

Representation of francophones in the federal public service

By: Darren Touch, Undergraduate Student in Political Science and Public Administration
Supervisor: Luc Turgeon, Professor
Department of Social Science, University of Ottawa

Abstract

Today’s federal public service is very different from that of a couple of decades ago. Prior to the adoption of the Official Languages Act, the French language did not have equal standing within the federal government as it does today. This placed francophones in a position of disadvantage, in regards to both employment and service. During the 1960s the adoption of a national policy of bilingualism, the Official Languages Act (1969), would permanently change the work environment of the federal public service. This resulted in the federal government adopting proactive measures to remove barriers to francophones. Today, Francophones are slightly over-represented in the federal public service. However, we don't know if the representation of Francophones varies between governmental department and agencies. This research aims to determine the representative nature of governmental department and agencies as being more anglophone, francophone, or proportional. Although, the number of representation of francophones and anglophones are unavailable to the public, the Public Service Employee Survey provides a general idea of the number of francophones and anglophones in the federal public service through the question asked pertaining to First Official Language.

Introduction

Although, Canada is a bilingual country, the percentage of Canadians who know French versus English is incredibly low. Aside from Quebec, and New Brunswick, the other Canadian provinces function primarily in English, which places French speaking Canadians in a position of disadvantage. The struggle between the French and English language has existed prior to the foundation of this country. Furthermore, there is a strong notion that the federal public service should be representative of the population, particularly in the representation of language. Canadians have a right to request service in the language of their choice, as such the federal public service must be able to accommodate the language requested. However, although Canada is largely anglophone, there has been a notion that francophones are vastly underrepresented in the federal public service. However, this research seeks to prove the opposite. This research will not report on all governmental department and agencies but only a select few that are considered core public administration departments. The research was conducted through utilizing government data and reports. Representation is an important topic as it can play a factor in Quebec separatists’ sentiments. An unrepresentative federal government public service can foster a strong sense of alienation, which can act as a reason for separation from Canada.

Methodology

Obtaining data for this research design was difficult because the Government of Canada does not release statistics to the public on the number of francophones and anglophones within the governmental department and agencies. However, the government conducts the *Public Service Employee Survey* every three years since 1999, in which public services anonymously voice their opinions and concerns on the leadership, workforce, and work environment of the federal public service. Within each survey, the First Official Language section explicitly referenced the opinions and concerns of francophones and anglophones within the federal public service. Although, the numbers of respondent varied, the data provided a general idea of the number of francophones and anglophones. The number varied between questions as some respondents may have chosen to abstain from answering. The highest number of respondent for francophone and anglophone was utilized from the First Official Language section. The Public Service Employee Survey from 2005 and 2011 and the 2006 and 2011 Census was utilized to compare and contract the number of francophones and anglophones in the governmental department and agencies and the francophone and anglophone populations in Canada. Although, there was no 2005 Census, the 2006 Census was utilized to help reach the conclusion.

Results



Conclusion

The data presented within *Public Service Employee Survey* in 2005 and 2011, and the 2006 and 2011 Census, reveal that francophones are overrepresented in every governmental department and agencies. Although, the quota has been largely met regarding francophone representation, the number of francophones in certain government departments and agencies are on the rise. The level of francophones representation within the governmental department and agencies ranges from 20% to 80%. In essence, according to the data presented, francophones are overrepresented in the federal public service.

- Francophones are overrepresented in the federal public service. The number of Canadians that declared French to be their mother tongue was 21.80% in 2005, and 21.35% in 2011.
- Francophones constitute 32.30% in 2005, and 31.3% in 2011 in the federal public service.
- Therefore, francophones are overrepresented in the federal public service in comparison to their representation in Canada.
- Furthermore, all the federal departments and agencies are overrepresented with francophones.
- The governmental and departmental agencies that were not present in 2005 was a result of the Public Service Employee Survey in 2005. These departments were not included for some unknown reason.

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