

“European Immigration in Western Canada:
Acculturation Processes within the
Francophone Communities
in the Canadian Prairies”

“Inmigración Europea en el Oeste de
Canadá: Procesos de Aculturación en las
Comunidades Francófonas
de las Praderas Canadienses”

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Abstract

Introduction: Canada, declared a bilingual nation after the proclamation of the Official Language Act in 1969, counts on a low percentage of French speaking citizens in the western regions of the country. The Ukrainians and the German descendants stand amongst the European origin minorities that have also exerted a significant influence on Western Canada's population profile.

Method: The diversity of ethnic realities within the western regions of Canada is depicted in the present paper by means of a cross sectional study which includes the analysis of the current linguistic, socio-cultural and economic situation of the Francophones, the Germans and the Ukrainian-Canadian minority groups in the province of Alberta. Our research is completed with the quantitative analysis of the statistical data obtained from a survey aimed at measuring acculturation among the Francophone population in the three Canadian Prairies –Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Results: The vindications and the political activity of the Ukrainian origin citizens, the relative invisibility of German-Canadians and the integration of the Francophones as their preferred mode of acculturation appear in the present work as diverse strategies and mechanisms of survival within a pluralistic and multicultural society.

Discussion or Conclusion: The conclusions drawn from our study allow us to corroborate the idea that there is not just the 'majority' on one side and visible minorities on the other side. As the result of our investigation, this article aims at pointing out a series of elements which may justify the determination of those citizens who live in areas of the country where the most spoken language is different from their mother tongue to preserve their cultural heritage while trying at the same time to keep alive their Canadian identity.

Keywords: Canadian Prairies; Minorities; Francophones; Acculturation

Resumen

Introducción: Canadá, nación declarada bilingüe tras la proclamación de la Ley de Lenguas Oficiales de 1969, cuenta con un pequeño porcentaje de ciudadanos de habla francesa en las regiones situadas al oeste del país.

Los ciudadanos de origen ucraniano y alemán constituyen los grupos minoritarios de origen europeo que también han ejercido un papel significativo en el perfil de población en el oeste de Canadá.

Método: La diversidad de realidades étnicas en las regiones del oeste de Canadá se muestra en el presente artículo a través de un estudio comparativo, el cual incluye el análisis de la situación lingüística, socio-cultural y económica de los francófonos, los ciudadanos de origen alemán y ucraniano en la provincia de Alberta. Nuestra investigación se ha completado con el análisis cuantitativo de los datos estadísticos obtenidos a través de un cuestionario administrado con objeto de medir el denominado índice de aculturación entre la población francófona en las provincias de Alberta, Manitoba y Saskatchewan.

Resultados: Las reivindicaciones y la actividad política de los ciudadanos de origen ucraniano, la relativa invisibilidad de los canadienses de origen alemán y la integración de los francófonos como su modo preferido de interacción con el resto de población canadiense aparecen como las distintas estrategias y mecanismos de supervivencia de estos grupos de población dentro de una sociedad pluralista y multicultural.

Discusión o Conclusión: Las conclusiones obtenidas de nuestro estudio permiten corroborar la idea de que no existe únicamente la 'mayoría' a un lado y las minorías visibles al otro. Como resultado de nuestra investigación, el presente artículo destaca una serie de elementos que podrían justificar la determinación de aquellos ciudadanos que viven en áreas del país donde la lengua más hablada es diferente a su lengua materna por preservar su herencia cultural, intentando al mismo tiempo mantener viva su identidad canadiense.

Palabras Clave: Praderas Canadienses; Minorías; Francófonos; Aculturación.

1. Introduction

The aim of this work is to analyze the current situation of the European origin minority groups located in western and central regions of Canada. For our purposes, three Canadian provinces -Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba- have been chosen in order to study the impact that the migratory flows of European origin citizens have exerted on the multicultural social model commonly known as *Canadian Mosaic*. This area of the country, also known as The Prairies, is distinguished from the rest of Canada due to its own cultural and political traits.

The Canadian Census classifies population by ethnic origin. According to the data provided by Statistics Canada referring to 2006 and 2011, Ukrainian, German and French origin citizens constitute the most representative groups of population in the Prairies when British and Irish descendants are not considered. This fact allows us to determine which factors could determine the preservation and the vitality of these minority groups within a multicultural society dominated by an Anglophone vast majority.

Taking into consideration the information provided by the most recent Canadian censuses, we can conclude that there exists an important nucleus of French origin immigrants established in northern areas of the province of Alberta. Most Ukrainian descendent immigrants gradually settled within the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan whereas German origin citizens are nowadays distributed along the southern areas of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan (Statistics Canada, 2012).

The first Europeans to see the Prairies were fur traders and explorers from Eastern Canada and Great Britain. When the *Canadian Pacific Railway* was built, a widespread agricultural settlement took place¹. It is known that the French settlers made several incursions within western regions of Canada at the beginning of the seventeenth century. They would penetrate via Saint Lawrence River up to the Great Lakes vast

¹ The Canadian Pacific Railway was originally built between Eastern Canada and British Columbia between 1881 and 1885. It became Canada's first transcontinental railway.

areas. First French pioneers traded furs and other products with aboriginal population in order to gain valuable information about routes that could let them access to unexplored territories (Logan, 1997: 65).

The complex process of colonization carried out by people of European origins together with the cultural and ethnic clash between Native American culture and European civilization since seventeenth century onwards also constitutes the basis for a better understanding of the Canadian social integration model.

Eastern Europeans constituted an important wave of immigration to Canada apart from those who had English or French origin. Tens of thousands of peasants arrived in the late 1800s and early 1900s in the western prairies. The Ukrainians are the largest and most prominent Eastern European community in Canada. At the turn of the century, the number of Ukrainian Canadians was 1,200,000, two-thirds of whom live in the three Prairie provinces- Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan (Bohdan & Kordan, 2001: 12-16).

The Ukrainian Question has been the main topic for different researchers (Bohdan & Kordan, 2001: 12-26). The social trends prevailing among Ukrainian Canadians have also been dealt with on essays by relevant sociologists and psychologists (Petryshyn, 1980). More recent studies have been focused on the problems associated to the waves of Ukrainian immigration in the Prairies throughout the last century (Kondrashov, 2009).

