# BILINGUALISM, EDUCATIONAL ELITISM AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION POLICY: Politics and the Early French Immersion Program in Greater Victoria

by

Patricia Georgina Morris
B.A., University of Kingston-upon-Hull, 1969

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Political Science

ACCEPTED

[redacted]

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

[redacted]

Dr.N.J.Ruff, Supervisor (Department of Political Science)

[redacted]

Dr.J.T.Morley, Departmental Member (Department of Political

[redacted]

Dr.C.Hodgkinson, Outside Member (Department of Education)

[redacted]

Dr.P.E.Roy, External Examiner (Department of History)



University of Victoria

Supervisor: Dr.N.J.Ruff

## ABSTRACT

In 1968, Canada's Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism argued that the nation would benefit from an expansion of opportunities to learn a second official language. A higher incidence of bilingualism would encourage communication between francophones and anglophones, and bilingual skills would confer individual career advantages. In 1970 the federal government responded by funding grade school French instruction, including immersion, under the Official Languages in Education program.

Using Victoria as an example, this study attempts to explain why early French immersion (EFI) has remained a minority program within a universal public education system, despite its averred contribution to national and individual economic well-being and national unity. Explanations for EFI's minority status can be found in the historical and contemporary contexts of the program, and in responses from pressure groups, the public, parents, and local and provincial education policy-makers. There is evidence that EFI appeals to parents with collectivist, integrative and elitist outlooks and relatively high socio-economic status (SES). Conversely, there are reasons to believe that EFI lacks appeal for parents unfavourably disposed towards the federal government, Quebec, and the French language.

An examination of theories of education and models of education systems can help to describe the relationship

between the state and EFI participants, to reveal any unintended consequences of introducing EFI, and to predict whether EFI will remain a minority program. This analysis gives rise to an examination of the socio-economic and other characteristics of EFI and English program parents, and of their attitudes and motivations towards the two programs and related issues. Following a review of existing literature, the discussion centres on the results from a survey of 658 parents. SES and motivational findings from the survey support the conclusion that systemic elite selection and elite self-selection exist in the Victoria EFI program. There is no evidence, however, of the systemic "tracking out" of low-SES families from EFI.

Although a majority of English program parents in Victoria would like additional intellectual challenge and enrichment for their children, many have concluded that EFI is incompatible with their children's needs. A large minority would opt for private school enrolment. In contrast, more EFI parents are satisfied with their education program, and almost all selected EFI for its "additional intellectual enrichment and challenge".

In a departure from most previous investigations, this study asked both parent groups to indicate their motives for program selection. In addition, the attitudes, motives and characteristics of the two parent groups are contrasted in relation to their own party allegiances and political orientations and to those of the British Columbian electorate. Important differences are found. English program parents are on average more ethnocentric, B.C.-alienated, right-wing, individualist, and populist,

whereas EFI parents are more integrative with respect to B.C.-alienated and ethnocentric political orientations, more collectivist, and more left-wing (although, in an apparent contradiction, a majority hold elitist opinions).

The attitudinal and SES data and earlier contextual evidence lead this study to conclude that EFI represents a protected elite "fragment" of the traditional, universal, liberal public education system. Continued downsizing and fragmentation of public education creates the potential for EFI to evolve into the minority elite component of a differentiated "mass-minority" education system. Such a process could be accompanied by increased conflict between the two parent groups as educational resources become even more scarce. In either of these minority roles, the program cannot be relied on to successfully promote favourable majority sentiment towards national integration and unity.

Examiners:

[redacted]

Dr.N.J.Ruff, Supervisor (Department of Political Science)

[redacted]

Dr.J.T.Morley, Departmental Member
(Department of Political Science)

[redacted]

Dr.C.Hodgkinson, Outside Member (Department of Education)

[redacted]

Dr.P.E.Roy, External Examiner (Department of History)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## LIST OF TABLES

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author acknowledges the following:

the Sara Spencer Foundation for Research in the Applied Social Sciences,

the Greater Victoria School Board,

parents of Campus View, Doncaster, Margaret Jenkins, Quadra, Sir James Douglas and Willows elementary schools,

Phil Morris, for the creation of fast data entry software, and for installing the database and the SPSS/PC program,

and

Phil Morris, Ben Morris and Lucy Morris, for relieving the author from household duties.

# Introduction

## Studies of French immersion policies and programs

Since 1965, when Canada's first early French immersion students moved into their kindergarten room at St. Lambert School, Montreal, to take part in an intensely-monitored experimental program, a number of studies of immersion programs have been undertaken. Early French immersion (EFI) became a focus of education research because of its unique approach to language learning, in that although the program is designed for anglophone students, it uses French as the sole language of instruction. The only exception is the teaching of English language arts, typically introduced after two or three years of total immersion in French. In addition to following the normal elementary curriculum, which includes a certain level of proficiency in English, students in EFI are expected to acquire a fairly high level of functional bilingualism in English and French by their sixth school year. EFI is designed to result in a significantly higher level of proficiency in the French language than can be produced by the teaching of basic (also known as "core") elementary French within the regular English program.

Although most studies of EFI have been concerned with the effectiveness of French Immersion as an academic program, during the past decade some writers have focused on other issues, including divisiveness in the public education system, equal access to EFI, elitism, social justice, and parent motivation. In relation to these issues, comparisons have been drawn between EFI and English program parents in terms of their socio-economic characteristics,

ethnicities, ethno-linguistic attitudes, and educational priorities. The socio-economic and attitudinal data has generated a certain amount of discussion about reproductive, correspondence and change models of education theory, with special reference to the role played by the public school system in facilitating social reproduction and social production. This study of Victoria parents is undertaken in the belief that the issues raised in the literature merit further development.

## The scope of this study

In the first chapter, the environment of second language education programming is examined, with special reference to early French immersion. An overview is provided of the following areas of interest: the political and public policy dimensions of EFI; the political economy of bilingualism and bilingual education, including concerns about the fragmentation of the public school system; the origin and funding of the program; the proliferation of EFI throughout Canada; public opinion on French second language education; the role of pressure groups; the current status of French in British Columbia; and the position of EFI in Greater Victoria.

In the context of the public policy dimensions of EFI (and with special attention paid to issues of equal access and social justice), the second chapter reviews literature on EFI for its findings about the socio-economic characteristics of EFI parents and English program parents. This section also describes other important characteristics of parents in the two groups. The second section of the review examines findings about parent attitudes relative to elitist, career-motivated, integrative, and other

perspectives. The literature provides some insight into parent identity with the "individualist" goals of EFI programs (the economic and other benefits offered to the individual) and the "collective" goals (support for bilingualism, biculturalism, and federalism).

Chapter Three describes a survey of EFI and English program parents undertaken for this study in Victoria in May, 1990. Using data from this survey, the socio-economic and other characteristics of the parent sample in Victoria are reported and contrasted, and comparisons are drawn between these findings and those of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Possible links between the characteristics are examined, and additional hypotheses about the two groups of parents are tested.

The survey was also designed to determine the motives of Victoria parents for placing their children in EFI or the regular English program. Chapter Four describes the results, and again makes a comparison with previous surveys, this time in the context of the attitudes, values and assessments associated with the parents' motives, and the relationship of these with individualist and collective goals.

In Chapter Five, the two sets of parents are compared by party allegiance, religious affiliation, and opinions about government decision-making. Use of these indicators represents a departure from previous studies, in that they seek information **indirectly** related to choice of a school language program, and are included in order to test whether there are broad ideological or political cleavages between the two sets of parents. If such cleavages are observed, they may contribute to an understanding of other differences between the two parent groups. They may have particular

relevance to the individualistic and collective goals associated with EFI, and to parent orientations on other dimensions important to Canadian and British Columbia politics: elitism, populism, B.C. alienation, and ethnocentrism.

Finally, the results from this survey and other studies are evaluated in the context of the national interest and the interests of individuals and socio-economic groups benefitting from French immersion programs (the political economy of bilingualism and bilingual education). This section of the study (Chapter Six) then considers whether the minority EFI option can be regarded as a fragmentation of common schooling. Reference is made to the tensions and contradictions surrounding ideas of public choice as opposed to universal provision of education programs. A concluding section addresses whether federal public funds and national language policies are being channelled towards functional bilingualism programs in a partial attempt to meet educational needs only indirectly related to French fluency, while more general needs - for basic French or for additional enrichment and challenge - are still not being met. The fact that parents in both programs have identified such educational needs raises questions about the overall effectiveness of policy-making in Canada's public education system. There is also some discussion of the potential for conflict at school district and school community levels, given that the needs of both the parent groups may not be met, and that there may be more profound differences in orientation between the two groups than has been assumed in some of the literature.

## The Greater Victoria setting

For this study, parents using six elementary schools in the Greater Victoria School District No.61 were surveyed. The school district forms part of the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area and serves the urban municipalities of Victoria and Esquimalt to the south, and the suburban municipalities of Oak Bay and Saanich to the east, west and north, with a combined population (1986 census) of more than 182,000.[1] In 1989-90 there were 14,037 kindergarten to grade 7 students in the district's 38 elementary schools, 1,272 of whom (9.1%) were enrolled in the six schools offering early and late French immersion programs.[2] None of the six immersion schools were located in Esquimalt.

The metropolitan area is also served by several independent schools with elementary campuses; three Roman Catholic, one Christian, three non-denominational (one co-educational, two for girls, and one for boys), and two or three small schools offering primary education only.

The Victoria metropolitan area is situated at the southern tip of Vancouver Island in the province of British Columbia. The public sector is an important part of the local economy. The city is the seat of the provincial government, housing the Legislature Buildings, Ministry offices and agency headquarters. The University of Victoria is located in Saanich, and Camosun community college maintains three campuses in Saanich and one in Victoria. Esquimalt is a Canadian armed forces naval base and has some heavy industry. There are two major hospitals in the area, and a small number of federal government agencies.

In 1986, most of the working population was employed by the government, and in tourist and other service industries,

the retail industry, health, and education. The most numerous occupational categories were clerical (17,235 positions, 79.2% of them filled by women), service (17,195, 52.5% male), sales (9,535, 50.4% female), management and administration (9,425, 67.5% male), technical, social, religion and art (8,065, 63.4% male), health (6,075, 76.0% female), construction (4,515, 97.8% male), and teaching (4,100, 57.2% female). Fabrication and repair, transportation, and primary and processing occupations together accounted for 10,050 positions, 88.8% of them filled by men.[3]

Family income in the four municipalities in 1985 averaged $49,032 (1990 dollars).[4] In the Victoria CMA in 1986, personal income was 3% below the national average.[5]

In the four municipalities served by the school district, among those in the population who were 15 years or older in 1986, 8.0% had an education level of grade 8 or below, 38.2% had grades 9 to 13, 26.7% had a trades/non-university education, 13.6% had a university education without a degree, and 13.5% had a university education including a first or higher degree.[6]

In the Victoria "primary" area (the census subregion, larger than the four municipalities), 1.8% of the population reported French as a mother tongue in 1986. English was reported by 90.3%.[7]

In the 1986 provincial election, party allegiance in the two electoral districts covering most of the school district (Victoria, and Oak Bay-Gordon Head) averaged as follows: Social Credit, 48.8%; New Democrat, 43.1%; Liberal, 6.3%. The Progressive Conservative candidate in Oak Bay-Gordon

Head received 4.0% of the vote. The three NDP candidates were returned (Victoria had two seats).[8]

The 1988 federal election returned three New Democratic Party (NDP) Members of Parliament in the region, the NDP capturing 50.9% of the vote in Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca, 37.8% in Victoria, and 35.3% in Saanich-Gulf Islands. The the Liberals won 12.0%, 21.3%, and 17.6% of the vote in the three electoral districts, the Progressive Conservatives 25.1%, 29.8%, and 33.4%, and the Reform Party 10.4%, 8.4%, and 12.4% respectively.[9]

## Notes to the Introduction

1. Financial Post Information Service, Canadian Market 1990: Complete Demographics for Canadian Urban Markets, vol.64, (Toronto: 1990), 594-602.

2. Figures supplied by Ray Shergold, Vice Principal, Greater Victoria School District, June, 1990.

3. Financial Post, Canadian Market 1990, 594-602.

4. Community Council of Greater Victoria, The People of Greater Victoria: A Demographic Atlas, Part 2: Education, Income and Employment: Statistical Information from the Canada Census, 1981 and 1986, (Victoria: Spring, 1990), 22. Inflation rates in Victoria between 1986 (the earliest available) and 1990 were obtained from the Victoria office of Statistics Canada. The compounded inflation rate was 19.2% (1.8% in 1986, 2.5% in 1987, 3.8% in 1988, 4.5% in 1989, and 5.3% in 1990).

5. Financial Post, Canadian Market 1990, 594.

6. Ibid, 594-602.

7. Statistics Canada, Census Tracts 1986: Profiles: Victoria: Part 1, catalogue 95-169, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1986).

8. Elections British Columbia, Electoral History of British Columbia, 1871-1986, (Victoria, 1988).

9. Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, Canada General Election Report, 1988, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1988), 976-9, 1057-61, 1095-8.

# Chapter I

## The Public Policy Context of Early French Immersion Programs

### The contemporary context

Second language education funding programs were originated by a Liberal federal government under the leadership of Pierre Trudeau. This is important, since the Liberal Party and Trudeau in particular eventually suffered from extreme unpopularity in Western Canada, in part due to the federal government's official languages policies, of which second language education funding programs are a component. Trudeau's policies are still reviled by some sectors of the community in the West (and in other regions of Canada as well) for what is perceived to be their huge cost, lack of sensitivity towards regional concerns (resource management and multiculturalism are two examples), and favouritism toward Central Canada, particularly Quebec. Subsequent Progressive Conservative administrations have continued Canada's official languages policies, supported by the federal New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party in opposition. The PC Government is now extremely unpopular, even in the West, and support for the Western-based Reform Party, which opposes Canada-wide official bilingualism, appears to be growing.

Irrespective of support for Canada's official languages policies and programs, clearly they can be regarded as examples of social engineering and economic intervention on a grand scale. Among other objectives, national policy-shapers wished to foster understanding between the two

European founding peoples of Canada and to accomplish this in part by increasing the proportion of bilingual citizens, especially within the anglophone population. Economic benefits to the nation were expected to result from improved understanding and greater mobility of people, goods and services within Canada. There would be international benefits also, since French and English are major world languages. And if national policies helped to keep Quebec in Confederation, the economic and social disruption of separation would be averted.

It was also recognized that individual citizens would benefit in economic and other less tangible ways from being bilingual. But in regions of Canada where francophone minorities are small and widely dispersed, as they are in B.C., anglophones would tend to benefit economically from English-French bilingualism only if they were upwardly or geographically mobile, or if they were employed in education, the arts, the communications media, the federal public service, and at senior levels in the provincial public service, the Crown corporations and national or international organizations or private corporations.

Federal-provincial separation of powers meant that some second-language education programs had to be "sub-contracted" to provincial departments of education for implementation, because the departments are the only agencies through which federal funds can be transferred to local school boards. The federal government has no means of mandating the departments to offer French immersion, neither is it politically feasible for provincial governments (even if so inclined) to force school boards into offering EFI programs. Therefore, at all levels, EFI is only an option. The optional aspect means that typically parents have had to organize collective action, first to pressure boards into

starting programs, second to make sure programs survive, and third to ensure they meet increasing demand, not only horizontally but also vertically into the secondary system and beyond.

In spite of community demand for French immersion programs, absence of clear leadership from either provincial or local levels tends to stamp EFI with a federal government label, much like the French on cereal boxes. One outcome of federal policy and funding leadership is that activist members of the parent pressure group Canadian Parents for French must develop direct relationships with federal government agencies and politicians. They must also interact directly with school boards as deliverers of EFI programs, whereas interaction with provincial governments is not so crucial.

In summary, the public policy context within which EFI education takes place is defined in part by the following dimensions: identification with unpopular federal parties, especially the Liberal Party in power; "huge and unnecessary expense"; "insensitivity"; "favouritism"; social engineering by the state; economic intervention by the state; unequal economic benefits to individuals and groups; demand at the community level; a need for collective action by the program client group; federal instead of provincial or local government leadership; a need for the client group to develop a direct relationship with the federal government.

Additional dimensions of the public policy context of EFI can be drawn from a review of writings on the political economy of bilingualism and bilingual education. Albert Breton's economic model of bilingualism,[1] for example, is referenced in the literature on EFI; the model predicts

that the cost of bilingualism inevitably will be borne by the smaller society in a dualist collectivity. According to Breton, this occurs because the larger society determines the supply and demand of goods exchanged between the two societies. Changes in the costs of trading, including the costs of overcoming trade barriers (language differences for example) are borne by the society that cannot determine supply and demand (the smaller society). The language of the larger society becomes the lingua franca of the two societies. It follows then that the costs to English Canada of learning the language of Quebec will be borne by Quebec. This would not apply if anglophones were to learn French for purely cultural reasons (that is, for enrichment or personal travel). But the economic model predicts that individuals learn French only to the extent that it benefits them economically - because after that point they will not afford it.

Another author, Donald Smiley, comments that federal and Quebec language legislation attempts to shift part of the burden back to English Canada.

> In terms of language, there are three labour markets in Canada - one for bilinguals, one for those who speak French only, and one for those who speak English only. The federal Official Languages Act extends this market for bilinguals, the majority of whom are francophones. Quebec legislation securing French as the language of work extends the market for French unilinguals, restricts that for English unilinguals, and has less determinate effects on the opportunities for bilingual persons. In these as in other cases of linguistic interactions, winners and losers are clearly and decisively defined.[2]

George Burns approaches the political economy of bilingual education from a slightly different direction, focusing on issues of public choice, universal provision of EFI as an ideal, and the social justice of program rationing and elitism. In his examination of three reproductive models of

education, Burns comments that the state, from the perspective of the hegemonic-state model, uses schools to further the bicultural and bilingual interests of the state and the dominant (middle) classes. The effects of weighting education funding towards such goals, he argues, can be seen in the distinction made by politicians, educators, schools and the labour market between high status bilingual expertise and low status unilingual expertise. Burns points out that the literature on French immersion pays little attention to the role of the state in its use of schools to achieve national policy goals.[3]

The ideological implications of language policies are considered from a similar perspective in an article by Dominique Clift, who comments with reference to the debate within the federal public service:

> As a general rule, the proponents of bilingualism insist on the representativeness of public institutions, particularly when sizeable minorities are present. Their idealism coincides with their self-interest. Presenting the state as a prime mover in social and economic progress maximizes their personal linguistic skills. On the other hand, the critics of official bilingualism will tend to see only a limited role for government, which is to offer a relatively narrow range of services and exercise a limited responsibility for the state of the economy. Thus bilingualism and representativeness are much more compelling for those committed to thoroughgoing reform than they are for conservatives. In fact, these two ideas have provided some of the justifications for the expansion of government bureaucracy.[4]

A parallel debate takes place within private corporations, Clift argues. Divergent social interpretations (in media and advertising, for example) and different corporate policies proposed by bilinguals and unilinguals heighten competition for jobs and advancement. They are symptomatic of "a long drawn-out struggle for power, the purpose of

which is to control the direction of social change to one's advantage".[5]

In this context, it is hardly surprising if a growing number of English Canadians, having identified unilingualism as a severe limitation, opt to enrol their children in French immersion programs. Moreover, according to Clift, FI appeals to the characteristic elitism of Canadian society:

> In other words, immersion has many of the attributes of private schools. But it is all at public expense since federal and provincial funding, offered in the interest of national unity, makes the whole system viable.[6]

Both Clift and Burns are interested in identifying a "hidden" as well as an explicit curriculum, arguing that the program meets the functional needs of the elite in a capitalist economy instead of serving conscious public purposes. The two writers' critique of the liberal model of education and the state appears to emanate from a Marxist perspective, in which the imperatives of capital (to produce people as well as commodities) are mediated by educational institutions. The hegemonic-state model describes the inevitable tension existing between the economic and the political systems of Western capitalism. The economic system is hierarchical and totalitarian, and requires education to differentiate between classes in order to reproduce existing economic relations. In contrast, the formally democratic egalitarian political system requires universal access to education programs. Moreover, a modern capitalist economy needs citizens who have been educated to understand the entire production process, without their using this knowledge to try to change the economic system. Thus there is also conflict between the need to reproduce labour in its traditional form and the need to produce it in new forms instrumental to a changing economy.

At this point, other models of the relationship between the state and education should be brought into the discussion to provide context for the hegemonic-state model. The "liberal" model dominant in twentieth century Western societies typically encompasses the following three ideas: education is said to be concerned with initiation into the "forms" of knowledge; education is (primarily) for the full development of the individual; and education is designed to equip individuals for the "needs" of democratic society. The hegemonic-state model is a critique of the liberal model.

A third model describes provision by the state of two contrasting systems of education, "mass schooling" and "minority culture". (This model prevailed in nineteenth century Britain.) The schools of the working class were organized like factories, with an emphasis on order, subordination, and habits of industry and punctuality. School became the dominant ideological institution of the state, mediating between the worlds of home and work. Minority education on the other hand was associated with liberal education, the development of the person; it stressed the importance of duty, self-discipline, responsibility and leadership, individualism, competition and rewards. Intellectual ability was seen as a natural attribute, and emphasis was placed on the early recognition of the capacity of 'gifted' children and their performance.

The radical view of education, a fourth model, is founded in working class traditions and nineteenth century working class opposition to mass schooling. Its content and principles differed from those of a mass education system, stemming from a concern to impart "really useful knowledge" and to conduct an internal debate about education as a political strategy or as a means of changing the world.

This view attempted to break the distinction between education (the school) and the world outside the school, and enjoyed a revival in the 1970s.[7] Ivan Illich, for example, in his book, "Deschooling Society", argues for a radical liberalizing and devolution of education and society.[8]

With respect to the liberal model of education systems, a tendency towards the "disassembly" of liberal public education has been noted by Wexler, Whitson and Moskowitz (1981). According to these writers, "disassembly" is the result of several developments, including shrinking education budgets and movements towards skills training and narrowing of the curriculum. The impetus for disassembly comes from private enterprise, since such changes are methods by which "the technical aspects of labor power are produced in schools without the occasion for self-conscious production of social cognitions and cultural attitudes in traditional general education".

The traditional hidden curriculum is removed from the school, and its social task is accomplished instead by older social forms such as the family, and by a powerful and pervasive mass culture industry.[9]

Wexler argues that in the early 1980s, disassembly or fragmentation of schooling was more instrumental to the reproduction of capitalism than schooling. A "deschooling of society" was occurring not as a result of rational public policy-making, but "by default".

With reference to this argument, and to Burns's view that middle class parents are taking advantage of the "cultural capital" produced by early French immersion placement, EFI might be seen as an elite minority program that has been sheltered to some extent from the effects of a movement towards the disassembly of liberal public education. In

other words, it might be argued that the introduction of EFI has been associated with a desire on the part of a minority to retain or enhance some of the features of liberal, or common, schooling (the potential contribution to individual self-realization and the formation of a democratic community). Assuming this is so, it does not necessarily follow, however, that EFI has been **consciously** created by the state on behalf of or at the behest of an elite (including EFI parents) as a minority program serving elite interests, though this may be the case. It could be argued, however, that the existence of elitist attitudes among EFI parents, together with elitist socio-economic status, amounts to evidence of consciously elitist motivation for EFI programming.

On the other hand, it is possible that the retention or enhancement of liberal educational features by means of EFI programming represents the majority rather than the minority interest, in that it defends or promotes values which otherwise might disappear from the common school system. Evidence that parents are motivated by a desire for national unity, national integration and communication, or a general expansion of enrichment opportunities, might be used in support of this more democratic explanation. In this case, confirmation or otherwise of the elite socio-economic status of EFI parents by itself would not necessarily indicate conscious elitist motivation.

Alternatively, EFI might be categorized as an elite form of "work-experience", since (within the terms of reproduction theories of education), career education is the method by which social differentiation is achieved. If there is strong evidence that EFI parents are socio-economically elite and are motivated by instrumental economic reasons to select FI programs, then this explanation might be favoured.

The initial outcome of the program under these circumstances would be the same as if EFI were an elite minority program. But there would be a difference in potential outcome, because if elitist attitudes and policies are not decisive factors governing program size, by themselves they would not act as barriers to eventual mass enrolment.

Admittedly, further barriers such as teacher recruitment, start-up costs, opposition from other groups, and inadequate implementation procedures might prevent immersion from developing into a universal or mass education program. And even though in this model the state would appear to be neutral, in the sense that the state-funded program is not designed exclusively for and by an elite, the state's need for bilingual citizens (or its ability or willingness to reward large numbers of high-status citizens) may not be sufficiently high.

A recent statement by Commissioner of Official Languages D'Iberville Fortier underscores the suspicion that practical and/or political limitations do in fact exist. He writes:

> It is now clear that immersion will never be universally implemented, nor was it ever intended to be. Good core French programs are adequate and appropriate in many situations.[10]

Conversely, if elitist attitudes and policies seem to act as barriers to eventual mass enrolment, EFI would appear to be analogous to the "minority" elite program in the "mass/minority" education model mentioned earlier. It remains to be seen whether the program-designers' intention resulted from practical limitations or from the requirements of elitism.

The relationship between schooling and Canada's unity agenda is brought into sharper focus when the North American ideal of common schooling is examined more closely. In The Myth of the Common School, Charles Glenn describes the ideological foundations of the American public school system. The common school concept appears to have influenced education in some regions of Canada, particularly in British Columbia where there are no separate religious schools in the public system.

The common school ideal in part originated from nineteenth century efforts in the Netherlands to "unify and enlighten the nation through a monopolistic system of popular elementary education concerned even more with attitudes and values than with skills and numeracy".[11] In Massachusetts (the focal site of Glenn's study), these ideas were adopted by the state for the purpose of developing a common, public orthodoxy sharply distinguished from all sectarian religious doctrines. The common school ideal was also adopted in France. By the early twentieth century, France, the Netherlands and the U.S. were providing universal and compulsory elementary schooling. The purpose of education was primarily the development of the type of character suited to the requirements of society and the state, as defined by a national elite.

Glenn concludes with an account of the recent breakdown in the U.S. of the consensus underpinning public school systems, as shown by increased enrolment in private schools, court cases over the status of religion in public schools, and education voucher plans which would finance parent choice from public funds. He believes that broad support for public education can be rebuilt only by developing "a diversity of schooling that offers distinctive approaches to the common goals essential to [American] society".[12]

Aspects of three models of education systems can be identified in the unifying and character-building objectives of the common school, as interpreted by Glenn: the "mass/ minority", "liberal", and "hegemonic-state" models. Models of education systems will be re-examined in Chapter Six.

## The historical context of second language education policies and early French immersion programs

### Federal involvement in French second language instruction

Present-day federal involvement in second official language education is rooted in historical conflict between two colonial communities and their European parent nations, and investment in bilingualism is a relatively recent addition to a long list of strategies devised to cope with Canadian duality. The 1969 Official Languages Act marked a turning point in the central government's response to the fact of dualism, representing the first concrete attempt not only to legislate the equality of the two founding languages and cultures but also to plan and program for a bilingual future. Other approaches in the past have included military conquest, domination and attempts at assimilation (1791 and 1840), separation of provincial and federal jurisdiction (1867), and mediation by elites "at the summit" (1867 to 1960).

On the part of the federal government, there has been a continuing, if often unaccepting, recognition of Quebec as a society unique in North America, with institutional, linguistic and cultural (especially religious) traditions different from the rest of Canada's. Numerous

intergovernmental conflicts occurred in the past during which the English asserted their dominance, notably over Canadian foreign policies and the rights of francophones outside Quebec. Between the two cultures there evolved a complementary separation of political, religious and economic thought. In particular, Quebec came to believe that the terms of Confederation were a compact which could not be altered without the consent of the original partners. On balance, these factors and the strategies devised to cope with them "gave a degree of stability to anglophone-francophone relations and to Canadian federalism".[13]

A new chapter opened for Quebec during the 1960s. Traditional institutions and their justifying ideologies (such as religious authoritarianism and distrust of the state) had tended to resign the Quebec people to the subordinate position occupied by francophones in the Canadian economy. But these institutions and ideologies became increasingly irrelevant to the demands of industrialization and modernization. In response to new economic forces, Quebec nationalism, powered largely by a new middle class committed to using provincial powers as agents of change, rejected its former defensive posture. Confident nationalism meant that stabilizing factors in the relationship between the province and the federal government were undermined. For example, new forms of conflict between Quebec's own elites inhibited the traditional accommodations between anglophone and francophone elites within and outside the province. Major social, economic and political reforms were rapidly undertaken by the province, including broadening the job opportunities of French-speaking Quebecers by means of state economic intervention. Changes were accompanied by new demands on the federal government, including financial autonomy and financial resources, more institutionalized procedures for collaboration between

governments, and withdrawal of federal involvement from the internal affairs of the province.

To a large extent, Quebec's demands were a reaction to federal encroachment through spending power into policy areas under provincial jurisdiction, such as health, welfare, and higher education. Conflict between the two governments over Quebec's increasing role in international affairs was another factor associated with these demands. Between 1966 and 1970, conflict between the federal and Quebec governments assumed serious proportions, but once again an uneasy accommodation was regained. Responses to the new Quebec took several forms, chief among these being accession to Quebec's demands for fiscal and administrative autonomy, constitutional review and reform, and the establishment of a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963. In 1967 the Commission published its Report on the Official Languages. Two years later the Offical Languages Act came into force to give greater protection to the language rights of section 133 of the Constitution Act of 1867 by recognizing the equal status of English and French in federal institutions. The Act intended to ensure that citizens could communicate with the government of Canada in their choice of French or English, at least in places or situations where sufficient demand for either language made this feasible. A Commissioner of Official Languages was appointed to police the operation of the Act.

Although the Commission did not publish its full report on the federal administration until 1969, language reforms in the federal civil service were introduced in 1966. Civil servants would be able to use either French or English, depending on the language understood by the person with whom they were communicating. In addition, the linguistic

and cultural values of francophones and anglophones would be reflected through civil service recruitment and training.

In 1974, the Treasury Board identified positions for which French, English, or both languages were required, and in the National Capital Region, 45% of almost 80,000 positions were designated bilingual. Since the Commission had previously reported that English was the working language of the virtually the entire Ottawa civil service, this designation of such a high percentage set in motion major recruitment and training programs.

By 1975, a government report and the Commissioner of Official Languages had criticized the way in which bilingual positions were being designated as well as the cost-effectiveness of French language training programs. The bilingual bonus was a subject of contention and has remained so. In 1990-91 it will cost $45.6 million. In 1977, a new policy was outlined in which training and classification devolved to the departments under broad guidelines set by the Public Service Commission (PSC), but this policy in turn was subjected to criticism from civil service employees, media, and the public. Current rules require that public servants entering senior management positions in bilingual regions (and, more generally, supervisory positions) should have "intermediate" proficiency in both languages; all public servants in the senior management group will be required to achieve the "superior" level of reading and oral interaction skills in both languages by 1998.[14] In 1988 the PSC reported that 28.5% of civil service positions were filled by francophones and 71.5% by anglophones. (In context, 24% of Canada's population speaks French as its first language, 61% speaks English, 11% speaks other languages, and four percent has more than one mother tongue.[15] Canadians bilingual in both official languages

are much more likely to be francophone.)

The Canadian Development Institute (CDI) analyzed 1987 PSC data and found that 32% of positions at deputy minister level, 26% at officer level, and 21% at senior middle management level were occupied by francophones. The CDI expressed concern at "general over-representation" by francophones in 52 of 69 government agencies, "heavy over-representation" in 35, and even more pronounced representation in 14 key agencies, including the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission. Another three agencies had high proportions of francophones: the Public Service Commission (60%), the Official Language branch of Treasury Board (65%), and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (74%).[16] These figures were widely quoted in the media and used by pressure groups such as the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada.

Despite many setbacks, other language-related policies and programs have slowly been incorporated into national and provincial institutions. In 1982 Canada adopted a Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, in which language rights were prominent. The Charter is unclear on the right of majority language Canadians to learn a second official language, although there is now a clearer picture of the limitations on how the Charter may be used by this group. In 1987 the Supreme Court of B.C. ruled that members of the linguistic majority may not invoke Section 23 since it deals specifically with minority language educational rights. The ruling followed from the unsuccessful suit of nine parents from Saanich school district, eight of them anglophone, to order the board to maintain a kindergarten EFI program which was about to be phased out.[17] A revised Official Languages Act became law in 1988, although most of the regulations

required for full implementation of the Act have yet to be tabled in Parliament. In two of the most important areas, however (communications with and service to the public), regulations were tabled in November, 1990, following pressure from the Commissioner of Official Languages and the parliamentary Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages. These regulations will probably come into force by the end of 1992.[18]

Provincial and federal governments have gone some way towards enhancing the position of francophone minorities outside Quebec. French-language networks of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation have been expanded, and funding for French-language schools has been provided in all provinces, although many students are without access to such schools. New Brunswick in 1979 became an officially bilingual province, and in 1985, Manitoba restored francophone language rights as a result of a Supreme Court decision. Ontario extended language services to francophones and designated some regions bilingual in 1989 in accordance with the Ontario French Languages Services Act of 1986. Quebec also adopted new language policies, in 1976 electing the Parti Quebecois and one year later enacting Bill 101, making French the official language of the province. In education, as in many other fields, Quebec's new language policies were significant. Grade school students were to be educated in French unless they or their immediate families fulfilled one of a number of language conditions,[19] and between 1970 and 1990, enrolment in English schools had dropped by 57%.[20]

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism published its Report on Education in 1968, arguing that Canada would benefit from an increase in the number of bilingual citizens, and that an appreciation by francophones and anglophones of the languages and cultures of both

peoples would improve the relationship between them. It was also noted that at the level of the individual, bilingual skills conferred career advantages. Because the Commissioners were convinced that the most effective learning took place early in life, they included six recommendations directly concerned with grade school second language education, paying special attention to instruction in the primary grades. One recommendation was far-reaching enough to call for mandatory study of both official languages in all Canadian schools.

The federal government's response to these and other recommendations was to establish the ongoing Official Languages in Education (OLE) program in 1970. In common with all other second official language programs in public schools, immersion classes have been provided with funds from the OLE program through provincial departments of education by means of successive federal-provincial agreements. The departments transfer the funds to school boards according to various program guidelines. Post-secondary second language education has also been funded by the federal government.

In 1989-90, the year of this survey, federal contributions to the provinces and territories for French and English minority and second language education programs, covering the public schools and including basic English in Quebec, totalled more than $250 million. In constant dollar terms, annual payments have remained at about this level since 1982-83, comparable to expenditure in the first year of the program. Expenditure rose gradually after 1972-73, reaching a peak in 1977-78. The next year a sharp drop was recorded, followed by a gradual decline to the year 1982-83, at which point expenditure levelled to around the current figure.

