming and increased relevance of the religious integration issues for voters, especially in Quebec. The balance of this paper provides empirical evidence for these processes at work. Specifically, we highlight the linkage between the exogenous shock and change in vote intention (2, 7), show that there was significant and sustained media response linked to both the exogenous shock and vote intention (3) and that the media strongly associated the issue with the NDP (5). Finally, we provide evidence for the priming mechanism (6) by showing that those voters who were in favour of a niqab ban voted against the NDP—a sign of a primed electorate. More formally, we hypothesize that:

H1: The court ruling on the niqab issue triggered a decrease in vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian Federal Election, particularly in Quebec.

H2: The court ruling was endogenized by the media response through massive coverage, the creation of strong associations between the issue and the NDP, and the overall priming of the niqab topic, especially in Quebec.

Research design and results

To test our hypotheses, we rely on two data sets. First, we use the 2015 Canadian Election Study (CES) data (Fournier et al. 2015). We employ the pre-election web sample

alongside several questions drawn from the re-sample in the post-election survey.⁴ Second, we leverage an original dataset of media coverage of the niqab issue during the campaign period. We collected French- and English-language print media from July 1, 2015 to October 31, 2015 that mentions either the niqab or the economy.⁵ We use frequencies of English- and French-language media and full text of French-language media.

We employ a difference-in-differences (DID) design with cross-sectional data (Angrist and Pischke 2009) to measure the impact of the court ruling. Although DID can be employed with both panel and cross-sectional data, the latter strategy is less frequently used; this is mainly due to concerns about the changing composition of the groups from one time period to another (Stuart et al. 2014). The standard way to evaluate this threat is through balance tests on variables that are entirely unaffected by the treatment (Legewie 2013; Balcells and Torrats-Espinoso 2018; Eady and Breton 2019). We evaluate pre- and post-treatment balance on a range of demographic variables alongside self-reported past voting behavior and find no meaningful imbalance (see Appendix F for this test and

⁴More information about the sample sizes, response rates, and the sampling procedures of the poll is available at <https://ces-eeec.arts.ubc.ca/english-section/surveys/> (Retrieved: 11/05/2019). We use only high quality CES responses as per Breton et al. (2017), although the findings hold to the full dataset. We do not employ weights in the main models, however, their inclusion also does not alter the results. Additionally, we test our main models on another academic survey run during the election—the Local Parliament Project (Loewen et al. 2018). See Appendix S for these results which mirror those of the CES.

⁵We do not include televised or social media. Druckman (2005) finds that television and print media, while they differ in the quantity of coverage, generally do not differ in terms of content. We further examine Google Trends in Quebec after the court ruling and show a similar discontinuity (see Appendix E).

other relevant balance tests).⁶

We start by estimating the differential effect of the niqab ruling on Quebec and rest of Canada. To do so we make a parallel trends assumption that both Quebec and the rest of Canada would have continued on the same trend in the absence of the court ruling (we run a pre-period linear trend and a placebo test to provide evidence for the parallel trend assumption in Appendix P and find no pre-trend). In this context, as both Quebec and the other Canadian provinces were exposed to the niqab ruling, these models estimate the heterogeneous effects of the event; thus, Quebec is considered the treated group and those residing in other provinces are the control group.

For all models, the outcome variable is an indicator of whether the respondent intends to vote for the NDP (1) or is either undecided or intends to vote for any other party (0). Despite having a binary dependent variable, we rely on Linear Probability Models for our main DID estimations—an option that is discussed and endorsed by Lechner (2011).⁷ We focus on the interaction of two explanatory variables: the niqab court ruling and residence in Quebec. Specifically, the niqab court ruling variable is a dummy variable which scores 0 up to and including September 15 and 1 starting the day after the decision (September 16th).⁸ The Quebec variable is an indicator and registers whether a respondent is a resident of Quebec (1) or not (0). We run specifications both with and

⁶For a strategy similar to our own, see Montalvo (2012). An alternative estimation strategy would be to focus more on the language of a natural experiment and look at the total impact of the court ruling by regressing vote intention on a pre- and post-treatment dummy; further, we could look at heterogeneous treatment effects by distinguishing between Quebec and the rest of Canada. This alternative strategy is employed in Legewie (2013) and Balcells and Torrats-Espinosa (2018). See Appendix R for results which mirror the ones shown in the paper.

⁷Despite the limitations of using logistic regression in a DID setting, we also show these estimations in Appendix D—the results do not change.

⁸Results remain the same if those interviewed on September 15th are considered treated—even though no stories on the niqab were published that day in our sample.

without standard controls (an approach similar to Balcells and Torrats-Espinoso 2018) with the results reliably similar. We use a vector of controls previously employed in the analysis of campaign effects and studies on Canadian elections (Gidengil 2013): age (continuous variable), gender proxy (female = 1), respondent’s mother tongue (French = 1), employment status based on three non-mutually exclusive binary variables (full-time workers, students, and retired), formal education (categorical variable with four levels of educational achievement: high-school diploma, bachelor degree, and post-bachelor degree, with those without high-school education serving as the reference category), and region (categorical variable with five levels: Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, Prairies, and Atlantic Canada, with the latter as the reference category). As partisanship in Canada is generally much more flexible than in the United States (Clarke and Stewart 1987), we instead include self-reported vote for NDP in the 2011 Canadian Federal Election as a control.⁹ Descriptive statistics for all employed variables can be found in Appendix H.

Table 1 shows the results for the full specified DID-model with controls. Model 1 is captured in the Equation 1, with β_3 indicating the key interaction term of interest where Quebec is an indicator variable for whether the individual is in Quebec and Ruling refers to whether the response was measured before or after the ruling and X indicating the vector of covariates described above. In all of our equations, i indexes the individual and t indexes time.

$$\begin{aligned}
 NDP_Vote_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 Quebec_i + \beta_2 Ruling_t + \\
 & \beta_3 (Quebec_i \times Ruling_t) + X'_{it} \omega + \varepsilon_{it}
 \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

Model 1 shows that the exogenous event was significant and negative for the NDP in Quebec: the ruling indicates an approximate 11-point drop in the post-treatment

⁹As shown in Appendices G and I, there is a high instability in partisan affiliation with the NDP over the sample but not in self-reported vote.

period.¹⁰ This first model provides evidence for H1 but assumes that a sharp discontinuity occurs at the moment of the court case.¹¹

However, as per the theorizing above, we do not anticipate a sharp discontinuity; few Canadians are made immediately aware of technical court rulings. Unlike a terrorist attack or a major natural disaster, coverage of such an event is expected to develop over the subsequent weeks (as shown above in Figure 2) and voters are expected to incrementally respond to the new information that they are receiving. This suggests that the effect of the niqab ruling would not be sudden, but rather the result of accumulation over time. To test this, Model 2 introduces a variable that accounts for a post-September 15th linear trend (**Trend**). The variable scores 0 up to and including September 15th and afterwards it counts the number of days since (the first stories appeared on September 16th). This allows us to test a Quebec-specific trend. The model changes to the following, with the addition of two γ terms which indicate the coefficients of interest for an overall

¹⁰An alternative way to approximate this is to compare vote intention in the pre-election sample with reported vote in the post-election survey where the same respondents were re-interviewed. Comparing those in Quebec who initially replied to the pre-survey before September 15th to those who replied after September 15th indicates a similar 14.1 percentage point difference in reported vote for the NDP. For those who were interviewed before September 15th, 39.2% indicated that they intended to vote for NDP whereas only 25.1% then later reported that they did. In the rest of Canada, this same comparison shows a difference of only 4.5 percentage points.

¹¹As we use observational data, unobserved confounders are a concern. We evaluate how sensitive to unobserved confounders our DID results are using the R `konfound` package (Rosenberg et al. 2019). For Model 1, we find that an omitted variable would need to be correlated at 28% with both the outcome and the interaction term, while controlling for other covariates. Moreover, 71% of the estimate would have to be due to bias to invalidate the inference. These findings increase the confidence in the estimation.

Table 1: The effects of the niqab ruling on vote intention for the NDP (DID)

	1: DID Quebec	2: Trend Quebec
Constant	14.18 (4.77)**	14.01 (4.76)**
Quebec	9.60 (3.40)**	9.23 (3.39)**
Voted NDP 2011	48.98 (1.34)***	48.87 (1.33)***
Ruling	-2.69 (1.59)	-2.51 (2.49)
Trend		-0.01 (0.11)
DID coefficients		
Ruling: Quebec	-10.62 (2.52)***	-0.03 (4.04)
Trend: Quebec		-0.59 (0.18)***
R ²	0.28	0.29
Adj. R ²	0.28	0.28
Num. obs.	3789	3789
RMSE	37.68	37.60

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for DID estimations with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). All models use full web sample. All models include demographic controls.

linear trend as well as a Quebec-specific trend.

$$\begin{aligned}
 NDP_Vote_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 Quebec_i + \beta_2 Ruling_t + \gamma_1 Trend_t + \\
 & \beta_3 (Quebec_i \times Ruling_t) + \gamma_2 (Quebec_i \times Trend_t) + X'_{it} \omega + \varepsilon_{it}
 \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

If the β_3 coefficient remained significant, then this would indicate discontinuity. However, when we include both the September 15th dummy and the linear trend in Model 2 of Table 1, the effect of the interaction between Quebec and September 15th disappears, while a negative 0.59-percentage point significant effect is registered for the new interaction (γ_2). Note that γ_1 is not significant which indicates that this model detects only a Quebec-specific effect: a gradual decline of NDP support of approximately 0.6 percentage points

per day after the court ruling.¹² As there is a strong correlation (0.73) between the ruling dummy and the linear trend, we run two further robustness checks to confirm that there is no discontinuity reflected in the data. We first test using the DID specification from Equation 1 with a constrained sample to 7 days before and after the treatment. The results found in Appendix J show that there is no statistically significant relationship for any window in the studied period, which suggests a gradual erosion (rather than an immediate and sudden drop) of support over time. A second test uses a regression discontinuity approach. We test different specifications and the results, fully available in Appendix K, provide further evidence that there is no sharp discontinuity.

We show evidence for H1 and find that this effect is approximated by a linear trend which links the September 15th court ruling with the drop in support in Quebec.¹³ Stopping the analysis here would capture only Figure 1, steps 1, 2 and 7 where the exogenous event and political predispositions are said to directly inform the change in vote intention. However, this provides an unsatisfactory explanation of the processes at work and so, to better understand the nature of this trend, we turn to the second hypothesis which teases out the mechanism by which Canadians became aware of the court decision: the media media being an information-provision and priming agent by which the niqab issue became an important part of voters' evaluations of parties.

Media-based findings

As shown above in Figure 2 and unlike vote intention, the court had a marked and immediate effect on media coverage of the niqab. Prior to the court ruling, there was virtually no coverage of the niqab whereas after September 15th, there was substantial

¹²This is a very large effect; the 34 days left in the campaign indicate a 20 percentage point drop. A more conservative estimate excludes the last week of the campaign to account for any final strategic voting considerations and still finds an average 0.41 percentage-point drop for the 27 days, which suggests a more conservative 11 percentage point drop overall. See Appendix Q for this model.

¹³These results are robust to alternative specifications using logistic regression and to using the full combined phone and web sample. See Appendices L and D.

media attention directed at the issue in both Quebec and the rest of Canada. In Quebec, there was a strong immediate effect of the court ruling that was followed by steadily increasing coverage peaking at a daily coverage rate similar to that of the economy, whereas in the rest of Canada we find that media coverage of the niqab began to emerge only some time after the ruling and peaked at about half the daily coverage rate of the economy. Statistical analyses demonstrating this causal effect are found in Appendix C.

Given this causal effect of the court ruling on the coverage of the niqab, we substitute the court ruling dummy and linear trend in our initial specifications (Table 1) with two different operationalizations of media coverage that try to approximate the informational environment of the campaign. As shown in Equation 3, we match each individual respondent with a daily measure of niqab coverage in their print-media environment (either Quebec or the rest of Canada). Thus, each respondent sampled on a given day receives values for the media measures based on their location and the date they were interviewed. We test two different measures: the first is a saturation measure which captures a rolling sum of coverage for the previous week per newspaper; a second, alternative measure is of accumulation which is a function of the cumulative niqab coverage during the election weighted by the square root of the day of the campaign and rescaled from 0 to 1. This second measure allows us to evaluate the accumulation effect without directly reproducing a linear trend.

$$\begin{aligned}
 NDP_Vote_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 Quebec_i + \beta_2 Coverage_t + \\
 & \beta_3 Quebec_i \times Coverage_t + X'_{it}\omega + \varepsilon_{it}
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{3}$$

Table 2 shows these results where coverage is interacted with Quebec. Model 1 indicates a strong association: for every story published on the niqab in the previous seven days in the average Quebec newspaper, support for the NDP vote in Quebec dropped by approximately 0.65 percentage points; a hypothetical Quebec-based individual sampled on October 5th (two weeks before the election) who read only one newspaper would have been exposed to an average of 16 articles on the niqab over the previous week and the model estimates they would be 10 percentage points less likely to indicate vote intention

for the NDP relative to a respondent on September 15th. For the accumulation effects, Model 2 shows a similar negative effect with higher niqab coverage accumulation being associated with decreased support for the NDP in Quebec. Both the total amount of coverage and the coverage over the previous week coincide with a steep decline in support for the NDP. When coupled with the causal relationship between the ruling and the coverage of the niqab issue, this indicates that the court ruling exerted a pronounced effect on electoral support for the NDP. Again, we show robustness across different samples and with a logistic regression strategy, see Appendices D and L.¹⁴

Table 2: The effects of media coverage of the niqab and vote intention for the NDP

	1: 7-day rolling sum	2: Campaign Accumulation
Constant	13.52 (4.72)**	13.29 (4.73)**
Quebec	9.04 (3.28)**	9.72 (3.28)**
NDP 2011	48.95 (1.34)***	48.87 (1.33)***
7-day niqab	-0.32 (0.21)	
Niqab accumulation		-3.10 (3.00)
Interaction coefficients		
7-day niqab: Quebec	-0.67 (0.25)**	
Niqab accumulation: Quebec		-20.40 (4.25)***
R ²	0.28	0.29
Adj. R ²	0.28	0.28
Num. obs.	3789	3789
RMSE	37.67	37.62

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for with standard errors in parenthesis. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). All models use full web sample and clustered standard errors by date. All models include demographic controls.

