

THE CRIC PAPERS

A Changing
People:
**Being Canadian
in a New Century**



Centre for Research and
Information on Canada

A P R I L 2 0 0 3

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Preface

It has become trite to say that Canada is a very different country than it was 30 years ago. Immigration has made the country ever more diverse. But beyond the obvious, much more is happening.

The 2001 Census shows that while population growth has slowed overall, certain key metropolitan centres are growing rapidly. At the same time, other areas grapple with decline and out-migration of educated young people. This poses clear challenges for political decision makers who will have to balance interests within the federation and ensure not only that the growth centres are heard, but also parts of Canada that face population challenges.

The Census confirms the importance of the Aboriginal “baby boom” that is changing the demographic make-up of parts of the West.

It shows that French-language communities outside Quebec grew in terms of total numbers, but declined as a percentage of the population. However, francophone community leaders regard the future with confidence.

The Census shows that an increasing number of Canadians are bilingual. However, it is uncertain whether enough Canadians are acquiring the necessary language skills to succeed in a more pluralistic society and global economy.

Canada is going through a profound transition. The present CRIC Paper examines the shifts, and some of the policy choices they will provoke.

Introduction: How Canada is Changing¹

by Andrew Parkin

Canada's population has more than doubled in the past 50 years, reaching a total of 30 million in 2001. But the rate of growth has slowed. More importantly, growth across the country is not uniform. In fact, the most significant population growth is concentrated in a few urban areas, a factor that is shifting the locus of political influence. This shift will have a major impact on policy decisions, and make it increasingly difficult to reconcile the country's different regional interests. The impacts of these and other factors are explored in this introduction.

UNEVEN GROWTH

Between 1996 and 2001, Canada's population grew by 4.0%, one of the lowest population growth rates in its history. Not only is the overall population growth rate low, it is also uneven. Thus, residents of Calgary or Toronto – two of the metropolitan growth areas – might be surprised to learn that the country's overall rate of population growth is at a nadir almost unmatched since the Great Depression.

In three provinces – Ontario, Alberta and BC – population grew more rapidly than the average. Taken together, these provinces experienced a 6.5% increase in population since the last Census in 1996. Over the same period, population in the other seven provinces combined grew by only 0.5%. In four provinces – Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan – population declined.

Differing population growth rates have a profound impact on the federation. As shown in Figure 2, the relative share of the country's population, represented by Atlantic Canada, Quebec, and Manitoba-Saskatchewan, has declined during the past 50 years. The share represented by Ontario and Alberta-BC has increased. From the perspective of seven of the country's ten provinces, therefore, the population of the federation is becoming less and less evenly distributed. In 1951, there were about three Ontarians for every Atlantic Canadian; today the ratio is five to one. Similarly, in 1951, Quebec's population was 88% as large as that of Ontario; today that figure is 63%. Sixty years ago, more people lived in Saskatchewan than in its neighbour, Alberta. Today, Albertans outnumber Saskatchewanians by more than three to one.

FIGURE 1 CANADA – TOTAL POPULATION

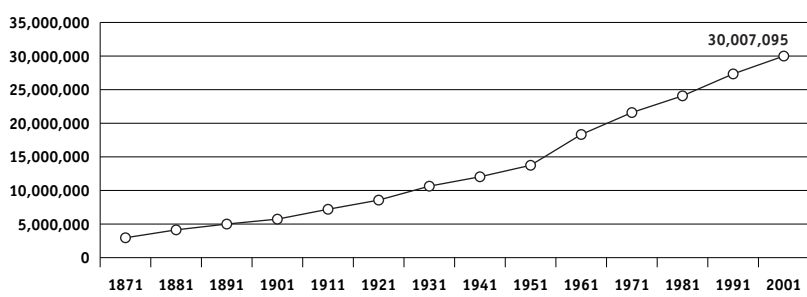
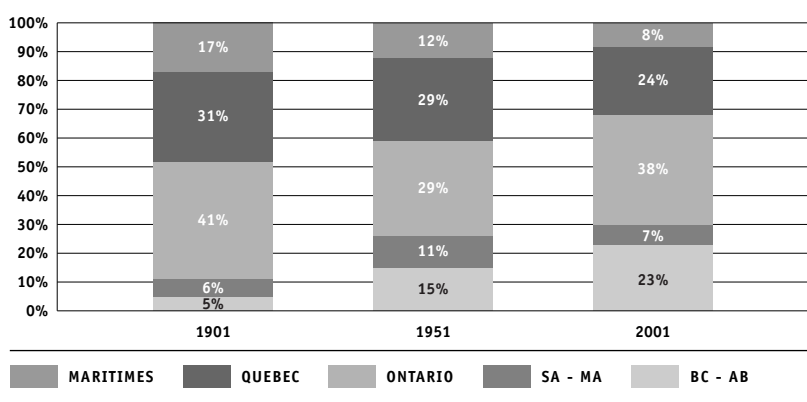


FIGURE 2 CANADA – POPULATION BY REGION



¹ The information presented in this article, unless otherwise noted, is from the 2001 Census of Canada, as reported by Statistics Canada. Reports of Census data are available online at: <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/release/PrevRel.cfm>.

These changes have made Alberta and BC much more important, over time, in terms of their population. However, in recent years, their growth rates have often been matched by Ontario's. As a result, since the early 1980s (and based on projections for the next federal election), Ontario will have gained 11 seats in the House of Commons in response to its growing population, more than either Alberta (which will have gained 7 seats) or BC (which will have gained 8 seats).² This might be a source of frustration to those who thought that significant population growth in the country's two most western provinces might automatically bring with it a shift in the balance of power within the federation.

The bottom line, for those who feel that all provinces except Ontario remain on the outside looking in, is that while that province had 32.1 % of the seats in the House of Commons fifty years ago, after the next election it will have 34.4%. Over the same period, by way of comparison, Atlantic Canada's share of Commons seats has fallen from 12.5% to 10.4%.

In a democracy, power lies with the people. But the Census shows that Canada's people are more and more concentrated in certain provinces than ever before. Thus, power within the federation has become progressively more concentrated as well.

THE EMERGING METROPOLIS

There is an even more striking socio-political reality. Population increase in the growth provinces tends to concentrate in certain big cities. If Ontario, Alberta and BC are growing, it is because of population booms in and around such cities as Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver.

Canada has been urbanizing for many decades (see Figure 3). But in recent years, not every city has benefited from this process. In more than one half of the country's 27 metropolitan areas, population growth has either been below average or negative. The country's major population growth has occurred in only four major urban areas: Greater Montreal; Toronto and its surrounding area; the Edmonton-Calgary "corridor"; and BC's lower mainland. In these

FIGURE 3 CANADA'S POPULATION – URBAN / RURAL

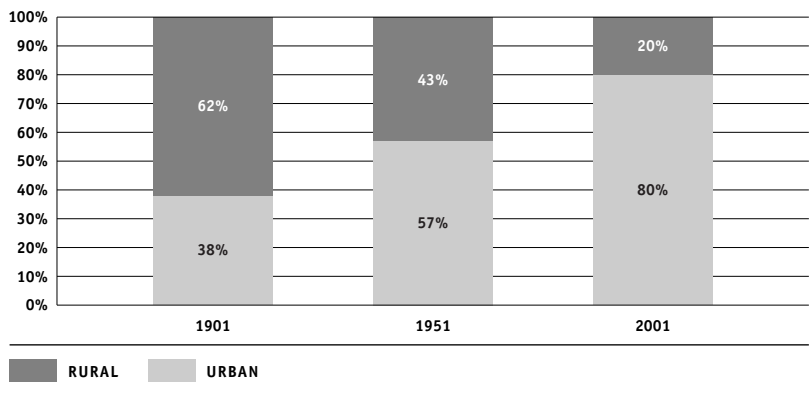
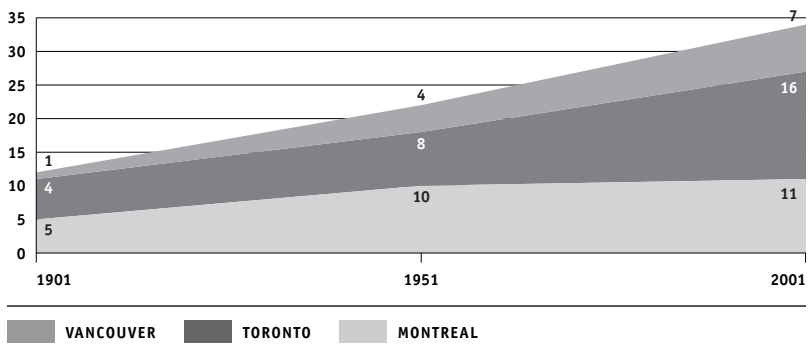


FIGURE 4 POPULATION OF CANADA'S THREE LARGEST CITIES AS A PERCENTAGE OF CANADA'S TOTAL POPULATION



four areas, population grew by 7.6% between 1996 and 2001. In the rest of the country, it grew by only 0.5%. One of three Canadians now lives in one of the country's three largest cities (see Figure 4), and one of two live in one of the four major urban areas just mentioned.

As many people live in the Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal urban areas as in all of the rest of the country combined. The population of the six smallest provinces, taken together, equals only 28.7% of the population of these four metropolises.

² I am grateful to Jack Jedwab for bringing this point to my attention.

As the population continues to concentrate in a few large urban areas, so too will political power. The challenge facing farmers in Saskatchewan, or fishers in Newfoundland, or lumberjacks in rural BC in getting their concerns on the national agenda will become even more acute. The issue is not one of “central Canada” being insensitive to other regions. Rather, it is this: more and more Canadians are living in an emerging “metropolitan Canada” that is far removed from the realities facing those living in “the hinterland.” The job of “brokering” consensus among Canadians around social and economic policy objectives will not be made easier by the increasingly uneven distribution of the population across the country.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The country is changing in other important ways.

The Aboriginal population is growing: the number of those with Aboriginal ancestry grew by almost 20% between 1996 and 2001, and now stands at 1.3 million – or 4.4% of Canada’s total population. The number of those who identify themselves as Aboriginal grew at a comparable pace, reaching 976,305 or 3.8% of the total population.³ Statistics Canada points out that, measured as a percentage of the total population, Canada’s Aboriginal population is bigger than that of Australia and the US, although much smaller than that of New Zealand.

While much of the increase in the Aboriginal population is due to “natural causes,” part is due to a greater willingness by some to declare themselves Aboriginal. Political and judicial developments play a role here. Land claims negotiations and court cases relating to Aboriginal rights can sometimes heighten the sense of pride in, or the significance of, Aboriginal identity. If the Métis population in Canada has risen by 43% in the last five years, and almost doubled during that time in the province of Ontario, it is

surely related in part to the political mobilization that has resulted from ongoing efforts to confirm Métis rights in court.⁴

This development reflects a similar phenomenon that occurred in Quebec. As the nationalist movement gained momentum, a greater proportion of francophone Quebecers came to identify themselves in public opinion surveys as Québécois rather than French-Canadian or Canadian.⁵

The province with the largest Aboriginal population is Ontario. However, the 188,315 Ontarians identifying themselves as Aboriginal represent less than 2% of the province’s total population. In Manitoba and Saskatchewan, by contrast, about 14% of the population is Aboriginal. The proportion of Aboriginal peoples in the three northern territories is even greater. The figures are 23% in the Yukon, 51% in the Northwest Territories, and 85% in Nunavut.

Two further points regarding the Aboriginal population are especially important:

- **Growing urbanization of the population:** In 2001, 49% of those who identified themselves as Aboriginal lived in urban areas. Aboriginal peoples now represent a significant component of the population of many of western Canada’s principal cities. The figures are: 8.4% in Winnipeg; 9.1% in Saskatoon; 8.3% in Regina; and 4.4% in Edmonton.
- **The Aboriginal population is much younger than the non-Aboriginal population:** One in three of those identified as Aboriginal is under 14 years of age, compared to less than one in five among other Canadians. One in four children in Manitoba and Saskatchewan is Aboriginal.

