

**Prejudice and Asymmetrical Opinion Structures: Public opinion
toward immigration in Canada.**

Jessica Fortin

Department of Political Science
McGill University
855 Sherbrooke Street West
Montréal, Québec
H3A 2T7
<Jessica.fortin1@mail.mcgill.ca>

&

Peter John Loewen

Département de science politique
Université de Montréal
C-4006 Pavillon Lionel-Groulx
3150 Jean-Brillant
Montréal, Québec
H3T 1N8
<Peter.john.loewen@umontreal.ca>

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Introduction

Compared to most nations, Canada's tradition of immigration has been uncommonly durable, and consistently characterized by predominantly liberal and moderate control policies. Unsurprisingly then, aside from Australia and Israel, Canada has received more immigrants per capita since 1945 than any other country in the world. Given its history as a place of large scale immigration and the size of its foreign born population, the government has at times struggled with the public perception that foreigners have abused Canada's immigration system and that restriction is desirable.¹ However, Canadians are in general more open to immigration when compared to American's often hardening attitudes towards this phenomenon.² This qualitative difference between public attitudes affords a great research opportunity. Specifically, it allows us to call into question hypotheses about public opinion towards immigration in a country in which the balance of opinion is much different than the United States, where the majority of research into opinions on immigration has been generated, and thus tested. In short, the Canadian case, in which we witness both support for increased immigration and calls for restrictions, is unique.

What explains increases and decreases in support for legal immigration in Canada? More specifically, are researchers mistaken in assuming that the factors associated with support for decrease are the same as the factors associated with increase? In the event that they are not part of the same causal process, what methods of demonstration are best-suited for assessing asymmetrical causal processes? The unique nature of immigration public opinion Canada allows us to begin answering these questions, and additionally to test the robustness of various hypotheses coming from different research traditions. Indeed, very few studies have bridged the different testable hypotheses scattered across different disciplines. It is our goal to do just this, while determining the best method for doing so.

We conduct our demonstration over four parts. First, we review the main hypotheses on public opinion towards immigration, particularly the synthesizing work of Citrin, Green, Muste, and Wong, and Espenshade and Calhoun, drawing their work together into three main hypotheses. A review of these hypotheses makes clear the need to consider multiple and asymmetric causal processes. Second, we review our method, paying particular attention to our data and the model with which we choose to analyze this, the multinomial logit. We demonstrate how we come to this model by a process of elimination, highlighting along the way the substantive advantages of using this technique. Next, we present our specifications and results. Finally, we review our findings and discuss their implications for our understanding of public opinion toward immigration in Canada, and the general hypotheses about public opinion and immigration.

2.0 Theory

The vast majority of studies on public opinion toward immigration concentrate on either side of the question, asking what drives support for increased immigration over status

¹ Manuel Garcia y Griego. 1994. "Canada: Flexibility and Control in Immigration and Refugee Policy," in Wayne Al. Cornelius, et al. *Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective*, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, p.120.

² R.J. Simon and S.H. Alexander. 1993. *The Ambivalent Welcome: Print Media, Public Opinion and Immigration*, Westport, CT: Praeger.

quo, or more commonly, support for less immigration. Studies do not typically examine all three of these possibilities simultaneously. Moreover, when these options are considered simultaneously, researchers have generally considered the causal processes to be symmetrical. By employing ordered models (in which the choices over immigration policy are arranged ordinal), it is assumed by nearly all scholars that the direction of the relationship between the various independent variables and restrictive opinions will be inverted in the cases of subjects favoring an increase in immigration. In other words, if an increase in factor A increases support for more immigration, a decrease in factor A will increase support for restrictions on immigration. However, we believe that the causal processes at work in both attitudes may not be identical or symmetrical. Moreover, the use of ordered models forces the data in this restrictive distribution of results. Accordingly, we first sketch a general argument for asymmetrical processes (Section 2.1), and we then review and regroup the various hypotheses (Sections 2.2 and 2.3).

2.1 The Case for Asymmetry

Most existing inquiries on the roots of attitudes towards immigration levels are largely individual-based, whether they employ social-psychological or self-interest based approaches. However, studies on racial prejudice conducted in sociology point to the existence of a group-based and irrational sources of prejudice in public opinion that, not only are not often taken into account in models, but also lead us to believe that opinion formation in support for increased immigration is qualitatively different than support for a decrease in numbers. For sociologist Lincoln Quillian, “Prejudice is characterized by irrationality (a faulty generalization) and emotional evaluation (antipathy).”³ In that understanding, measuring for rational individual satisfaction with personal finances, for example, may possibly not tap into the emotional and irrational domain of prejudice. In addition, at the group level, from the work of Herbert Blumer, prejudices are often a response to threats to established group privileges and the feelings are not necessarily linked to the individual interests of group members.⁴ These explanations cast doubt on the proposition that attitudes towards restriction have the same causal patterns than attitudes favoring increase. Indeed, the propensity of individuals to rely on group-based and/or prejudicial feelings may differ

There are numerous theories and subsequent philosophies which suggest what drives support for immigration in one direction or another across many disciplines of social sciences. Perhaps the most succinct summation of these to date is provided by Espenshade and Calhoun and Espenshade and Hempstead who identify five basic theories about support for the restriction of illegal immigration. Although we will be reviewing and using these categories, we believe these can easily be more efficiently grouped into 3 categories. Furthermore, we consider that these theories apply equally for legal immigration, following Day (1990), who has noted the general conflation of illegal and legal immigration.

2.2 Existing Hypotheses

A) *Education Hypotheses*

³ Lincoln Quillian. 1995. “Prejudice as a Response to Perceived Group Threat: Population Composition and Anti-Immigrant and Racial Prejudice in Europe,” *American Sociological Review*, 60(4):587.

⁴ Herbert Blummer. 1958. “Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position,” *Pacific Sociological Review* 1(3): 3-7, in Quillian, p.386.