Students of Canadian politics might observe at this point that the LPC and the NDP had similar positions towards the niqab before and during the campaign. We have shown that the niqab issue hurt the NDP in Quebec. If the media was simply providing

¹⁴To better understand these results, we further investigate a Quebec sub-sample. A weak and volatile identification with the NDP may have made this party's potential voters more receptive to campaign priming and information effects. Indeed, we find that the effects are strongest for those who voted NDP in 2011 (see Appendix M).

information on party positions to voters through their coverage (Figure 1, step 3), then support for the LPC should have been hurt in a manner similar to the NDP to the benefit of parties whose positions were more in line with mainstream Quebec-opinion. To solve this puzzle, it is necessary to consider the media associations and evaluations in the endogenizing process (Figure 1, step 5). To assess this, we perform two forms of text analysis on Quebec print articles that mentions the niqab ($n = 489$). We use two hierarchical dictionary count (proximity count) methods, looking both at associations and sentiment. First, we test whether the media was more critical of the NDP than the LPC during the election campaign. To do this, we identify where in the articles key terms associated with the parties appear. For the NDP, we search for Mulcair, NDP, Nouveau Parti Démocratique, NPD, néodémocrate, and néo-démocrate. For the LPC, we search for Trudeau, Liberal, and libéral, PLC, and LPC. We then use the French-language Lexicoder sentiment dictionary (Duval and Pétry 2016) to identify negative and positive sentiment in proximate word tokens to the party-affiliated words ($n = 15$). We find that tokens proximate to NDP-associated terms are more negative than those of the LPC-associated terms (mean difference of 5%, $p = 0.03$ for an article-based t-test), and a “net tone” analysis (Lowe et al. 2011; Proksch et al. 2019) confirms the difference ($p = 0.03$). Second, we test for association between the niqab and the NDP to determine whether this issue is being specifically linked with the NDP. We check the frequency of NDP- and LPC-mentions across our article sample. Here we find large differences, with the NDP-associated terms appearing much more frequently in the articles as compared to the LPC-associated ones (3.68 versus 2.20 average mentions per article, $p = 0.0007$ for a daily average t-test). See Appendix N for visualizations of media tone and mentions over the course of the campaign.

This provides evidence that the media associated the NDP with the issue and evaluated them negatively (Figure 1, step 5). Note that this is not necessarily indicative of media bias directed towards the NDP—the media may have had good reason to negatively evaluate the NDP given the mismatch between their position and the attitudes of the Quebec population. As the measures for media and campaign attention in the

CES surveys contain a very high number of missing observations, we cannot link media consumption directly to individual voters as has been tried elsewhere (Druckman 2004); nonetheless, we contend that voters, particularly those in Quebec, faced a media environment that primarily associated the NDP with the niqab issue and made those associations in a negative manner. For an illustrative passage from media analysis at this time see below (translation by authors). Similar indicative examples are found in Appendix N. The passage below is from an article two weeks after the court ruling covering a northern visit by Mulcair where he gave a press conference on an entirely unrelated issue: the price of orange juice and other challenges facing a northern food assistance program.

...but there was a veil cast over Thomas Mulcair's message throughout [his] 24-hour visit to Nunavut. The issue of the niqab, to be more precise, followed the NDP campaign to Iqaluit...as opposed to Justin Trudeau, who is banking on an infrastructure program and on non-taxable direct financial assistance to young families, and Stephen Harper, who is delivering a simple message... (La Presse, October 1, 2019: Comme une voile sur cette campagne)

The final step in our theorized chain is that the issue was heavily primed and that the religious integration issue became more relevant for voter's decisions (Figure 1, step 6). If priming happened, one of the observable implications would be that those who were in favour of the ban would be less likely to express vote intention for the NDP once the issue became central to the campaign. We can test this using a post-election question asking whether the respondent is in favour of a ban on the niqab during citizenship ceremonies. As expected, those in Quebec who responded to the pre-election survey prior to the court ruling and were in favour of the ban were equally likely, as compared to those against a ban, to express vote intentions for the NDP (35.4% versus 37.1%); this indicates that their position on the issue was not central to their vote decision. However, after the issue was primed by the coverage of the ruling, the same comparison shows that those who are in favour of a ban were far less likely to indicate vote intention for the NDP (19.9% versus 27.6%). These groups later self-report vote for the NDP at similar levels and have similar overall support for the ban. This increases our confidence that those who replied prior to the ruling were later primed and updated their preferences in a manner similar to those

impacted by the priming of the niqab issue. The same comparison for those residing in the rest of Canada does not show any difference; see Appendix O for additional details and tests.¹⁵ These findings align with theoretical and empirical expectations; by any standard, an eight percentage point difference in vote intention due to a single issue is a considerable effect size and strong evidence of a strong mid-campaign shift where the issue of the niqab went from a marginal consideration to one central to voter's evaluations. We have provided confirmatory evidence for both H1 and H2 and each of the processes found in Figure 1; there was an accumulating loss of support for the NDP in Quebec that is directly linked to the September 15th court case with media coverage, media tone, and priming substantiating the mechanism by which the loss of support occurred.

Alternative explanations

Several alternative explanations have been suggested against the niqab explanation for the NDP loss of support; we consider three we have identified as the most significant barriers to inference. First, we address a confounder explanation where other campaign events and shocks may have been more important and the niqab, while it attracted significant media attention, did not actually influence voters' opinions. Second, we investigate an observation that support for the NDP may have begun to drop in the week before the court ruling and thus the decision had little impact. Rather, a trend that began before the ruling merely continued. Third, we examine a strategic vote argument where some have observed that NDP support softened in the final weeks of the campaign as it became clear that the LPC was the main alternative to the CPC government, which was widely disliked. We address each in turn.

The first alternative is the confounder explanation where it is previous or subsequent events that caused the decline rather than the niqab issue. Four other possible events stand-out during the campaign that are unrelated to the niqab ruling and could have had an effect: 1) a criminal trial for CPC Senator Mike Duffy where he was accused of

¹⁵The support for the ban variable is also balanced in the pre- and post-court ruling periods indicating a stability in attitude, see Appendix F.

31 charges of fraud, bribery and breach of trust; 2) a promise to balance the budget by the otherwise left-leaning NDP and promised deficit spending by the centrist LPC; 3) campaign debates; and finally 4) when an image of a dead Syrian boy, three-year old Alan Kurdi found washed up on Turkish beach made international headlines and prompted a renewed conversation around the processing of Syrian refugee applications. For one of these events to matter more than the niqab, we would need to be convinced, in addition to high salience, that the event would have heterogeneous effects for Quebecers relative to the rest of Canada and be contemporaneously correlated with the court ruling.

The Senate expense scandal had been ongoing for a long time and few major revelations emerged during the campaign. A question on the CES tracked whether respondents had heard about the Senate expense scandal and only 32% of non-Quebec Canadians and 24% of Quebecers indicated that they had heard any information about the issue during the past week and only 21% of Canadians and 18% of Quebecers indicated that they cared about this issue. This topic was less covered and cared about in Quebec and it cannot credibly explain the NDP's decline in that province.

The decision to balance the budget was a move by the NDP to attract more centrist voters and it is possible that this shifted their left-wing away to the LPC party. The CES included a question asking respondents about "What the federal government should do to help the economy: balance the budget or run a deficit." There is a small statistically relevant (t-test) difference between Quebec and the rest of Canada, with Quebecers being slightly more in favour of deficit spending, but the mean difference is only ~ 3 percentage points, and the inclusion of this variable in the regression models is non-significant on NDP vote choice. While we cannot disregard this possibility entirely, it is unclear why Quebecers would react more negatively to the balanced budget promise relative to those residing out of province with similar positions on the issue.

Another possibility that has been raised is leadership debate performances and other mechanisms by which the party leaders could have been re-evaluated by the electorate. To test this, we use party leader feeling thermometers and find that while there was some decline in Mulcair's support over the course of the campaign, and some increase in

Trudeau's support, support for Trudeau remained lower than that of Mulcair in Quebec for the entire duration of the campaign, even in the last two weeks (about 5%, $p = 0.002$).

Finally, the death of Alan Kurdi did spark a greater conversation during the campaign about the limited number of Syrian refugees Canada was accepting. Both the NDP and the LPC took strong positions on the issue and promised to increase resettlement efforts. While there is no question in the CES about the refugee crisis in Syria, overall support for immigration does not differ significantly between Quebec and the rest of Canada. The campaign also focused more heavily on this issue in early September prior to the dip in NDP support. More generally, the tests done earlier to establish that there was no sharp discontinuity at the September 15th break on vote intention also tested whether there were any sharp discontinuities over the course of the campaign. Results for the DID 7-day window tests, as shown in Appendix J, indicate that there was no other clear campaign event that produced a significant change from one week to the next.

A second alternative is that the dip in the NDP support occurred before September 15th and that this somehow produced a linear decline in NDP support for the duration of the campaign. This is simply not a credible explanation as a slight decline in one party's fortunes in no way determines the overall trend for the remaining duration of the campaign. However, to test this we subset our sample to before the September 15th date and add both a daily trend and a dummy for the week of September 8th-14th, with a null finding (see Appendix P). Additionally, our tests for discontinuity indicate no such shift took place in the week before the ruling.

The third alternative explanation concerns the strategic vote. The presence of a strategic desertion vote from the NDP to the LPC and BQ in Quebec has been identified as a factor behind the NDP defeat in both academic and popular media. It is true that there was a recurring 'Anything but Conservative' campaign which called for centrist and leftist voters to vote strategically to avoid another Conservative government.¹⁶

¹⁶Campaigns like Vote Together which encouraged NDP, LPC, and BQ voters to vote for the local candidate who had the best chance against the CPC nominee in the riding were a part of the public discourse during the 2015 campaign.

However, previous studies on strategic voting have shown a high potential but a less realized strategic vote; for example, Blais et al. (2009) investigate the amount of strategic voting in four Canadian federal elections (1988, 1993, 1997, and 2002) and show that, although the potential strategic vote varies between 10% and 15%, the realized strategic vote is between 2.2% and 3.8% of voters. For the 2015 Election, Daoust (2018) indicates a somewhat larger role for strategic deserters and other analyses of the 2015 Canadian Election have similarly indicated a larger than usual role for strategic voting (McGrane 2016; O’Neill and Thomas 2016). However, even in a world of strategic voting for the LPC, why did the vote coalesce around them as opposed to the NDP? There must have been some shift that positioned the NDP as less-electable during the last week or two weeks of the campaign, and this effect must have been particularly strong in Quebec. To rule out that late strategic voting was the primary dynamic, we removed the last week of the campaign from the analyses performed above and the results hold, see Appendix Q. However, the niqab ruling and media explanations are not exclusive to strategic voting, the presence of strategic voting in the final days of the campaign is a function of rather than a cause of a less competitive NDP due to the niqab ruling.

Conclusion

By looking at the 2015 Canadian Federal Election, this paper has theorized how exogenous events come to be endogenized during electoral campaigns and influence vote intentions. The existing literature has generally focused on the overall impact of exogenous campaign events without modelling the diffusion mechanism; we address this gap at both theoretical and empirical levels. Through careful analysis, we show that an exogenous campaign event triggers complex political dynamics that involve the voters’ political predispositions and the media and party responses. This attention to the mechanisms related to information-provision and priming sets aside our paper and opens the door for further exploration of campaign events for which one should not theoretically expect immediate and generalized public knowledge. A court ruling, even on a topic that has recently gotten increasing coverage in the Western societies—the public display of religious symbols—is not the same thing as a massive terrorist attack and modeling its

effects calls for the proper acknowledgement of these expectations. However, even for the massive events, more attention should be paid to information diffusion to show the posited mechanisms. Through examining individual and aggregate level measures in tandem with multiple robustness checks, we contribute to the campaign effects literature and to the emerging stream of work that investigates the electoral relevance of immigration and integration-based concerns.

Our paper is not without limitations. First, our media analysis for hypothesis two is based on ecological grounds, given that the individual-level survey measures for media exposure are not reliable. Second, we focus primarily on the NDP position on the niqab issue in our analysis. Future research could do more to specify the strategic interactions that took place between the main parties during the studied campaign. Third, We evaluate the priming mechanisms (Figure 1, step 6) through a post-election measure and a test that roughly captures the aggregate influence of the issue on self-reported vote, but cannot identify those who may have changed their mind as a result of NDP persuasion or the campaign more generally. Lastly, in our analysis of the media, we only look at print media and leave television and social media as avenues for further research. In general, we hope that other works will build on our findings on the nuanced consequences of exogenous events and subsequent campaign dynamics.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, our paper shows the relevance of topics related to religion, integration, and immigration for electoral democracy. Going against the public on crystallized and controversial issues could have important, and sometimes negative, consequences for politicians who dare to take these stances. After examining the outcome of the 2015 Canadian Federal Election, strategic elites may think twice before taking a principled stance against a crystallized position of the mass-public. Given that policy leadership can cause significant attitudinal changes (e.g. Oforu et al. 2019), such strategic decisions could impede attitudinal change in general and the process of integration and religious accommodation in particular.

