

Political Institutions, Ethnic Elites
and the Civic Engagement of Immigrants:
A Comparison of Canada and the United States

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Introduction:

Immigrants' political activities have long been viewed with suspicion in receiving countries, their foreignness raising questions of loyalty and suitability. Immigrants are either too radical or too conservative, too unversed in democracy to participate or so well-versed in the political game that they manipulate outcomes. Across the Western world non-citizen immigrants enjoy increased rights as citizenship restrictions on employment, social services and licensing requirements gradually disappear (Plascencia, Freeman and Setzler 1999; Soysal 1994).¹ Yet, political rights like voting and running for office have remained, for the most part, linked to citizenship. Although there are some proposals in the US to allow non-citizens to vote (Harper-Ho 2000), most suggestions for fostering immigrant political participation involve the recognition of dual citizenship, reaffirming the tie between citizenship and politics (Jones-Correa 1998). Even some proponents of dual citizenship raise questions of loyalty, suggesting that naturalized immigrants should "be obliged to prefer the interests of the U.S. over those of any other polity" (Schuck 1998: 245).

In this paper I argue that such fears ignore the significant isomorphism between a host country's political system and newcomers' participation. During the "first wave" of mass migration to North America from 1880 to 1920 some immigrants brought radical new ideas, significantly influencing worker and socialist movements.² The influence of "second wave" immigrants appears more subtle, a careful jockeying for space within

¹ The 1996 US Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (the Welfare Reform Act) is the most serious challenge to the trend de-linking citizenship from various socio-economic benefits. The Welfare Reform Act made sweeping changes to the distribution of public benefits for all residents of the US, both citizens and non-citizens. The changes for non-citizen immigrants were the most dramatic: as of August 22, 1997 most non-citizens would be denied Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and food stamps, and states could decide to refuse them Medicaid and welfare as well. In July 1997, the Budget Agreement restored SSI to those residing in the US on August 22, 1996, while food stamps benefits were restored in 1998. However, eligibility for these programs was not extended to legal immigrants entering the country after August 22, 1996, except in special cases. It is unclear at the present whether Welfare Reform heralds a new period linking citizenship and rights in the US.

existing political structures. I suggest that political institutions exert a selection effect on potential immigrant community leaders both before and after migration. These selection processes reinforce prevailing political discourses and ways of participating.

This paper is divided into four sections. In the first, I identify three critical components of immigrant political incorporation: community leadership, mobilizing structures and legitimate political discourses. I examine the relevance of these three concepts by applying them to a case study of Portuguese immigrants, introduced in section two. The Portuguese in Ontario and Massachusetts provide an ideal case since their migration patterns are very similar, yet political incorporation appears to be moving more quickly in Ontario than in Massachusetts. We have, in effect, a quasi-natural experiment: similar individuals from the same socio-cultural background arrive in receiving societies with differing institutional configurations. We can conclude that differences in political outcomes probably depend on the political structures of the receiving societies, not in the qualities of ordinary immigrants. This study thus builds on the work of Soysal (1994) and Jones-Correa (1998), both of whom document the importance of host society institutions in shaping immigrant political incorporation.

Rather than just saying institutional configurations matter, however, I show *how* they matter by examining the configuration of leadership within the Portuguese community. In this third section, I highlight the subtle selection effects that make it more likely for certain types of people to become community's advocates and I show how political discourses and mobilizing structures interact with leadership patterns. In the final section, I show why leadership patterns matter to ordinary immigrants, affecting the ways that they can become engaged in the civic and political life of their new country.

² See, for example, Rosenblum (1973) on the US and the 1978 *Canadian Ethnic Studies* issue on ethnic radicals in Canada.

Identifying Key Determinants of Immigrant Political Incorporation

Recent Census Bureau reports, newspaper articles and policy briefs from immigration think tanks have noted a striking decrease in immigrants' propensity to acquire American citizenship over the past three decades (Schmidley and Gibson 1999; Pan 2000; Camarota 2001). Census data from 1970 indicate that 63.6% of immigrants in the US were naturalized. By 2000, the Current Population Survey shows that only 37.4% of immigrants are US citizens. The steep decline is in part a statistical artifact since citizenship levels are calculated by dividing the total number of foreign-born by the number of naturalized individuals (Bloemraad 2000; Schmidley and Gibson 1999). During periods of rapid immigration—such as in the post-1965 period—the denominator (total migration) grows much more quickly than the numerator.³ Nonetheless, Schmidley and Gibson (1999) estimate that changes in migrant cohorts only account for a third of the citizenship decline. Some consider this trend a troubling indication that “recent immigrants may not be developing a strong attachment to the United States... [and] a very large percentage of established immigrants have chosen not to participate fully in the civic life of their new country” (Camarota 2001: 10).

It is an open question, however, whether immigrants choose to stay out of American political and civic life or whether the US has failed to invite them in. Mainstream and immigrant leaders play a central role in promoting political and civic participation. The famed urban political machines of the 19th and early 20th centuries encouraged local leaders from certain ethnic communities to mobilize immigrant compatriots while others were purposefully kept out of the corridors of power (Erie 1984). Research at the end of the 20th century suggests that even this partial immigrant mobilization no longer holds. Jones-Correa (1998) reports that machines in Queens, NY

³ Immigrants are required by law to wait five years before applying for citizenship and most wait a number of years longer.

do little to encourage naturalization or the electoral involvement of Latino immigrants in the area.

Declining levels of citizenship appear to parallel a more general decline in civic engagement and political participation among the American population (Putnam 2000). Starting sometime between the 1960 and 1975, Americans have become less likely to vote, to attending a political meetings or to be a member of civic association. In 1960, 62.8 percent of voting-age Americans cast a ballot in the Presidential election. By 1996, this dropped to 48.9%. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) suggest that as political elites cease to mobilize citizens personally voters tune out and feel detached from the political process. To understand immigrant political incorporation we must consequently consider the role of mainstream and ethnic elites in mobilizing newcomers.

Changes in elite mobilization styles parallel changes in the way people engage in politics. If the 1960s are known for mass political action—the civil rights movement, feminist movement and anti-Vietnam war protests come to mind—the dawn of the 21st century appears better characterized by professional interest and advocacy groups such as the American Association of Retired People, the Sierra Club and the National Council of La Raza (Walker 1991; Minkoff 1995). These Washington-based advocacy groups usually employ professional paid staff while membership, if any, often rests on annual dues rather than regular participation. Although the presence of these groups appears to have widened the range of issues considered in political circles, the new advocacy industry can exclude many ordinary people. Success requires unique skills associated with higher education, excellent command of the English language and familiarity with American political structures. For those who lack these skills, particularly immigrant communities, arenas of participation can narrow substantially.

Skocpol (1999) suggests that modern advocacy politics has replaced broader mobilization patterns based on Americans' membership in civic associations.

Immigrants, in particular, benefit from political mobilization around group membership. New to a country, often speaking a different language, immigrants come together in religious congregations, ethnic business associations, social clubs and cultural organizations. In the past, politicians often sought out such groups as an easy and efficient means by which to reach large numbers of voters (Parenti 1967). If these traditional forms of political mobilization are being replaced by television ads and professional advocacy politics, immigrant political incorporation might well suffer.

The Power of Comparison: the Canadian Case

In order to evaluate whether the structure of the political system influences immigrant political incorporation, we need a cross-national comparative methodology. Like the United States, Canada accepts large numbers of immigrants each year, has a liberal naturalization policy, and enjoys a relatively open political system capable of accepting newcomers. While largely lacking a history of slavery, the country shares with the US past policies of Asian exclusion, Japanese internment and, up until the mid-1960s, an immigration system that favored white, European immigrants. In contrast to the US, Canada inherited a Parliamentary system from Great Britain and today administers a relatively developed immigrant settlement policy, providing federal funding for English language training and job placement assistance to new immigrant arrivals. Over the past few decades, the American federal government has only offered such support to legally recognized refugees.

Comparing US and Canadian citizenship levels over the course of the past century, we find a pattern of historic similarity that abruptly ends after 1970. Graph 1 tracks the percentage of adult immigrants (those 21 or older) who report being a naturalized citizen of their new country over the course of the 20th century.⁴ In the first

⁴ The immigrant population is defined as all those born outside of the country. For those censuses where it is possible, this excludes those who received US or Canadian citizenship via their parents at birth.

two decades, the US figures include only adult males since census enumerators did not collect citizenship information on women.⁵ In the Canadian case, the data from 1901-1941 refer to non-British immigrants due to the peculiar nature of citizenship and naturalization in Canada before 1947.⁶ We find that in the first half of the century, citizenship levels in the US and Canada closely track each other, rising and falling in tandem.⁷ In the US case, citizenship levels fell from 67% in 1900 to 49% in 1920, only to rise again to a historic high of 79% in 1950. The Canadian level did not begin the century as high as in the US, at only 55%, but it also reached its peak in 1951 with 79% of the adult immigrant population reporting Canadian citizenship.

Graph 1 about here.