³ The Census counts the number of Aboriginal peoples in two ways: those who list an Aboriginal group in response to the question about their ethnic origin are said to have Aboriginal ancestry. Those who say they identify themselves as North American Indian, Métis or Inuit are said to have Aboriginal identity. The number of those who identify as Aboriginal is smaller than the number who say they have Aboriginal ancestry.

⁴ This point is made by Statistics Canada in their analysis of the Census results. See: Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Demographic Profile*, page 14. Available online at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/analytic/companion/abor/contents.cfm>.

⁵ Maurice Pinard, Trends in Perceived Costs of Independence and Ethnic Self-Identification, 1970-2001, unpublished manuscript, November 2001. See also: Matthew Mendelsohn, “Measuring National Identity and Patterns of Attachment: The Case of Quebec,” unpublished manuscript, available online at <http://qsilver.queensu.ca/~mattmen/papers/index.html>.

The urbanization of the Aboriginal population and its relative youthfulness both demand a public policy response. Educational and employment opportunities must be adequate to meet the needs of Aboriginal youth. Increasingly, many Canadian cities must tailor key services in areas such as education or housing to the needs of their Aboriginal citizens. Equally important, they must ensure that Aboriginal peoples are able to find their rightful place in the wider community. Care must be taken to ensure that Aboriginal peoples do not find themselves living within a city's boundaries while being excluded from full economic, social and political participation.

In this vein, the findings of CRIC's 2002 *Portraits of Canada* survey on relations with Aboriginal peoples are a cause for concern. It found that in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the two provinces with the largest Aboriginal populations (measured as a percentage of provincial population), a majority of respondents said that relations between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal Canadians were bad.

MULTICULTURALISM

When Canada's multicultural policy was adopted in the early 1970s, 73.3% of the country was classified as being of either British or French ancestry. This type of data, specifying the proportion of Canadians that were British, French or "other" in ethnic origin, had by then been part of the country's census reports for 100 years. But 25 years later, in 1996, the demographers at Statistics Canada were forced to give up on the exercise, for two reasons.

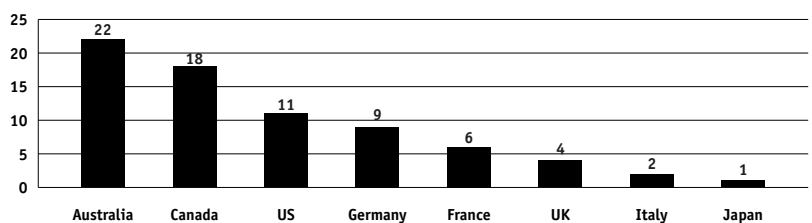
- First, our ethnic heritage had become so complex that it was no longer possible to classify most Canadians as belonging to one or the other of two major groups (British or French). The point is not simply that Canadians come from many different backgrounds (over 200 groups were cited in the 2001 Census). It is that more and more individual Canadians identified themselves as having multiple ancestries (in 2001, 38% did so, up from 29% in 1991).

- Second, for the first time, the 1996 Census gave Canadians the opportunity to select "Canadian" as their ethnicity. The fact that three in ten chose to do so (rising to 39% in 2001) made it futile to try to trace the origins of the majority of Canadians back to one of two groupings of Europeans.

From a practical standpoint, it is now impossible to divide Canadians into a limited number of distinct ethnic groupings – British, French, or "other." This is what multiculturalism means today.

Immigration continues to drive this new reality. More immigrants came to Canada during the 1990s than in any previous decade,⁶ and Statistics Canada points out that the country's yearly intake of immigrants, on a per capita basis, is higher than in two other countries that also welcome large numbers of immigrants, Australia and the US. Today, 18.4% of Canada's population was born outside the country, the highest proportion since before the Great Depression. In 2001, 1.8 million people, or 6.2% of the country's population, were immigrants who arrived in Canada during the last decade.

FIGURE 5 IMMIGRANTS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION



Sources: For Australia, Canada and the US: National censuses as cited by Statistics Canada. For all other countries: OECD.

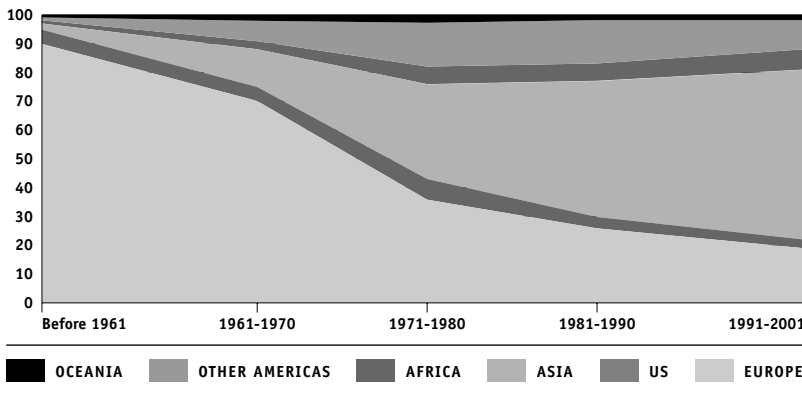
⁶ Note that there have been times when the proportion of new immigrants arriving, measured as a percent of the country's total population, has been higher than it was during the 1990s.

Introduction: How Canada is Changing

In the context of multiculturalism, the important point is the changing face of immigration (see Figure 5). Two-thirds of those who came to Canada in the last ten years were of Asian or African origin. Prior to 1961, only 3.7% of Canada's immigrants were Asian or African born. Conversely, Europeans accounted for over 90% of all immigrants prior to 1961, compared to less than 20% of those arriving in the past decade.

The resulting increased cultural diversity is most obvious in Canada's urban centers, where most immigrants settle. Three out of four immigrants arriving in the 1990s put down roots in one of Canada's three biggest cities. The importance of immigration to the growth of these cities is underscored by the fact that 17% of the current population of both Toronto and Vancouver is made up of immigrants who have arrived since 1991. Indeed, Statistics Canada points out that Toronto has one of highest proportion of immigrants among the world's major cities – much higher than New York or Los Angeles.

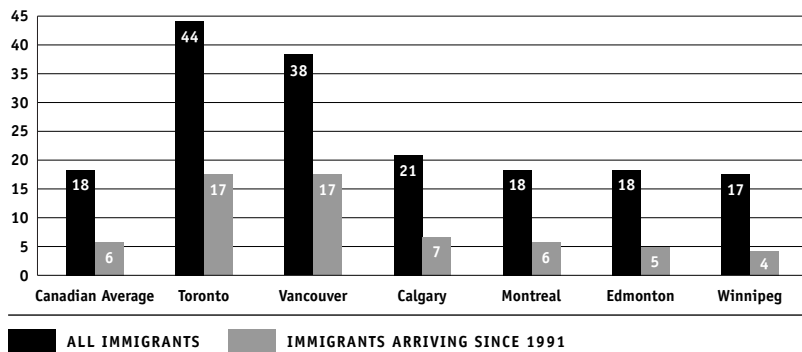
FIGURE 6 PLACE OF BIRTH OF CANADA'S IMMIGRANT POPULATION, BY PERIOD OF IMMIGRATION TO CANADA



Even more striking is the way in which Canadians have embraced this change. In recent years, CRIC surveys have noted the following:

- 92% of Canadians agree “every Canadian has a responsibility to make sure that people from different races and cultures feel welcome in this country.”
- 86% approve of the section in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that calls for it to be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of Canada's multicultural heritage.
- A majority of Canadians say that the country should accept either the same number of immigrants as it does now, or more immigrants, and only a minority say that it should accept fewer.
- 53% say that relations between immigrants and other Canadians are good, while 21% say they are neither good nor bad and 23% think that they are bad.
- Where relations between visible minorities and other Canadians are concerned, 52% say they are good, 23% view them as neither good nor bad while 21% think that they are bad.
- Only 16% say that racism or discrimination against minorities is becoming more of a problem in their community today than it was a few years ago, compared with 25% who say it is becoming less of a problem, and 56% who say that things have stayed about the same.

FIGURE 7 IMMIGRANTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION IN SELECTED CANADIAN CITIES



For its part, Environics reports that 86% of Canadians say that multiculturalism is either very or somewhat important to the Canadian identity.⁷ As two observers of Canadian public opinion recently observed, “The triumph of multiculturalism in Canada lies in the wonder of its becoming more of a unifying symbol of Canadian identity than a force of divisiveness.”⁸

This does not mean that there are not problems. Too many individuals and communities in Canada battle with racism on a daily basis.

At the same time, some commentators are uncomfortable with the way Canada is changing. In Ottawa, a newspaper columnist argued that Canadians are “sleepwalking” through the profound changes caused by the arrival of immigrants whose “rich, strongly-defined cultures and religions” make them more “dissimilar” than the Europeans who arrived in the past. “Somehow,” he cautioned, “Canadians don’t look ahead to the time when the Western European traditions that most of us would call Canadian are merely another little piece of an ethnic patchwork quilt.”⁹ Similarly, a recent report on immigration policy hinted that, despite Canada’s reputation for tolerance, present levels of immigration might increase racial tension and erode social cohesion.¹⁰

The survey findings cited above suggest that the public as a whole remains more comfortable with the way Canada is evolving than do these commentators.¹¹

TABLE 1 POPULATION BY LANGUAGE GROUP IN 1951 AND 2001 AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION

	Canada		Canada outside Quebec		Quebec	
	1951	2001	1951	2001	1951	2001
Anglophones	59	59	78	76	15	8
Francophones	29	23	7	4	82	82
Allophones	12	18	15	20	3	10

LANGUAGE

The immigration trends described above have also produced changes in Canada’s linguistic profile. In 2001, 18.0% of Canadians had as their mother tongue a language other than English in French, up from 16.6% in 1996 and 15.3% in 1991. In the urban areas that attract so many new immigrants, the proportion of allophones is even higher, reaching 39.9% in Toronto and 37.6% in Vancouver. Overall, more than 100 different languages are spoken in Canada.

As the allophone population has grown, the relative size of both the francophone minority outside of Quebec, and the anglophone minority inside that province, has declined (see Table 1). Yet, English and French remain the two dominant languages, used at home by nine out of ten Canadians. Nine out of ten of allophones use either French or English as their principal language at work. The third most common language in Canada, Chinese, is the mother tongue of only 2.9% of the country’s population (though the figure is much higher in cities such as Vancouver (15.2%) and Toronto (7.6%)).¹²

In Quebec, the French-language remains secure: four out of five people in the province speak French as their mother tongue, and the number speaking French at home has increased slightly to 83.1%. A growing number of Quebec allophones are adopting French,

⁷ Source: Environics Focus Canada, 2000. Data obtained from the Canadian Opinion Research Archive at Queen’s University. See www.queensu.ca/cora.

⁸ Darrell Bricker and Edward Greenspon, *Searching for Certainty: Inside the New Canadian Mindset* (Toronto, Doubleday Canada, 2001), p. 295.

⁹ Randall Denley, “Let’s Talk Frankly About Immigration,” *The Ottawa Citizen* (January 24, 2003), p. F4.

¹⁰ Martin Collacot, “Canada’s Immigration Policy: The Need for Major Reform,” *Public Policy Sources* No. 64 (February 2003). Available online at: <http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/admin/books/files/immigration-2ndEdition.pdf>. Collacott presents little evidence to support his assertion that present immigration limits might stretch native Canadians’ goodwill to its breaking point. An analysis of CRIC survey data shows that both native-born Canadians and Canadians living in large cities (where most immigrants settle) are currently as supportive, if not more supportive, of present immigration levels than are other Canadians.

¹¹ See note 9.

¹² Statistics Canada groups together the different dialects within the Chinese family of languages.

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rather than English, as their second language of choice. In 1991, only 15.4% of Quebec allophones spoke French most often at home, compared with 24.1% who spoke English. Ten years later, the proportion speaking French most often at home has risen to 20.4%, while that speaking English fell to 22.1%.