## The response to federal policies on French language education

### The growth of French immersion and basic French in Canadian and British Columbian schools

In 1989-90, more than half the students (almost two million) attending English-language public schools in Canada were enrolled in basic French or French immersion programs. Among elementary students, about 60%, or double the 1970-71 percentage, were participating in French as a Second Language (FSL) programs, and approximately 7.0% of anglophone students were enrolled in elementary or secondary French immersion programs.

In British Columbia, 222,400 students were in enrolled in all types of FSL programs (more than 43% of the total B.C. public school population). More than 38% were in basic (also known as "core") French programs at elementary and secondary levels, and slightly more than 5.0% attended all levels of French immersion. There were 187 French immersion schools.[21]

### Language rights and French language instruction policies in British Columbia

British Columbia does not recognize the application in the province of Sections 16 to 22 of Canada's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.[22] These sections refer to the official languages of Canada, and they enable provinces to provide services in the minority official language where circumstances warrant. In common with Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland, British Columbia does not explicitly

permit French to be be used in its Legislature.[23]

B.C., like all Canadian provinces and territories, receives transfer payments from the federal Official Languages in Education (OLE) program to fund French immersion programs through grants to school districts. In 1989-90, it was provincial policy to fund basic intructional costs for FI at the same (per capita) level as the regular English program, but FI programs were also eligible for supplementary funds from the OLE program.[24] Supplementary funding took two forms. When a district started a new FI program or expanded an existing one, it qualified for an OLE-funded special projects grant; the amount of the grant was established annually, based on the number of requests and funds available. A second OLE-funded grant was intended to subsidize maintenance costs. The amount varied according to the number of students enrolled and the availability of funds. School boards were not restricted to spending funds according to the formula used by the provincial government, which took account of enrolment in all French programs (immersion, core French, and the programme cadre for francophone students). But the money had to be spent entirely on French programs.[25]

Ministry guidelines stated that all students were eligible to enter Early French Immersion at kindergarten or grade 1, or in later grades on proof of adequate proficiency in French. If a district offered early immersion, the program had to begin at kindergarten level.

The immersion program was intended to parallel the English program in structure and content. In addition, on graduation from grade 12 an immersion student was expected to be able to take part easily in French conversations, enter post-secondary courses with French as the language of

instruction, and accept employment with French as the working language.

B.C policy stated that "school districts may offer French immersion programs when requested [by parents in the district] to do so, subject to the availability of funding and observance of Ministry guidelines ... However, the offering is optional, and as in the case of all optional programs, its continuation or expansion is at the option of the Board".[26]

An elementary program for francophone students has also been in place in B.C. since 1979. In accordance with Section 23 of the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, parents who fulfill certain language conditions are entitled to a programme cadre de francais in their school district, provided student numbers warrant. The standard minimum number for an elementary class is ten, but smaller classes can be approved to suit local circumstances.[27] The francophone population in B.C. consists of 45,000 people so widely scattered that there are few communities in which francophones represent more than 2.0% of the population, and even as a whole, francophones make up less than 2.0% of B.C.'s total population. In 1988-89, 2,090 students were enrolled in cadre programs in 42 schools.[28] The cadre programme parallels the curriculum of the regular English program in content, with the addition of French Canadian culture as a major component. English as a subject is usually introduced at grade three.

**French language instruction policies in the Greater Victoria School District**

In 1989-90, the Greater Victoria School District offered six French programs: elementary and secondary basic (core) French, early immersion (kindergarten to grade 7, with English language arts introduced at grade 3); late immersion (beginning at grade 6); an elementary-level programme cadre de francais for francophone students; and the secondary bilingual program, formed from graduates of the elementary cadre and immersion programs.

Early French immersion has been offered by the district since 1973. In 1989-90 there were six dual-track elementary schools, four of them in the relatively affluent south-eastern and eastern sectors of the district, with 1,272 Early and Late FI students enrolled from kindergarten to grade 7. Of the overall elementary school population in the district, 9.1% were French immersion students.[29]

Early in 1989, EFI demand in the Greater Victoria School District in 1989-90 was expected to represent 15% of total kindergarten enrolment, an increase of 3.0% over the previous year.[30] Board statistics indicated the program was growing at a greater rate than the English program.[31] In response to demand, plans were made to extend the program to schools in northern and western areas of the district. The board later dropped its policy of "capping" the number of EFI places, deciding instead "to offer instruction in either official language ... as demand warrants and, at the same time, assuring the viability of both English and French programs". In place of capping as a method of controlling demand, alternatives to EFI were recommended. These included: enhancing the basic (core) French program (the board had previously mandated basic French for grades four

to seven, beginning in 1992); enriching the regular English program; and improving public awareness of opportunities available in the English program. Significantly for this study, the committee reported: "The perception that the only avenue to enrichment is the Immersion program must be addressed".[32]

Students would be placed in EFI kindergarten at a particular immersion school in the following order of priority: those with siblings already enrolled at the school, those living closest to the school, then all other applicants. The new rules replaced those of January, 1982, in which siblings had been given first priority but other applicants (with the exception of one school) were not prioritized by proximity to the school of their choice. By 1989 therefore, predicted increases in enrolment meant that dual-track schools might begin to retrieve their status as neighbourhood schools, possibly as important a factor to English program parents in Victoria as it is in Winnipeg (Bienvenue, 1983, 1986). Parents using Victoria's dual track schools have made their views known on this point at several meetings. On the other hand, sibling priority remains a significant enrolment factor in Greater Victoria, and it has been known for siblings to half fill a kindergarten class before other students (including neighbourhood students) can be placed.

**The influence of pressure groups**

The survival and proliferation of Early French Immersion "experiments" in every region of Canada can be attributed to unremitting pressure on government and school district policy-makers from a single highly sophisticated lobby group, Canadian Parents for French (CPF). CPF was formed in 1977 and has always been partially funded by the federal

government. By 1989 the pressure group reported an individual membership of more than 18,000, as well as associate member schools, school boards, pre-school groups and institutions. Strong organizations existed at the national, provincial and territorial levels, and local groups were active in more than 200 communities, including Greater Victoria.

In 1980, CPF adopted a policy of pressuring for the right of every Canadian child to an education in either or both of Canada's official languages, as a matter of equality. In 1984, CPF entered into an agreement with La federation des francophones hors Quebec to support the right of minority language young Canadians to education in their mother tongue from kindergarten through post-secondary level.[33]

The following are the official goals of CPF: (1) to assist in ensuring that each Canadian child has the opportunity to acquire as great a knowledge of the French language as he or she is willing and able to attain; (2) to promote the best possible types of French language learning opportunities; (3) to establish and maintain effective communication between interested parents and education and governmental authorities concerned with the provision of French language learning opportunities.

The birth of CPF can be traced to Keith Spicer, Canada's first Commissioner of Official Languages. In his travels across Canada during the mid-1970s he met parents interested in having their children attend French immersion programs, and brought 35 of them together for an informal meeting in Ottawa.[34] One of those parents became a founding member of the Greater Victoria chapter of CPF. In June, 1978, one year after the founding of CPF, Spicer chaired a public relations workshop for CPF directors, suggesting that "in

the coming year, 80% of CPF efforts be devoted to PR and publicity". Also present were Max Yalden, the new Commissioner of Official Languages, who gave the opening address, and Maxim Jean-Louis, editor of the newspaper "Le Franco-Albertan".[35]

The Victoria chapter enjoyed a useful connection with Ottawa and the national organization of CPF in the mid-1980s. A former senior civil servant with the federal government was elected CPF national president for a two-year term while employed in Victoria as an assistant deputy Minister for the B.C. government. He later returned to a senior position with the federal government, in the department responsible for OLE programs.

In May, 1984, the University of British Columbia hosted the second in a series of CPF-sponsored national conferences on post secondary-education in French. CPF activities cover a broad spectrum, including liaison with government ministries, research institutes, school boards, and teacher associations. The organization offers a variety of conferences, summer camps, enrichment opportunities, and oratory contests, and is involved in polling, public information, and publishing books, brochures and other materials.

Organized opposition to French instruction in the schools, particularly towards French immersion programs, has been undertaken at the national and provincial levels by political pressure groups such as the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada (APEC) and the Northern Foundation, both based in Ontario. Political parties such as the Western Canada Concept, the Confederation of Regions (CoR), and the Reform Party, based in Alberta, have also opposed bilingual policies to a greater or lesser degree.[36]

APEC is probably the best-known anti-bilingualism pressure group in the Victoria area, where in 1990 it was said to have 1,600 members. At a meeting of the Sooke school board in February, 1990, APEC failed to convince trustees they should reconsider their decision to introduce French immersion into the district and were criticized for their "jackboot and brownshirt mentality".

It is a much more complex task to pinpoint the sources of parent-organized opposition to French immersion at the school district level. Parents and teachers at established English program schools are almost always concerned to defend the sense of community they believe may be lost when a school receives French immersion students, many of whom do not live locally. In addition, as has been noted elsewhere in this chapter, parent (and teacher) opposition tends to coalesce whenever there is a period of uncertainty about the future. Typically this occurs when FI enrolment has grown and a board expends large amounts of administrative time and energy on finding another site.

Recent events in the Greater Victoria district have shown that parents are prepared to defend the community nature of a school. In 1988, the parent consultative committee for Willows School asked the school board to retain its 50% cap on EFI enrolment at the school, on the grounds that English program and EFI parents wanted Willows to remain a neighbourhood school free from crowding and "added strain". (The president of the committee had children in both programs.) Parents also wanted a return to the former system where enrolment at a school was restricted to residency within school boundaries, even though at that time only five of the board's 35 schools were dual track, all of them on the eastern side of the district.

Despite opposition from parents, the board voted to place EFI overflow into four empty classrooms at Willows School on a temporary basis because no other school had room. Otherwise the board would have had to turn 22 students away from Willows. Parents expressed their concern that as in the past, a "band-aid solution" would become permanent. Nine months later the board voted unanimously to end the capping policy, allowing demand and available space to decide EFI enrolment at each school. An additional school was added to the EFI program the following year. Despite consultation, there was stiff opposition from English program parents at the school.[37]

Saanich school district from the late 1970s to 1987-88 presents a more extreme example of organized parent opposition to EFI than Greater Victoria.[38] Parents interested in EFI, as well as a smaller number of English-program parents, created a pressure group in the late 1970s known as Peninsula Electors for Responsible Communities. The group backed pro-EFI candidates for election to the board and tried to persuade the incumbent board to start an EFI program. Parent group pressure was instrumental in the board's decision to introduce EFI for 1979-80. A certain amount of opposition to EFI was organized under the umbrella of the Confederation of Parent Associations of Saanich, many of whose members were concerned about board and candidate lobbying by pro-EFI parents. In the year leading up to the decision to introduce EFI, another organized group acted as an "official opposition" to EFI supporters on the board and the pro-EFI pressure group.

Throughout this period the board's membership included trustees who were opposed to EFI in principle. During the turmoil surrounding EFI programs in the mid-1980s in Saanich, two of the most influential of these trustees were

former district teachers. One of the teachers, a former principal of three Saanich district schools, later summarized his view of the French immersion program. He expressed educational or pedagogical concerns, on the basis that the early years of education are key years. He believed that the "99%" of children in B.C. who were English-speaking would be disadvantaged by a gap in their familiarity with English language and culture if they began school in an FI program. He suggested that FI programs were akin to private schools, since both these programs segregated advantaged students from the mainstream, resulting in a loss to all students. Moreover, FI children were deprived of the neighbourhood peer-group situation enjoyed by regular program students. In his view, FI programs divided school staff and parents into factions. Finally, enormous administrative costs were associated with FI in terms of time and energy as well as dollars (particularly for research). The trustee stated that although he did not object on philosophical grounds to federal expenditure on FI, it should be recognized that B.C. sent $2 to Ottawa for every $1 returned.[39]

**Public opinion**

Communities and school boards across Canada have not always welcomed requests from parents for new or expanded French immersion programs, and in the 1970s and 1980s, EFI tended to attract controversy. One observer noted that "finding a site for immersion is frequently as difficult as finding a site for disposal of toxic wastes".[40] If initial conflict between stakeholders in the two programs existed, it tended to be worsened and prolonged when trustees resorted to ad hoc implementation procedures (described by Burns, 1982, 1983, and discussed in Chapter Two).

School board trustees, many of them parents and fully aware of opinion differences between other parents, found themselves under pressure from all sides. Frequently, boards would divide into factions over EFI issues, and it is not surprising that in such circumstances trustees sometimes found it impossible (even politically inexpedient) to practise a system approach to planning (advocated by Burns, 1982, 1983). Because of initial concerns and fears about conflict, long-range commitment to immersion and long-term program planning were often delayed by several years after a board had been pressured by parents into beginning an "experimental" lead immersion class.

Some trustees consistently refused to introduce French immersion programs.[41] Even when school boards agreed to introduce EFI, years of uncertainty might follow. Rapid growth of immersion enrolment within school districts meant that decisions about school location sometimes had to be made very quickly, leaving little time for consultation with staff and parents in either program. Often the newly designated schools were unwelcoming, even though in a period of overall decline in enrolment it could be an immersion program that would save a school from closing. Immersion teacher shortages were reported, and English program teachers expressed concerns about possible redundancy.

Some school districts imposed limits on the growth of the program. In 1987, Saanich school board, a neighbour district to Victoria, eliminated immersion kindergarten (a decision unsuccessfully challenged in court by a group of parents), with the result that in 1988 only 51 children registered for grade one, down from 80 in previous years.[42] Greater Victoria for some years allowed French immersion enrolment to make up no more than half the student number in each dual track school, and Saanich applies the same policy.

Some boards limited entry by other means. Canadian Parents for French (CPF) reported in 1985 that a district in Prince Edward Island had required parents to register by phone on a specified day on a first-to-get-through, first-enrolled basis. CPF described how in several B.C. communities registrants lined up overnight at board offices on French immersion enrolment day.[43]

Aware that French immersion programs, despite obvious demand, seemed plagued with more than their share of what one retired Saanich school district official later termed "political posturing",[44] Canadian Parents for French commissioned a Gallup opinion poll in 1984 to guage public support for French instruction.[45] The results showed that most Canadians viewed French in the schools, including French immersion, in a positive light. From a sample of 3,000 adult anglophone Canadians across Canada, 68% of respondents agreed children should learn French in school in order to become bilingual. A regional breakdown showed that even in regions with lowest support for French bilingualism, a clear majority were supportive. The lowest percentages were reported for the prairie provinces (56%) and B.C. (57%). Other regional percentages were Quebec (95%), Atlantic (83%), and Ontario (73%). Among all respondents, 59% said they would enroll a child in early French Immersion if FI were available. No region had a positive response rate of under 50%, and CPF was able to use these encouraging figures as the basis of a multi-media public awareness campaign the same year.

Two years before the Canada-wide survey, the British Columbia chapter of CPF had commissioned a Gallup poll of more than 1,000 adults in the province. This survey showed a smaller proportion (51.5%) of respondents supporting school French for bilingualism than the 1984 poll,

suggesting a positive shift in attitude during the intervening two years. The 1982 survey had asked school French supporters for their reasons. The results showed that 25.8% believed the main advantage of fluency in both English and French would be better employment opportunities; 22.5% thought the principal advantage would be intellectual development; 17.7% cited cultural enrichment; and 13.3% thought the main benefit would be travel possibilities. Only 6.8% thought that strengthening national unity would be the major advantage. Among those who supported French instruction in schools, 39% favoured basic French for 20 minutes a day, while 27.9% favoured early immersion. In a separate question, a very large minority (47.2%) of French supporters said they would choose early immersion if they were enrolling children in the school system (in 1982). (B.C. support for a similar question in 1984 rose to 59%, as noted above.)

In 1985, 4,000 Canadians were polled in a survey undertaken for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. In British Columbia, 69% agreed that "knowing both English and French is important in helping a young person get ahead". (By comparison, Ontario support was much stronger at 82%, Prairie province support was also stronger at 74%, and Atlantic province support was strongest, at 93%.) On two other survey issues of direct relevance to this study, B.C. support for French was slightly higher than in the Prairie provinces, but again much lower than either Ontario or the Atlantic provinces. Seventy-seven percent in B.C. agreed "it would be a good thing if all Canadians could speak both English and French" (Ontario 83%, Prairies 75%, Atlantic 92%). Fifty-nine percent of B.C. adults thought "English and French should be required subjects in all Canadian schools" (Ontario 70%, Prairies 57%, Atlantic 77%.)

Firm conclusions cannot be reached about a major shift in Canadian attitudes in the years since the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and the first Official Languages Act, because no comparable polls were taken during the late 1960s and very early 1970s.[46] The clearest indications that a shift could be occurring are results from more recent surveys comparing attitudes across age groups. For instance, a CPF-commissioned poll in February 1990 indicated that anglophones between the ages of 18 and 29 are more likely (39%) than older respondents (27%) to report that their attitudes toward French second-language instruction had become more positive in the last year.[47]

**Summary**

The contextual overview above has shown that early French immersion programming can be traced to economic, political and social change in the province of Quebec during the 1950s and 1960s, a period often referred to as the Quiet Revolution. The Liberal federal government's major response to change and to new demands was to appoint a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Among other recommendations, the Commission advocated an increase in the employment opportunities of francophones and bilingual Canadians (who were for the most part also francophones) in the federal public service, and an expansion of second official language instruction, particularly for young students. The second measure was designed to improve the representation of anglophones among bilingual Canadians.

Over the past two decades, the expansion of language learning opportunities recommended by the Commission has in fact taken place. For example, the percentage of elementary students enrolled in French as a second language programs

has doubled to include almost two-thirds of the students in this age-group. Canada-wide, 7.0% of anglophone elementary and secondary students were taking part in French immersion programs in 1989, and in the Greater Victoria School District, the focal site of this study, 9.1% of elementary students were in the EFI program. In the mid-1970s, when the program began in Victoria, trustees committed the Board to continuing EFI programming through to Grade 12, although, as in other districts, implementation of EFI at any level has not always proceeded without incident. There is some evidence that the demand for EFI arose partly from a perception among parents that immersion is an enrichment program. There is also evidence that majority enrolment in EFI is unlikely to occur in the near future, for several reasons. First, only a small minority of the district's elementary schools offer EFI, some areas still are without a local EFI program, and the GVSD does not provide or subsidize transportation to EFI schools. Second, pressure groups opposing official bilingual policies and programs (such as APEC) are active in Victoria and probably have an effect on public support for federal and local initiatives in this field. Although (according to opinion polls) majorities of people in all provinces are in favour of French instruction in the schools, and the size of these majorities is expected to increase over time, support in British Columbia is still fairly weak. On the other hand, Canadian Parents for French continues to work actively at the federal and local levels to promote French programs of all types in every institution of education. Finally, teachers in the EFI and regular programs are likely to have exerted some influence over siting and general expansion of immersion programs, as they have been able to in other districts.

Other related developments have included a reversal of the formerly subordinate position of the francophone majority and the French language in Quebec, a patchwork of moderate improvements to the position of francophone minorities in the rest of Canada, and greater access to federal public service careers for unilingual francophones and those who are bilingual in French and English.

The political and public policy dimensions of French immersion considered earlier in this chapter have suggested that FI programs may have more appeal for those who are comfortable with collectivist solutions to economic, social and political issues. Participants in French immersion must often adopt a collective-action approach towards influencing policy and program decisions, and the programs themselves represent a publicly-funded attempt at social engineering on the part of the state. From this perspective, the federal state's desire to modify behaviour and attitudes through the education component of the national unity policy seems to coincide perfectly both with the collectivist beliefs of the policy's participants and with their desire for economic and other individual benefits. Some of the writers cited above would go further than this, arguing that a symbiotic partnership between state and clientele produces continued public funding for a minority elite program and results in unequal benefits to classes and individuals.

Analysis of certain theories of education and models of education systems has revealed a number of alternative ways of describing the relationship between the state and EFI participants. Such models and theories may help to explain the introduction of French immersion funding and programming, and, on the assumption that the education component of the national policy is retained, they may also be useful in predicting the future of the program. Concern

for the future centres on whether EFI will continue as a service to a minority (and here it is important to know the types of need EFI parents believe the program serves), or whether it has the potential to evolve into a majority or mass program, possibly serving slightly different requirements. For this area of discussion, the socio-economic status of EFI and English program parents and the incidence of elitist and other attitudinal orientations are crucial, and will be examined in succeeding chapters.

## Notes to Chapter I

1. Albert Breton, Bilingualism: An Economic Approach, Accent Quebec research and publications program (Montreal: C.D. Howe Research Institute, 1978).

2. Donald V. Smiley, Canada in Question: Federalism in the Eighties, 3rd. ed (Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1980), 239.

3. George E. Burns, "French Immersion Implementation in Ontario: Some Theoretical, Policy, and Applied Issues," Canadian Modern Language Review 42,3 (January 1986), 581.

4. Dominique Clift, "Towards the larger community", Language and Society, "The Immersion Phenomenon", special issue, (12, Winter, 1984), 66.

5. Ibid., 66.

6. Ibid., 66.

7. Models taken from Madan Sarup, Education, State and Crisis, A Marxist Perspective (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), chap.4, "Schooling and the State".

8. Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1988, first published 1970).

9. Philip Wexler, Tony Whitson and Emily J. Moskowitz, "Deschooling by Default: The Changing Social Functions of Public Schooling", Interchange vol.12, no.2-3, 1981, 148. A summary of the deschooling debate appears on p.133. Burns cites Wexler, and other "recent critics", as arguing "... in terms of cultural production, not merely reproduction of social inequality by class ...". Burns, "French Immersion Implementation in Ontario," 583.

10. Commissioner of Official Languages, Annual Report, 1990 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991), 274.

11. Charles Leslie Glenn, Jnr., The Myth of the Common School, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 39.

12. Ibid., 288.

13. Donald V. Smiley, Canada in Question: Federalism in the Eighties, 3rd ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1980), chapter 7.

14. Commissioner of Official Languages, Annual Report, 1990 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991), X.

15. Figures taken from Frank Moher, "Signpost: Ici la farce Canadienne", West magazine, (November, 1989), 62.

16. Tom McFeely, "Facts that argue for APEC", British Columbia Report, (March 5, 1990), 37.

17. Language and Society, No.22 (Spring, 1988), (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1988), 14.

18. Commissioner of Official Languages, Annual Report, 1990, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991), 59-64.

19. English immersion programs have been incompatible with Quebec governments' policies for French language protection. There are no English immersion schools in the province, although basic (core) English programs are widespread.

20. Statistics Canada, A Portrait of Children in Canada, Catalogue 89-520, 1990 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services).

21. Statistics from Commissioner of Official Languages, Annual Report, 1989, 215; Annual Report, 1990, 272 and 318-9. (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1990 and 1991).

22. "Federal and Provincial Linguistic Dates", Language and Society, (Summer, 1989), (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services), R-31.

23. Language and Society, No. 20, (Fall 1987), (Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services), 24.

24. British Columbia, Ministry of Education, French immersion programs, Ministry Policy Circular, July 1987.

25. British Columbia, Ministry of Education, Modern Languages Service Branch, "Manual on federal funding for French programs", September, 1987, p.2.

26. British Columbia, Ministry of Education, French immersion programs, Ministry Policy Circular (Victoria: July, 1987), 1.

27. British Columbia, Ministry of Education, Programme cadre de francais, Ministry Policy Circular (Victoria: July, 1987).

28. "All Quiet on the Western Front?", Language and Society, No.33 (Winter, 1990) (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1990),23.; Raymond M. Hebert, "Francophone Communities in the West: Setbacks and Victories", Language and Society, special report, (Summer, 1989), R41-3; and Annual Report, 1990, Commissioner of Official Languages (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991), 321.

29. Figures supplied by Ray Shergold, Vice Principal, Greater Victoria School District, in June, 1990.

30. Greater Victoria School District, Long Range Planning for French Immersion, report of the Education Policy Development Committee (Victoria: February 1, 1989).

31. Victoria Times-Colonist, "French immersion given green light by board", 1 March, 1989.

32. Greater Victoria School District, Long Range Planning for French Immersion, report of the Education Policy Development Committee (Victoria: February 1, 1989).

33. Carolyn Hodych, (National President, Canadian Parents for French), Brief presented to the Standing Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Official Languages (Ottawa: CPF, June 4, 1986), unpublished.

34. Laird O'Brien, "Path to understanding: Two languages unite in a new generation", The Review (Imperial Oil), No.1, 1985.

35. Canadian Parents for French, Workshop Notes, Session I, Public Relations, June, 1978, unpublished.

36. Gracie MacDonald, "Fear of French', Monday Magazine, (Victoria), May 3-9, 1990, p.6-9; and Language and Society, No.28, Fall, 1989, (Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services, 1989), 15-16.

37. Victoria Times-Colonist articles: "Parents at Willows want French immersion curbs", 27 April, 1988, C10; "French overflow protested", 31 May, 1988; "Board pops cap on French-immersion registrations", 9 Dec, 1988; "French immersion plan in despite gripes over space", 28 February, 1989; "French immersion growth given green light by board", 1 March, 1989.

38. There is agreement on this conclusion from interviewees in both districts. Explanations for the different intensities of opposition have included declining overall enrolment in Victoria compared with expansion in

Saanich, since declining enrolment provides more options for housing a new and expanding program. Attitudinal differences between Victoria and Saanich were also cited. One Saanich trustee (not a supporter of EFI) referred to North Saanich as "the redneck heartland" and a source of "violent objection" to EFI. Another trustee suggested New Democratic Party sympathisers on the Greater Victoria Board had "fewer hang-ups" about Canada's bilingual policies.

39. Joe Lott (Chairman, Saanich School District), interview by author (written notes), Saanich School District Office, February 16, 1988.

40. James P. Jones, "Past, Present, and Future Needs in Immersion", Canadian Modern Language Review, Vol.41, No.2, November 1984, 260-268.

41. Canadian Parents for French, Brief to the (Parliamentary) Committee on Equality Rights, 1985, (unpublished), 10.

42. Victoria Times-Colonist, Patrick Murphy, "Immersion faces disaster", April 20, 1988.

43. Canadian Parents for French, Brief to the (Parliamentary) Committee on Equality Rights, 1985, (unpublished), 5.

44. Saanich News, "Political posturing threatens French program", Letter to the Editor from R. W. Gowing, Co-ordinator French Programs (retired), 1974-1984, School District No.63 (Saanich, B.C.), March 5-10, 1987.

45. Canadian Parents for French, Brief to the (Parliamentary) Committee on Equality Rights, 1985, (unpublished).

46. Gerard Pelletier, "Reactions and comments [to a Canadian Facts poll commissioned by the Office of the Official Commissioner of Languages in 1985]: Why Are We Less Divided?", Language and Society, No. 19, April, 1987 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1987), 9.

47. Language and Society, No.32, Fall, 1990 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1990), 22.

# Chapter II

## Review of Literature

### The scope of Chapter II

The first chapter described the environment of French immersion programming, and examined certain public policy dimensions identified by this study and by writers in the field of EFI education. Many of the issues raised in the discussion were related to the characteristics of EFI parents, and their motivations for pressuring school boards into introducing programs and for enrolling their children in them. Questions of equal access to EFI and the social justice of limiting EFI enrolment, for example, are given new importance if evidence is found of elite socio-economic status among the minority of families taking advantage of the programs. Additional characteristics of EFI and English program parents - the incidence of French as a home or childhood language, for example - should also be examined for possible differences between the parent groups, since they may have an influence on program choice. In the first section of this chapter, previous studies are reviewed for their findings about the attributes of the two groups.

The results from a study of Northern Ontario (Olson & Burns, 1981, 1983, Burns, 1983) and of Ontario (Burns, 1986) indicate strongly that during the introductory years of EFI, participating families are drawn from a socio-economic elite, at least in terms of their own communities; and the authors conclude that high SES is the major factor in EFI placement. Trites (1981) also finds evidence linking relatively high SES with EFI placement, this time among

families of four-year-old EFI enrollees. On the other hand, researchers such as Bienvenue (1984), Guttman (1983), and Malatest (1988) are less convinced that socio-economic characteristics act as primary determinants, particularly in an established program. Additional attributes such as geographic mobility, childhood language, and language currently spoken at home are examined for their effect by Bienvenue, but are found to play relatively insignificant roles.

In the second section of this chapter, parent motives, attitudes, and values come under scrutiny. Themes from the first chapter recur in this literature; for example, writers are interested in knowing how far EFI parents identify with the different types of goals thought to be associated with the program: that is, the collective, social, and cultural goals, as distinct from the individualist-instrumental (career-related) goals. Both parent groups are tested for their ethnocentric, integrative, and instrumental orientations, and for their concerns about such issues as neighbourhood schools and divisiveness. A number of attitudinal cleavages between EFI parents and English program parents (Bienvenue, 1984; Carey, 1984, and McEachern, 1980), are found to be significant. Bienvenue and Carey conclude they are more significant than differences in either socio-economic characteristics or other attributes. Parents' assessment of EFI as an educational enrichment program receives some attention (Guttman, 1983; Carey, 1984). A concluding section of this chapter summarizes the findings.

**Differences in the socio-economic status and other attributes of the two parent groups**

A survey conducted among virtually all the EFI parents in eight school districts in Northern Ontario (Olson and Burns, 1981) found that French immersion children tended to be upper-middle class, have a higher IQ, and higher achievement than their English program counterparts. The authors reported that their findings conformed closely with studies undertaken in Hamilton, North York, and Ottawa-Carleton districts. The EFI students were said to make up an elite cohort inside the school system, whose inevitable success had endowed the immersion program with an "aura" among many educators, encouraging strong support.

In addition, the parents of the first group of children to enter a new immersion program were found to be disproportionately from upper socio-economic backgrounds. Self-selection of mainly upper and middle income families into the program was observed both in the most senior grades of new programs and in all grades of well-established programs. Moreover, these two phenomena contributed only partly to the creation of an elite cohort. EFI teachers tended to progressively "track out" children who did not perform as well as others in the program, and the authors had reason to believe that those who were excluded were generally working class or had lower IQs or learning problems. Immersion teachers were able to reject slow learners, unmotivated students, and those with behaviour problems (options not available to colleagues in the English program).

Self-selection of higher socio-economic-status (SES) students into EFI was not explained in the paper, although parents' beliefs about the program and their reasons for enrolment provide some insight and are examined in another

part of this review, below. The explanatory value of this information is limited, however, by the absence of data from a control group of English-program parents. Moreover, family attributes other than socio-economic are not examined in the study.

According to Olson and Burns, the implications of self-selection and systemic selection are profound when considered in the light of the federal government's intended outcomes of bilingualism in education: to increase the opportunities for all children to become bilingual, and to contribute to greater understanding between Canada's anglophone and francophone populations. Both types of selectivity also raise questions of social policy and distributive justice. If (as the authors argue and as many of their EFI parent respondents believed) being bilingual brings with it access to wider cultural opportunities and more and better jobs, then selectivity, the authors conclude, amounts to a systematic denial of such benefits to numerous children. Olson and Burns argue that FI should not be "allowed to emerge as a form of education whose curriculum and concomitant advantages are beyond the grasp of mainstream Canadians".[1]

In another paper based on the same study, Burns (1982)[2] reports that although the occupational levels of French Immersion parents in Northeastern Ontario tended to cluster (76%) around the middle of the scale, and the program contained more working class background students than programs in Southern Ontario, middle range occupations often formed the core of their communities "upper" social structure. In addition, Northern Ontario programs contained the children of virtually <u>all</u> the professional people, and a substantial group of children whose parents were local merchants, union stewards and other persons active in the

community. The same pattern held for the education levels of the EFI parents.

Measured by income, immersion children came from privileged backgrounds; EFI family incomes were typically two or three times the mean family incomes of their local communities. Only 4.0% of the immersion children were found to come from families earning under $10,000 a year (1981 dollars), whereas Statistics Canada data for 1978 reported 16.4% of the population in equivalent areas of Ontario earning between $7,000 - $9,000 or less.

Other studies cited by Burns show a strong relationship between family background and children's overall achievement, leading to the conclusion that parents of students in EFI play an important role in their children's academic success. Therefore, Burns suggests, care should be taken in attributing the apparent pedagogical success of EFI to the excellence of the immersion path itself or to careful implementation by Ministry, district, or school personnel.

Burns argues that school boards should ensure universal access to EFI by bussing and by practising active rather than passive recruitment. They should provide remediation and other support services within the program so that every child who enrols in immersion can succeed. Funds granted for bilingual education should be monitored at all levels so that they directly impact the programs they were designed to support. In view of the rapidly increasing demand for EFI, boards should plan for its introduction. For example, a total system approach should include long-term maintenance funding and proposals for extension of FI into secondary schools. In the early 1980s, few boards had adopted the planned approach; most programs had been hastily implemented in response to pressure from parents, even

though ad hoc implementation is yet another factor that tends to nurture elitism, since, Burns argues, high socio-economic-status parents are more willing to gamble on innovations. As Burns notes, typically the high-SES parents are also the initial source of external pressure on the board, and consequently their children are likely to form the majority of the lead cohort in a new EFI program.

A third paper based on this study (Olson and Burns, 1983) cites more evidence of elitism. In the North York region, the board had so far refused to provide bussing for EFI because the program was optional, even though seven out of eight EFI schools were concentrated in the more affluent third of the district, and the eighth school was nearby. Bussing would not have been an expense to the district, but the board estimated it would have produced a 40% growth in EFI participation, or approximately 50 additional schools. So even where demand from less-affluent areas was known to exist, French immersion programs continued to function as a service to an elite. Some boards had set minimum standards for IQ and other tests for entry into the program. In effect, EFI classes had become enriched programs for high achievers from high-SES families.

Another Ontario study, a report summarising EFI research findings (Cummins, 1983), concludes that in pedagogical terms, early French immersion programs are suited to all students, including those who speak a third language at home, those with relatively low IQ levels, and those from working class backgrounds. The same report cites statistics on the fate of children who dropped out of French into the English program. A large majority repeated or dropped back a grade level, and although they made good progress in the English program in relation to the grade level they repeated, their performance fell further behind that of

equivalent children of the same age who remained in French immersion.

This report is disturbing in view of suggestions made by Olson and Burns (above) about systemic selecting-out of EFI students, and in the context of teacher assessments cited in an Ontario Ministry of Education study (Trites, 1981). Trites found that teachers rated more of the English program four-year-olds "below-average" in ability, fewer of them "above-average", and more of them "likely to encounter difficulty in school". Trites also reported that the fathers, mothers, and families of four-year-olds about to enter EFI had significantly higher socio-economic status than those of children about to enter the English program. Trites concluded that the EFI program appeared to be composed of the most capable students, but did not explain the phenomenon.

