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Minority **French-Language**  
**University Education:**  
Competing **Perspectives in Ontario**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Francophones outside Quebec have long held the belief that their historical contribution as one of the two founding peoples of the nation should ensure their rightful place in Canadian society. While recognizing the fact that Canada was first and foremost founded by its aboriginal peoples, francophones have long struggled to affirm and legitimize their standing in Canada with the English. Despite the francophone stronghold in Quebec, francophones outside of Quebec, a population of over one million, have been confronted with the hostility of English-majority provincial governments, and have faced the spectre of assimilation throughout the past century.

While French-language rights are fully enshrined in the Canadian Constitution, and official bilingualism has been implemented at the federal level, the provincial governments retain jurisdiction over education. Franco-Ontarians have no right to postsecondary education, at least in their own language, as they do for elementary and secondary education, which is guaranteed under Section 23 of the Constitution. The Ontario government's response to accommodate francophones at the university level has been a system of bilingual institutions. This has been met with consternation and trepidation by the Franco-Ontarian community. Dating back to their early roots in the province, Franco-Ontarians have long demanded autonomous institutions, and it now seems that they are at a critical point with regard to university education.

Francophones do not want to be considered "multicultural", "ethnic" or as "immigrants". Their mentality, culture, language and history all point to legitimate claims as

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equal partners in the Confederation of Canada, as seen through their eyes. Anglophones (a term which embodies English-speakers, and/or all those in Canada who have not been integrated into the francophone mainstream) have not always viewed it as such, and, for the most part, have not been overly receptive to the concept of bilingualism. Predominantly English-speaking provinces, with the exception of New Brunswick, the only officially "bilingual" province, and most recently, Ontario, have trivialized French-language services, and have often argued that they should serve their larger "ethnic" populations before their French minorities. This argument, however, loses sight of history and the concept of nationhood. It does, nonetheless, recognize a reality that many Canadians live in a unilingual world, and that their contact with the French language and francophones is often superficial.

To put the problem into its proper perspective, one must realize that there are pockets of francophones throughout the country. Those who compare francophones outside of Quebec with anglophones in Quebec will be troubled to find that the latter have a very secure, well-developed and complete infrastructure at their disposal. Autonomous anglophone schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and a vibrant economic and political base reflect the confidence of English-Canadians in Quebec. Franco-Ontarians, on the other hand, are struggling to acquire French-language school boards, colleges, a university, economic and political power, and general recognition for their language and culture. It should be noted that, in the past few years, the Ontario government has increased access to and improved education for francophones by creating two French-language schools boards and a French-language community college.

This paper will attempt to unearth the dynamic which characterizes the low level of francophone participation in university education in Ontario. Several questions will be addressed, including: What role does language play in the development of a culture and a community? How best can minority groups be accommodated in a vast, complex majority system, which is comprised of many stakeholder-groups? Who are the "anglophones" and what is their role in the political-economic structure? What factors contribute to the low francophone participation rate at the university level?

In order to carefully undertake such an analysis, the following factors will be examined: the present francophone situation, the historical factors, the political factors, the economic factors, the social factors, and the education factors. By linking together common questions which weave through the above mentioned categories, we will be able to conceptualize and understand the reasons for the present state of affairs, why it persists, and, perhaps, foresee potential reforms. The present constitutional impasse resulting from the failed Meech Lake negotiations, the threat of Quebec separatism and the general malaise throughout the country will frame the analysis, but will not be the subject of this paper.

The multicultural context will be discussed, in a broad sense, because this is an area viewed as being potentially harmful to the progress of francophones. Indeed, some experts have asked whether it is possible to be multicultural, and at a more fundamental level, what does it mean to be multicultural? While it is beyond the scope of this paper to fully examine multiculturalism and its relevance with regard to multicultural education, an attempt will be made to highlight how education for francophones and multiculturalism intersect.

## **THE FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY IN ONTARIO**

The first Europeans to set foot in Ontario were the French in 1608. Early settlements, comprised of French clergy and labourers, were established in several parts of the province. Francophones, as Welch (1988) has outlined, contributed in an important way to the economic growth (forestry, mining and agriculture) and development of the province. They were a deeply religious group, whose culture, language and family values formed the core of their existence. They were, for the most part, from Quebec, and, to a lesser extent, from New Brunswick and France. Their most predominant settlements are to be found in the eastern and north-eastern regions of the province.