The first and more widely supported hypotheses suggest that, because education is liberating, knowledgeable individuals are less likely to be turned off by simple, value-laden, categorical arguments for the restriction of immigration. On the other hand, some scholars believe that “advanced education simply allows individuals to construct more sophisticated ideologies to protect group interests”.⁵ Despite these competing hypotheses, a consensus exists that education is important to the development of opinions toward immigration.

B) *Individual correlates*

In general hypotheses derived from this perspective presuppose that we can associate the questions about attitudes on immigration with individual characteristics such as age, working class status and sex. Many researchers demonstrate that personal correlates such as income and occupational prestige were more often than not positively associated with receptivity to immigration.⁶ Moreover, results from studies also demonstrate that people from working classes, as well as older cohorts and lower educational achievements tend to express more prejudice, hence be more likely to be opposed to immigration.⁷ Following Espenshade and Calhoun’s findings that women express more negative attitudes than men towards illegal immigrants, considering the effect of gender on attitudes towards immigration could also shed light on opinion formation on immigration policy preferences. Using Canadian data from 1975 to 1994, Douglas Palmer also found evidence that women were more opposed than men to immigration.⁸

C) *Self-Interest*

Cost-benefit and self-interest hypotheses suggest that opinions are formed principally on material concerns, and that individuals will form attitudes mainly by following their assessment of the economic impacts of immigration. In other word, this classic perspective assumes the self-interest leads individuals to “support those policies that maximize benefits and minimizes costs to the individual’s private material being.”⁹ In the case of support for decreased levels of immigration, the general understanding is that attitudes result from either blaming the target group for economic hardship, scape-goating, or from competition with the group for scarce resources.

One of central the *self-Interest* derived conjectures suggests that immigrants are perceived as taking jobs from individuals of low socio-economic status (SES), especially

⁵ M. Hoskin, W. Mishler. 1983. “Public Opinion Toward New Migrants: A Comparative Analysis,” *International Migration*, 21(4)440-462, Day, C.L. 1989. “US Hispanics and Immigration Reform,” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Il. April 13-15, Day, C.L. 1990. “Ethnocentrism, Economic Competition, and Attitudes towards U.S. Immigration Policy,” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Il. April 5-7

⁶ Hoskin & Mishler (1983), C.L. Day 1989. “US Hispanics and Immigration Reform,” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Il. April 13-15, Day, C.L. 1990. “Ethnocentrism, Economic Competition, and Attitudes towards U.S. Immigration Policy,” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Il. April 5-7.

⁷ Minako K. Mayakovich 1975. “Correlates of Racial Prejudice,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 32: 1014-1020, Hyman, Herbert, Charles Wright, & John Reed. 1975. *The Enduring Effects of Education*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, Case, Charles, Andrew Greely and Stephen Fuchs. 1989. “Social Determinants of Racial Prejudice,” *Social Perspectives*, 32:469-483.

⁸ Douglas L. Palmer. 1994. *Anatomy of an Attitude: Origin of the Attitude Toward the Level of Immigration to Canada*, Strategic Planning and Research, Immigration Policy, Citizenship and Immigration Canada. February 3.

⁹ David O. Sears, Carl P. Hensler, Leslie K. Speer. 1979. “Whites’ Opposition to “Busing,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol.73(2), p.369.

union members (who are more likely to be employed in sectors in direct competition with immigrant labour). Indeed, some research demonstrates that respondents might prefer lower levels of immigration if they believe immigrants take jobs away from natives or that they are more likely to depend on the state for subsistence.¹⁰ In that vein, other studies also have demonstrated that unemployed individuals who believe immigrants are taking jobs away from residents are consistently more likely to oppose increases in immigration levels.¹¹ Conversely, the individuals that perceive immigration as not harmful to their personal economic situations are more likely to support increased numbers. Therefore in the case of economic variables, we would expect symmetrical results.

In order to examine the effect of self-interested motives on the opinion formation process, we look at both personal and national retrospective and prospective economic evaluations, following the method employed by Citrin, Green, Muste and Wong, in an article in which they reveal that personal economic circumstances have little effect in opinion formation in the United States.¹² Indeed, they demonstrate that beliefs about the state of the national economy, concern over fiscal policy as well as feelings about the major immigrant groups are the major determinants of restrictionist opinion within the American population, which is a replicated finding from previous studies in sociology.¹³

D) *Cultural Explanations*

The *Cultural Affinity* hypothesis is based on the notion that individuals retain a stock of affinity for those from similar cultural backgrounds. Accordingly, in the American case of illegal immigration, this hypothesis is actualized through higher support for illegal immigration among Hispanics, as the majority of illegal immigrants in the United States are Mexican. In the United States, recent demographic projections have suggested that within two decades Hispanic Americans will constitute the largest minority in the country.¹⁴ The increasing size of the Hispanic population has led to a greater support among members of the group towards increased immigration: in some research, in-group identification has greater effects than standard socio-economic predictors on Hispanic attitudes about questions like immigration.¹⁵ Although there is no group as dominant as the Hispanic diasporas in Canada, we will nevertheless assume that a similar process is at work within the immigrant population, that group identification or feelings of attachment to a group have an important role to play in attitude formation.

E) *Symbolic Politics*

¹⁰ See Espenshade and Calhoun 1993, Espenshade and Hamsstead 1996, Edwin Harwood. 1983. "Alienation: American Attitudes Towards Immigration," *Public Opinion*, 6:49-51.

¹¹ See Palmer (1994).

¹² Jack Citrin, Donald P. Green, Christopher Muste, Cara Wong. 1997. "Public Opinion Toward Immigration Reform: The Role of Economic Motivations." *Journal of Politics* 59(3):858-881.

¹³ David O. Sears, Carolyn L. Funk, 1991. "The Role of Self-Interest in Social and Political Attitudes," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 24(3):1-91, see also Jack Citrin and Donald P. Green. 1990. "The Self-Interest Motive in American Public Opinion," *Research in Micropolitics*, 3:1-28.

¹⁴ Paul R. Campbell. 1994. "Population Projections for States, by Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin : 1993 to 2020," *Current Population Reports* P25-1111. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census. Washington DC: GPO.