With respect to German immigration, references point at the British conquest of Nova Scotia as the element that would trigger their arrival into Canada. First German settlers were mainly Protestants that were brought into Canadian territories to counterbalance the large number of French Catholic population living along the eastern maritime areas of Canada (Bassler & Lehmann, 1986: 186-204).

The relative invisibility of German Canadians and their presence in Canada virtually unnoticed has also constituted the main topic of different authors work (Sauer & Zimmer, 1998: 49). Other issues such as the establishment of German religious communities in Canada also appear as subject for debate (Grams, 2013: 480-498).

A brief analysis of the situation here depicted provides us with arguments that lead us to think that the vitality of the European origin minority groups in western provinces of Canada has not been fully understood. In order to analyze the complexity of the social and cultural relations established among the Francophones, the Germans, the Ukrainians and the Canadian mainstream society, a cross sectional study has been carried out as the first part of our research.

The second part of our investigation is centered on the Francophone citizens and deals with the study of the diverse strategies which seem to evidence the coexistence of the duality of identities- heritage culture and Canadian-. A survey aimed at measuring acculturation within the Francophone population in the three provinces has been specifically designed in order to shed light on the strategies of the Francophones in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan regarding the social interaction with the mainstream society.

2. Method

Our research includes the qualitative study of certain parameters –categories- which have been conveniently selected for the analysis of the actual situation of the Francophones, the Ukrainians and the German descendents in the Canadian context. We have completed this study with the quantitative analysis of the data obtained by means of a survey carried out as the second phase of our investigation.

2.1. Quantitative Study: Methods and Sources of Information

Four different categories -Language, Identity and Traditions, Education and Socio-Economic Indicators- have been selected to conduct a cross sectional study which allows us to interpret the current degree of cultural pluralism within the Canadian Prairies. In order to access to the available information related to the categories established, we based on the facts and data provided by primary sources such as national and regional newspapers, documentary compilations and digital archives broadcast by Radio Canada, which show personal testimonies of immigrants and newcomers, together with diverse statistical sources and the analysis of the Canadian legislation.

The debate about the need for reflection on the identity of the European origin minorities becomes even more significant when we focus on the Francophone communities. The singularities of the Francophones within the Canadian Mosaic lead us to search for arguments which may justify whether the Francophone self-identification is incompatible with the idea of 'Canadian Identity'. At this point of the discussion it is essential to project the Francophone identity including other aspects different from linguistic, especially in reference to values, beliefs and traditions.

2.2. Acculturation Measurement: Quantitative Analysis

The second phase of our investigation encompasses the quantitative analysis of the statistical data extracted from a questionnaire which included a set of twelve questions related to the attitudes of the participants towards the Francophone heritage culture and other twelve concerning the attitudes shown by the respondents towards social, cultural and psychological aspects related to the Canadian mainstream culture.

The Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder, Alden & Paulus, 2000: 65) was taken as a reference for our survey. The Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) test comprises 20 paired questions that refer to both American culture and the citizen's heritage culture. The original design of this test includes 9 Likert-type response options ranging from disagree (1) to agree (9). It has been previously tested with Asian ethnic groups residing in North America and successfully met the independence assumption (Kang, 2006: 687).

VIA has been adapted to our target group, being the term "American" replaced by "Canadian". Two questions were added for each subscale in order to measure the degree of acceptance of the individual by other members of the mainstream culture community and by individuals from his/her own heritage culture. The number of Likert-type response options has been reduced to 4. Responses 1 and 2 are henceforth associated to a weak degree of identification with the statement formulated within the referred question whereas 3 and 4 would correspond to strong level of agreement.

Individual responses were used to calculate the mean Acculturation Index related to each subscale -Francophone and Canadian- in order to associate each respondent to

one of the four modes of acculturation -assimilation, separation and marginalization- according to bi-dimensional model proposed by Berry (1992).

MODES OF ACCULTURATION		Attitude Toward Keeping Heritage Culture and Identity	
		Negative	Positive
Attitude Toward Learning and Interacting with Mainstream Culture	Positive	ASSIMILATION	INTEGRATION
	Negative	MARGINALIZATION	SEPARATION

Source: Based on Berry (1992).

Figure 1. Acculturation models classified according to attitudes toward host society and heritage culture.

The potential candidates to participate in this research were all the citizens who self-identified as Francophones and resided within one of the three provinces included in our survey-Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The questionnaire was firstly distributed via email among the Francophone Universities of Saint Jean in Edmonton (Alberta) and Saint Boniface in Winnipeg (Manitoba). During the second phase of the distribution, a cover letter with hyperlinks to the questionnaire was sent to diverse Francophone school districts and French Immersion schools.

The final step of the survey was aimed at covering other collectives of Francophones within a wider range of academic levels. To achieve this goal, we counted on the support of Francophone media such as Radio Canada and diverse associations such as the French Canadian Association of Alberta (ACFA) and the French Canadian Association of Regina, which published the links to our questionnaire on their websites.

A total number of 144 female (65%) and 79 male (35%) Francophone citizens participated in this survey. Alberta, the most populated province, contributed with 100 responses. Saskatchewan registered 65 responses and 58 candidates resided within the province of Manitoba when the survey was carried out.

We must consider the limitations of our quantitative analysis taking into consideration that our survey was mainly distributed within the metropolitan areas of the cities of Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg and that many rural areas of the northern region of Alberta known as *Rivière-la-Paix*, with a high concentration of Francophone citizens, were not reached.

The citizens older than 50 constitutes the age group with the highest percentage of respondents (35%). Those whose age ranged between 18 and 30 contributed with 18% of the total. Amongst the participants in the present survey, 30 reported to be born outside Canada (13.5%). When considering length of residence within the province, 81% of the total number of responses lie within the *10 years or more* category.