With the exception of New Brunswick, where francophones continue to make up one third of the population, the situation facing francophone communities outside of Quebec raises concerns. While the francophone population outside Quebec grew in absolute numbers between in 1996 and 2001, it declined slightly in relative terms, from 4.5% to 4.4% of country's total population. This decline was not uniform across the country. In fact, Alberta's francophone population grew by 12.6% over the past five years. This compares to more modest growth rates in provinces such as BC (up 3.8%), PEI (3.1%) and Ontario (1.9%), and declines of over 6% in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan, the lack of renewal within the francophone community is illustrated by the astounding fact that one out of every two francophones is over 52 years of age.¹³

Yet the mood within francophone communities outside Quebec remains optimistic. In CRIC's *Portraits of Canada 2001* survey, 70% of francophones outside of Quebec said that the survival of the language and culture of the francophone minority in their province was either very or somewhat assured. By comparison, only 54% of Quebec's anglophones felt this way about their own community.

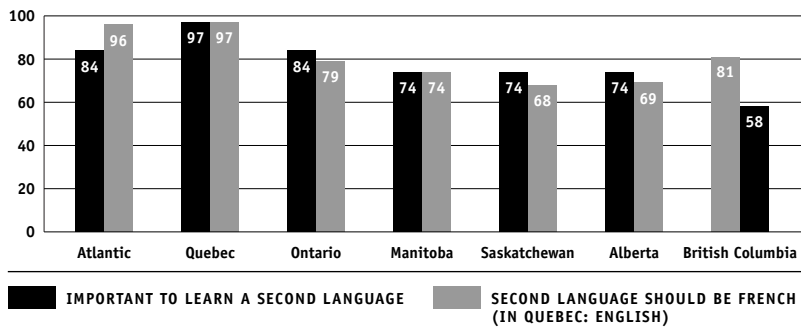
The Census also highlights the growing number of anglophones in Canada who can speak French. Nine percent of Canada's anglophones are bilingual, up from 8.2% in 1991 and 8.8% in 1996. Among anglophones outside Quebec, the rate of English-French bilingualism is 7.1%, up from 6.3% in 1991 and 6.9% in 1996. Rates of English-French bilingualism are also increasing among francophones and allophones.

Among younger Canadians, rates of bilingualism are higher. For instance, 14.7% of anglophones outside Quebec, aged between 15 and 19, can speak French, as can 13.5% of 20 to 24 year olds. However, there are two points of concern. First, the proportion of bilingual anglophones outside Quebec in the 15 to 19 age group is lower than in 1996. Second, a number of these bilingual teenagers lose their second-language skills once they leave secondary school. Evidently, too few anglophones who learn French at school find enough opportunities to practice it later in life. This is illustrated by the fact that only 2.1% of anglophones outside Quebec say they use French regularly at work.

These findings raise concerns, not necessarily from the perspective of national unity, but in terms of national competitiveness. As globalization advances and Canada becomes more diverse within its own borders, language skills are increasingly important as a gateway to opportunity. This is something that Canadians themselves recognize. According to CRIC's *Portraits of Canada 2001* survey, 86% of Canadians (including 82% of anglophones) think that it is important for their children to learn to speak a second language.

FIGURE 8 LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE
ANGLOPHONE RESPONDENTS ONLY IN PROVINCES OUTSIDE QUEBEC
FRANCOPHONE RESPONDENTS ONLY IN QUEBEC

How important to you is that your children learn to speak a second language?
(Charts shows the number saying it is very or somewhat important).
Which second language in particular do you think is important for your children to learn?
(This question was asked to respondents who said it is very or somewhat important that their children learn to speak a second language).



Source: CRIC, *Portraits of Canada 2001*.

¹³ That is to say that the median age for the francophone population in that province is 52.3 years, compared to 37.6 years for the Canadian population as a whole.

Of course, some non-francophone Canadians, interested in acquiring a second language, may opt for a language other than French. Yet, given the overall size of the country's francophone population and the presence across the country of French-language institutions (including media) and an extensive network of French-immersion programs, French will be the natural choice for most. Among anglophones who think it important that their children learn a second language, 75% say that this language should be French, including over 95% of those in the Atlantic region, roughly three-quarters of those in Ontario and Manitoba, two-thirds of those in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and 58% of those in BC.

Those who argue that in the context of growing multiculturalism, bilingualism is less relevant today than it once was should also reflect on the following: allophones are more, not less, supportive of official bilingualism than are anglophones; those who support the principle of multiculturalism tend to be more, not less, supportive of bilingualism. For most Canadians, bilingualism and multiculturalism are values that complement rather than conflict with one another.

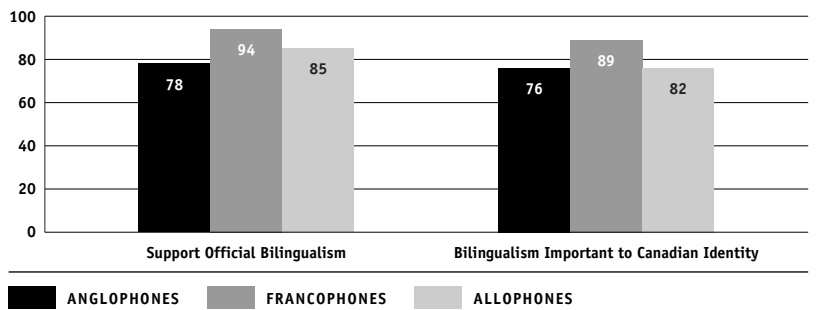
CONFRONTING CHANGE

Canada is changing in ways that have profound consequences on our understanding of the country, politics, and public policy. Comprehending the nature of this evolution is essential to preparing ourselves for the future. The papers that follow seek to broaden our grasp of what is happening by expanding on and exploring the developments highlighted in this introduction.

Andrew Parkin is Co-director of the Centre for Research and Information on Canada.

FIGURE 9 | SUPPORT FOR BILINGUALISM, BY LANGUAGE GROUP

Canada currently has two official languages – English and French. This means that all citizens can get services from the federal government in the official language that they speak. Do you strongly support, moderately support, moderately oppose, or strongly oppose this policy?¹ How important are the following to the Canadian identity: very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important? Bilingualism.²



1. Source: CRIC, *Portraits of Canada 2001*.
 2. Source: Environics Focus Canada, 2000 (data obtained from the Canadian Opinion Research Archive at Queen's University).

Demographic Change: A Prairie Perspective¹⁴

by John R. Allan

Given the dimension and diversity of Canada, it will come as no surprise that the policy implications of demographic change vary significantly from region to region and that, in a policy context, “One size does not fit all.” For example, while the growth in national population decelerated from 5.7% between 1991–96 to 4.0% during the following five years, that of the three prairie provinces accelerated from 3.8% to 5.7%. But this, too, is seriously misleading: during these consecutive five-year periods, population growth in Alberta accelerated from 5.9% to a nation-leading 10.3 %; while Manitoba’s fell from 2.0% to 0.5%; and Saskatchewan’s growth actually turned negative, falling from 0.1 to minus 1.1 %.¹⁵ Thus, when assessing the implications of regional or national demographic data, the watchword must be caution.

David Foot has observed that “demographics explains two-thirds of everything”, and, more recently, “In determining the impact of demographics on economic behaviour, age explains ‘two-thirds of everything’”.¹⁶ Still, it is useful to look at changes in some of the broader demographic aggregates before considering the policy implications arising from our increasingly elderly population. Several developments are worthy of note.

Perhaps most significant was the general deceleration of population growth. With a total increase of only 4.0%, population growth during this most recent census-to-census quinquennium was lower than at any time other than the Depression of the thirties and the severe recessionary period 1981–86. Since the rate of natural increase (births minus deaths) declined by about one-third from the previous quinquennium – a result of the continuing decline in fertility rates, the impact of the “baby bust” generation, and an aging population – such national growth as did occur was primarily attributable to immigration. The effect, however, was very unequally distributed: 93% of the immigrants who arrived during the nineties chose to live in the census

metropolitan areas, almost three-quarters of them in Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal. They have thus contributed to the long-established trend towards increasing urbanisation and the concentration of population.

Internal migration has also exerted a significant impact on patterns of growth. Although the rate at which Canadians relocated was the lowest in two decades – reflecting, among other factors, the decline in mobility associated with an aging population – migration, particularly among younger Canadians, had a major impact on the distribution of population, and on the relative growth rates in regional labour forces. It also contributed to the emerging patterns of regional age differentials. In particular, it contributed to the growing disparity between the median ages of the population residing in rural areas and small towns – from which younger Canadians were moving – and that in the census metropolitan areas. For the latter, median age increased by only 1.8 years during the intercensal quinquennium. In contrast, the increase for the residents of rural areas and small towns, at 3.5 years, was almost twice as great. For the country as a whole, the median age increased during the period 1996–2001 by a record 2.3 years, to an all-time high of 37.6 years.

THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES

In some ways, the region that is the focus of this note – the three Prairie provinces – paralleled the national demographic changes, while in other significant respects it differed appreciably. Perhaps of greater consequence, in a public-policy context, where the profound differences among the Prairie provinces, most particularly between Alberta on the one hand, and Saskatchewan and Manitoba on the other. For example, with median ages of 35.0, 36.7 and 37.8 years respectively, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba were the three “youngest” provinces. But, as the following chart indicates, their age distributions differed from the national distribution in

¹⁴ It should be acknowledged that this note relies heavily on the various Statistics Canada publications of the *2001 Census: Analysis Series*. No attempt has been made to cite every instance of such dependence. The interested reader is referred to the Statistics Canada 2001 Census website <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Analytic/Index.cfm>.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada, *2001 Census Analysis Series — A profile of the Canadian population: where we live*.

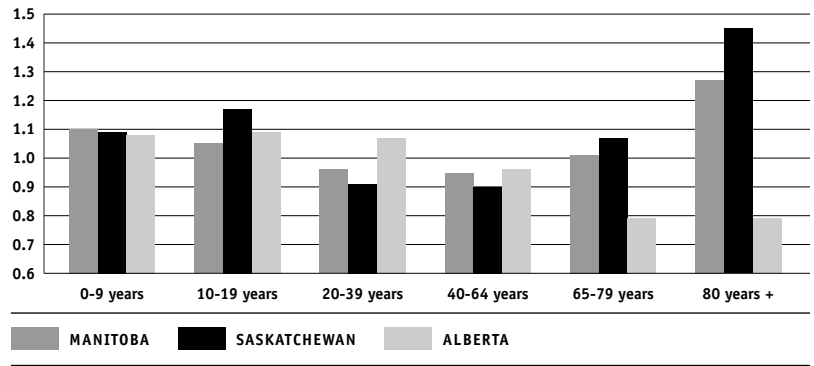
¹⁶ David Foot, *Boom, Bust & Echo: How to Profit from the Coming Demographic Shift* (Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter & Ross, 1996), and David K. Foot, Richard A. Loreto and Thomas W. McCormack, *Demographic Trends in Canada, 1996–2006: Implications for the Public and Private Sectors* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 1998).

more than merely median age. In the chart, the percentage of a province's population in each age class is expressed as a ratio of the corresponding national percentage. Thus, for the 0–9 age class, the proportion of Alberta's population in this age class is 1.08 times the Canadian proportion, while the values for Saskatchewan and Manitoba are 1.09 and 1.10 respectively.

What the chart immediately reveals is that the populations of Saskatchewan and Manitoba differ from the national population in that they are appreciably more heavily concentrated in the youngest age groups, and in the oldest. Such a distribution has profound policy implications. For example, given the strong positive correlation between age and both public and private health-care expenditures, it is quite obvious that providing health-care services in these provinces will be appreciably more expensive per capita than providing comparable services to the national population.¹⁷ Similarly, and other things being equal, educational expenditures will also have to be higher because of the concentration of population in the younger age classes. Social services, too, are likely to be more expensive than for a population distributed in closer conformity to the national pattern. While the continuing influence of the "baby bust" generation should reduce the number of pre-school and school-aged children in these two provinces, there is likely to be little comfort in the usual suggestion that, while it is more costly to provide services to an older population, there may be some compensating savings in reduced expenditures for the young.