In contrast, a comparison of 318 EFI parents and 213 English program parents from four Winnipeg school divisions (Bienvenue, 1983) suggested that socio-economic status and other family characteristics were not major determinants of EFI enrolment. Crucial factors for enrolment in the two programs appeared to be the parents' values and attitudes. (These findings are examined in the next section, below.) Occupational status and income did not differ significantly between the two sets of parents, and more than one-third in each group were working class. Significant differences in educational levels were observed, however: more than twice as many EFI mothers as English-program mothers had university degrees (28% compared with 12%). Differences between fathers' educational levels were not so large, except at masters degree level, where there were 13% of EFI fathers and only 3.0% of English-program fathers.

A shortcoming of the Winnipeg study should be noted at this point. Among other objectives, the study intended to determine whether there were differences in the economic situations of parents who chose either program for their children. In restricting the sample to kindergarten and grade one parents, the outcome of self-selection could be fully observed; on the other hand, unlike the Ontario study, it was possible to take into account the effects of only two years of systemic-selection and "tracking out".

A case study of FI in New Brunswick (Edwards, 1984) states that "virtually everyone has access to the program, but there is undoubtedly a self-selection process at work and the students opting for immersion are usually from the better-educated families in the higher economic bracket".[3]

Two British Columbia studies conclude this review of literature on the socio-economic characteristics of FI and English-program families. In a mail survey of potential FI demand commissioned by an unidentified, mainly rural, Lower Mainland school district, O'Shea and Horvath (1983) reported that unequivocal support for French immersion increased with the educational level of parents. The researchers' concern on this point was alleviated by their prediction that immersion children would probably be drawn fairly evenly, in absolute numbers, from all socio-economic strata, since the proportion of parents with higher levels of education was smaller than the lower-education proportion. No data are available on the accuracy of their prediction, and only about 225 families responded to the survey.

In 1988 the Greater Victoria school district commissioned a telephone survey of parents (Malatest, 1988). Among other objectives, the researchers attempted to isolate the factors influencing parents' decisions to enroll children in EFI and

Late French immersion. Two samples were obtained, one consisting of 384 parents with children already attending district elementary schools (selected using district records), and the other including 261 parents with children born between 1982 and 1984 (selected by a telephone pre-survey of randomly-chosen households). The second sample contained 67 families with children not yet attending a district school. The two samples were then combined, producing 523 usable cases (a very high response rate of more than 81%).

Two measures of family socio-economic status were used: education level, and tenure (owner or renter of residence). Education level did not significantly affect support for French immersion (EFI and Late FI). Similarly, parents who supported FI showed no marked variation by education level in the reasons they provided for FI selection, or in their ranking of the reasons. The report (a summary) implies that support of FI, reasons for support, and ranking of reasons all varied across tenure, although evidence for this conclusion is not supplied. Parents who did not support FI were also asked for reasons and a ranking. Once again, there was no significant difference between reasons and ranking by education level. Among the non-supporting parents, tenure was not a significant variable in relation to differences between reasons or ranking. On the other hand, the opinions of the total parent sample on the need for second language education varied significantly by education level and by tenure. Renters (at 18%) were almost twice as likely as owners (9.4%) to take the view that a second language is unnecessary. About 20% of parents with up to Grade 12 education thought a second language was not necessary, whereas only about 5.0% of those with post-graduate education took the same view.

In summary, these studies offer mixed evidence on the possibility of a significant relationship between FI placement and relatively high socio-economic status. As will be recalled from the review above, the most compelling evidence of such a relationship, reported by Olson and Burns in their study of Northern Ontario school districts, leads the authors to conclude that EFI classes effectively had become enriched programs for high achievers from high-SES families. In examining how this could occur, Olson and Burns are led to a second conclusion with regard to EFI: that inadequate program implementation tends to limit the reforming capabilities of national policy goals.

Olson and Burns (1983) also discuss "the important theoretical lessons" of their findings, taking issue with a group of educational theorists typified (in their view) by writers such as Bowles and Gintis (1976, 1980). Olson and Burns disagree with the following theories: that schools are passive agents in the educational process, serving only or mainly to reproduce students' socio-economic status by instilling acceptance of the appropriate ideology; that educational content is incidental to this purpose; and that content learning is relatively ineffective in differentiating future social status compared with the effect of a student's class background. For Olson and Burns, this theoretical position devalues any attempt at increasing social mobility through educational reform. The two authors postulate an alternative approach, based on their findings about the EFI program in Ontario:

> We believe from our observations that the content of schooling is anything but passive. Instead, we suggest that French immersion is one of a constellation of key **technical** job-related studies (others are computer sciences and information processing) that represent new forms of 're-skilling'. What we argue is that the practices attendant on re-skilling represent an important stage in class maintenance and reformation, with the aim of solidifying

individual class positions in times of technological or job-requirement shifts. Consequently, they [the practices] may be seen as individual (but class-based) **mediations** of shifts in economic and social structure.[4]

The term "attendant practices" refers to the workings of economic realities, demographics, vested interest groups, local biases and other factors that mediate between the original intent of a policy and its practical outcome. The authors suggest that it is at these "mediated" levels of implementation and re-interpretation that social context becomes vital. "Attendant practices" are also "government hiring practices, state intervention to sanction official bilingualism and provide funds for programs, and so on". It is assumed the authors mean to include all factors tending to determine government policy on second language funding and the level of EFI programming offered by education agencies. Attendant practices together form the "situational context".

The "social context", on the other hand, also referred to as the "more general social (stratified) context", appears to encompass factors directly influencing differential uptake of a program by individuals as members of socio-economic classes. In the case of EFI programming, Burns and Olson found evidence that anglophone middle class parents were quick to perceive the relationship between EFI and their children's job opportunities. The authors then showed that normal implementation practices tended to encourage self-selection of an elite into lead cohorts of the program, and that other practices over the first few years of placement tended towards systemic selection of an elite, since students who did not fit the elite mould were rejected from the program.

The net effect of interaction between situational and social contexts is the creation of "a new elite who, through its access to peers, its enriched curriculum, its parental activism, and its bilingualism, is substantially better equipped - retooled, so to speak - to solidify its own class advantage".[5] In the authors' view, EFI programming could become more equitable through the use of situational planning. Sociocultural and educational innovations need to be preceded by evaluations of accompanying social processes.

In a later paper (1986), Burns develops the themes of elite reproduction and change theory. As might be expected from his interest in planning, he favours an approach to educational implementation emphasizing educational change not as an event or a product, but rather as a process. Burns and Olsen have shown that an early French immersion program should not be regarded as a single entity within an education system, because such a program exerts a "multi-dimensional" effect on the ecology of schools and schooling, with implications for existing programs, support services, teaching staff, funds and facilities. The multi-dimensional effect in turn requires changes in the nature of social relationships, between educators themselves and between educators and students, and between educators and different sections of the larger society. Changes at this level of complexity frequently produce resistance and inequalities.

Proceeding from the assumption that a program which breeds inequality is not achieving its stated objectives, Burns assesses three models of reproduction theory (economic, cultural, and hegemonic-state) for their utility in any attempts at reducing inequalities and overcoming resistance to innovation. The models are defined by means of a quotation from H. A. Giroux:

> First, schools provide different classes and social groups with the knowledge and skills they need to occupy their respective places in a labour force stratified by class, race and gender. Secondly, schools are reproductive in the cultural sense. In this perspective they function in part to distribute and legitimate forms of knowledge, values, language, and modes of style that constitute the dominant culture and its interests. And finally schools are reproductive in the sense that they serve as a part of a state apparatus that produces and legitimates the economic and ideological imperatives that underlie the state's political power.[6]

Burns argues that the reproductive economic model and the cultural reproduction (or correspondence theory) model view schools as responsible for inequality and as institutions which are instrumental in meeting the needs of capitalist society. Burns values these approaches for their usefulness in explaining the existence of inequality. On the other hand he is obliged to reject them for their determinism, their "reductionist instrumentation" towards the meaning and role of schools, and for their "radical pessimism that offers little hope for social change and even less reason for developing alternative educational practices".

For Burns, the hegemonic-state reproductive model seems to offer more potential for interventionism, change, and positive outcome. He argues that the role of the state is central to an analysis of factors affecting French immersion implementation. The federal state has a long history of attempting to achieve national policy goals through funds to programs implemented by provincial and local educational institutions. In this paper, the author consolidates his and Olson's previous findings to reaffirm that EFI elitism exists, is being encouraged by inadequate implementation and planning, and is becoming an "unquestioned fact". As an example of unquestioning acceptance of EFI inequality at the centre of decision-making, Burns quotes a statement from the

1981 Annual Report of the Commissioner of Official Languages, M.R. Yalden:

> Some parents, teachers, and specialists see a dangerous form of elitism in current immersion programs because of the access problem. One is tempted to observe that this word is increasingly used in contemporary circumstances to express disapproval when one cannot find anything else wrong. No one disputes that immersion places are limited and probably always will be. The issue is whether the future of a programme like immersion French should be put in doubt because some youngsters may be benefitting from it, but not the population at large.[7]

Burns takes the opposite approach. In a democracy, he believes, a new high-status knowledge opportunity provided with public funds must be made equally available to all. Equitable implementation of the opportunity ensures equitable access to the capital with which the knowledge is rewarded.

Among the studies reviewed above, only Bienvenue's survey of Winnipeg parents (Bienvenue, 1983, 1984, 1986) reports an extensive examination of parent attributes other than SES as determinants of program selection. This is an important area of research, since a relatively high level of geographic mobility, for example, could result in a more integrative outlook and a more positive valuation of bilingualism, leading parents to opt for the French immersion program. Bienvenue's data, however, indicates no significant differences between the two groups of parents in terms of geographic mobility. Slightly more than half the parents in both programs had lived outside Manitoba, for the most part in the same locations. Moreover, a multivariate analysis did not confirm ethno-linguistic factors as major determinants of program enrolment. In terms of linguistic background, there were similar proportions of English, French and "other" backgrounds among the fathers, and only a

slightly higher proportion of French-Canadians among the mothers (16% for EFI and 7.0% for the English program). In addition, there were lower proportions of non-English, non-French mother tongues (16% versus 27%) in the immersion program. Being foreign-born and having "other" mother tongues seemed to be associated with placement in the English program rather than French immersion.

## The relationship between program selection and the parents' motives, attitudes, and values

The study of eight Northern Ontario school districts described in the previous section (Olson and Burns, 1981) found little evidence that parents of FI children identified closely with the collective social-cultural goal of federal government bilingual education policies, defined by the authors as the eventual transformation of Canada into a bilingual nation.

Olson and Burns found instead that most FI parents held an individualistic, pragmatic view of immersion. A large majority (88%) believed it was important to learn a second language, 82% thought that mastery of a second language was an important part of education, 74% identified immersion as a form of enrichment, and 88% had selected FI because they wanted their children to have "better access to jobs".

On the other hand, only 38% indicated an important reason for their choice of FI had been "Canada's future depends upon bilingual citizens". In addition, more parents (48%) felt it was important for their child to have the cultural opportunity to travel in Quebec than felt the presence of their child in FI showed Quebec that Ontarians cared about national unity (37%). The authors note that these results

were obtained in a region of Ontario where 26% of the population is of French ethnicity, and on the eve of a separatist referendum in Quebec, when public opinion and the media were particularly sensitive to issues of national unity. In other words, ideal circumstances existed under which collective goals could be predicted to take precedence over individualistic goals, yet this did not happen.

Olson and Burns found that their concern over the apparent elitism of FI (discussed above) was not shared by FI parents, 92% of whom disagreed that "French immersion programs are not a good idea because they make children in them different from their friends". Almost as many (91%) disagreed that "French immersion programs are not a good idea because they create an elite group".

Reference has been made above to the attitudinal and value differences found between parent groups in a Winnipeg survey (Bienvenue, 1983, 1984, 1986), and to Bienvenue's assessment that values and attitudes were more important to program selection than the parents' SES characteristics. Bienvenue's study shows that more French immersion than English program parents are positive about such national integrative issues as official bilingualism, the value of Quebec in Confederation, the school and language rights of French Manitobans, multi-cultural policies, the legitimacy of teaching "non-official languages" in public schools, and the learning of a second language. For example, while 71% of immersion parents agreed with the principles of official bilingualism, only 45% of the comparison group agreed. More English program parents (29%) than FI parents (10%) believed that the Official Languages Act ought not to apply to Western Canada. When asked whether Canadians should make more effort to learn French, 68% of FI parents agreed, compared with 39% of English program parents.

In each of three dimensions relating to the value of French fluency - instrumental (employment possibilities), integrative/national (understanding French-Canadian culture), and integrative/international (travelling and visiting in Quebec and abroad) - FI parents were significantly more positive than English program parents. Job access (instrumental value) showed the least variation between groups, but on the other hand showed the highest amount of agreement in both groups (85% for FI and 62% for the English program (gamma .55). Olson and Burns's assessment of the instrumental value of FI to FI parents appears to have been borne out, although the difference between the two groups of parents on this dimension is not as great as might have been expected from the authors' concern over the apparent pervasiveness of elitism in FI. Bienvenue's integrative/international dimension of French fluency also showed 85% agreement amongst FI parents, but the percentage decreased to 52 for the English group. This dimension showed the highest strength of association of the three (gamma .65, compared with .56 for the integrative/national value), and emerged as the strongest predictor of immersion participation tested in the Winnipeg study.

These results lead Bienvenue to the conclusion that English program parents are less "cosmopolitan" and less positive about the value of individual French/English bilingualism and about French as an asset in terms of culture or international travel, even though most recognize fluency as useful for employment. In contrast to the Northern Ontario findings, Bienvenue believes the Winnipeg study shows it is the non-immersion parents who tend to view individual bilingualism in a predominantly instrumental fashion. The strength of association between these dimensions and the two parent groups did not change significantly when parental

differences in family income, fathers' occupation, ethnicity, and mother tongue were included. Bienvenue's 1983 paper therefore concludes:

> To place a child in French Immersion or in the regular program is not a simple matter of socio-economic status. Nor are decisions based on support or non-support for Official Bilingualism. For most parents, decisions are rooted in a set of values and practical concerns regarding elementary education.[8]

In another response to Olson and Burns, Guttman (1983) questions their "assertion" that the cognitive gains in French fluency associated with enrolment in FI are the result of the children's socio-economic characteristics rather than the content of the curriculum. Olson and Burns predicted that the FI student cohort would not make similar gains in the second generation because the implementation problems the two authors identified as being the cause of high socio-economic selectivity would have been overcome and FI placement would have become more equitable. Guttman throws doubt on this "conjecture", and suggests an alternative explanation for the apparent academic success of FI students. Successful academic performance, she argues, results from a match between the motivational and educational aspirations and abilities of the child and the motivational and learning atmosphere that can be provided by the teacher and the school. According to Guttman, Olson and Burns ignore two important factors: that French immersion takes place in a positive learning environment and that second language learning increases cognitive functioning. Parents are looking to the school to provide new and stimulating environments beyond those that they can offer at home, and for most parents, the regular school programs are failing to make such provision. The French immersion option offers something more. When the North York (Ontario) district introduced a program for gifted and talented

elementary students, more than 50% of French immersion parents in two FI schools opted instead for the enriched English program when their children were found to qualify. Most of these parents commented that their children needed more enrichment than the FI program offered.

Guttman observes that for many parents, especially for those with a university education, the regular English program does not always offer an **educational** advantage. Parents may be concerned that the regular environment would be unstimulating if their children's classmates did not share a similar home background or first language. A comparison of the characteristics of French immersion programs and private schools suggests that they have much in common. These characteristics include: parent voluntarism, involvement and commitment, selectivity, an academic learning atmosphere, and a concern for discipline. According to Guttman, they help to explain why parents opt for FI. Moreover, immersion teachers can be characterized as committed, teaching FI by choice, highly trained and selected, concerned for discipline and learning atmosphere. These factors tend to produce a consensus between teachers and students which is likely to effect a more cooperative academic ecology, which in turn affects students' cognitive achievements, and influences parental assessment of the program. In summary, Guttman's alternative explanation of parent motivation suggests a more complex interplay between the "social" and "situational" contexts of EFI than Burns and Olson have described. The three authors agree, however, that the individual, instrumental advantages of FI are of major importance to EFI parents.

The study undertaken in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia by O'Shea and Horvath in 1983 appears to support Guttman's explanation. The most popular reasons (out of a

possible seven) for actively considering enrolment in were enrichment (37%), the ability to travel and communicate in different parts of the world (23%), and the importance of French as part of general education (19%). Only 10% of potential FI parents cited improved job opportunities as their most important reason. Integrative motives do not appear to have been ranked highly by the FI parents surveyed for this study.

Integrative values are important determinants of student performance in French immersion programs, according to a paper concerned mainly with the pedagogical aspects of FI programs (Stephen Carey, 1984). The author examines a decade of immersion studies and concludes that the most powerful cluster of variables influencing students' performance in FI programs is a combination of the attitudes and values and the degree of ethnocentricity acquired by students from their sociocultural and familial background. Although immersion education entails some content or trade-off costs to the student, these costs will be more than offset if immersion is allowed to reach its full potential. Moreover, the costs will be negligible if "the hidden curriculum in the home" is congruent with or complements the aspirations and goals of the immersion program.

Instrumental and integrative motives for selecting the two programs were investigated in Victoria in 1980, seven years after the Victoria school district had introduced its first early French immersion program (McEachern, 1980). All immersion kindergarten parents were surveyed (at the time, there were only 82 students), yielding a small number of respondents (53). In the English program, a randomly-selected sample of 150 kindergarten parents (10% of the total) were surveyed, of whom 76 responded. Three questions tested parents' instrumental attitudes towards bilingualism:

parents were asked whether the ability to speak French had cultural, intellectual and social advantages, whether knowledge of English was sufficient to live in Canada, and whether French-English bilingualism provided individuals with more and better employment opportunities.

The issue of employment opportunities produced the only significant difference between the two parent groups. More French immersion parents (86.5%) than English program parents (61.3%) felt their children would have better employment opportunities if they were bilingual. More than 29% of English program parents thought opportunities would **not** be greater, compared with only 3.8% of EFI parents. And, in contrast to Bienvenue's findings, no significant difference between the two groups was observed on an integration issue (whether children educated in FI were likely to lose their English Canadian identity).

On the other hand, more French immersion parents than English program parents felt optimistic about their child's ability to be successful in an EFI program. For example, the two parent groups differed in their assessments of whether their children would suffer in English and other subjects by being in an immersion class, the EFI parents being much more positive. McEachern suggested that the difference possibly resulted from misinformation or a lack of information about the program, and advised educators to be pro-active and to inform parents in layman's terms. In contrast with Olson and Burns' findings, transportation problems were not influential; had an immersion class been located in a neighbourhood school, most English program parents (65.8%) still would not have enrolled their children in EFI.

McEachern's findings on the relative optimism of the two parent groups with respect to the EFI program are replicated in Bienvenue's study. Bienvenue found that differences of opinion on the educational components of FI were additional critical factors for recruitment into French immersion. For example, a much larger percentage of English program parents than FI parents thought that FI was too experimental, that FI children had greater adjustment problems and suffered in terms of English language development, and that money spent on FI would have been better spent on improving French teaching throughout the school system.

Moreover, the two parent groups in Bienvenue's study were clearly divided by their assessments of basic (core) French programs. Although only half of the English program parents thought the elementary core French program was adequate, a much smaller group of FI parents (16%) held the same opinion. A sizeable majority of FI parents (75%) agreed that "children who learn French in the regular program cannot develop a high degree of proficiency", whereas only 43% of English program parents agreed. Differences between parent groups were also pronounced with respect to three statements on the value of neighbourhood schools (children acquire a sense of community, children attend school with neighbourhood friends, parent is concerned for the value of neighbourhood schools).

In addition, three political aspects of immersion were tested for their ability to differentiate between the two groups of parents: "FI creates a divided school system", "FI creates a privileged school system", and "too much conflict and too many hard feelings surround FI". In contrast with the parents' evaluations of the educational components of FI, their assessments of basic French programs, and the values they assigned to neighbourhood

schools, the political aspects did not clearly separate the two groups.

These results prompt Bienvenue to characterize French immersion parents as cosmopolitan persons who can accept an innovative and successful educational program, whereas English program parents tend be less confident about the quality of the immersion program, preferring French to be taught as a regular subject. English program parents have stronger ideological and practical ties to their neighbourhood school.

Another Ontario study (Burns, 1987), undertaken in Sault Ste. Marie elementary schools and involving 202 immersion parents and 780 English program parents, offers additional insight into parent satisfaction with the district's French as a second language programs. Ninety-four percent of the FI parents indicated they would have chosen the immersion program again, and many commented they were pleased at the way in which immersion challenged bright children. Given a choice between early and late immersion, 96% said they would choose EFI again. In contrast, among the English program parents, only 21.4% would have selected EFI if they could have selected again. Instead, 63.4% would have opted for core French, and only 10.3% would have chosen extended French (where one or more subjects is taught in French within the English program). A sizeable majority (60%) believed core French should be extended downwards from its starting point (then grade six) to a point between kindergarten and grade three. Only a small minority (36 parents) did not select a French program. These results indicate that although most English program parents would like French instruction for their children, few would prefer instruction to take place within the EFI program, in contrast to the EFI parents. Many EFI parents are also

interested in the enrichment opportunities offered by the EFI program.

Surprisingly, more FI parents (37.9%) than English program parents (19.4%) believed that the district FI program had affected other programs and services. (Among teachers, who were also surveyed, a much higher proportion (51.2%) believed there had been an effect, prompting Burns to warn of the role of interest groups in arousing the community.) It will be recalled that Bienvenue found no obvious differences between the two parent groups on the political aspects of French immersion.

## Summary and conclusion

Research has revealed much important information about the two parent groups. While there may be disagreements over issues raised in the literature, there is also some consensus. For example, there are different levels of support for language policies among the two parent groups. On the other hand, a major dispute centres on the importance of socio-economic and class differences as determinants of program placement. A further disagreement arises from confusion over definitions of integrative orientation as opposed to instrumental orientation; for Bienvenue, valuations of travelling and visiting in Quebec and abroad are regarded as positive or negative positions in relation to an "integrative/international" orientation. Such valuations resulted in the strongest correlations between programs of any of the indicators used in her study, leading to her conclusion that French immersion parents were much more oriented towards an integrative perspective and to the implication that FI parents were **motivated** to select the FI program because of a desire to integrate with francophone

people. For Burns, valuations of this type are bound up with instrumental motivations (since travel in Quebec is a cultural opportunity), and are contrasted with integrative motivations (such as a desire to show Quebec that Ontarians care about national unity). In a similar vein, McEachern surveyed parents for their instrumental attitudes towards the individual cultural advantages of French fluency, and Guttman argues that parents are primarily motivated by the individual enrichment advantages of the FI program.

It is clear, then, that overall consensus has not been achieved on the most important question - the relative influence of various parent attributes as determinants of program placement - and that this is partly due to confusion over definitions. The literature on the client groups of the two programs has raised a number of important issues, however, and at this point a brief summary will facilitate comparison with the results of the Victoria survey, presented over the next three chapters.

With regard to parent attributes, important dimensions are the effects of socio-economic status and ethnic background on program placement, and their relationship to language-related attitudes and other values. With respect to attitudes and values as independent dimensions for program placement, several themes begin to emerge. Elitist/anti-elitist attitudes are examined as independent variables influencing program placement, and as dependent on socio-economic status. Parents are said to exhibit greater or lesser degrees of cosmopolitanism, interest in French for international travel, ideological and practical ties to their neighbourhood schools, concern for educational enrichment, confidence in the abilities of their children, and evaluations of EFI and core French programs (as experimental, effective, more or less disruptive, and so

on.) Ethnocentricity is examined by several authors. Parents are asked about their support for Quebec in Confederation, multiculturalism policies, official languages, minority languages and bilingualism policies, and the teaching of non-official languages in public schools. In sum, the attitudes of parents in both programs towards second language acquisition have been linked to pragmatic, instrumental, and individualistic motivations, or conversely to integrative and collectivist motivations. Cultural benefit has been regarded either as integrative (with collectivist overtones), or as instrumentally enriching and advantageous, and therefore as individualistic. Most of these dimensions will be re-examined in the next two chapters in the light of more recent data on parent motivation collected in a survey of the Greater Victoria School District. The individualist/collectivist dimension will undergo further development in Chapter Five.

## Notes to Chapter II

1. Paul Olson and George Burns, "Immersed for Change: Politics and Planning in French Immersion", Orbit, 60,12,5 (December, 1981), 10.

2. George Burns, "Charges of Elitism in Immersion Education: The Case for Improving Program Implementation", unpublished paper presented at the national conference of Canadian Parents for French (October, 1982). This study is assumed to have used the same parent sample as Olson and Burns (1981).

3. Viviane Edwards, "The quest for linguistic equality in New Brunswick", Language and Society, No.12 (Winter, 1984), 43. (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services.)

4. Paul Olson and George Burns, "Politics, Class, and Happenstance: French Immersion in a Canadian Context", Interchange, 14A,1, 1983, 8. Published by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

5. Ibid., 9.

6. H.A. Giroux, "Theories of Reproduction and Resistance in the New Sociology of Education: A Critical Analysis", Harvard Educational Review, 53, No.3. (August, 1983), 258.

7. Commissioner of Official Languages, Annual Report, 1981 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1982), 48.

8. Rita Bienvenue, "French Immersion: Recruitment Factors", unpublished preliminary results, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Manitoba, February, 1983, 27.

# Chapter III

## Socio-economic and Other Attribute Differences between French Immersion Parents and English Program Parents

### The scope of Chapter III

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two offers conflicting evidence on the role of socio-economic status (SES) in early French immersion participation. The results of a study of Northern Ontario (Olson & Burns, 1981, 1983, Burns, 1983) indicate strongly that during the introductory years of EFI, participating families are drawn from a socio-economic elite, at least in terms of their own communities; and the authors conclude that high SES was the major factor in EFI placement. Trites (1981) also finds evidence linking relatively high SES with EFI placement, this time among families of four-year-old EFI enrollees. On the other hand, researchers such as Bienvenue (1984), Guttman (1983), and Malatest (1988) are less convinced that socio-economic characteristics act as primary determinants, particularly in an established program.

Additional attributes such as geographic mobility, childhood language, and language currently spoken at home are examined for their effect by Bienvenue, but are found to play relatively insignificant roles. Certain attitudinal cleavages between EFI parents and English program parents (Bienvenue, 1984; Carey, 1984, and McEachern, 1980), are, however, found to be significant. Bienvenue and Carey conclude they were more significant than differences in either socio-economic characteristics or other attributes.

This chapter describes and compares the socio-economic status of both EFI and English program parents in Victoria in 1989-90, measured not only in terms of income, occupation, and education, but also in respect of three additional sets of attributes. The first set reiterates some of the ground covered in previous studies, in that it includes measures of childhood language, language currently spoken at home, former residence (geographic mobility), and attendance at the local school. An additional variable included is the number of years of residence in British Columbia. A second set breaks new ground, using data from a question on withdrawal from the EFI program to address concerns in the literature about the link between relatively low economic status and EFI attrition. And, in view of comments in the literature on the similarities between private schools and EFI as enriched programs, the study will also attempt to determine differences between EFI and English program families respecting enrolment in private schools and the public school elementary Challenge program. Finally, results for a third set of variables associated with political orientations in British Columbia (Blake et al, 1985) will be examined: private or public sector employment, and federal government employment. A subsequent chapter on political orientations will assess the results from a broader perspective.

## The survey of parents in Greater Victoria

### Setting

Survey data were gathered from parents of students attending the six "dual track" elementary schools in the Greater Victoria School District between 28 May and 1 June, 1990.

**Sampling**

The study describes and compares two groups of parents: those who have all their children in the Early French Immersion (EFI) program, and those who have all their children in the regular English program.

The sample of English program parents was taken from those with children in dual track schools rather from those with children in single track English program schools. This procedure was followed in order to control such extraneous factors as transportation difficulties and unwillingness to remove children from neighbourhood peer groups. Moreover, in dual track schools each EFI grade level is paralleled by an English program grade level, allowing students to change from French to English in the same school, should French immersion be found unsuitable.[1] (For further information on sampling procedures, please refer to Appendix I.)

A total of 1511 survey forms were delivered (758 to French immersion families, and 753 to English program-only families). Altogether, 660 forms were returned, of which two were unusable, resulting in an overall return rate of 43.6% (N=658). Of the 753 English-program-only parents, 276 responded (36.7%). In the French immersion sample (N=758) there were 382 respondents (50.4%). Nine percent of the French immersion parents had children in the English program as well (N=68). This group was set aside in order to compare the French-immersion-only group with the English-program-only group. The French-immersion-only group (N=314) represented 41.4% of the original French immersion sample.

**Two-parent and one-parent families**

As a preliminary step to reporting the results of this study, Table 1 shows the slightly different proportions of two-parent and single-parent families in each program. These percentages should be borne in mind when interpreting the data on socio-economic status, since single parent families, especially those headed by single mothers, are more likely to have low incomes than two-parent families. (Statistics Canada recently reported that 58% of children living in one-parent families headed by women and 32% of children living in one-parent families headed by men are poor, compared with the overall percentage of children in poverty (15%).[2] All other factors being equal, therefore, an additional four families (or 2.5%) in the English program are more likely to be poor.

**TABLE 1: Distribution of Two-Parent and Single-Parent Families, by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b]**

| Family type | French immersion % | English program % |
|---|---|---|
| Both parents | 92.7 | 90.2 |
| Single mother | 7.0 | 8.7 |
| Single father | 0.3 | 1.1 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).
b Parents whose children are all in the English program (N=276).

## Survey results: parent characteristics

### Family income

Table 2 displays the percentages of families at various income levels in the two programs. Although the differences between families in the two programs are not as startling as those observed in the Olson and Burns study, the results show that there are more families with incomes of $30,000 or less in the English program and more families with incomes of $90,000 or above in the French immersion program. The pattern of income distribution found in this survey runs contrary to the findings of Bienvenue in Winnipeg in 1983, and Malatest and Associates in Victoria in 1988; both studies found no significant difference between the economic status of EFI and English program families.

**TABLE 2: Distribution of Before-Tax Annual Family Income, by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b] (collapsed Ten-Point Scale)**

| Income levels | French immersion % | English program % |
|---|---|---|
| Under $30,000 | 12.4 | 19.6 |
| $30,000 - $49,999 | 29.7 | 29.2 |
| $50,000 - $69,999 | 26.5 | 27.5 |
| $70,000 - $89,999 | 17.7 | 16.3 |
| $90,000 and above | 13.8 | 7.5 |

a Parents whose children are all in the French immersion program. N=283 (9.8% of the original N omitted the income question.)
b Parents whose children are all in the English program. N=240 (13.0% of the original N omitted the income question.)

Mean income levels over the 10-point scale are 5.3 for the immersion families and 4.8 for the English program families (value 4 representing $40,000, value 5, $50,000, and 6, $60,000). Placing these figures in context, the mean annual family income in the four municipalities[3] covered by the Greater Victoria School District in 1985 was $46,058 (in 1990 dollars).[4] In the three municipalities where EFI schools were located in 1990 (Oak Bay, Saanich, and Victoria), the mean annual family income in 1985 was $49,032 (1990 dollars). The EFI mean family income is notably larger than both these figures, whereas the mean income of the English program families is somewhat greater than the four-municipality mean, and slightly smaller than the three-municipality mean.

The next analysis focuses on the percentages of low-income and high-income families in the two programs, compared with low-income and high-income families in the school district as a whole. In 1985, 24.6% of families in the four municipalities had incomes of $59,600 (1990 dollars) or more (the highest level cited), whereas the survey data show 44.5% of EFI families and 36.2% of English program families with incomes of $60,000 or more. At lower income levels, in 1985, 26.2% of families in the four municipalities had incomes of $23,840 or less (1990 dollars), compared with 12.4% of EFI families and 19.6% of English program families who had incomes of less than $30,000.[5]

The results of these analyses - mean income, low income, and high income - suggest that the English program group follows the pattern of family income in the school district more closely than does the French immersion group. The mean income of FI families is relatively higher, and there are more high-income and fewer low-income FI families compared

both to English program families and all families in the school district.

## Occupational status

Results of the occupational analysis closely parallel the income data above, and suggest that the occupational levels of mothers, fathers, and families among the two programs show significant variations. The first set of occupational statistics describes differences between the mothers of the students. Table 3 shows that of mothers who work in paid employment outside the home (79.2% of responses to the occupation-mother question are in this category), a much larger proportion of French immersion mothers than English program mothers have highest status occupations; in the lowest status occupations, the situation is reversed. There is a slightly larger proportion of FI mothers than English program mothers at the "semi-professional/technical" level, and English program mothers are more heavily represented than FI mothers at the "other white collar" level.

**TABLE 3: Occupational Level of Mother, by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b]**

| Occupational Level | French immersion % | English program % |
|---|---|---|
| Professional/ senior manag. | 35.3 | 22.6 |
| Semi-professional/ technical | 30.3 | 28.4 |
| Other white collar | 27.0 | 35.6 |
| Blue collar | 7.5 | 13.5 |

a Mothers whose children are all in the French immersion program. N=241 (3.2% of the original N omitted the occupation question; other responses not included from the original N were: homemakers 15.6%; students 3.8%; unemployed, disabled or retired 0.3%; absent 0.3%).

b Mothers whose children are all in the English program. N=208 (4.7% of the original N omitted the occupation question; other responses not included from the original N were: homemakers 18.1%; students 0.7%; absent 1.1%). There were no unemployed, disabled or retired in this group. Crosstabulation of the two program groups by professional/senior management level versus all other occupational levels results in a gamma association of .30.

Over the four-point scale shown in Table 3, the mean occupational level for the French immersion mothers is higher (2.9) than for the English program mothers (2.6). The occupational mode of the FI mothers is at the highest level (Professional/senior management); for the English program mothers the mode is two levels lower (other white collar).

When the mothers in the two programs are divided into two occupational levels (professional/senior management versus all other levels), there is a fairly strong positive relationship between high occupational level and French immersion participation[4].

For the fathers, the relationship between relatively high occupational status and French immersion participation is more pronounced at the highest level and lowest level of occupational status; the two levels between are less polarized, and there is slightly larger percentage of English program fathers than French immersion fathers in the second highest occupational level ("Semi-professional/technical").

Table 4 reports the percentages of fathers who work in paid employment outside the home (88.8% of the responses to the occupation-father question fall into this category), by program and occupational level.