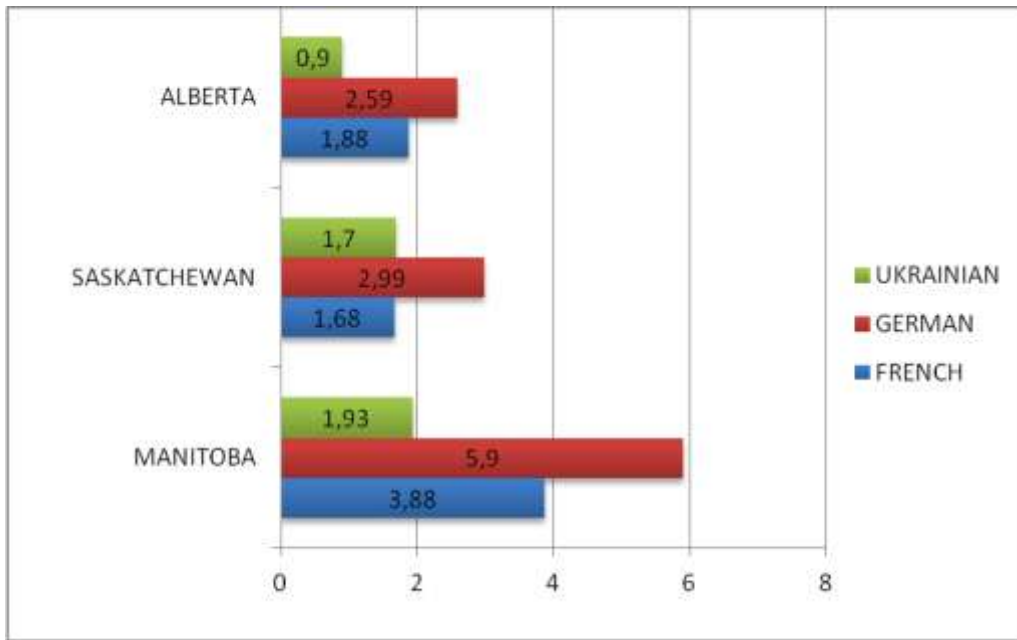
The Acculturation Index which we obtained for each individual citizen taking part in our survey has permitted to analyze the four possible modes of acculturation- integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization- according to the attitudes towards heritage culture and the host society.

3. The Francophones, the Germans and the Ukrainians: Cross-sectional Study Results

The information gathered for each of the four categories established for the first phase of our investigation has been synthesized to present the most remarkable aspects that contribute to present a precise profile for each of the Francophones in relation to the most representative European origin minorities: the Germans and the Ukrainians. The most significant facts related to the different categories are hereby presented.

3.1. Language

Census shows the decline in the three languages -French, Ukrainian and German- as mother tongue. Ukrainian dropped from 11% of all non-official languages spoken in Canada in 1971 to 2% in 2006. German has also been declining throughout the last decades, steadily diminishing from 19% in 1971 to 7% in 2006. Francophone minorities living outside Quebec recorded a steady decrease dropping from 7% in 1951 to 4% in 2006.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2012. Available online at: <http://www.stat12.gc.ca>

Figure 2. Percentage of population by mother tongue in the Canadian Prairies provinces. Canada Census, 2011.

When Manitoba was created in 1870, about 50 per cent of the population spoke French. By the end of the nineteenth century, the number of French speakers declined to roughly seven per cent. Even though, Manitoba is the western Canadian province with the highest number of citizens who report French as mother tongue. Throughout the last years, this province experienced a decrease in the Francophone population (4.2% of the population declared to have French as mother tongue versus 4.0% in 2011). The percentage of population with French as mother tongue was slightly inferior to 2 % in the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Langlois and Gilbert (2006) remark that in the actual Canadian context, the use of mother tongue as a parameter indicating of the use of the language does not take into account the continuous flux of immigrants for whom French constitutes their language of communication although it is not their mother tongue. They also point at the fact that some of the citizens that report French as mother tongue are no longer capable of holding a fluent conversation in that language.

The evolution of women fertility according to mother tongue and to the language most spoken at home has also been object of study. Fertility plays an important role in the renewal of language groups (Lachapelle & Lepage, 2010). However, estimating fertility according to mother tongue is a problem in Canada, since only Quebec includes the language question on its birth certificates. The estimations of the fertility according to women's mother tongue show that whereas in 1956 the fertility rate of the Anglophone and the Francophone population was higher than the one for the speakers of a non-official language, the fertility rate of non-official languages speaker was slightly superior to those people that declare to have English or French as their mother tongue after year 2001.

Another important factor to be considered to measure the vitality of minority languages is the linguistic integration of immigrants. Canada's foreign-born population is a linguistically diverse community. Immigration therefore affects the evolution of Canada's language groups (Chui, Tran & Maheux, 2007).

We must consider that endogamy is not a common practice within the three ethnic groups studied, with the only exception of Mennonites of German origin. Marital religious conversion is not a characteristic element within mixed marriages in Canada as it usually happens with certain groups such as Orthodox Jews (Brudner & Douglas, 1997: 1-48). The high proportion of mixed couples is also a relevant factor to be taken into account when we study the transmission of the mother tongue from parents to descendants.

Language retention is the parameter usually considered to study the vitality of minority languages. This term evaluates the percentage of immigrant population with a given mother tongue that continues using this language in their new country. We talk about total retention when the citizens make use of their mother tongue as their main language at home. We would refer to partial retention when the mother tongue is spoken sporadically.

The data provided by Statistics Canada in the censuses of population 2006 and 2011 show that none of the three languages object of this study is placed within the ones with the highest rate of retention. Whereas calculations give French language a

percentage of 63% of total retention, German and Ukrainian show an even lower rate (35 and 26 per cent respectively). Punjabi, Tamil and Mandarin show percentages that have the highest rates, higher than 80 per cent (Statistics Canada, 2012).

3.2. *Identity and Traditions*

The cultural history of the Canadian Prairies has been marked by the unusual circumstances of the western fur trade, in which native cooperated peacefully with European for more than two centuries, from 1640 up to the second half of the nineteenth century. Native traders became indispensable for the commercial activities and European fur trade.

The technological context of natives' life changed dramatically due to the arrival of Europeans. Some studies suggest that natives of the western interior may have lived a life of relative comfort, no more precarious or more miserable than their contemporary European counterparts (Friesen, 1987: 32-37). French fur traders decided to learn native languages. It was also a common practice to offer presents to native population so that they could let them establish privileged positions to carry out their activities of fur trading (Wade & Falardeau, 1960: 123-135). Many French fur traders decided to stay for long periods of time in the Prairies and take native women as wives. This would be the origin of the *Métis*- name given to the descendants of mixed couples formed by Native women and European fur traders, mainly of French origin.