Franco-Ontarians constitute the largest French-speaking population outside Quebec in North America, which today hovers

around the 500,000 mark, depending on which criteria are used<sup>2</sup>. Census data and other sources have often miscalculated the number of francophones due to language questions that do not take into account bilingualism, culture, second language usage or other factors<sup>3</sup>. Another complicating factor is the ever-increasing number of multicultural francophones who are immigrating to the province. The needs of these new citizens are often divergent from those of the larger block of original inhabitants, and their misunderstanding of each other has led to intensive lobby efforts, each often seeking a different path. Francophones are connected throughout the province by over

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<sup>2</sup> The 1986 census listed Ontario as having 484,265 francophones, or 5.3% of the population. Other data, which counts those who have both French and English as their mother tongue, or French in combination with another language, raises the francophone total to 543,825. When multicultural francophones are included, the total of francophones increases markedly.

<sup>3</sup> Many Franco-Ontarians who were raised in English-French families may signal that English is their mother tongue. There are a number of plausible variations which may cause this: French mother tongue, but educated in English system; French mother tongue, but more proficient in English; English spoken to one parent and French to the other; general perception that English is the language of communication; both languages used in the home of francophone parents.

The 1981 census confirmed that more than 40% of Ontario's population, and more than 50% of Metro Toronto's, belong to an ethnic group other than British or French. Of the total Ontario population, 692,900 fell into the French ethnic category, and 475,605 identified French as their mother tongue. Among these francophones, 45,145 were born abroad. The multicultural francophone component, listed at 28,430, is inaccurate because it does not include their children. The Office of Francophone Affairs, a provincial government central agency, has data on this subject, as does the Association multiculturelle francophone de l'Ontario (AMFO).

3,000 social and interest groups'.

There are still a great many Franco-Ontarians, especially those over the age of 50, who cling to the notion of "vainqueur-vaincu" (conqueror-conquered). Having been subjected to the humiliation of not being able to use their own language at work, at school, with and in the provincial government or in business has left long-term scars on the community. It is not surprising to note that the illiteracy rate for Franco-Ontarians is considerably higher than that of anglophones: a 1989 study revealed that 28.5% of the Franco-Ontarian population, compared to 13% of the anglophone population, had less than nine years of formal education (Boucher, 1989, p.31). When language is not made a priority in education, the results are somewhat predictable, and the social costs become even greater. The need for appropriate education in the mother tongue becomes obvious when one considers that francophones, demographically speaking, are more blue collar with regard to professional status, have disproportionate numbers in rural areas, are less educated than anglophones, and have been traditionally left outside of the political and economic decision-making circles (ACFO, 1986; Savas, 1988).

The Churchill Report, the first comprehensive study of the entire French-language education system in Ontario, confirmed what many less detailed studies had highlighted: the francophone participation rate in postsecondary studies is half that of the anglophone majority; francophones do not study math and science as much as anglophones; programs in French are severely lacking in many areas (e.g., math, science, health and social services); francophones prefer to study in French language institutions; when they study in bilingual or English language institutions, their drop-out rate is by comparison extremely high; postsecondary education is not as valued by the majority of francophones, due to a myriad of factors, including a lack of

services/programs in French, history, mentality, lack of Franco-Ontarian content, and the structure of the system (Churchill, Frenette and Quazi, 1985, a & b).

This report provided the impetus for a new way of looking at French-language education in Ontario. The Ministry of Colleges and Universities, for example, developed and implemented a series of initiatives, starting in 1987, which aimed to get at the root of the problem". Programs which target community participation and the use of the latest technologies (e.g., distance education), and which will help to improve the foundation required for the catch-up, have been implemented. In 1989, the Ministry granted a charter for the creation of the first French language college in the province, La Cite collegiale in Ottawa, joining the 22 other community colleges, of which five are "bilingual". Francophone interest groups, led by the Association canadienne-francaise de l'Ontario (ACFO), are demanding that two more French-language community colleges, one in the north and one in the south, and a French-language university (Gilbert, 1990), be established in order to stop the erosion and assimilation of the francophone community, which is estimated at one-third of each generation.

Francophones must now compete with the ever-increasing number of bilingual immersion students; mixed English-French schools, which are often culturally and administratively dominated by anglophones; francophones from Quebec; and an increasing international francophone presence. While francophones have looked inward for some time, the provincial government has started to broaden its scope, since it now sees a number of positive trickle-down effects from French-language education. In addition to educating Franco-Ontarians, French-language education opens the door to international business and tourism, enhances relations with Quebec and other francophones outside of Quebec, and allows for individual and collective exchanges with the international "francophonie". At

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" ACFO, l'Association canadienne-francaise de l'Ontario, is the rallying force around the francophone lobby effort in Ontario. This group, which was formed in the early 1900s, is head-quartered in Ottawa and maintains 22 regional offices. Franco-Ontarians have traditionally been led by groups representing the education community.