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Appendices

A Evolution of vote intentions

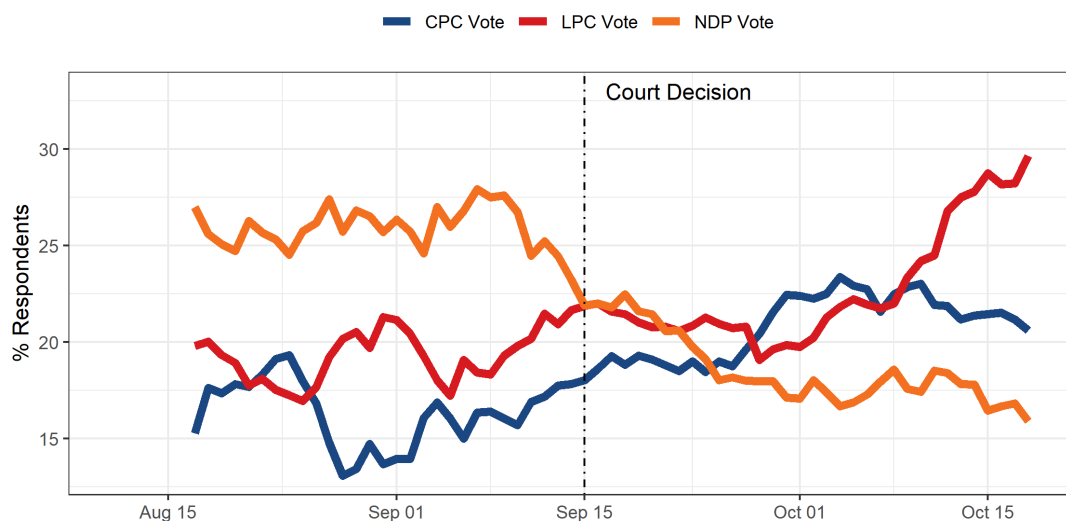


Figure A.1: The evolution of the vote intention for the main parties across the campaign (7-day moving average, CES data)

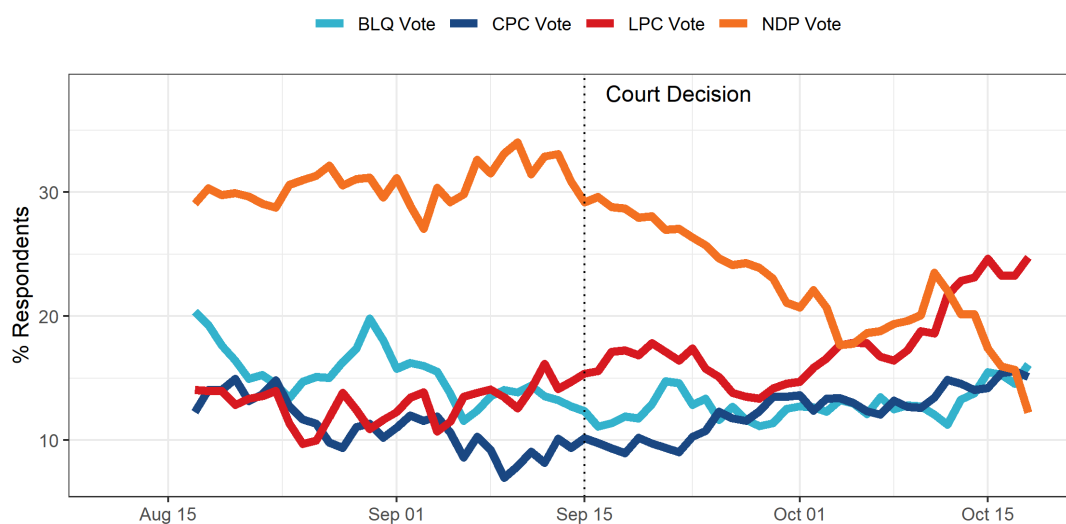


Figure A.2: The evolution of the vote intention for the main parties across the campaign in Quebec (7-day moving average, CES data)

B Media coverage

Data was gathered from Lexis-Nexis for English-language media and Eureka for French-language media for the period from July 1, 2015 to November 1, 2015 using Python Selenium. Full text was gathered for French-language media. Full-period coverage is available for the following English-language newspapers:

- The Gazette
- The Star Phoenix
- Windsor Star
- The Leader-Post
- Ottawa Citizen
- The Globe and Mail
- The Vancouver Sun
- The Daily Gleaner
- The Telegraph-Journal
- The Calgary Herald
- The Times & Transcript
- Times Colonist
- The Toronto Star
- Sherbrooke Record
- National Post's Financial Post & FP Investing
- National Post
- The Vancouver Province
- Waterloo Region Record
- Edmonton Journal
- The Hamilton Spectator
- The Guelph Mercury
- Yukon News
- North Shore News
- Guelph Tribune
- Waterloo Chronicle
- Carstairs Courier
- Brampton Guardian
- Ottawa West News
- The Mississauga News

- Stratford Gazette

And for the following French-language newspapers:

- La Presse
- Le Devoir
- La Tribune
- Le Droit (an Ottawa-based journal that is nevertheless read in Quebec)
- L'Actualite
- Le Nouvelliste
- Le Soleil
- Journal de Montreal
- Metro
- 24H

Table B.1: Descriptive statistics for media data (rest of Canada)

	Variable	n	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
1	Daily niqab coverage	110	9.35	19.08	0.00	0	93
2	Rolling sum of niqab coverage (7 days)	110	1.97	3.36	0.10	0	12
3	Cumulative coverage of niqab	110	5.31	8.87	1.10	0	34
4	Daily economy coverage	110	89.83	47.96	96.50	2	182
5	Rolling sum of economy coverage (7 days)	110	611.72	131.69	631.50	43	791
6	Cumulative coverage of economy	110	163.25	95.43	157.75	1	329

Table B.2: Descriptive statistics for media data (Quebec-only)

	Variable	n	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
1	Daily niqab coverage	110	5.93	10.88	0.00	0	47
2	Rolling sum of niqab coverage (7 days)	110	3.69	6.05	0.20	0	18
3	Cumulative coverage of niqab	110	9.98	17.73	1.10	0	65
4	Daily economy coverage	110	26.48	15.02	26.50	1	80
5	Rolling sum of economy coverage (7 days)	110	179.26	44.73	190.50	9	259
6	Cumulative coverage of economy	110	134.95	84.70	124.40	1	291

C Causal effect of court ruling on niqab coverage

We demonstrate the causal effect of the court ruling on the niqab media coverage through a comparison between coverage of the niqab issue and the coverage of the economy during the period under examination. We employ a difference-in-differences (DID) strategy where each outcome observation (**Coverage**) is the total number of articles per day that mention either the economy or the niqab. The coefficient of interest is that of the interaction between whether the coverage pertained to the Niqab (**Niqab**) and whether the coverage occurred in the pre or post-court ruling period (**Ruling**). A post-ruling trend is also computed (**Trend**). We also include a daily trend (**Daily Trend**) to account for campaign dynamics, but find non-significance. As Canada has two distinct regional-linguistic media environments, we model Quebec and the rest of Canada separately.

$$\begin{aligned} Coverage_{rt} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 Niqab_r + \beta_2 Ruling_t + \gamma_1 Trend_{rt} + \\ & \beta_3 Niqab_r \times Ruling_t + \gamma_2 Niqab_r \times Trend_{rt} + \beta_1 Daily Trend_t + \varepsilon_{rt} \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

Table C.1 shows the result of these estimations, with a daily campaign linear trend added for substantive reasons (see the discussion in the body of the paper) and as a robustness check. Here, as expected, we find an extraordinary effect in both Quebec and in the rest of Canada – observe the DID coefficients of interest, β_3 and γ_2 . The Quebec media has both an immediate and progressive reaction, whereas media in the rest of Canada develops significant media coverage over the election period. These models provide strong causal evidence that the court ruling sparked the media coverage of the niqab.

Put another way, there were four articles in the preceding week which mentioned the niqab in the sample of 40 English- and French-speaking newspapers: 0.014 stories per day per paper as compared to a campaign high of almost 5 stories per day per paper in Quebec and 3 stories per day per paper in the rest of Canada.

Table C.1: Niqab and economy coverage during election

	Quebec	Rest of Canada
Constant	0.83 (0.19) ^{***}	0.76 (0.21) ^{***}
Daily campaign trend	0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Niqab Coverage	-0.82 (0.16) ^{***}	-0.73 (0.18) ^{***}
Ruling	0.07 (0.34)	0.28 (0.36)
Trend	0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
DID coefficients		
Niqab: Ruling	1.54 (0.44) ^{***}	0.71 (0.47)
Niqab: Trend	0.04 (0.02) [*]	0.07 (0.02) ^{***}
R ²	0.58	0.50
Adj. R ²	0.56	0.48
Num. obs.	156	156
RMSE	0.78	0.84

^{***} $p < 0.001$, ^{**} $p < 0.01$, ^{*} $p < 0.05$. OLS models for DID estimations with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: number of articles published per day.

D Logistic regressions

Despite the limitations of using logistic regression in a DID setting, we also show these estimations. All results remain significant in the expected direction.

Table D.1: Niqab ruling effects on Quebec voters (logistic regression)

	1: DID	2: Trend	3: DID (no controls)	4: Trend (no controls)
Constant	-1.87*** (0.34)	-1.89*** (0.34)	-1.14*** (0.06)	-1.14*** (0.06)
Quebec	0.60* (0.24)	0.57* (0.24)	0.45*** (0.09)	0.45*** (0.09)
NDP 2011	2.54*** (0.09)	2.54*** (0.09)		
DID				
Ruling	-0.20 (0.12)	-0.20 (0.18)	-0.16* (0.08)	-0.21 (0.13)
Trend		-0.00 (0.01)		0.00 (0.01)
Ruling: Quebec	-0.66*** (0.18)	0.11 (0.29)	-0.36** (0.13)	0.26 (0.20)
Trend: Quebec		-0.04*** (0.01)		-0.04*** (0.01)
AIC	3399.27	3383.84	6221.96	6205.71
BIC	3505.34	3502.40	6248.50	6245.52
Log Likelihood	-1682.63	-1672.92	-3106.98	-3096.86
Deviance	3365.27	3345.84	6213.96	6193.71
Num. obs.	3789	3789	5624	5624

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Logistic DID models. Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). First and second models include demographic controls.

Table D.2: Niqab media effects on Quebec voters (logistic regression)

	1: 7-day	2: Acc.	3: 7-day (no controls)	4: Acc. (no controls)
Constant	-1.91*** (0.34)	-1.95*** (0.34)	-1.17*** (0.05)	-1.20*** (0.06)
Quebec	0.57* (0.23)	0.64** (0.23)	0.47*** (0.08)	0.54*** (0.09)
NDP 2011	2.53*** (0.09)	2.54*** (0.09)		
DID				
7-day niqab	-0.02 (0.02)		-0.02 (0.01)	
Niqab accumulation		-0.22 (0.22)		-0.14 (0.15)
7-day niqab: Quebec	-0.04* (0.02)		-0.02 (0.01)	
Niqab accumulation: Quebec		-1.43*** (0.31)		-0.94*** (0.23)
AIC	3397.29	3385.29	6217.14	6206.83
BIC	3503.37	3491.37	6243.68	6233.37
Log Likelihood	-1681.64	-1675.64	-3104.57	-3099.41
Deviance	3363.29	3351.29	6209.14	6198.83
Num. obs.	3789	3789	5624	5624

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Logistic models (DID estimations). Clustered standard errors by date in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). First and second models include demographic controls.

E Google Trends

We examined Google Trends data looking at searches for the term ‘niqab’ in Quebec and find a similar discontinuity to that of media coverage.

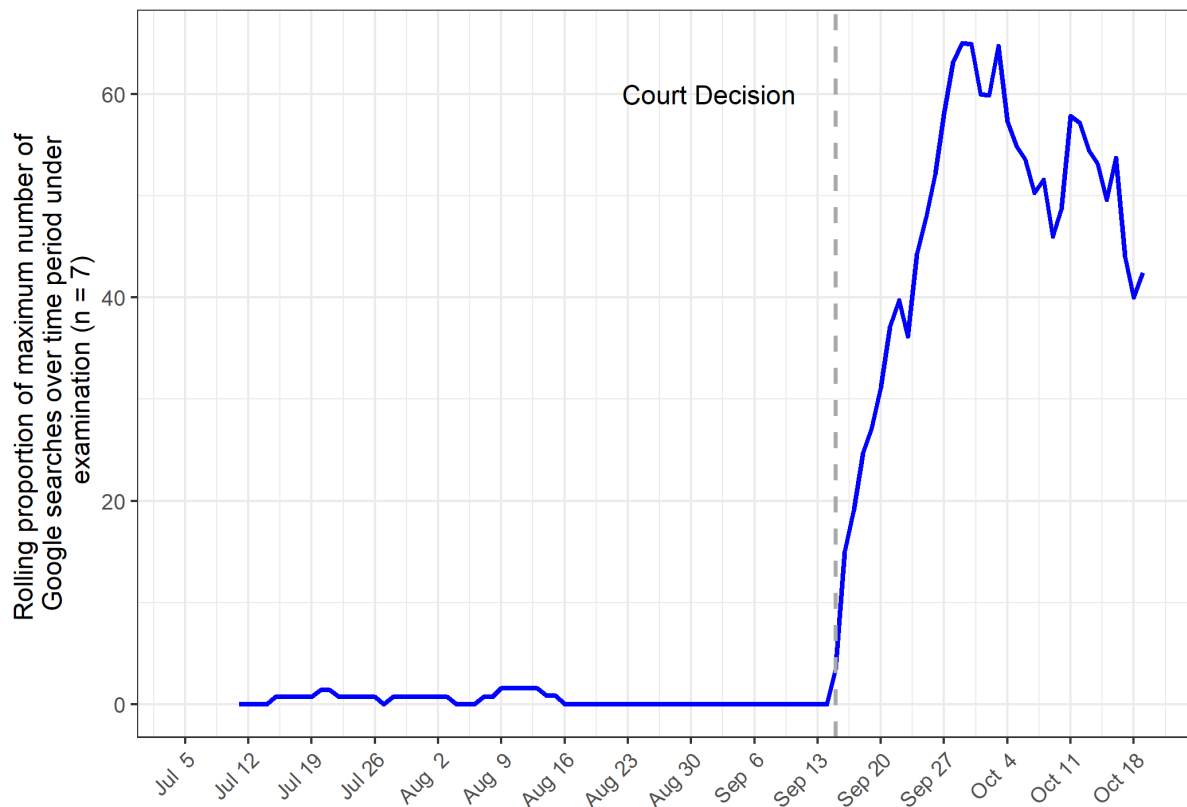


Figure E.1: Rolling Google search interest in the niqab in Quebec across the campaign

Extracted from Google Trends <https://trends.google.com/trends/> (Retrieved: 11/05/2019).