**TABLE 4: Occupational Level of Father, by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b]**

| Occupational Level | French immersion % | English program % |
|---|---|---|
| Professional/ senior manag. | 50.9 | 31.6 |
| Semi-professional/ technical | 25.4 | 28.1 |
| Other white collar | 5.4 | 7.0 |
| Blue collar | 18.3 | 33.3 |

a Fathers whose children are all in the French immersion program. N=279 (2.5% of the original N omitted the occupation question; other responses not included from the original N were: farmers 0.3%; homemakers 0.3%; students 0.6%; unemployed, disabled or retired 0.3%; absent 7.0%).

b Fathers whose children are all in the English program. N=228 (4.3% of the original N omitted the occupation question; other responses not included from the original N were: farmers 0.7%; homemakers 0.4%; students 2.2%; unemployed, disabled, retired 1.1%; absent 8.7%). Crosstabulation of the two program groups by professional/ senior management level versus all other occupational levels results in a gamma association of .38.

Over the four-point scale shown in Table 4, the mean occupational level for the French immersion fathers is notably higher (3.1) than for English program fathers (2.6). The occupational mode of the FI fathers is at the highest level (professional/senior management); for the English program fathers the mode is at the lowest level (blue collar), although percentages at the two highest levels follow closely behind.

When the fathers in the two programs are divided into two occupational levels (professional/senior management versus all other levels), there is an even stronger positive

relationship between high occupational level and French immersion participation than was observed among the mothers.

The next set of data reports the occupational status of families, derived from the highest occupational level in each family. The pattern of positive relationship between relatively high occupational status and French immersion participation is repeated with respect to families. Table 5 reports the percentages, by program and occupational level, of families which have at least one parent working in paid employment outside the home. (Of the combined responses to the occupation-mother and occupation-father questions, 97.8% are in this category.)

**TABLE 5: Highest Occupational Level of Family, by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b]**

| Occupational Level | French immersion % | English program % |
|---|---|---|
| Professional/ senior manag. | 55.4 | 35.7 |
| Semi-professional/ technical | 26.1 | 30.6 |
| Other white collar | 11.9 | 21.7 |
| Blue collar | 6.6 | 12.0 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program. N=303 (3.2% of the original N were cases where occupations for both parents were omitted. Also not included were families where there were no other occupations apart from homemakers, students, unemployed, disabled or retired; together totalling 1.3% of the original N).

b Families whose children are all in the English program. N=258 (3.6% of the original N were cases where occupations for both parents were omitted. Also not included were families where there were no other occupations apart from homemakers, students, unemployed, disabled or retired; together totalling 2.9% of the original N).
Crosstabulation of the two program groups by professional/ senior management level versus all other occupational levels results in a gamma association of .38.

Over the four-point scale shown in Table 5, the mean occupational level for the French immersion families is again notably higher (3.3) than for the English program families (2.9). The occupational mode of the families in both programs is at the highest level (professional/senior management); but the percentages of families at this level in each program are greatly different - there are almost 20 percentage points between them. The next most common occupational level for both groups of families (semi-professional/technical) is almost 20 percentage points

distant for the French immersion group, but only five percentage points distant for the English program group.

Crosstabulating the two program groups by professional/ senior management level versus all other occupational levels results in a fairly strong association between French immersion participation and higher occupational status among families, identical to the association observed between FI and high occupational status of fathers.

**Public and private sector employment**

According to Blake et al (1985), ideology and party allegiance in British Columbia (examined in the next chapter) is associated with public sector-private sector employment.

Data from this survey shows the two parent groups differing somewhat by employment in the public or private sectors (Table 6). In this instance, because the percentages of non-respondents are so large, they are included in the tabulation and must be taken into account when interpreting the data. The large size of these percentages reflects the fact that the question on employment sector could not be answered by full-time students, homemakers, and people who are unemployed, disabled or retired. The percentages of absent parents complete the picture.

Excluding all cases except for those responding either "private sector" or "public sector", crosstabulation by program results in low positive associations between French immersion and public sector for mothers and fathers.

**TABLE 6: Employment in Public and Private Sectors, by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b], by Mother and Father**

| | French immersion | | English program | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Employment Sector** | **Mother %** | **Father %** | **Mother %** | **Father %** |
| Public | 37.9 | 41.7 | 33.7 | 31.5 |
| Private | 24.8 | 32.5 | 29.3 | 37.3 |
| Both sectors | 3.8 | 4.1 | 5.4 | 7.2 |
| No Answer | 33.1 | 14.6 | 30.4 | 15.2 |
| Absent Parent | 0.3 | 7.0 | 1.1 | 8.7 |
| TOTALS | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314). (Of mothers, 3.2% omitted the occupation question; other responses which would have produced a non-response to the employment sector question were: homemakers 15.6%; students 3.8%; unemployed, disabled or retired 0.3%. Of fathers, 2.5% omitted the occupation question; other responses included: homemakers 0.3%; students 0.6%; unemployed, disabled or retired 0.3%.)

b Families whose children are all in the English program (N=276). (Of mothers, 4.7% omitted the occupation question; other responses which would have produced a non-response to the employment sector question were: homemakers 18.1%; students 0.7%. There were no unemployed, disabled or retired among mothers in this group. Of fathers, 4.3% omitted the occupation question; other responses were: homemakers 0.4%; students 2.2%; unemployed, disabled, retired 1.1%.)
Excluding all cases except for those responding either "private sector" or "public sector", crosstabulation by program yields low positive associations between French immersion and public sector for mothers (gamma .14) and fathers (gamma .20).

**Federal government employment**

This study hypothesized that federal government employees would comprise a larger percentage of French immersion parents than English program parents, since the federal workplace is directly impacted by national bilingual and bicultural policies, even in British Columbia where the Francophone minority is very small. This expectation was not borne out. Families in which at least one parent works for the federal government are proportionately almost equal in the two program groups, comprising 9.8% of French immersion families and a slightly higher percentage of English program families (11.1%). After discounting those who did not respond (2.2% and 1.8% respectively), a gamma association of -.07 was calculated.

**Education level**

Statistics tabulated below demonstrate that the two groups of parents are characterized by different average education levels as well as by differences in average income and occupational level. The first set of education statistics describes differences between the mothers of students in the two programs. Table 7 shows that proportionately more French immersion mothers than English program mothers have attained bachelor and higher degree levels of education.

**TABLE 7: Highest Education Level of Mother, by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b]**

| Education Level | French immersion % | English program % |
|---|---|---|
| Grade 10 | 1.6 | 3.4 |
| Grade 12 graduate | 16.4 | 23.5 |
| Trade, college, or institute cert/diploma | 27.3 | 34.3 |
| University cert/diploma | 8.7 | 10.1 |
| Bachelor degree | 29.6 | 21.6 |
| Masters degree | 9.0 | 3.7 |
| Professional degree | 5.5 | 2.2 |
| Earned Ph.D | 1.9 | 1.1 |

a Mothers whose children are all in the French immersion program. N=311 (0.6% of the original N omitted the education question, and 0.3% were absent).

b Mothers whose children are all in the English program. N=268 (1.8% of the original N omitted the education question, and 1.1% were absent.
Crosstabulation of the two program groups by bachelor degree and above, versus all levels below bachelor degree, results in a gamma association of .36.

Over the eight-point scale shown in Table 7, the mean education level of the French immersion mothers is higher (4.1) than for the English program mothers (3.5). The education mode of the FI mothers is "bachelor degree", although almost as many mothers are included in the next most common level, "trade, college, or institute certificate/ diploma", which is also the mode of the English program mothers, though by a much greater percentage.

When the scale is collapsed into two education levels (bachelor degree and above, versus all levels below bachelor

degree), and crosstabulated by French immersion and English program, there is a fairly strong positive relationship between higher levels of education and French immersion participation.

The relationship is replicated for the education levels of the fathers in the two programs. In Table 8 it is apparent that in the FI group the percentage of fathers with the modal (bachelor degree) level is not much larger than the "trade, college or institute certificate" percentage; however, there is a much larger percentage of fathers with bachelor degrees or higher degrees in the FI group (58.8%) than in the English program group (35.6%). The mode for the English program fathers is lower (trade, college or institute certificate/diploma) than for the FI fathers. The next most common level for the English program group is even lower (grade 12 graduate).

**TABLE 8: Highest Education Level of Father, by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b]**

| Education Level | French immersion % | English program % |
|---|---|---|
| Grade 10 | 2.4 | 5.2 |
| Grade 12 graduate | 13.9 | 21.2 |
| Trade, college, or institute cert/diploma | 18.5 | 30.8 |
| University cert/diploma | 6.3 | 7.2 |
| Bachelor degree | 23.0 | 17.6 |
| Masters degree | 13.9 | 7.6 |
| Professional degree | 13.9 | 8.8 |
| Earned Ph.D | 8.0 | 1.6 |

a Fathers whose children are all in the French immersion program. N=287 (1.6% of the original N omitted the education question, and 7.0% were absent).

b Fathers whose children are all in the English program. N=250 (0.7% of the original N omitted the education question, and 8.7% were absent).
Crosstabulation of the two program groups by bachelor degree and above, versus all levels below bachelor degree, results in a gamma association of .44.

Over the eight-point scale in Table 8, the mean education level of the French immersion fathers is higher (4.7) than for the English program fathers (3.8). When the scale is collapsed into two education levels (bachelor degree and above, versus all levels below bachelor degree), and crosstabulated by French immersion and English program, the gamma value demonstrates an even stronger positive relationship between higher levels of education and French immersion participation than was observed among the mothers.

The association is observed for a third time in the data on the education levels of families (Table 9). There is a very clear division between the programs in terms of the percentages of families with degree-level education or above, and the percentages with less than degree level. The mode for the FI families (bachelor degree) is two levels above the English program mode (trade, college or institute certificate/diploma).

**TABLE 9: Highest Education Level of Family (Both Parents or One Parent) by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b]**

| Education Level | French immersion % | English program % |
|---|---|---|
| Grade 10 | 0.3 | 1.1 |
| Grade 12 graduate | 7.6 | 13.9 |
| Trade, college, or institute cert/diploma | 19.7 | 33.0 |
| University cert/diploma | 6.7 | 8.4 |
| Bachelor degree | 27.7 | 23.4 |
| Masters degree | 14.3 | 8.8 |
| Professional degree | 15.3 | 9.5 |
| Earned Ph.D | 8.3 | 1.8 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program. N=314 (all cases).
b Families whose children are all in the English program. N=273 (1.1% of the original N lacked responses from both parents). Crosstabulation of the two program groups by bachelor degree and above, versus all levels below bachelor degree, results in a gamma association of .42.

The mean education level of the French immersion families is higher (5.0) than for the English program families (4.1) over the eight-point scale shown in Table 9. Collapsing the scale into two levels and crosstabulating by program produces a slightly weaker, though still fairly strong, positive relationship between higher levels of education and French immersion participation than was observed among the fathers. The slightly weaker association is attributable to the inclusion of both parents in this analysis, since smaller proportions of mothers have high educational qualifications than fathers, and there are more one-parent families headed by mothers than by fathers.

**Withdrawal from French Immersion**

Olson and Burns (1981) found that EFI teachers tended to "track out" children who did not perform as well as others in the program, and the authors stated they had reason to believe tracked-out students were generally working class or had lower IQs or learning problems. In this analysis the socio-economic status of families who have withdrawn students from EFI is examined.

Table 10 shows the income distribution of families with children in FI, English, and both programs, who have withdrawn children from the FI program. The income distribution of French immersion families who have not withdrawn children from FI is included for comparison. The two distributions are very similar, and the "withdrawn" group is definitely not clustered at the low end of the income scale.

**TABLE 10: Distribution of Before-Tax Annual Family Income: All Families who have Withdrawn Children from French Immersion[a], and French Immersion Families who have not Withdrawn Children[b]**

| Income Level | All families who have withdrawn children from FI | FI families who have not withdrawn children from FI |
|---|---|---|
| | % | % |
| Under $20,000 | 6.9 | 5.3 |
| $20,000 - $29,999 | 6.9 | 7.2 |
| $30,000 - $39,999 | 10.3 | 15.8 |
| $40,000 - $49,999 | 13.8 | 14.3 |
| $50,000 - $59,999 | 12.1 | 14.0 |
| $60,000 - $69,999 | 19.0 | 13.2 |
| $70,000 - $79,999 | 13.8 | 11.7 |
| $80,000 - $89,999 | 6.9 | 5.3 |
| $90,000 - $119,999 | 6.9 | 7.9 |
| $120,000 or more | 3.4 | 5.3 |

a All families who have withdrawn children from French immersion (N=58). This N includes families whose children are all in the French immersion program, families whose children are all in the English program, and families whose children are in both programs. Of the original N (72), 19.4% did not respond to the income question.

b Families whose children are all in French immersion and who have not withdrawn children from the FI program (N=265). Of the original N (292), 9.2% did not respond to the income question.

Over the ten-point scale shown in Table 10, the mean income of the "withdrawn" group is 5.3, whereas the mean income of the "French immersion, not withdrawn" group is actually slightly lower (5.2). (Value 5 represents $50,000-$59,999.)

The occupational status of the "withdrawn" group is shown in Table 11, with the "French immersion, not withdrawn" group again included for comparison.

**TABLE 11: Highest Occupation Level of Family: All Families who have Withdrawn Children from French Immersion[a], and French Immersion Families who have not Withdrawn Children[b]**

| Occupational Level | All families who have withdrawn children from FI | FI families who have not withdrawn children from FI |
|---|---|---|
| | % | % |
| Professional, senior management | 47.1 | 55.9 |
| Semi-professional, technical | 32.9 | 25.3 |
| Other white collar | 12.9 | 12.5 |
| Blue collar | 7.1 | 6.4 |

a All families who have withdrawn children from French immersion (N=70). This N includes families whose children are all in the French immersion program, families whose children are all in the English program, and families whose children are in both programs. Of the original N (72), 2.8% did not respond to the occupation questions.

b Families whose children are all in French immersion and who have not withdrawn children from the FI program (N=281). Of the original N (292), 2.4% were cases where neither parent responded to the occupation question, and 1.4% were cases where both parents or single parents were in the following categories: student, homemaker, retired, disabled, unemployed.

The occupation statistics in Table 11 show that the French immersion families who have not withdrawn children from FI are almost as likely to be working class as the families who have withdrawn children. The "withdrawn" group are less likely to be represented in the top occupations, as indicated by percentages for the "professional/senior

management" level, and more likely to be members of the "semi-professional/technical" occupation level. Mean occupational levels over the four-point scale are virtually the same (3.2 for the "withdrawn" group and slightly higher (3.3) for the "French immersion, not withdrawn" group, value 3 representing "semi-professional/ technical, and value 4, "professional/senior management").

The families in the "withdrawn" group and the families in the "French immersion, not withdrawn" group have comparable distributions of education level, as shown in Table 12. The "withdrawn" group is no more likely to have education attainments at the lowest levels ("grade 10" and "grade 12 graduate") than the control group. Using "bachelor degree" as a dividing line (higher attainments above and including this level, lower attainments below it), a somewhat larger percentage of the "withdrawn" group (42.3%) is in the non-degree category. The mean education level of the "withdrawn" group is only slightly lower, at 4.7, than the mean of the "French immersion, not withdrawn" group, (5.0). (Value 4 represents "university certificate/diploma", and value 5, "bachelor degree".)

**TABLE 12: Highest Education Level of Family: All Families who have Withdrawn Children from French Immersion[a], and French Immersion Families who have not Withdrawn Children[b]**

| Education Level | All families who have withdrawn children from FI | FI families who have not withdrawn children from FI |
|---|---|---|
| | % | % |
| Grade 10 | 1.4 | 0.3 |
| Grade 12 graduate | 2.8 | 8.2 |
| Trade, college, or institute cert/diploma | 26.8 | 19.5 |
| University cert/diploma | 11.3 | 6.2 |
| Bachelor degree | 28.2 | 28.1 |
| Masters degree | 8.5 | 14.4 |
| Professional degree | 18.3 | 14.7 |
| Earned Ph.D | 2.8 | 8.6 |

a All families who have withdrawn children from French immersion (N=71). This N includes families whose children are all in French immersion, families whose children are all in the English program, and families whose children are in both programs. One case was excluded from the original N because neither parent responded to the education questions.

b Families whose children are all in French immersion and who have not withdrawn children from the FI program (N=292). In all these cases, at least one parent responded to the education question.

The three analyses above suggest that socio-economic differences between these two groups are very small in terms of occupation (except in relation to the top occupations), and somewhat greater (though still fairly small) in terms of education attainment. Income differences are almost non-existent, and if anything they favour the "withdrawn" group,

although by an insignificant amount. In conclusion, concerns about the "tracking out" of working class children from early French immersion programs are not substantiated by this study.

**Language distribution between the two parent groups**

The language distribution was analyzed in three ways. The families were initially identified according to whether either or both parents first learned French in childhood (or French plus another language), and whether either or both parents still understand(s) French. Such families were found to comprise an unexpectedly large proportion of the two program groups (21.2%), in view of the fact that Francophones make up about 2% of British Columbia's population.[5] Almost two-thirds (62.9%) of these families are in the French immersion program. The remainder (37.1%, or 7.8% of all families responding to this survey) are in the English program. The majority group for this analysis (78.8%) consists of families whose first languages are English and/or other languages (not French). Bivariate analysis of first language and program placement demonstrates a positive, though fairly weak, correlation between French and French immersion (gamma .24).

For the second analysis, languages were grouped differently: families with English as their childhood language, and families with French and/or other childhood languages. Only six cases of "other" language were observed to move between the first and second analyses, and a virtually identical association resulted (gamma .25).

Finally the relationship between childhood language, program, and family occupational status was examined.

Language was divided as for the first analysis (French; English and/or other languages). The strongest positive correlations between French immersion, French language, and occupational status were found at the "semi-professional/technical" and "blue collar" levels (gammas .58 and .55 respectively). "Other white collar" resulted in a positive gamma of .21. Almost no relationship was found between high occupational status, French immersion, and French language: the "senior management/professional" level produced a gamma value of -.06.

The respondents were also asked to state the language each parent currently speaks at home (Table 13). Mother and father responses were combined by case; in the computation, if either parent cited "French", then "French" was allowed to override the second parent's "other language" or "English" response; this ensured that French was identified. In the next step, one parent's "other language" response overrode the second parent's "English" response, for the same reason. Differences between programs were found to be minimal; English is by far the majority language in both programs.

**TABLE 13: Language(s) Currently Spoken at Home, by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b]**

| Language at Home | French immersion % | English program % |
|---|---|---|
| English | 96.8 | 97.8 |
| French or French and English | 1.3 | 1.8 |
| Other language(s) | 1.9 | 0.4 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program. N=314 (all cases).
b Families whose children are all in the English program. N=273 (1.1% of the original N lacked responses from both parents).

**Former residence outside British Columbia**

In contrast with the conclusions of Bienvenue (1983) that geographic mobility and location of former residence outside the province (Manitoba) varied little between parents in the two programs, it appears that the French immersion and English program parents in Victoria do differ in terms of these variables.

Table 14 shows the percentages of parents in the two programs who have lived in various locations. Some of the percentages are very small, and have been included for descriptive purposes. (Even so, it should be noted that the direction of association between programs and certain locations is generally predictable even where the percentages are small; for example, former residence in New Brunswick, the only officially bilingual province in Canada, is, as expected, positively associated with enrolment in French immersion; this is also the case for former

residence in Manitoba, which has a considerable French minority.)

In both programs, the percentages of parents who have lived in Ontario are larger than those who have lived in New Brunswick and Manitoba. A positive association between FI and former residence in Ontario is again observed, as expected, probably influenced by the presence there of a bilingual population, a large Francophone minority, a large federal workforce and several bilingual regions. It is also possible that a number of Francophones from Ontario have enrolled their children in FI. A proportion of Anglophone and bilingual (and possibly Francophone) former residents of Quebec would be expected to enroll their children in French immersion in preference to the English program. The same pattern would be expected to hold in the case of former residents of French-speaking foreign countries. In fact, these five locations - New Brunswick, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and French-speaking foreign countries - all show positive levels of association at the higher end of the levels calculated for Table 14.

Large percentages of the parents in both programs are former residents of Alberta and Saskatchewan, but the association between these two provinces and EFI placement is very weak, though still positive. Both provinces have francophone minorities, generally in widely scattered rural communities comprising less than 5% of the population, though each has regions where Francophones make up between 5% and 10% of the population, and Saskatchewan has one region where the proportion reaches 10% or higher.

The pattern of differential EFI placement described here parallels the findings of public opinions polls reported in Chapter 1. For example, support for French second language

instruction among Anglophones in 1984 varied by region as follows (strongest to weakest): Quebec, the Atlantic provinces, Ontario, British Columbia, the prairie provinces (B.C. and the prairies had almost the same percentages). In a 1984 poll, support for young people becoming bilingual showed the same variation by region (except for Quebec, which was not included). With respect to Manitoba, one would expect (though no evidence can be produced here) that public support for French second language programs would be stronger than in Saskatchewan or Alberta in view of Manitoba's more supportive French language public policy. This in turn might be reflected in a greater incidence of EFI placement among former residents of Manitoba.

Anomalies in the results of this study should also be noted. Newfoundland (with a scattered Francophone minority of less than 5% of the population), shows a higher level of positive association than any other location apart from New Brunswick, with comparably small percentages. The negative association between French immersion and the provinces of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island is a second anomaly, since both have sizeable Francophone minorities throughout their jurisdictions as well as specific regions where Francophones exceed 10% of the population. As noted above, in opinion polls the Atlantic region is the most supportive of French second language instruction. It is possible that favourable opinion in Nova Scotia and PEI appears higher than it actually is when poll results are reported by region, because of a particularly high level of support in New Brunswick.

**TABLE 14: Former residence outside British Columbia, by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b]**

| Location | French immersion % [c] | English program % [c] | Gamma |
|---|---|---|---|
| New Brunswick | 8.0 | 2.9 | .49 |
| Newfoundland | 4.5 | 1.8 | .43 |
| Quebec | 23.9 | 12.0 | .40 |
| Manitoba | 17.8 | 8.7 | .39 |
| French-speaking foreign countries | 6.7 | 3.3 | .36 |
| Ontario | 44.3 | 28.3 | .34 |
| United Kingdom | 22.6 | 15.6 | .23 |
| Other English-speaking foreign countries | 25.8 | 20.3 | .15 |
| Alberta/Sask | 43.0 | 37.3 | .12 |
| Foreign country, not French- or English-speaking | 15.3 | 12.7 | .11 |
| Nova Scotia/PEI | 9.9 | 12.0 | -.11 |
| Yukon/NWT | 4.1 | 5.1 | -.11 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program. N=314 (all cases).
b Families whose children are all in the English program. N=276 (all cases).
c Column percentages total more than 100% because parents in many families have lived in several locations.

Overwhelming majorities of families in both programs include at least one parent who has lived outside the province at some time (92% of the FI families and 80.8% of the English program families). These percentages are accompanied by a

fairly strong positive association between French immersion and former residence outside British Columbia (gamma .47).

**Length of residence in British Columbia**

The two parent groups differ by the lengths of time they have lived in British Columbia. Parents with children in the English program tend to have lived for longer in B.C. than parents whose children are in French immersion. Table 15 shows the distribution of years lived in B.C. by program, averaged between parents in the same family. There are many more parents in the English program than in FI who have lived in B.C. for 21 or more years. Conversely, FI parents are much more likely than English program parents to have lived in the province for a shorter time.

**TABLE 15: Parents' Length of Residence in British Columbia (averaged by family), by French Immersion Program[a] and English Program[b]**

| Length of Residence[c] | French immersion % | English program % |
|---|---|---|
| 0-5 years | 13.1 | 10.6 |
| 6-10 years | 14.0 | 5.1 |
| 11-15 years | 14.6 | 8.8 |
| 16-20 years | 18.2 | 15.3 |
| 21 or more years | 40.1 | 60.2 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program. N=314 (in all cases, at least one parent responded).
b Families whose children are all in the English program. N=274 (0.7% of the original N lacked responses from both parents).
c Two-parent means were calculated for two-parent families (91.5% of families in this table are two-parent families). The Pearson eta correlation coefficient for the relationship between program and years of residence in this distribution, with program as the dependent variable, is .22, significant to a level of less than 0.0005.

**Attendance at the local school**

Bienvenue (1981, 1983) reported that families in the English program were more likely than French immersion families to send their children to their neighbourhood school. Families attending the six dual track schools surveyed for this study repeated this pattern. In the English program, 81.5% of families sent all their children to their local school, a much higher proportion than for the French immersion program (43.6%).

**Private school enrolment**

In view of concern expressed in some of the literature about a possible relationship between French immersion and elitism, and about the alleged similarities between FI and private school programs, the incidence of private school enrolment in the two programs is reported. A slightly larger proportion (3.6%) of French immersion than English program students (2.2%) have siblings who attend private schools, a difference which, it could be argued, is attributable simply to the larger percentage of higher-income families in the French immersion group. On the other hand, a much larger proportion of English program than French immersion parents (44.7% compared with 31%) would like to enroll their children in private schools, a difference for which there are several explanations.

The figures indicate that a larger proportion of English program parents than EFI parents prefers private school values and offerings over those of the public system. From this one can speculate that a stronger interest in private schools as an alternative to the public school system on the part of English program parents stems from a higher level of dissatisfaction with the public school system. If English program and EFI parents differ by levels of dissatisfaction with the public system, one can speculate further that this may be associated with differences between the two public programs rather than (or in addition to) differences between the two groups of parents. It is possible that the EFI parent group tends to identify less strongly with private school programs as an alternative for its children **because**, in comparison with English programs, EFI programs are more like private schools. On the other hand, for the EFI group the whole question of an alternative program may be irrelevant as long as it tends to value access to French

fluency more highly than any other offering. In Chapter Four, these explanations will be re-examined in conjunction with attitudinal data.

**Enrolment in the Challenge program**

Continuing the exploration of differences between the two groups of families in terms of enrolment in enriched programs, parents of children in Grade 4 or above were asked whether their children had been selected for the school district's Challenge program. French immersion and English program families showed very similar incidences of involvement in the Challenge program: 14.6% of the EFI group and 13.0% of the English program group had been selected.

**Summary and conclusion**

From the foregoing examination of the two program groups, a tentative profile of French immersion parents in Victoria has begun to take shape. In contrast with English program parents, EFI parents are characterized by a more advantaged socio-economic status. The data has revealed a significantly greater proportion of EFI parents with high incomes, occupations and education attainments, findings which encourage further analysis of the issue of elitism in relation to EFI programs. In this connection, evidence that private schooling has less attraction for EFI parents than for their counterparts in the English program has been considered ambiguous in relation to elitist attitudes, and will be re-examined in the next chapter. On the other hand, there is no ambiguity about the lack of evidence in support of a claim that students withdrawn from EFI are more likely

to be working class than those who remain in the program (although it appears they are less likely to have parents in top occupations). Further, only a very small difference between the two parent groups in terms of student selection for the "Challenge" enrichment program is found. In sum, at this point any conclusions drawn from the data about the association of EFI with elitism have rested mainly on socio-economic indications and are therefore concerned more with self-selection of advantaged students than with "selecting-out" of less advantaged students. Evidence suggesting that a relatively larger proportion of more advantaged families tend to self-select into the program will have to be considered in light of the finding that 57% of EFI parents transport their children to schools outside their neighbourhoods, whereas only 19% of English program parents do so. The fact that the Greater Victoria district does not provide or subsidize transportation for EFI students prompts the observation that absence of transportation can be just as much a form of systemic selection as the practice of "tracking out".

Turning to other parent characteristics, the data has shown that although the great majority of parents in both groups has lived elsewhere at some time, on average EFI parents are more likely to have lived outside British Columbia than English program parents. In addition, EFI parents on average tend to have lived for fewer years in B.C. Perhaps these findings should be cited as evidence of a greater incidence of "cosmopolitanism" among EFI parents, as Beinvenue concluded was the case in her study of Winnipeg parents. As well, such findings should have relevance for the examination of any ethnocentric attitudes among the parent groups. More evidence relating to these themes will be presented in the next chapter.

French language appears to have emerged as a fairly important indicator for EFI placement. EFI parents are much more likely to have lived in Quebec, in French-speaking foreign countries, and in Canadian provinces with significant Francophone minorities. In addition, positive (though somewhat small) associations were observed between EFI placement and French, both as a first language of parents and as a current home language. This is another set of data which may have a bearing on ethnocentrist and integrative attitudes.

A slightly larger proportion of EFI parents than English program parents was found to be employed in the public sector of the economy. It was a hypothesis of this study that this would be the case; EFI parents could be expected to feel more comfortable with the social engineering, public policy aspect of EFI, perhaps in association with a second expectation - that their stronger representation in the higher occupational levels of the public sector would predispose many EFI parents towards government intervention for the purpose of achieving national goals. It was also expected that for similar reasons a greater proportion of EFI parents would work for the federal government, but this hypothesis was not borne out. Chapters Four and Five will continue to investigate the two parent groups in relation to their support of collectivist public policies and French language initiatives.

## Notes to Chapter III

1. After grade one, a change from English to French usually is not possible until the student reaches the age at which Late French immersion is an option. In 1989-90, one elementary school (Sir James Douglas) offered Late FI, beginning at grade six.

2. Statistics Canada, Canadian Social Trends, Summer, 1991, 4 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991).

3. Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Saanich, and Victoria.

4. Community Council of Greater Victoria. The People of Greater Victoria: A Demographic Atlas, Part 2: Education, Income and Employment: Statistical Information from the Canada Census, 1981 and 1986, (Victoria, Spring, 1990), 22. Inflation rates in Victoria between 1986 (the earliest available) and 1990 were obtained from the Victoria office of Statistics Canada. The compounded inflation rate was 19.2% (1.8% in 1986, 2.5% in 1987, 3.8% in 1988, 4.5% in 1989, and 5.3% in 1990).

5. Ibid., 23.

6. For a 2 x 2 crosstabulation, a value of 1 would indicate a perfectly positive relationship between two bivariates; a value of -1, a perfectly negative relationship; and a value of 0, no relationship. Gamma is produced by calculating the difference between the number of concordant and discordant pairs, then dividing this difference by the sum of the number of concordant and discordant pairs. For further information, please refer to Marija J. Norusis, The SPSS Guide to Data Analysis for SPSS/PC+ (Chicago: SPSS Inc., 1988), 291-2.

# Chapter IV

## Parents' Attitudes towards the Two Programs

### The scope of Chapter IV

In this survey, parents were asked directly about their reasons for placing children in either program, whereas most other studies have extrapolated about motivation from the parents' opinions on language policies, the value of French fluency, and additional program-related issues. Moreover, little attention has been paid to the reasons for English program parents having preferred the regular option. In this chapter, the degrees of importance attached by Victoria parents to a range of motives are examined alongside the values and "orientations" they appear to be associated with. For example, parents motivated by the belief that "FI fosters understanding between French and English cultural groups in Canada" are assumed to be positively oriented toward a "national/integrative" point of view, whereas parents who are not motivated by this statement or who oppose the French language or federal bicultural policies are assumed to be negatively oriented. Secondly, support for career-related motives is taken as indicating (in Bienvenue's terms) an "instrumental" orientation towards education. Two other motivations - a desire for additional enrichment and challenge in education and an assessment of FI as an enriched program - are evaluated in relation to Guttman's suggestions about parents who value educational advantage for their children. Elitist and anti-elitist reasons for selecting either program are also examined. The reasons considered most important by the parents (and the orientations and values associated with them) are reviewed

for their relationship with such other variables as socio-economic status, past or future involvement with French immersion, French as a first language, former residence in certain other provinces, and length of residence in British Columbia. These analyses are undertaken because most of the variables have been tested by this and previous studies as factors which might differentiate between the two parent groups. For example, French as a first language and former residence in other provinces have been examined by Bienvenue for their association with the "national/integrative" orientation. Two attributes added by this study (past or future involvement with FI and length of residence in British Columbia) are additions to the literature and are tested here for their relationship with attitudes towards French immersion and Bienvenue's "national/integrative" orientation.

The attitudinal information from this survey is largely a reflection of the mothers' opinions, since only about one in every ten respondents is a father, and only about one in every four survey forms has been completed by both parents. In addition, small differences between the two parent groups should be noted. Compared with the English program group, among the French immersion parents there are more mothers and fewer both-parent, father, and unspecified respondents. (For details, please refer to Appendix II, Table 37). Because the numbers of both-parent and father respondents in the two programs are small, it is not possible to demonstrate that none of these factors is important when making generalizations from the data.

**Parents' reasons for selecting French immersion**

Table 16 shows that almost all FI parents (97.4%) selected the FI program because it offered "additional intellectual challenge and enrichment". Moreover, "challenge/enrichment" was by far the most frequent motivation when the parents ranked reasons as first and second most important (Table 17). The parents who ranked this reason third still made up 14.3% of the FI parent group, the fourth largest number of parents in the third column. Further, Table 18 shows that 23.2% of the FI parents cited enrichment/challenge as additional motivations of their own ("FI or another language enriches, challenges, trains a child's brain"; "it's beneficial to have two or more languages - it broadens the horizons;" "FI fosters better development of English/other languages/all languages"). The first two were the most frequent among all additional reasons cited. There were also two families whose children were "bored in the English program because it was not challenging enough", and three who wanted their children to be placed in a language program and had chosen French immersion as the only available option ("a different language program would be as good/better than FI, etc."). The parents' own reasons are considered significant, since almost 22% rank their own reasons as most important, second only to the percentage (31.8) ranking the supplied reason "additional intellectual challenge and enrichment" as most important.

**TABLE 16: French Immersion Parents[a]: Importance of Reasons for Selecting EFI Program (Excluding Additional Reasons Supplied by Parents)**

| Reason | Important % | Not Important % | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offers additional intellectual challenge and enrichment | 97.4 | 2.6 | 306 |
| Wanted child/ren to become fluent in French | 95.8 | 4.2 | 306 |
| Fosters understanding between English & French cultural groups | 77.7 | 22.3 | 287 |
| Helps child/ren qualify for wider choice of careers | 76.5 | 23.5 | 306 |
| English program does not offer enough French | 64.6 | 35.4 | 263 |
| Wanted child/ren to be with other bright, highly motivated students | 64.6 | 35.4 | 263 |
| Knew/heard of people who were enthusiastic about EFI | 38.4 | 61.6 | 245 |
| Feel pressured into making sure child/ren are bilingual | 6.0 | 94.0 | 281 |
| Francophone parents, want to pass on language and culture | 82.4* | 17.6 | 34 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).
* Percentages relate to only 34 respondents.