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CEFO, the Conseil de l'education franco-ontarienne, the provincial government advisory body to the Ministers of Education and Colleges and Universities, has insisted upon greater autonomy for francophones in order to achieve better standards and a more effective allocation of resources.

the university level, it also enables Ontario to participate in AUPEI,F meetings, an association which links up French-language universities. Finally, it demonstrates an important level of tolerance and commitment to minorities.

## THE HISTORICAL FACTORS

Some commentators feel that francophones are asking for too much when it comes to university education. They argue that the costs are high, and that services are already available but are not fully used. The bilingual university network, which francophones argue has not satisfactorily met their needs (Frenette, 1989a; CEFO, 1989), is a unique model, found nowhere else in the world. Only the University of Ottawa can boast of having any significant influence out of the bilingual institutions, and that influence is diminishing on an annual basis. From a student body that was well over 60% francophone only forty years ago, francophones represent only just over 30% today (Gilbert, 1990, pp.15-16).

What gives particular credence to the arguments for an autonomous French-language university is the fact that francophones had, at one time, their own unique system of university education dating back to 1848. Gervais (1985), a Franco-Ontarian historian, offers a detailed account of the history of French language university education in his article "Pour l'universite française en Ontario" and highlights the problem as follows:

d'abord le desinterressement historique du gouvernement ontarien jusqu'à une époque toute récente, ensuite la politique provinciale de ne pas financer l'enseignement collégial confessionnel. Parce que le gouvernement n'offre pas d'enseignement supérieur en français, les Franco-Ontariens se dirigent exclusivement vers les institutions catholiques, et parce qu'elles sont catholiques, ces institutions ne reçoivent pas d'aide du gouvernement. Donc le gouvernement provincial, avant 1960, n'a aucunement aidé le postsecondaire en français (p.22).

Towards the late 1800s, the Catholic church, loyalists and local politicians forced the hands of universities, which consequently lost a considerable amount of their French influence. The political climate of the day, which had little tolerance for the French language, made it increasingly difficult to support institutions that promoted the "fait français". The provincial government's policy of not financially supporting Catholic institutions further handicapped French-language university education.

Anti-French sentiment came to a head in 1912 when the government of Ontario passed Regulation 17, which effectively banned the teaching of French in Ontario. Many francophones went underground in order to teach the language and maintain its survival. The provincial government implemented legislation providing for the funding of public secondary school education in French only in 1968. Up until that time, only those who were sent to private French-language schools became educated, and subsequently, they formed the Franco-Ontarian elite. Most of the others, at least before 1968, did not complete their secondary studies, or did so in English, which only reinforced their assimilation into the majority.

Significant changes have taken place since the late 1960s. The question, however, remains: has the damage that has been reinforced at several levels rendered the present situation irreparable? It should be highlighted that the francophone drop-out rate is still considerably higher than the anglophone one, when francophones do not study in French language institutions (Quirouette, 1989). However, as the critical mass of French-language students and professors increases, francophones will be less willing to accept the status quo, and the need for a modern, advanced system which caters to their needs becomes all the more obvious.

The contemporary renaissance of bilingualism stems from the 1963 federal Task Force Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Canada. The two solitudes that had constantly confronted each other were facing extremely divisive times in the 1960s (Armstrong, 1970). Quebec, the only predominantly francophone province, was no longer willing to accept its status nor that of French-speaking citizens within the confederation. This was the era in which the "Quiet Revolution" seeped through all levels of Quebecois society. The Commission

laid the groundwork for profound changes in French-English relations: the federal government became officially bilingual; the province of New Brunswick declared itself officially bilingual; more federal funds were allocated for the development of a bilingual nation, including more English-French exchanges and immersion schools; Ontario made moves to improve government services and French language education. The Commission, therefore, provided the impetus for the creation of the *Official Languages Act*, which was viewed as the dawning of a new era, especially since the then newly-elected Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau, was a committed supporter of federalism and bilingualism. It should be noted that a number of multicultural groups lobbied the Commission to change its bicultural mandate, which it did, since they argued that Canada was a country made up of many cultures. In 1971, Prime Minister Trudeau articulated the federal multiculturalism policy as follows:

although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other....A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians....Canadian identity will not be undermined by multiculturalism. Indeed, we believe that cultural pluralism' is the very essence of Canadian identity. Every ethnic group has the right to preserve and develop its own culture and values within the Canadian context...a policy of multiculturalism must be a policy for all Canadians (McLeod, 1981, p.13).