The problem is particularly severe for Saskatchewan, which has both the highest provincial percentage of its population under twenty (29%) and the highest provincial percentage aged 65 and over (15%).¹⁸ It also has the lowest percentage of population in the core labour-force-participation years 20–64 (56%). This has profound fiscal implications. Moreover, the province's labour force is Canada's oldest, with the proportion aged 55 and over being 29% higher than

FIGURE 10 **COMPARATIVE AGE DISTRIBUTIONS, PRAIRIE PROVINCES**
THE PERCENTAGE OF EACH PROVINCE'S POPULATION IN EACH AGE CLASS EXPRESSED AS A RATIO OF THE CORRESPONDING NATIONAL PERCENTAGE



for that for the whole country. Clearly, the challenge of financing the health, educational and social expenditures required by this age distribution is, and will continue to be, particularly daunting.

In contrast, the graph for Alberta's population is consistently above 1.00 (representing parity with the percentage of national population in a given age class) until the 40–64 age class is reached, at which point the graph drops below, and remains below, the 1.00 gridline.¹⁹ It is evident from this decidedly younger population profile that the social and health-care expenditures associated with its older citizens are far less difficult for Alberta to manage than are the corresponding expenditures for Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Moreover, with the highest employment rate – defined as the percentage of the population 15 and over that is employed – of any of the provinces (69.3%, vs. 61.5% for Canada, and 63.3% and 63.5% for Manitoba and Saskatchewan respectively) and a decadal labour force growth rate of 19.7 % (vs. 3.2% and 0.8% per cent respectively for Manitoba and Saskatchewan), it is obvious that, quite apart from its natural-resource advantages, Alberta's demographics confer an advantage in fiscal capacity relative to other provinces, including its prairie neighbours.²⁰

¹⁷ The Romanow Commission on Health Care has estimated that annual per capita public expenditure on health care for those sixty-five and over is 3.8 times that for all age groups, while that for those 85 and older is 9.8 times the average for all age groups. See Final Report, *Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada*, p. 22.

¹⁸ Statistics Canada, *Profile of the Canadian Population by Age and Sex: Canada Ages*, p. 22.

¹⁹ Had five-year age classes been utilised, it would be evident that the actual cross-over occurs between the 45–49 and the 50–54 classes.

²⁰ Statistics Canada, *The Changing Profile of Canada's Labour Force*, pp. 44–45.

Demographic Change: A Prairie Perspective

Both immigration and inter-provincial migration have contributed to a widening of the demographic differences between Saskatchewan and Manitoba on the one hand, and Alberta on the other. With respect to immigration, none of the Prairie provinces attracted a share of immigrants in the 1990s commensurate with their shares of the total Canadian population. Nonetheless, Alberta did gain some 130,000 immigrants, four times as many as Manitoba and almost ten times as many as Saskatchewan. Thus, immigration has widened the population gap between Alberta and its neighbours, relatively and absolutely.

Interprovincial migration has had a similar effect, with both Saskatchewan and Manitoba losing population to Alberta. Indeed, more than half of Saskatchewan's out-migrants moved next-door to Alberta. More than 43% were young people aged 15–29, precisely the people that a province with the nation's oldest labour force can least afford to lose. Alberta's quinquennial net gain from interprovincial migration was almost 120,000. This was the largest such gain, both relatively and absolutely, in the country. Moreover, 57% of this net gain comprised people not yet thirty. In contrast, Saskatchewan's net loss of 24,900 represented 2.7% of its population aged five and over, and, in relative terms, was second only to that of Newfoundland and Labrador. With a net loss of 1.8%, Manitoba had the third largest migratory loss among the provinces.

An important implication of this net migration is the benefit reaped by Alberta in the enhanced human capital that the migrants bring as a result of the post-secondary educational investments made by the provinces from which they came. For example, the Calgary–Edmonton corridor was the Canadian region most dependent on university graduates from other provinces, 12% of its graduates having been obtained from such sources in the last five years alone.²¹ Since half of its out-migrants have post-secondary education, this issue has been particularly important for Saskatchewan.²² Such movements do much to recompense Alberta for the benefits it provides through the federal Equalization system. They also provide a sound rationale for federal government participation in the financing of post-secondary education.

INCREASING URBANISATION OF POPULATION

The tendency for population to become increasingly concentrated in metropolitan areas was also evident in Alberta. The Calgary–Edmonton corridor had the largest population increase of Canada's four main urban areas, while the inter-censal increase for the Calgary Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) was an astounding 15.8%. In contrast, the CMAs in the other prairie provinces either grew much more slowly (Saskatoon, 3.1%; Winnipeg, 0.6%) or declined (Regina, -0.4%).

"...the Calgary–Edmonton corridor was the Canadian region most dependent on university graduates from other provinces, 12% of its graduates having been obtained from such sources in the last five years alone. Since half of its out-migrants have post-secondary education, this issue has been particularly important for Saskatchewan. Such movements do much to recompense Alberta for the benefits it provides through the federal Equalization system."

While both of the Saskatchewan CMAs experienced net population losses as a result of internal migration, it is interesting that, in both cases, half or more of the people who were attracted to the cities moved from the smaller towns and rural areas of the province. This continued an established trend that, since the census of 1981, has seen rural municipalities ("RMs") lose more than a quarter of their population, and most of the smaller centres at least 10%.²³ Since a substantial part of these decreases is attributable to a declining rate of natural increase and the loss of younger age groups to the urban centres, the population that remains in the small communities and rural areas is disproportionately older, giving rise to a variety of inter-related policy problems.

²¹ Statistics Canada, *Education in Canada: Raising the Standard*, p. 18.

²² Doug Elliott, *A Demographic Overview of Saskatchewan*, March 12, 2003.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

For example, as their population bases shrink, it becomes increasingly difficult to provide a variety of social services to the RMs and smaller centres. In particular, the maintenance of social infrastructure becomes unsustainably expensive. This then forces the closure or downsizing of schools, hospitals and government offices in the least viable centres, and an increased reliance on moving students, patients and others over greater distances to regional centres. This means increasing monetary and non-monetary costs to those involved. Once initiated, this process becomes extremely difficult to reverse. It will be interesting to see if the recently announced federal initiative to encourage immigrants to settle in Canada's smaller communities has much impact on this costly and painful trend.

THE ABORIGINAL DIMENSION

With a birth rate much higher than that of the non-Aboriginal population, and declining mortality rates as a result of improved access to health care, the proportion of Aboriginals in the population has increased greatly in the last half-century. In the 2001 Census, over 1.3 million people – 4.4% of the national population – reported some Aboriginal ancestry, up from 3.8% only five years earlier. Almost one million identified themselves as North American Indian, Métis, or Inuit, 22.2% higher than the comparable number for 1996. The contrast with the non-Aboriginal population, which grew by only 3.4% over the same period, is striking.

While the largest Aboriginal populations were in Ontario and British Columbia, the highest concentrations as a percentage of population were in the three Prairie provinces: for both Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Aboriginal peoples constituted about 14% of the total population, while in Alberta, the corresponding figure was 5%. In all three provinces, the Aboriginal population was both younger than the national Aboriginal population, and decidedly younger than their non-Aboriginal populations. This stands out in the following table, which presents the relevant data for Canada and the three provinces:

TABLE 2 MEDIAN AGES: ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL POPULATIONS

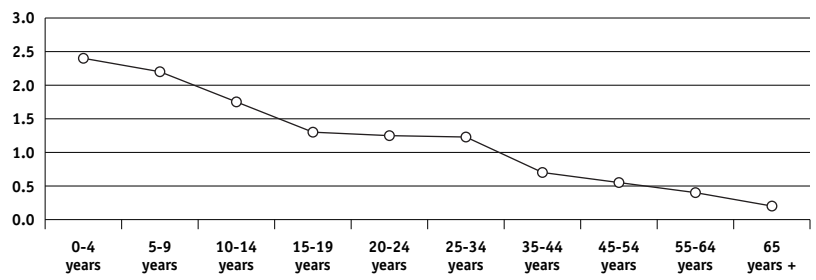
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Difference
Canada	24.7	37.7	13.0
Manitoba	22.8	38.5	15.7
Saskatchewan	20.1	38.8	18.7
Alberta	23.4	35.4	12.0

The table offers a vivid demonstration of why these provinces are the three youngest in the country.

It is useful to examine the data for Saskatchewan more closely. With a difference in the median ages of 18.7 years, it is obvious that the age distributions of the Saskatchewan Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations are profoundly dissimilar and have significantly different policy implications. How different is made clear in Chart 2, where for each age class, the percentage of the Aboriginal population is expressed as a ratio of the percentage of the non-Aboriginal population in the same age class.²⁴

FIGURE 11 RATIO OF ABORIGINAL AGE-CLASS PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION TO THAT OF NON-ABORIGINALS – SASKATCHEWAN

THE CHART SHOWS THE PERCENTAGE OF THE ABORIGINAL POPULATION IN EACH AGE CLASS EXPRESSED AS A RATIO OF THE PERCENTAGE OF THE NON-ABORIGINAL POPULATION IN THE SAME AGE CLASS



It is immediately apparent from the chart that the Aboriginal population is very heavily concentrated in the younger age classes, with almost one-half being under twenty years. It follows that as the older non-Aboriginal population continues to age and leave the labour force, the new entrants necessary to replace the retiring workers increasingly will be

²⁴ In the chart, a value of one indicates parity of the two percentages, while a value greater or less than one means the percentage of the Aboriginal population in the class is greater or less, respectively, than the percentage of the non-Aboriginal population.

Aboriginal. Consequently, it is imperative that all levels of government work to eliminate educational gaps affecting the province's Aboriginal citizens. It is encouraging to note the progress identified by the 2001 Census in the numbers of Aboriginal people obtaining high-school or higher educational certification.²⁵ Such educational advance should contribute to improving economic circumstances and to a reduction in the social and other difficulties spawned by unacceptable levels of poverty. It must be recognised, however, that with a poverty rate for school-aged Aboriginal children in excess of 50%, progress will be extremely difficult without significant improvements in the quality of urban Aboriginal life.²⁶

In common with the population in general, the proportion of Aboriginal people choosing to live in cities has continued to increase over time, reaching 49% in 2001. The percentage for Saskatchewan, at 45%, is not quite as high, but it exceeds by a considerable margin the 36% residing on reserves.²⁷ The balance of the Aboriginal population, 19%, resides in rural non-reserve areas. This pattern of location of Aboriginal peoples and the fact that only 3.5% of federal Aboriginal spending is urban specific has made financing of services to urban Aboriginals a thorny issue in inter-governmental affairs.²⁸ Unfortunately, the recent federal budget, which contained several initiatives to increase the funding available for Aboriginal purposes, provided little evidence of any sense of federal responsibility for what is now the largest group of Aboriginal people, those residing in urban areas.

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear from even this cursory review of the demographic data that the problems associated with population change differ markedly among the three prairie provinces. Saskatchewan must deal with oldest non-Aboriginal population in the country, the oldest labour force, and a burgeoning Aboriginal population.

It must finance the educational costs associated with having the relatively largest provincial population under twenty. Added to these costs is the challenge of a rapidly growing Aboriginal student population that is still subject to a significant, but improving, educational deficit relative to the rest of the population. It must finance the health care and other social costs associated with the largest – again in relative terms – population 65 and older, and, in respect of its rapidly growing Aboriginal population, health care expenditures that are almost double the provincial average.²⁹ And it must confront these problems despite having the smallest provincial proportion of its population in the core labour-force participation years and the second highest rate of outward migration. In large measure, Manitoba's issues parallel those of Saskatchewan, but to a somewhat lesser degree.