Canada opened its doors to mass immigration earlier than the US, believing that post-World War II prosperity would be linked to strong population growth. The large numbers entering Canada in the 1950s (over 1.5 million newcomers to a country with a population of only 14 million in 1951) explains much of the significant drop in reported citizenship for 1961. Unfortunately no American data is available since the census did not ask a citizenship question in 1960. In 1970/71, the first census after the US and Canada ended immigration restrictions aimed at keeping out non-whites, citizenship levels were again roughly equal. However, since that time there has been rapid and striking divergence: US citizenship levels plummet from 64% in 1970 to 35% in the 1997

⁵ The absence of citizenship information on women likely results from women's lack of federal suffrage and the nationality laws then in place. These generally mandated that women's citizenship follow that of their husband (Bredbrenner 1998).

⁶ It was only on January 1, 1947 that Canadians could officially declare themselves Canadian citizens. Prior to 1947, Canadian nationals were legally defined as British subjects, both in Canada and abroad. Immigrants from Britain or other areas of the Commonwealth therefore already possessed the citizenship status of Canadians when they immigrated. Non-British immigrants could naturalize to become Canadian nationals, a status that guaranteed them entry into Canada, but not into other areas of the Commonwealth (Angus 1937; Kaplan 1993).

⁷ Like all census data, these figures represent only the reported citizenship of immigrants. It is noteworthy that in both 1921 and 1941—the two census enumerations most linked to World War One and Two—that Canadian reports of citizenship jump above American levels, though in the decade prior, American citizenship levels were higher. It is probable that the two wars, in which Canada was more heavily involved for a longer period, impacted reports of nationality.

Current Population Survey. In comparison, Canadian citizenship levels have risen slightly, despite significant immigration. In 1961 60% of immigrants over the age of 21 reported being naturalized. By the 1996 Census, this figure increased to 72%.

Of course, migration streams to the United States and Canada have some important differences. The US, for example, attracts large percentages of immigrants from Mexico and Latin America. Canada receives few immigrants from these areas, but instead draws heavily from Asia, both the Indian subcontinent and East Asia. Since we know that immigrant groups differ significantly in their propensity to naturalize (Portes and Mozo 1985; Liang 1994), selection effects might produce striking aggregate differences. Yet, even when we control for country of birth, a North American naturalization gap persists, as can be seen in Table 1. Comparing only established immigrants—those who have been in North America for 11-15 years—we find that citizenship levels are much higher in Canada than in the US across a variety of migrant groups. Elsewhere I demonstrate that the US-Canada citizenship gap remains robust even after taking into account citizenship regulations, the relative advantages and disadvantages of citizenship in the two countries and the individual attributes of newcomers (Bloemraad forthcoming).

Table 1 about here.

I think that part of the reason for this North American naturalization gap lies in differing patterns of immigrant political incorporation found in the US and Canada. While levels of citizenship are an imperfect indicator of civic engagement and political participation—many activities do not require citizenship—certain core political acts, such as voting and running for office, are restricted to citizens. Naturalization can confer legitimacy: immigrants may feel more comfortable asserting themselves once they can claim citizenship and legislators might place more weight on a letter written by a citizen than one sent by a non-naturalized resident. Although some claim we are heading into a

post-national age where legal citizenship loses its importance (Soysal 1994; Jacobson 1996), opinion polls reveal that even among groups with low naturalization levels, the vast majority of immigrants want to become citizens of their new home country (de la Garza, et al. 1992).⁸

The timing of the divergence between Canadian and American citizenship levels suggests a third element to consider in an account of immigrant political incorporation, political discourses. In 1971, the Canadian federal government adopted an official policy of multiculturalism.⁹ As part of this policy, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau outlined four objectives: providing government support to ethnic organizations, eliminating cultural barriers to participation in Canadian society, promoting dialogue between all Canadian cultural groups, and assisting immigrants to learn one of Canada's two official languages. With the caveat "resources permitting," Trudeau outlined a policy that was unabashedly interventionist: "We are free to be ourselves. But this cannot be left to chance. It must be fostered and pursued actively" (in Palmer, 1975: 137). As Fleras and Elliot (1992) suggest, multiculturalism was not only a recognition of Canada's objective diversity, but it became a state ideology of how Canada represented itself to the world and to its own citizens, in addition to being a federal program that disbursed grants and government monies. Later the focus of multiculturalism shifted to attacking barriers of racism and discrimination as new arrivals overwhelming came from non-European countries (Canada 1984).

We can ask what impact such government-promoted ideologies and integration efforts have on immigrants or, more generally, whether the political or civic culture of a

⁸ Mexican immigrants have extremely low levels of naturalization yet when asked in the National Latino Survey, only 14% claimed to have no interest in becoming a US citizen.

⁹ The original multiculturalism policy was directed at non-English and non-French ethnic groups that had protested against a bicultural definition of Canada during the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Some commentators contend that multiculturalism has little to do with immigrants, but rather was intended as an attack against the growing separatist movement in Quebec (Labelle, Rocher and Rocher

receiving society matters. Almond and Verba (1963) argued that nations have particular civic cultures that promote or depress political participation. Along many dimensions the US and Canada, both are liberal-democracies in a “New World” context, share many similarities. Yet, Martin Seymour Lipset (1990) claims that the American Revolution created two distinct political cultures on the North American continent: revolutionary radicals in the US espoused individualism, universalism and distrust of the state while the Loyalists who fled north established a statist, group-oriented political culture that tends to defer to authority. According to Lipset, these cultural differences not only explain the difference between the US melting pot and Canadian multicultural ideologies, but also serve to attract different immigrants.

The Portuguese Case Study: Data and Methodology

To investigate the effect of community leadership, mobilizing structures and political discourses on immigrant political incorporation, I consider the case of Portuguese immigrants living in the United States and Canada, with a particular focus on the greater Boston and Toronto areas. The Portuguese offer an ideal test case since post-World War II migration from Portugal to the United States and Canada draws from the same sending areas and includes individuals with similar backgrounds. Almedia (2000) claims that Portuguese immigrants share so many socio-cultural features that the two North American populations are largely interchangeable. In my own interviews, many respondents told of a sibling, cousin or friend who lives on the other side of the border. We might consequently consider Portuguese migration equivalent to a quasi-natural experiment: if individuals who come to North America share the same cultural, socio-economic and political background, any difference in political incorporation can be attributed to the characteristics of the host societies.

1995). By claiming that all ethno-racial groups are equal in Canada, the government wished to reduce Francophone Quebec's nationalism to one ethnicity among others.

Portugal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimates that in 1997 almost 22% of the Portuguese living abroad resided in North America, with about half a million people each in the United States and Canada (Rocha-Trindade 2000). Census estimates put the number of Portuguese immigrants at 165,040 in Canada (1991) and 210,122 in the United States (1990).¹⁰ In this paper, I concentrate on the substantial post-World War II flow of Portuguese to Massachusetts and Ontario.¹¹ In both countries, approximately 60-70% hail from the Azores, while another 20-30% hail from mainland Portugal, often from the north or Lisbon area (Anderson 1983; Ito-Alder 1980; Teixeira and Lavigne 1992). Smaller groups come from Madeira or Portugal's former African colonies. Most arrived in the second half of the 1960s or first half of the 1970s. Teixeira and Lavigne estimate that in the late 1960s, over 10,000 Portuguese migrated to the US every year, while Canada—with a tenth of the US population—welcomed about 6,000 per year (1992: 5). In 1990, the Portuguese represented about 13% of all foreign-born residents in Massachusetts, constituting the largest immigrant group in the state. In Ontario, Portuguese-born individuals accounted for 4.9% of all immigrants in 1991, one of the five largest immigrant groups in the province.

Portuguese immigration is largely ethnically homogeneous and almost all are Roman Catholic.¹² Though inter-regional differences exist between Portuguese immigrants—Azoreans and mainlanders continue to express old stereo-types of each

¹⁰ The discrepancy arises because the Portuguese government also apparently counts the North American-born children of Portuguese immigrants. If we expand our definition of Portuguese to include all those who report Portuguese ancestry, in 1990 1,153,351 people in the US claimed some Portuguese roots while in Canada 335,110 individuals reported Portuguese ethnicity in 1996.

¹¹ The US has a longer history of Portuguese migration. Starting in the 19th century with the whale boats, and continuing with the pull of New England factories and California agriculture, substantial numbers of Portuguese moved to the US between 1880-1920. As with most other groups, immigration quotas in the 1920s reduced Portuguese migration to a trickle. It only regained steam in the 1950s after a series of natural disasters in the Azores lead New England Senators, including John F. Kennedy, to convince Congress to admit a special quota of Portuguese immigrants (Pap 1981). A few years earlier, Canadian immigrant officials had begun recruiting Portuguese laborers to work on Canadian farms, mines and on the railroads (Marques and Marujo 1993).

other—the overall picture is of broad similarities. Walking in the traditional areas of Portuguese settlement in Massachusetts or Ontario, you see a similar collection of travel agencies and restaurants, sports bars and small grocery stores. You can often identify a Portuguese home by the statute of the Virgin Mary in the front yard. Talking with these immigrants, you hear similar stories: life in Portugal was difficult; here it is better, but you must work many, many hours. What little free time people have is spent in social clubs, with family and friends or watching TV.