As the first Canadian policy on multiculturalism, it was perceived as an avant-gardiste approach, given the context of French-English relations.

The concept of multiculturalism, which is a relatively recent phenomenon, at least in its present format, has, in the minds of many, confused the francophone issue with the concerns of other "ethnic" groups, and has stimulated the debate concerning a renewed vision of what should constitute Canadian society. While there are many similarities between the struggles

that francophones and multicultural groups (a generic term which embodies most groups in society, except for the "founding nations" and the members of the First Nations) must endure, it remains that language is the driving force behind the francophone rights battle. While the vast majority of all immigrants to Canada are integrated into the larger English language group, francophones have been able to clearly define their identity, their "raison d'etre" and their culture primarily, but not exclusively, through their language. Franco-Ontarians are not seeking special status: on the contrary, this argument focuses on obtaining the same rights, advantages and opportunities as others. If they are not able to study in their language, they will not be able to fully contribute to society.

Multiculturalism policies have come about, not so much as the result of a national consensus, but rather because of a significant shift in demographics and immigration. According to the 1986 census, 25% of Ontario residents, compared to 16%, nationally, were born outside of Canada. Moreover, Ontario receives about 50% of all immigrants (approximately 85,000 annually), and a full half of this number settles in Toronto. Approximately 50% of all immigrants speak neither French nor English upon their arrival. In 1967, about 80% of all immigrants came from Europe whereas in 1987, the rate was only 30%, with 40% coming from Asia and 20% from Central and South America (Ontario, Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1989, pp.36-37).

Clearly, the ideal of a multicultural society will have major and far-reaching consequences for all citizens. Francophones, being in a unique minority situation - characterized by deep, historic roots, a close attachment to their language, an unfavourable demographic situation, and existing within an English-majority system that does not fully appreciate the importance of preserving the French language/culture - have fears of being forgotten once multiculturalism becomes the accepted modus operandi. Moreover, there is no agreement on what constitutes multiculturalism - Is it anti-racist education? Employment equity? The celebration of all religious holidays and a de-emphasis of Christianity, or complete secularization? The acceptance of all languages, or just English as the unifying one? Is it the blending of all cultures, or the acceptance and practice of some? -, and this puts English and French Canadians at odds,

because the way they look at this challenge is quite different. Indeed, some commentators have openly speculated that if English Canada had a stronger, more identifiable culture, like the more nationalistic Europeans who advocate greater tolerance but no dilution of their respective cultures, the concept of multiculturalism may never have become an issue. Some or all of these elements will need to be clarified before all Canadians, regardless of their ethnic and linguistic origins, will be able to understand and appreciate the merits of a "multicultural society".

### **THE POLITICAL FACTORS**

Politics in Ontario has long played a central and pivotal role in French language education. The political arena defined the earlier agitation and discrimination against francophones, and has ushered in the recent era of more responsive and proactive legislation. Politicians have also been well aware of the need to address the concerns of the multicultural groups, who, in some cases, have formed powerful political alliances: the mobilization of multicultural associations against the Meech Lake Accord being the most recent and prominent example. The ever-present and probing media, which can shape the equality debate, also plays an important role in politics, and therefore, in French-language education.

Politicians in Ontario are faced with an interesting problematic: support French-language education rights on the grounds that it is good for the francophone community, it is the right thing to do, given the Canadian context, and it will reap the benefits in the long-term for the entire province in socio-economic terms, or oppose expansion of French-language education rights on the grounds that more voters may be more interested in multiculturalism, it could be costly in the short-term, and it may be a politically dangerous position to support. Common arguments supporting the latter are as follows: Why can't they speak English like everyone else in the province, given their relative small number and the fact that Quebec has not been receptive to the anglophone minority? Why should they have special rights when immigrants that have been here for many years, even generations in some cases, are not getting what they want? Why can't they satisfy their French-language

needs after school and in the community like so many other groups do? Unfortunately, the francophone issue, like many others, is often presented in terms of acceptance or rejection.

With regards to the universities, they are autonomous institutions, who serve large and varied constituencies, and are not obliged to follow government policy. While the government controls the funding system, this alone does not ensure that the universities will accommodate the needs and aspirations of the community. The fifteen publicly-funded universities in Ontario are all theoretically positioned at the same level, although it is well known that some are more entrenched than others, and offer more programs due to size, age and location. Their programs are all approved by the same body and there is a certain degree of compatibility among them. Except in certain specialized areas, the same types of programs are offered, where available. However, some universities, because of their rich, historic traditions, which guarantee a certain prestige and greater private-sector funding, remain better placed to deal with their own priorities.