The term used in the Google searches is “niqab”.

F Checking sample balance

As we posit a natural experiment, the pre- and post-court ruling samples should be balanced. To confirm balance, we evaluate the standardized mean differences between the pre and post-court ruling periods. Figure F.1 shows that across demographic, attitudinal and self-reported behavioural measures the sample is balanced with all variables having a standardized mean difference of less than 0.1—a threshold identified in Stuart (2010) and Rosenbaum (2010). Another test for balance are equivalence tests as forwarded by Hartman and Hidalgo (2018) which allow us to reject the null hypothesis of difference between pre- and post-ruling samples (ϵ set at default level of 0.2). These results are encouraging and show that the pre- and post-court ruling period samples are balanced. Given this balance, we validate the natural experiment setup.

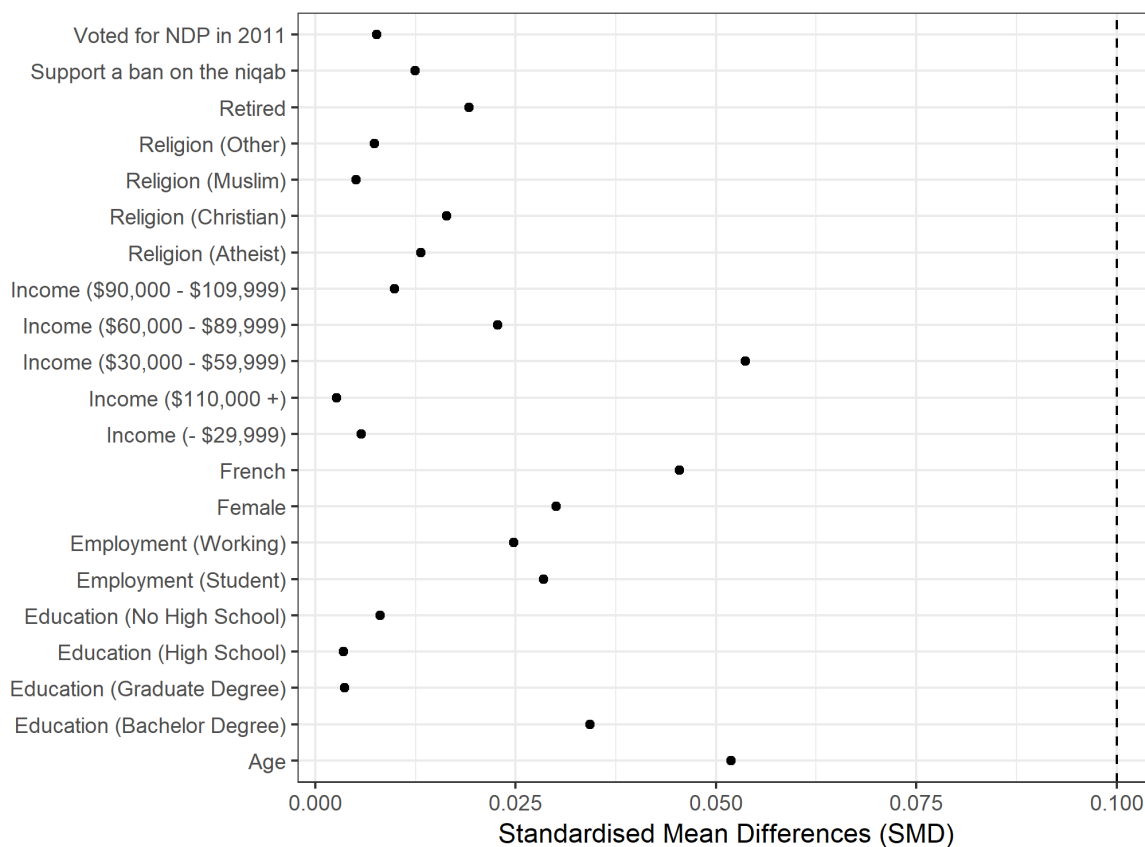


Figure F.1: Standardized mean differences balance test for pre- and post-court ruling samples (CES web sample)

As we also model an over-time trend in the post-court ruling period, day-to-day or week-to-week balance is desirable. We thus perform the same check comparing every

week to every other week in the post-ruling period. Figure F.2 shows the balance for weekly comparisons (using an SMD threshold of 0.1) and Figure F.3 for daily ones (using a more lenient SMD of 0.15 to account for small daily sample sizes), both on the web sample. The charts show, for each variable, the total number of week-to-week (day-to-day) imbalances relative to balances. For the weeks that is $C(5, 2)$ or 15 comparisons and for days that is $C(33, 2)$ or 528 comparisons. We examine only the post-court ruling period here as the pre- and post- balance has already been established and we are testing whether the trend in the post-ruling period may account for changing vote intentions. Results in the Figures below show some week-to-week and day-to-day imbalance.

While there is some week-to-week and day-to-day imbalance in the web sample, we perform the same tests on the phone sample in the CES which has a true randomized rolling cross section design (Johnston and Brady 2002, 2006) to determine whether the imbalance is systematic and pronounced. Figures F.4 and F.5 show the results. We find that the imbalance present in the web sample is similarly present in the rolling cross section phone one. The week-to-week standardized mean difference across the covariates for the web sample averages 0.059 (95% balanced), while the same comparison for the phone is 0.06 (96% balanced). For day-to-day comparisons, the web sample averages 0.143 (61% balanced) versus the 0.128 (66%) for the phone sample. Even in a randomized design some imbalance is statistically probable, especially when using small daily sample sizes. We thus conclude that the imbalance in the web sample likely does not pose a threat to our research design.

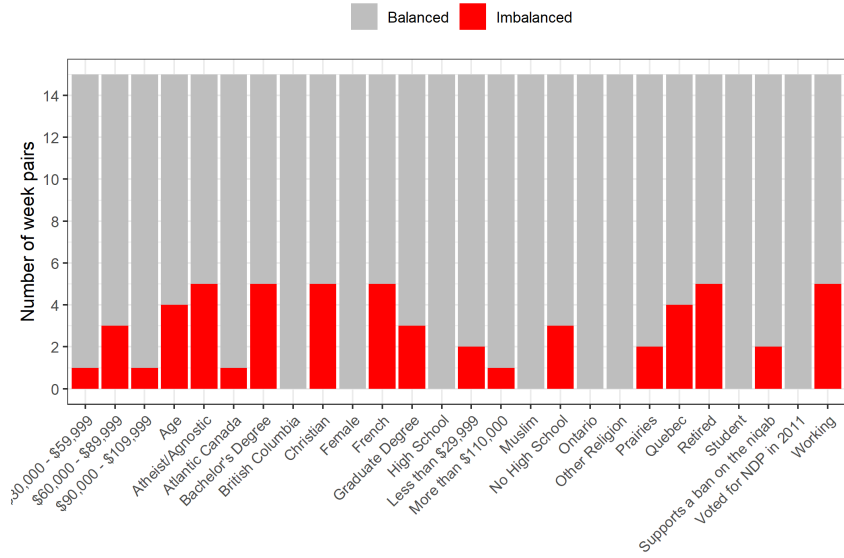


Figure F.2: Week-to-week standardized mean differences balance test (CES web sample)

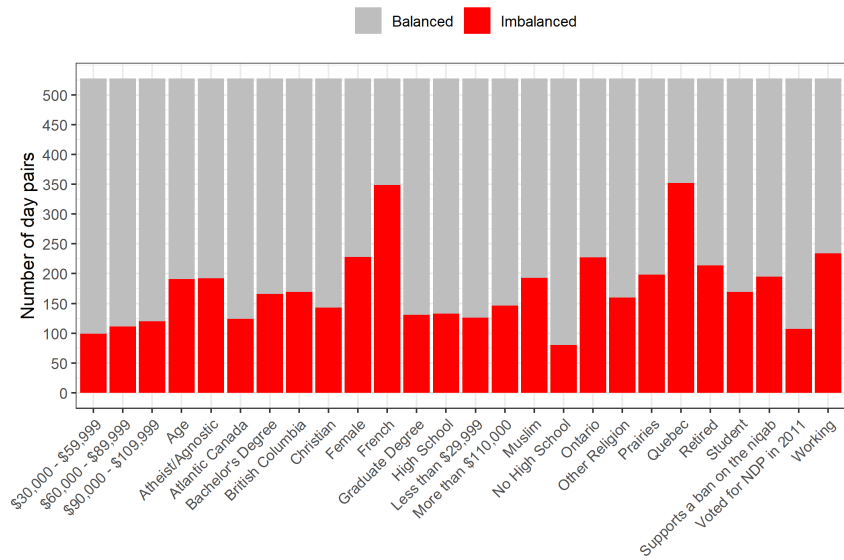


Figure F.3: Day-to-day standardized mean differences balance test (CES web sample)

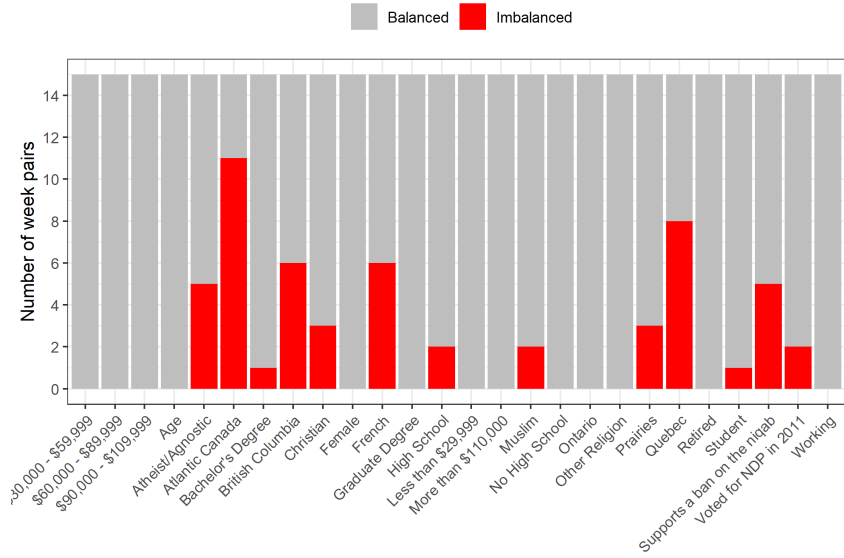


Figure F.4: Week-to-week standardized mean differences balance test (CES phone sample)

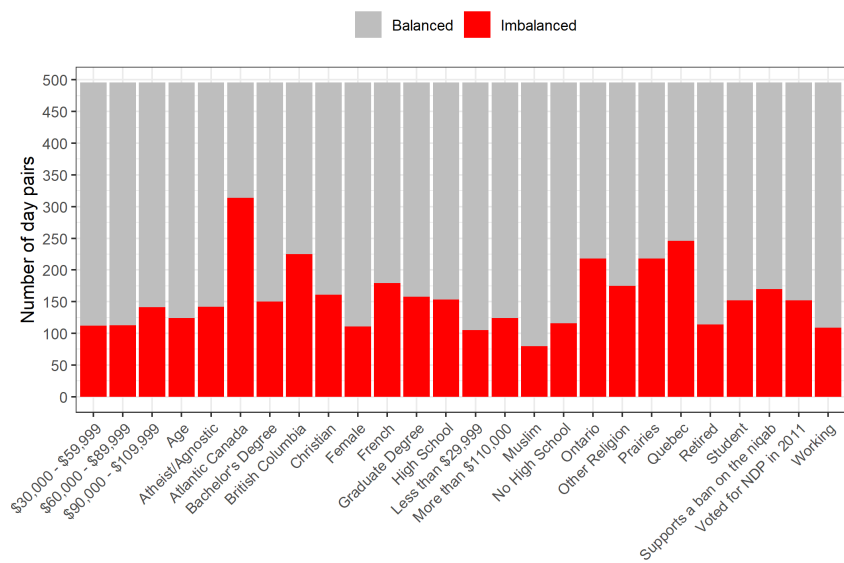


Figure F.5: Day-to-day standardized mean differences balance test (CES phone sample)

G Evolution of vote intention and party identification

As Figures G.6 and G.7 show, partisanship is highly unstable over the course of the campaign. This lack of stability informs our decision not to include it as a control variable in the estimated models. In this manner, we avoid post-treatment bias.