¹⁵ Rodolfo O. de la Garza, Jerry L. Polinard, Robert D. Wrinke, and Tomas Longoria, Jr. 1991. "Ethnicity and Attitudes Toward Immigration Policy: The Case of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans in the United States," *Social Science Quarterly*, 72:379-387, M.N Hood III, Irwin L. Morris, Kurt A. Shirkey. 1997. "'¡Quedate o Vente!': Uncovering the Determinants of Hispanic Public Opinion Toward Immigration," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol.50(4): 627-647.

The final group of hypotheses fall under the rubric of *Symbolic Politics*. Rather than being given over entirely to economic calculations, this suggests that individual opinions can be structured and influenced by symbolic triggers, which are reflective of underlying values most likely acquired in one's childhood. Because of this deep early conditioning, whether or not some issues are of any consequence in an adult's life is irrelevant.¹⁶ Analogously at the group level, it was argued by Herbert Blumer, prejudices are often a response to threats to established group privileges and the feelings are not necessarily linked to the individual interests of group members. As it should be apparent, symbolic politics as opposed to self-interest lead to very different predictions about the processes of opinion formation.¹⁷

While self-interest based models may be powerful to explain support for liberal immigration policies, they are likely problematic when we try to explain prejudice among individuals whose interest are not in conflict with the target group, here immigrants. What is more, and also what we believe is evidence that immigration attitudes are not symmetrical, is that the most important studies on symbolic racism have found no link between such attitudes and self-interest indicators.¹⁸ In fact, some studies demonstrate that dominant group member's whose personal interests are not directly vulnerable to other groups are as likely to express prejudice than those individuals whose interests we would consider more directly threatened.¹⁹

Related to this line of inquiry is the theory of "symbolic racism," a more subtle and underground form of racism that came to supplant more overt forms of racism since they are no longer socially acceptable in most advanced democracies. For example, instead of proclaiming that certain ethnicities or cultures are inferior to others, new forms of racism are disguised in statements and actions aimed to defend more nobles and important values.²⁰ In the American case, Espenshade and Calhoun identify the American values of racial equality and the predominance of the English-language. To give an example, they suggest that those concerned about the decline of the English language in America will be concerned about the impact of immigration, and will support a restriction. Contrarily, those concerned with racial equality will be the most receptive to illegal immigration. Three observations should be taken from this: first, symbols are a means by which individuals rationalize their opinions. Second, symbols can work in contrary directions. Finally, there needs to be a clear connection between the symbols which are operationalized and the actual character of the political arena in which the opinions are being measured. In other words, in the Canadian case we must identify symbols which are pertinent to our national discourse.

2.3 Regrouping

By our rendering, these five groups of hypotheses are best collapsed into three sets of hypotheses. We label the first the *Economic Social hypotheses*, which we believe takes up the *individual correlates* and *self-interest hypotheses*. Indeed, all of these hypotheses turn, in one way or another, on the concept that personal opinions are formed by individual interests. Those with lower incomes and educations are both more likely to feel threatened by both the labour market competition of immigrants and the competition for government-

¹⁶ Sears, Hensler & Speer, (1979), p.371.

¹⁷ Sears, Hensler & Speer, (1979), p.372.

¹⁸ Sears, Hensler & Speer, (1979), p.381.

¹⁹ Sears, Hensler & Speer (1979), also Sears and Funk, (1991).

²⁰ David O. Sears 1988. "Symbolic Racism," in P.A Katz & D.A. Taylor (Eds.), *Eliminating Racism: Profiles in Controversy*, New York: Plenum, pp.53-84.

supplied social benefits, while, holding all else equal, lacking the cognitive abilities to understand immigration not as a zero-sum game, but as a process which indeed expands both the economy and the demand for labour.²¹

We take the *Cultural Affinity* hypotheses as presented, adding only that we also expect immigrants to have an affinity for immigrants which transcends culture, and thus generally to be opposed to restrictions on immigration. Similarly, we expect the opinions of visible minorities to be favourable toward increased levels of immigration. Finally, we take the *Symbolic Politics* argument as given, but operationalize it in a manner which is reflective of the dominant national discourse in Canada, specifically, the abiding concern for national unity.

In analyzing these three sets of hypotheses, we do not wish to engage in a zero-sum evaluation in which we assume that one set must be clearly correct or superior. We rather wish to see which, or the combination of what, best explains the different opinions which individuals can take on immigration, and thus leave open the possibility that one group can explain one opinion outcome, and another the opposing opinion outcome. We now review the method which allows for this possibility.

3.0 Methods

Imperative to determining whether multiply causal mechanisms exist in the formation public opinion is the selection of the proper measurement model. Indeed, we believe that researchers should not be agnostic toward the models they employ, or ambivalent toward the effects the models they choose are likely to have on the results which they find. In this sense, while the literature on public opinion formation points to the interplay of a vast array of causal factors, analysts rarely employ models that reflect the richness and complexity of this literature. In fact, we believe that using ordered probability models lays down the rigid analytical point of departure that outcomes are indeed ordered: an assumption we are not ready to make especially in light of the research on symbolic politics. Parameter estimates from an ordered model are likely to underplay or overplay factors that may only be relevant in one of the possible choices, hence seriously biasing our understanding of the process. The more closely a model approximates the patterns under study, the more accurate the parameter estimates.²² For this reason, the models we select should have both theoretical and a substantive justifications. We lay out both through a process of elimination.

3.1 The Model

First, we recognize that our dependent variable is both categorical and non-binary. Since the probability of forming an opinion on immigration cannot be greater than one and less than zero, the explanatory variables cannot have a linear effect on attitudes. In addition, we must outright reject binary models since we believe opinions of wanting immigration levels to stay the same have a substantive meaning. Consequently, we need a model that will deal with a dependent variable with multiple values. Setting aside OLS models – because of the nature of our dependent variable– we are left with six principal choices: ordered, multinomial, and conditional logit, and order, multinomial, and

²¹ R.J. Simon and S.H. Alexander. 1993. *The Ambivalent Welcome: Print Media, Public Opinion and Immigration*, Westport, CT: Praeger and R.J. Simon. 1987. "Immigration and American Attitudes," *Public Opinion*, 10:47-50.