Alberta's faces something different. While it too must incur the costs associated with a population heavily concentrated in the younger age classes, it will have a decidedly easier task in meeting the social outlays in respect of the elderly, particularly their health care costs. It does, however, have the challenge of providing the housing and social and economic infrastructure required by the most rapidly growing population. Challenging though this may be, Alberta will find it is helped in confronting these challenges by having the fastest growing and youngest labour force in the country; the highest employment rate of any province; and the largest gain from net migration, many of the migrants having received expensive educations paid for by other provinces. And then, of course, there is the oil. Might this be the one-third of everything not explained by demographics?

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²⁵ Statistics Canada, *Education in Canada: Raising the Standard*, p. 16.

²⁶ National Council on Welfare, *Poverty Profile 1998*.

²⁷ It is informative to note that Aboriginal people account for over 29 % of the population of Prince Albert, 9 % of that of Saskatoon, and 8 % of those of Regina and Winnipeg.

²⁸ See Calvin Hanselmann, "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," available online at www.cwf.ca.

²⁹ See Final Report, *Building on Principles: The Future of Health Care in Canada* (Ottawa: Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, 2002), p. 217.

Canada's Francophone Communities Look to the Future

Shortly after the release of Statistics Canada's most recent census data on the linguistic composition of Canada, the Centre for Research and Information on Canada brought together four community leaders for a conference call roundtable discussion on the state of the country's francophone communities outside Quebec. The participants included:

Marie Bourgeois, Executive Director of the Maison de la Francophonie in Vancouver;

Ali Chaisson, Executive Director of the Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador;

Claudette Tardif, Dean of the University of Alberta's Faculté Saint-Jean; and

Raymond Thériberge, Dean of Education of Saint-Boniface University College.

CRIC: Overall, were you heartened or discouraged by the latest census figures on Canada's francophone minorities – which show, for example, that francophones outside Quebec now account for only 4.4% of the country's population, down from 4.8% in 1991? Is this "bad news" for your community? And is there any good news in the census data?

Marie Bourgeois: I wasn't discouraged, nor was I surprised. British Columbia, and particularly the metropolitan Vancouver area, has seen a considerable rise in its allophone population. But the francophone community has fared well through all that. We seem to be gaining from multiculturalism in the British-Columbian population. The community as a whole is showing a marked interest in the French fact. We have organizations here at the Maison de la Francophonie that offer courses in French as a second language. I dropped into one last week and discovered that allophones make up 42% of their clientele. Many allophones who come from some African countries and Vietnam, for example, often enrol their children in francophone schools. To us, this represents a new clientele.

Claudette Tardif: Like Marie, I was not at all disheartened by the census results. In fact, I find the question a little too pessimistic. According to the census, there were nearly 6.8 million francophones in 2001, up 1.1% over 1996. In absolute terms, the number of francophones is rising, not falling. Here

in Alberta, there are now 62,250 francophones, or 12.6% more than there were in the 1996 census. So for us, the data is very encouraging. And with multiculturalism and our desire to integrate people from other ethnic backgrounds into our communities, we have even more reason to be optimistic.

Raymond Thériberge: I'm of the opinion that Statistics Canada's official language indicators are a very inaccurate measure of the vitality of francophone communities outside Quebec. Here in Manitoba, for example, the data say very little about the stability of the province's francophone institutions in that it doesn't take into account the changes in demographics of the Manitoba population. There are outcomes that apply as much to anglophones as to francophones. Manitoba isn't Alberta or British Columbia. In any event, here there is a tendency for people to move out. So I think we have to be careful when we analyse these figures.

Ali Chaisson: While there are only 2,500 francophones in Newfoundland, that number has stayed quite stable over time. At one point, we made up 0.4% of the population; today, we're at 0.5%. And the reason is really quite simple. More anglophones than francophones are leaving Newfoundland. There are even new families joining the francophone community. It's also important to remember that there are 21,000 bilingual people in Newfoundland. I'm convinced that, statistically speaking, the data is misleading and the picture is far rosier than it appears.

"British Columbia, and particularly the metropolitan Vancouver area, has seen a considerable rise in its allophone population. But the francophone community has fared well through all that. We seem to be gaining from multiculturalism in the British-Columbian population. The community as a whole is showing a marked interest in the French fact. We have organizations here at the Maison de la Francophonie that offer courses in French as a second language. I dropped into one last week and discovered that allophones make up 42 per cent of their clientele."

Canada's Francophone Communities Look to the Future

CRIC: So it's wrong to put too much emphasis on the raw census data, which doesn't adequately reflect the vitality of your community?

Ali Chaisson: Absolutely. It's not only the number of francophones that's important, but also their contribution on the provincial scale. With a very small francophone population, we have still managed to do some very big things here. For example, we're in the process of organizing a celebration of Newfoundland's francophone history, in co-operation with the province. The work we're doing is very well regarded.

Marie Bourgeois: The way francophones are counted in the census is inaccurate. If an individual lists two mother tongues, like my children, for example – with a francophone mother and anglophone father –, then they're counted as 50% francophone and 50% anglophone. There are 3,000 students in British Columbia enrolled in French schools, the majority of them from bilingual families. So these 3,000 students, who go to school in French and will likely have access to post-secondary education in French (which la Fédération des francophones de la Colombie Britannique is setting up with Simon Fraser University in Vancouver), are counted as 1,500 francophones rather than 3,000.

Claudette Tardif: In looking at the figures from the last census, you get the impression that francophone communities are an insignificant part of the overall Canadian picture, and that is far from the case.

CRIC: While the percentage of francophones outside Quebec is down, the same is true of the anglophone minority in Quebec. Does this mean that Canada's "linguistic duality" is nothing more than a myth, that Canada is not really "bilingual" but is divided into a French-speaking Quebec and an English-speaking "rest of Canada"?

Marie Bourgeois: I know that many Canadians do, in fact, believe that Canada is an English country with one French province. But if you take a closer look, you see that's not the case at all. We in British Columbia have a very dynamic French community, and the whole pre-Olympic process is a good example. Vancouver's bid for the 2010 Olympic Games put francophones right in the dress circle by demanding

the recognition of both official languages. Francophone organizations have been invited to play an active role and sit on the executive committee. The "francophonie" is very dynamic in our province right now. So nobody can tell me only Quebec is French.

Raymond Thériège: I think that a distinction needs to be made between bilingualism and linguistic duality. The two are not synonymous. When we speak of linguistic duality, we're talking about duality in terms of our infrastructures. New Brunswick is a perfect example of linguistic duality at work. In terms of provincial services, anglophone and francophone structures are on an even par. To me, that's duality. The whole question of official bilingualism, for its part, is the domain of the federal government. The question is: Is Canada really bilingual? I think that the country is in the process of becoming bilingual, but that the fervour from the Trudeau days has died down.

CRIC: The census data show that only a very small percentage of anglophones outside Quebec speak French, although the number is steadily climbing, up from 6.3% in 1991 to 7.1% in 2001. Is this increase really significant? How important is it to the future of our francophone communities that anglophones become increasingly bilingual? Can greater bilingualism really offset the proportional drop in population of the francophone minorities in provinces like Nova Scotia or Manitoba, for example?

Raymond Thériège: Let's just say that Manitoba's bilingual anglophones occupy an important place in our institutions. In fact, we try as much as possible to integrate them into our community, even when it means dropping terms like "Franco-Manitobans" in favour of "francophones of Manitoba".

Claudette Tardif: Definitely, any increase in the number of bilingual anglophones is important and ensures us allies in the struggle to maintain French-language institutions. We have a large number of non-francophone students enrolled here at the Faculté Saint-Jean. Once they've finished school, they play an important role within the francophone community. They become allies.

Marie Bourgeois: The same is true in British Columbia. The agreement I mentioned with Simon Fraser University to set up a post-secondary program in French is due, in part, to the co-operation of *Canadian Parents for French*, anglophone partners who went through the French school system.

Ali Chaisson: For anglophones, bilingualism raises their chances of finding a job. It expands their horizons and enables them to forge relationships with other people of a different language. That's a fact. I often wonder why we're not more bilingual than we are.

CRIC: It is sometimes said that young anglophones are much more likely to become bilingual and more enthusiastically embrace the reality of the two official languages. Is it the case in your community that the situation is improving with every new generation?

Ali Chaisson: Bilingual anglophones are more likely to enrol their children in French-language or immersion programs. They believe that it's better for their children to speak not only French and English, but a third language as well.

Raymond Th  berge: When you look at the data on bilingualism, they clearly show that the younger age groups are becoming more bilingual. This is largely due to immersion programs.

Claudette Tardif: There's something I'd like to add. While it's true that we're seeing greater progress every 20 years, I don't think it's moving fast enough. Intergovernmental Affairs Minister St  phane Dion's plan is to double the number of bilingual graduates over the next 10 years. I think that's a very important objective. But there's still a lot of work to be done, and I think we need an action plan to raise the level of bilingualism in this country at a much faster pace.

Raymond Th  berge: It's important to note, however, that the dropout rate from immersion programs is high. That should be kept in mind in putting together any action plan. We must also agree on the terms. When we say bilingual, do we mean being able to function in the second language? The question's an important one.

CRIC: The 2001 census also shows significant growth in the so-called "allophone" population in Canada – those whose mother tongue is neither French nor English. Outside Quebec, for example, there are nearly five times more allophones than francophones. In your opinion, is Canada's ethnic and linguistic diversity a threat to the survival of the country's francophone minority communities? Can policies that promote French-English duality co-exist with those that promote multiculturalism?

Ali Chaisson: In my opinion, there are three types of multiculturalism. The first relates to people from countries where neither of our two official languages is spoken. The second relates to people who come from English-speaking countries, and the third, to those who come from francophone countries. I believe that the federal government has an important "sorting" job to do in order to facilitate the integration of new immigrants to Canada. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the multicultural population is growing. The future of our francophone communities depends, at least in part, on this population, which enriches Newfoundland's culture and society.

Raymond Th  berge: Let's not forget that, since 1971, Canada has billed itself as a multicultural country within a bilingual framework. That mustn't change. But when we talk about allophones and the impact immigration has on our communities, we have to be realistic. Eighty-five per cent of Canadian immigrants ultimately settle in three cities – Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. The situation is very different for Manitoba. But what is very important to us here right now is the agreement between our province and the federal government to attract francophone immigration to Manitoba. That is the cornerstone of a new multicultural French community in this part of the country. It's clear to us that the arrival of new francophone immigrants will force us to redefine ourselves as a community in relation to this new cultural reality. And that's a good thing; there's nothing negative in that.

Canada's Francophone Communities Look to the Future

Claudette Tardif: Along the lines of what Raymond said, the French community here in Alberta is becoming increasingly multicultural. In the major cities, Edmonton and Calgary, we're seeing a growing number of French-speaking allophones joining our communities. This is a way for us to increase the number of French-speaking people in the province. We need to find ways to properly integrate them, to develop policies and practices that will help them integrate into our communities.

CRIC: Are you referring to something specific?

Claudette Tardif: I sometimes find that our integration services are not sufficiently developed. We have to work harder with the provinces and federal government to set up a francophone infrastructure in the anglophone provinces to integrate French-speaking immigrants: social services, schools, housing, language training, etc.

CRIC: One of the prevalent myths in the non-francophone population is that francophone communities stem solely from our country's past. But what you're saying is that francophone communities are much more focussed on the future, the international community, building ties with other countries in La Francophonie and globalization. This is all very important to you, isn't it?

Claudette Tardif: Yes. And it's a real challenge. We want to keep our history and our culture, but we know we must open doors to the world if we're to survive as a minority group. I think that that future is increasingly rooted in francophone multiculturalism, in internationalisation. That is where we stand today.

Raymond Th  berge: Our youth is particularly open to the world. If we keep telling them they can never stray from their little community, we'll lose them entirely. The world is very small and we can't isolate ourselves from globalization. We can't isolate ourselves from immigration. Everything has to be put in its proper context. When I left Manitoba in 1974 to study in Ottawa, I was a French Canadian. I was told I was a minority. When I came home in 1981, I was a Franco-Manitoban. Now, I'm a francophone. To what extent do these labels reflect a reality? "Francophone" is far more inclusive a term than "Franco-Manitoban", and I think that what want today is inclusion, not exclusion.