Before moving to North America the majority of Portuguese immigrants engaged in subsistence farming, fishing or manual labor. Many have extremely low levels of education since free schooling only extended to grade four in the years of the dictatorship. Nonetheless, Portuguese workforce participation rates in North America resemble those of the native-born. The majority of Portuguese immigrants engage in similar manual and semi-skilled jobs, such as cleaning, factory work and, for men, construction. **Appendix A** summarizes a number of socio-demographic indicators for Portuguese-born residents in Massachusetts and Ontario based on 1990/91 census data. Most important for the purposes here, the majority of Portuguese immigrants lived part of their lives under the dictatorship, a time when few people voted (and then, only for one party) and during which a secret police repressed political dissent. Many point to Portugal's fascist history as the reason that Portuguese immigrants are politically “invisible” in North America.

The bulk of my data comes from 60 qualitative interviews I conducted with first and second generation Portuguese living in the greater Boston and Toronto areas. Everyone interviewed had at some time lived and/or worked in the ‘traditional’ areas of Portuguese settlement: East Cambridge and Somerville in the Boston metropolitan

¹² In the past, when Cape Verde was still a Portuguese colony, Americans in New England would occasionally call all Portuguese “black Portugee” (Pap 1981), expanding the southern one-drop rule to a

area, or in downtown Toronto, west of Kensington Market. In each country, the interviews were broken down into two roughly equal sets. First, I sought out “ordinary” Portuguese immigrants. I used referrals from a variety of sources to select people with varying backgrounds, migration histories and socio-demographic characteristics that I felt might be theoretically and substantively important to political incorporation. I purposeful did not use organizational referrals or extended snowball sampling for this group because I did not want to sample based on prior civic engagement or political activity. For the second set of interviews, I interviewed Portuguese community leaders. These people were either involved in an organization that served the Portuguese community or were identified by others as spokespersons or opinion-makers.

The interviews were conducted between July 1997 and January 2001. I followed a semi-structured interview schedule that asked questions about the individual’s migration history, experiences living in Portugal and North America, citizenship and political participation, organizational involvement and general feelings about the US or Canada. Most interviews lasted 90 minutes, though in a few memorable cases we talked over five hours. The majority of the interviews were conducted in English, taped and transcribed. When a respondent preferred to speak in Portuguese, I used a co-ethnic interpreter. The interview data are supplemented by documentary evidence from various organizations serving the Portuguese in the United States and Canada.

Community Leadership: Selection Mechanisms and the Left

Lipset believes that initial differences in political culture between the US and Canada were reinforced by migrant selection mechanisms: radical democrats would choose republican America while conservative migrants were attracted to monarchical Canada (1990: 183). Whatever its historical accuracy, this prediction does not ring true

whole immigrant population. I do not include those born in Cape Verde in my study.

for contemporary Portuguese migration.¹³ Community advocates in Toronto are, in general, more to the left than the community as a whole, and they are more actively engaged in social justice issues than their compatriots in the Boston area. In this section I suggest that pre- and post-migration selection mechanisms cause the difference, but in a way contrary to what Lipset might suggest. In a few notable cases, immigrants' images of Canada and the US act lead them to prefer one country over another. Once in North America, left-wing beliefs can be reinforced or developed by post-migration institutions. Particularly important in this regard is the state-assisted "settlement industry" in Toronto (largely absent in Boston) and the political party system.

In Massachusetts, Portuguese immigrants who vote tend to support the Democratic party. Given their immigrant background and socio-economic status, their choice is not surprising. As most community leaders will explain, however, Portuguese Democratic support is not necessarily linked to approval of a particular party ideology. Rather, many see themselves as Kennedy Democrats, putting loyalty to the Kennedy clan first and political ideology second.¹⁴ In Ontario, most Portuguese support the Liberals, Canada's centrist political party.¹⁵ As in Massachusetts, loyalty to the Liberals is often tied to a person, in this case former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, not a platform. For those worried about voting for the 'wrong' side, the Liberals also offer the Goldilocks advantage: not too far to the right nor too far to the left, a designation that could also apply to many Portuguese in Massachusetts.

In contrast, a large number of community leaders and activists in Toronto consider themselves New Democratic Party (NDP) supporters and often formalize that

¹³ I am not entirely convinced that Lipset's observation is historically accurate, but it is worth further investigation.

¹⁴ In California, more Portuguese appear to support the Republican party than in Massachusetts.

¹⁵ Until recently, Ontario—and especially Toronto—was characterized by a three party system: the New Democratic party to the left, the Liberals in the center and the Progressive Conservatives on the right. Recently, a new party of the right, the Alliance, has been making limited gains at the federal level in Ontario.

relationship through party affiliation and activism. As **Table 2** highlights, eight of 17 community leaders I interviewed claim to usually vote for the NDP, and of these, seven are or have been party members. Many appeal to the language of social justice to explain their activism. Rosemary, for example, does advocacy around education issues, promoting participation by Portuguese parents in school decision-making. When I asked about the relation between her political stance and her activism, she first denied a link, then quickly changed her mind:

Irene: Now this activity... has that been separate from your activity as an NDP supporter? Do they overlap?

Rosemary: They don't overlap.

Well, they overlap, certainly. It's not separate. Because I know that the reason that—and you call it a vocation, it's correct—that the way I work, it has to do... It fits in the NDP philosophy. Education for all. Taking care of the disadvantaged. Equity. Antiracism education. All those things, they are the philosophy of the NDP. So yes, they go hand in hand... I go all the way to make sure that we do everything we can to meet those kids' needs.

Individuals like Rosemary do not promote their political party during their community work, but they do share a discourse centered on class equity and social justice.

In the US, the majority of the community leaders who can vote and were willing to share their party loyalty claimed to be Democrats. Rarely, however, do these people link their community activism to clear political ideologies. Indeed, only three reported party membership, and of these three, one admitted to voting primarily for Republicans in recent years. Tony, for instance, has been active in health advocacy and negotiating Portuguese-language programming from the local TV cable company. When I asked him what was the most important issue facing the Portuguese community, he answered:

Family. Because I believe that it is in the house that everything starts. If the family is good, then we get a great foundation, and we can get these people to develop in this county, in the American sense of the word, and be more involved in politics and so forth. [...]

[Portuguese immigrants] come to America, and they think that the government is going to take care of them. ...there are a lot of services here that help those who don't have a job, who have problems

financially. And then they feel, “Hey, this is good.” And this is a setback. I’m against this kind of service. I’m not saying that I’m a Republican, but people should be forced to go ahead and succeed.

Many Boston-area leaders compartmentalize their involvement in the community, understanding their activism on an issue-by-issue basis. To a large extent, their thinking more closely reflects the ideas of the majority of Portuguese immigrants than community leaders in Toronto. Why the difference in political orientation?

Pre-Migration Selection: Why Canada?

Scholars such as George Borjas (1999) believe the United States should follow Canada’s example and institute an immigration ‘point system’ to filter permanent entry into the country. Most legal immigrants to the US acquire their status through family ties: a relative who already lives in the US must sponsor their application to migrate.¹⁶ In addition to family sponsorship, Canada offers would-be immigrants the chance to apply as an “independent” immigrant. These people are accepted for their potential contribution to the Canadian economy, a calculation based on assessing ‘points’ depending on age, education, language skills and work experience. Those who score enough points are given permanent residency. According to Borjas, the point system screens out individuals with low human capital, resulting in better socio-economic outcomes for immigrants and the host society. Others challenge Borjas’s conclusions. Jeffrey Reitz (1998), for example, argues that the impact of the Canadian point system is exaggerated and, in any case, economic outcomes have much more to do with institutional configurations than individuals’ human capital attributes.

¹⁶ The US preference system heavily favors family reunification. In distributing immigrant visas, only two of six preferences are given independent of family ties, either to people of exceptional ability or to individuals fulfilling labor shortages. For those who wish to migrate but who have no relatives in the United States, an alternative path to permanent residency is to first enter the US under a student visa or temporary work permit and then attempt to change status once in the country.

In comparison to the debate on economic incorporation, the impact of selection mechanism on *political* incorporation is rarely discussed. A long history of political science research tells us that political involvement is highly correlated with individual characteristics such as education and feelings of political efficacy (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Scholzman and Brady 1995). If Canada's immigration policy truly selects individuals with better language skills and more years of schooling, we might expect immigrants in Canada to be more politically active than their counterparts in the US. I argue that although a certain selection mechanism influences community leadership in the Toronto area, selection is based on political ideologies, not human capital attributes.

Without the barrier of immigration laws, the majority of Portuguese emigrants—or at least, Azoreans—would have moved to the United States. At the height of post-war Portuguese migration, the US was widely seen as *the* land of economic opportunity.¹⁷ When Canadian immigration officials first went to Portugal in the 1950s, they found that “people in the Azores did not ‘emigrate’ but rather ‘went to America’” (Oliveira 2000: 86). The US felt familiar and it exuded an aura of adventure, especially for young people. Canada was, at best, a second-place option. Many who initially moved to Canada went because they had no relatives able or willing to sponsor them to the US. These early pioneers then established migration chains that brought family and friends to Canada

Most people I interviewed in the Boston area came to the US through family sponsorship. In Canada, more people reported migrating as an independent immigrant or the family member of an independent immigrant. However, many of these independent immigrants do not possess the human capital skills associated with the

¹⁷ The idea of making one's fortune was especially strong during the dictatorship. Since 1974, Portugal's economic situation has steadily improved, especially after Portugal's entry into the European Union in 1986. Familiarity was bred from stories of friends and relatives who had migrated earlier, while the US military presence in the Azores provides points of contact for some would-be migrants.