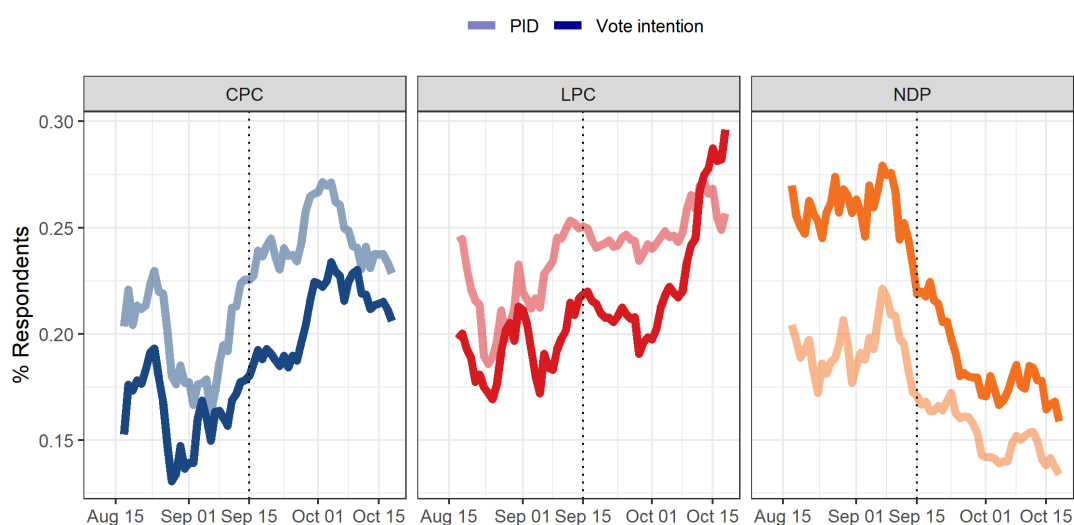


Figure G.6: The evolution of the vote intention and party identification (PID) for the main parties across the campaign in the rest of Canada (7-day moving average, CES data)

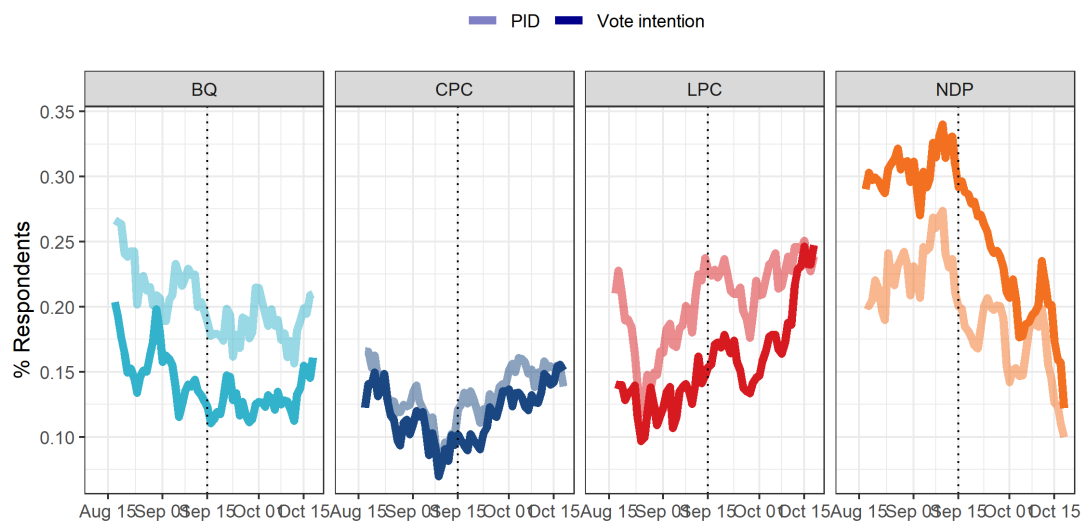


Figure G.7: The evolution of the vote intention and party identification (PID) for the main parties across the campaign in Quebec (7-day moving average, CES data)

H CES descriptive statistics

Table H.1: Descriptive statistics for CES data (web sample)

	Variable	n	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
1	NDP Vote Intention	5624	0.25	0.43	0.00	0	1
2	Liberal Vote Intention	5624	0.24	0.43	0.00	0	1
3	Conservative Vote Intention	5624	0.19	0.39	0.00	0	1
4	Favor of Niqab Ban	3284	0.68	0.47	1.00	0	1
5	Age	5970	47.73	17.10	49.00	18	93
6	Female	6013	0.50	0.50	1.00	0	1
7	French	6023	0.36	0.48	0.00	0	1
8	Quebec	6023	0.38	0.49	0.00	0	1
9	Working	5771	0.53	0.50	1.00	0	1
10	Student	5771	0.08	0.27	0.00	0	1
11	Retired	5771	0.25	0.43	0.00	0	1
12	No High School	5983	0.07	0.26	0.00	0	1
13	High School	5983	0.43	0.50	0.00	0	1
14	Bachelor's Degree	5983	0.40	0.49	0.00	0	1
15	Graduate Studies	5983	0.10	0.30	0.00	0	1
16	Vote for NDP in 2011	4155	0.32	0.46	0.00	0	1
17	Feeling towards Conservative Party	5891	37.56	31.46	34.00	0	100
18	Feeling towards Liberal Party	5864	50.39	28.54	55.00	0	100
19	Feeling towards NDP	5727	54.62	27.23	60.00	0	100
20	Feeling towards the Bloc Quebecois	5297	26.82	28.91	17.00	0	100
21	Feeling towards Harper	5227	34.18	31.65	29.00	0	100
22	Feeling towards Trudeau	5160	50.74	29.40	56.00	0	100
23	Feeling towards Mulcair	4923	55.01	26.68	60.00	0	100
24	Feeling towards Duceppe	4441	33.87	29.38	30.00	0	100
25	Post-Court decision	6023	0.57	0.49	1.00	0	1
26	Post-Court decision linear trend	6023	10.30	11.50	6.00	0	34

I Stability of reported vote for NDP 2011 over the campaign

There is some evidence that a retrospective question on vote in the previous election may vary with current vote intention. We assess this threat by modelling the variable across the campaign with a linear trend and post-court ruling variable. While there is variance in self-reported vote in the 2011 Canadian Federal Election, this is to be expected and there is no clear trend in Quebec that indicates that respondents are claiming vote for the NDP in 2011 when they did not or vice versa. Neither are significant with or without controls.

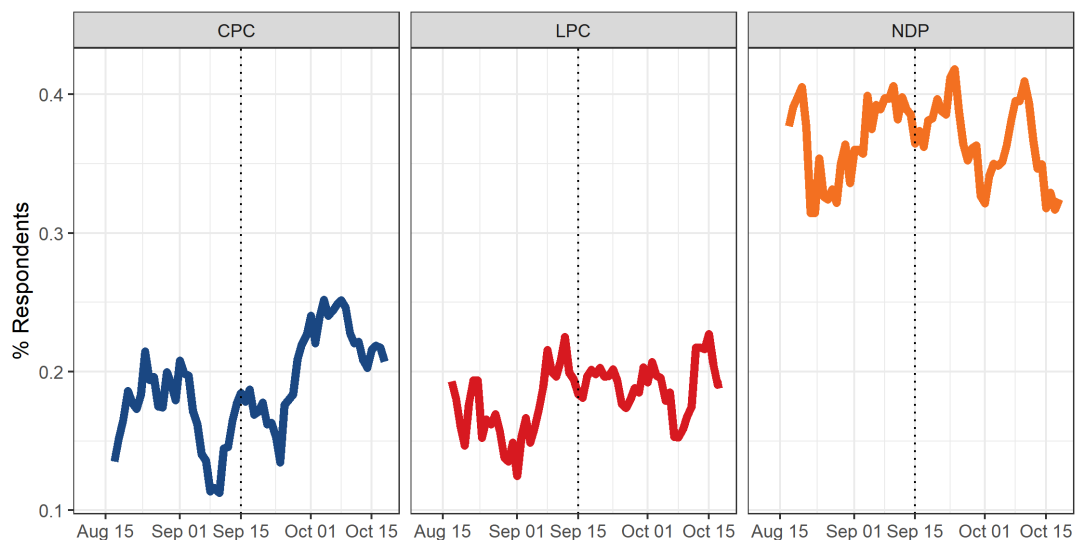


Figure I.1: Self-reported vote in 2011 for the main parties across the campaign in Quebec (7-day moving average, CES data)

J Testing windows

We test 14-day windows to see if there was a significant and sharp discontinuity at any point during the campaign. We move the treatment period by increments of 3-days and, should there be a discontinuity, we would expect the treatment variable or treatment*Quebec interaction term to be significant. As is shown in Table J.1 and J.2 and, not a single period shows significance, with or without controls.

Table J.1: Testing alternative treatment dates with pre and post windows of 7 days (Quebec versus Rest of Canada) and no controls

	2015-09-03	2015-09-06	2015-09-09	2015-09-12	2015-09-15	2015-09-18	2015-09-21	2015-09-24	2015-09-27	2015-09-30	2015-10-03	2015-10-06
Constant	24.39*** (2.87)	25.94*** (2.91)	27.20*** (2.88)	24.27*** (2.51)	22.82*** (2.14)	22.80*** (2.09)	19.62*** (2.05)	20.83*** (2.07)	21.41*** (1.96)	21.84*** (1.86)	21.87*** (1.89)	19.80*** (2.03)
Treatment	0.80 (3.99)	-1.36 (3.75)	-5.75 (3.57)	-2.46 (3.29)	-1.86 (3.01)	-3.05 (2.98)	2.01 (2.83)	0.28 (2.81)	-0.49 (2.80)	-0.90 (2.79)	-2.36 (2.79)	0.15 (2.90)
Quebec	6.47 (4.45)	6.51 (4.39)	7.04 (4.37)	10.23 (4.00)	9.38** (3.42)	10.40** (3.38)	10.53** (3.28)	6.67* (3.40)	3.24 (3.43)	1.83 (3.25)	2.57 (3.35)	6.66 (3.41)
Treatment:Quebec	3.52 (6.13)	2.97 (5.81)	5.43 (5.52)	0.65 (5.30)	0.29 (4.85)	-4.29 (4.80)	-6.73 (4.70)	-4.56 (4.69)	1.08 (4.92)	1.03 (4.61)	1.99 (4.67)	-5.99 (4.72)
R ²	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adj. R ²	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00	0.00
Num. obs.	882	1018	1152	1197	1354	1344	1398	1385	1313	1418	1385	1280
RMSE	44.96	45.04	44.51	44.10	43.42	42.80	42.17	41.77	41.71	41.66	41.46	40.84

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. OLS estimations (DID models). Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). The name of the model shows the date around which the 7-day pre- and post-window is centered.

Table J.2: Testing alternative treatment dates with pre and post windows of 7 days (Quebec versus Rest of Canada)

	2015-09-03	2015-09-06	2015-09-09	2015-09-12	2015-09-15	2015-09-18	2015-09-21	2015-09-24	2015-09-27	2015-09-30	2015-10-03	2015-10-06
Constant	18.38 (11.97)	24.03* (11.24)	25.19* (10.86)	14.81 (10.49)	12.46 (9.77)	8.83 (9.68)	5.21 (9.51)	8.36 (9.39)	8.20 (9.62)	9.49 (9.36)	8.85 (9.38)	11.96 (9.62)
Female	-5.17 (3.24)	-5.74 (3.03)	-4.86 (2.78)	-4.17 (2.74)	-3.29 (2.54)	-3.67 (2.52)	-4.69 (2.47)	-2.16 (2.45)	-2.53 (2.53)	-3.71 (2.50)	-2.22 (2.44)	-4.39 (2.58)
Age	-0.16 (0.14)	-0.14 (0.13)	-0.09 (0.12)	-0.12 (0.12)	-0.06 (0.11)	-0.03 (0.11)	0.03 (0.11)	0.07 (0.11)	0.06 (0.11)	-0.06 (0.11)	-0.07 (0.11)	-0.15 (0.12)
French	17.45** (6.30)	10.74 (5.83)	3.17 (5.37)	3.91 (5.11)	4.56 (4.71)	-0.85 (4.67)	-1.30 (4.35)	-0.54 (4.40)	-4.58 (4.47)	-2.22 (4.49)	-0.19 (4.42)	-1.60 (4.81)
British Columbia	8.81 (8.45)	13.07 (7.99)	16.88* (7.56)	11.93 (7.03)	10.28 (6.53)	13.38* (6.08)	10.47 (5.78)	8.10 (5.64)	9.10 (5.54)	10.55 (5.71)	4.71 (5.78)	10.34 (6.11)
Ontario	0.89 (6.99)	0.87 (6.08)	-1.58 (5.87)	-2.86 (5.63)	0.37 (5.28)	1.05 (5.06)	2.74 (4.90)	3.05 (4.74)	2.66 (4.61)	4.05 (4.73)	3.68 (4.92)	2.90 (5.28)
Prairies	6.33 (8.24)	4.03 (7.15)	0.78 (6.56)	-2.76 (6.27)	-1.36 (5.90)	1.16 (5.71)	-0.25 (5.60)	0.64 (5.66)	5.84 (5.53)	6.65 (5.58)	10.10 (5.65)	13.74* (5.94)
Quebec	-4.74 (8.85)	-1.67 (7.99)	1.37 (7.69)	2.91 (7.28)	5.35 (6.69)	9.66 (6.58)	8.22 (6.24)	0.69 (6.12)	9.37 (6.01)	10.11 (6.13)	8.37 (6.22)	11.41 (6.75)
Full-time worker	3.38 (4.39)	-3.45 (4.19)	-3.57 (3.84)	-1.70 (3.77)	-0.05 (3.52)	-1.47 (3.43)	1.83 (3.37)	2.83 (3.36)	2.43 (3.46)	3.14 (3.41)	3.68 (3.36)	3.53 (3.48)
Student	2.85 (10.99)	-1.27 (9.99)	-12.05 (8.32)	-11.26 (7.76)	-7.06 (7.49)	-12.92 (7.30)	-1.71 (7.41)	5.42 (7.39)	14.93 (7.90)	18.96* (8.10)	21.81** (7.26)	11.07 (7.24)
Retired	6.94 (5.69)	-2.53 (5.45)	-3.36 (5.04)	-0.09 (4.84)	-2.18 (4.51)	-4.19 (4.43)	-2.61 (4.28)	-2.61 (4.19)	-3.28 (4.40)	1.35 (4.25)	0.77 (4.18)	4.45 (4.37)
High School	-6.72 (7.36)	-2.81 (6.98)	-3.75 (6.80)	4.34 (6.60)	1.11 (6.08)	4.05 (6.14)	0.26 (6.00)	-5.88 (5.84)	-6.57 (6.00)	-4.22 (5.71)	-6.39 (5.67)	-4.77 (5.59)
Bachelor	-2.53 (7.35)	1.63 (6.97)	1.14 (6.81)	8.62 (6.60)	3.46 (6.07)	7.74 (6.14)	2.64 (6.00)	-1.32 (5.87)	-4.44 (6.01)	0.40 (5.73)	-0.38 (5.71)	-1.01 (5.67)
Graduate	-5.00 (8.42)	-0.59 (7.99)	-1.46 (7.85)	3.68 (7.58)	1.14 (7.05)	6.29 (7.12)	3.83 (6.97)	-0.81 (6.77)	-2.85 (6.91)	-5.71 (6.62)	-7.95 (6.58)	-9.83 (6.62)
Vote NDP 2011	50.71*** (3.50)	50.48*** (3.24)	52.87*** (3.00)	51.63*** (2.95)	50.66*** (2.74)	50.64*** (2.74)	50.12*** (2.71)	47.76*** (2.69)	46.55*** (2.75)	43.63*** (2.69)	44.23*** (2.63)	42.08*** (2.75)
Treatment	3.86 (4.27)	-2.04 (4.03)	-5.56 (3.72)	-0.09 (3.49)	-0.16 (3.23)	-2.54 (3.22)	-0.16 (3.10)	-4.78 (3.08)	-3.43 (3.07)	-1.57 (3.16)	-0.28 (3.08)	2.45 (3.29)
Treatment:Quebec	-2.31 (6.52)	1.53 (6.20)	5.80 (5.77)	0.34 (5.59)	-6.07 (5.16)	-6.58 (5.10)	-3.05 (5.04)	7.25 (5.00)	1.52 (5.25)	-3.06 (5.08)	-4.44 (5.00)	-10.26* (5.20)
R ²	0.29	0.29	0.32	0.31	0.30	0.31	0.30	0.28	0.27	0.25	0.27	0.25
Adj. R ²	0.27	0.27	0.30	0.30	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.26	0.26	0.23	0.26	0.23
Num. obs.	621	714	799	825	934	913	933	939	865	930	911	844
RMSE	39.75	39.92	38.65	38.46	38.15	37.40	36.98	36.94	36.48	37.21	36.11	36.66

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. OLS estimations (DID models). Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). The name of the model shows the date around which the 7-day pre- and post-window is centered.