"We want to keep our history and our culture, but we know we must open doors to the world if we're to survive as a minority group. I think that that future is increasingly rooted in francophone multiculturalism, in internationalisation. That is where we stand today."

Marie Bourgeois: We have a community that welcomes many people from other ethnic groups, but I agree that better integration systems are needed. We just had a rather interesting situation occur: February was Black History Month and one weekend, four francophone African associations from Vancouver held a celebration at the Maison de la francophonie. Two or three months ago, I didn't even know these organizations existed. But they got in touch with us and insisted on holding their event here so that they could do it in French. It's ironic, though – and I don't know if it's the same in Alberta, Manitoba and Newfoundland – that Quebec families who move to British Columbia enrol their children in the English school system. We have a hard time making them understand that their children will still learn to speak English in the French system. Attracting Quebec families to the French system is a real challenge.

Ali Chaisson: I think that these are all political issues. If we talk about opening doors to the world, remember that Acadia has been involved in France-Acadia co-operation for 30 years now. We have agreements with Belgium. We do a lot of work in Africa, in countries like Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast. Here in Newfoundland, we're contemplating some major projects with Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. The problem is that governments have never taken our international work very seriously.

CRIC: When you look to the future, are you optimistic or pessimistic? What will it take to foster the growth and prosperity of the francophone communities in your part of the country?

Marie Bourgeois: I think the measures outlined in the Dion plan are essential. The communities already have projects in place. A lot of progress has been made in recent years, but Canada's policy on linguistic duality needs to be brought up to date.

Claudette Tardif: The francophone community obviously must keep building the institutions it needs to flourish – French schools, school boards, universities, health services, media, and much more. To do that, we need the ongoing support of the federal government, which must continue to champion the official languages cause and promote the country's linguistic duality, all while supporting the francophone minority communities.

Raymond Th  berge: I am quite optimistic about the future. If I look at the development of some of our communities over the last 30 years, I can see that the network is much stronger than ever before. The important thing is to strengthen the institutions already in place. I'm talking about school administration, for example, about post-secondary institutions, and so on. We also need to set up more institutions to serve the francophone population. The federal government must also renew its commitment to the official languages.

However, I'm no longer hearing negative comments about bilingualism or the French fact in general. It has become a value that's now part of our Canadian identity. So there wouldn't be any major backlash if the government were to invest more in programs for francophone communities outside Quebec. The smaller the community, the greater its needs. We have a tendency to set uniform policies that ignore the particular circumstances of Manitoba, British Columbia, Newfoundland or Prince Edward Island. Very often, these policies are designed in response to what's going on in Ottawa or in New Brunswick, which has a very large francophone population. So it's important that we look at small communities to see what can be done to help them flourish.

Bilingualism in Canada and the US: Are We Losing Our Comparative Advantage?

by Jack Jedwab and Andrew Parkin³⁰

INTRODUCTION

Canada takes great pride in being a bilingual country. Surveys confirm that the majority of the population values French as a language of Canada and most see bilingualism as a defining element of the Canadian identity. Moreover, bilingualism and multilingualism are considered important assets in terms of personal development and employment opportunities. Speaking to members of Canadian Parents for French, the Honourable Stéphane Dion, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, declared that people who have a second and even a third language have a significant advantage in a world that is increasingly competitive and open to different cultures. He argues that “in today’s world, a global world, where Canadians have to interact more than ever with other countries, other cultures, two language skills are a key condition for our nation’s success.” He adds emphatically that “Canada’s bilingualism is undoubtedly a competitive advantage. The presence of English and French in Canada opens the door to other languages. This is an advantage that we have and that Americans do not.”³¹

Many Canadians believe that, in contrast to the situation here, the United States, with its preference for the so-called “melting pot,” is a bastion of unilingualism. Yet, to some extent, as a result of Latin American immigration to the US, the perception that that country compares unfavourably to Canada when it comes to bilingualism is becoming less and less valid. A comparison of the strength of linguistic minorities and the progress of bilingualism in Canada and the US invite a readjustment of this country’s comfortable assumptions.

FRENCH CANADA, HISPANIC AMERICA

One difference between Canada and the US is that about one in four Canadians have French as their mother tongue. The 2001 Census counted 6.8 million francophones in Canada, representing 22.9% of the population (measured in terms of the language spoken most often at home, rather than in terms of mother tongue, the proportion of francophones is 22.0%). The US, however, is hardly a unilingual society. The 2000 American Census reported that 10.7% of the US population speaks Spanish at home. And while the proportion of francophones in Canada is slowly declining, the proportion of hispanophones in the US is growing (see Table 3). Thus, over time, the difference in the relative size of the two linguistic minorities is narrowing. In three decades the percentage who speak Spanish in their homes in the United States may reach levels similar to those speaking French in their homes in Canada.

The situation in Canada remains unique because francophones form a large majority within Quebec. There, they represent 81.4% of the population (or 82.8% in terms of “language spoken most often at home”). By contrast, in no American state does the proportion of home language Spanish speakers exceed 30%.

TABLE 3 RELATIVE SIZE OF FRENCH AND SPANISH LINGUISTIC MINORITIES IN CANADA AND THE US³²

Canada		
	1991	2001
Percent of population speaking French most often at home	23.3	22.0
US		
	1991	2001
Percent of population speaking Spanish at home	7.5	10.7

Sources: Canada, 2001 Census; US, 2000 Census.

³⁰ This article is based on a more comprehensive study by Jack Jedwab on bilingualism in Canada and abroad.

³¹ Stéphane Dion, «Why immersion and second language education will be important in our action plan,» notes for an address by the Honourable Stéphane Dion, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Speech delivered at the conference «Celebrating the Past, Reflecting on the Present, Cultivating the Future of CPF,» Delta Ottawa Hotel and Suites Ottawa, Ontario October 18, 2002.

³² Unfortunately, the results of the two censuses are not directly comparable, since the Canadian census reports the number who speak a given language *most often* at home, while the US census reports the number who speak a given language at home. Nonetheless, these are the best figures available for the sake of making as good a comparison as possible.

Bilingualism in Canada and the US: Are We Losing Our Comparative Advantage?

At the same time, many more US states than Canadian provinces have a significant linguistic minority population. In Canada – with the exceptions of Quebec and New Brunswick – less than 5% of the population of every province and territory is francophone. In the US, by contrast, hispanophones form more than 10% of the population in a number of important states, including New York, Florida, Texas and California. The proportion who speak Spanish at home in New York City is as large as the number speaking English at home in Montreal. As shown in the table below, the bottom line is that “linguistic duality” is a reality in a greater number of US states than Canadian provinces.

BILINGUALISM IN CANADA AND THE US

Over the past few decades there has been a significant increase in the number of Canadians who speak both official languages. In 2001, 17.7% of the population could speak both, compared with 16.3% ten years earlier. However, the extent of bilingualism varies from region to region. 40.8% of Quebecers and 34.2% of New Brunswickers are bilingual. Elsewhere in Canada, English-French bilingualism ranges between four and twelve percent. Rates of bilingualism among anglophones and francophones are also very different: 43.4% of francophones can speak English, compared with 9.0% of anglophones who can speak French. Outside Quebec, only 7.1% of anglophones are bilingual.

How does this compare with the situation south of the border? According to a Gallup survey conducted between March 26 and 28, 2001, about one in seven Americans said they are able to speak both English and Spanish. This is slightly less than the 17.7% of Canadians who can speak both English and French. But Canada’s advantage in this regard is largely attributable to the presence of a sizeable francophone population, 43.4% of whom can speak English.³³

TABLE 4 SIZE OF FRENCH-, ENGLISH- AND SPANISH-SPEAKING MINORITIES IN CANADA AND THE US

Name of Province or State	Size of linguistic minority (% total population), defined as those with Spanish as home language (US), those who speak French most often at home (Canada except Quebec), or those who speak English most often at home (Quebec)
New Brunswick	30.3
New Mexico	28.7
Texas	27.0
California	25.8
Arizona	19.5
Florida	16.5
Nevada	16.2
New York	13.6
New Jersey	12.3
Illinois	10.9
Quebec	10.5
Colorado	10.5

Sources: Canada, 2001 Census; US, 2000 Census.

The 2001 US Gallup poll reveals that, among non-Hispanics, the percentage who speak Spanish is about 9.5%. This is only slightly lower than the 9.6% of non-francophones in Canada who, according to the Census, can speak French. In other words, the rate of English-French bilingualism among Canada’s non-francophone population is not considerably greater than the rate of English-Spanish bilingualism among the non-Hispanic population in the United States.³⁴

³³ Roughly the same proportion of American hispanophones can speak English, but as noted above, Hispanics comprise a lesser proportion of the US population than francophones do in Canada.

³⁴ The comparison is not exact, because the US data is derived from a public opinion survey, whereas the Canadian data is derived from the more thorough Census. It is possible that survey respondents are more prone to over-estimate their language skills. Once again, however, the argument presented here is based on what remain the best available statistics.

Bilingualism in Canada and the US: Are We Losing Our Comparative Advantage?

TABLE 5 PUBLIC OPINION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

US					
How important is it that Americans learn to speak a second language other than English?	Essential	Important	Not Too Important	Not At All Important	No Opinion
	19%	50%	18%	12%	1%

Sources: Gallup, March 26 to 28, 2001.

Canada					
How important is it that Canadians learn to speak a second language other than English?	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	No Opinion
	36%	39%	15%	10%	1%

Sources: Association of Canadian Studies, 2003.

Anglophone Canadians Outside Quebec					
How important is it that your children learn to speak a second language?	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	No Opinion
	45%	36%	10%	8%	0%
Which second language in particular do you think it is important for your children to learn?*	French	Spanish	Chinese	Japanese	German
	75.1%	5.5%	3.3%	2.1%	1.9%

* Asked of those who said it was very or somewhat important that their children learn to speak a second language.

Sources: CRIC, *Portraits of Canada 2001*

A comparison between Canada and western European countries is even less flattering. Not surprisingly, knowledge of a second language in western Europe is considerably greater than it is in North America. Nearly half of the western European population is able to speak a language other than their mother tongue. In fact, according to a Eurobarometer survey conducted in April and May of 2001, one out of four Western Europeans report an ability to speak three languages. Europe's impressive rate of bilingualism is in large measure a function of the predominance of English and its rapid expansion as a second language across that continent. Nonetheless, the same survey shows that some 11% of the United Kingdom's population are able to speak French – greater than the 9.0% of Canada's mother tongue English population that declares a knowledge of French.³⁵ In the case of France, 32% of the population report an ability to speak the English language, just below the percentage of Quebec's francophone population that is bilingual (36.6%).

While 76% of Canadian anglophones tell pollsters that bilingualism is important to the Canadian identity,³⁶ their inclination to actually practice bilingualism is not much greater than that of their anglo-American or British counterparts. This should give pause to those who see bilingualism as a distinctly Canadian advantage.

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Canadians have for many years said that they consider knowledge of both English and French to be important. For instance, in 1985, 62% of anglophones said it was either very or somewhat important to speak both of Canada's official languages.³⁷ Similarly, in 2001, 62% of anglophones said that it was very or somewhat important that their children learn to speak a second language, and that this second language should be French.³⁸

³⁵ Again, the comparison is not exact because the European data is derived from a public opinion survey. See note 5.

³⁶ Environics Focus Canada / Canadian Opinion Research Archive, Queen's University. The survey question was: "How important are the following to the Canadian Identity: very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important? Bilingualism." The figure cited above includes those who say it is very or somewhat important. The survey was conducted in 2000.

³⁷ Environics Focus Canada / Canadian Opinion Research Archive, Queen's University. The survey question was: As you know, Canada has two official languages. Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important to be able to speak both of Canada's official languages?

³⁸ CRIC, *Portraits of Canada 2001*.

Bilingualism in Canada and the US: Are We Losing Our Comparative Advantage?