Canadian point system. In the early post-war period, Canadian officials were told to search for applicants with “roughened and hardened” hands (Marques and Marujo 1993) since the Canadian economy needed agricultural and manual labor. I found few notable differences in the socio-economic backgrounds of ordinary Portuguese immigrants I interviewed in Toronto and Boston.

Among community leaders, however, I found a slightly different pattern. In Toronto, a few individuals explicitly labeled themselves as political immigrants, not economic migrants, and they pointed to ideological ‘fit’ as one reason they chose Canada over the US. No one I met in the US explained his or her migration in political terms though, as in Canada, there were a few people who left Portugal to avoid being drafted in the colonial wars of the 1960s and early ‘70s. There were two types of “political” immigrants: a few ethnic Portuguese who had lived most of their lives in Portugal’s African colonies and then left after the colonies gained independence, and a larger group from the mainland that had been involved in the Communist party and its efforts to overthrow the dictatorship. I focus on the latter group, people who not only brought a left-wing ideology to Canada, but who also influenced a number of young Portuguese immigrants going to school in Toronto. In some cases, these individuals embraced the Communist party and ideology. Others, probably a larger group, were less enamored, but since there was no other organized or viable opposition, they joined in events or participated in networks organized by the Communists.

Although Canada never experienced the McCarthy witch-hunts of the 1950s, it does not necessarily have a history of welcoming left-leaning immigrants with open arms (Whitaker 1987). Nonetheless, a number of those involved in opposition to the Salazar/Caetano regime saw Canada as the more welcoming country.¹⁸ In Toronto, the

¹⁸ This perception has some basis in reality. In the US, an individual must formally declare past Communist affiliation on the naturalization application. Past membership in the Communist party constitutes grounds

Portuguese Canadian Democratic Association, created in 1959 "to form a front against the Fascist regime in Portugal," has been home to many left-wing Portuguese immigrants (Marques and Medeiros 1984). Today it continues to be active in intellectual circles, occasionally bringing in a writer, politician or artist from Portugal. In contrast, no one with whom I spoke in Massachusetts can remember any anti-fascist club in the Boston area. There are some reports that in the early post-war period a few individuals wrote to Portuguese-language newspapers advocating a republican government along American lines, but any incipient attempts to organize such opposition quickly fizzled out into neutrality or apathy towards the regime at home (Pap 1981; Rogers 1974).

Jose Manuel has been active in Toronto trying to bridge what he considers the substantial gap between ordinary Portuguese immigrants and the Canadian political system. When I asked why he left Portugal, Jose Manuel explained, "As a matter of fact, I left for political reasons, period. I was in the first year of [university] when I was arrested for the first time by the political police. I was not affiliated with any movement or any party. I was against fascism." When he felt things were becoming intolerable in Portugal, he followed a friend's advice and entered Canada on a tourist visa. His vague positive impression of Canada was confirmed in those early days and he decided to stay, regularizing his situation. In Toronto he occasionally attended meeting of the Portuguese Canadian Democratic Association and has been active in a variety of community activities.

In a like manner, Valadao also considers himself a political migrant although he came to Canada as a legal independent immigrant. Valadao participated in a number of organizations opposed to the dictatorship in the 1960s, drawing the attention of the secret police. When he found his chances for professional advancement consequently

upon which the INS can refuse to grant American citizenship. There is no similar question on Canadian citizenship forms.

blocked, he decided to emigrate and, after careful research, he chose Canada. Initially he had hoped to return to Portugal once the dictatorship fell, but he eventually decided to stay. His decision has probably been to the benefit of the Portuguese-Canadian community: Valadao has helped initiate a number of projects within the community and is widely respected.

Other Canadian-Portuguese leaders trace their activism to people like Valadao and Jose Manuel. Nelson came to Canada as a fifteen year old in 1968 to avoid being drafted into the Portuguese army. He, like Jose Manuel, entered on a tourist visa, then family sponsored his request for permanent status. Nelson soon was attending a Canadian high school and participating in his local church, especially the Portuguese youth group. He vividly remembers what he terms his first political awakening. He innocently asked whether they couldn't organize a youth group like the ones in Portugal:

It was a cross-breed of the scouts. They did a lot of camping, and knot-tying, and singing the praises of government. I only realized they were a fascist organization when I arrived in Canada, because one of the guys once had a scouts group, and I suggested, "Why not a *Mocidade Portuguesa* chapter?" And he was one of the ones that had been politically involved in Portugal with the Communist party. He told me, "My God, can't you see that's a fascist organization, the way they salute with their fists clenched, and their arms outstretched?" And the "S" on the buckles was like a square "S", for Salazar, for a semi-swastika.

And it was only at the age of fifteen, did I come to realize—and I had to come to Canada to realize that—that I had lived my first fifteen years of my life in a fascist government. I had never come to that conclusion on my own.

As Nelson began to re-evaluate his beliefs, he became more interested in Canadian politics. Initially the New Democratic Party (NDP) ideology attracted him as an antidote to fascism, then as a party opposed to any system of privilege, "I knew by then that the NDP was my party because it was just by then that I had decided to turn against the system, because I saw the system in Portugal... So by now, any party that was against the system was my party." When close friends became active, he was slowly drawn in.

Advocacy Jobs: Social Justice and the Immigrant Settlement Industry

Pre-migration decision-making made it more likely that left-leaning individuals would go to Canada and they, in turn, influenced some young Portuguese to adopt similar beliefs, although along lines congruent with the Canadian political system. However, ideological selection processes are not sufficient to explain the heavy over-representation of left-wing community leaders in Toronto compared to the more conventional political ideologies found amongst Boston-area activists. Pre-migration selection mechanisms were reinforced by the post-migration settlement industry, a sector offering more employment possibilities in Ontario than in Massachusetts.

What I term the “immigrant settlement industry” includes non-profit voluntary associations and social service agencies, public hospitals and government departments and for-profit private businesses. Some argue that for-profit, public and non-profit sectors are analytically distinct (Salamon 1999), but in the case of immigrant settlement little distinguishes these three sectors. Indeed, many of the community activists I interviewed regularly moved between public, for-profit and non-profit employment. What unifies these different jobs and organizations is a concern with helping immigrants and their families adjust to life in the new country. This adjustment might include English as a Second Language training, assistance with job-placement and family counseling. While many agencies offering such services are public or non-profit, some for-profit businesses—such as travel agencies self-styled immigration consultants—assist immigrants in filling out applications for pensions, sponsorship papers or other forms.

In Canada, community leaders were more likely to have made a career out of immigrant settlement work. Some told me they always envisioned a future in community service. Dan, a Canadian-born son of immigrant parents, recalls:

I remember going through high school, and being encouraged to become an accountant, and being encouraged to become a lawyer.

The guidance counselor had me pegged for one or the other... but I just couldn't stand it. You know what I mean?

I always just wanted to go the social services route. I always just wanted to listen to people, and to help people, as best I could, you know. The sappy reason why all of us social work types get into this type of work. [...] And I've always wanted to do that with the Portuguese community, because I've always saw the need here as being the greatest and it's my roots, and it's always been the community that I wanted to work with. So it's never been a question.

After completing university, he found employment in a public agency, coordinating interpretation services for immigrants, then he worked briefly as a paralegal working on immigration. This job was followed by a series of positions at various social service agencies, mostly dealing with the Portuguese, but also serving other immigrant clientele. Given his interest in social service, especially with immigrants, Toronto provided a relatively rich environment for Dan to build a career.

In contrast, Teresa never planned to work in social services. When she first arrived in Canada, she found work as an office clerk in a large corporation. She stayed in the position for almost ten years until illness forced her to quit. After a period at home, she was offered a position doing office work for a Portuguese non-profit. This job then re-channeled her career into immigrant settlement work. She soon moved to a better position doing front-line support with Portuguese clients in a social service agency and today she works at a large community non-profit organization. In this position, she has initiated a number of programs for Portuguese immigrants. Working in the immigrant settlement industry also changed her politics. Teresa voted Progressive Conservative when she first became a citizen but now she supports the more centrist Liberal party.

Celia's work has focused on advocacy rather than direct service provision, but like Teresa, she was initially drawn into community activism because she needed a job, not due to a strong internal conviction. As a young university graduate, she stumbled onto a government communications position that focused on immigrant outreach. This first job put her on the path to community leadership:

I wasn't interacting with the Portuguese community all that much at that time. ...it wasn't until I worked at [the department] that my interaction became more interaction of people calling and saying, "Do you know where we can get grants?" and "Do you know who I can all to get this information and that information?" Because, once a member of your own community is in a place where you're perceived to have some knowledge or some power, you automatically get those calls, and an invitation to go to events and so on. Even though I wasn't filling a powerful position by no stretch of the imagination....