K Regression Discontinuity Design

The regression discontinuity estimations are performed using the `rdrubust` package in R (Calonico et al. 2015). For all the estimations, the dependent variable is the vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian Federal Election (binary variable). The assignment variable registers the day the subjects were interviewed, with the cut-off point set at September 15th (e.g. for the respondents interviewed on September 14th the value of the variable is -1, while for those contacted on September 16th is 1). We employ a sharp RDD (i.e. the treatment variable is a deterministic function of the assignment variable, which means that all the observations after September 15th are considered treated – and get an value of 1 – and the ones before September 15th get a value of 0) with no controls (a decision that is justified by the balance of the sample, see Appendix F). The overall goal is to test whether a sharp discontinuity takes place around the cutoff date.

To test the robustness of the findings, we employ a diversity of bandwidths, either manually selected (3, 5, 7 or 9 days around the cutoff) or automatically, based on the IMSE-optimal selection procedure (the “`mserd`” option). In addition, we vary the polynomial order (1, 2 or 3). All the local linear regressions are estimated with a triangular kernel and the we display coefficients and standard errors based on the *robust* estimations proposed by Calonico et al. (2015).

Table K.3 looks at the Quebec sub-sample to identify whether a sharp discontinuity has taken place on September 15th. All the results allow us to reject the idea of a discontinuity around the date of the niqab ruling (see the p-values in each table).

For conformity, we also display our results graphically. Specifically, we show two plots for the Quebec sample obtained with the same `rdrubust` R package: 1) using a manually-selected bin width of 7; and 2) using a bandwidth automatically selected (`mserd`). All plots are based on a polynomial order of 1 and a triangular kernel.

Table K.3: Testing RD around September 15th with a variety polynomials of bin widths

Sub-sample	Selection	Bandwidth	Poly. order	Coefficient	St. Err.	P-value
Quebec	manual	3.00	1	0.02	0.14	0.89
Quebec	manual	5.00	1	0.01	0.20	0.97
Quebec	manual	7.00	1	-0.07	0.14	0.60
Quebec	manual	9.00	1	-0.09	0.11	0.45
Quebec	mserd	11.95	1	0.01	0.08	0.94
Quebec	manual	5.00	2	0.01	0.58	0.98
Quebec	manual	7.00	2	-0.02	0.26	0.94
Quebec	manual	9.00	2	-0.06	0.19	0.75
Quebec	mserd	15.92	2	-0.01	0.09	0.92
Quebec	manual	7.00	3	0.44	0.62	0.48
Quebec	manual	9.00	3	0.06	0.35	0.86
Quebec	mserd	14.00	3	-0.11	0.14	0.42

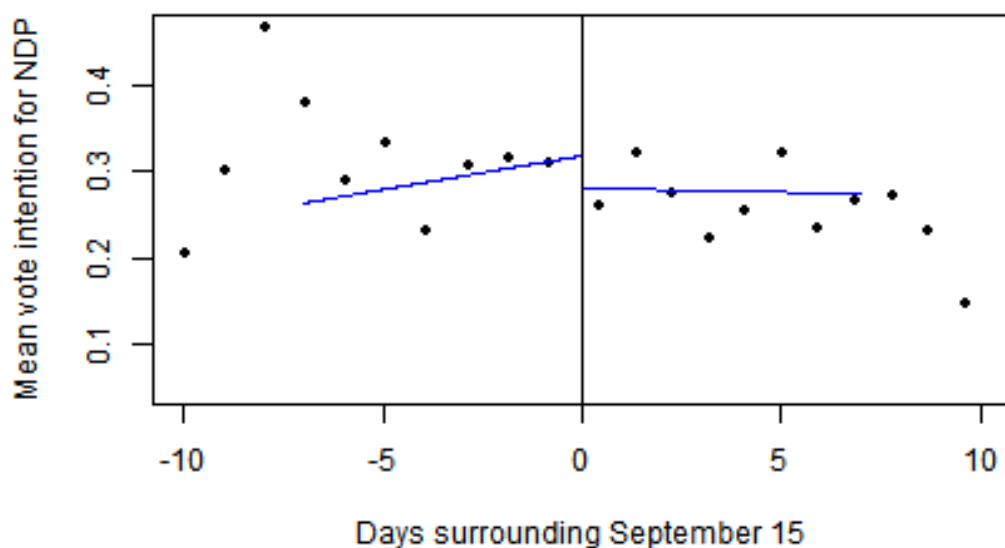


Figure K.1: 7-day Quebec

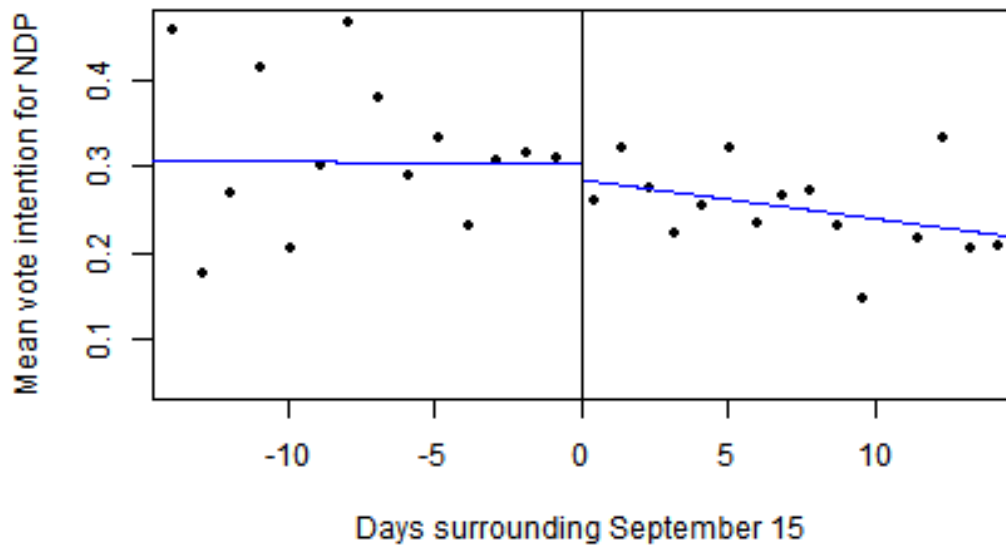


Figure K.2: mserd automatic Quebec

L Testing alternative samples

We test the robustness of our results by employing the full CES sample, which combines the web and phone samples. In the estimations that combine the web and phone samples, we employ a binary variable which registers the mode of the survey (web = 1).

Table L.1: The effects of the niqab ruling on vote intention for the NDP (full sample)

	1: DID Quebec	2: Trend Quebec
Constant	10.40 (3.53)**	10.26 (3.53)**
Quebec	7.69 (2.50)**	7.54 (2.50)**
Voted NDP 2011	46.21 (1.00)***	46.12 (1.00)***
Ruling	-2.90 (1.22)*	-2.49 (1.67)
Trend		-0.03 (0.07)
DID coefficients		
Ruling: Quebec	-9.68 (2.02)***	-1.10 (3.03)
Trend: Quebec		-0.47 (0.13)***
R ²	0.27	0.28
Adj. R ²	0.27	0.27
Num. obs.	6621	6621
RMSE	35.92	35.87

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for DID estimations with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). All models use full CES sample. All models include demographic controls.

Table L.2: The effects of the niqab ruling on vote intention for the NDP (no controls)

	1: DID Quebec	2: Trend Quebec
Constant	24.18 (1.11) ^{***}	24.18 (1.11) ^{***}
Ruling	-2.82 (1.47)	-3.70 (2.30)
Quebec	9.19 (1.76) ^{***}	9.19 (1.76) ^{***}
Ruling: Quebec	-7.58 (2.37) ^{**}	3.60 (3.77)
Trend		0.05 (0.10)
Trend: Quebec		-0.62 (0.17) ^{***}
R ²	0.01	0.01
Adj. R ²	0.01	0.01
Num. obs.	5624	5624
RMSE	42.83	42.76

^{***} $p < 0.001$, ^{**} $p < 0.01$, ^{*} $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for DID estimations with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). All models use full CES sample.

Table L.3: The effects of media coverage of the niqab and vote intention for the NDP (full sample)

	1: 7-day rolling sum	2: Campaign Accumulation
Constant	8.96 (3.44) ^{**}	8.66 (3.44) [*]
Quebec	7.39 (2.35) ^{**}	7.73 (2.32) ^{***}
NDP 2011	46.12 (1.00) ^{***}	46.09 (1.00) ^{***}
7-day niqab	-0.27 (0.14)	
Niqab accumulation		-2.77 (1.94)
Interaction coefficients		
7-day niqab: Quebec	-0.63 (0.18) ^{***}	
Niqab accumulation: Quebec		-17.50 (3.06) ^{***}
R ²	0.27	0.27
Adj. R ²	0.27	0.27
Num. obs.	6621	6621
RMSE	35.92	35.89

^{***} $p < 0.001$, ^{**} $p < 0.01$, ^{*} $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for with standard errors in parenthesis. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). All models use full sample and clustered standard errors by date and include controls.

Table L.4: The effects of media coverage of the niqab and vote intention for the NDP (no controls)

	1: 7-day rolling sum	2: Campaign Accumulation
Constant	23.62 (0.98)***	23.21 (1.03)***
7-day niqab	-0.30 (0.19)	
Quebec	9.43 (1.61)***	10.49 (1.63)***
7-day niqab: Quebec	-0.51 (0.23)*	
Niqab accumulation		-2.38 (2.73)
Niqab accumulation: Quebec		-17.47 (3.94)***
R ²	0.01	0.01
Adj. R ²	0.01	0.01
Num. obs.	5624	5624
RMSE	42.81	42.78

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for with standard errors in parenthesis. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). All models use full web sample and clustered standard errors by date.

M Quebec 2011 NDP voters

To better understand the results, we run all the models found in Table 1 and 2 but instead investigate only the Quebec sub-sample. As noted above, many Quebec voters cast a ballot for the NDP for the first time in 2011 and their loyalty to the party may have been influenced in particular by the niqab ruling. Alternatively, the party may have been able to persuade their supporters of their issue position (Tesler 2015).

Tables M.1 and M.2 show the results with and without controls. Here, the DID control and treatment groups are those who voted for the NDP in 2011 and those who did not. The effects shown are strikingly similar as the Rest of Canada-Quebec comparison, with no sharp discontinuity but effects for both linear trend and media coverage measures particularly in this group. The effect is very strong, with a daily erosion of support by approximately one point each day after the niqab court ruling among Quebecers who voted NDP in 2011. The court ruling occurred thirty-four days before the election which, in substantive terms means that a 2011 NDP supporter was ~ 53 percentage points more likely to vote for the NDP than other Quebecers on September 14th but only ~ 20 percentage points more likely by the date of the election on October 19th.

The exogenous shock seemed to have an important impact on those Quebecers who supported NDP in the previous election. This is consistent with an interesting evolution we observe in the data: the percentage of those reporting NDP party identification is always smaller than the percentage of those expressing a vote intention for the same party (for the comparative evolution of party identification and vote intention for the three major parties across the campaign, see Appendix G). A weak and volatile identification with the NDP may have made this party's potential voters more receptive to information effects and campaign priming.

Table M.1: The effects of the niqab ruling on vote intention for the NDP (DID)

	1: DID	2: Trend	3: DID (no controls)	4: Trend (no controls)
Constant	16.78 (7.62)*	15.27 (7.56)*	19.29 (1.92)***	19.29 (1.90)***
Ruling	-9.15 (2.69)***	-4.14 (4.37)	-8.62 (2.61)***	-3.48 (4.24)
Voted NDP 2011	49.21 (3.20)***	49.09 (3.17)***	50.16 (3.11)***	50.16 (3.09)***
Ruling:Voted NDP 2011	-10.65 (4.32)*	6.17 (6.97)	-11.89 (4.23)**	2.68 (6.79)
Trend		-0.28 (0.19)		-0.28 (0.18)
Trend: Voted NDP 2011		-0.97 (0.31)**		-0.85 (0.30)**
R ²	0.24	0.26	0.23	0.24
Adj. R ²	0.24	0.25	0.23	0.24
Num. obs.	1504	1504	1580	1580
RMSE	40.56	40.22	40.68	40.39

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for DID estimations with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). All models use Quebec web sample. Models 1 and 2 include demographic controls.