²² See the discussion on model choice in Guy D. Whiten & Harvey D. Palmer. 1996. "Heightening Comparativists' Concern for Model Choice: Voting Behavior in Great Britain and the Netherlands," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 40(1):231-260

conditional probit. We first select between logit and probit, and subsequently among the three varieties.

Leaving aside different assumptions which these two models make about population density functions, the principal difference between these models is that the logit assumes the irrelevance of independent alternatives, meaning that the cross-elasticity of demand for an existing alternative with respect to a new alternative is uniform across alternatives.²³ Put another way, this assumes that if alternative D is introduced among Alternatives A, B, and C, then the proportion of preferences for A, B, or C will not change. This is a difficult assumption to meet, and should usually bias researchers towards the probit. However, our dependent variable exhausts the available responses, and as such we need not be restricted by IIA. Consequently, we settle on logit over probit models.

Of logit varieties multinomial, ordered, and, conditional, we select the multinomial. We believe it both theoretically and substantively better suited to our questions than both the ordered and the conditional. We first consider the multinomial versus the conditional logit. The principal distinction between these models is that one is designed for choice-specific effects (the conditional logit), while the other is intended for characteristic effect measurement (the multinomial).²⁴ Whereas econometricians often argue for a pure application of either of these models, in practice they can often be mixed. As the majority of the factors we wish to test are in fact characteristic specific, we side with the multinomial model. We are thus left to choose between the multinomial and the ordered logit; the most important decision in our case.

Ordered models assume a clear order to possible responses. In other words, it assumes that the ordering of these options is uniform and single-peaked for every respondent. Presumably in the case of opinions on immigration policies, it is not clear that this is the case for every respondent, and as such we should not assume that it is so. Second, the multinomial specification allows us to test the possibility that certain variables separately affect opinion in each direction: not supporting increase is not the same as supporting decrease. MNL being a less restrictive model, it allows us to better reveal the complexities of attitudes on immigration levels. In other words, if we were to select the ordered over the multinomial logit, we would be faced with two possible inferential errors. First, the ordered logit returns a coefficient as significant which is only significant in one of the pairings in the multinomial logit. When this is the case, we may over interpret the significance of a variable, understanding it is as predictor of support in the direction of more immigration, when it is in fact simply a predictor of the support of the status quo over restriction. Second, the ordered logit returns a coefficient which is not discernible from zero, but is significant in the multinomial equation in one direction. In this instance, we are liable to miss a factor which bears significantly on the formation of opinions we wish to understand. As such, we choose the multinomial over the ordered logit.

3.2 Data and specifications

To test our various hypotheses, we perform four multinomial logit estimates, each time adding a series of variables, and retaining those from the earlier stages. We begin with basic demographic and occupational variables, then adding contextual variables next. In the following step, we then include perceptions of the national economy. Our

²³ Vani K. Borooah. 2002. *Logit and Probit: ordered and Multinomial Models*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, p.73.

²⁴ Borooah, p.47.

penultimate stage includes measures of party and ideological affiliation, followed finally by a measure of the perceived impact of immigration.

Our principal demographic variables – Age, Education, and Income – are coded 0 to 1, with 0 representing the lowest score, and 1 representing an upper bound (the exact codings and values can be found in the appendix). We also include dummy variables indicating if a respondent is a visible minority, a female, and/or and immigrant. The occupational variables included in the model are a series of dummies indicating if a respondent is self-employed, retired, a student, a homemaker, or disabled. In this case, the comparison group is full-time employment. We also include a dummy indicating whether the respondent or a member of their immediate household is a union member. Contextually, we include 0 to 1 variables measuring the percentage of foreign-born individual's in the respondent's riding, as well as the percentage of unemployment.

To capture economic perceptions, we include four different measures, representing the four possible combinations of the personal-national and retrospective-prospective decision rules: personal prospective economic evaluations, personal retrospective economic evaluations, national prospective economic evaluations, and national retrospective economic evaluations. These are coded 0 to 1, positive to negative. We measure political and ideological affiliation with a series of dummies. The party identification variables indicate if the respondent is a strong or moderately strong identifier with one of the five major federal parties. The left and right dummies indicate if an individual self-identifies with the left or right.

Finally, to measure the influence of the perceived impact of immigration, we include a 0 to 1 scale drawn from three questions, measuring disagreement to agreement that immigrants do not make an important contribution to Canada, that Canadian unity is weakened when Canadians of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds “stick to their old ways”, and that “too many immigrants just don’t want to fit into Canadian society.” We believe this captures the essence of Symbolic Politics. Indeed, no two issues have been as central to Canadian national discourse, and arguably, to “Canadian identity” than multiculturalism and a preoccupation with Canadian unity. Accordingly, the Symbolic Politics hypothesis would suggest that those who score highly on the Impact measure are likely to be opposed to immigration as threatening to Canadian unity. Conversely, those who value multiculturalism over integration and assimilation are not likely to be persuaded by restrictionist arguments made on those grounds.

3.3 MNL Estimations of attitudes on immigration levels

Considering only demographic and occupational variables in Table 1, we already notice from this first model that the variables at work in support for decrease and increase do not always work in a symmetrical pattern. The differences in the factors accounting for open versus restrictive opinions about immigration suggests that mass opinion formation about immigration is even more complex than previously hypothesized; restrictive versus open feelings towards immigration levels each stem from a different combination of factors. For example, we find that education and immigrant status decrease the probability of favouring restriction over the current levels of immigration, a probability further decreased if the respondent is a student. However, if a respondent works part-time, they are likely to favour restriction over the status quo. Therefore when a variable is a predictor on one side of the question, it is not necessarily on the other. This is also exemplified by the variable female which has a significant effect on the probability of supporting an increase in immigration, but not on support for decrease.