The present trend in Ontario universities seems to lean towards a greater concentration of funds directed at graduate studies, research and special projects. This means that the undergraduate student is plagued, in many instances, with out-dated equipment, over-crowded classrooms and limited time with professors. Trends also point to more hiring of part-time faculty, who must teach the bulk of courses so the more successful teachers may continue their research careers, and enhance their reputations and the status of their respective institutions. The consequences regarding francophones are serious because less of a priority is put on their needs, since the bilingual institutions are predominantly controlled by the interests of the anglophone majority. The data show that francophones have encountered difficulties unknown to other minority groups, who have, either willingly or unwillingly, been integrated or assimilated into the majority group and language (CEFO, 1989; Churchill et al, 1985; Welch, 1988). While the multicultural groups are still lobbying for power, changes in the curricula, increased funding and employment equity, they have benefitted, although this may not be the case across the board, from an elementary and secondary education within the framework of the majority system. At the same time, the

francophone community is pointing to an autonomous French-language university, which may take the form of the one established two decades ago in New Brunswick, or the unique network system developed in Quebec, in order to increase the participation rate, produce quality graduates and respond to the needs of the community (Frenette, 1989a; Gilbert, 1990).

## THE ECONOMIC FACTORS

Francophones must contend with several dependent and independent variables at the university level. Given their limited numbers, there are several economic arguments against further expansion of French-language services. Some will argue that the present programs are not filled to 100% capacity, thus indicating a lack of efficiency. The costs of developing programs and materials are relatively higher in French than they are in English. French-language text-books, software and other learning materials often have to be imported from Quebec, or even France, which signifies a certain amount of incompatibility and higher costs. One of the cheaper ways of regulating this is to translate English-language materials, but this too fails to capture the minority francophone perspective. Others argue that the majority of francophones speak English and will have to speak English in their careers after university, and therefore, money spent on French-language programs is money poorly spent. In addition, for ideological reasons, some feel that francophones should not be given what they consider to be "special" status, since most citizens, regardless of their background, study in English. With a budget approaching \$2 billion annually for university education, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities administers a complex operating grant formula that allocates funds to universities primarily according to the number of students, and subject and level of study. The universities have relative freedom over how they will spend the majority of these funds, which can, and does, place French-language education at a lower priority level (Ontario, Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 1989c).

Francophones substantiate that French can and will be their working language, because they are more effective and more comfortable using it, because they have a right to it, and because Ontario will become more diversified and more

competitive with the maintenance of a solid core of French-speakers. They also argue that it would be cheaper to spend the money in Ontario to develop French-language learning materials because they will be more effective, create greater returns and will decrease in cost as more specialists are trained in the province. Some francophones also make the point that autonomous institutions would be the most cost-effective method because they would not have to provide duplicated services, as bilingual institutions do, and because enrolments would increase, which would, in effect, mean a greater contribution to the society as a whole. As the Franco-Ontarian community starts to feel the positive effects of more francophone university graduates, able to understand the francophone situation and communicate in French, sifting through the Ontario socio-economic system, one could foresee a drop in the illiteracy rate, among other social indicators, due to greater sensitization of the community and mobilization of resources. The present shortage of francophone social workers, pharmacists, doctors etc., and the many other fields where they are severely under-represented, is a long-term and systemic problem which requires a long-term solution.

Some families will never send a son or daughter to university because class, money, professional status, values, life style and geography will all play a role. However, the majority of anglophone-Ontarians do go to public schools, albeit there are differences between them, which, for the most part, reinforce certain values. The data on enrolment shows that despite the traditional elitism, university enrolment is increasing for those who come from families with no university history. The cycle, although it fully promotes the rich and the upper class, as medical and law school enrolments fully demonstrate, can be breached to a certain degree, if the right mixture of variables are presented - e.g., good marks, proper attitude, family support, adequate funding, cooperation of the universities and government encouragement. In a recent doctoral thesis on French-language education university education in Northern Ontario, Bindseil (1991) highlights, using a geographical context and analysis, how francophones in the North, and in particular and Laurentian University, are under-serviced as far as quality and far-reaching French-language university education is concerned.

Whereas most Canadians of "ethnic" origin, in this context meaning non-francophone, non-anglophone or non-aboriginal, which equates to presently about 60% of the population, feel relatively comfortable interacting in the English language, and have been integrated/assimilated into English-Canadian society, francophones are faced with a classic dilemma: either study in English and risk assimilation, or attempt to study in French in a bilingual environment that may be overly biased toward the anglophone culture and the English language.