Table M.2: The effects of media coverage of the niqab and vote intention for the NDP

	1: 7-day	2: Acc.	3: 7-day (no controls)	4: Acc. (no controls)
Constant	15.29 (7.57)*	14.74 (7.53)	18.93 (1.80)***	18.80 (1.76)***
NDP 2011	48.72 (2.97)***	50.74 (2.93)***	49.14 (2.89)***	51.00 (2.85)***
7-day niqab	-0.66 (0.20)***		-0.65 (0.19)***	
NDP 2011:7-day niqab	-0.83 (0.31)**		-0.85 (0.30)**	
Niqab accumulation		-14.17 (4.07)***		-13.63 (3.94)***
NDP 2011:Niqab accumulation		-25.96 (6.68)***		-25.69 (6.52)***
R ²	0.25	0.25	0.23	0.24
Adj. R ²	0.24	0.25	0.23	0.24
Num. obs.	1504	1504	1580	1580
RMSE	40.52	40.25	40.64	40.43

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for with standard errors in parenthesis. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). All models use full web sample and clustered standard errors by date; first two models include demographic controls.

N Media mentions and sentiment

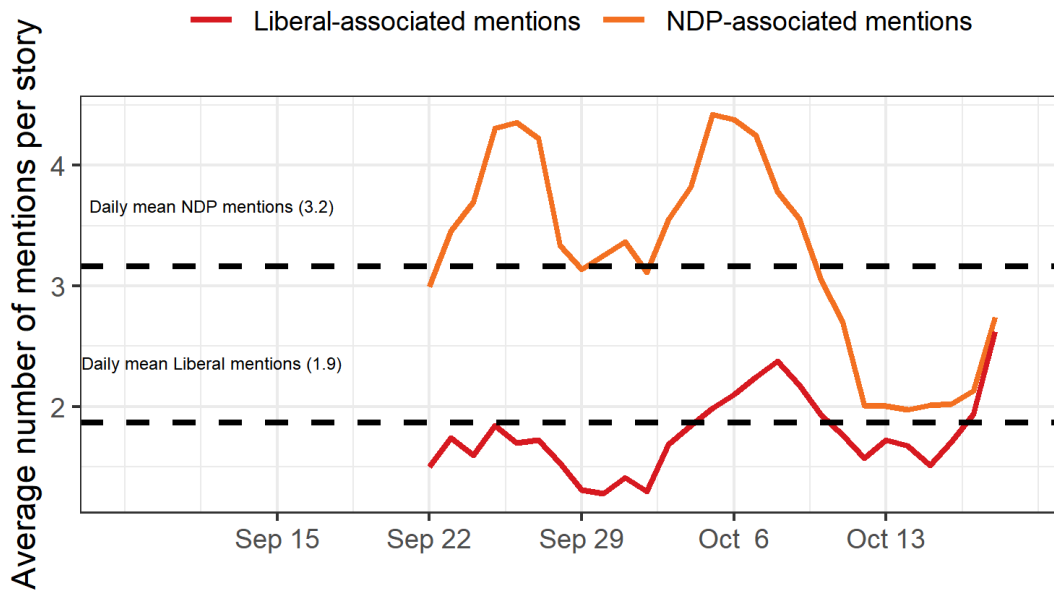


Figure N.1: Moving average ($n = 7$) number of mentions of NDP and Mulcair versus Liberals and Trudeau per article in Quebec media over the campaign period

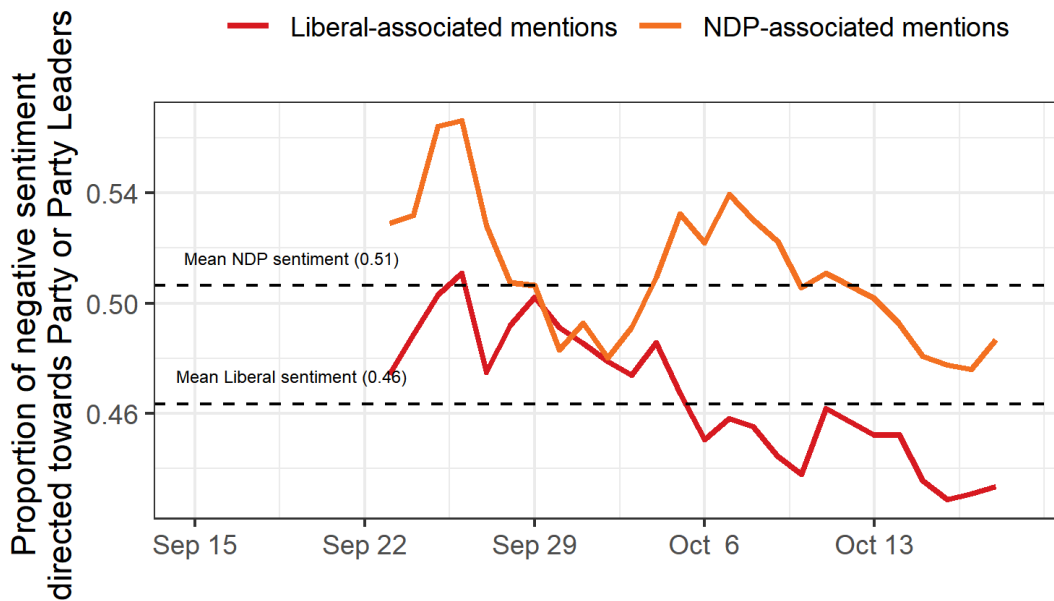


Figure N.2: Moving average ($n = 7$) of negative sentiment directed towards NDP and Mulcair versus Liberals and Trudeau in Quebec media over the campaign period

The original French version of the passage appears in the body of the text reads as follows:

...mais il y avait comme un voile cachant en partie le message de Thomas Mulcair tout le long de cette visite de 24 heures au Nunavut. Comme un niqab, pour être plus précis, qui a collé sur la campagne néo-démocrate à Iqaluit...Contre Justin Trudeau, qui mise sur un programme d'infrastructures et sur une aide financière directe non imposable aux jeunes familles, et contre Stephen Harper, le maître du message simple. (La Presse, October 1, 2019: Comme une voile sur cette campagne)

Here are an additional four selected (translated by authors) passages. The first article dates to four days after the court ruling and provides an example of how the NDP fumbled and how Mulcair and the NDP quickly became attacked on the issue.

The Conservatives and Bloc Québécois have benefited from the recent court ruling on the wearing of the niqab to help them attack their opponents. Stephen Harper's party has announced another judicial appeal and accused Thomas Mulcair and Justin Trudeau of going against the opinions of Canadians. Meanwhile, the Bloc Québécois have launched a campaign ad targeting the NDP on the issue. Thomas Mulcair, for his part, has not been entirely clear on his position and avoided the question of whether he will withdraw the appeal, as the Liberals have promised. "We will respect the decision of the court", he replied while noting that "the courts are there for protecting the rights of religious freedom".

Conservateurs et bloquistes ont profité du jugement récent des tribunaux sur le port du niqab pour taper sur leurs adversaires. Les troupes de Stephen Harper ont annoncé un nouveau recours judiciaire, tout en accusant Thomas Mulcair et Justin Trudeau d'aller à l'encontre de la volonté des Canadiens sur cette question. Les troupes de Gilles Duceppe, de leur côté, ont lancé une nouvelle publicité pour s'en prendre à la position du NPD...Division au NPDThomas Mulcair, de son côté, s'est fait discret sur la question, évitant de préciser s'il retirerait, comme les libéraux, l'appel du fédéral. "Nous allons respecter les tribunaux", a-t-il répondu, en no-

tant que... “les tribunaux sont là pour garantir la liberté de religion”. (Le Devoir
September 19, 2015: Le niqab devient une arme électorale)

A second article comes from six days after the court decision, where the story focuses on Mulcair and the niqab is brought up several times and internal divisions in the NDP approach are highlighted.

The leader of the NDP did not condemn the statements of the members of his party who compared the campaign advertisement of the Bloc Québécois (on the NDP position on the niqab) to those of the Front National. “People need to understand that the law already requires that people show their face when they become citizens. The real focus of this campaign are the politics of fear and division of Stephen Harper”. Thomas was visiting Newfoundland all day.

Le chef du NPD a cependant évité de condamner les déclarations de son propre personnel, qui comparait une publicité du Bloc québécois au Front national. « Les gens doivent comprendre que la loi exige qu’une femme qui porte le niqab se dévoile avant de pouvoir devenir citoyenne. Le vrai sujet de la campagne, ce sont les politiques de peur et de division de Stephen Harper. » Thomas Mulcair était en visite à Terre-Neuve toute la journée. (La Tribune, September 21, 2015: Les faits sont connus, dit Mulcair)

The third is an article from several days later and shows the strong connections being made between between the NDP and the Niqab; the report talks at length about Mulcair’s position and only briefly mentions Trudeau.

Thomas Mulcair had been silent about the issue of the niqab for a week, but he was adamant on Tuesday: he opposes the ban on wearing a full veil at citizenship ceremonies...This position seems to be damaging his support in Montreal, where some of his election posters have been vandalized...Would Mulcair support a Conservative law? “No more than I would vote for a law that would take away the freedom of press”, replied the leader of the NDP to the journalist who asked him the question.

Thomas Mulcair s'était fait discret sur la question du niqab depuis une semaine, mais il a été catégorique mardi: il s'oppose à l'interdiction du voile intégral aux cérémonies de citoyenneté et rejetterait un projet de loi en ce sens. Une position qui semble déranger à Montréal, où certaines de ses pancartes électorales ont été vandalisées...M. Mulcair appuiera-t-il une loi conservatrice ? "Pas plus que je voterais en faveur d'une loi qui vous enlèverait la liberté de presse, voyons donc", a lancé le chef du NPD à la journaliste qui venait de lui poser la question. (Le Devoir, September 23, 2015: Le niqab, source de discorde)

Finally, an article published in the Journal de Montréal the day before the election which lamented how the niqab had been focused on the whole campaign and then suddenly dropped the last week.

The whole campaign we have discussed the woman in the niqab. The woman in the niqab over there, the woman in the niqab over here. Hundreds of people went and voted with their faces covered because of the woman in the niqab. The campaign of Tom Mulcair was derailed because of the woman in the niqab. The story of the woman in the niqab was told around the world and, in the debates, the most passionate moments were those that concerned the woman in the niqab.

Tout le long de la campagne, on a parlé de la femme au niqab. La femme au niqab par-ci, la femme au niqab par-là. Des centaines de personnes sont allées voter masquées à cause de la femme au niqab. La campagne de Tom Mulcair a dérapé à cause de la femme au niqab. L'histoire de la femme au niqab a fait le tour du monde et, dans les débats, les moments les plus enflammés et les plus passionnés concernaient la femme au niqab. (Le Journal de Montréal, October 18, 2015: La femme au niqab)

O Priming the niqab issue

Figure O.1 shows a Quebec distinctiveness, with Quebecers much more likely to favour a niqab ban and generally express lower support for Muslims as compared to those residing in the rest of Canada. The results are based on the CES post-election survey.

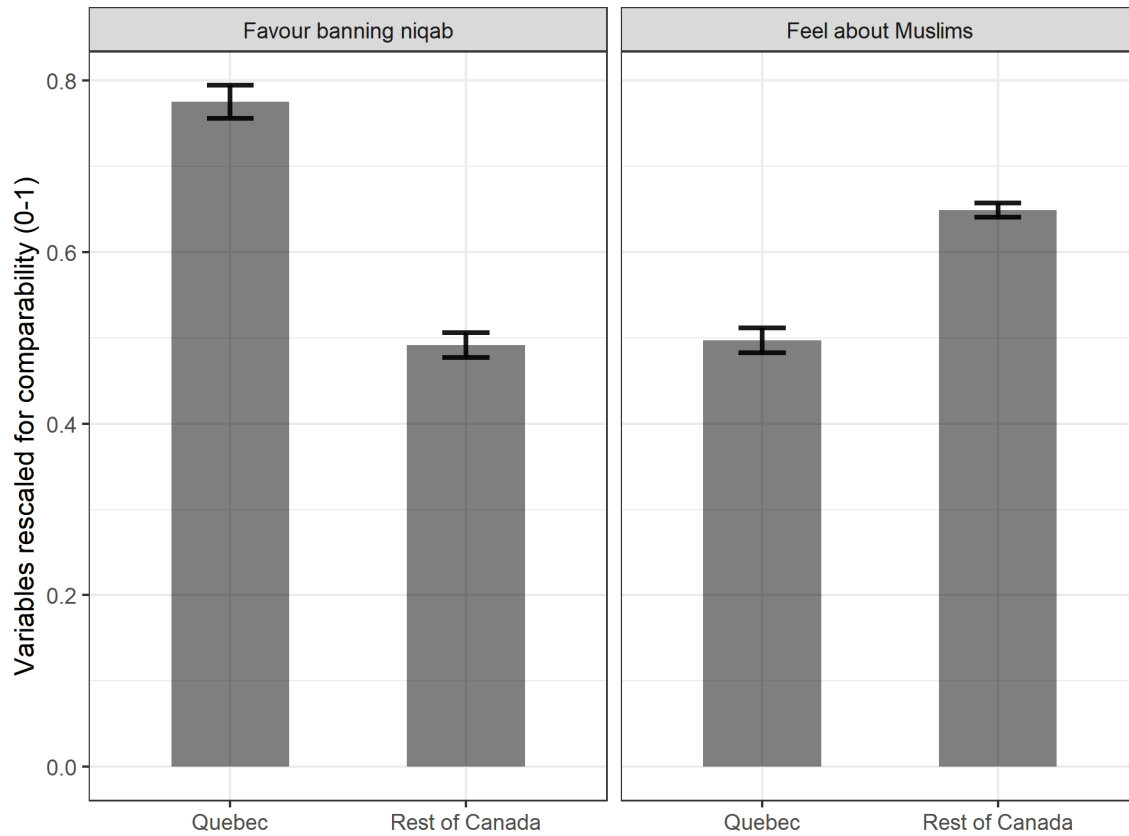


Figure O.1: Quebec distinctive opinion towards Muslims and the niqab ban

Of critical interest to us here, however, is the extent to which opinions on this issue structured the vote. Figure O.2 shows comparisons across respondents who replied to both the pre- and post-election survey. The sample focuses only on decided voters in the pre-election survey. We observe only one group for which there is a notable difference between intended and reported vote: the bottom left panel shows that those who replied to the survey before the issue was primed by the September 15th court ruling and were in favour of a niqab ban were much less likely to actually vote NDP. Other notable comparisons include: those in favour of the ban and those against (left columns in the left panels) who were equally likely to express an intention to vote for the NDP in the pre-court ruling period; those in favour of the ban who were surveyed in the pre- and post-ruling periods were equally likely to end of voting for the NDP (right columns in the bottom panels); and the sizeable difference in reported vote for the groups for and against the niqab ban.