A fairly large majority of the FI parents (64.6%, Table 16) indicated that a desire for their children "to be with other bright, highly motivated students" was an important or very important factor when they opted for French immersion. Although only a small proportion of the parents (2.0%) cited this as the most important reason for selecting FI (Table

17), for 10.7% of the group it was the second most important factor and for 11.6% it was the third most important. The survey uses this factor as its primary measure of elitist attitudes among FI parents. On average, those parents who considered this factor important have higher socio-economic status than those who did not.[1]

In connection with Bienvenue's "integrative/national" orientation (interest in understanding French Canadian culture), a substantial majority of FI parents (77.7%) indicated that FI's ability to "foster understanding between English and French cultural groups in Canada" was an important motivation (Table 16), ranking it fifth among all reasons in first place (Table 17). Some parents added their own "national/integrative"-oriented reasons for selecting FI. Eight percent stated that "FI or another language encourages communication and understanding", 1.9% that "Canada is bilingual and/or bicultural", and 1.0% that "a different language would be as good as or better than FI, or that multiculturalism is more important than FI" (Table 18).

Also with reference to the "integrative" orientation, it will be recalled that in Chapter Three, French first language was found to be a more frequent characteristic of the FI parents than expected. Another unexpected finding is that the large number of parents assigning importance to "fostering understanding between English and French cultural groups" does not appear to be associated with French as a first language.[2] Similarly, it could be expected that parents who have lived longer in British Columbia, with its small Francophone population and relatively low level of opinion poll support for French language instruction, would be less influenced by an integrative reason for selecting FI. This was not the case, since parents who were influenced by this motive have lived in the province for

slightly longer, on average, than parents who were not. On the other hand, the substantial percentages of FI parents who have lived in Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba are somewhat more likely to report an "integrative" motivation.[3]

Bienvenue's "integrative/international" orientation represents the value assigned by parents to FI as a means of facilitating travel to Quebec and other countries. Within her typology it is closely related to the "integrative/ national orientation", discussed above. Only 2.2% of FI parents mentioned they valued French or other languages for their usefulness when "travelling/seeing the world/living elsewhere" (Table 18). It is difficult to separate either of these orientations from an interest in enrichment, and since the "integrative/international" orientation appears to involve an assessment of the instrumental as well as the integrative value of a second language, no further exploration of the "international" dimension is made in this study.

Olsen and Burns, Bienvenue, and Clift, note that FI parents could be expected to perceive French immersion as having "instrumental" value, in that it should improve young people's access to a career market where bilingualism is legislated and rewarded. In this survey, 76.5% of the FI parents were motivated by the perception that FI would help their children "qualify for a wider choice of careers" (Table 16). An instrumental motivation figured strongly in the ranking by parents of first, second, and third most important reasons (16.9%, 11.0% and 18.4%), ahead of all others as the most important reason apart from challenge/ enrichment and the parents' own reasons (Table 17). As well, 1.9% of the parents commented that French or other languages would be useful for their children's careers

(Table 18). On the other hand, only 6% felt "pressured" into making sure their children were bilingual (Table 16).

**TABLE 17: French Immersion Parents[a]: Distribution of Reasons as First, Second, and Third Most Important for Selecting the EFI Program**

| Reason | First (N=302) % | Second (N=299) % | Third (N=294) % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offers additional intellectual challenge and enrichment | 31.8 | 31.1 | 14.3 |
| Additional reason(s) supplied by parents[b] | 21.9 | 3.3 | 5.1 |
| Helps child/ren qualify for wider choice of careers | 16.9 | 11.0 | 18.4 |
| Wanted child/ren to become fluent in French | 12.6 | 23.1 | 24.1 |
| Fosters understanding between English & French cultural groups | 6.6 | 14.4 | 18.4 |
| Francophone parents, want to pass on language and culture | 6.3 | 0.7 | 0.3 |
| Wanted child/ren to be with other bright, highly motivated students | 2.0 | 10.7 | 11.6 |
| English program does not offer enough French | 1.7 | 5.0 | 5.1 |
| Knew/heard of people who were enthusiastic about EFI | 0.3 | 0.7 | 2.0 |
| Feel pressured into making sure child/ren are bilingual | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.7 |
| TOTALS | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).
b N=152. That is, 48.4% of parents supplied an additional reason or reasons.

Two further sets of reasons complete the picture of parent motivation towards French immersion. The first is "neutral" in orientation, since the parents citing these reasons are more strongly influenced by individual circumstances than general attitudes. The following catalogue illustrates why such a distinction should be made, beginning with three reasons relating to individual circumstances which were included in the survey form (Table 16): "as Francophone parents, we want to pass on our language and culture to the next generation" (28 out of 34 Francophone families stated this was an important or very important reason); "we knew/heard of people who were enthusiastic about French immersion" (only 38.4% of the parents attached importance to this reason); and "we wanted our child/children to become fluent in French", an important reason for most parents (95.8%), and one which they placed fourth as "the most important reason", raising it to second place for second and third choices (Table 17).

The next cluster of individual circumstances consists of reasons volunteered by parents: "we wanted to try FI because it was offered at the local school/a more convenient school/because it's there"; "we wanted to keep our child with friends who were entering the FI program"; "there was no neighbourhood school, so FI was an equally available option"; "we were determined to enroll our children in FI after a previous district had refused to offer FI"; "our family has moved around/may transfer to or has lived in Quebec or another Francophone community"; "our child wanted to be in the FI program"; "our relatives are Francophones"; "we chose FI to get our children into a better school"; "parent is a French teacher"; and "child's parent was in French immersion". Overall, the "personal circumstance" reasons supplied by the parents themselves represent 12% of all reasons supplied by the parents.

Another three reasons are treated as a separate set because they assess the two programs in ways that contribute little insight into parent orientations. These are: "it's effective to learn a second language when young/by immersion"; "FI has superior teaching/ teachers/a smaller class and/or the English program has inferior teaching/teachers" (Table 18); and "the English program does not offer enough French" (Tables 16,17).

**TABLE 18: French Immersion Parents[a]: Distribution of Parents' Additional Reasons for Selecting EFI Program[b]**

| Parents' Additional Reason | Percentage citing reason | N |
|---|---|---|
| FI (or another language) enriches, challenges, trains a child's brain | 9.6 | 30 |
| Beneficial to have two or more languages; it broadens the horizons | 8.2 | 26 |
| FI (or another language) encourages communication and understanding | 8.0 | 25 |
| Effective to learn a second language when young/by immersion | 5.4 | 17 |
| FI fosters better development of English/ other languages/all languages | 4.8 | 15 |
| Wanted to try FI as option at local school/ more convenient school/because it's there | 3.5 | 11 |
| FI teaching/teachers superior/class is smaller English program teaching/teachers inferior | 2.2 | 7 |
| FI/other languages useful for travelling/ seeing the world/living elsewhere | 2.2 | 7 |
| Canada is bilingual and/or bicultural | 1.9 | 6 |
| Child's needs/interests indicated FI | 1.9 | 6 |
| FI/other language(s) useful for careers | 1.9 | 6 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Child wanted to be in FI program | 1.6 | 5 |
| Family moves or has moved around/may transfer to or has lived in Quebec or another Francophone community | 1.3 | 4 |
| Different language would be as good as/better than EFI, eg.Japanese/Spanish/Chinese/family's heritage language/multiculturalism more important than FI | 1.0 | 3 |
| Relatives are Francophones | 1.0 | 3 |
| Chose FI to get children into better school | 0.6 | 2 |
| Child bored in English program because it was not challenging enough | 0.6 | 2 |
| Parent teaches French | 0.6 | 2 |
| Wanted to keep child with friends going into FI | 0.6 | 2 |
| No neighbourhood school: FI was an equal option | 0.3 | 1 |
| FI parents are more ambitious/motivated/ interested in children's education | 0.3 | 1 |
| We were determined to enroll child/ren in FI after previous district refused to offer FI | 0.3 | 1 |
| Parent was in FI | 0.3 | 1 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).
b N=152. That is, 48.4% of parents supplied an additional reason or reasons. Column percentages total 58.8%, because 10.4% of parents supplied two or three reasons.

---

**Parents' reasons for selecting the regular English program**

In common with the FI parents, most of the English program parents appear to show a strong interest in the challenge and enrichment opportunities of their children's education program. For 78.2% of the English program parents, program choice was influenced by their assessment that English

offers "as much or more challenge and enrichment as French immersion", while for 61.4%, it was important that "although FI offers more intellectual challenge and enrichment, we were not sure whether our children would benefit from it" (Table 19). These two reasons placed fourth and sixth respectively when parents were asked to indicate their most important motivation for selecting the English program (Table 20).

A slightly larger majority (79.9%) of the English program parents indicated the importance of the statement that "young people can decide to learn French later if they want to, or if they need to learn it for career reasons", implying that although French may be seen to have instrumental value (utility for career purposes), at the same time most parents reject the view that early immersion is a better way of learning French (Table 19).

**TABLE 19: English Program Parents[a]: Importance of Reasons for Selecting English Program (Excluding Additional Reasons Supplied by Parents)**

| Reason | Important % | Not Important % | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Young people can learn French later if they need to for careers/want to | 79.9 | 20.1 | 234 |
| English program offers as much or more challenge and enrichment as FI | 78.2 | 21.8 | 197 |
| FI might make it more difficult to find and correct a learning problem | 78.2 | 21.8 | 234 |
| Concerned that child's/children's English would suffer | 71.4 | 28.6 | 231 |
| FI more challenging/enriching, but unsure if my child/ren would benefit | 61.4 | 38.6 | 202 |
| FI pressures school (overcrowding), and devalues the English program | 59.4 | 40.6 | 207 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Canadian governments spend too much on the French language | 58.5 | 41.5 | 205 |
| FI is an experiment; more time is needed to see if students benefit | 56.2 | 43.8 | 203 |
| Did not want to be pressured into making sure child/ren are bilingual | 50.9 | 49.1 | 220 |
| Would not have been able to help child/ren with FI homework | 48.9 | 51.1 | 237 |
| Do not believe FI fosters greater understanding between French and English cultural groups in Canada | 43.9 | 56.1 | 187 |
| There is enough French in the regular English program | 43.9 | 56.1 | 180 |
| British Columbia is an English-speaking province | 43.7 | 56.3 | 215 |
| FI parents believe their children are specially bright & highly motivated; we/I did not want to get involved | 36.4 | 63.6 | 206 |
| Knew/heard of people who were not enthusiastic about FI | 29.3 | 70.7 | 188 |
| A school with FI as well as English is no longer a neighbourhood school | 28.8 | 71.2 | 198 |
| FI would not help my child/ren qualify for wider choice of careers | 27.3 | 72.7 | 176 |
| Did not consider/hear about the French immersion program | 27.2 | 72.8 | 169 |
| Child/ren completed English kindergarten at non-FI school | 22.4 | 77.6 | 147 |
| Traffic problems are caused by FI students being driven to school | 18.5 | 81.5 | 195 |

a Families whose children are all in the regular English program (N=276).

With reference to the "national/integrative" orientation, only a fairly slim majority (58.5%) was motivated to select English on the grounds that "Canadian governments spend too much on the French language", and a bare majority (50.9%) "did not want to be pressured into making sure our children are bilingual" (Table 19). Statements that "we do not believe FI fosters greater understanding between French and English cultural groups in Canada" and "British Columbia is an English-speaking province" were important only to minorities (albeit large minorities) of the English program parents (43.9% and 43.7% respectively), and none of these three statements was cited by a large number of the parents as the primary reason for selecting English (Tables 19,20). Former or possible future involvement with French immersion appears to be negatively associated with views of this type. Almost 70% of parents whose children have never been enrolled in FI and who are not considering Late FI indicate that at least one of these reasons was an important factor in their decision to enrol in the English program (N=180). For parents who have withdrawn children from FI and/or who plan or are unsure about enrolment in Late FI, the incidence of these opinions is lower, at just over 53% (N=92).

The English program parents for whom these reasons were important are characterized by lower average education and occupation levels than the parents who were not influenced by such views. The mean education levels of the first group range between 3.8 and 3.9, depending on the reason, and increase to between 4.5 and 4.8 for the second group. (Value 3 represents "trades/college/institute certificate or diploma, value 4, "university certificate or diploma", and value 5, "bachelor's degree".) The mean occupation levels of the first group range between 2.7 and 2.9, and move up slightly to between 3.0 and 3.2 for the second group. (Value

2 represents "other white collar", and value 3, "semi-professional/technical".) On the other hand, the average income levels of the two groups are virtually the same, ranging between 4.8 and 5.3 in the first group, and between 4.7 and 5.1 in the second (a minimal positive association with the importance of the four reasons unfavourable to an "integrative" orientation). (Value 4 represents $40,000, while value 5 represents $50,000).

Unpredictably, French as a first language is associated positively with three of the reasons unfavourable to a "national/integrative" orientation, although to an insignificant degree.[4] The exception, "Canadian governments spend too much on the French language", shows a very small negative association.[5] In connection with these results it should be noted that the incidence of French first language is small, with a range of 34 to 39 families over the four calculations. As expected, former residence in Quebec or Ontario tends to reduce the importance of these motives, although once again the numbers are small in relation to the parent sample.[6] Surprisingly, parents who found these views important have lived in British Columbia for almost the same average number of years as parents who found them unimportant, except for those influenced by the opinion "British Columbia is an English-speaking province", who on average have lived in the province for slightly longer.

A group of 43 parents (15.6%) volunteered their own reasons for selecting the English program, advocating the "pre-eminence" of the English language, as follows: "English should be taught first because it is the language most used in B.C./our native tongue/the language of computers/normal for this environment/our cultural heritage/a universal language". This category was the most frequently cited among the parents' own reasons (Table 21), and the parents

judged their own reasons to be the most important, well ahead of any reason supplied by the survey form (Table 20). In addition, the reasons supplied by 3.3% of the parents can be categorized as opposing French/bilingualism/Quebec and official languages policies, or as dismissing FI as a political rather than an educational program (Table 21). (None of the English program parents who have withdrawn students from the FI program cite reasons of this type.) A small number (2.9%) are not necessarily supportive of FI when they propose a multicultural approach or other language immersion programs, although their general orientation appears to be "integrative", as well as "instrumental" and "interested in enrichment".

As in the French immersion group, there are many parents in the English program whose choice of program has been influenced by "individual circumstances" rather than general attitudes. Some of these reasons were supplied by the survey form (Tables 19,20). For example, almost half the respondents indicated the importance of the reason "we would not have been able to help our children with their homework" (48.9%). Smaller numbers were motivated by the fact that they "knew or heard of people who were not enthusiastic about FI" (29.3%) or "did not consider or hear about the FI program" (27.2%). Students in 22.4% of families had completed English kindergarten at a school which did not offer FI. Finally, there is a strong element of "individual circumstance" in the statement "although FI offers additional intellectual challenge and enrichment, we were not sure our children would benefit from it", and this was an important reason for 61.4% of the English program group.

**TABLE 20: English Program Parents[a]: Distribution of Reasons as First, Second, and Third Most Important for Selecting English Program**

| Reason | First (N=302) % | Second (N=299) % | Third (N=294) % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Additional reason(s) supplied by parents[b] | 33.0 | 4.9 | 4.5 |
| FI might make it more difficult to find and correct a learning problem | 11.8 | 15.5 | 10.6 |
| Concerned that child's/children's English would suffer | 11.8 | 15.5 | 10.6 |
| English program offers as much or more challenge and enrichment as FI | 8.5 | 8.3 | 5.5 |
| Would not have been able to help child/ren with FI homework | 5.7 | 8.7 | 6.5 |
| FI more challenging/enriching, but unsure if my child/ren would benefit | 4.2 | 4.9 | 5.5 |
| Canadian governments spend too much on the French language | 3.8 | 5.3 | 3.0 |
| FI is an experiment; more time is needed to see if students benefit | 3.3 | 4.9 | 4.5 |
| British Columbia is an English-speaking province | 2.8 | 2.4 | 3.0 |
| Did not want to be pressured into making sure child/ren are bilingual | 2.8 | 4.4 | 6.0 |
| Young people can learn French later if they want to/need to for careers | 2.4 | 8.3 | 16.1 |
| Did not consider/hear about the French immersion program | 1.9 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| FI pressures school (overcrowding), and devalues the English program | 1.9 | 2.9 | 6.0 |
| Child/ren completed English kindergarten at non-FI school | 1.4 | 2.4 | 1.5 |
| FI would not help my child/ren qualify for wider choice of careers | 0.9 | 1.5 | 1.5 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| There is enough French in the regular English program | 0.9 | 3.4 | 1.5 |
| FI parents believe their children are specially bright & highly motivated; we/I did not want to get involved | 0.9 | 0.5 | 5.0 |
| Knew/heard of people who were not enthusiastic about FI | 0.9 | 1.0 | 3.0 |
| Do not believe FI fosters greater understanding between French and English cultural groups in Canada | 0.5 | 2.4 | 2.5 |
| Traffic problems are caused by FI students being driven to school | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| A school with FI as well as English is no longer a neighbourhood school | 0.0 | 1.5 | 2.5 |
| TOTALS | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

a Families whose children are all in the regular English program (N=276).
b N=174. That is, 63.0% of parents supplied an additional reason or reasons.

---

Additional "individual circumstances" were volunteered by some of the parents, (Table 21) and when combined they account for 36.8% of all parent-volunteered reasons. The most frequently cited are those where children were not enrolled in the FI program because child and program were expected to be incompatible ("child has learning difficulty/ child did not have skills/emotional readiness, general concerns about skills required by FI/readiness for FI/pressure of FI/negative effect of FI on self-esteem and success"). Other families had tried the FI program and found the match unsuitable ("our child needed to focus on

other subjects/the basics/essential skills", "our child found FI too pressured/stressful/detrimental to success and self-esteem", and "child was not happy/failed in FI").

The remaining "individual circumstances" are as follows: "child wanted to be in English program/did not want French immersion"; "French would be our child's third language/we are landed immigrants"; "child's needs and interests indicated English/indicated against FI" (it is not known whether these respondents had tried FI); "family moves around/has moved around"; "information about EFI is not persuasive/ not enough information about EFI"; "local FI program is/was full"; "child joined FI school after entry-level FI/school started FI program when child was past entry-level"; "parents do not speak French"; "we selected English in case FI was discontinued"; and "our local school did not offer the Late FI program". Rejecting a match between individual children and early French immersion implies a negative assessment of FI as an education program on the part of some parents. Other parents expressed views that "more and/or earlier core French/partial immersion would be better than the current EFI or English programs" and "the English program has superior teaching/teachers/a smaller class and/or the FI program has inferior teaching/teachers" (Table 21). Statements in the survey form provided other opportunities for assessing the English program in comparison with FI (Tables 19,20). More than 78% indicated it had been important that "if a child developed a learning problem, FI might make it more difficult to locate the problem and help him/her overcome it", and 71.4% had selected English because of a concern that their children's English would suffer in the FI program. More than 56% had been influenced by their assessment that "FI is an experiment, and more time is needed to see whether students benefit from it". A smaller proportion selected English

because "there is enough French in the English program". And as noted above, 78.2% of English program parents thought it important that "the English program offers as much or more intellectual challenge and enrichment as FI".

Concerns both about conflict between the two programs and their parent groups and about the existence of elitism among the FI parents do not appear to be issues of overwhelming importance for English program parents. Almost 60% said they had been influenced in their decision by the opinion that "French immersion puts too much pressure on the school (e.g. from overcrowding) and devalues the regular English program". Minorities preferred English because "FI parents believe their children are specially bright and highly motivated, and we did not want to get involved with this" (36.4%), and because "traffic problems are caused by FI students being driven to school" (18.5%). Table 20 shows, however, that none of these concerns is given a high ranking, and only three parents added statements that "FI is elitist" or "FI participants are aggressive". Nor does it seem that many parents are concerned about the neighbourhood school being changed by FI. Only 28.8% found this reason important (Table 19), and none indicated it was most important (Table 20).

**TABLE 21: English Program Parents[a]: Distribution of Parents' Additional Reasons for Selecting English Program[b]**

| Parents' Additional Reason | Percentage citing reason | N |
|---|---|---|
| English is language most used in B.C./native tongue/computer language/normal for this environment/cultural heritage/universal language, and should be taught first | 15.6 | 43 |
| Child has learning difficulty/child did not have skills/emotional readiness/general concerns about requisite skills/readiness/pressure/negative effect of FI on self-esteem and success | 9.1 | 25 |
| Our children needed to focus on other subjects, the basics, essential skills | 5.4 | 15 |
| More/earlier core French/partial immersion would be better than EFI or current English program | 5.1 | 14 |
| Child wanted to be in English program/ did not want FI | 4.3 | 12 |
| Found FI too pressured/stressful/detrimental to success and self-esteem | 3.6 | 10 |
| Anti-French/bilingualism/Quebec/official languages policies/FI categorized as politics not education | 3.3 | 9 |
| English program teaching/teachers superior/ FI program teaching/teachers inferior | 3.3 | 9 |
| French would be child's third language/ landed immigrants | 2.9 | 8 |
| Different language would be as good as/ better than FI, eg.Japanese/Spanish/Chinese/ family's heritage language/ /multiculturalism more important than FI | 2.9 | 8 |
| Child's needs/interests indicated English/ indicated against FI | 2.5 | 7 |
| Family moves/has moved around | 2.2 | 6 |
| Information about EFI not persuasive/ not enough information about EFI | 1.4 | 4 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Local FI program is/was full | 1.4 | 4 |
| Child joined FI school after entry-level FI/ school started FI when child was past entry-level | 1.4 | 4 |
| FI is elitist/participants are aggressive | 1.1 | 3 |
| Child not happy/failed in FI | 1.1 | 3 |
| Parents do not speak French | 0.7 | 2 |
| Selected English program in case FI was discontinued | 0.4 | 1 |
| Local school did not have Late FI program | 0.4 | 1 |

a Families whose children are all in the regular English program (N=276).
b N=174. That is, 63.0% of parents supplied an additional reasons or reasons. Column percentages total 69.7%, because 6.7% of parents supplied two or three reasons.

---

**Both parent groups: desire for additional intellectual enrichment and challenge**

More evidence about levels of interest in intellectualy enriching and challenging programs on the part of parents in both groups can be drawn from Tables 22, 23, 24 and 25. Table 22 shows that more English program parents (53.3%) than French immersion parents (38.5%, Table 23) are dissatisfied with the enrichment-challenge elements of their program. However, if the English program had offered more challenge and enrichment before grade four (in 1990, this was the grade at which selected students entered the Challenge program), only 4.2% of the French immersion parents would have opted for the English program instead

(Table 24). Thus it seems that for most FI parents (71.5%), enrichment and challenge by themselves may not be valued as highly as French fluency and/or the other advantages of the French program (Table 23). A slightly different explanation would be that for most FI parents, the immersion program already offers a degree of enrichment-challenge (as well as other advantages, including fluency) sufficient to outweigh any number of additions to the English program. The second explanation would seem more probable in the light of evidence presented earlier in this chapter.

The French immersion parents who indicate they would like more enrichment and challenge in the FI program are characterized by notably higher average occupation, education, and income levels than other parents in the FI group.[7] In contrast, the English program parents wanting enrichment and challenge have notably lower occupation and income levels than other English program parents, although their education level is minimally higher.[8]

**TABLE 22: English Program Parents[a]: Inclination towards the Regular English Program offering Additional Intellectual Challenge and Enrichment before Grade 4**

| Yes % | No % | Not sure % | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| 53.3 | 22.8 | 23.9 | 272 |

a Families whose children are all in the regular English program (N=276).

**TABLE 23: French Immersion Parents[a]: Inclination towards the French Immersion Program offering Additional Intellectual Challenge and Enrichment before Grade 4**

| Yes % | No % | Not sure % | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| 38.5 | 24.9 | 36.6 | 309 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).

**TABLE 24: French Immersion Parents[a]: If the Regular English Program had offered More Intellectual Challenge and Enrichment before Grade 4, Would you have enrolled your Child/Children in the English Program instead of in FI?**

| Yes % | No % | Not sure % | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4.2 | 71.5 | 24.4 | 312 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).

When Late immersion is added to the picture (Table 25), it is apparent that hardly any English program parents (4.0%) regard Late FI as a solution to their dissatisfaction. (It should be recognized, though, that "individual circumstances" would probably inhibit many parents from opting for Late French immersion; for example, by grade six the students themselves would be involved in making a choice.)

**TABLE 25: English Program Parents:[a] Intention to Enrol Child/Children in Late French Immersion**

| Yes % | No % | Not sure % | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4.0 | 71.4 | 24.3 | 275 |

a Families whose children are all in the regular English program (N=276).

## Reasons for withdrawing from French immersion: a comparison of the two parent groups

Tables 26 and 27 show the different reasons for withdrawal from French immersion among the two parent groups. It should be noted that the numbers in the tables are very small and should not be used to generalize about FI withdrawal in the school district. In the French immersion group, where there were 16 withdrawals, placement in a private school was cited in five cases, accompanied by no other explanation (Table 26). Three students were withdrawn for reasons indicating they and the FI program were considered incompatible and therefore FI was assessed negatively, while another three were "transferred to the English program to obtain electives/an unsemestered program/more challenge at junior high level/better high school science, or to avoid split grades or attend the Challenge program". Four other parents preferred a neighbourhood school or found the drive to the FI school too long.

**TABLE 26: French Immersion Parents[a]: Distribution of Reasons for Withdrawing Student(s) from FI Program[b]**

| Reason | Percentage citing reason | N |
|---|---|---|
| Transferred from FI to private school | 1.6 | 5 |
| Child has learning difficulty/child did not have skills/emotional readiness; general concerns about requisite skills/readiness/pressure/ negative effect of FI on self-esteem and success | 1.0 | 3 |
| Transferred to regular English program to obtain electives/unsemestered program/more challenge at junior high level/better high school science/ to attend Challenge program; to avoid split grades | 1.0 | 3 |
| Preferred neighbourhood school/drive to FI school is too long | 1.0 | 3 |
| Parent wants to monitor child's education, but has no French | 0.3 | 1 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).
b N=15. That is, 4.8% of the original N supplied a reason for withdrawing a child or children from FI. (Withdrawals = 16).

Twenty-four of the 26 English program student withdrawals resulted from incompatibility, the same pattern that was observed earlier in this chapter, and which again involves negative assessments of FI (Table 27). All remaining citations apart from two are concerned with other "individual circumstances" described previously.

**TABLE 27: English Program Parents[a]: Distribution of Reasons for Withdrawing Student(s) from FI Program[b]**

| Reason | Percentage citing reason | N |
|---|---|---|
| Child has learning difficulty/child did not have skills/emotional readiness; general concerns about requisite skills/readiness/pressure/ negative effect of FI on self-esteem and success | 6.5 | 18 |
| Child not happy/failed in FI | 1.1 | 3 |
| Child wanted to be in English program/ did not want FI | 0.7 | 2 |
| Child's needs/interests indicated English/ indicated against FI | 0.4 | 1 |
| Family moves/has moved around | 0.4 | 1 |
| Found FI too pressured/stressful/detrimental to success and self-esteem | 0.4 | 1 |
| Different language would be as good as/better than FI, eg.Japanese/Spanish/Chinese/ family's heritage language/ multiculturalism more important than FI | 0.4 | 1 |
| English program teaching/teachers superior/ FI program teaching/teachers inferior | 0.4 | 1 |

a Families whose children are all in the regular English program (N=276).
b N=26. That is, 9.4% of parents supplied a reason or reasons for withdrawing a child or children from FI. (All withdrawals supplied a reason). Column percentages total 10.3% because of rounding up, and because two families each supplied two reasons.

**Additional comments: a comparison of the two parent groups**

The small group of French immersion parents volunteering final comments (10.8%) are thinly spread over an eclectic range of opinion, so that even when clustered into "orientations", parent numbers in each cluster remain insignificant relative to the total size of the French immersion sample (Table 28). In terms of "integrative" orientation, extremely small percentages of the respondents express opinions that FI or another language "encourages communication and understanding" and "Canada is bilingual/bicultural". On the negative side (as far as French immersion is concerned), only three respondents argue in favour of a different immersion language or multiculturalism instead of or as well as FI, or oppose the French language, bilingualism, Quebec, official language policies, and French immersion (or at least one of these). A third small group expresses interest in the enrichment opportunities of FI, and others assess the FI program (for example, "it's effective to learn a second language when young/by immersion"). Very few comments relate to elitism.

Almost twice as many English program parents (19.6%) as FI parents added their own comments (Table 29). Notable among these are the supporters of more and/or earlier core French/partial immersion in place of the current EFI and regular English programs. Another sizeable group (containing more than four times as many parents as the comparable FI cluster) opposes the French language, bilingualism, Quebec, official language policies, French immersion (or at least one of these), or proposes a different immersion language or multiculturalism instead of or as well as FI, or argues for the pre-eminence of English for various reasons. A third cluster is concerned about conflict between the two programs or parent groups, or about

FI and elitism, commenting that "French immersion encourages differences", "FI is elitist/FI participants are aggressive", "FI is bad for the school", and "FI is a parent fad and is not child-centred". Other comments arise from "individual circumstances" or assessments of the FI program, and are infrequently cited.

**TABLE 28: French Immersion Parents[a]: Distribution of Parents' Additional Comments on the Two Programs[b]**

| Parents' Additional Comment | % | N |
|---|---|---|
| FI (or another language) encourages communication and understanding | 2.2 | 7 |
| Effective to learn a second language when young/by immersion | 1.6 | 5 |
| FI (or another language) enriches, challenges, trains a child's brain | 1.6 | 5 |
| Beneficial to have two or more languages; it broadens the horizons | 1.3 | 4 |
| Different language would be as good as/better than FI, eg.Japanese/Spanish/Chinese/family's heritage language/multiculturalism more important than FI | 1.0 | 3 |
| English program teaching/teachers superior/ FI program teaching/teachers inferior | 0.6 | 2 |
| FI/other languages useful for travelling/ seeing the world/living elsewhere | 0.6 | 2 |
| Canada is bilingual and/or bicultural | 0.6 | 2 |
| Wanted to try FI as option at local school/ more convenient school/because it's there | 0.6 | 2 |
| Parents would have preferred an immersion program in a different language (anti-French) | 0.6 | 2 |
| FI parents are more motivated/ambitious/ interested in their children's education | 0.6 | 2 |
| Parents who prevent local schools from offering FI programs are elitist | 0.3 | 1 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Child's needs/interests indicated FI | 0.3 | 1 |
| Child has learning difficulty/child did not have skills/emotional readiness/general concerns about requisite skills/readiness/pressure/negative effeft of FI on self-esteem and success | 0.3 | 1 |
| More/earlier core French/partial immersion would be better than EFI or current English program | 0.3 | 1 |
| FI is elitist/participants are aggressive | 0.3 | 1 |
| Relatives are Francophones | 0.3 | 1 |
| Parent(s) determined to enroll child/ren in FI after previous district refused to offer FI | 0.3 | 1 |
| Anti-French/bilingualism/Quebec/official languages policies/FI categorized as politics not education | 0.3 | 1 |
| Transferred to private school with FI program | 0.3 | 1 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).
b N=34. That is, 10.8% of parents offered one or more comments. Column percentages total 14.0%, because 2.5% of parents offered more than one comment.

**TABLE 29: English Program Parents[a]: Distribution of Parents' Additional Comments on the Two Programs[b]**

| Parents' Additional Comment | % | N |
|---|---|---|
| More/earlier core French/partial immersion would be better than EFI or current English program | 6.2 | 17 |
| Anti-French/bilingualism/Quebec/official languages policies/FI categorized as politics not education | 4.7 | 13 |
| Different language would be as good as/better than FI, eg.Japanese/Spanish/Chinese/family's heritage language/multiculturalism more important than FI | 3.3 | 9 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| English is: language most used in B.C./native tongue/computer language/normal for this environment/cultural heritage/universal language, and should be taught first | 1.8 | 5 |
| French immersion encourages differences | 1.8 | 5 |
| Found FI too pressured/stressful/detrimental to success and self-esteem | 1.4 | 4 |
| FI is elitist/participants are aggressive | 1.4 | 4 |
| French immersion is bad for the school | 1.1 | 3 |
| Our children needed to focus on other subjects, the basics, essential skills | 0.7 | 2 |
| Child's needs/interests indicated English/ indicated against FI | 0.4 | 1 |
| Child has learning difficulty/child did not have skills/emotional readiness/general concerns about requisite skills/readiness/pressure/negative effect of FI on self-esteem and success | 0.4 | 1 |
| Family moves/has moved around | 0.4 | 1 |
| Information about EFI not persuasive/ not enough information about EFI | 0.4 | 1 |
| French immersion is a parent fad, not child-centred | 0.4 | 1 |
| Wanted Late FI, but not offered at local school | 0.4 | 1 |
| English program teaching/teachers superior/ FI program teaching/teachers inferior | 0.4 | 1 |

a Families whose children are all in the regular English program (N=276).
b N=54. That is, 19.6% of parents offered one or more comments. Column percentages total 25.2%, because 3.3% of parents offered more than one comment.

**Summary and conclusion**

The attitudinal information presented in this chapter has begun to flesh out the characteristics of the French immersion and English program parent groups in Victoria. For the FI group, a desire for enrichment and challenge seems to have been the most important factor influencing FI enrolment, to an extent exceeding the findings of McEachern in Victoria, O'Shea and Horvath in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, and even Burns and Olsen in Northern Ontario. With regard to the importance of enrichment, the results of the present study strongly support the findings of Guttman in North York, with the exception that almost all the FI parents in Victoria would not prefer an enriched English program as an alternative to FI. This result is more in line with Burns's finding in Sault Ste. Marie, where 94% of FI parents said they would choose FI again. In this study, as in Olsen and Burns's, French immersion appears to be viewed as a form of enrichment, although a considerable minority in Victoria would like to see it even more enriched and challenging. Fluency in French, valued by almost all parents, could be regarded as fulfilling the need for enrichment and challenge, a relationship not addressed specifically in the literature. Those FI parents indicating they would like more enrichment and challenge are characterized by notably higher average occupation, education, and income levels.

Most of the FI parents were motivated also by reasons analogous to Bienvenue's "national/integrative" and "instrumental" orientations. The levels of support for both types of reasons were similarly high, whereas Bienvenue as well as Burns and Olsen found the "instrumental" perspective receiving much more support than the "national/integrative" outlook. On these issues, the results of this survey are

more in line with findings reported by O'Shea and Horvath, and by Carey in his survey of other studies. With regard to the "integrative" orientation, the study has found that there is no association of this factor with French as a first language, and very little association with years of residence in B.C. ("integrative" motives are unexpectedly associated with slightly longer residence). Yet former residence in Quebec, Manitoba and Ontario produces positive associations.

Guttman observed that many FI parents, especially those who are university-educated, may be concerned about a lack of stimulation in the regular English program environment if their children's classmates do not share a similar home background. A fairly large majority of parents in this survey appear to share this concern, preferring their children to be with "other bright, highly motivated students". The average socio-economic status of parents for whom this factor was important is higher than the SES of parents who found it unimportant. This difference is in addition to the higher average SES of FI families compared with English program families observed in Chapter Two.