And those were very positive experiences. I also got the opportunity to work with all ethnic groups. It wasn't just with my community. So, it opened up my horizons where other ethnic groups are at, where my community stood. But it also gave me an opportunity to make [government] a little more accessible to ethnic groups who hadn't before had the opportunity to step in there and to get a feel of how the government works and so on.

This initial positive experience led Celia to stay in the area of immigrant advocacy: she later worked for a non-profit community agency and most recently in another government department. Over the last 15 years she has been actively involved in many community projects, most focused on developing a stronger advocacy stance and political voice for the Portuguese community.

In Massachusetts, a few people tell stories similar to those of Teresa and Celia. Rosana moved to Cambridge as a child and, like many immigrant youngsters, quickly found herself helping her family deal with their new environment or, as she puts it, "I became everybody's caretaker." Since she picked up English relatively quickly, and learned to read and write English in school, Rosana would be called upon to phone the utility company if there was a problem with a bill or to translate letters sent to her parents. Upon graduation from high school, she entered secretarial college and went to work as an administrative assistant in health care. Ten years later, Teresa went back to school on a part-time basis, quit her secretarial job and became a caseworker for newcomers at a large non-profit organization. Providing assistance to immigrants ceased to be something she did only for family and friends on a volunteer basis and now

became a job. Today she works for a different non-profit group, advocating on behalf of immigrant rights.

Although some in Massachusetts devote their career to immigrant settlement, it is much harder to do in the US than in Canada. The Canadian state funds immigrant integration much more heavily than the US. Government settlement efforts can be dated to 1950 when Canada first set up the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.¹⁹ Over the next decade a range of services were offered to immigrants, including language classes, health care, job-placement assistance and citizenship classes. Funding for these initiatives were often split between federal and provincial governments, with federal intervention increasing over time (Lanphier and Lukomskyj 1994). There are important limits in provision. Historically, many services were directed at working-age males, considered family breadwinners, while others received little help. Programs are also restricted to newcomers.²⁰ Nonetheless, such programs are much more than the services offered by the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the post-World War II period. Generally, the US government provides support to those legally admitted as refugees, but the INS does little for immigrant newcomers.²¹

A larger settlement industry encourages more people to become community advocates. To some extent this occurs because the individual's employment is tied to the community. Those who are being paid to do immigrant settlement have a strong economic interest in showing government and other potential funders that their services

¹⁹ Depending on the government of the day, a number of different departments handled immigration prior to 1950. Officials focused on recruiting, processing and screening would-be immigrants, not on settlement.

²⁰ Acquiring citizenship or having more than one or three years of residence might make an immigrant ineligible for settlement policies.

²¹ Beyond the federal government, local governments in the US and Canada sometimes fund initiatives directed to immigrants, and there are a wide array of non-profit organizations in both countries that also provide services, in addition to for-profit options. Generally speaking, the Ontario provincial and Toronto municipal governments have been more active than their counterparts in Massachusetts, in line with the more interventionist nature of Canadian government, especially since the mid-1960s. The US, in contrast, offers many more foundations and private sources of funding than found in Canada, thus compensating in some degree for restricted government funds and providing groups with some autonomy from the vagrancies of public finance.

are needed. More subtly, however, working with compatriots often provides—especially to those endowed with better language skills and higher education—a better understanding of the barriers others face in making their homes in the new country. These individuals then use their skills to speak out on behalf of compatriots, although not necessarily with a unified voice and perhaps not always reflecting community needs.

Agostinho, for example, felt a wide gulf between his socio-economic background and geographic origins in Africa compared to the majority of Portuguese from the Azores who had little education. He came to Canada as a professional and initially wanted little to do with the community. He sought a job in his field, but employers were unwilling to accept his foreign credentials or required “Canadian experience.” Eventually he found work in the immigrant settlement industry:

You know, I still have 52 letters of “Don’t call us, we’ll call you.” I’ve kept those. And eventually, I decided, given my knowledge of English and Portuguese, to consider doing something else. And I put my name down for a few translation agencies, and also approached the Immigration Department to see if they were in need of interpreters... And so that’s how I started, I started doing some translations.

This work quickly evolved to higher positions and led Agostinho to become more involved in community activism. As he explains it, “Once you get involved, it is always the same people, you know? Who are you going to call to do something? ‘Well, what about the guy who has done that for those people?’ So it goes in circles.” Today, he runs his own business providing services to immigrant compatriots. When I ask why he remains active in the community despite his initial reluctance, his answer includes themes of self-interest and public service:

I: Why have you stayed so involved in the Portuguese community?

L: The nature of my business. [...] If I had maybe found a job with [a large corporation], I might have gone into a different direction, if you know what I mean. But my occupation brought me to very close dealings with the community, you know. I mean I can’t ignore... You live in a community, you have to be part of the community. And in whatever small way you can, you have to do something.

Without the employment opportunities available in immigrant settlement, it is likely that Agostinho might have directed his energies at mainstream organizations or perhaps eschewed active civic involvement entirely.

One does not, of course, need to be working in immigrant settlement in order to engaged in the community. The Toquevillean image of the US suggests that active citizens (should) contribute to their community within the broader category of citizen. Armando holds leadership positions in a number of Boston-area Portuguese associations and regularly helps to organize community events. He works long hours as a high-level manager in a for-profit business, yet still finds time for meetings in the evenings and on weekends. In a similar way, Eduardo's activism in Toronto has little to do with furthering his business interests except for the indirect publicity he receives from his community involvement. Eduardo also works many volunteer hours, occasionally taking time from his regular workday for important community events.

Armando and Eduardo are, however, the exception. The majority of those who are highly active in the Portuguese community combine their volunteer work with professional or job-related tasks. John, for example, sits on the board of a local non-profit, an activity that dovetails nicely with his public-sector job overseeing the disbursement of government grants for refugee and immigrant services. Ana Maria works in education and has, in her free time, advocated for improved schooling opportunities for immigrant youngsters. Most of those who do not work in the immigrant settlement sector have little time to devote to community activism—many work two jobs or regular overtime—and they have little chance to learn the skills needed to be a community leader, such as running meetings, writing grant proposals and speaking to the media. Armando, due to his high position, has the flexibility to use company time to organize events. His superiors see his activities as a way to improve the company's

image among the public. Eduardo, because he is self-employed, can set his own hours and sometimes uses his company's resources (like the office photocopier) to help out local associations. Holding a job in the immigrant settlement industry improves the chances that an individual will have the time, inclination, skills and resources to engage in community advocacy. Consequently, a larger settlement industry begets more chances at developing community leadership.

The Party System: Finding a Place

The transfer of civic engagement into political advocacy and participation is enhanced through an active party system. As noted earlier, more community leaders in Toronto report being members of a political party than their compatriots in metro Boston. I would suggest this difference is due, among other factors, to the lower costs of participating in Toronto compared to the Boston area and the greater importance of the party in the Canadian Parliamentary tradition compared to the current US system. Canada's robust party system provides an easier path to political engagement for community leaders with political aspirations. This consequently increases the political visibility of the Portuguese population among mainstream actors and institutions.

In Massachusetts, largely a Democratic state, competition for office is often between members of the same party, rather than between two parties with clear differences in platform. Potential candidates must raise significant amounts of money first to win a primary election, and then to run for office in the general election. Significant start-up costs dissuade many immigrants from attempting to run for office, particularly when they face additional barriers due to their newcomer status. One Portuguese immigrant who has run for office explained, "For those not born here, the odds, barriers are greater to running for elected office. [...] I didn't have the school buddies, the friends from elementary school that would be your natural supporters."

Support from the ethnic community might partially compensate for the lack of longstanding roots in an area, but ethnic-specific voting is almost never enough to win, either in a primary or general election.

Stiff internal competition also often exists for the party nominations in Ontario. However, nominations take place within riding associations, not through a primary, thus reducing costs. The ethnic bonds that are insufficient to win a general election can serve a much more important role in the nomination process in Toronto. If a potential candidate can convince fellow ethnics to become party members and attend the riding nomination meeting, these supporters can swing the nomination. Such strategies—creating “instant” party members who support a compatriot’s bid for nomination—generated significant press attention in the 1980s and early 90s as well as an in-depth study of ethnic access to politics by the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (Stasiulis and Abu-Laban 1991). As Stasiulis and Abu-Laban suggest, immigrants took advantage of loopholes and strategies previously used by mainstream politicians. As ethno-racial outsiders, their activities raised the profile of previous problems, redefining weaknesses in the parties’ regulations as an “ethnic” issue of political abuse.

Once nominated, the stronger Canadian party system and tighter campaign finance laws make personal financial resources a bit less important in Ontario than in Massachusetts. When I asked one politically active Portuguese immigrant in Toronto how difficult it had been to raise money for a failed election bid, the individual dismissed the question with a shrug, “I didn’t really raise funds. [...] If you intend to run, you have to let it be known, you have to start right away. If you establish your networks right away, it’s okay.” In contrast, an informant in Massachusetts describe a quite different situation, “It’s very difficult to raise money. You have to start with your own natural constituency. But, it’s easier to organize a function to collect money for the parish—

even one in the Azores—than to support a politician.” Since candidates have to raise their own money for primaries, they have less party loyalty:

The party really doesn't have the clout and the kind of influence because it doesn't support [candidates] as it should. Therefore the representatives don't have that much loyalty to the party. That's why you see Democrats voting every which way. The representatives are much more independent.