As is the case with low-income anglophone families, the economic costs for francophones to go to university are higher than they are for the middle class and upper class. The pressure to get into the work force earlier is greater for francophones, especially given the relatively high-paying mining and forestry jobs available in the north, and it is not unimportant that few francophone parents have gone to university. Moreover, francophones are less likely to get student grants, since there is little money available for just French-speakers. It remains that certain factors in the present financial aid system, like language of study, region, and class, tend to be over-looked or not given the full attention that they merit.

Franco-Ontarians have traditionally not considered postsecondary studies in Quebec to be a reasonable option. Francophones in Quebec have a different history and mentality, and enjoy the benefits of being a majority group in their province. Francophones in Ontario have not felt at home in Quebec, since many Quebecois have viewed them as "bilinguals", or francophones of a lesser degree. At the same time, bilingual universities in Ontario have a disproportionate number of Quebec francophones enrolled. The University of Ottawa has long relied on the participation of Quebecois students in order to offer a more complete slate of French language programs (Universite d'Ottawa, 1985). To illustrate this, Gilbert's study (1990, pp.15-16) reveals that, of the full-time francophone undergraduate enrolment at the University of Ottawa in 1988-1989, 2,222 of the 5,119 students came from Quebec. In contrast, of the 6,932 full-time anglophone undergraduate students registered for that year, only 1,071 came from outside Ontario. Enrolment figures at Laurentian University confirm this bias towards an increasing and dominant anglophone student population, with the anglophone-francophone ratio at approximately 4:1.

## THE SOCIAL FACTORS

Various social factors nourish the other factors and provide the basis of hope for community development, which facilitates provincial and national development. Francophones in Ontario will have to be able to study their history, their culture and all relevant subject areas available to others in society in the French language in order to develop leaders. Obviously, they have not been able to participate to the fullest in the history of Ontario, as is equally true of the women's struggle and that of multicultural groups, let alone the treatment the aboriginal peoples have been subjected to. It is only in the last several years that francophones have started to make significant strides in revitalizing their language and community, and in closing the gap between anglophones and francophones in Ontario. However, the gap remains too large and too complex to determine how long it would take to ever reach a state of equality, which in itself, seems implausible given the anglophone domination of affairs.

Francophones face unique challenges because a large percentage of the Franco-Ontarian population lives in isolated, rural areas of the province. The majority of francophones live far from Toronto, the economic and political decision-making centre. Many francophones also maintain out-dated images of anglophones, due to historic relations, which impede full-fledged acceptance of the anglophone way. This is not to say that all immigrants and multicultural groups openly accept the anglophone way of doing business, but, as was stated previously, there has been a general acceptance of the language, which inevitably includes much of the culture. The majority of immigrants to Ontario came here knowing that English is the primary language of the province Ontario. Indeed, many have prospered here and have been able to sponsor relatives to Canada. Over time, many immigrants who have been assimilated into the anglophone majority may develop fears of providing increased or enhanced services to francophones.

Frenette (1989b), borrowing from Ogbu's typology of minority groups, postulated that there are three types of minorities in Canada: "subordinate minorities" (those here before Canadian power and state structures were developed, including

the Innu, Indians, and to a lesser degree, French-Canadians); "immigrant minorities" (those arriving after a state structure was in place, and who have "a certain price to pay" in the host country); and "autonomous minorities" (those groups which participated in establishing the power structure and institutions, including the English and Scottish, but not the Irish). Each minority has a different perspective: the "subordinate minorities" constantly refer to "their rights; the "immigrant minorities" speak of "equality of choice" and are willing to pay a price, but not as far as discrimination; the "autonomous minorities" believe that "we are all minorities". Frenette argues that the "immigrant minorities" have a tendency to not only misunderstand, but also look contemptuously at the "subordinate minorities" because they do not accept the rules of the game, one being that English is the public language of the land. "Afterall, they ("immigrant minorities") were able to adapt, why not the others?" With two "minority" blocks then set against the "subordinate minorities", achieving equal status or linguistic rights is rendered extremely difficult.