- Insert Table 1 about here -

Adding the four types of economic evaluations further clarifies the picture of what leads to support for restriction or expansion.²⁵ Education, immigrant status, being self-employed, retired, or a student still decrease the probability of choosing restriction over the status-quo, and higher percentages of immigrants in a riding tends towards supporting restriction. But we also see that negative personal and national retrospective economic evaluations increase the probability of choosing restriction over current levels of immigration. These two factors also decrease the probability of choosing expansion over the status quo. Moreover, despite having no effect on the choice between maintenance and restriction, negative national prospective evaluations decrease the probability of choosing expanded over current levels of immigration.

Upon the addition of partisan and ideological affiliations, the direction and significance of our results in the previous stage remain the same substantively. However, we supplement to this the finding that those who identify with the Bloc Quebecois are more likely to favour restriction over the status quo, while those who self-identify with the left are less likely to favour this restriction. Furthermore, identifying with the left and/or the NDP increases the probability of supporting an increase over the status quo.

- Insert Table 2 about here -

It is when we fully specify our model by including a measure of the perceived impact of immigration that the most interesting results emerge.²⁶ However, most variables included in previous models continue to show independent statistical effects robust enough to survive the addition of a new variable measuring the perceived impact of immigration.

On the restriction side, education yielded strong results that resisted the inclusion of the new variable, and continued to be a strong factor in explaining attitudes favouring restrictionist policies over status quo. Indeed, upon moving from 0 to 1, a respondent would be close to 60 percent less likely to support a decrease over current levels of immigration. Also still significant, net all other factors, are immigrant and visible minority status. Respondents born outside Canada and/or considered visible minorities are respectively 40 percent and 60 percent less likely to favour a decrease than Caucasian and/or Canadian-born individuals. In addition to the respondent's personal characteristics, we also observe that as the percentage of immigrants in a riding increases, individuals become much more likely to favour restrictive policy orientations than the status quo.

Now turning to occupational variables, we notice that occupational status still has significant effects on policy orientations, although standard errors tend to be larger than in model III. For instance, being self-employed or a student both reduce the probability of favouring restriction over the status quo, while being retired is no longer significant in this last model. Regardless of the significance, the direction of the parameter estimate for this category is surprising to the extent that the literature usually depicts retired individuals as more likely to adopt conservative attitudes.²⁷ In this sense, the failure of the age variable to be significant in any direction in most models is also puzzling. In addition, also considering the literature on attitudes about immigration, we note that the

²⁵ The likelihood ratio test between models 1 and 2 indicates that there are significant differences between the 2 models: we therefore reject the null hypothesis that model 1 is not different from model 2.

²⁶ Here, the likelihood ratio test between models 3 and 4 indicates that there are some significant differences between the 2 models: we therefore reject the null hypothesis that model 3 is not different from model 4.

²⁷ Although, the coefficient for the category "retired" is only weakly significant at 0.06.

dummy variables for unemployed individuals and union members also failed to yield statistically significant results. Whether few or many controls are used, these factors do not seem to have the impact the literature suggests they should. Hence, self-interest hypotheses seem to have a lesser influence than expected in the case of restrictionist attitudes.

The inclusion of the perceived impact of immigration in model IV did not have a measurable impact on the effects of political orientation. Even when more controls are added, political orientations are still of importance in determining restrictionist attitudes. Not surprisingly, when all else is taken into account, respondents identifying with the left are still close to 70 percent less likely to favour restriction than people located at the center of the ideological spectrum. Nevertheless, identification with the right does not have a significantly different effect on restrictive attitudes than being at the center, consequently reinforcing our hypothesis that attitudes on immigration levels are not well-suited for ordered models.

Also of significance, negative personal and national retrospective economic evaluations increase the probability of supporting restriction over maintenance of current levels. This clearly demonstrates that Citrin & Al.'s finding about the modest importance of personal retrospective evaluations as a predictor of attitude about the level of immigration does not hold well in the Canadian context. Contrary to Americans, personal evaluations of finances do play a large role for Canadians in shaping their opinions on immigration levels. Unfavorable assessments of one's own situation is strongly associated with a restrictionist outlook, as we can see in Table 2. On the other hand, when controlled for both demographics and political orientations, national retrospective evaluations lose some of their effect in the fourth model. In other words, when all the relevant variables are taken into account, negative evaluations of national economy are no longer significant predictors of support for reducing immigration.

By contrast, prospective evaluations of the economy yield different results. As we move toward negative personal prospective evaluations, individuals become less likely to favour restrictionist policy orientations. Indeed, moving from 0 to 1, an individual would be close to 50 percent less likely to support cuts in levels of immigration. This finding suggests that past and prospective personal economic hardships each have distinctive effects. However, this is not the case with the national evaluations since both past and prospective evaluations parameter estimates are in the same direction. Nevertheless, the factor which most strongly predicts support for decreasing the number of immigrants who come to Canada is a negative evaluation of the impact of immigrants on Canadian unity and society. The move from 0 to 1 on the scale combining measure of disagreement to agreement that immigrants do not make an important contribution to Canada, that Canadian unity is weakened when Canadians of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds "stick to their old ways", and that "too many immigrants just don't want to fit into Canadian society," makes one close to 100 times more likely to favour restrictionist policy orientations. This variable is by far the most influential of all models.

On another front, while gender is not a significant predictor of restrictionist opinions, it becomes significant in predicting the likelihood of more open opinions about immigration. Indeed, being a female makes an individual close to 40 percent less likely to favor increased levels as opposed to status quo. This finding about gender effects on attitudes reinforces our belief that MNL models are the most appropriate models for studying opinion formation processes given their complexity. Women are not more likely to favour restrictionist policies, as some research have demonstrated; they are just less likely to support increased levels.

While identifying with the New Democratic Party maintains the same result as in the preceding stage, economic evaluations, show different effects. In comparison with

previous models, only national evaluations, prospective and retrospective, remain significant. In both cases, there is a decreasing probability of supporting an increase as perceptions become more negative. Contrary to the final decreasing model, personal evaluations of economic situation do not seem impact the belief that levels of immigration should be increased compared to the base category. In addition, for the first time, being a member of a union household decreases the probability of supporting an increase over the status quo. And, finally, the most significant factor in determining support for an increase is the perceived impact of immigration. The more negative the perceived impact, the higher the probability that an individual will support the status quo over an increase.