In Toronto, stronger party ties also draw in volunteers to work on a campaign. Long-time Liberal, NDP or PC supporters might assist the nominated candidate even if they do not know the individual personally. In contrast, would-be politicians in Massachusetts must work hard to build up their own personal corps of volunteers.

No one of Portuguese background has ever been elected to municipal, state or federal government from Somerville or Cambridge. Yet, large concentrations of Portuguese reside in both: 7.3% of Somerville's population and 9.0% of Cambridge's population report Portuguese ethnicity according to the 1990 US Census, the third largest ethnic group in both cities. In Somerville, the Portuguese language is the most frequently spoken language at home, after English (7.3% of the population), while in Cambridge it is the third most spoken non-English language (3.8% of the population).

The only elected official in the area, a woman born in the US to Portuguese immigrant parents, sits on the Somerville Public School Board. She is a Democrat and actively involved in local party organizations, though Somerville School Board elections are non-partisan. At the state level, currently one Portuguese immigrant (also a Democrat) sits in the State Legislature and a few others claim some Portuguese ancestry. The few individuals of Portuguese origin at the state level almost always come from the New Bedford/Fall River area in southeastern Massachusetts, a region estimated to be 60% Portuguese. No one of Portuguese-origin has been elected to federal politics from Massachusetts in the post-World War II period.

In Toronto we find slightly more representation. There have been at least five Portuguese-Canadians elected to either the Public or Catholic School Boards of Toronto, all but one of whom are first generation immigrants. Yet the Portuguese constitute a slightly smaller percentage of the city population compared to Somerville and Cambridge. According to the 1991 Canadian Census, those of Portuguese ethnicity made up 4% of Toronto's population, the fourth largest group in the city. The Portuguese language was the third most frequently spoken non-English household language (3% of the population). Although school board elections in Toronto are non-partisan, three current or former trustees are affiliated with the NDP party and the other two are widely seen as Liberals. In at least one campaign, the NDP clearly advertised political loyalties, promoting a slate of candidates running for municipal council and the public school board.

There have been two municipal councilors at the Toronto city or metropolitan level born in Portugal, one of whom is still in office. Both were elected to represent downtown areas traditionally associated with Portuguese immigration. Municipal politics are non-partisan, but most councilors have clear political affiliations. The city's sitting Portuguese-origin politician is affiliated with the Liberal party while the former Portuguese-Canadian elected official is a member of the NDP. At the level of provincial politics, only one person of Portuguese origin has ever been elected. A member of the governing Progressive Conservative party, this immigrant represents a riding in Mississauga, a suburb to which many Portuguese move if they leave the downtown core. As in the Boston area, no one of Portuguese-origin has ever been elected to federal government.²²

²² Indeed, it appears that no one of Portuguese-origin has ever been elected to federal government anywhere in Canada. In the US, with a longer history of Portuguese migration, a number of US-born individuals of Portuguese heritage have entered the House or Senate.

When it comes to generating support within the Toronto-area Portuguese community, observers underscore that Portuguese-Canadians running under the NDP banner often succeed despite, rather than due to, their party affiliation. One Portuguese-born priest, who has wielded considerable influence in the community, equated NDP support to being Communist, and then regularly denounced these ‘Communists.’ Those NDP supporters who are elected succeed through a combination of ethnic solidarity, activism in the community and by garnering votes from non-Portuguese NDP loyalists living in the ward. Yet, despite being to the left of their community, a number of community members have successfully run for office, while more generally, more Portuguese-Canadian community leaders—regardless of party loyalty—have been engaged in electoral politics than their compatriots in Somerville and Cambridge. The institutions of the receiving country clearly shape the various pathways to community leadership, either through electoral politics or by providing opportunities in the immigrant settlement industry.

Institutional Repercussions: Linking Leaders and Community Members

In the previous section I outlined how ideological selection mechanisms and the institutional structures of the host society shape the community leadership amongst Portuguese populations in the greater Toronto and Boston areas. For many of those active in Toronto, these influences translate into a discourse of social justice when advocating for the community. A larger immigrant settlement industry allows more people to combine advocacy with employment while the more robust party system provides easier paths to electoral involvement for those interested. In the Boston area, nothing similar has occurred. Most community leaders were sponsored to the US by family members and their community activities are rarely linked to a clear political agenda.

One might well wonder whether leadership differences make a substantive impact. Does the configuration of leadership in an ethno-racial community matter for ordinary immigrants? In this section I would like to suggest that it does. I will not focus on policy outcomes, but rather show how leadership and institutional structures facilitate or hinder civic engagement and political participation among ordinary immigrants. First, I argue that a discourse of social justice allows some Portuguese to overcome hesitancy with political participation. Since this discourse is more prevalent amongst Canadian Portuguese community leaders, the impact has been greater in Toronto. Second, I suggest that linkages between community leaders and ordinary immigrants are strong in Toronto. Since activists tend to have more education, skills and resources than the people they claim to represent, there is a significant danger of disconnect between advocates and ordinary community members. Leadership paths through immigrant settlement or a political party generate greater links between community leaders and ordinary immigrants than alternative configurations. Using two organizations claiming to be national voices of the Portuguese as an example, I demonstrate how this disconnect is more evident in the US than in Canada.

Ordinary Immigrants and Social Justice

Portuguese-born residents of Massachusetts and Ontario talk about their sense of place and identity in similar ways, but their discussions of politics and citizenship differ. In both communities, the dominant migration story is one of finding a “better life” in North America, a continuous contrast between ‘here’ and ‘there.’²³ This better life is usually described in economic terms, including better living conditions, greater material wealth and better opportunities for children. Manuela, a cleaner in Cambridge, came from the Azores in 1968 at the age of 29 with her husband and daughter. Although she

²³ “There” is not only a geographic reference to Portugal, but also a temporal reference to the Portugal left behind—largely rural, traditional and under-developed.

talks of the Azores with nostalgia, her memories are shaded with the remembrance of economic suffering, “We are poor here [in the US], but one dresses better, doesn’t go hungry, which is most important. There... the children would live in need... We knew what hunger was, when we were young.” Marta, a 67 year old woman living in Toronto, tells a similar story, “[I’d] bake bread for the table, till farming land, go pick up wood, carrying it on my headpiece. Bread, three times a week. Clothes were not available, much of it ripped, so I sat and did a lot of mending, sewing.” Marta migrated from the Azores to Canada 1973 with eight children, rejoining her husband who had been working in Toronto for a few years. She was forced to seek employment in the paid labor force for the first time in her life to support her family, working mostly as a cafeteria employee. Currently retired, Marta would love to move permanently back to islands, but children and grandchildren keep her tied to Toronto.

Manuela became a citizen largely for economic reasons: she was able to get a raise at work with American citizenship. Today, her legal status has also become an identity—she proudly claims to be American—and she has translated her belonging into political participation, notably voting. Manuela, however, stands out from my Massachusetts interviews. It was rare that someone with her background—from the islands, with little education, working in a low-skilled service or manufacturing job—would embrace the political aspects of American citizenship. Most people of her background did not participate, at most following American politics on TV. For many, citizenship remains only a legal status. Maria, for example, became an American citizen in 1971 in order to sponsor family members to the US. When I spoke to her in 1997, she had never voted, “I’m afraid to vote for the wrong person. I am not confident in myself... I always feel that I am going to make a mistake or something.”

Most Portuguese immigrants in Ontario saw citizenship as not only a legal status, but also as an invitation—or obligation—to participate politically. Marta, who has no

formal schooling and speaks almost no English, has already voted in a few elections since becoming a Canadian citizen in the mid-1990s. She became a citizen with the help of a local social service agency once she turned 65 and no longer needed to satisfy the English language requirement before naturalizing. Like Maria, her reasons for citizenship are largely instrumental: fewer hassles with pensions and at the American border. Unlike Maria, Marta votes regularly with the help of her priest. Since she is illiterate, her priest will read a copy of the ballot prior to election day so that she knows where to mark the ballot.²⁴ Mario, like Marta, also votes regularly, though he too was never able to go to school while growing up in northern Portugal. Today he runs a small store in downtown Toronto. Mario started to vote immediately after he became a Canadian citizen in 1971 because “I never voted in my country. So I think that it’s kind of a privilege for a citizen to vote. They have the right to vote.” While others in Toronto expressed different motivations, most voted at least occasionally.

In Canada, the presence of the NDP and their message of socio-economic justice provide a legitimizing mechanism with which some Portuguese immigrants can translate their economic experiences and frustrations into political participation. In the United States, such a transfer is more difficult. Even for the majority of Portuguese-Canadians who do not consider themselves left-wing supporters, some of the discourse of the left provides a language to make legitimate claims against the political system. In the US, claims-making by minority groups tends to be legitimated through the language of race, a problem for a community such as the Portuguese that has consciously defined itself as white.²⁵

Tilla provides an example of how political discourses and institutions interact to open a path to civic engagement and political involvement for ordinary immigrants. With

²⁴ Marta was quick to tell me that her priest does not tell her what to vote.

only a primary education from the Azores, Tilla immediately started to work in a factory after arriving in Canada as a teenager in the early 1960s. Later she took a job as a cleaner, an occupation held by many Portuguese women in Toronto. She remembers with disgust her supervisor, a Portuguese man, "He's an evil, evil man.... He's just try to make us dirty, to give to us too much work. Like slavery, it's like slavery there and not many jobs at that time." When she mentioned to another cleaner that their working conditions would improve if they tried to form a union, she was fired from her job for being a troublemaker.