When one considers the social construction of the Canadian state, it should be mentioned that visible minorities experience problems that francophones, per se, may or may not encounter: outright discrimination because of race, colour, region, sex, or a combination of these. Going through the Canadian school system is one key to breaking down the barrier to discrimination. Several multiculturalism and race relations policies have been developed and implemented in school boards and in government. Becoming mobilized and politicized, more so than the accumulation of wealth, may be the answer regarding development, recognition and true integration. Undoubtedly, general everyday discrimination in the mass media, in our social institutions and throughout a large segment of the more conservative sectors of the population is more omni-present against visible minorities. However, the fact that one group encounters discrimination should not necessarily mean that discrimination against another group is to be permitted or tolerated.

Integration can be positive, but assimilation implies losing one's culture, language, religion and values. As many studies (Modgil & al., 1986; Provincial Advisory Committee on Race Relations, 1987; Toronto Board of Education, 1979) have

pointed out, a multicultural society must accommodate differences, diversity, a range of values, and be tolerant and receptive to change. It is clear that neither the francophone minority in Ontario nor the multicultural groups or proponents of multiculturalism are satisfied with the present arrangement; at the same time, the present national crisis clearly shows to what degree the anglophone majority is undertaking an intensive soul-searching exercise. The difference is in the type of arrangement sought: francophones want autonomous institutions whereas the multicultural proponents want institutions to become truly multicultural. Francophones have tried the bilingual experience and are increasingly dissatisfied with it. While some multicultural groups/supporters have been successful in acquiring certain concessions and a certain amount of accommodation (e.g. employment equity', multiculturalism policies, human rights legislation), the situation remains somewhat rigid, and the significant structural changes required have not yet been forthcoming.

#### THE EDUCATION FACTORS

At the educational level, the same question looms large over the debate: who's in charge? The multicultural as well as the francophone literature reflects the same sentiment in that the education system does not sufficiently incorporate multicultural values, traditions, history and even languages. When one looks to the law for guidance, it can be established that francophones have certain rights with regards to education. In Ontario, the *Education Act* stipulates that the French language be officially recognized in elementary and secondary education. The 1981 Ontario government policy on accessibility underlines the importance of participation and opportunity,

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On November 9, 1989, the Management Board of Cabinet, Government of Ontario, made public its employment equity strategy. This initiative, called "Strategies for Renewal", aims to get more members of the target groups - women, natives, visible minorities, the handicapped and francophones - into the Ontario Public Service, and to ensure that they are represented at all levels.

stating that "a place in some program at some Ontario university, but not necessarily the program or university of first choice, will be provided for every academically qualified student who wishes to pursue university studies" (Stager, 1989, p.45). A reformed education system, which provides quality and access to university education for all citizens, will inevitably benefit the society as a whole; but the above statement does not take into consideration language and culture.

Section 23 of the Constitution of Canada also provides for the protection of minority language educational rights (Canada, 1986b, pp.66-67). The problem with this section, however, is at the interpretative level, especially regarding clause 3 (Edmonds, 1984; Young, 1987, pp.248-268). The predominantly English-speaking provinces have not been forthcoming and responsive in providing the appropriate structure and funding for francophone minorities outside of Quebec. The country's only officially bilingual province, New Brunswick, is the exception, given that it has set up a parallel school system for francophones.

The overall French-language school system is playing catch-up with the anglophone system. This becomes clear when one reviews the findings of a recent comparative study by the Lapointe et al. (1989), *A World of Differences: An International Assessment of Mathematics and Sciences*, which compared twelve target populations - five countries and four Canadian provinces, three of which provided samples of anglophone and francophone thirteen year-olds. The overall results show a clear distinction between anglophones and francophones in Ontario: Franco-Ontarians came in second-last overall, just ahead of the Americans, and English-speaking Ontarians ended up in the top half of the sample.

A comparative analysis of drop-out rates among francophone students in French schools and in mixed schools, and among non-francophone students in anglophone and in mixed schools reveals that only 31% of francophones as opposed to 48% of non-francophones reached the grade 12 and 13 levels (Universite d'Ottawa, 1985, Tables 1 & 3). Of those who reached grade 13, the francophones who went on to university were most often those who came through the French-language schools rather than through mixed or English-language schools. This percentage, however, is still lower than the percentage of non-

francophones in anglophone secondary schools who continued on to university (Churchill et al., 1985, Table A-14). These observations are connected to the overall perception that francophones at the high school level have about university studies. Poirier et al. (1987) revealed that, in their profile on secondary school students, of those undecided at the grade 13 level, only 7.9% favourably viewed a university education.

At the university level, the number of francophone applicants is slowly increasing each year, although it is far from reaching a total proportionate to its population. Applications from non-Ontario francophones is also increasing, but at a faster rate (Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU), 1989b). The data become even more relevant when one looks at the programs to which Franco-Ontarians are applying. The majority apply to the social sciences, leaving a large gap in engineering, health professions and occupations, sciences and agriculture programs (Churchill et al., 1985, Tables B-1 - B-14; Ontario, MCU, 1989b).