4.0 Discussion and Conclusions

To conclude, we consider each of our three groups of hypotheses in turn, and then draw general conclusions. We begin with the Economic Social Hypothesis. Recall that this hypothesis suggests generally that individual, demographic attributes are likely to explain an individual's opinion towards immigration. More specifically, the most common variant of the hypothesis suggests that the more likely an individual is to face labour market competition (by being poorly educated, and/or by working in a low-paying, part-time occupation), the more likely she is to oppose immigration. This, we argue, receives partial support in our models. Indeed, when we fully consider all factors, more education makes one less likely to be favourable towards restriction. More directly, negative personal and national retrospective evaluations make one more likely to favour a restriction in immigration, net all other factors. Moreover, while it does not reach a conventional level of significance, the coefficient for negative national prospective evaluations is also in a direction which suggests that cynicism about the state of the economy leads to support for less immigration. Similarly, negative retrospective and prospective evaluations clearly make respondents less likely to support an increase in immigration. Figures 1 displays the range of these effects for national retrospective and prospective evaluations on opinions towards restriction and expansion. As can easily be seen, the range of effects is greater for the choice between restriction and the status quo than between expansion and the status quo.

What is most interesting to observe is that various other Economic Social factors matter for one possible opinion but not another. For example, the percentage of immigrants in a riding is likely to affect attitudes toward restriction, but not toward expansion. Moreover, being a union member is likely to decrease one's probability of supporting an increase, but has no effect on supporting restriction. In short, aside from national economic evaluations, the Economic Social factors affecting immigration opinion are different for expansion and restriction. Accordingly, the degree and type of support the hypothesis receives is conditional upon whether we are speaking of expansion or restriction and not as straightforward and direct as some analysts may have hypothesized.

Our results further suggest that the Cultural Affinity Hypothesis receives similarly weak yet measurable support, but only on the question of whether immigration should be restricted. Indeed (and this further demonstrates the efficacy of the MNL), being an immigrant reduces one's probability of supporting a decrease in immigration over the current levels of immigration. However, being an immigrant or a visible minority has no measurable effect on an individual's probability of favouring an increase in immigration, when all else is taken into account.

It is for the Symbolic Politics hypothesis that we find the most measurable support. Indeed, net all other factors, if a respondent believes that the impact of

immigrants on Canadian unity is negative, then they are highly likely to support a restriction in immigration over the status quo, and the status quo over an increase. As Figure 2 indicates, for an individual who moves from a completely positive view of the impact of immigration on Canadian unity to a completely negative view, the probability of favouring restriction over the status quo moves from 0.04 to 0.828, and the probability of moving from supporting an increase to supporting the status quo moves from 0.49 to 0.01.

Taken together, our observations of asymmetry and our conclusions that each hypothesis receives more or less support raise an interesting puzzle. What explains their coexistence? We are inclined to side with the hypotheses that multiple processes are at work; that individuals may look to self-interest or ideology in structuring their opinions on the expansion of immigration, but in considering restriction, it is prejudice which carries the day. Our own (and others') future research ought to pay attention to this possibility, and consider further its implications for our understanding of both public opinion and prejudice.

We set out to achieve three things in this paper. First, we sought to propose a grouping of hypotheses on public opinion toward immigration and make an argument as to why we would expect some asymmetry in causal processes. The second goal was to propose which model – the multinomial logit – is best-suited to achieve this. And, finally, we intended to weigh in on various hypotheses about the process of opinion formation on immigration levels. In sum, all of our three groups of hypotheses – Economic-Social, Cultural Affinity, and Symbolic Politics – have some predictive power. However, in the case of the first two, this is contingent upon the direction of the question. Only symbolic politics, operationalized here through questions about concerns for Canadian unity, has power in explaining both opposition to and support for immigration, results all the more robust considering the flexibility of our approach. Looking forward, we contend that this should heighten analysts' attention to arguments which incorporate symbolic factors. Equally, it should heighten comparativists' concern for model choice, especially in assessing questions of public opinion.

Table 1: (MNL) OPINIONS ON LEVELS OF IMMIGRATION (Odds Ratio)

Variables	Model 1				Model 2			
	Decrease	Std. err.	Increase	Std. err.	Decrease	Std. err.	Increase	Std. err.
Age	0.84	0.43	3.38*	2.22	0.85	0.46	3.35*	2.25
Education	0.16***	0.05	1.99*	0.76	0.19***	0.06	1.57	0.62
Female	1.09	0.15	0.63***	0.11	1.05	1.15	1.34	0.41
Income	1.19	0.29	1.45	0.43	1.37	0.34	0.71*	0.13
Unemployed	1.51	0.49	1.01	0.02	1	0.02	1.01	0.02
Self employed	0.67*	0.15	1.12	0.28	0.61**	0.14	1.25	0.32
Part Time	1.71**	0.46	0.71	0.34	1.55	0.43	0.73	0.36
Retired	0.67	0.18	1.17	0.36	0.67	0.18	1.25	0.38
Student	0.35***	0.14	0.49	0.26	0.37**	0.15	0.51	0.28
Homemaker	1	0.27	0.61	0.33	0.93	0.26	0.67	0.36
Disabled	1.44	0.69	2.05	1.17	0.99	0.5	2.09	1.26
Union	1.1	0.16	0.88	0.16	1.12	0.16	0.88	0.16
Immigrant	0.57**	0.14	1.14	0.27	0.56**	0.14	1.21	0.29
Visible Minority	0.29***	0.14	1.04	0.39	0.3**	0.14	0.94	0.37
Percent Immigrant	2.97*	1.71	1.64	1.08	3.05*	1.8	1.55	1.07
Personal Retrospective					2.18***	0.49	0.56**	0.17
Personal Prospective					0.58**	0.14	1.12	0.34
National Retrospective					1.71***	0.36	0.42***	0.12
National Prospective					1.74**	0.42	0.51**	0.15
N	1295				1295			
Pseudo R ²	0.06				0.09			
Log Likelihood	-1186.6				-1147.1			
Likelihood Ratio X ²	153.81				232.81			