Losing her job spurred Tilla to contact the NDP party. Her local politician, a member of the party, was not Portuguese, but he worked closely with a Portuguese lawyer who Tilla approached. With the help of the two men, Tilla took her former employer to court and won damages. This incident led to further involvement, helping to organize cleaners in downtown office towers. Talking about her activities, Tilla explains:

...the opposition [in the Ontario legislature] was quite good at that time because they fight for the working class people. You had a little bit protection because of the opposition, the left. So, then they pay me [damages] as I say before, then I start to be involved. Manuel start to involve me with Sandy. She's the one who always works with working class cleaners to fight for the woman's rights, the union's rights.... And me and Sandy and the other Portuguese woman... we go to the doors, to the woman's work [in downtown] to see if we can do something to put [in] the union.

Tilla's activism was not only connected to a political party, but was also tied in to a local immigrant settlement organization, St. Christopher House. St. Christopher House provided the group with meeting facilities, and also paid Tilla and the other two women a small wage.

²⁵ Due to a lack of space, I do not deal with impact of race-based political claims here. Interested readers can refer to Bloemraad (2001) and Moniz (2001).

Similar support is hard to find in Massachusetts, even though it is one of the most staunchly Democratic states in the US. Manuela, introduced above, also talked to me about socio-economic injustices. In her case, she rails against high rents:

Now, the rents can't be paid.... The poor don't have the means for that. They are immigrants that buy little, how are they going to pay 700 dollars in rent, 300 for the home, dear? [...] If you don't work, if you can't, you can't live. It is tough. But they [the government] don't know how it is there. ...you can't say, "Sir, sir, send people that care about the immigrants, because they are the people who can't speak up." There is nowhere to complain to, and we can't complain.

Unlike Tilla, Manuela cannot identify many options to protest what she considers to be exorbitantly high rents. After a "Jewish man" came to her door, Manuela attended a meeting at City Hall to protest the end of rent control in Cambridge, but her participation was a one-time event. Unlike Tilla, Manuela's participation did not develop into other activism; there was no follow up by a political party and little involvement by Portuguese organizations in her area. Lacking these institutions, Manuela has been unable to transfer her indignation over high rents into sustained civic or political participation.

A Tale of Two Organizations: PALCUS and the National Congress

Without institutional links between ordinary immigrants such as Manuela and community activists in the Boston area, the two groups find it difficult to talk to each other or mount sustained campaigns on behalf of Portuguese-Americans' concerns. Non-profit organizations in the Somerville/Cambridge area speak out for the community, but as one Portuguese immigrant complained:

The community organizations, they sometimes have their own focus on a goal, and the goal is, "We have this funding... This is what we are assigned to do for the year; this is what we have to manage for the year." ...[the non-profit director] seems to be a very credible person; he knows his job. But, on the level, I think that he looks up to himself. He cares about everybody else, but appearances are also very important. And if he doesn't communicate with the people, well, that's a problem there. He cannot forget, or they cannot forget that the global community, the people themselves, are very important. [...] If you don't have a message, they

don't care. Because they are too busy with their jobs. They are too busy trying to get their bills paid, too busy with their kids' problems.

Such comments appear to echo Skocpol's (1999) warning that in an American political universe populated by "advocates without members," class biases in participation will increase while a shared sense of citizenship is undermined. Similar problems appear in Toronto, but the gulf between leaders and community members appears narrower. To illustrate how linkages between leaders and community members differ in Canada and the US, I compare two national organizations that claim to be the voice of the Portuguese in North America: the Portuguese-American Leadership Council, Inc. and the Portuguese Canadian National Congress. Once again, discourse, leadership and institutions come together to shape immigrant political incorporation.

The Portuguese-American Leadership Council of the United States, or PALCUS, is the only Portuguese-American association located in the nation's capital. Its mission includes the promotion of Portuguese-Americans' ethnic heritage, furthering traditional ties of friendship between the US and Portugal, and supporting the analysis of "a broad range of issues affecting Portuguese-Americans and the relations between Portugal and the United States." To accomplish this mission, PALCUS cultivates "greater general appreciation of the contributions which the Luso-American community and its unique culture have made, and are making, throughout the United States." The organization does not make appeals to social justice on behalf of Portuguese-Americans, nor does it usually discuss hardships related to language barriers and socio-economic status. It instead seeks access in Washington, DC by highlighting the accomplishments of Portuguese-Americans. For example, PALCUS newsletters regularly feature a front page interview with a successful Portuguese-American judge or business person. Issues PALCUS has tackled include waiving visa requirements for Portuguese nationals visiting the US, organizing conferences or seminars on trade, diplomacy, the US census

and citizenship, facilitating internships and academic exchanges between Portugal and the US, and advocating with other ethno-racial groups in the capital for the restoration of SSI benefits to legal immigrants.

At its inception, the founders of PALCUS clearly saw the council as an elite association of the most prominent Portuguese-Americans. Formally incorporated as a non-profit educational organization in 1991, would-be members needed to be sponsored into the group and fees were set at \$500/year—far beyond the budget of ordinary Portuguese immigrants. Those involved in its founding were either well-established Portuguese-Americans who could trace their roots many generations or elite immigrants, such as a corporate executive transferred to the US by his company or the son of a prominent Portuguese family who came to the US to attend university. The advisory board is largely non-Portuguese, and includes a former US Ambassador to Portugal and other notables. Despite the fact that many Portuguese immigrants have not naturalized, PALCUS demands US citizenship as a criterion for membership.

The contrast with the Canadian Portuguese Canadian National Congress is striking. The organizing impetus for the National Congress began in 1991, at the same time that PALCUS was incorporated. Instead of focusing on the successes of the Portuguese-Canadian community, the National Congress found inspiration from the knowledge that “our emancipation at the economic, social and political levels would largely depend on a strong organization, willing to defend the interests and aspirations of Portuguese Canadians” (Conference Report 1995: 1).

The Portuguese Canadian National Congress incorporates heritage promotion and furthering ties with Portugal into its goals, but social justice stand in the forefront for many involved in the Congress. During its founding conference, attendees focused on economic, social or political development in the Portuguese Canadian community. Specific recommendations for future activities included: “through government funding,

create co-operative programs to help Portuguese Canadians get back to work as well as develop apprenticeship programs,” “make government aware of how cut-backs are affecting individuals in the Portuguese community,” and “encourage clubs and associations to offer workshops on citizenship, the importance of voting and the role of different political parties in Canada” (Conference Report 1995: 19-31). There is no mention of Canada-Portugal diplomacy or trade relations, though participants did urge the Congress to work with the Portuguese embassy and consulates to promote Portuguese language classes.

In line with the stronger interest in marginalized populations, the Portuguese Canadian National Congress tries to be a democratic ‘ground-up’ organization. For the founding conference in March 1993, a core group of organizers contacted 250 organizations across Canada, including churches, musical groups, social clubs and Portuguese media, then sent out 3000 conference programs and registration forms. The organizers nonetheless apologize that “We understand that the ideal situation for the development of a national organization, would have been to start at the local level, with regional elections, and then proceed with the election of a national board of directors.” (Conference Report 1995: 2). The failure to do so is blamed on a tight time line linked to funding deadlines. Following the founding conference, a needs assessment was commissioned that surveyed Portuguese-Canadian communities across the country, asking people to identify key issues and recommend changes to the Congress’s functioning (Nunes 1998). Today, people in leadership positions are chosen according to region by local elections. Unlike PALCUS, Canadian citizen is not a requirement for membership.

Interestingly, PALCUS appears to be the stronger organization, at least in terms of administration and formalization. What started as a number of friends working together on a voluntary basis has evolved into a permanent organization. Five years

after incorporation, the group acquired a full-time president. Depending on budget constraints, the president is aided by a small staff. PALCUS has a physical presence in Washington, DC with office space downtown, and it produces occasional newsletters of professional quality. In contrast, many of those initially involved in founding the Portuguese Canadian National Congress admit to fatigue as lack of resources and constant in-fighting takes its toll. The Congress has no permanent office nor staff, thus it relies heavily on the enthusiasm and energy of the person elected President, a voluntary position.

PALCUS is clearly the more elitist organization. The benefit of this elitism is that greater resources allow a level of professionalization not seen in Canada. The major drawback is a significant detachment from the bulk of the Portuguese-American community. The consequences of this detachment are two-fold: a lack of grassroots membership and a political identity that does not necessarily reflect the needs and lives of many Portuguese-Americans. By 1995 resentment built in local communities against the founding group that proclaimed itself a national voice of Portuguese Americans. In response, membership rules changed in 1996 and were made a bit more accessible, though a new category of individual membership, at \$100/year, does not include voting rights (still restricted \$500 members). PALCUS's president traveled the country from 1996-98 to promote PALCUS and talk to local people. The organization's agenda also broadened beyond international business and politics to include clearer immigrant issues. Nonetheless, with continued distrust and no local branches, it is unclear how grassroots concerns—such as Manuela's anger at high rents—can be translated up to become part of PALCUS's activities.