When the construction of the rail line was accomplished, the land policy was intended to create conditions that would attract immigrants. The Department of Interior started programs to recruit immigrants, printing advertising material in a wide range of languages. Much of the later immigration has been described as *chain migration*, linked to citizens already in their new homes. In 1872, the government had approved the reservation of blocs of land for groups of Germans, Swiss and Scots though little came to Canada in the following years.

The first significant colonies to settle in the Prairies were Mennonites from Russia and French Canadians from New England. By the end of the nineteenth century, promotion of immigration in the western regions encouraged the arrival of experienced farmers. This was intended to discourage groups of population like blacks, Italians,

Jews or Orientals that would not succeed on farming. These recruitment policies were intended to encourage the arrival of Ukrainians.

After the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, immigration policies changed and in the early 1920s Ukrainians and Germans were considered *enemy aliens*. The use of French was also limited at schools. In 1918, Saskatchewan reduced the use of French to the first year of school only. In 1931, Alberta permitted only limited use of languages different from English. The result was that the Prairies stopped being a suitable destination to French-speaking immigrants in the twentieth century. French communities constituted a chain of parishes across the west from the Red River to the Rockies. They became representative of one of the two dominant religious groups in Canada, the Roman Catholics (Friesen, 1987: 185-261).

For the Francophone population, it was in the 1930s when they started to look for their inclusion within the most diverse cultural activities offered by Anglophone community. They began to substitute their meeting point, which was the church, by other places where they could join other social activities. However, many institutions were created at this time in order to preserve the Francophone identity in provinces like Alberta. The most relevant one, *ACFA* (French-Canadian Association of Alberta) had already been created in 1926.

There exists a French cultural legacy in the Prairies provinces in Canada that is still visible through the multiple activities that take place in the province. The most representative celebration is the Winter Carnival, including activities like sledge races and snow sculptures. Some traditional dishes of French Canadian origin such as the *tourtières* and the *poutine* can also be tasted during festivals and other parties.

The Germans who arrived in western Canada during the immigration boom came principally from the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires rather than from Germany. Some of them were Roman Catholic whereas others professed Protestantism. They were numerous in total but divided into different dialects and religions so that they never achieved a single German identity. During the War years, nearly eight thousand citizens from Germany were designated enemy aliens by some militant Protestant

reformers. Some of them were sent to internment camps, though most were eventually released to alleviate labour shortages (Thompson, 1991: 6).

The Germans eventually accommodated to the British-Canadian norm. Many German Canadians made great effort to hide all vestiges of their ethnic identity. Many surnames were adapted or changed, *Schmidt* became Smith, *Braun* became Brown, for instance. Anglicized names for German-Canadian names symbolize this assimilation. In Alberta, for example, Dusseldorf was named Freedom. Worships in Lutheran churches were only conducted in English language. More than 100000 Germans were worried or ashamed of their origins so that they declared to be Dutch or Austrian in 1921 Census (Thomson, 1991: 8).

In the case of the Ukrainians, the conditions for the newcomers were miserable and they were not welcomed at the beginning. At first, an anti-Ukrainian sentiment was widespread. After the outbreak of the War in 1914, many Ukrainians who were politically active were arrested and isolated in labour camps during the war. They were interned in worse conditions than German prisoners of war that were in the same camp (Thompson, 1991: 10). There have been points of connection between Ukrainian prairie settlers and First Nations -term currently used to refer to the aboriginal people who lived in Canada before the arrival of Europeans. The fact that early Ukrainian newcomers were disadvantaged with respect to other ethnic groups makes us think of certain historical affinities as outcast minorities. This feeling of humiliation and vexation has been expressed in different poems and popular songs (Hinter & Mochoruk, 2010: 86-88).

The situation of the Ukrainian Canadians was also fundamentally different in 1939 than in 1914. As a result of the war's economic effects, industry drew Ukrainians out of rural settlements in the prairies. This would lead to a higher grade of assimilation. Ukrainian Canadians have demanded the recognition that their ancestors were not treated fairly. In fact, Prime Minister Mulroney formally apologized to the Ukrainian-Canadian communities for the injustices done to them during the two World Wars (Thompson, 1991: 17). The vindications of the Ukrainian origin communities in Canada are present every year in one of their most popular celebrations called *Holodomor*. This is the name given to the genocide by famine that took place in Ukraine from 1932 to 1933.

3.2. Education

The first schools established in the western provinces of Canada were founded by French Catholic priests. The first school was funded in 1818, in Red River Valley, area which nowadays corresponds to the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the states of North Dakota and Minnesota. Some years later, English-Scotch Protestant schools were established in the region. Firstly, a separate school system was created by French priests and the other was founded by English and Scottish. The first opposition to bilingualism in the western provinces of Canada arose in Manitoba in 1871 when the Protestant immigrants coming from Ontario protested against the establishment of the dual school system. Consequently, this school system would be later abolished in Manitoba in 1890.

The French-speaking population's protests forced Manitoba government to set up in 1897 a provincial Board of Education consisting of two sections, one Protestant and the other Catholic. After this, Manitoba government agreed to offer bilingual teaching in the public schools in which ten or more students spoke the same non-English language. The Manitoba government also agreed to offer German Mennonites to set up private schools after their arrival in Manitoba, but these schools soon deteriorated due to a lack of teachers. Government invested on public schools to improve the salaries of these teachers but many of these actions were interpreted as a threat to their religion and many Mennonites kept sending their children to private schools (Bilash, 1960: 2-5).

The main flow of Ukrainian immigrants arrived into the Prairies when the bilingual school system was being established. The Ukrainians did not know how to organize their schools and they had serious difficulties to hire teachers willing to work for them. During World War I, many Canadian citizens, appealing to their nationalist ideas, demanded the quick and complete assimilation of the non-English population. The newspapers played an important role in the abolition of the bilingual public school system. Some newspapers such as the *Winnipeg Evening Tribune* or *Winnipeg Telegram* published a series of articles in 1916 in order to turn the opinion of the public against bilingual public schools.²

In 1963, the Canadian Federal Government created the Commission for Bilingualism and Biculturalism so that they could write a report concerning the situation of Canada with respect to bilingual education. The report elaborated by this commission encourages parents and students to attend schools where they could be instructed in a language of their choice (Hoffman & Ward, 1970: 27).