Canadians are more inclined to accept the importance of bilingualism than are Americans. For instance, recent surveys show that 75% of Canadians (and 75% of Canadians outside Quebec) say that it is very or somewhat important to learn to speak a second language other than English, compared to 69% of Americans (see Table 5).

But while most Canadians appear to wish their children to learn French, enrollment of children in French language instruction outside of Quebec has not increased in recent years. In fact, according to Statistics Canada, the proportion of Canadian students outside Quebec enrolled in French language courses fell slightly from 51.6% in 1994-95 to 49.6% in 1998-99.

While Canadian students are more likely to study a second language than are American students, there was a considerable increase in enrollment in second language instruction in the US during the 1990s. The big increase came in the numbers learning Spanish. For example, the percentage of American students in grades 9 to 12 enrolled in Spanish courses more than doubled between 1982 and 1994 (from 12.5% to 26.4%).³⁹ Over time, then, the English-Spanish bilingual anglophone population in the US can be expected to increase, and the gap between the willingness of anglophone Canadians and Americans to learn the language of their respective largest linguistic minorities can be expected to narrow.

CONCLUSION

There is a sharp difference between the very positive attitudes towards bilingualism on the part of Canadians, and the extent to which they take opportunities to learn a second language. Those living in Quebec and to a lesser extent New Brunswick constitute important exceptions to this rule and, consequently, rates of bilingualism in those provinces rival that of many European countries. Otherwise, despite the gains that have been made, the extent to which Canadians are acquiring second languages is in danger of falling behind that of their counterparts in the US and the UK.

Thus, while Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dion echoes the views of many Canadians when he speaks of bilingualism as a "Canadian advantage," the fact is that whatever advantage Canadians may have held relative to other western countries is eroding. Outside of Quebec and New Brunswick, bilingualism among anglophones is no more of a reality in Canada than it is in much of the United States or Western Europe.

Some may conclude from this that Canada should give up on the idea of improving its population's degree of bilingualism. This, however, would condemn many Canadians (notably, anglophones outside of Quebec) to fall farther and farther behind their counterparts in the US and Europe in terms of learning languages. The more helpful conclusion is that Canadians outside of Quebec must go beyond the acceptance of bilingualism as a principle and a feature of their collective identity. If they want to equip themselves for the 21st century, greater numbers must make bilingualism a feature of daily life for themselves and their children.

³⁹ United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2001.

Being Canadian

by David Baxter

Canada is proving an exception to Marshall McLuhan's dictum that people march backwards into the future. Partly as a result of policy, but largely the result of benign neglect, Canada is showing the world the possibility of a nation where people are defined by their humanity, not ancestry, nationality or appearance. Canada has not yet achieved this, and perhaps no nation can, but the vitality of Canada's communities shows the validity of the concept of a nation where, to paraphrase Nobelist Naguib Mahfouz's definition of paradise, every person can reasonably aspire to live in security and dignity.

Nowhere better is this shown than in Canada's schools, where the future of Canada – children from twenty, fifty, a hundred different ancestral and language backgrounds – are figuring out how to deal with a diversity of opinion, attitude, appearance and ability that most adults cannot even imagine. In doing so, these kids are building a new, living, tolerant culture that effectively defines Canada now and will do so in the future.

This is not to suggest that all is sweetness and light, either in schools or communities. There are problems and conflicts. But these are overwhelmingly the problems that always come with people, with all of their warts and bumps, living together. They are not problems created by diverse ancestries.

"Partly as a result of policy, but largely the result of benign neglect, Canada is showing the world the possibility of a nation where people are defined by their humanity, not ancestry, nationality or appearance. Canada has not yet achieved this, and perhaps no nation can, but the vitality of Canada's communities shows the validity of the concept of a nation where, to paraphrase Nobelist Naguib Mahfouz's definition of paradise, every person can reasonably aspire to live in security and dignity."

BEING, NOT BECOMING, CANADIAN

The kids in our schools are not becoming Canadian; they are being Canadian. Two examples, one named after home canning products and the other after paper products, illustrate the vitality of the culture that flourishes in young Canada:

- Wide Mouth Mason, a great blues rock band from Saskatoon, is about as multicultural and multi-ancestral as you can get, and yet cranks out music that is light years away from "heritage days" at the local community centre.
- Rice Paper, the Asian arts Canadian culture magazine that robustly synthesizes ancestry and contemporary into Canadian culture, has regular contributors from Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, and Montreal. Its latest cover commentary notes that "Canadian artistic and cultural expression is innovative and dynamic, and in most cases, expressive of its communities", something the magazine emphatically demonstrates.

In this media vein, the current box office hit "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" is quintessentially a Canadian movie, not merely because it was made by and stars someone from Winnipeg but is set in Chicago, nor merely because it is a light-hearted romantic comedy, but because it captures the reality that individuation is a much more fundamental human process than acculturation. In one of the movie's "touching" scenes, the heroine (can one use any other description for the brave Tula?) is assured by her bother Nick that her ancestry does not define her, but rather that it is part of what she can carry forward as she defines herself.

THE GAP OF THE FUTURE

While Canada's synthesis of diversity is most obvious in the big metropolitan regions of Canada, communications and mobility mean that it is happening throughout the country – look at the roots and sources of Rice Paper and Wide Mouth Mason. The electronic global village of Much Music and the net, 'zines and boarding, fashion and politics have erased spatial divides. The gap of the future is not between urban and rural, or immigrant and non-immigrant, but, between those who embrace change and those who are repelled by it.

The reality of Canada's rich culture is indicated by the 2001 Census. Given McLuhan's dictum, as might be expected, much of the response to the 2001 Census release of ancestry data looked backwards, at people's place of birth, period of immigration, and officially defined minority status, rather than at how people viewed themselves and their country. This focus on the rear view mirror meant that some very significant indicators were given scant consideration.

DEFINING OURSELVES

For example, little was made about the fact that, given the chance, we increasingly define ourselves as Canadians. In 2001, 39% of Canadians listed Canada as an ethnic origin, up from 31% in 1996, and far and away the leading choice. This increase was matched by a decline in number (and hence share) of people who selected ethnic origins in the other top five options, English, French, Scottish, Irish, and German. This makes sense. As a country matures, migration from other countries many generations earlier loses contemporary relevance.

An interesting dimension of growing acknowledgment of Canada as defining our heritage is that the 33% increase in the number of people giving Canadian as their ethnic origin was the result of a 27% increase in Canadian as a single ethnic origin and a 42% increase in the number for whom Canadian was one among multiple origins. Being Canadian does not mean divorcing one's ancestry.

The propensity of Canadians to acknowledge that one of their origins is Canada will continue to grow – slowly – as the country matures. With 22% of the 2001 population 15 years of age and older born outside Canada, and a further 16% of this adult population being the Canadian born children of this 22%, it will take a few years for Canadian as an ethnic origin to reach the level at which no one will bother to ask the question. After all, it took Statistics Canada until 1996 to list Canada as an origin option on the Census (Newfoundland became an option as an ethnic origin in 2001). This temporal pattern is shown in the provincial reporting of ethnic origin, with the slowly growing provinces having the highest incidence of reporting Canadian ethnic origin and the rapidly growing ones having the lowest level.

IMMIGRANT OR FOREIGN-BORN?

The backward focus on origins is also found in Statistics Canada's definition of immigrants, which labels people born outside Canada, regardless of when they arrived here, as immigrants, rather than what they are, which is foreign born Canadians. While it is true that these people immigrated to Canada at some time in the past, immigration is a process that ends with citizenship. According to Statistics Canada's definition, the first Prime Minister of Canada, Sir John A. MacDonald, was an immigrant throughout his life in Canada; he probably thought he was a Canadian.

Words have not only definitions, but uses, and the term "immigrant" is too often used to establish a excluding distinction. For example, the Fraser Institute recently published a book which argues immigration increases health care costs because so many "immigrants" are old, drawing this conclusion from Statistics Canada's data on the foreign-born population. The fact, explicitly shown in the data, is that the overwhelming majority of the "old immigrants" came to Canada as young people, have been Canadian citizens for decades, and that the age profile of people who are current immigrants (Statistics Canada calls them recent immigrants) is significantly younger than the population of current citizens. The misrepresentation of the immigrant population is abetted by Statistics Canada use of the term immigrant to mean foreign-born.

VISIBLE MINORITIES AND MAJORITIES

A final example of looking away from both the present and the future is found in Statistics Canada's visible minority data. These data show that in some communities, the "minority" is the majority, and that in many others it is a minority that nears the majority in size. It must be understood that the "visible minority" is a derived variable: census respondents are not asked whether they consider themselves part of a visible minority. Statistics Canada defines you to be part of the visible minority if you are anything but "white" or "aboriginal". With the increase in the proportion of people with multiple ancestries, in the future a lot of respondents are going to have a hard time figuring out whether or not they are white.

A much different picture of Canadian diversity would emerge if people were asked if they felt they were part of visible minority. Some white folks would probably say yes, as would a lot of tattooed skateboarders and very tall people. Visible minority is a concept whose time, thankfully, is just about gone, soon to be replaced by the concept of a diverse humanity.

“A final example of looking away from both the present and the future is found in Statistics Canada’s visible minority data. These data show that in some communities, the “minority” is the majority, and that in many others it is a minority that nears the majority in size....Visible minority is a concept whose time, thankfully, is just about gone, soon to be replaced by the concept of a diverse humanity.”

POLICY

The role of policy in contributing to the vitality and diversity of Canadian communities is an oft debated topic. Canada has had an official policy of multiculturalism, which in its unfortunate moments equated ancestry with culture. This policy certainly was not hostile to the development of tolerant and diverse communities, but it did not, on its own, create them. For multiculturalism to work, it needed the larger ambiguity of bi-culturalism. Effectively, once two ancestries, two cultures, in one nation are officially okay, it is hard to say that three, four, five, aren’t. Without the mould of a single role model of a “Canadian”, people could not be compelled to become Canadian. Instead, they were free to be Canadian by participating in Canadian life.

Other countries have not been so fortunate. Born out of revolution and revolt, the United States of America had to create an “American” for people to become. The resulting tension between an external single definition of what it is to be an American and the complex reality of an individual continues to affect community life in the USA.

ANTIQUATED DEFINITIONS OF CITIZENSHIP

An even greater tension exists in Europe, where acknowledgement of single global community repeatedly conflicts with cultural definitions from a distant past. Until recently, the only way to become a German citizen was to have had parents who were. In France one had only to give up one’s ancestry and adopt all of the cultural mannerism of the French (well, Parisians actually) to be French; embrace Racine and give up vos racines.

The reality of many communities in these countries is that they are as diverse as those of Canada, but because of the antiquated national definition of A citizen and A culture, there is a level of stress and lack of recognition that is much, much greater than it is in Canada.

Canadians are not better, or more tolerant, people than those in the rest of the world. The absence of a state endorsed model of citizen and culture has simply meant that our culture could grow, diversify and embrace change with much less tension.

This is not to say that there is no tension in Canada between those who look longingly backwards to an ancestry-based culture that never really existed and the reality of a multi-cultural society, where culture is defined by values, interests and intelligence, not by ancestry, appearance or parentage. This is where we are going – this is the culture that is emerging from our schools and communities. This is our future, and with our children, the future is in good hands.

David Baxter is a demographer, economist and simulation modeller, and a Director of Urban Futures Incorporated in Vancouver

A Decade Different From the Last: Canada at the Heels of Increased Immigration

The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander

I was born in Canada, but moved to New York for a short time. Growing up in the late 1930s in Harlem, New York, I got my first real job pushing carts of clothing in the laundry where my mother worked. During these formative years, I was struck by the sight of Black men and women filling every social niche, an image that opened my eyes to the immense contribution immigrants and people of colour can make to North American society. When I returned to Canada a few years later, I brought with me a resolve and sense of hope – I need not follow in my father's footsteps and become a train porter, I could aspire to assume a role outside of the few jobs then available to people of colour.

The 2001 Census ignites my optimism once again. These figures show what the immigrant community has been saying all along: immigrants are a fuelling force to the Canadian economy, with newcomers representing almost 70 percent of the labour force's total growth in the 1990s. As of May 15, 2001, people born outside the country accounted for 20% of Canada's employed workers.