Only three of the FI families have withdrawn children from the program as a result of incompatibility or adjustment problems (although those who were placed in private schools may have been drawn from this category). It will be recalled that Bienvenue, and also McEachern, noted that more FI parents than English program parents were optimistic about their children succeeding in the program.

Most English program parents indicated that they selected the regular program because "young people can learn French later if they want to, or if they need to learn it for career reasons". For a large majority, early immersion was

rejected because of a concern that children's English would suffer, and for an even larger majority because learning problems might not be identified. For a smaller majority it was important that FI is still an "experimental" program. Bienvenue's characterization of the English program group as less confident about the quality of the immersion program, and McEachern's finding that they are less optimistic about their children's chances of success in the program, appear to apply to the results of this study. In fact, the degree of concern about students' English is much higher in Victoria than was reported by Bienvenue in Winnipeg, and is probably augmented by the number of parents citing incompatibility or adjustment problems, and negative assessments of FI.

As observed earlier in this chapter, English program parents also exhibit a high degree of interest in enrichment and challenge for their children. A large majority of parents chose the program because it offered "as much or more challenge and enrichment as French immersion". Nevertheless, a small majority would like to add enrichment and challenge to the regular program.

In contrast with French immersion parents, English program parents who want more enrichment and challenge have notably lower average occupation and income levels than those who do not, although their average education level is minimally higher.

Small majorities or large minorities indicated that motives tending to be unfavourable towards a "national/integrative" orientation were important to their choice of program. These parents are characterized by slightly lower average occupation and education levels (though minimally higher income levels) than parents who were not motivated in this

way. French immersion involvement, either in the past or considered for the future, is found to be negatively associated with views of this type. In this connection, it is notable that a small minority proposes introducing additional French within the regular English program. French as a first language was not associated negatively with these views (except for government expenditure on the French language), and neither was shorter length of residence in British Columbia (apart from "B.C. is an English-speaking province"). Former residence in Quebec and Ontario did, however, reduce their importance.

Although a sizeable majority of the English program parents was influenced in its decision by the belief that FI "puts too much pressure on the school and devalues the English program", other reasons relating to divisions between programs and parent groups, or to elitism, were not important to many parents. Only a small minority had selected the English program because they feel that FI undermines neighbourhood schools. These findings are in contrast to Bienvenue's, most of whose English program sample agreed that FI created a divided school system and is surrounded by too much conflict and too many hard feelings (although only a minority agreed that FI created a privileged system). However, the results of this study are more indicative of divisions than Burns's finding in Sault Ste. Marie, where only 19.4% of the English program parents felt that FI had affected other programs and services in the district.

In Chapter Five, some of these findings about the two groups of parents are examined in relation to religious affiliations and political party identities, and to general attitudes about public policy.

## Notes to Chapter IV

1. The mean education level of the first group is 5.2, and for the second group, 4.9. (Value 5 represents "bachelor's degree", and value 4, "university certificate or diploma".) Mean occupation levels are 3.4 and 3.3 respectively (value 3 being "semi-professional/technical", and value 4, "senior management/professional"). Mean income levels are 5.7 as opposed to 5.1 (value 5 represents $50,000, and value 6, $60,000).

2. Gamma .01.

3. The three locations yield positive Gamma values of .23, .25, and .11 respectively.

4. Gammas .07, .07, and .08.

5. Gamma -.13.

6. In the case of Ontario, the Gamma associations are between -.05 and -.25 (54 to 64 families who have lived in that province are included in the four calculations). For the families with parents who have lived in Quebec, Gammas are between -.02 and -.41 (although only 26 to 30 Quebec cases are included).

7. FI parents wanting more enrichment are characterized by the following means: income 5.6; occupation 3.5; education 5.5. Those not wanting enrichment: income 5.2; occupation 3.3; education 5.1. Please refer to Tables 1, 4 and 7 for value labels.

8. English program parents wanting more enrichment are characterized by the following means: income 4.7; occupation 2.8; education 4.3. Those not wanting enrichment: income 5.1; occupation 3.1; education 4.2. Please refer to Tables 1, 4 and 7 for value labels.

# Chapter V

## Political Party Allegiance, Religious Identity, Attitudes about Government Decision-Making

### The scope of Chapter V

The previous chapters have presented evidence concerning the socio-economic and other characteristics of parents enrolling their children in French immersion and the regular English program, and their reasons for selecting either option. An attempt will now be made to link this information with additional data on parents' party political allegiances, religious identities, and general orientations towards the role of government. For example, the different intensities of national/integrative orientation noted above could be associated with greater or lesser degrees of ethnocentrism and alienation in British Columbia, and possibly also with choice of federal party. Another example might be elitism, which was observed among FI parents and which may be associated negatively with populist political orientations. Instrumental (career) motivations may be bound up with public sector employment and a particular view of the role of the state. Some of the dimensions of French immersion policies and programming outlined in Chapter One - for example, collective action, federal government leadership, social engineering and economic intervention by the state - may appear to be more closely aligned with one end of the ideological spectrum in British Columbia (collectivism) than the other (individualism). Occupational status, education level and income may each be associated with certain ideological dimensions and political allegiances, while religious identity may have some bearing on political ideology. With the addition of information on

the political environment of two groups of parents, it may be possible to revisit French immersion issues in the context of national, provincial and local decision-making (the subject of the final chapter).

## Provincial party allegiance

As a first step to linking parent characteristics and attitudes with their political orientations, a major dimension in British Columbia party politics should be examined for its ability to reveal additional cleavages between the two groups of parents. In a 1979 election study of B.C., David Elkins writes that in the B.C. setting, one aspect of conservative and liberal ideologies - individual versus collective responsibility for social and economic matters - has evolved into two competing political orientations.[1] One orientation focuses on individual self-reliance and contribution to the community, the other emphasizes collective sharing of the risks inherent in an individualistic and competitive economic system and the collective benefits to be achieved through co-ordinated action. In the political arena these orientations are generally described as "free enterprise" and "socialism". The B.C. election study used a six-point scale focusing on differences in attitudes towards a prominent state role in social policy and economic regulation. Results from this scale showed that the two orientations differed by provincial party support; New Democrat supporters were more collectively oriented, whereas Social Credit supporters were very individually oriented.

This ideological cleavage appears to be relevant to some of the issues surrounding French immersion. It was noted earlier that EFI is associated with such program and policy

dimensions as social engineering by the state, a need for collective action, central (federal government) leadership, and economic intervention by the state. With regard to these dimensions, a substantial majority (almost 78%) of French immersion parents indicate they were influenced by the FI program's ability to foster understanding between English and French cultural groups in Canada, a motivation closely aligned with the major stated objective of Canada's bilingual education programs. On the other hand, almost 44% of English program parents express no identity with French immersion as a component of Canada's national policy, indicating they do not believe that FI fosters greater understanding between French and English cultural groups in Canada. The same percentage felt it important to select the English program because "British Columbia is an English-speaking province". In addition, 58.5% chose English because they believe Canadian governments spend too much on the French language, and almost 51% because they did not want to be pressured into making sure their children are bilingual. (In contrast, only 6.0% of FI parents felt they were being pressured in this way.) Clearly, percentages of this size cannot be used to characterize the English program parent group as a whole, but the importance of such reasons to many parents may have a significant impact on voting preferences. It is also notable that almost 80% chose English because "young people can decide to learn French later if they want to, or if they need to learn it for career reasons", implying that most English program parents regard knowledge of French as a useful tool for the individual, but do not identify with a collective drive to increase the proportion of Canadians fluent in both official languages.

In the B.C. study, individualist/collectivist ideologies, occupation, and income (plus two other variables not related

to this discussion) were found to have the most significant impact on provincial party choice. Higher income voters were much more likely to support Social Credit, and lower income voters to support the NDP. Differences by occupational level were not as striking but were still apparent, although managerial and professional groups were almost evenly divided between the two parties. Elkins speculates that Social Credit's support in upper occupational groups was garnered from the private sector managerial elite, whereas the NDP has been successful in attracting professionals and semi-professionals from the public sector. The Social Credit Party, he notes, "has had a reputation for suspicion, if not outright hostility, towards traditional elites, particularly lawyers, doctors, and educators".[2] However, education was not a significant indicator of party allegiance.

As far as income is concerned, as a predictor of party choice in the parent survey it does not help to explain why there are more NDP supporters in the FI program (Table 30), since there are also relatively more high-income cases in that group. The occupational data from Chapter III may help to clarify the situation. There are proportionately more parents with senior managerial and professional occupations in the FI program, which according to Elkins' findings would tend to result in a higher incidence of Social Credit instead of NDP supporters in the FI program, unless an additional factor - a higher incidence of public sector employment among FI parents at this occupational level - is also involved. The public-private sector dichotomy is cited by Elkins as a significant feature of workplace setting, a dimension that appears to be closely interwoven with ideology and party allegiance in B.C. Its importance is summarized by Blake:

A significant public versus private sector conflict has emerged in British Columbia. The conflict is bound up with differing views about the size of the public sector, the degree to which individuals or the community should assume responsibility for the well-being of individuals and the degree to which the state ought to intervene in the economy for the same reasons. This conflict has driven a wedge between members of both the working class and the middle class. Professionals and semi-professionals, especially those employed in the public sector, are much more likely to support social policy initiatives and government intervention in the economy than others in the upper status occupations. Their political preferences are linked to this ideological position, but also directly to self-interest - their livelihoods often depend on an activist state.[3]

The "wedge" between members of the working class refers to a strong level of support for the NDP and collectivist ideology among public administration blue collar employees as well. (For "other white collar" employees, the public/private dichotomy is again a divisive factor.) As reported below, there is a somewhat higher incidence of public sector employment in the FI program, possibly helping to undermine the tendency of high-income families (of which there are also larger numbers in the FI program) to vote Social Credit.

Finally, the importance of instrumental, or career-motivated, reasons to a large majority of FI parents should not be forgotten. Since French fluency is particularly important for high-level federal government employment, there may be some association between career-motivated French immersion enrolment and identification with an interventionist view of the role of the state.

To summarize this discussion, in the context of the French immersion policy and program dimensions identified above, "national/integrative" (ethnocentricity) issues may be associated with the individual/collective responsibility dimension of provincial politics. Attitudinal associations

of this type could be strengthened by differences in public and private sector employment, and could contribute to the different patterns of provincial partisanship noted among parents in the two programs (Tables 30 and 31, below).

Table 30 shows that majorities of parents in each of the two programs are supporters of the provincial New Democrats (NDP) or Liberals, both of which are on the left side of the political spectrum (although the provincial Liberal Party may be farther to the right than the federal Liberal Party). On the other hand, only minorities favour Social Credit or the Progressive Conservatives (PCs), both of which can be categorized as right-wing parties. There are differences in levels of support between mothers and fathers in the same program as well as between the programs themselves, French immersion mothers showing the strongest level of support for the most leftward-leaning party (the NDP), and English program fathers the weakest. NDP support among FI fathers and English program mothers is similar, although slightly stronger in the first group. There is relatively stronger support for the Liberal Party among mothers in the FI group in comparison with FI fathers and English program mothers and fathers. Support for the Liberals and PCs is weak across all groups, resulting in numbers that are too small to be used for comparison. The pattern of support for both of the leftward-leaning parties ranges from 71.0% for FI mothers and 59.5% for FI fathers, to 56.6% for English program mothers and 51.9% for English program fathers.

**Table 30: Provincial Party Allegiances of Mothers and Fathers, by French Immersion Program[a] and Regular English Program[b]**

| | French immersion | | English program | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mothers (N=214) % | Fathers (N=185) % | Mothers (N=182) % | Fathers (N=158) % |
| New Democrat | 64.0 | 54.6 | 53.3 | 46.2 |
| Social Credit | 14.0 | 21.6 | 19.8 | 24.1 |
| None | 12.6 | 16.8 | 18.7 | 19.0 |
| Liberal | 7.0 | 4.9 | 3.3 | 5.7 |
| Prog. Cons | 1.4 | 0.5 | 2.7 | 3.8 |
| Green | 0.9 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 0.6 |
| Other | 0.0 | 0.5 | 1.6 | 0.6 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).
b Families whose children are all in the English program (N=276).

On the right of the provincial political spectrum, support for Social Credit and the PCs in every group is relatively much weaker than for the left-wing alternatives, being weakest among FI mothers and strongest among English program fathers. The range of right-wing support across the four groups is the opposite of the left-wing pattern, with a high of 27.9% among English program fathers, 22.5% for English program mothers, 22.1% for FI fathers, and a lowpoint of 15.4% among FI mothers. Another notable result is the higher incidence of parents in the English program group who indicate they have no allegiance to a party.

**Table 31: Provincial Left-Wing/Right-Wing/No Party Allegiance of Families, by French Immersion Program[a] and Regular English Program[b]**

| Allegiance | French immersion % | French immersion N | English program % | English program N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Family is left-wing[c] | 45.9 | 144 | 35.5 | 98 |
| Family is right-wing[d] | 11.8 | 37 | 14.1 | 39 |
| Family has no allegiance[e] | 8.6 | 27 | 10.5 | 29 |
| All other cases[f] | 33.8 | 106 | 39.9 | 110 |
| TOTALS | 100.0 | 314 | 100.0 | 276 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314). Of this N, 31.5% of mothers did not respond, and 0.3% were absent parents; 34.1% of fathers did not respond, and 7.0% were absent parents.
b Families whose children are all in the English program (N=276). Of this N, 33.0% of mothers did not respond, and 1.1% were absent parents; 34.1% of fathers did not respond, and 8.7% were absent parents.
c Where both parents, single parent or single response indicate(s) New Democrat/Liberal.
d Where both parents, single parent or single response indicate(s) Social Credit/Progressive Conservative.
e Where both parents, single parent or single response indicate(s) no party allegiance ("None").
f Where two parents are unmatched by left-wing/right-wing, or by non-allegiance, or where both are non-respondents, or a single parent is a non-respondent.

When parents in the same family are matched by provincial party allegiance (Table 31), more left-wing families are found in FI (45.9%) than in the English program (35.5%). Right-wing families are few in number in both programs, but there are proportionately more in the English program. Also in the English program there is a slightly greater

proportion of families who do not support a party, but the numbers are too small for significant comparison.

## Federal party allegiance

Three dimensions of importance to federal partisanship in B.C. are also closely linked to the integrative, ethnocentric, collective and instrumental attitudes of parents reported in Chapters Two and Four. These dimensions are B.C. alienation, ethnocentrism (negative attitudes towards bilingualism, biculturalism, and the position of Quebec), and the individual/collective responsibility dichotomy discussed above.[4] Data on federal party support in the 1979 election showed that individualists were more likely to support the PCs, and to a lesser extent, the Liberals, than the NDP. There was a clear relationship between collectivist orientation and support for the NDP, except from the most ethnocentric, and partisan preferences persisted after the introduction of control variables such as provincial party allegiance, occupation, and religion.

The conception of B.C. alienation developed by Elkins differs slightly from the generally understood idea of Western alienation, and is more accurately described in terms of discontent, partisan rivalry or policy grievances. He defines B.C.'s particular brand of alienation in the following way:

> Western alienation will be understood as an attitude or set of attitudes about the place of western provinces (and especially B.C.) in the Canadian confederation. It involves beliefs about the appropriate distribution of powers and jurisdictions between the federal provincial domains of politics, feelings about nation, province, and locale, expectations about policy responsibility and performance, fears about being left out of significant political

decisions, and the balance between national and regional or provincial loyalties and identities. [5]

Attitudinal findings lead Elkins to the conclusion that B.C. alienation may reflect a judgement that the federal government has made mistakes, "rather than a feeling that it is illegitimate or that it can do nothing right".[6] In this connection, it will be recalled that the program and policy dimensions associated with French immersion include its identification with unpopular federal parties, particularly the Liberals for having introduced bilingual policies and later the PCs for having upheld the policies after gaining office. (The federal NDP has also supported bilingual policies, but has never formed a government.) In addition, language policies have alienated some sectors of public opinion because of what is perceived to be the policies' huge and unnecessary expense, insensitivity to regional concerns, favouritism towards central Canada, and the intrusion of the federal government into grade school education, a provincial area of responsibility. In the survey of parents, there is some evidence of these types of attitude among the English program parents. As noted above, slightly more than half of these parents chose English because they wanted to avoid being pressured into ensuring their children were bilingual, and somewhat larger majority thought Canadian governments spend too much on the French language. Although the percentages in both programs are large, more parents in the English program (87.9%) than in FI (78.7%) agree that "the federal government makes policies without consulting the people most affected by them" (Table 35).

Predictable connections between the Liberal Party and alienation were observed in the 1979 survey. Supporters of the federal and provincial Liberal parties were significantly less alienated, and as measures of alienation

increased, there was a marked and very significant decline in positive rating of the Liberals and an increase in negative ratings. In the survey of parents, support for the Liberal Party among FI parents is 7.0% and 6.0% stronger than among English program parents (Table 32). By 1990, alienation from federal bilingual policies probably also was reflected in strength of support for the Reform Party, which opposes such policies. In fact the data shows stronger levels of support for the Reform Party - and presumably more alienation - among the English program parents, producing a difference of 8.0% between FI mothers and English program fathers (Table 32). The data also shows very low levels of support for the PCs among all groups, which can be attributed to voting patterns in Victoria and, more recently, in Saanich, and the dwindling popularity of the PC government throughout Canada (Table 32). However, in view of the relatively stronger level of support for the Reform Party among English program parents, the unpopularity of the PC Party may be related also to its commitment to maintaining the policies of bilingualism. Finally, if the unattractiveness of all federal parties is an indicator of alienation among the electorate, then there is a slightly higher incidence of alienation among English program parents by this measure as well.

Blake et al found that alienated and ethnocentrist attitudes were important in the 1979 federal election, favouring the PCs and hindering the Liberals and the NDP. (In 1990, such attitudes would have tended to favour the Reform Party, as well as, or instead of, the PC Party.) The discussion above, concerning possible linkages between degrees of ethnocentrism (positive or negative "national/integrative" orientations), French immersion program and policy dimensions, the individual/collective responsibility dimension, and the public/private sector dichotomy, is even

more relevant to federal than to provincial partisanship; French immersion is clearly a federal initiative, making this level of government the obvious target for discontent. In this connection, about 17% of the English program parents said they had selected their program because they supported the pre-eminence of the English language, and/or opposed French, bilingualism, Quebec, official languages policies, and French immersion (Table 21). By contrast, in the FI program, only three parents expressed ethnocentric views (Table 28). This is taken as evidence that more French immersion parents than English program parents are likely to support the NDP and the Liberals rather than the PCs or Reform, and the data in Tables 32 and 33 supports this expectation. ("Ethnocentrist" parents in the English program may be partially offset by a small group (3.3%) suggesting a different immersion language, a heritage language, or multiculturalism in place of FI (Table 29). It is also interesting to note that when French is removed from the picture, overwhelming majorities of parents in both programs agree that "in principle, it is better to know two languages than one" (Table 35).)

Table 32 shows that majorities of parents in each of the two programs are supporters of the federal New Democrats (NDP) or Liberals (parties to the left of the political spectrum), whereas only minorities favour the Progressive Conservatives (PCs) or Reform Party (both considered to be right-wing parties). Once again there are differences in levels of support between mothers and fathers in the same program as well as between the programs themselves. French immersion mothers again show the strongest level of support for the most leftward-leaning party (the NDP), and English program fathers the weakest. NDP support among FI fathers and English program mothers is very similar, but FI fathers show a stronger allegiance to the Liberal Party. Stronger

support for the Liberals among mothers and fathers in the FI group in comparison with the English group, coupled with particularly weak NDP support among English program fathers, results in a pattern of support for both of the leftward-leaning parties ranging from 73.3% for FI mothers and 64.9% for FI fathers, to 58.8% for English program mothers and 52.2% for English program fathers.

**Table 32: Federal Party Allegiances of Mothers and Fathers, by French Immersion Program[a] and Regular English Program[b]**

| | French immersion | | English program | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Mothers** (N=221) % | **Fathers** (N=191) % | **Mothers** (N=182) % | **Fathers** (N=155) % |
| New Democrat | 43.9 | 35.6 | 36.3 | 29.0 |
| Liberal | 29.4 | 29.3 | 22.5 | 23.2 |
| Prog. Cons | 11.3 | 15.7 | 14.8 | 18.1 |
| None | 11.3 | 13.1 | 18.7 | 17.4 |
| Reform | 2.3 | 4.7 | 7.1 | 10.3 |
| Green | 1.8 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| Other | 0.0 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1.3 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).
b Families whose children are all in the English program (N=276).

On the other side of the political spectrum, support for the PCs and the Reform Party is relatively weak in every group, but is weakest among FI mothers and strongest among English program fathers. The range of right-wing support across the four groups is the opposite of the left-wing pattern, with a

high of 28.4% among English program fathers, 21.9% for English program mothers, 20.4% for FI fathers, falling to a low of 13.6% among FI mothers. In the federal data as well there is a higher incidence of parents in the English program group indicating they do not support a party.

When parents in the same family are matched by party allegiance (Table 33), there are found to be more left-wing families in FI (49.0%) than in the English program (37.0%). Right-wing families are few in number in both programs, but there are proportionately more in the English program, and the difference between the two program is greater than that observed in the provincial data above. Finally, in the English program there is a slightly greater proportion of families who do not support a party, although the numbers are small and may not be significantly different.

**Table 33: Federal Left-Wing/Right-Wing/No Party Allegiance of Family, by French Immersion Program[a] and Regular English Program[b]**

| Allegiance | French immersion % | French immersion N | English program % | English program N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Family is left-wing[c] | 49.0 | 154 | 37.0 | 102 |
| Family is right-wing[d] | 9.6 | 30 | 14.1 | 39 |
| Family has no allegiance[e] | 8.0 | 25 | 10.1 | 28 |
| All other cases[f] | 33.4 | 105 | 38.8 | 107 |
| Totals | 100.0 | 314 | 100.0 | 276 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314). Of this N, 29.3% of mothers did not respond, and 0.3% were absent parents; 32.2% of fathers did not respond, and 7.0% were absent parents.
b Families whose children are all in the English program (N=276). Of this N, 33.0% of mothers did not respond, and 1.1% were absent parents; 35.1% of fathers did not respond, and 8.7% were absent parents.
c Where both parents, single parent or single response indicate(s) New Democrat/Liberal.
d Where both parents, single parent or single response indicate(s) Social Credit/Progressive Conservative.
e Where both parents, single parent or single response indicate(s) no party allegiance ("None").
f Where two parents are unmatched by left-wing/right-wing, or by non-allegiance, or where both are non-respondents, or a single parent is a non-respondent.

## Attitudes about government decision-making

Evidence in previous chapters concerning such factors as elitism, career instrumentalism, socio-economic status, and the social engineering and expenditure aspects of French immersion programs, suggests that another dimension of B.C.

politics - populism - should be introduced into the discussion, in the expectation that more English program parents than FI parents will exhibit populist attitudes. Of the three authors referenced for definitions of populism, the first, Elkins, writes that wherever populist orientations are found, at the core are two related beliefs: a suspicion of "experts", and a trust in "ordinary people" and commonsense. Populism prefers action instead of talk - "simple, concrete, commonsense actions rather than the complicated schemes of experts or intellectuals".[7] From two other works (Margaret Canovan, Robert Lapper), additional populist ideas have been distilled. They are: anti-elitist, anti-intellectual, and anti-progress perspectives; suspicion of government and business on a large-scale, and identification with small property-owners and small private businesses; feelings of being powerless, especially with regard to economic power; a desire for economy, avoidance of waste, and a balanced budget; assertions by leaders that there are no divisions in the community, along with a concern for the levelling of society; beliefs in commonsense, the man-in-the-street, and participation; and the importance of popular sovereignty in the public schools.

Not all of these ideas could be included in the parent survey because of lack of space and limitations on the attention span of respondents, but five statements were included (Table 34), focusing on ideas thought to be particularly relevant to issues surrounding French immersion. These are: emphasis on an absence of divisions in the community and a levelling of society; anti-elitism, anti-intellectualism, suspicion of "experts" and trust in "ordinary people"; suspicion of large-scale government and feelings of being powerless; opposition to "progress"; and lastly, economy and avoidance of waste. (The first item shown in the table relates to ethnocentrist attitudes,

above.) As predicted, the response indicates a stronger identification with populist sentiments among English program parents than among FI parents, revealing differences between the two groups in their approaches to government decision-making. It should be noted as well that Elkins found populism to be strongly and positively related to B.C. alienation, and it has been argued above that English program parents show a higher level of alienation than that detected among FI parents. Moreover, the 1979 study also produced evidence that populist attitudes were less common among higher status occupational groups, higher income groups, and the highly educated. This is a particularly relevant finding, since all three indicators occur more often among the FI parents. Finally, evidence of elitist attitudes among a majority of FI parents, noted in Chapter IV, further strengthens the conclusion that the two program groups are characterized by different degrees of support for either side of the populist/elitist dimension.

**Table 34: Relationships between French Immersion Enrolment and Opinions about Government Policy-Making, with Percentages agreeing in the French Immersion Program[a] and the Regular English Program[b]**

| | French immersion | | English program | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gamma** | **% Agree** | **N** | **% Agree** | **N** |
| In principle, it is better to know two languages than one. | | | | |
| .52 | 97.4% | 307 | 92.2% | 257 |
| As far as possible, all students in British Columbia should go through the same program of education. | | | | |
| -.51 | 26.1% | 284 | 51.9% | 243 |
| In the long run, it is better to trust the opinions of ordinary people rather than the opinions of experts and intellectuals. | | | | |
| -.44 | 28.6% | 185 | 50.9% | 163 |
| The federal government makes policies without consulting the people most affected by them. | | | | |
| -.33 | 78.7% | 239 | 87.9% | 232 |
| There have been too many unnecessary changes to the school system over the past 20 years. | | | | |
| -.35 | 31.1% | 222 | 48.6% | 208 |
| Generally, education tax dollars are being spent wisely. | | | | |
| .30 | 62.6% | 235 | 47.5% | 202 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).
b Families whose children are all in the English program (N=276).

## Religious identities

An additional indication of the different political orientations of the two parent groups emerged from the data on religious identities (Table 35). According to Elkin's findings, British Columbians without religious allegiance are least sympathetic to Social Credit and, on average, have the most collectivist attitudes. When mothers and fathers in this study were matched by case, there were more families in the French immersion program than the English program indicating no religious identity (25.7%, or 72 cases, compared with 20.4%, or 48 cases).[8]

It is also notable that no significant difference was found between the proportions of Roman Catholic parents in each program (matched by family, there are 5.7% in French immersion and 6.0% in the English program).[9] The incidence of Roman Catholicism was sought by this study because of possible associations with former residence in Quebec, with francophonie and positive "national/integrative" orientations, and hence with French immersion placement.

Data on the incidence of fundamentalism was collected because of a finding by Elkins that "members of the fundamentalist religions are overwhelmingly Social Credit voters and most individualistic",[10] leading to speculation that there might be more fundamentalists in the English program. However, numbers in either program are too low for fundamentalism to be regarded as a significant factor.

**Table 35: Religious Identities of Mothers and Fathers, by French Immersion Program[a] and Regular English Program[b]**

| | French immersion | | English program | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mothers (N=270) % | Fathers (N=250) % | Mothers (N=226) % | Fathers (N=204) % |
| None | 34.4 | 40.8 | 27.4 | 39.2 |
| United | 17.4 | 17.2 | 22.1 | 14.7 |
| Anglican | 15.9 | 14.4 | 19.5 | 17.6 |
| Roman Catholic | 15.9 | 12.4 | 13.7 | 13.7 |
| Other | 10.0 | 6.8 | 6.2 | 5.9 |
| Other Protestant | 3.3 | 4.0 | 3.5 | 2.9 |
| Baptist | 1.9 | 3.6 | 5.8 | 3.4 |
| Fundamentalist | 1.1 | 0.8 | 1.8 | 2.5 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).
b Families whose children are all in the English program (N=276).

## Summary and conclusion

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that parents in the two programs differ to a certain extent by provincial and federal partisanship, absence of religious identity, and elitist/populist orientation. Tentative arguments are advanced about the association of these variables with other dimensions - instrumental and national/integrative (ethnocentric) orientations, B.C. alienation, individual/collective responsibility, and some of the policy and program dimensions of French immersion. These arguments

are not conclusive, since the numbers of cases across many of the variables are not large enough for statistical analysis. However, they tend to confirm linkages between several of the parent characteristics and attitudinal orientations discussed in Chapters Two and Four. As expected, the negative "national integration" attitudes observed among the English program parents are associated with political outlooks that are on the whole less left-wing and collectivist, and more ethnocentrist, populist, and B.C. alienated. EFI parents tend to be more left-wing and collectivist, a finding which helps to explain why this parent group is more disposed towards a program associated with state social engineering and economic intervention, collective action, and central leadership. The higher incidence of public sector employment among the EFI parents strengthens this explanation. In the election study, federal NDP and Liberal Party allegiance - stronger among the EFI group - was found to be negatively associated with alienated and ethnocentric attitudes. Finally, although populist orientations in B.C. are known to cut across party lines, French immersion parents were found to be more elitist in outlook, and English program parents more populist. Chapter VI will attempt a synthesis of these and other dimensions that have been brought to bear on the politics of French immersion.

## Notes to Chapter V

1. David J. Elkins, "The Imperatives of Social Class", in Donald E. Blake, Two political worlds: parties and voting in British Columbia (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1987), 67-73.

2. Ibid., 81.

3. Donald E. Blake, Two political worlds: parties and voting in British Columbia (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1987), 172.

4. Ibid., 141.

5. David J. Elkins, "The Imperatives of Social Class", in Donald E. Blake, Two political worlds: parties and voting in British Columbia (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1987), 114.

6. Ibid., 124.

7. Ibid., 62.

8. Calculated from cases in which both parents, single parents or single respondents indicate "None".

9. Calculated from cases in which both parents, single parents or single respondents indicate "Roman Catholic".

10. Donald E. Blake, Two political worlds: parties and voting in British Columbia (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1987), p.86-7.

# Chapter VI

# The Contradictions of Early French Immersion

## The scope of Chapter VI

In this final chapter, the evidence of systemic elitism and elite self-selection into early French immersion programs is reviewed. The attitudes and political orientations of both parent groups with regard to education programming are reconsidered together with the public policy objectives of the EFI program. Models of education systems are re-examined in conjunction with the survey data. Finally, the overwhelming interest in additional educational enrichment and challenge observed among EFI parents in Victoria is discussed in the context of economic restructuring and the downsizing of the public education system in British Columbia.

## The evidence of systemic elitism

At the beginning of this study it was noted that early French immersion programs are normally introduced as a result of collective action and pressure from organized parent groups. Olson and Burns noted that parents lobbying school boards for EFI programs typically have a high socio-economic status relative to their communities, as do most of the parents enrolling their children in new EFI programs. To these findings can be added the observation that initial over-representation of relatively high SES families in each EFI school can continue for a number of years in districts where certain policies apply. At least four factors may be working to maintain an above-average SES profile in the EFI

program in Victoria, even though the district's pioneer EFI program was established almost 20 years ago. These factors include sibling priority, which remains a board policy; a policy of capping enrolment in each EFI school (dropped only in late 1988); and a very slow increase in the number of EFI schools in the district. When these factors apply, parents who would like to enrol their children in a local EFI program but who do not have children already in their chosen school are often expected to go farther afield to obtain EFI placement. In such cases, they may decide to opt for the English program at the local school instead. Another important factor is that the board only recently decided to broaden the catchment area of the program into hitherto unserved areas. With reference to this last decision, the potential for an increase in enrolment from unserved areas was well recognized; district officials reported that "when placed at a new site, the immersion program tends to create its own demand from the surrounding area".[1]

No evidence was found in this survey of the systemic tracking-out of children from low-SES families, a phenomenon observed by Olsen and Burns, and also Trites; on the other hand, low-income families are less likely to opt for FI initially, since the board does not provide or subsidize transportation for EFI students.

## The evidence of elite self-selection

This survey has shown that an abnormally large number of families with high SES and an abnormally small percentage of low-SES families are still present in the EFI program, almost two decades after the introduction of the first program in the district. The evidence of self-selection

into the EFI program by the relatively advantaged can be summarized briefly. There are more high-income, high-occupation level, and highly-educated families in the EFI group, and the average income of the EFI families is higher than both the average income of the English program families and of all families in the Greater Victoria School district. The English program group includes more families with small incomes, low educational attainments and low-status occupations, and its average income is close to the average income of all families in the district. The differences between the SES of the two program groups invites inquiry into whether, if all systemic impediments to EFI enrolment were removed, the program would be taken up by a majority of parents instead of by a small minority. For an answer to this question, this study should now re-examine the evidence concerning the characteristics of the parents, their attitudes towards the French immersion program, and their general political orientations.

The French immersion and English program parent groups in this survey differ from one another in many respects. French immersion respondents in this study were more likely than English program parents to have lived in other provinces or countries with French-speaking majorities or large minorities, and more likely to have spoken French as a first language. Former residence anywhere outside B.C. (one of the factors leading Bienvenue to characterize EFI parents as more "cosmopolitan") was also positively associated with the EFI program. All of these factors would be expected to predispose parents towards FI enrolment. As observed above, the English program group contains a larger number of low-SES families and a correspondingly smaller number of high-SES families, particularly in terms of occupation and education levels. In terms of average income, the English program group is closer than the EFI group to the average

income of all families in the district. If all the systemic barriers to EFI enrolment identified above were removed, there should be no differences in the potential of all socio-economic status groups to find places in the EFI program. (In an effort to control some of the impediments to EFI enrolment, the English program parents surveyed in this study were all using dual track schools, and in theory would have been able to select the EFI track instead.)

Whether or not the potential can be realized depends partly on the existence of other, attitudinal obstacles to EFI enrolment among the English program parents. Studies reviewed in Chapter Two suggested there are in fact a number of attitudinal barriers exerting an influence on English program parents. Such obstacles included a lack of confidence in the quality of the EFI program and in their children's abilities to succeed in immersion without adverse effects on their English skills and success in other subjects. Because of these concerns, English program parents tended to assess basic (core) and extended French programs more favourably than EFI. Significant numbers of parents held ethnocentric views unsupportive of Quebec, the French language, and bilingual and bicultural policies. The political aspects of EFI - divisiveness, conflict, and privilege - were not found to be of major importance, although neighbourhood schools were valued highly. In this study as well, these types of views - as well as opposition to French immersion itself - were present among the English program parents to a degree that has probably discouraged a large percentage from enrolling their children in EFI. And although the English program group, in common with the FI group, shows a strong interest in additional enrichment and challenge in education, a significantly larger percentage of English program parents is dissatisfied with their children's program, and a large minority would like to send

their children to private schools. In contrast to the FI parents, there is no association between a desire for additional intellectual enrichment and challenge and a higher average SES than for the English group as a whole. Moreover, even though a large majority of the parents would prefer their children to learn French at a later date if they need to or want to, very few English parents regard Late FI in grade six as a way of overcoming their dissatisfaction with the regular English program. It is notable that anti-elitist views were expressed by more than a third of the English program parents (those who said they had not wanted to involve themselves in EFI because "EFI parents believe their children are specially bright and highly motivated"). In addition, a much larger percentage of English program parents than FI parents hold populist opinions on government policy-making. A populist perspective entails opposition to elites, and has also been found to be strongly and positively associated with B.C. alienation and lack of support for federal language policies.