Analysis is by Multinomial Logistic Regression. Base category is respondent favours status quo. Entries are odds ratios. ***, ** and * indicate significance at the .01, .05, .10 levels, respectively

Table 2: (MNL) OPINIONS ON LEVELS OF IMMIGRATION (Odds Ratio)

Variables	Model 3				Model 4			
	Decrease	Std. err.	Increase	Std. err.	Decrease	Std. err.	Increase	Std. err.
Age	0.89	0.49	2.95	2	0.9	0.53	3.17	2.24
Education	0.23***	0.08	1.44	0.57	0.4***	0.14	0.86	0.36
Female	1.07	0.16	0.69**	0.13	1.25	0.17	0.61***	0.12
Income	1.29	0.33	1.42	0.44	1.15	0.32	1.32	0.42
Unemployed	1.43	0.48	1.2	0.65	1.01	0.02	2	0.02
Self employed	0.64**	0.15	1.1	0.29	0.66*	1.17	0.88	0.24
Part Time	1.55	0.43	0.68	0.33	1.73*	0.51	0.52	0.27
Retired	0.69	0.19	1.24	0.39	0.63	0.19	1.25	0.4
Student	0.43**	0.18	0.44	0.25	0.38**	0.17	0.35*	0.21
Homemaker	0.93	0.26	0.61	0.34	0.98	0.29	0.48	0.28
Disabled	1.04	0.53	1.81	1.1	1.05	0.58	1.28	0.84
Union	1.18	0.17	0.85	0.16	1.22	0.19	0.72*	0.14
Immigrant	0.55**	0.15	1.2	0.29	0.58*	0.17	1.07	0.27
Visible Minority	0.34**	0.16	1.01	0.4	0.38*	0.19	0.79	0.32
Percent Immigrant	4.08**	2.51	1.37	0.95	9.41***	6.24	1.12	0.81
Personal Retrospective	2.15***	0.48	0.58*	0.17	1.71**	0.41	0.74	0.24
Personal Prospective	0.58**	0.14	1.12	0.34	0.49***	0.13	1.07	0.34
National Retrospective	1.72**	0.37	0.40***	0.12	1.52*	0.35	0.56*	0.18
National Prospective	1.8**	0.44	0.47**	0.14	1.87**	0.48	0.53**	0.17
Liberal ID	1.01	0.21	0.96	0.23	1.09	0.24	1	0.25
Alliance ID	1.02	0.27	1.27	0.43	0.78	0.22	1.73	0.25
Conservative ID	0.79	0.3	1.04	0.51	0.83	0.33	1.34	0.67
NDP ID	1.06	0.51	2.6**	1.16	0.136	0.75	1.91	0.86
Bloc ID	1.75	0.62	0.88	0.5	1.38	0.51	1.25	0.74
Left	0.24***	0.08	1.51*	0.35	0.31***	0.11	1.27	0.31
Right	1.11	0.21	1.04	0.25	1.17	0.24	1.12	0.28
Impact					96.54***	43.56	0.01***	0.01
<i>N</i>	1295				1295			
<i>Pseudo R²</i>	0.11				0.2			
<i>Log Likelihood</i>	-1124.6				-1007.1			
<i>Likelihood Ratio X²</i>	277.95				512.89			

Analysis is by Multinomial Logistic Regression. Base category is respondent favours status quo. Entries are odds ratios. ***, ** and * indicate significance at the .01, .05, .10 levels, respectively