The 2001 Census reflects a Canada different from the one in which I grew up. Today's Canada reflects a dramatic increase in the proportion of recent immigrants (aged 25 to 64) working in high-skilled occupations (24 percent of immigrants who arrived between 1996 and 2000, up from 13 percent for those who had arrived between 1986 and 1990). Without a doubt, the inclusion of new immigrants to the Canadian mosaic has played a strong role in the growth of highly skilled occupations over the past decade, most evident with accountants as well as computer-related occupations.

These census results give weight to our image of Canada as a land of opportunity. Incidentally, more immigrants are also coming to Canada as entrepreneurs, helping to establish the businesses that will hopefully create tomorrow's jobs. As a result, these immigrants, as well as individuals who are well educated, tend to find better opportunity in the labour market.

Over the past decade, Canada has been the beneficiary of highly skilled, very well educated immigrants. The trend is consistent with Canada's more recent immigration policy, which has favoured the entrance of better-educated immigrants. According to the Census, 61% of working age immigrants who arrived in the 1990s held trade, college or university credentials in 2001, contributing to Canada's fourth-place ranking as a world leader in education.

We can no longer deny how immigrants play a central role to Canada's future, especially as we enter the new millennium faced with a declining fertility rate and an urgent need for a skilled and educated labour force to compete in the international marketplace. Indeed, the latest census bodes well for proponents of immigration. However, we must temper this rosy picture with a call for more vigilance in addressing the racism and systemic discrimination that prevents the full contribution of newer immigrants to Canadian society.

In 2001, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation released a report which found, among other things, that racial discrimination still exists in the workplace but it has become much more subtle. Some ways in which this discrimination manifests itself is through work assignments (racial minorities are assigned some of the worse tasks consistently) and the development of cliques, with those closest to the supervisor getting the advantage.

"Canada has been the beneficiary of highly skilled, very well educated immigrants. The trend is consistent with Canada's more recent immigration policy, which has favoured the entrance of better-educated immigrants. According to the Census, 61 percent of working age immigrants who arrived in the 1990s held trade, college or university credentials in 2001, contributing to Canada's fourth-place ranking as a world leader in education."

A Decade Different From the Last: Canada at the Heels of Increased Immigration

The report also points to the fact “that foreign-born visible minorities earned, on average, only 78 cents for every dollar earned by foreign-born non racialized groups.”

Despite strong economic growth in the late 1990s, Census 2001 still reveals the persistence of gaps in labour market conditions between recent immigrants and Canadian-born workers (65.8% of recent immigrants were employed, compared to 81.8% among Canadian-born). These Census numbers also reveal that the discrepancy between newcomers and Canadian-born are segmented along gender lines.

According to the latest Census, recent male immigrants experienced an employment rate 8.9 percentage points lower (77.4%) than the rate for their Canadian-born counterparts. In contrast, only 55.6% of recent female immigrants in 2001 were employed, 21.8 percentage points lower than the employment rate of 77.4% for Canadian-born women in 2001.

We also can't remain complacent about the large proportion (though declining) of recent immigrants (43%) who were still in low-skilled jobs. What do the numbers say overall? Although great strides were made in the last decade, it's clear that the work towards social equality is far from over.

Regardless of the Canadian public's view on immigration,⁴⁰ the Census demonstrates that the country is increasingly multicultural. Between 1991 and 2000, Canada enjoyed the highest influx of immigrants for any decade in the past century. The proportion of Canada's population, who were born outside the country, has reached its highest level in 70 years. During the past 100 years, immigrants have called Canada home, adding to the ethnic and cultural mosaic of the country.

Fifty years ago, most immigrants to Canada were likely from Europe. Today, Canada is a country that boasts more than 200 ethnic groups, with most newcomers arriving from Asia. The full incorporation into Canadian society of nearly two million newcomers during the past decade has taken place peacefully, and in a period of economic and employment growth. Census 2001 is a testament to how modern Canadians aspire to build their country.

The responsibility now lies with us when it comes to how we treat recent immigrants to Canada. Will we welcome such pioneers with open arms, or will we erect more walls to further complicate their inclusion into Canada's social fabric? Let us rid ourselves, forever, of the notion that immigrants take away jobs. Let us, instead, remain steadfast in our belief that we as a country become stronger through the contribution of newcomers to Canada. It's because we are multicultural that we have some of the world's most vibrant cities and one of its strongest economies.

The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, a former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, is the Chair of the Canadian Race Relation Foundation (www.crr.ca), an organization founded through the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement committed to building a national framework against racism in Canadian society. He is also a Governor of the Canadian Unity Council.

“Census 2001 still reveals the persistence of gaps in labour market conditions between recent immigrants and Canadian-born workers... What do the numbers say overall? Although great strides were made in the last decade, it's clear that the work towards social equality is far from over.”

⁴⁰ Editor's note: some example of public opinion on the subject of immigration and multiculturalism appear on page x.

Appendix: Canada at Glance

CANADA

Population	2001	30,007,095
	1996	28,806,812
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	4.0%
Language	Anglophones (%)	59.5%
	Francophones (%)	22.9%
	Allophones (%)	17.6%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	17.7%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	9.0%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	18.4%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	6.2%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	3.3%

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Population	2001	512,930
	1996	551,792
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	-7.0%
Language	Anglophones (%)	98.3%
	Francophones (%)	0.6%
	Allophones (%)	1.1%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	4.1%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	3.7%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	1.6%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	0.4%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	3.7%
Principal City	St. John's (population)	172,918
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	-0.7%
Key Fact	The province's population has declined by almost 10% since 1991.	

Appendix: Canada at Glance

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Population	2001	135,295
	1996	134,557
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	0.5%
Language	Anglophones (%)	94.1%
	Francophones (%)	4.4%
	Allophones (%)	1.5%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	12.0%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	8.3%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	3.1%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	0.6%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	1.0%
Principal City	Charlottetown (population)	58,358
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	2.0%
Key Fact	55.2% of the province's population is rural, the highest proportion of any province.	

NOVA SCOTIA

Population	2001	908,005
	1996	909,282
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	-0.1%
Language	Anglophones (%)	93.1%
	Francophones (%)	3.9%
	Allophones (%)	3.0%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	10.1%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	6.4%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	4.6%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	1.1%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	1.9%
Principal City	Halifax (population)	359,183
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	4.7%
Key Fact	Among Atlantic Canada's three census metropolitan areas, only Halifax registered a gain in population. Two of five Nova Scotians, and almost one in five Maritimers, live in this city.	

Appendix: Canada at Glance

NEW BRUNSWICK

Population	2001	729,500
	1996	738,133
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	-1.2%
Language	Anglophones (%)	65.0%
	Francophones (%)	33.3%
	Allophones (%)	1.7%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	34.2%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	15.0%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	3.1%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	0.6%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	2.4%
Principal Cities	Saint John (population)	125,705
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	-2.4%
	Moncton (population)	117,727
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	3.7%
	Fredericton (population)	81,346
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	3.0%
Key Fact	New Brunswick is second only to Quebec in terms of the percentage of bilingual citizens and, more specifically, in terms of the proportion of its anglophone population that can speak French.	

QUEBEC

Population	2001	7,237,480
	1996	7,138,795
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	1.4%
Language	Anglophones (%)	8.4%
	Francophones (%)	81.6%
	Allophones (%)	10.0%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	40.8%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	36.6%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	9.9%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	3.4%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	1.1%
Principal Cities	Montreal (population)	3,426,350
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	3.0%
	Quebec (population)	682,757
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	1.6%
Key Fact	The anglophone population in Quebec has declined by 6% in the last decade, while the francophone population has grown by 4%, and the allophone population has grown by 18%.	

Appendix: Canada at Glance

ONTARIO		
Population	2001	11,410,045
	1996	10,753,573
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	6.1%
Language	Anglophones (%)	71.7%
	Francophones (%)	4.6%
	Allophones (%)	23.7%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	11.7%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	8.2%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	26.8%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	9.1%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	1.7%
Principal Cities	Toronto (population)	4,682,897
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	9.8%
	Ottawa-Hull (Qc) (population)	1,063,664
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	6.5%
Key Fact	16% of Canadians live in Toronto. 43% of all immigrants coming to Canada in the 1990s settled in Toronto. Immigrants make up 44% of the city's population. Nearly one of every five school aged children in Toronto is a recent immigrant to Canada.	
MANITOBA		
Population	2001	1,119,585
	1996	1,113,898
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	0.5%
Language	Anglophones (%)	75.9%
	Francophones (%)	4.2%
	Allophones (%)	19.9%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	9.3%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	6.5%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	12.1%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	2.9%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	13.6%
Principal City	Winnipeg (population)	671,274
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	0.6%
Key Fact	14% of Manitoba's population (and one in four of the province's children) is Aboriginal.	

SASKATCHEWAN

Population	2001	978,930
	1996	990,237
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	-1.1%
Language	Anglophones (%)	85.8%
	Francophones (%)	2.0%
	Allophones (%)	12.2%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	5.1%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	3.6%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	5.0%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	1.2%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	13.5%
Principal Cities	Saskatoon (population)	225,927
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	3.1%
	Regina (population)	192,800
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	-0.4%
Key Fact	Saskatchewan's non-Aboriginal population has declined by 4% since 1996, while the Aboriginal population has grown by almost 15%.	

ALBERTA

Population	2001	2,974,810
	1996	2,696,826
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	10.3%
Language	Anglophones (%)	81.9%
	Francophones (%)	2.1%
	Allophones (%)	16.0%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	6.9%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	5.3%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	14.9%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	4.4%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	5.3%
Principal Cities	Calgary (population)	951,395
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	15.8%
	Edmonton (population)	937,845
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	8.7%
Key Fact	Calgary is the fastest growing city (census metropolitan area) in Canada.	

Appendix: Canada at Glance

BRITISH COLUMBIA		
Population	2001	3,907,735
	1996	3,724,500
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	4.9%
Language	Anglophones (%)	74.1%
	Francophones (%)	1.6%
	Allophones (%)	24.3%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	7.0%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	6.0%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	26.1%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	9.6%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	4.4%
Principal Cities	Vancouver (population)	1,986,965
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	8.5%
	Victoria (population)	311,903
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	2.5%
Key Fact	Immigrants make up 38% of the population of Vancouver. Nearly one in five school aged children in Vancouver is a recent immigrant to Canada. The proportion is higher in selected communities, reaching one in three in Richmond. Chinese is the language spoken most often at home by 13% of people in Vancouver.	
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES		
Population	2001	37,360
	1996	39,672
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	-5.8%
Language	Anglophones (%)	78.2%
	Francophones (%)	2.8%
	Allophones (%)	19.0%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	8.4%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	7.0%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	6.4%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	2.1%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	55.0%
Principal City	Yellowknife (population)	16,541
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	-4.2%
Key Fact	The only province or territory, besides Nunavut, in which the majority is Aboriginal.	

YUKON

Population	2001	28,674
	1996	30,766
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	-6.8%
Language	Anglophones (%)	87.2%
	Francophones (%)	3.3%
	Allophones (%)	9.5%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	10.1%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	7.3%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	10.6%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	2.7%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	22.9%
Principal City	Whitehorse (population)	21,405
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	-1.8%
Key Fact	Yukon's population has more than tripled since 1951, but declined by almost 7% between 1996 and 2001.	

NUNAVUT

Population	2001	26,745
	1996	24,730
	Rate of population growth, 1996-2001	8.1%
Language	Anglophones (%)	27.6%
	Francophones (%)	1.6%
	Allophones (%)	70.8%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism	3.8%
	Rate of English-French bilingualism (Anglophones only)	7.3%
Immigration	Immigrants (% of total population)	1.7%
	Immigrants arriving since 1991 (% of total population)	0.4%
Aboriginal Peoples	Total Aboriginal population (% of total population)	85.2%
Key Fact	84% of the territory's population is Inuit.	

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