In 1982, the Canadian federal government approved the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Section 23 of this Charter granted minority language students the right to receive teaching instruction in French language at the same time that parents were given access to control and management of the educational institutions that their kids attend.

The establishment of entirely Francophone schools in the Prairies provinces has not been an easy task. Francophone communities have been forced to fight against provincial governments in order to gain access to their rights. In Alberta, the proportion of students that attend Francophone schools has steadily increased throughout the last decade. In the school year 2001/02, only 0.55% of the students in Alberta went to a Francophone school. Ten years later, in 2012, this percentage has gone up to 1.01%.³

In Saskatchewan there are currently 15 Francophone schools, also known as Fransaskois schools, designed for students of Francophone heritage. Due to the special educational program designed for Francophones, all activities –music, drama and sports- take place in French language. It was in 1993 when Francophone parents were given control of Fransaskois schools. According to the information provided by *Conseil des Écoles Fransaskoises*, Saskatchewan implemented its Francophone school division in 1995, offering a varied program that aims to meet the academic, cultural and linguistic needs of the Francophone students of the province (Bassler, & Lehmann, 1986; Bodan & Kordan, 2001; Logan, 1997).

In Manitoba, the French Immersion Program has been recognized since 1995 as an official program by the Department of Education. Manitoba has also implemented

² Winnipeg Evening Tribune published the article “Bill to Abolish Bilingualism Passes Reading” on February 19th, in which strong opposition to public funding of bilingual schools is shown.

³According to data provided by Alberta Education (2012) the number of students enrolled in Francophone schools was 5,994 of a total amount of 598114 students in public and private schools of the province.

other programs to revitalize the use of French among its population. The French Second Language Revitalization Program was established by Manitoba Education in 2009 in order to provide with grants to the educational community for the development of activities that are primarily offered to the members of the French minority community in Manitoba (Manitoba Education, 2014).

The percentage of students enrolled in second language programs throughout the last decade has increased 9.5 per cent in Canada. If we compare the available information regarding the Prairies provinces, we can point out at Alberta as the one that experienced a higher increase in the number of students that enrolled in French language immersion programs (18.5 %). Manitoba registered a slight increase up to 3.9% whereas in Saskatchewan the number of students enrolled in second language immersion programs remained constant (Statistics Canada, 2012).

In the past, students in Bilingual Programs were typically third and fourth generation immigrants to Canada with little or no knowledge of the language. Nowadays, the goals of Bilingual Programs are to provide students with the opportunity to learn and communicate in two languages at the same that they can develop, understand and appreciate other cultures, languages and religions.

Alberta currently offers French as a second language courses (FSL). Bilingual language arts curriculum for Chinese, Spanish, German and Ukrainian is also being offered. In the primary grades, instruction in the second language represents 50% of the school day up to grade six. In grade seven, the time of instruction in the second language is reduced. Whether the students in these programs speak the target language at home varies from one program to a different one (Alberta Education, 2014).

Manitoba is offering different foreign languages in its schools. German is the language with the highest overall enrolment followed by Spanish. German language education has a long history in Manitoba. German-English bilingual programming was introduced in Manitoba shortly after the introduction of Ukrainian bilingual programming in the school year 1979-80. In Saskatchewan, the Ukrainian-English bilingual education is offered only by the Catholic School Board (Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division, 2014).

3.3. *Socio-economic Indicators*

The data provided by Statistics Canada (2012) display a significant percentage of population that identify themselves as French origin citizens. The figures related to year 2011 showed that 5.6% of the population in Manitoba, 11.4% in Saskatchewan and 11.9% of the total population reported to have French ethnic origin.

Most Francophone citizens that have arrived into the Prairies in the last decades are coming from Quebec, with the purpose of settling and growing the lands located in the Northern areas of the province of Alberta. This region has special climate conditions that allow the growth of cereals, milk production and agriculture activities development. In this rural region of Alberta, there are five villages in which there exists a Francophone majority (Boileau, 2003: 17-26).

The areas surrounding this region are populated by a vast Anglophone majority. People manifest in the documentary their worries about new generations. They affirm that their sons have been forced to move to other parts of the country- Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver-in their search for a job out of the agricultural sector. Many French Canadians of third and fourth generation who settled in the Prairies live today in an Anglophone context and have now become English speakers. With the purpose of maintaining their social conditions and preserve their Francophone institutions and schools, some Albertan Francophones have decided themselves to spread within the province so that the provincial government authorizes them to set up new Francophone Catholic schools.

Some sociological studies show the permanent changes in the identity and social construction of the Francophone communities. They have gradually become a minority group within the provincial borders as a consequence of the policies of both federal and provincial governments (Thériault, 1994: 15-32). Other scholars have researched on the relationship between Francophone groups and other communities within Canadian society. It has been observed that at the beginning of the 1990s, different Francophone groups of people started to reconsider their Francophone identity. Francophone newcomers began to challenge the idea of accepting traditions and values that had been

adopted by the Francophone communities settled in the country for centuries (Cardinal & Lapointe, 2000: 47-66).

The Canadian Prairies have also been the home to many heritage speakers of German and Ukrainian with European origins. In these western provinces of Canada, religion and lifestyle often act as a motivation for language preservation. Although they did not constitute a serious threat to Canadian security, both communities became victims of the two World Wars. Their integration into the mainstream of Canadian life was better as the result of the war's economic effects. In fact, military service and jobs in war industry employed Ukrainians and Germans, taken them out the rural settlements of the western provinces where they lived (Thompson, 1991:17).

German ethnic origin was reported by more than 28% of the population of Saskatchewan in 2007. In Alberta and Manitoba this proportion was also close to 20% according to the information provided by Statistics Canada (2007). Although the percentage of citizens that reported to have German ethnic origin is considerably high, German Canadians are generally considered well assimilated, being their presence in Canada relatively unnoticeable (Sauer & Zimmer, 1998). In the International Conference *Assimilation, Integration, Acculturation*, organized by the University of Winnipeg (province of Manitoba) between 26th and 29th August in 2004, the situation of the German-Canadian population constituted the main issue. Since then, it has been often discussed if the settlement process constituted either a transnational social practice or, on the contrary, a simple diasporic experience.