Figure 1

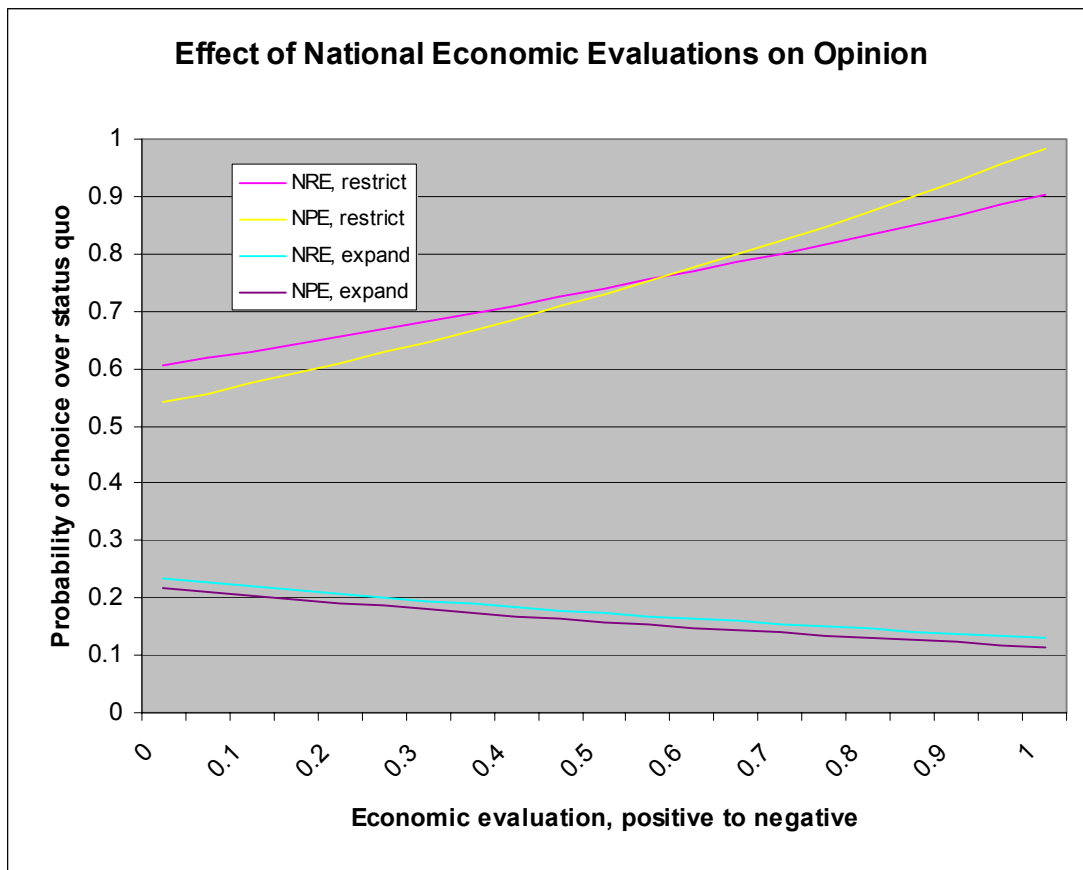
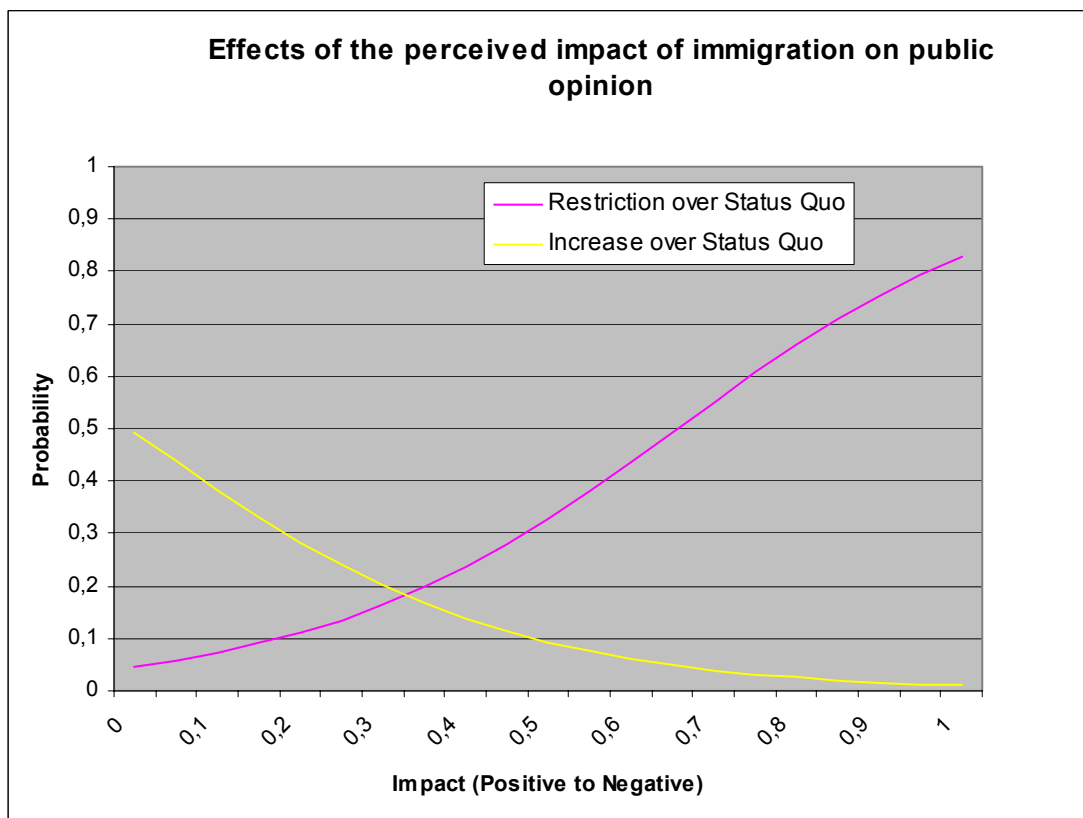


Figure 2



Appendix – Variable codings

B) Demographics

Age	0-1, minimum to maximum
Education	0-1, none to post-secondary completion and beyond
Female	0 Male, 1 Female
Immigrant	0 non-immigrant, 1 first-generation immigrant
Visible Minority	0, non-self-identified minority, 1 if self-identified as Bahamian, Bangladeshi, Black African, Chinese, El Salvador, Ethiopian, Guyanese, Haitian, Indian, Jamaican, Japanese, Korean, Lebanese, Nigerian, Pakistani, Philipino, Sikh, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Tamil, Trinidadian, Vietnamese, Other Asian, Other/Central American/West Indian /Carribbean Countries, Other South American, Other African, Inuit, Metis, Aboriginal, Native
Income	0-1, less than \$20 000 to \$100» 000
Percent Immigration	0-1, percentage of riding population who is foreign born
Unemployment	0-1, unemployment rate in riding

Occupation (Dummies, Full-time is comparison group)

Selfemployed	0,1
Parttime	0,1
Unemployed	0,1
Retired	0,1
Student	0,1
Homemaker	0,1
Disabled	0,1
Union	0 non-union member, 1 self or family member belongs to a union

C) Party Identification

PCid	0, not or weak PC identifier, 1 PC strong or moderate identifier
LIBid	0, not or weak Liberal identifier, 1 Liberal strong or moderate identifier
NDPid identifier	0, not or weak NDP identifier, 1 NDP strong or moderate identifier
CAid	0, not or weak CA identifier, 1 CA strong or moderate identifier
Blocid identifier	0, not or weak Bloc identifier, 1 Bloc strong or moderate identifier

Personal and National Retrospective and Prospective Economic Evaluations

PRE	0-1, positive to negative
NRE	0-1, positive to negative
PPE	0-1, positive to negative
NPE	0-1, positive to negative

D) Impact

Contribution	0-1, agreement to disagreement that immigrants make an important contribution to Canada
Unity Impact	0-1, disagreement to agreement that Canadian unity is weakened when Canadians of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds stick to their old ways
Integration Impact	0-1, disagreement to agreement that “too many immigrants just don’t want to fit into Canadian society
Impact	0-1, Average of three previous questions.

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