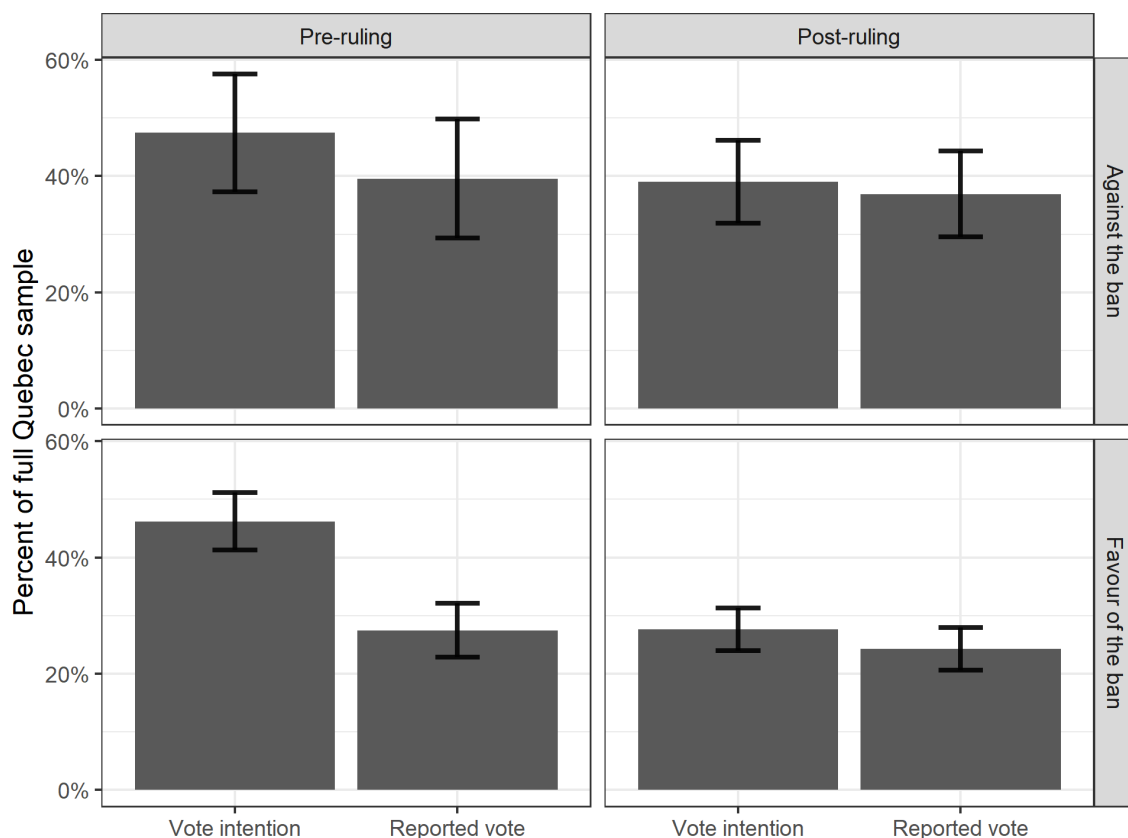


Figure O.2: Pairwise comparisons for vote intention and reported vote for the NDP across various Quebec sub-samples

P Testing pre-trends

The following two tests show no pre-trend in relation to the evolution of the NDP vote intention before the court ruling. Table P.1 shows the first two models (with and without controls) that test for an overall pre-court ruling trend of a Quebec-specific linear trend. This is a common test for the parallel trend assumption and we find no pre-trend in both models.

Table P.1: Pre-trend test for DID comparing Quebec and the Rest of Canada

	1: Pre-trend test (controls)	2: Pre-trend test (no controls)
Constant	16.68 (7.43)*	23.92 (2.03)***
Female	-4.17 (1.90)*	
Age	-0.03 (0.08)	
French	2.86 (3.68)	
British Columbia	3.59 (5.00)	
Ontario	-2.20 (4.15)	
Prairies	-3.09 (4.71)	
Quebec	3.72 (5.52)	9.71 (3.18)**
Working	-0.76 (2.66)	
Student	1.84 (5.45)	
Retired	0.88 (3.37)	
High School	-1.85 (4.39)	
Bachelor's Degree	-0.23 (4.38)	
Graduate Degree	2.61 (4.99)	
Vote 2011 NDP	53.83 (2.04)***	
Pre-trend	0.04 (0.11)	-0.02 (0.11)
Pre-trend:Quebec	0.02 (0.18)	0.03 (0.17)
R ²	0.32	0.01
Adj. R ²	0.31	0.01
Num. obs.	1704	2467
RMSE	38.49	44.61

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. OLS estimations. Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable).

Table P.2 displays a placebo test where we see if there was movement that predated the court ruling. The models with and without controls show that there was no significant movement regarding NDP vote intentions in the week between September 8th and 15th in Quebec or in the rest of Canada.

These pieces of evidence increase the confidence in the parallel trend assumption behind the DID estimation and confirm that what we observe is not determined by a drop in the NDP vote intention before the court ruling.

Table P.2: Pre-trend test for DID comparing Quebec and the Rest of Canada

	1: Trend	2: 1-week dummy	3: 1-week dummy (controls)
Constant	23.92 (2.03)***	24.70 (1.36)***	16.43 (7.29)*
Pre-trend	-0.02 (0.11)		
Quebec	9.71 (3.18)**	9.10 (2.15)***	3.15 (5.01)
Pre-trend: Quebec	0.03 (0.17)		
Sep 8		-1.88 (2.58)	-1.27 (2.70)
Sep 8: Quebec		0.28 (4.12)	0.47 (4.26)
Female			-4.14 (1.90)*
Age			-0.03 (0.08)
French			2.91 (3.68)
British Columbia			3.32 (4.98)
Ontario			-2.30 (4.15)
Prairies			-3.10 (4.70)
Working			-0.74 (2.66)
Student			1.69 (5.44)
Retired			0.83 (3.37)
High School			-1.84 (4.39)
Bachelor's Degree			-0.18 (4.38)
Graduate Degree			2.48 (4.99)
Vote 2011 NDP			53.82 (2.04)***
R ²	0.01	0.01	0.32
Adj. R ²	0.01	0.01	0.31
Num. obs.	2467	2467	1704
RMSE	44.61	44.61	38.49

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. OLS estimations. Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). Sub-sample of respondents before September 15.

Q Evaluating strategic voting

The following models are reproductions of the models found in the body of the paper (Tables 1 and 2), except that they exclude the last week of the campaign where strategic voting is most likely to occur. The results generally hold, except that the combined binary and linear trend treatments of the post-court ruling are not jointly significant; both the binary variable (the court ruling) and the linear trend have a substantive effect and are in the expected direction, however.

Table Q.1: The effects of the niqab ruling on vote intention for the NDP

	1: DID Quebec	2: Trend Quebec	3: Both
Constant	14.64 (5.00)**	14.46 (4.96)**	14.58 (5.00)**
Quebec	8.54 (3.50)*	7.70 (3.38)*	8.44 (3.50)*
Voted NDP 2011	50.24 (1.40)***	50.25 (1.40)***	50.26 (1.40)***
Ruling	-3.30 (1.66)*		-0.87 (2.71)
Trend		-0.20 (0.09)*	-0.17 (0.15)
DID coefficients			
Ruling: Quebec	-7.50 (2.64)**		-3.68 (4.43)
Trend: Quebec		-0.41 (0.14)**	-0.25 (0.24)
R ²	0.29	0.29	0.30
Adj. R ²	0.29	0.29	0.29
Num. obs.	3442	3442	3442
RMSE	37.68	37.65	37.66

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for DID estimations with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). All models use web sample but exclude the last week of the campaign. All models include demographic controls.

Table Q.2: The effects of media coverage of the niqab and vote intention for the NDP

	1: 7-day rolling sum	2: Campaign Accumulation
Constant	13.82 (4.93)**	14.08 (4.95)**
Quebec	8.25 (3.37)*	8.33 (3.40)*
NDP 2011	50.11 (1.39)***	50.14 (1.39)***
7-day niqab	-0.43 (0.22)	
Niqab accumulation		-6.66 (3.85)
Interaction coefficients		
7-day niqab: Quebec	-0.42 (0.27)	
Niqab accumulation: Quebec		-15.15 (5.35)**
R ²	0.29	0.29
Adj. R ²	0.29	0.29
Num. obs.	3494	3494
RMSE	37.67	37.67

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for with standard errors in parenthesis. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). All models use full web sample, with the last week removed, and clustered standard errors by date. All models include demographic controls.

R Alternative modelling strategy

Table R.1 shows the alternative modelling strategy based on a natural experiment framework as employed in Balcells and Torrats-Espinosa (2018), with and without controls. This specification on our data yields an overall 7% effect, with it being almost entirely driven by Quebec respondents who express an 10% decrease in vote intention for the NDP. Note that Model 4 is identical to Model 1 appearing in Table 1, however the logic is different. In the main body we use a DID logic whereas here we model heterogeneous effects of the exogenous shock on Quebec versus the rest of Canada.

Table R.1: The effects of the niqab ruling on vote intention for the NDP (DID)

	1: Overall	2: Overall (controls)	3: Quebec	4: Quebec (controls)
Constant	27.81 (0.86)***	17.10 (4.73)***	24.18 (1.11)***	14.18 (4.77)**
Quebec		3.38 (3.07)	9.19 (1.76)***	9.60 (3.40)**
Ruling	-5.86 (1.15)***	-6.93 (1.24)***	-2.82 (1.47)	-2.69 (1.59)
Ruling: Quebec			-7.58 (2.37)**	-10.62 (2.52)***
R ²	0.00	0.28	0.01	0.28
Adj. R ²	0.00	0.28	0.01	0.28
Num. obs.	5624	3789	5624	3789
RMSE	42.93	37.76	42.83	37.68

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models based on a natural experiment setup with dependent variable as vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary). All models use full web sample. Models 2 and 4 contain demographic controls.

S Local Parliament Project data

Another major academic survey was run during the 2015 Canadian Federal Election. The Local Parliament Project (<https://www.localparliament.ca/>) surveyed approximately 37,000 Canadians seeking to get representative samples (more information on the survey can be found here: <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/DACHKP>).

Table S.1 matches Table 1. Here the results are directionally similar but are smaller in effect size. We note that the LPP survey began on August 26, 2015 and thus the CES contains two weeks of pre-treatment observations that the LPP is missing.

Table S.1: The effects of the niqab ruling on vote intention for the NDP (DID)

	1: DID Quebec	2: Trend Quebec
Constant	14.86 (1.81) ^{***}	14.80 (1.81) ^{***}
Quebec	8.79 (1.15) ^{***}	8.66 (1.15) ^{***}
Voted NDP 2011	41.71 (0.52) ^{***}	41.75 (0.52) ^{***}
Ruling	-2.93 (0.55) ^{***}	-1.34 (0.87)
Trend		-0.08 (0.03) [*]
DID coefficients		
Ruling: Quebec	-6.93 (1.03) ^{***}	-2.79 (1.61)
Trend: Quebec		-0.20 (0.06) ^{***}
R ²	0.21	0.21
Adj. R ²	0.21	0.21
Num. obs.	27434	27434
RMSE	35.81	35.78

^{***} $p < 0.001$, ^{**} $p < 0.01$, ^{*} $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for DID estimations with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). Both models use full LPP sample and include demographic controls.

Table S.2 similarly matches Table C.1 and shows the same effects for Quebec respondents. However, the effects are both smaller in magnitude and there are separate rest of Canada-only effects identified. We note the larger sample size has an effect on the effect of standard errors and could explain the statistical significance for the rest of Canada.

Table S.2: The effects of media coverage of the niqab and vote intention for the NDP

	1: 7-day rolling sum	2: Campaign Accumulation
Constant	14.75 (1.80) ^{***}	14.54 (1.80) ^{***}
Quebec	8.26 (1.09) ^{***}	8.11 (1.09) ^{***}
NDP 2011	41.72 (0.52) ^{***}	41.79 (0.52) ^{***}
7-day niqab	-0.41 (0.06) ^{***}	
Niqab accumulation		-4.58 (0.85) ^{***}
Interaction coefficients		
7-day niqab: Quebec	-0.29 (0.09) ^{***}	
Niqab accumulation: Quebec		-8.83 (1.41) ^{***}
R ²	0.21	0.21
Adj. R ²	0.21	0.21
Num. obs.	27434	27434
RMSE	35.79	35.80

^{***} $p < 0.001$, ^{**} $p < 0.01$, ^{*} $p < 0.05$. Linear probability models for with standard errors in parenthesis. Dependent variable: vote intention for the NDP in the 2015 Canadian federal elections (binary variable). Both models use full LPP sample, cluster standard errors by date, and include demographic controls.

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