The proportion of Canadians that declared to have Ukrainian ethnic origin was higher than 10 % in the three provinces. Alberta was reported to have 10.2% of citizens of Ukrainian origin whereas in Manitoba this percentage went up to 14.7% in 2007. In Saskatchewan 12.6% of the citizens were included within the Ukrainian ethnic origin group (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Growth scenarios point at a situation in which between 25% and 28% of the population could be foreign-born in 2031. Diversity will grow among the Canadian born

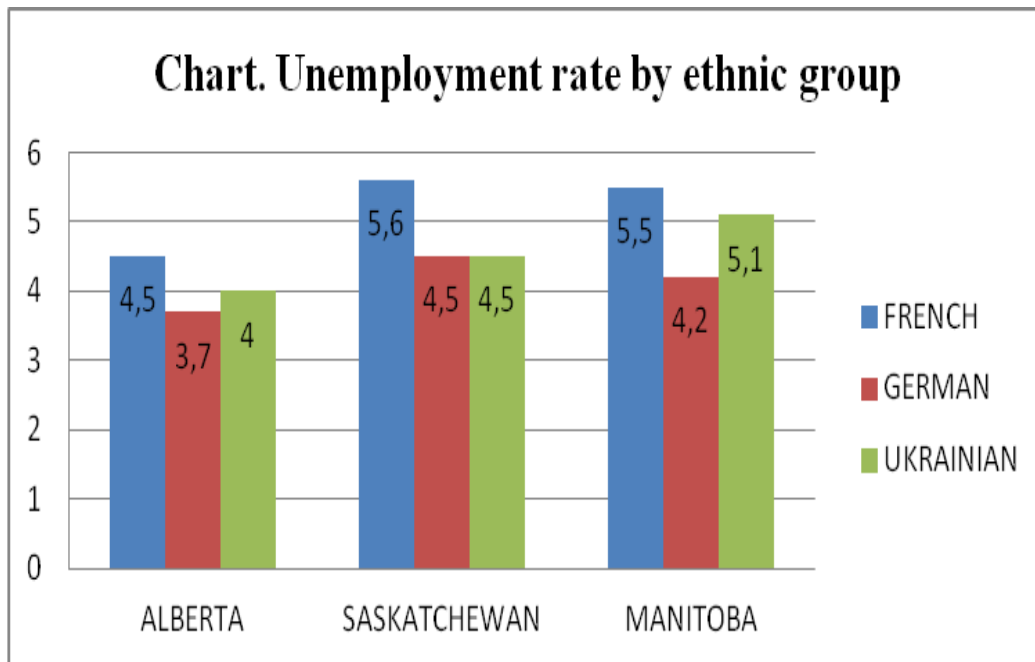
population and the proportion of citizens with a Christian religion would decline from 75% to 65%. Within the population having a non-Christian religion, about one half would be a Muslim by 2031.⁴

The Ukrainians have been for long associated to the peasant communities that settled the Prairies at the beginning of the twentieth century. Despite their experience in agriculture, they kept using outdated technology. After the Second World War, many Ukrainian males decided to search jobs as city labourers, miners, railway and forestry workers. Women opted for positions as domestic servants, waitresses and also within hotels services.

The Ukrainian-Canadian population has suffered discrimination and exploitation for decades in the western provinces of Canada. Throughout the last three decades, the proportion of Ukrainian Canadians dedicated to agriculture has become lower than 10%, similar to the Canadian average. The unskilled workers within Ukrainian communities add up to less than 4% of the Ukrainian labour force.

When we compare data provided by Canadian Census (2011) concerning unemployment, a remarkable question is the fact that German origin population registered a lower rate of unemployment in the three provinces. Ukrainian communities also reported a lower unemployment rate when comparing it with the average of the provinces. French communities registered a higher proportion of unemployed citizens, very close to the average rate of the provinces -4.3% in Alberta, 5.6% in Saskatchewan and 5.5% in Manitoba.

⁴ Information taken from the study *Projection of the Diversity of the Canadian Population, 2006 to 2031*, prepared by Statistics Canada for Canadian Heritage, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2012. Available online at: <http://www.stat12.gc.ca>

Figure 3. Unemployment rate (%) corresponding to French, German and Ukrainian ethnic origin population.

No significant differences among the three ethnic groups included within our research are observed when dealing with their main economic activity. In Alberta, the main activity reported for our groups of study was construction, mining and oil and gas extraction, the same as for the mainstream of the population in the province. In Saskatchewan, agriculture and manufacturing were reported as the main economic activities for French, German and Ukrainian communities whereas for the total population of the province agriculture and construction were the ones with a higher number of employees. In Manitoba, manufacturing and agriculture constitute the main economic activities of the province. However, French and German communities registered a significant number of transportation and warehousing workers.

Other two parameters that we have chosen as valuable indicators of social and economic status of the ethnic groups in our survey are the prevalence of low income for family members together with the percentage of the population without a postsecondary certificate. The percentage of persons in economic families below low income was reported higher in French origin families. However, we must remark that the three

communities studied register a lower percentage of families with low incomes when we compare to the average in the total population.

The total population over 15 years old and who do not hold a certificate, diploma or degree is inferior for the three ethnic groups studied -Francophones, Ukrainian and German origin citizens- when we compare it to the total population of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In the case of Alberta, only Ukrainian population registered a lower percentage of population without a postsecondary certificate with respect to the province's average.

4. Quantitative Research: Acculturation Measurement for the Francophones

The cross-sectional study on European origin minority groups living in the Canadian Prairies carried out as a previous part of our research can be used to determine the degree of prediction of certain variables such as 'income' or 'socio-economic status' upon the modes of acculturation experienced by individual citizens belonging to the groups of population included in our investigation.

Nevertheless, we decided to focus on ethnic identity, socio-cultural and psychological factors as indicators of individual's acculturation strategy. With the aim of examining to what extent the ethnic identity of the Francophones have become either assimilated or integrated into the mainstream Canadian society, the next step taken in the present research was to develop strategies for the measurement of acculturation within the Francophone communities within the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

4.1. Questionnaire Design and Validation.

A specific questionnaire based on Vancouver Index of Acculturation has being edited for measuring acculturation within the Francophone citizens living in the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The internal consistency of the responses provided for the questions referred to both subscales- Francophone heritage and Canadian mainstream- was tested by means of the Cronbach alpha coefficients obtained (α). The twelve items chosen to validity of the Canadian mainstream subscale provided alpha of 0.82. The other items aimed at calculation Cronbach alpha for the Francophone heritage subscale provided a slightly superior value ($\alpha=0.84$).