The data presented in Chapter Five showed that there are broad differences in partisanship between the two parent groups. There were more New Democrats and Liberals and fewer Social Crediters, Progressive Conservatives and Reformers among French immersion parents than among English program parents. In other words, taken as a whole, the EFI group was significantly more left-wing than the English program group. Based on the findings of a 1979 election study, supporters of the provincial and federal NDP were assumed to be oriented more towards a collectivist than an individualist outlook on social and economic matters, and therefore more easily able to identify with a publicly-funded, centrally-planned program, especially in view of the somewhat higher proportion of public sector employees among

the EFI group. EFI funding is an example of such a program, in that it represents one of several responses to a federal policy designed to increase the numbers of Canadians fluent in both official languages. The stated objectives of the policy - to improve the relationship and encourage economic and other exchange between francophones and anglophones in the service of national unity - would tend to have stronger appeal to those with who view the state "as a prime mover in social and economic progress", as Clift has argued, and especially in relation to representativeness.[2] It will be recalled as well that supporters of the federal New Democrats and Liberals are much more likely to hold integrative rather than ethnocentric views with respect to Canada's duality, and less likely to feel alienated by federal government language policies. Further evidence that EFI parents are on the whole more disposed towards an interventionist role for government and less alienated than the English program group was found in the two groups' opinions on government policy-making, where a lower incidence of populist opinions was reported for the EFI parents. And as noted above, the 1979 election study found populism to be strongly and positively related to B.C. alienation.

Summarizing evidence on the attitudes and political orientations of the two groups of parents, it is clear that French immersion, even when more than usually accessible (as it is in a dual track school), would not be an acceptable alternative for most of the English program parents. This is also the case for the slightly more than half of this group who would like additional enrichment and challenge in their children's education program.

Up to this point in the discussion, emphasis has been placed on the ways in which collectivist and integrative political

orientations are consistent with the EFI policy and with participation in EFI programs. It was noted above, however, that the initiators of the bilingualism policy recognized also that fluency in French and English would confer individual career and economic advantages. Since that time, bilingual abilities have been rewarded both in the federal public service and, to a lesser extent, in other organizations regulated and funded by the federal government. This development is the outcome of another component of the national policy, an attempt to redress the former over-representation of unilingual anglophones in many of Canada's most important institutions. Unfortunately, unless the effects are mitigated or balanced in some way, the giving of an advantage (even if it is only temporary) to one group is often at the expense of disadvantage to another group. Moreover, as Burns and Olson (and also Clift) have argued, an additional complication arises when an already advantaged section of the community lobbies for and becomes the clientele of a publicly-funded program, as has occurred in the case of EFI. If the program remains a minority program, for various reasons, then there are even stronger grounds for concern. With reference to the Victoria survey, this aspect of EFI funding, policy implementation, and participation is not consistent with one of the principal tenets of social democracy and modern liberalism - that publicly-financed social programs (and the provision of public education surely falls within this category) should be universally available. There appears to be a contradiction here for the majority of parents with liberal views who are making use of the French immersion program, a problem which will now be considered.

In defence of the provision of publicly-funded programs to a minority, it might be argued that this is an inevitable outcome of second language education funding policy, given

the "situational context" (the term used by Burns and Olson) and the institutional complications of federalism. That is, EFI is designed to promote national unity through bilingualism (a policy to which a section of the population strongly objects); and it achieves this objective by making limited funds available for an optional program, through grants to agencies over which the federal government has no jurisdiction. In this respect the EFI program is similar to many other Canadian social programs characterized by overlapping and duplicated agencies, policy inconsistencies and lack of coordination. The similarities of EFI with other social programs are underlined by another, closely related approach to the issue, one that would emphasize the way in which EFI and other federal programs must often maintain a balancing act between competing and often contradictory "dominant ideas". In their description of the normative content of Canadian public policy, Doern and Phidd (1983) describe a number of such ideas and show that frequently there is unavoidable tension between them.[3] The following dominant ideas are associated with the EFI program:

. individual liberty (EFI must be a matter of individual choice, and so may never attain mass or even majority participation);

. redistribution and equality (anglophones need opportunities to become bilingual and therefore eligible for jobs that are designated bilingual);

. equity (such opportunities should be publicly funded or they will be afforded only by the wealthy);

. national identity (from the perspective of the state, this transcends all other identities);

- unity and integration (an overriding concern, especially in times of constitutional crisis such as Canada has experienced during the past 30 years, and which justifies federal intervention at the local and individual level);

- regional diversity and sensitivity (the optional feature of EFI once more, this time guaranteeing choice at the provincial, regional and local levels).

Under these circumstances, it is not difficult to imagine why EFI had to begin as an optional, minority program and seems destined to remain so without significant changes in attitudes, funding and program implementation.

A number of possible reasons for EFI remaining an elite minority program have been confirmed by this study. They are: inadequate implementation by the school board; lack of leadership from the provincial government (which allocates the OLE grants to school boards but has not provided funding leadership of its own to any significant extent); inadequate leadership from the federal government, which has not actively promoted the program as a majority option, and has had to rely heavily on a pressure group, Canadian Parents for French, to publicize the message to parents. It has also been shown that the federal government is limited by its need to balance several contradictory ideas dominant in Canadian public policy-making. In any event, successive federal Commissioners of Official Languages did not plan for majority participation in EFI. In his 1986 annual report, for example, Commissioner D'Iberville Fortier stated:

What is most salutary in this new interest in core French is that it provides us with many alternatives to the Sorcerer's Apprentice solution of endlessly escalating immersion.

> Given the egalitarian absurdity of providing immersion for all (and traumatizing the entire English Canadian education system in the process), we can now turn our minds more calmly to the practical economic task of providing as many children as possible with the sort of second language literacy that will stand them and their country in good stead.[4]

Together, the factors described above are effective in rationing the number of EFI programs and ensuring that few families with lower socio-economic status take part. To compound the situation, the attitudes and political orientations of many parents in the regular program tend to discourage them from becoming involved in French immersion.

## The implications of elite self-selection

An attempt should be made to explain why EFI parents take part in a social program that is both rationed and (in relation to families with low socio-economic status) somewhat exclusive. Given the political orientations of the majority of EFI parents, these features of the program would be expected to discourage them from participating. In Burns and Olson's terms, the focus will now shift to the "social context" of EFI, examining factors that directly influence why the program appeals to individuals as members of social classes.

In an earlier analysis (Chapter I), several models of education systems were examined for their relevance to explanations of the introduction of EFI and the motivations of EFI parents. It was argued, for example, that the existence of elitist attitudes among EFI parents, together with evidence of relatively elite socio-economic status, could lead to the conclusion that EFI had been consciously created on behalf of or at the behest of an elite, as a

minority program serving elite interests. The following evidence of elitist attitudes among EFI parents in Victoria supports such a conclusion: first, it will be recalled that a substantial majority were motivated by career considerations to select the program; second, a significant majority placed their children in the program because they wanted them to be with "other bright, highly motivated students". (It is notable that parents motivated in this way placed even higher on the average SES scale than the EFI group as a whole, which already has an abnormally large proportion of high-SES families). Finally, a much larger percentage of FI parents than English program parents were positioned at the elitist end of the opinion scale on government policy-making. Two statements in the scale produced notable differences between the two groups: "as far as possible, all students in British Columbia should go through the same program of education", and "in the long run, it is better to trust the opinions of ordinary people rather than the opinions of experts and intellectuals". It is notable that collectivist political orientations among the EFI parents could not be used to predict the incidence of elitism, since all these indicators of elitism occurred as often (or more often) among NDP parents as among non-NDP parents. The only negligible difference between the two groups was found among mothers on the issue of wanting their children to be with "other bright, highly motivated students".

The elite interests served by EFI programming were said to be the retention or enhancement of some of the features of "liberal" ("common") public education, for example the potential contribution to individual self-realization and the formation of a democratic community. Fragmentation of liberal public education is seen to be taking place as a result of shrinking budgets, skills training and narrowing

of the curriculum. It was suggested that French immersion might be regarded as a protected fragment of liberal education - an elite minority program that has been allowed to escape the general trend towards "trimming the fat" from the education system.

It was also argued that if French immersion parents were found to have been motivated by a desire for national unity, national integration and communication, or for a general expansion of enrichment opportunities, then the FI program's status as a protected fragment of liberal education could be regarded as serving the majority as well as the minority interest (whether intentionally or not). If this were found to be the case, elite socio-economic status by itself would not necessarily be taken as indicating conscious elitist motivation. The survey evidence relating to this argument was found to be mixed. For most of the FI parents it was important that the program "fosters understanding between English and French cultural groups in Canada"). Support for this reason was substantially weaker than for the enrichment/challenge motivation, and this was also true with respect to the desire for French fluency (which appears to have been assessed by the parents as a form of enrichment in itself). Morever, "fostering understanding" ranked poorly in first, second and third place in comparison with enrichment/challenge and fluency, and also compared with the careers motivation noted above. The EFI parents volunteered very few concerns about expanding enrichment and challenge opportunities outside the FI program, and only a very small number would have opted instead for an enriched and challenging regular English program. In other words, there is not enough evidence to support the view that EFI as a "protected liberal-education fragment" serves the majority rather than the minority interest.

A third analysis in Chapter I discusses the possibility of categorizing EFI as an elite form of "work-experience", since within the terms of reproductive theories of education, career education (or, during restructuring of the economy, "re-skilling" education) is the method by which social differentiation is achieved. It was suggested that if EFI parents were found to be an economic elite (on average, this was the case), who are motivated by instrumental economic reasons for selecting EFI (three-quarters were), then over the longer term EFI could begin to serve majority economic and integrative interests after an initial period as an elite re-skilling program. This could only occur, however, so long as elitist attitudes and other factors did not intervene. There is evidence that a substantial majority of EFI parents are in fact motivated by elitist sentiments, and little to suggest that reform of the minority aspect of EFI enrolment is a burning issue among federal and provincial policy makers and school board trustees. In addition, there are barriers to universal access due to a shortage of EFI-trained, bilingual teachers, limitations to start-up and other funding, opposition from other groups, and inadequate implementation procedures. Finally, the state's economic need for bilingual skills and its national integrative need for bilingual citizens would have to be present on a mass scale in order to mobilize the financial resources and political will to implement majority EFI. It is likely, however, that bilingualism on this scale would be thought of primarily as a normative concern, involving a redistribution of the opportunities for individual self-realization, similar in many ways to the promotion of universal literacy. As a consequence, financial and other resources necessary for majority implementation would probably not be made available, particularly in a society ruled by fiscal restraint and neo-conservative ideology.

Findings from the previous analysis point to one remaining model as being more capable of explaining the evidence than any of the other models of education systems. In the first chapter it was suggested that if elitist attitudes and policies appeared to act as barriers to eventual mass enrolment, then EFI could be said to represent a "minority" elite program within the terms of the "mass/minority" education model. Minority education (in contrast to the regimented regime of basic mass education) was associated with liberal education, the development of the person; emphasis was placed on the importance of duty, self-discipline, responsibility and leadership, individualism, competition and rewards. Intellectual ability was seen as a natural attribute, and minority education stressed the early recognition of the capacity of 'gifted' children and their performance.

If this model provides the best explanation of EFI, then in the terms of Olson and Burns's thesis, the net effect of interaction between the "situational" and "social" contexts (or, in the terms of this study, the interaction between "systemic selection" and "self-selection") is the creation of a "new elite".

> ... Through its access to peers, its enriched curriculum, its parental activism, and its bilingualism, [the new elite] is substantially better equipped - retooled, so to speak - to solidify its own class advantage".[5]

The arguments of Burns and Clift will be recalled, however, in which they identify what can be regarded as the hidden curriculum of EFI, an attempt to meet the retooling needs of the dominant middle class elite in a capitalist economy, as distinct from the explicit curriculum, which serves conscious public purposes. The implication of this analysis is that those who originally persuaded federal decision-

makers to provide French immersion funding, those who have continued to persuade, those who have pressured school boards to start programs, and all parents who enrol their children in FI, are an elite minority. They are the beneficiaries of the capitalist state's need to reproduce traditional economic relations, but in a form which is also instrumental to the changing economic relations between Quebec and English-speaking Canada. From this perspective, the hegemonic state is mediating this class-based objective through the public education system, while nominally retaining its formal democratic commitment to universalization of the program (since expansion appears to be limited by budgetary restraint and parent demand rather than by explicit policy statements).

In spite of the emphasis on a hidden curriculum in this analysis, it retains a fundamental confidence in EFI's potential for change. In practice, however, the state appears to have abandoned the commitment, since the first programs were introduced almost 20 years ago, and according to two successive Commissioners of Official Languages, EFI was not envisaged as a universal program. The evidence from this study tends not to support Olson and Burns's conclusion that a more equitable EFI program could be ensured through "situational planning", involving the evaluation of social processes before sociocultural and educational innovations are introduced. In place of a relatively optimistic view of the state and of the relationship between the state and what amounts to a common, essentially liberal education system, determinist models of the state and education seem more appropriate. Such models would define schools as agents of inevitable social stratification, cultural reproduction, and legitimization of the economic and ideological imperatives underlying the state's political power. (In this respect it is worth emphasizing that one of the demands made by the

logic of corporate capitalism in the 1960s was for a renewal of federal strength.)[6] The models also assume that schools are responsible for inequality, and are unaffected by liberal political considerations (redistribution of wealth, for example). Such models are associated with theories that schools are passive agents in the educational process, serving to reproduce socio-economic status by instilling acceptance of the appropriate ideology. In this connection it could be argued that the integrative ideology of French immersion serves the need of business interests to ensure that Canadian political issues are "viewed through the dominant idea of regional conflict and national integration, and/or French-English relations".

"Thus, redistribution as a dominant political idea has had to take a secondary role in the definition and evolution of economic and social policy."[7]

In this situation, the potential for fundamental change of the type Olson and Burns have argued for, and the opportunities for EFI to become a majority program, are extremely limited.

This analysis may help to explain one of the functions of EFI in the public education system. It could be argued that EFI's integrative ideal serves to divert attention from the redistributive ideal of public education. There is greater potential for diversion when the clientele is an activist elite group, motivated by a desire for educational opportunities which the alternative program appears to offer but which seem to be disappearing from the majority program. The following discussion will examine this possibility.

**The significance of motivations for additional intellectual enrichment and challenge**

As noted above, just over three-quarters of the FI parents said they had enrolled their children in the program because it would help them qualify for a wider choice of careers - about the same number as were motivated by a concern to "foster understanding". Neither motive, however, was as important to the parents as the perception that EFI offers additional intellectual enrichment and challenge. It was this perception that motivated almost all of the FI parents and inspired them to add their own reasons and comments. Further, since almost all the FI parents also chose the program because they wanted their children to become fluent in French, it seems that almost all the FI parents regard the acquisition of French fluency as an enriching and challenging educational experience in itself. This conclusion is supported by two other findings: that only a minority (38.5%) believe the FI program needs to be enriched and made more challenging, and, as noted above, only an extremely small minority would have selected the English program as an alternative if it had been enriched and made more challenging. It was noted as well that additional enrichment/challenge in EFI is associated with higher socio-economic status, since the parents who wanted an enriched EFI program were characterized by an even higher average SES than the already advantaged EFI parent group.

EFI parents demonstrate an overwhelming interest in the enrichment-challenge potential of the EFI program. What does this convey about the parents, the education system, and the EFI program itself? In the discussion above, it was concluded that some of the major features of EFI - minority participation, and the incidence of systemic and self-selective elitism, career instrumentalism, and

integrativeness - were explained by components drawn from two models of education systems. The two components were the "protected liberal-education fragment" of the common liberal education system, and the "minority" aspect of the "mass-minority" system, both of which involve the provision of an additional share of enrichment and challenge for their students, above the amount provided for the majority. It may not be necessary to choose between these two explanations, since the EFI "fragment" can be viewed as a preliminary stage in the development of a fully-fledged "minority" program; such a program would offer immersion centres as separate institutions within the public school system, as well as separate education and training programs for FI teachers at post-secondary institutions.

For EFI to be defined as a protected fragment of liberal common education, there would have to be sufficient evidence of the conditions under which a deliberalizing fragmentation of the education system could occur. Among these, the most significant are decreasing expenditures on education, pressure from politicians, business leaders and parents for a return to "the basics", and a renewed emphasis on skills training to prepare students for the realities of the job market. All of these factors have influenced British Columbia's education system during the past two decades. School board funding, for example, has been subjected to a series of upheavals. In 1972, the government capped school board expenditures and prevented boards from increasing their spending unless they were supported by local taxpayers. Boards would have to conduct special referenda (locally organized and funded) in order to win support. In the early and mid-1980s, the education system passed through a period of extreme instability and conflict, beginning in 1982 with the introduction of the Education (Interim) Finance Act. This measure gave the Minister of Education

control over the size of the budget for each school district, and removed the right of local school boards to levy taxes on non-residential property. The Act was subsequently toughened in line with the government's stated aim of reducing the levels of local and provincial education expenditures to those of a decade earlier, despite the fact that at that time B.C. contributed a smaller percentage of personal income to education than any other province in Canada. As a proportion of the total provincial budget, public school spending is estimated to have fallen from 14.7% in 1977-78 to 11.2% in 1983-84. As a result of these measures, a number of non-basic programs and services were deleted from school board budgets over the next three years, and many teachers were laid off. In late 1983, teachers joined other employees in the public sector to protest Bill 3's provisions for arbitrary dismissal and Bill 11's public sector wage controls.[8]

Under the most recent legislation, Bill 82 in 1991, the province has appointed a Compensation Fairness Commissioner to intervene in collective agreements between school boards and teachers where their negotiated salary increases are considered to be over-generous. Moreover, education block funding, the system which finances B.C.'s public schools and under which the boards' right to levy local school taxes on residential property was eliminated in 1989, is associated with 1991-92 budget increases to some boards of less than the rate of inflation. The government's decision to equalize taxes across the province has resulted in staff layoffs, program cuts and reductions in service in districts with a history of being relatively supportive of local taxation. In Victoria, a budget shortfall of $9 million (and possibly another $2.2 million if the board's contract with the teachers is approved) has made it necessary for the board to cut 51 positions from its special education staff

(a 14% reduction in the department's budget).[9] Other reductions are expected to affect classrooms and inner-city school staff for special needs students, special education supplies, summer school for elementary students, eleven positions in the enrichment program for gifted students (including the co-ordinator and the testing staff), and half the budget for staff training and implementation of new programs. Cultural events for students and multicultural initiatives are expected to be eliminated.[10]

In 1989-90, B.C. still ranked tenth out of all provinces in terms of personal income contribution, eighth in per capita terms, and ninth in terms of education spending as a percentage of G.D.P.[11] There is concern in the education community that implementation of many of the "Year 2000" recommendations made by a Royal Commission on Education in 1988-89 will not be adequately funded. The effect of all these developments has been to make school board planning difficult from year to year and even more problematic over the longer term. The situation has been complicated by Ministerial edicts on such issues as dual-entry kindergarten, implemented across the province against the advice of most educators, then dropped a year later, with chaotic consequences.

In common with other neo-conservative governments elsewhere in Canada, in Britain, and in the U.S., the B.C. government has justified taking control of local education spending and decision-making with the argument that recessionary economic conditions have forced it to adopt fiscal restraint policies and ensure that such policies are applied at the local level as well. Opponents doubt that the financial crisis is serious enough to merit downsizing of the education system, emphasizing instead the ideological basis of the B.C. government's actions, the effects of which have been felt

throughout the public sector. In the words of Philip Resnick:

> Neo-conservatism ... encompasses a number of elements. It invokes individualism against collectivism, and repudiates the principle of equality (both of opportunity and condition). It rejects the redistributionist ethic of the welfare state and the interventionist role of government ...[12]

For the public education system, this ideological position has profound implications. Whereas traditionally there has been an expectation that education "would provide people with the skills to make sense of their lives and contribute to the growth of their community and of society as a whole",[13] in the neo-conservative climate the liberating potential of education is under seige. In its place has emerged a narrowing of educational opportunities, a neglect of children with particular needs, a system of streaming students into academic and non-academic career paths, a concern for training rather than education, and an emphasis not on cognitive development but on knowledge and behaviour appropriate to the workplace.[14]

These developments have been paralleled by the introduction of public funding for private schools in British Columbia (in 1977) and by gradual increases in funding levels to these schools. Between 1986 and 1991, government funding to private schools rose by 120%, whereas public school funding increased by 83%. In 1991-92, the provincial government will grant $92 million to private schools, an increase of 12% over the previous year, compared with a 7% increase for public schools. About 35,000 or 7.0% of the province's students attend private schools, a percentage that has not risen dramatically during the period of increased funding.[15]

There are signs that the new priorities for education will be taken up at the national level. A 1991 survey by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business showed that 58% of employers were unsatisfied with the way high schools prepare students for the labour market. According to a recent report, the chairman of one of Canada's largest banks has called for national high school examinations. In addition, "a prime ministerial task force has cited inadequate education and training as one of the greatest threats to Canada's productivity, and the Conference Board of Canada has held a two-day conference to talk about improving the school system". (In the U.S., President Bush has appealed to business to help finance a network of new schools that will meet national standards in core subjects and operate outside the public school system.)[16]

If neo-conservative ideas succeed in redefining the nature and purpose of publicly-funded education, there is a strong possibility that a divided, or fragmented, system will be created in which challenging and enriching opportunities will not be offered to the majority of students. There is evidence that this has already taken place in British Columbia. At the elementary level, in particular, there are few "frills", and Victoria schools are likely to be even more limited by budget restrictions in the future than they have been in the past. It is no wonder that almost all early French immersion parents are strongly motivated towards the program because of a desire for additional intellectual enrichment and challenge for their children, since the learning of another language offers the students something more than just the regular curriculum. And because the program has been a national priority and has consistently received supplementary funding from the federal government, EFI has been able to survive relatively unscathed through the whirlwind of provincial economic

restructuring. Finally it should not be forgotten that EFI parents form an elite constituency across Canada, whose leaders have developed a close relationship with senior federal public servants in Ottawa.

During the period of restructuring, a number of parents have opted for private schools, in which normally the curriculum is enriched with additional programming. Although private schools are expensive, almost 14% of the EFI parents in this study report annual family incomes of $90,000 or more and could probably afford the expense. Very few (3.6%) use private schools, however, and only 37% indicate they would like to use them, despite the substantial majority who placed their children in EFI because they wanted a comparably "bright and highly motivated" peer group. Perhaps the unattractiveness of private schools for the majority of EFI parents is connected with their majority allegiance to the New Democratic Party, which traditionally has been unsympathetic to private schooling. This seems to be the case, since 83% of the families with NDP mothers and 82% of the families with NDP fathers have neither enrolled their children in private schools nor do they wish to. (The NDP parents are no less interested in additional intellectual enrichment and challenge for the EFI program than the non-NDP parents; on the contrary, they are **more** interested.)[17] Although the satisfaction with EFI expressed by most of the parents may be an important factor in their choice of EFI over private schooling, collectivist ideology may also be decisive.

**The contradictions of the early French immersion program**

It is difficult to argue that parents should place a higher priority on the interests of the community as a whole than on their individual interests in relation to the needs of their children. On the other hand, it is important to be aware of the social implications of private decisions. In their concern to select the most advantageous education program for their children, a minority of parents in British Columbia may be contributing unintentionally to the downgrading of the educational experiences of the majority of children in the public school system. The evidence from this study, indicating that EFI is a minority, relatively elite program in Victoria and is likely to remain that way for the foreseeable future, raises a number of concerns. The first is that EFI has been used as an enrichment program and has therefore reduced the pressure on the school board and the provincial government for an enriched regular English program, including more and better core French teaching. The second concern is that the program has served as a haven from the effects of provincial government decisions on education funding during the past 15 years, with the result that the potential for pressure on board and province from a relatively elite group has been weakened. Third, the program may continue to play this role if the future holds yet more fundamental changes to the public education system, as economic restructuring, selective fiscal restraint and neo-conservative ideology take firmer hold. It may be easier to implement training programs designed by business interests for the majority of students if there are places in other programs for an activist minority who expect their children to be educated as well as trained.

In this pessimistic view of the future, a "mass-minority" public education system could be legitimized by different ideals, creating further divisions: for the minority EFI component, personal development, self-realization and national unity and integration would be emphasized; for the majority component, international competitiveness and employability would be the point of reference.

The EFI program is surrounded by such contradictions. For the parents, it is associated with collectivist, integrative ideals, and at the same time appears to satisfy individualist concerns for exclusivity, elitism, and advantage in terms of career paths and educational enrichment. This is problematic both for parents and school boards, particularly for boards with NDP majorities, as in Victoria. The minority availability of EFI is often justified by arguments about consumer or public choice, since immersion is "not everyone's cup of tea".[18] At the same time EFI's proponents expect the program to have a broadly unifying effect across the entire nation. Further contradictions are noted in the alignment of neo-conservative ideas and public choice perspectives, the latter stressing the maximizing behaviour of individuals in pursuit of their private interests; from such a perspective, the public interest, which in the case of EFI would be universal or majority provision of the program, would be served only incidentally. With reference to these contradictions, an argument could be made that EFI is actually an instrument for the integration of Canada's elites, and that an important national unity policy has been consigned to the vagaries and inequities of consumer choice and program rationing. Yet if national unity depends on a majority of Canadians feeling positive about integration, it is reasonable to expect a majority of parents to be offered EFI, a program designed to encourage positive attitudes.

This study has shown that the current limitations of public education have a significant impact on English program parents who cannot afford the expense of private schools or do not wish to use them, and who for various reasons do not regard EFI as an option for their children. A majority of English program parents would like additional intellectual enrichment and challenge in the regular program, but such expectations are unlikely to be met in the present political climate.

There is little evidence in the study of Victoria that conflict between the two parent groups has been a crucial factor in school board decision-making. There is greater potential for conflict in the future, however, as the financial resources for new programs in the public education system - including enrichment programs - become more scarce, while federal funding for new French immersion programs continues to be made available. Trustees, parents and parent organizations will have to ensure that the quality of other French programs in the elementary public schools is a matter of priority, particularly if little else can be provided in the form of universal enrichment for this level of the school system. More dual track schools need to be established in areas where there are none at present, and the school board should reconsider transportation for EFI students. Inability or unwillingness to take part in early French immersion should not be a barrier to involvement in national unification through French second language education programs. It is equally important to recognize that for most English-program parents, EFI would not answer the need for additional intellectual challenge and enrichment in the elementary school system.

## Notes to Chapter VI

1. Greater Victoria School District, Curriculum and Instructional Services Department, Long Range Planning for French Immersion, (Victoria: February 1, 1989), 2.

2. Dominique Clift, "Towards the larger community", Language and Society, "The Immersion Phenomenon", special issue, 12 (Winter, 1984), (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1984), 66.

3. G. Bruce Doern and Richard W. Phidd, Canadian Public Policy: Ideas, Structure, Process, (Toronto: Methuen, 1983), 54-7.

4. Commissioner of Official Languages, D'Iberville Fortier, Annual Report, 1986 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1987), 172.

5. Paul Olson and George Burns, "Politics, Class, and Happenstance: French Immersion in a Canadian Context", Interchange, 14,1, 1983, 9. (The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.)

6. Reg Whitaker, "Images of the state in Canada", in The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power, ed. Leo Panich (Toronto: U.T.P., 1977), 61. Although this statement is made with reference to the rationalization of welfare plans on a national basis as being beneficial to corporate capital, it could also be applied to French second language education as part of the national unity policy. Both welfarism and FSL education could be regarded as legitimizing policies that benefit the increasing mobility of capital.

7. G. Bruce Doern and Richard W. Phidd, Canadian Public Policy: Ideas, Structure, Process, (Toronto: Methuen, 1983), 61.

8. Warren Magnusson and Monika Langer, "The 'New Reality' in Education", in The New Reality: The Politics of Restraint in British Columbia, ed. Warren Magnusson et al (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1984), 242-58.

9. Victoria Times-Colonist (Jody Paterson), "Cutting of 49 non-teaching positions fulfillment of promise of 'attack us'", April 30, 1991, B12.

10. Victoria Times-Colonist (Jody Paterson), "Special classes to bear brunt of school cuts", April 16, 1991, B1.

11. "1989 Education Spending as a Percentage of ..." (table), B.C. Today, Public Education Edition, 1 (1), June, 1991.

12. Philip Resnick, "The Ideology of Neo-Conservatism", in The New Reality: The Politics of Restraint in British Columbia, ed. Warren Magnusson et al (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1984), 138.

13. Gordon A. Bailey, "Politicizing Education", in After Bennett: A new politics for British Columbia, ed. Warren Magnusson et al (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1986), 299.

14. Ibid., 297-305.

15. Victoria Times-Colonist (Jody Paterson), "Higher funds to private schools makes 'public schools for elite'", May 23, 1991, A6.

16. Victoria Times-Colonist (Carol Goar), "Bush vision on education worth our attention", May 8, 1991, A5.

17. 41.2% of the NDP parents and 34.7% of the non-NDP parents would like the EFI program to offer additional intellectual enrichment and challenge.

18. Commissioner of Official Languages, M. F. Yalden, Annual Report, 1981 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1982), 49.

# Bibliography

## Books

Bibby, Reginald W. Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada. Toronto: Irwin, 1987.

Blake, Donald E. Two political worlds: parties and voting in British Columbia. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1985.

Bowles, S. and H. Gintis. Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and Contradictions of Economic Life. New York: Basic Books, 1976.

Canovan, Margaret. Populism. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981.

Doern, Bruce G. and Richard W. Phidd. Canadian Public Policy: Ideas, Structure, Process. Toronto: Methuen, 1983.

Glenn, Charles Leslie Jr. The Myth of the Common School. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.

Illich, Ivan. Deschooling Society. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1988. First published by Harper & Row, New York and Toronto, 1970.

Magnusson, Warren and Monika Langer. The New Reality: The Politics of Restraint in British Columbia. Ed. Warren Magnusson, William J. Carroll, Charles Doyle, Monika Langer, R. B. J. Walker. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1984.

Norusis, Marija J. The SPSS Guide to Data Analysis for SPSS/PC+. Chicago: SPSS Inc., 1988.

Sarup, Madan. Education, State and Crisis, A Marxist Perspective. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982.

Smiley, Donald V. Federalism in the Eighties. 3rd ed. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1980.

## Articles

Bienvenue, Rita M. "Ethnolinguistic Attitudes and French Immersion Enrollments". Canadian Ethnic Studies. XVI (2), 1984.

Bienvenue, Rita M. "French Immersion Programs: A Comparison of Immersion and Non-Immersion Parents." Canadian Modern Language Review. 42,4 (March), 1986: 806-13.

Burns, George E. "Charges of Elitism in Immersion Education: The Case for Improving Program Implementation". Contact. 2,2 (May) 1983: 2-8.

Burns, George E. "French Immersion Implementation in Ontario: Some Theoretical, Policy, and Applied Issues." Canadian Modern Language Review. 42,3 (January) 1986: 572-91.

Burns, George E. "Planning, Doing, and Coping with FSL Change." Canadian Modern Language Review. 44,1 (October) 1987: 47-66.

Carey, Stephen. "Reflections on a Decade of French Immersion." Canadian Modern Language Review. 41,2 (November), 1984: 246-260.

Clift, Dominique. "Towards the larger community." Language and Society. "The Immersion Phenomenon", special issue. 12 (Winter) 1984: 65-8. (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1984).

Edwards, Viviane. "The quest for linguistic equality in New Brunswick." Language and Society. No.12 (Winter) 1984: 39- 43.

Eisler, Dale. "Western Alienation and Western Report." (Table). Language and Society. Summer, 1989: R-44.

Giroux, H.A. "Theories of Reproduction and Resistance in the New Sociology of Education: A Critical Analysis." Harvard Educational Review. 53, no.3 (August) 1983: 257-293.

Guttman, Mary A. J. "There's More to French Immersion than Social Class." Interchange. 14A,1, 1983: 17-22. Published by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Hebert, Raymond M. "Francophone Communities in the West: Setbacks and Victories." Language and Society. Special report. (Summer) 1989: R41-3.

Jones, James P. "Past, Present, and Future Needs in Immersion." Canadian Modern Language Review. 41,2 (November) 1984: 260-268.

Lapper, Robert. Populism in British Columbia Politics. Working Papers on B.C. Government and Politics, Political Science: B.C. Project. University of Victoria, 1983.

MacEachern, William. "Parental Decisions for French Immersion: A Look at Some Influencing Factors." Canadian Modern Language Review. 36,2 (January) 1980: 238-246.

McFeely, Tom. "Facts that argue for APEC." British Columbia Report. March 5, 1990.

Moher, Frank. "Signpost: Ici la farce Canadienne." West magazine. (November) 1989.

O'Brien, Laird. "Path to understanding: Two languages unite in a new generation." The Review. (Journal of the Imperial Oil company.) No.1, 1985.

Olson, C. Paul and George E. Burns. "Immersed for Change: Politics and Planning in French Immersion." Orbit 60,12,5 (December) 1981: 7-14.

Olson, C. Paul and George E. Burns. "Politics, Class and Happenstance: French Immersion in a Canadian Context." Interchange. 14A,1, 1983: 1-16. Published by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

O'Shea, Thomas and Adam Horvath. "An Approach to Decision-Making for Communities Considering Implementing French Immersion." Contact. 2,4 (December) 1983: 12-15.

Pelletier, Gerard. "Reactions and comments [to a Canadian Facts poll commissioned by the Office of the Official Commissioner of Languages in 1985]: Why Are We Less Divided?." Language and Society. No. 19 (April) 1987: 9.

Pineo, Peter C., John Porter and Hugh A. McRoberts. "The 1971 census and the socioeconomic classification of occupations." Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology. No.14 (February) 1977: 91-102.

Wexler, Philip, Tony Whitson and Emily J. Moskowitz. "Deschooling by Default: The Changing Social Functions of Public Schooling." Interchange. Vol.12, no.2-3, 1981: 133-50.

**Unpublished articles**

Bienvenue, Rita M. "French Immersion: Recruitment Factors". (Unpublished preliminary results.) Institute for Social and Economic Research. University of Manitoba. February, 1983.