Conclusion

Perhaps it is difficult to expect anything else from PALCUS, given the political environment in which it is founded. Today in the United States, discourses centered on social justice and working class rights find little purchase. It is difficult for immigrant groups to access party politics, while Washington-based advocacy requires specific skills and resources. Faced with such an environment, it is not surprising that PALCUS appeals to the successes of Portuguese-American luminaries in order to find a place in the nation's capital. The problem, however, is that PALCUS offers few opportunities for Maria and Manuela to get involved in the civic and political life of the US. For the most part they, and other Portuguese immigrants, are marginalized from the American political mainstream. Portuguese naturalization rates remain extremely low in the United States, as compared to Canada, while the national organization of Portuguese-American demands citizenship as a criterion for membership.

In contrast, the Canadian political environment, where social justice issues are more legitimate, provides more space for such a discourse. Appeals to issues ranging from continued government funding for unemployment insurance to calls for more political participation unites the leadership of the Portuguese Canadian National Congress—generally people with higher educations and better occupations—with cleaners such as Tilla. Because such a discourse also feeds into political parties like the New Democratic Party and, to a lesser extent, the Liberal Party of Canada, groups such as the Congress can facilitate access into mainstream politics. A greater sense of citizenship between community advocates, ordinary immigrants and the Canadian mainstream might explain in part why so many more Portuguese in Canada have naturalized than their compatriots to the south.

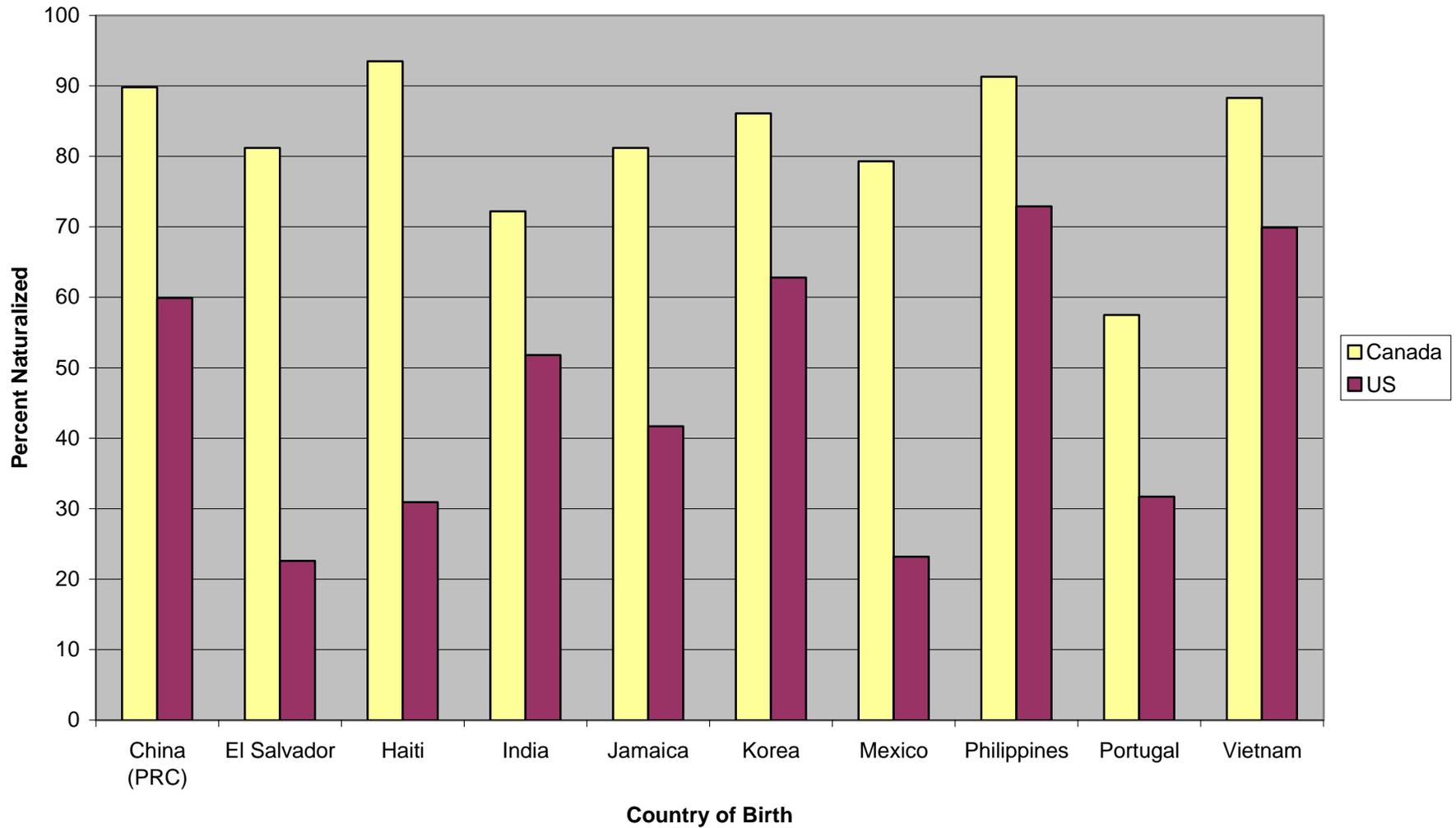
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**Table 1: Naturalization Levels of Established Adult Immigrants
(11-15 yrs residence) living in the US and Canada, 1990/91**



Appendix: Selected Characteristics of Portuguese-born Adults in Ontario and MA (1990 US Census 5% PUMS, 1991 Canadian Census 3% PUMS)

	Ontario	Massachusetts
N	3220	3575
Population:		
number of Portuguese-born adults	107, 333	68, 189
% of total foreign-born population	4.9%	13.0%
residential distribution (metro area)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70.6% in Toronto • 7.9% in Kitchener • 9.2% not in a metro area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27.9% in Boston • 24.6% in Fall River; 23.1% New Bedford • 21.0% not in a metro area
Migration and Citizenship:		
immigration period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • largest migrant wave arrived in 1971-75 • second largest wave came in 1966-70 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • largest migrant wave arrived in 1965-69 • second largest wave came in 1970-74
% naturalized citizen	57.5%	43.5%
Demographics:		
age	<i>mean – 42.6, median – 41 years</i>	<i>mean – 45.3, median – 42 years</i>
% female	49.8%	51.0%
marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78.3% married, living with spouse • 13.0% single, never married 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72.9% married, living with spouse • 12.1% single, never married
Language Ability:		
% unable to speak English (or French) ⁱ	23.6%	13.6%
% using English (or French) at home ⁱⁱ	28.1%	7.2%
Education:		
educational attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49.4% only completed grade 8 or lower • 29.1% completed high school, or more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54.6% only completed grade 8 or lower • 28.8% completed high school, or more

Appendix: Selected Characteristics of Portuguese-born Adults in Ontario and MA (1990 US Census 5% PUMS, 1991 Canadian Census 3% PUMS)

Employment and Income.ⁱⁱⁱ

labor market participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>employed</i> -- 65.8% • <i>unemployed</i> – 8.0% • <i>not in labor force</i> – 26.2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>employed</i> -- 64.8% • <i>unemployed</i> – 7.1% • <i>not in labor force</i> – 28.2%
class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>works for employer</i> – 72.9% • <i>self-employed</i> – 4.1% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>works for employer</i> – 76.5% • <i>self-employed</i> – 3.9%
personal income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • men: median income \$28,219 (Cnd) • women: median income \$11,000 (Cnd) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • men: median income \$19,000 (US) • women: median income \$10,000 (US)
(census) family income	<i>median</i> – over \$50,000 (Cnd)	<i>median</i> – \$36,800 (US)
household income	<i>median</i> – over \$50,000 (Cnd)	<i>median</i> -- \$37,724 (US)
% under the poverty line	12.7%	7.8%

Home Ownership:

% home owners	79.3%	64.1%
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ⁱ Because Canada has two official languages, the Canadian results count those unable to speak English *or* French. The language question on the censuses are not exactly comparable. The Canadian census asks, “Can this person speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation?” The US census question reads, “How well does this person speak English?” I tabulate the percentage responding “does not speak English”. If we add in those who responded “Yes, but not well” (assuming that the person does not speak well enough to conduct a conversation), the number increases to 37.1%.

ⁱⁱ The Canadian census question asks for the language most often spoken at home, but allows multiple responses if two languages are spoken equally. The US question asks for which languages, other than English, are spoken “sometimes or always”. The results shown here include all Canadian residents who indicate speaking English in the home, and all American residents responding that they speak no language other than English at home. As with the previous language question, the results are not directly comparable.

ⁱⁱⁱ I do not know the best way to compare the income data. At this point I have left everything in US or Canadian dollars, adjusting neither for the exchange rate nor purchasing power parity. The definitions of households and census families might also be different cross-nationally. [Should look at Reitz 1998 for his methodology.] The poverty thresholds might also not be comparable.