To test orthogonality, the inter-item correlation coefficients obtained when crossing the Canadian and the Francophone subscales were also calculated. The mean value of inter-items correlation was 0.15, which showed that both subscales are largely independent in our study. Data processing continued to work out the average value of the scores given by individual respondents to both Canadian and Francophone culture items. This value will be henceforth known as Acculturation Index.

For the purposes of the present study, 95% confidence level was considered. The descriptive statistical parameters obtained for each subscale showed a higher mean value for the items referred to Francophone heritage culture (3.68 versus 3.58 when processing responses in relation to Canadian culture items in the 4-point scale).

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were carried out to verify whether the distribution of responses given by individuals to each subscale fitted a normal distribution.⁵ The cumulative frequencies associated to responses extracted from the total sample led us to determine that the scores obtained through individual responses were not normally distributed.

4.2. Statistical Treatment

Since we collected a sufficiently high number of responses (N=223), an arbitrary distribution of responses was assumed for both subscales in order to test their statistical independence. Thus, a paired two-sample z-test was chosen as the suitable procedure in order to confirm or refuse the null hypothesis that the values of the acculturation indices obtained when using both subscales are not significantly different.

When performing the test of this hypothesis, z score obtained allow us to assume the independence of both subscales, since p value obtained is significantly inferior to the significance level established for our study (0.05):

⁵ When considering the total number of observations (n=223), the maximum difference obtained between theoretical cumulative frequencies and the ones obtained within our sample was superior to the critical value ($D_{critical}=0.09$). Therefore, we can state that the responses collected in our sample for both scales cannot fit a normal distribution (maximum value for this difference was 0.24 for Canadian subscale and 0.18 when using Francophone subscale).

Table 1. Mean acculturation values obtained for Canadian mainstream and Francophone heritage culture

	Canadian Acculturation Index	Francophone Acculturation Index
Mean value	3,5822	3,68307
Variance (known)	0,1439	0,1201
Number of responses	223	223
Hypothetical difference between averages.	0	
z	2,9311	
P(Z<=z)	0,0017	

Independence assumption was finally confirmed by means of the correlation coefficient between the pair of values corresponding to individual responses given for each subscale. Statistical tools provided us with an extremely low value of the correlation coefficient between Canadian and Francophone heritage culture ($r_s=0.006$).

Further treatment of the responses was devoted to study the four different modes of acculturation proposed in the bi-dimensional model exposed by Berry (1992). With the objective of assessing the acculturation mode for each participant, a dividing point for both subscales was necessary to differentiate two different grades of identification with each culture. Among the Likert-type response options presented to the participants in our survey, those lying on the upper range (3- 4) are identified with a strong degree of cultural identification in the present acculturation study. Hence, values inferior to these (<3) will be identified to weak level of identification with the statement formulated.

To achieve the main goal of this part of the research, we proceeded to filter the responses according to four different value ranges in order to determine the number of participants in our research that fall under each of the four modes of acculturation. Marginalization mode of acculturation includes respondents who granted scores lower than 3 to both Canadian and Francophone culture items whereas Integration would be associated to values superior to 3 for both subscales.

Separation was associated to scores greater than 3 for items related to Francophone heritage culture but lower than 3 for questions that refer to Canadian host society. The last mode of interaction –assimilation- includes respondents who registered average scores greater than 3 for Canadian culture related items but lower than 3 for Francophone heritage questions.

According to the criteria here established, no individual responses within our sample were bound to marginalization. Twelve participants would lie within the assimilation quadrant of the graph (5.38%). A total of 24 individuals would be associated to separation (10.76%). The rest of the participants fall under the model of integration according to the method used for differentiating weak and strong cultural identification attitudes (83.86%). These results show that the majority of the candidates participating in our study reported a positive attitude towards both Canadian mainstream culture and their heritage culture.

4.3. Test of Hypothesis

Following the criteria adopted for the interpretation of our results, according to which scores higher than 3 in our 4-points scale are associated to a strong degree of identification with either culture, we count a total number of 190 Francophone citizens that opted for integration and 12 opted for assimilation to mainstream host society. Our attempt to formulate a valid hypothesis that could be tested in order to extract general conclusions is based on the results above shown.

Taking into consideration the proportions observed in our sample, we conducted a hypothesis test for the proportion of integrated and assimilated citizens within the Francophone ethnic group in the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Null hypothesis (H_0) that the proportion of Francophones living in the Canadian Prairies who opt for integration is inferior to 0.75 (75% of the total) was stated. The alternative hypothesis (H_1) proposed is that the proportion of Francophones who opt for integration is equal or superior to 0.75.

We chose 0.05 as significance level to be consistent with the confidence level that we elected for previous treatment of statistical data (95%). We labelled P as the hypothesized value of population proportion in the null hypothesis ($P=0.75$) and N

represents the sample size (N=223). We computed the standard deviation (σ) of the sampling distribution using the following mathematical expression:

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\left[P * \frac{(1 - P)}{N} \right]}$$

We obtain z-score (z) as a test statistic using p as proportion of responses linked to integration within our total sample (p=0.852):

$$z = (p - P) / \sigma$$

The values obtained ($\sigma=0.029$; $z=3.52$) indicate that we can reject the hypothesis that the proportion of integrated population is inferior to 75% of the total population who are subject to our research, since z-value exceeded the critical value established at 1.96 when we work at 95% confidence level.

Given the low percentage of individuals that fell under the mode of assimilation in our sample (5.38%), we initiated our assimilation hypothesis testing the proportion of 0.1 (10% of total Francophone citizens assimilated). Z values obtained ($z=2.40$) exceeded critical values when calculated using the formulae previously shown. Thus, null hypothesis (H_0) that the proportion of assimilated Francophones to be superior to 0.1 (10% of total Francophone population) can be rejected.

5. General Discussions

The waves of immigration that have brought to the Prairies an important number of citizens of German and Ukrainian origin for the two last centuries have given way to other ethnic groups of Chinese, Indian or Latin American origin. As a result of these changes, ethnic and linguistic composition of the country has diversified.