Data for 1991 from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities show that francophones from Ontario constitute 3.5% of the Ontario university student population. Francophones from outside Ontario, primarily those from Quebec, make up a significant portion of that total. Approximately 80% of the francophone university student population studies in French, although it is difficult to gauge the exact number since universities are not required to keep data on the language of program in which francophones are enrolled. Of the 10,750 francophones in the system, it can be estimated that over 2,000 are enrolled in programs that are offered in English. There are more non-Ontario francophones than Franco-Ontarians enrolled in graduate programs in Ontario (Ontario MCU, 1989b).

## CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to outline the problematic of university education for francophones in Ontario. Much of the analysis was at the macro level, pertaining to underlying assumptions about how Canadian society is structured and how the system perpetuates inequalities. This paper also tried to make a clear distinction between the unique, historical contribution made by French Canadians and the legitimate,

divergent needs of a multicultural society. It has attempted to show that while both groups, francophones and multicultural proponents, share some common objectives - attaining equality, eliminating racism and discrimination, changing attitudes, facilitating and instilling tolerance and respect, changing structures; they are, in a certain way, perceived to be in competition. In reality, the advancement of one should, in no way, preclude the enrichment and development of the other.

The education system has consistently served to integrate, or assimilate, thus the reason for the great differences between immigrants and their children who are educated in Canada. One area that has received ample attention in the literature is that concerning English as a Second-Language (ESL) programs, which illustrates the assimilation bias. Until recently, those from multicultural backgrounds were not encouraged publicly to maintain their languages; those who did, had to do so at their own expense through private or community-organized schools. The popular Heritage language program in Ontario, which provides linguistic training in over 50 languages to ethnic Canadians and is offered after school, is a compromise between two extremes: full language training for cultural minorities and no public school time set aside for teaching minority languages (McLeod, 1981, p.20).

The debate over French-language minority education rights has been muddied because many in society, as Frenette articulated (1989b), feel that francophones are asking for "special rights". The French-Canadian perspective, as espoused by Laferriere (1981), argues that education must serve to provide the tools for future generations in order that they will be able to contribute to society and to the culture. He highlights the importance of not making multicultural groups ghettoized in education. His argument focuses not on a multicultural or intercultural education, but on a veritable transcultural one. There must be some form of culture at the base of the system, which should be receptive to positive change. The general fear of francophones, of being over-powered by the anglophone majority, undoubtedly plays a role in shaping this way of thinking. Laferriere puts more emphasis on class, which is inevitably omni-present in education, than most of his anglophone counterparts.

The argument in favour of the creation of autonomous

French-language institutions does not seem to be matched by an argument from multicultural sectors for a similar arrangement, especially in view of the measured and watered-down messages from politicians at all levels. At the university level, francophones are frustrated at the lack of French-language services/programs and the bilingual set-up. If major changes are not made in the near future, it is conceivable that French language programs and/or bilingual institutions will slowly be diminished owing to a lack of demand. Assimilation is so great that more and more students may choose to study in English if the only alternative is a limited, bilingual program that does not satisfy their needs. While the number of francophones graduating from high school is slowly increasing, it remains that their overall participation rate at the university level is only half that of the majority. It is uncertain what future politicians, policy-makers and interest groups will do ten or twenty years from now if the present situation is not remedied in the short-term.

Universities now, more than in the past, face enormous pressure to compete, not only provincially, but also nationally and internationally, in order to get the "best and the brightest", to acquire more funding and to establish a world-class reputation. Historically, it has been difficult for Franco-Ontarians to establish their foot-hold within the university hierarchy. As national and global trends intensify, will francophones be given their just share of the pie? Undoubtedly, multiculturalism will play an even greater role over the next 10-20 years as the workforce becomes more representative, and as we, as a society, start to understand the broader implications of the shifts in demographics and economic restructuring, and as the French-English debate comes to a head and/or an end. Many in multicultural circles have argued that the French-English struggle is only a smoke-screen, which prevents the fundamental issue of multiculturalism from boiling to the surface. Universities, our intellectual centres of excellence, should relish in being able to precisely define their future without the government carrot dangling in front of them. This is not to say that governments will play a diminished role in the future; it does indicate, however, that when the government figures out the *jus. proportion* of "francophonie" and "multiculturalism" to add to the anglophone stew, the universities will be better off.

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