Burns, George E. "Charges of Elitism in Immersion Education: The Case for Improving Program Implementation." Unpublished paper presented at the national conference of Canadian Parents for French. October, 1982.

**Chapters of books**

Bailey, Gordon A. "Politicizing Education". Chap. in After Bennett: A new politics for British Columbia. Eds. Warren Magnusson, Charles Doyle, R.B.J. Walker, John DeMarco. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1986.

Connolly, K. J. and J. S. Bruner. "Introduction, Competence: Its Nature and Nurture". The Growth of Competence. ed. Connolly, K. J. and J. S. Bruner. New York: Academic Press, 1974.

Elkins, David J. "British Columbia as a State of Mind." 49-73. Blake, Donald E. Two political worlds: parties and voting in British Columbia. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1985.

Elkins, David J. "The Imperatives of Social Class." 74-91. Blake, Donald E. Two political worlds: parties and voting in British Columbia. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1985.

Magnusson, Warren and Monika Langer. "The 'New Reality' in Education." Chap. in The New Reality: The Politics of Restraint in British Columbia. Ed. Warren Magnusson, William J. Carroll, Charles Doyle, Monika Langer, R. B. J. Walker. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1984.

Resnick, Philip. "The Ideology of Neo-Conservatism." Chap. in The New Reality: The Politics of Restraint in British Columbia. Eds. Warren Magnusson, William J. Carroll, Charles Doyle, Monika Langer, R. B. J. Walker. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1984.

Whitaker, Reg. "Images of the state in Canada." Chap. in The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power. Ed. Leo Panich. Toronto: U.T.P., 1977.

**Miscellaneous studies**

Breton, Albert. Bilingualism: An Economic Approach. Accent Quebec research and publications program. Montreal: C.D. Howe Research Institute, 1978.

Innis, Hugh R. Bilingualism & Biculturalism: An abridged version of the Royal Commission Report. McClelland and Stewart in co-operation with the Secretary of State Department and Information Canada, 1973.

Cummins, James. Research Findings from French Immersion Programs Across Canada: A Parent's Guide. (OISE). Reprinted as a Canadian Parents for French special report. 1983.

Community Council of Greater Victoria. The People of Greater Victoria: A Demographic Atlas. "Part 2: Education, Income and Employment: Statistical Information from the Canada Census, 1981 and 1986." Victoria. Spring, 1990.

Financial Post Information Service. Canadian Market 1990: Complete Demographics for Canadian Urban Markets, vol.64. (Toronto: 1990).

Statistics Canada. "Canada's Children." Alain Cregheur and Mary Sue Devereaux. Canadian Social Trends. No.21 (Summer) 1990: 2-5.

Statistics Canada. A Portrait of Children in Canada. Catalogue 89-520. 1990.

**Primary scources**

British Columbia. Ministry of Education. "French immersion programs." Ministry Policy Circular. Victoria. July, 1987.

British Columbia. Ministry of Education, "Programme cadre de francais." Ministry Policy Circular. Victoria. July, 1987.

British Columbia. Ministry of Education. Modern Languages Service Branch. Manual on federal funding for French programs. Victoria. September, 1987.

Canadian Parents for French. Public Relations. "Workshop Notes." Session I. June, 1978. Ottawa.

Canadian Parents for French. Brief to the (Parliamentary) Committee on Equality Rights. Ottawa. 1985.

Chief Electoral Officer of Canada. Canada General Election Report, 1988. (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1988).

Commissioner of Official Languages. Annual Reports. Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada. 1984-1990.

Elections British Columbia. Electoral History of British Columbia, 1871-1986 (Victoria: 1988).

Greater Victoria School District. "Long Range Planning for French Immersion." Report of the Education Policy Development Committee. Victoria. February 1, 1989.

Hodych, Carolyn (national president, Canadian Parents for French.) Brief presented to the Standing Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Official Languages. Ottawa. June 4th, 1986.

Lott, Joe. Chairman, Saanich School District. Interview, Feb. 16, 1988.

Malatest, R.A. & Associates Ltd. French Immersion Survey: Summary Report. Greater Victoria School District (SD61). Victoria. September, 1988.

Statistics Canada. Census Tracts 1986: Profiles: Victoria: Part 1. Catalogue 95-169. (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1986).

Trites, Ronald L. "Primary French Immersion: Disabilities and Prediction of Success." Review and Evaluation Bulletins. Vol 2, no.5, 1981: 43-44. Ontario Ministry of Education.

**Newspaper articles**

Monday Magazine.. (Gracie MacDonald.) "Fear of French." May 3-9, 1990: 6-9.

Saanich News. "Political posturing threatens French program." March 5-10, 1987. Letter to the Editor from R. W. Gowing, Co-ordinator French Programs (retired), 1974-1984, School District No.63 (Saanich, B.C.).

Victoria Times-Colonist. "Parents at Willows want French immersion curbs." 27 April, 1988: C10.

Victoria Times-Colonist. "French overflow protested." 31 May, 1988: B11.

Victoria Times-Colonist. "Board pops cap on French-immersion registrations." 9 Dec, 1988: B1.

Victoria Times-Colonist. "French immersion plan in despite gripes over space." 28 February, 1989: B14.

Victoria Times-Colonist. (Patrick Murphy.) "Immersion faces disaster." 20 April, 1988: C6.

Victoria Times-Colonist. "French immersion given green light by board." 1 March, 1989: C12.

**Additional publications**

Commissioner of Official Languages. Language and Society. Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada. 1981-1991.

# APPENDIX I

## Additional Notes on the Survey Method

For information on the **setting** of the survey, and the **sampling** procedures employed, please refer to Chapter Two.

### Method of entry

Permission to conduct a parent survey through the schools was first sought from the chairman and trustees of the Greater Victoria School Board. Agreement in principle followed, subject to the researcher adhering to the consultation process suggested to the board in the request letter.

This process involved liaison with a board official (the Assistant Director of Modern Languages and Multicultural Programs, Curriculum and Instruction Resources was assigned the task), and contact with principals and leaders of parent groups.

The researcher circulated information about the survey to school representatives of the Confederation of Parents' Association of Victoria and Canadian Parents for French. After telephone contact and a number of meetings it appeared that parent representatives were neutral or supportive with regard to the survey.

A presentation was made to the board's French immersion advisory committee. This body recommended the survey be allowed to go ahead. The researcher arranged access to schools and enrolment records. School and division enrolment lists had to be used at the school and could not be reproduced.

### Distribution and return of survey forms

Enrolment lists were used to ensure only one sibling from each family in a school took home a survey package.

Each sealed package contained a reply-paid envelope and a blank survey form with a covering letter. Packages were batched by division (class) and hand-delivered to the six schools. Each batch was accompanied by an explanatory note to the division teacher and a list of excluded siblings in the division.

The covering letter to parents requested return of the completed form by mail to a box number at the University of Victoria. Most respondents had returned forms by the end of June.

## Instrumentation

Some survey questions were derived from instruments used in other studies and modified appropriately. Most of the instruments were designed specifically for this study, and were based on interviews with parents, parent leaders, and trustees, and on literature and news articles covering developments in official languages policies, attitudes towards federal bilingual policies and French immersion, and political attitudes in British Columbia.

Three varieties of closed-ended questions were included. One set asked for program-related factual information (plans for late FI, child withdrawn from FI, child selected for Challenge program, children attending local school). One question (child withdrawn from FI) also had an open-ended option (reason why). Reasons for withdrawal were pre-coded for data entry.

Another set of closed-end questions covered parent attributes: childhood language, language spoken at home, years in B.C., former residence, education level, occupational level, self-employment, public/private sector employment, federal government employment, municipality, general location (postal code), income, political party identification, religious affiliation, and gender. Some of these questions (language, former residence, party and religion) also had open-ended options. These were pre-coded for data entry.

The third type of closed-ended questions were attitudinal. These included three questions relating to enriched programming (two about the English program - one for English program parents and one for FI parents - and a third about the FI program, specifically for FI parents). A further question asked parents whether they would like to enrol/had already enrolled a child in a private school.

Other closed-ended attitudinal questions made up the bulk of the survey. All used a five-point Likert scale. Codes from the entire scale were entered, but were then collapsed into three codes for analysis. In one set, parents whose children were all in the English program were given 20 reasons for having selected the English program and asked to state each reason's importance. Similarly, FI parents were given nine reasons.[1]

A final set of Likert scale questions occurred at the end of the form. All parents were asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement on six general statements relating to government policy-making.

In addition to the open-ended options mentioned above, other open-ended questions were included. Two allowed parents to state their own reasons for selecting either program. (One, described above, provided an opportunity for parents who had withdrawn a child from the French immersion program to state why they had done so.) In addition, a blank page at the end of the form was provided for further comments. The three sets of reasons supplied by parents conformed very closely to their comments. Therefore a pre-coding system was developed for use in all four instances.

Because the two groups of parents (French immersion and English-program-only) were asked different sets of questions, the survey form was divided into sections to avoid confusion. Questions in the initial and final sections of the form were common to both groups of parents.

The survey form and covering letter was pre-tested by ten parents (five families). Two families had students in French immersion programs. Their suggestions were incorporated into a final version.

## Measurements

**Education:** Respondent's highest education level is measured according to a scale based on the Canada Census Handbook, 1986. (For the levels, please refer to Tables 5, 6, and 7.)

**Occupational level:** Occupations supplied by parents were precoded for data entry in accordance with Statistics Canada's "Standard Occupational Class Coding Manual, 1980", and with the socio-economic classification system of occupations developed by Pineo, Porter and McRoberts (1977).

Classified occupations were then collapsed into the typology used by Blake (1985),[2] with two modifications: the managerial/ professional group was retained as a distinct category instead of being combined with the semi-professional/technical group (following Pineo et al); and the managerial/professional group was coded into two sub-groups (educators and others). Sub-groups and groups could be combined easily for analysis.

The following occupational typology is used in this study:

| | |
|---|---|
| Managerial/Professional: | Self-employed professionals<br>Employed professionals<br>High-level managers<br>Educators (separately coded) |
| Middle Managerial/Technical: | Semi-professionals<br>Technical occupations<br>Middle managers<br>Supervisors |
| Other white collar: | Skilled and semi-skilled clerical/sales/service |
| Blue collar: | Foremen/forewomen<br>Skilled crafts and trades<br>Semi-skilled crafts and trades<br><br>Unskilled clerical/sales/service<br>Unskilled labourers<br>Farm labourers. |

Separate codes were used for each of the following categories: farmer, student, homemaker, unemployed/disabled/retired.

**Income:** Ten possible total annual family income levels were specified, ranging from "less than $20,000 a year" to "$120,000 and over".

**Language:** The wording of the two language questions was based on Canada Census questions. Responses were coded English, French, Both, Other.

**Former residence (other country or countries):** Countries listed by respondents were coded as one of the following: French-speaking; English-speaking; United Kingdom (coded separately from the other English-speaking countries); country where neither French nor English is spoken; unspecified country.[3]

**Party identification (other):** Respondents identified two parties (Reform and Green) other than those listed.

**Religion (other):** Responses were categorized as follows: Baptist; Fundamentalist, including Pentecostal, Mennonite, Dutch/Christian Reformed, Salvation Army, Mormon, and Jehovah's Witness; Protestant (but not Anglican), including

Lutheran, Presbyterian, Congregational, Protestant and Evangelical Protestant, and Quaker; Other, comprising Buddhist, Moslem, Sikh, Jewish, Unitarian, Plymouth Brethren, Ukrainian Catholic, Baha'i, and Atheist. (Atheists may have selected the "None" option as as alternative.)[4]

## Data analysis

Analysis was undertaken using version 3.1 of the SPSS/PC+ program.

Results are presented in accordance with the approach outlined in the Introduction.

Most results are reported in the form of simple percentages. In some instances, Gamma is used as a measure of correlation for bivariate analysis.

For all questions, No-Answer responses and blank responses are combined in one code.

The English-program-only group consists of 276 respondents.

French immersion respondents are separated into two groups: those whose children are all in the FI program (N=314), and those who have children in both programs (N=68). The both-program group is described separately.

When comparisons are drawn between FI parents and English program parents, the all-immersion FI group is used. This procedure is designed to control (for the French immersion group) the effects of English program enrolment. (The existence of such effects is assumed. It would be interesting to compare the both-program group with the all-immersion group for differences in characteristics and attitudes. Unfortunately, the number of both-program parents in this survey is too small for such a comparison.)

## Size of samples

The researcher planned for an expected low rate of return by distributing as many questionnaire forms as the award budget allowed - a total of 1500. The ideal sample of 1500 would have consisted of equal numbers of families in each school (250), divided again by the two programs (125). In the event, as Table 1 illustrates, all six schools were included, but the sample totals at each school were roughly similar in only two cases - Quadra (315) and Doncaster (300)

- and even these samples were somewhat greater than the 250-family ideal.

Moreover, due to a delay in receiving approval for distribution from the principal of Margaret Jenkins Elementary, instead of 250 families receiving forms at this school, only 103 were surveyed. By the time the principal had agreed to distribute the forms, the researcher (in consultation with her supervisor) had increased coverage at Willows Elementary in order to maintain a full sample. At Willows, therefore, every grade level was covered, and instead of 250 families, 404 were surveyed.

At Sir James Douglas, French Immersion had begun the previous year, and there were only 14 kindergarten and 18 grade one students. There were, however, two grade one divisions (classes) and two kindergarten divisions in the English program. In order to match the French total of 32 as closely as possible, one English kindergarten division and one English grade one division were excluded from the survey. This decision produced an unbalanced pair of samples at Sir James Douglas (44 English, 32 French); however, the researcher concluded that sampling consistency did not justify arbitrarily singling out a number of students within a division to take home letters to their parents. It was decided, therefore, that distribution of survey forms **arbitrarily** to part-divisions would not be used as a method of fine-tuning sample sizes in individual schools.[5]

A printing overrun provided enough packages for all the students in the remaining two divisions. Thus the total sample stands at 1511 instead of 1500, and includes 758 French Immersion and 753 English program parents (Table 36).

## Sampling procedure

A procedure was designed to ensure that as far as possible each family received only one survey form. For each school, an alphabetical student list was used to identify families of students (by last name, address and phone number); then, using English and French division lists, elder siblings were excluded until one - the youngest - remained. This student was asked to take the survey envelope home. Youngest siblings were favoured on the advice of the Victoria chapter of Canadian Parents for French, whose experience with sending letters home via students suggests that young students are more reliable.

The exception to this procedure occurred where families had children enrolled in both programs. In these cases, the

English program students were eliminated from division lists and the French Immersion student, regardless of age, was given the envelope. This procedure ensured that the "mixed" family was included in the French Immersion sample of parents rather than in the English-only sample.

**Special family situations**

The existence of some types of family situations means that a small number of parents may have received more than one form. Duplication of forms may have occurred where two or more siblings live at separate addresses while attending the same school; where children in a blended family have different last names; or where a family has students in more than one of the six schools.

In the case of a blended family where the children have different last names, the sample counts each parent separately and assumes that each of the two parents would complete a separate form; this would be the simplest way for the parents to indicate the different decisions each of them has made in the past with respect to children from different original families. Nevertheless, some of these couples may have completed only one form per family. It was not possible to ensure that only one form was sent to a blended family with children of different last names where there is only one parent.

Special family situations described above might have marginally corrupted the results of the survey by altering the real size of each of the two samples of parents. It seems safe to assume, however, that unless there was a special reason for doing so (as in the case of the blended family), very few parents would have completed and returned more than one form. Analysis of the results has proceeded on the assumption that these factors have exerted only a marginal influence on sample size and results because only a minority of families is affected by them.

The blended family creates problems for the researcher on two further counts. The first problem occurs if all the couple's children have now adopted the same name. The parents will receive only one form, and if they complete it together their answers will not reflect the fact that past decisions about children from the original families were not made by both of the present parents. (If one parent answers on behalf of both, additional omissions and bias are possible.) Decisions likely to be adequately reflected are those that have been made more recently by both parents acting together, in particular with respect to younger children resulting from the new relationship. Returning to the case of the blended family where the children have **different** names, an additional complication arises where the

parents complete their two forms separately. Probably each of these parents would have trouble amalgamating into one response the decisions they made in the past about previous children along with the decisions they have made jointly, and more recently, about the younger children. To anticipate this problem it would have been necessary to ask for different information from each of the two parents, and then to provide two sets of questions, one relating to previous children in the blended family, and the other to the younger children. In the event, higher priorities were given to designing a simple form suited to the majority of respondents and to avoiding questions about marital status and other personal information.

**TABLE 36: Distribution of survey forms**

| School | Parents with at least one child in French Immersion (French sample) | | Parents whose children are all in the English program (English sample) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Margaret Jenkins | **53** | (grades: K,K,1\2) | **50** | (grades: K,K,1) |
| Willows | **204** | (K,K,1,1,2,2,3, 3,4,4\5,5,6,7) | **200** | (K,K,1,1,2,2,3,3\4, 4,5,5\6,6,6\7,7) |
| Quadra | **160** | (K,K,1,2,3,3\4, 5,6,7) | **155** | (K,K,1,1,2,2,3, 3\4,4) |
| Doncaster | **146** | (K,K,1,1\2,2, 3,4,5,6\7) | **144** | (K,K,1,1,2,2,3,3\4) |
| Sir James Douglas | **32** | (K,1) | **44** | (K,1) |
| Campus View | **163** | (K,K,1,2,1\2, 3,4,5,6,7) | **160** | (K,1,1\2,2\3,3,4, 4\5,5\6,6\7) |
| Fr.Imm. sample | **758** | | **753** | English sample |

**Total sample (both programs) = 1511**

## Notes to Appendix I

1. The reasons given in the survey form are intended to be a comprehensive reflection of issues raised by parents and the public in interviews, literature and news articles. They are not numerically balanced between the two groups. Such a balance could have been achieved, but at the expense of comprehensiveness. (Two respondents complained about the disparate numbers of questions.)

2. Donald E. Blake, Two political worlds: parties and voting in British Columbia (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1985), 189-90.

3. Sources for these categories were as follows: Language and Society, No.21 (Winter, 1987), 38 (map of the Commonwealth) (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services.); Language and Society, No.28, Fall, 1989, 13 (countries and areas where French is an official language or where it is in use); and English and French...in almost half the countries of the world (poster), Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, June, 1985.

4. Donald Blake's book, Two political worlds: parties and voting in British Columbia (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1985), suggested the fundamentalist category (page 87). Reginald Bibby, Fragmented Gods: the Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada (Toronto: Irwin, 1987) uses a similar category, but includes Baptists. The "Protestant" category resulted from conversations with Victoria-area ministers.

   The "Other" category comprises a small number of respondents citing other faiths, and does not mean to imply similarity between the faiths. The category is used for accounting, not for analysis.

5. The need to avoid duplicating questionnaire forms among siblings in families created a second situation which could be resolved only by giving letters to a number of students in a division and not to others. (See **Sampling procedure.**) The decision to go ahead in this case was regarded by the researcher as legitimate because there was no potential for divisiveness; sibling students were told that if they did not receive letters for their parents then a brother or sister would be taking one home instead. Thus the students knew that all families were included.

APPENDIX II

**TABLE 37: Distribution of Parents as Respondents, by French Immersion[a] and regular English Program[b]**

| Respondent | French immersion % | English program % |
|---|---|---|
| Mother | 67.8 | 59.8 |
| Father | 8.9 | 10.5 |
| Both parents | 21.3 | 25.7 |
| No answer | 1.9 | 4.0 |
| Totals | 100.0 | 100.0 |

a Families whose children are all in the French immersion program (N=314).
b Families whose children are all in the regular English program (N=276).

Survey of Parents in the Greater Victoria School District

April, 1990

Dear Parent(s):

With the permission of the Greater Victoria School Board and with help from parent groups and individuals like yourself, I am carrying out a survey to find out more about local parents' views on language education policies and related questions.

At times it has seemed that parents in many communities hold different opinions about education and the two official languages, and about whether present federal policies are appropriate for Canada as a whole, for local communities across Canada, and for students in each community.

Clearly it would be valuable for all those involved in the education of children in Greater Victoria to know more about the opinions, needs and expectations of parents served by the school district. Information collected by research in this field could be made available to everyone, including the parents themselves.

This survey has the co-operation of School Board trustees, the Confederation of Parents' Advisory Committees of Victoria, the French Immersion Advisory Committee to the board, Canadian Parents for French, Greater Victoria, and the parents' advisory committees of the schools listed below. (You may wish to know that I have no connection with these organizations or with any other groups interested in education or language issues.)

The survey is part of a graduate research project funded by the Sara Spencer Foundation for Applied Social Sciences, and is not related to surveys undertaken by the Greater Victoria school district or any other organization. The research project is supervised by a faculty committee of the University of Victoria.

Please take the time to answer this questionnaire (without using your name) and return it in the pre-paid addressed envelope enclosed. Although the questionnaire is most useful as a research tool when all the questions are completed, please feel free to return it with some of the questions left blank if you prefer not to answer them. Space for your comments is provided at the end of the questionnaire form.

To ensure strict confidentiality, no-one but myself will have access to the completed forms. The forms will be shredded as soon as all information has been retrieved from them.

(continued on the next page)

During analysis of the results, the anonymous information you supply will be combined with anonymous information from other parents. There will be no possibility of identifying individual students or parents from the survey results.

The results will be used solely for academic research. If, however, you would like a summary, please contact the parent organizations listed above. In addition, some of the general findings of the survey may be published in an academic journal at a later date.

Your help with the research project is greatly appreciated.

Patricia G. Morris

Schools included in the survey:

Campus View
Doncaster
Margaret Jenkins
Quadra
Sir James Douglas
Willows

Survey of Parents in the Greater Victoria School District
Funded by the Sarah Spencer Foundation for Applied Social Sciences,
University of Victoria, April 1990

Background information about school programs:

In the school district's French immersion program, all instruction is in French from kindergarten through grade 2. After grade 2, instruction is partly in French.

In the school district's regular English program, students are taught in English from kindergarten through grade 12.

QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 8 ARE FOR ALL PARENTS:

1. Do you have a child/children in the French immersion program?

☐ YES ☐ NO

2. Do you have a child/children in the regular (English) program?

☐ YES ☐ NO

3. Do you plan to enroll your child/children in the Late French immersion program? (Late French immersion is offered at Oaklands and Sir James Douglas schools, starting at grade 6.)

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

4. Have you ever withdrawn a child/children from a French immersion program?

☐ YES (please specify reason) _____

_____

☐ NO ☐ NO ANSWER

5. If any of your children are in grade 4 or above, have they been selected for the school district's Challenge program?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

(next page ...)

6. Do all of your children attend your local neighbourhood school?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

7. If you have a child/children in the regular (English) program, would you like the program to offer more intellectual challenge and enrichment before grade 4?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

8. Would you like to place any of your children in private school(s)?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

☐ We/I already have a child/children in private school(s).

QUESTIONS 9 THROUGH 12 ARE FOR PARENTS WITH A CHILD (OR CHILDREN) IN THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM. Parents whose children are ALL in the regular (English) program please leave this section blank and go to Question 13.

9. French immersion parents: How important were the following reasons when you chose the French immersion program?

WE/I DECIDED THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM WAS BEST FOR OUR/MY CHILD/CHILDREN ....

(A) Because, as Francophone parent(s), we/I want to pass on our/my language and culture to the next generation

(circle one of the following phrases to indicate how important Reason (A) is to you)

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(Note: If a reason does not apply to you, you can circle No Answer, or you can leave the reason unmarked.)

(B) Because it will help our/my child/children qualify for a wider choice of careers

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(more reasons on the next page)

(C) Because French immersion offered my child/children additional intellectual challenge and enrichment

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(D) Because I/we believe that French immersion fosters greater understanding between English cultural groups and French cultural groups in Canada

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(E) Because we/I want our child/children to be with other bright, highly motivated students

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(F) Because we/I knew/heard of people who were enthusiastic about French immersion

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(G) Because I feel pressured into making sure our/my children are bilingual

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(H) Because the regular English program does not offer enough French

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(I) Because we/I wanted our child/children to become fluent in French

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(next page ...)

(J) There is another reason why we/I placed our/my child/children in the French immersion program (please specify other reason)

_____

_____

Please indicate how important this other reason is by circling one of the following:

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

10. French immersion parents:

Please go back to Question 9 and write a number 1, number 2, and number 3 against the first, second, and third most important reasons (out of A - J) why you chose the French immersion program.

11. French immersion parents:

If the regular English program had offered more intellectual challenge and enrichment for students before grade 4, would you have enrolled your child/children in the English program instead of in French immersion?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

12. French immersion parents:

Would you like the French immersion program to offer more intellectual challenge and enrichment before grade 4?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

(next page ...)

QUESTIONS 13 AND 14 ARE FOR PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE ALL IN THE REGULAR (ENGLISH) PROGRAM. Parents who have a child or children in the French immersion program please leave this section blank and go to Question 15.

13. English program parents: How important were the following reasons when you chose the English program?

WE/I DECIDED THE ENGLISH PROGRAM WAS BEST FOR OUR/MY CHILD/CHILDREN ....

(A) Because I/we did not consider/did not hear about the French immersion program

(please circle one of the following phrases to indicate how important Reason (A) is to you)

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(Note: If a reason does not apply to you, you can circle No Answer, or you can leave the reason unmarked.)

(B) Because my child/children had already completed English kindergarten at a previous school that did not offer French immersion

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(C) Because the English program offers just as much (or more) intellectual challenge and enrichment as the French immersion program

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(D) Because although French immersion offers additional intellectual challenge and enrichment, we/I were/was not sure whether my child/children would benefit from it

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(E) Because we/I did not want to feel pressured into making sure our/my children are bilingual

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(more reasons on the next page)

(F) Because if a child developed a learning problem, French immersion might make it more difficult to locate the problem and help him/her overcome it

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(G) Because French immersion would not help my child/children qualify for a wider choice of careers

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(H) Because French immersion puts too much pressure on the school (e.g. from overcrowding) and devalues the regular English program

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(I) Because we/I would not have been able to help with French immersion homework

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(J) Because Canadian governments spend too much on the French language

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(K) Because the French immersion program was/is an experiment - more time was/is needed to see whether the students benefit from it

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(L) Because we/I were concerned that our child/children's English would suffer

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(M) Because young people can decide to learn French later if they want to, or if they need to learn it for career reasons

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(more reasons on the next page)

(N) Because there is enough French in the regular English program

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(O) Because traffic problems are caused by French immersion students being driven to school from outside the neighbourhood

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(P) Because French immersion parents believe their children are specially bright and highly motivated, and we/I did not want to get involved with this

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(Q) Because a school with a French immersion program as well as a regular English program is no longer a neighbourhood school

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(R) Because British Columbia is an English-speaking province

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(S) Because we/I do not believe that French immersion fosters greater understanding between English cultural groups and French cultural groups in Canada

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(T) Because we/I knew/heard of people who were <u>not</u> enthusiastic about French immersion

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(more reasons on the next page)

(U) There is another reason why we/I placed our/my child/children in the English program

(please specify other reason) _____

_____

Please indicate how important this other reason is by circling one of the following:

| Very Important | Fairly Important | No Answer | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|

14. English program parents:

Please go back to Question 13 and write a number 1, number 2, and number 3 against the first, second, and third most important reasons (out of A - U) why you chose the regular (English) program.

QUESTIONS 15 THROUGH 29 ARE FOR ALL PARENTS

15. What is the language you <u>first learned</u> in childhood and <u>still</u> understand? (please answer for both parents where this applies)

| Mother of student(s) | Father of student(s) |
|---|---|
| ☐ English | ☐ English |
| ☐ French | ☐ French |
| ☐ Other _____ (please specify) | ☐ Other _____ (please specify) |

16. What language do you speak <u>at home</u> now? (please answer for both parents where this applies)

| Mother of student(s) | Father of student(s) |
|---|---|
| ☐ English | ☐ English |
| ☐ French | ☐ French |
| ☐ Other _____ (please specify) | ☐ Other _____ (please specify) |

(next page ...)

17. How many years have you lived in British Columbia?
(please answer for both parents where this applies)

| Mother of student(s) | Father of student(s) | Years in British Columbia |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | 0 - 5 years |
| ☐ | ☐ | 6 - 10 |
| ☐ | ☐ | 11 - 15 |
| ☐ | ☐ | 16 - 20 |
| ☐ | ☐ | 21 and over |

18. Where have you lived before?
(please answer for both parents where this applies)

You may need to mark more than one box for each parent.

| Mother of student(s) | Father of student(s) | Place |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | British Columbia |
| ☐ | ☐ | Yukon/North-West Territories |
| ☐ | ☐ | Alberta/Saskatchewan |
| ☐ | ☐ | Manitoba |
| ☐ | ☐ | Ontario |
| ☐ | ☐ | Quebec |
| ☐ | ☐ | New Brunswick |
| ☐ | ☐ | Nova Scotia/PEI |
| ☐ | ☐ | Newfoundland |
| ☐ | ☐ | Other country or countries (please specify) |
| _____ | _____ | |
| _____ | _____ | |

(next page ...)

19. Please indicate your formal educational background.
(please answer for both parents where this applies)

You may need to mark more than one box for each parent.

| Mother of student(s) | Father of student(s) | Educational background |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | Up to and including Grade 10 |
| ☐ | ☐ | High school graduation certificate (Grade 12 or equivalent) |
| ☐ | ☐ | Trades/college/institute certificate or diploma |
| ☐ | ☐ | University certificate or diploma |
| ☐ | ☐ | Bachelor's degree |
| ☐ | ☐ | Master's degree |
| ☐ | ☐ | Professional university degree (M.D., L.L.B., M.B.A., M.P.A.,etc) |
| ☐ | ☐ | Earned doctorate. |

20. What is your usual occupation? (please answer for both parents where this applies)
(please print occupation(s) in full)

Mother's occupation _____

Father's occupation _____

For example, accounting clerk, door-to-door salesperson, student, civil engineer, homemaker, secondary school teacher, chief electrician, food processing labourer, farmer.

21. In your usual occupation, are you self-employed?
(please answer for both parents where this applies)

| Mother of student(s) | Father of student(s) |
|---|---|
| ☐ YES | ☐ YES |
| ☐ NO | ☐ NO |
| ☐ NO ANSWER | ☐ NO ANSWER |

(next page ...)

22. If you have paid employment, do you work for the public sector or the private sector?
(please answer for both parents where this applies)

| Mother of student(s) | Father of student(s) | Employment sector |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | Private (retail store, farm, doctor's office, etc.) |
| ☐ | ☐ | Public (public school, public library, government office, etc.) |
| ☐ | ☐ | Both sectors |

23. Does either parent work for the federal government?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NO ANSWER

24. Please indicate the municipality where you live

☐ Victoria
☐ Esquimalt
☐ Oak Bay
☐ Saanich
☐ Other (specify)_____
☐ Rural District

Please indicate your postal code (this shows general location only, e.g Fernwood; G.Head)

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ V8N | ☐ V8V |
| ☐ V8P | ☐ V8X |
| ☐ V8R | ☐ V8Z |
| ☐ V8S | ☐ V9A |
| ☐ V8T | ☐ Other |

25. What is your approximate total annual <u>family</u> income (before tax):

☐ less than $20,000 a year
☐ $20,000 to $29,999
☐ $30,000 to $39,999
☐ $40,000 to $49,999
☐ $50,000 to $59,999
☐ $60,000 to $69,999
☐ $70,000 to $79,999
☐ $80,000 to $89,999
☐ $90,000 to $119,999
☐ $120,000 - over
☐ NO ANSWER

(next page ...)

26. Please indicate which political parties, if any, you identify with. (Federal and Provincial): (please answer for both parents where this applies).

MOTHER of student(s) - for Father see below

| Federal Party | Provincial Party |
|---|---|
| ☐ Prog.Conservative | ☐ Social Credit |
| ☐ Liberal | ☐ New Democrat |
| ☐ New Democrat | ☐ Liberal |
| ☐ Reform | ☐ Prog.Conservative |
| ☐ Other _____ | ☐ Other _____ |
| ☐ None ☐ No answer | ☐ None ☐ No answer |

FATHER of student(s)

| Federal Party | Provincial Party |
|---|---|
| ☐ Prog.Conservative | ☐ Social Credit |
| ☐ Liberal | ☐ New Democrat |
| ☐ New Democrat | ☐ Liberal |
| ☐ Reform | ☐ Prog.Conservative |
| ☐ Other _____ | ☐ Other _____ |
| ☐ None ☐ No answer | ☐ None ☐ No answer |

27. Which religious denominations, if any, do you identify with? (please answer for both parents where this applies)

| Mother of student(s) | Father of student(s) | Religious denomination |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | United |
| ☐ | ☐ | Anglican |
| ☐ | ☐ | Roman Catholic |
| ☐ ____ | ☐ ____ | Other (please specify) |
| ☐ | ☐ | None |
| ☐ | ☐ | No answer |

28. Please indicate which parent is answering this questionnaire form.

☐ Mother ☐ Father ☐ Both parents ☐ No answer

29. On this page are some statements related to government policy-making.

Please read each statement carefully and circle one opinion beneath it to show how much you agree/ disagree with the statement.

If a statement is worded in such a way that you do not wish to give your opinion, you can circle No Answer, or you can leave the opinions unmarked.

(A) In principle, it is better to know two languages than one. (circle)

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | No Answer | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(B) In the long run, it's better to trust the opinions of ordinary people rather than the opinions of experts and intellectuals.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | No Answer | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(C) The federal government makes policies without consulting the people most affected by them.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | No Answer | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(D) There have been too many unnecessary changes to the school system over the past 20 years.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | No Answer | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(E) Generally, education tax dollars are being spent wisely.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | No Answer | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

(G) As far as possible, all students in B.C. should go through the same program of education.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | No Answer | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION
PLEASE MAIL THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. A STAMP IS NOT REQUIRED.

Additional comments are welcome. Please use the next page.

# VITA

Surname: Morris Given Names: Patricia Georgina

Place of Birth: Herts,England Date of Birth: 3rd Dec., 1946

## Educational Institutions Attended:

| | |
|---|---|
| University of Hull (England) | 1966 to 1969 |
| University of Victoria | 1984 to 1987<br>1988 to 1991 |

## Degrees Awarded:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| B.A. (Honours) | University of Kingston-upon-Hull | 1969 |

## Honours and Awards:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sara Spencer Foundation Research Award in Applied Social Sciences | 1988 to 1991 |

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant the right to lend my thesis to users of the University of Victoria Library, and to make single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the Library of any other university, or similar institution, on its behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or a member of the University designated by me. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis: Bilingualism, Educational Elitism and National Integration Policy: Politics and the Early French Immersion Program in Greater Victoria

Author [redacted]

PATRICIA GEORGINA MORRIS

30 Aug. 1991