Despite the official status of the French language in Canada and although the number of French speakers have increased in the Prairie provinces, the percentage of Francophone population in the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba has

decreased as a consequence of the arrival of speakers of English and other non official languages.

The vitality of the French language in western and central regions of Canada is not assured in a long term basis according to the information obtained in this research. Language retention rates indicate that the percentage of Francophone immigrants that keep using their mother tongue at home is also inferior to the values obtained for Chinese, Hindu or Spanish speakers.

Nevertheless, a positive aspect is the fact that the number of Francophone workers that use French at work has increased in the provinces studied, especially in Manitoba. The use of French at work by the Francophone community was reported higher in activities such as teaching and health care. From a linguistic point of view, a less favourable situation applies to German and Ukrainian speakers. Language retention has been reported lower for newcomers of both communities when compared to the one for French speakers who arrive in the Prairies.

Regarding the identity of the three ethnic groups studied in our research, we cannot conclude that there exist remarkable differences with respect to the mainstream of social groups within the Canadian Prairies. The parameters that have been taken in this research in order to analyze the different minorities studied within the rest of social groups show that the values registered for the Francophone, German and Ukrainian origin population are similar to those referred to the total population.

The Francophone identity in the western provinces of Canada is not as well defined as it could be either in Quebec or in the Maritimes provinces. This is due to the fact that most French speaking citizens in the Prairies are bilingual and also because of the vast distance that separates them from the rest of Francophone communities in the country. Nevertheless, thanks to the official protection of the French language, the Francophone community appears as the most visible minority in the Canadian Prairies.

In spite of the existence of German Canadian associations and the survival of nationwide German language newspapers in Canada, such as *Das Echo*, the Germans seem to be the most invisible group of population, with the exception of certain

religious groups such as Mennonites, where endogamy is still a common practice within this ethno-religious group.

Education appears as one of the most relevant elements that contribute to the vitality of the language and traditions of the different ethnic groups which have been included in this investigation. According to the data obtained in this research, the evolution of the second language immersion programs and the bilingual programs implemented by the Canadian government in all the provinces have contributed to an increase in the number of citizens that opt for an educational program in which they can preserve their mother tongue. The case of Alberta is an excellent example of change in the mentality of the Anglophone parents, since many of them decide to send their kids to French immersion programs so that the latter have better options to become bilingual and find a job in the future.

Immigration patterns mark a trend to a more complex situation in which most newcomers will have either Asian or African origin within the next decades. The preservation of French, German or Ukrainian cultures and languages are likely to become more difficult with the arrival of workers and refugees that are in most cases forced to use English as a means of achieving a faster and more effective integration within Canadian society. Although both federal and provincial policies try to guarantee the access to education and to the labour market giving equal opportunities to people of all ethnic groups in Canada, it is not always clear under which conditions citizens are granted the access to public services.

Canadian is often seen as an example of respect and social integration of the multiple ethnicities and cultures that co-exist and share common values such as tolerance and mutual understanding. Nevertheless, in some cases we can be led to think that the lack of an identified symbol –either religious or political- jeopardizes culture and traditions of the ethnic groups included in our study.

The next censuses of population may give us the clue about the evolution of these minority groups within the Canadian Mosaic. In order to meet the needs of a country with a low demographic density such as Canada, immigration pattern will have to accommodate to labour market. Oil industry in Alberta, together with better

opportunities to find a job in manufacturing or agricultural in the provinces of Manitoba or Saskatchewan are attracting an increasing amount of Canadians from all over the country to the Prairies. This migratory flow within the country seems to be destabilizing the demographic patterns and is causing the decrease of the percentage of French, German or Ukrainian speakers when we compare to the rates registered at the turn of the twentieth century.

The growth scenarios that have been considered for the projection of the Canadian population within the next decades assume a faster increase in the foreign-born population, mainly Asian. Regardless of the origin of the newcomers, some surveys also show a higher diversity among the Canadian-born population. The changes experienced in women's fertility rates may determine the survival of the traditions and language inherited by the citizens of French origin and other representative European origin groups –such as the German and the Ukrainian- that have influenced the way of life of the Canadian Prairies along the last two centuries.

Our own analysis of the acculturation processes has permitted to corroborate our hypothesis that the Francophones who are present in the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are not assimilated to the English speaking majority. Our survey designed for measuring acculturation within the Francophones in the Canadian Prairies made possible to estimate the proportion of Francophone citizens that opt for assimilation as preferred mode of acculturation.

Due to the limited number of responses obtained in our survey (N=223) in comparison to the total number of citizens who report to have French as mother tongue in the last Canadian census in the provinces included in our study, we must be cautious when dealing with percentage estimations. Nevertheless, it seems accurate to conclude that integration is the most prevalent mode of acculturation among our target group. By engaging in the two cultures (mainstream and Francophone heritage culture), many of these citizens acquire dual competencies and dual social networks that support the citizen during the process of acculturation (Benet-Martinez, 2005: 1015-1050).

A dividing line must be drawn between linguistic assimilation and the process of acculturation. Although language is necessary to acculturate and interact with other

groups of population, communication is a very complex issue and it is considered to go beyond language. Consequently, it should not be concluded that assimilation occurs simply because a person becomes fluent in the host culture language. Statistics Canada has never proposed a statistical definition for terms such as “assimilation” or “rate of assimilation”. Language assimilation has been regarded in this country as a continuum process of either a loss or a lack of transmission of French language.

A poor enforcement of citizens rights by public institutions or the inability of individuals, social groups or organizations to defend their rights frequently leads to marginalization. In the case of Canada, the social integration policies seem to encourage the enforcement of citizens’ rights, which may be interpreted as the cause for the extremely low rate of marginalization found within the Francophone minority groups studied. The educational programmes implemented in Canada have also influenced on the promotion of cultural diversity as a national goal.

To sum up, we point at the efforts made by the Canadian authorities to promote the maintenance of heritage cultures as the most remarkable factor which has facilitated the contact among different ethno-cultural groups. Future research on the measures implemented by the Canadian government could justify whether the Canadian social model could serve as an example for those European countries which are currently experiencing serious difficulties due to the arrival of immigrants from a wide range of ethnic origins.

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