

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNITIES IN CANADA

Canadians of Portuguese descent - often referred to as “*Luso-Canadians*” - comprise one of the largest and most distinct minority populations, in this country.<sup>1</sup> Figures from the 1991 Canadian Census estimate that there are approximately 292,185 individuals in Canada, which claim a Portuguese ethnic background, with the majority of these originating from the Atlantic islands of the Azores (60% to 80%).<sup>2</sup> The bulk of the Luso-Canadian community is concentrated in the urban areas of Toronto and Montreal. However, there are significant populations of Portuguese scattered in small and rural centres throughout nearly every province of this nation.

Yet, despite their numbers, Canadians of Portuguese background have traditionally been underserved and underrepresented in the social and political structures of our society. A combination of low average levels of education, a concentration in the blue-collar job sectors, and the legacy of having lived for years under a dictatorship have, until recently, combined to limit the ability of Portuguese-Canadians to advocate for programmes and services to address important community issues. Subsequently, for many years, it was clear that there was a need for a national organization, which could represent their concerns to the various levels of government in Canada and Portugal.

*“When one arrives here, one feels almost isolated, in a world that is completely different. One feels almost as if abandoned.”*

*(Saskatoon, Sask.)*

### B. THE PORTUGUESE-CANADIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

With this objective in mind, a group of 250 Luso-Canadian associations and individuals attended an inaugural Conference in Ottawa, in March of 1993, in order to form the Portuguese-Canadian National Congress.<sup>3</sup> The people in attendance charged this nascent organization with the mandate to act on such issues as the social, economic, cultural and political development of the community, matters of social justice, human rights, and the promotion of the full participation by community members in Canadian society. They also envisioned the Congress as an organization which could become a consultative body for the various levels of government and which could promote communication between Luso-Canadian communities, as well as between Portugal and Canada.

*“There is a very great need to really assert our presence; or, in other words, to say ‘we are living, we are here, there is much which has to be done.’”*

*(Ottawa-Hull)*

## II. THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY

### A. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

*"...It grieved me very much when I saw other ethnic groups... ..applying pressure about this issue. But, I didn't see a Portuguese voice there."*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

Soon after the inaugural Conference, the founding Directors of the Congress sought funds, from the Federal Government's *Department of the Secretary of State, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada*, for a national "Needs Assessment" (now the *Multiculturalism Programme of the Department of Canadian Heritage*). The reasons for this study were to assist the Congress to ascertain the hopes and vision of the Portuguese in Canada, to direct its activities in the coming years, as well as to gather knowledge about the present state of the wider Luso-Canadian communities; in particular the smaller population centres. There was also a need to raise the profile of the Congress and to foster a greater participation in the organization. A temporary Research Coordinator was hired in April of 1994 and the project officially launched.

*"We are all a part of... Portugal, with the [Azores] islands... But, each one goes in their own direction and no one works together. And it's a shame that this happens."*

*(Quebec City, Que.)*

### B. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objectives of this study were to:

- Broadly profile the state of the Luso-Canadian community that is scattered across Canada.
- Define the Congress membership and those individuals who are most involved in community organizations, in terms of demographic indicators, level of integration, the resolution of life problems and access to social services.
- Gather the opinions of Portuguese-Canadians, regarding what they perceived to be the major issues affecting their communities and the role which they see for the Congress in their resolution.
- Raise the profile of the Congress amongst these communities.
- Collect suggestions for improving ongoing Congress communications and representativeness.

*"There are a lot of problems... that we have, for many years, failed to face... we allowed our eyes to remain closed, we let the issue escape us and now, we are seeing the result of this negligence on our part.... The responsibility is ours, as a community, that we closed our eyes to the reality of the situation."*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

#### *i. Ensuring community participation*

In order to foster a broader participation in this study, a Steering Committee composed of community members and Congress Directors from the Greater Toronto region was set up to formulate the general objectives and research methods, as well as to develop the major questions. The remaining Congress Directors were also sent the minutes

after each Steering Committee meeting and these were encouraged to provide their input. Lastly, local volunteers were sought out to organize and undertake focus group meetings. This allowed the realization of more groups than what would normally have been possible with the available funds and helped to bring about a wider community involvement in the project.

### C. METHODOLOGY

The methods employed in reaching the study objectives were:

- **A 14-page questionnaire.** A survey was developed and 1,000 copies were distributed to 600 Congress members, as well as 250 Portuguese-Canadian clubs, associations, media organizations and churches across Canada. The questionnaire was also made available in English and French, upon request. The survey asked questions designed to gather a profile of those individuals who are most involved with community organizations and community development, to ascertain how well these are integrated, the ways in which they resolve life problems and how they access social services. It also asked for their opinions regarding major community issues and Congress functioning.

One hundred and sixty-eight questionnaires were returned and these were computer coded and analyzed through the statistical program SPSS. An outside consultant was contracted to assist with the coding of the open questions (Ilda Januario of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education).

- **Eighteen focus groups** were conducted, in various Luso-Canadian communities throughout Canada. Each group was asked six questions, ranging from the issues which most affect Luso-Canadians, to the role of the Congress in their resolution, as well as participants' preferences for an organizational structure for this organization, a system of voting and electing the National Executive. The meetings were organized and moderated by local volunteers, who were provided with a focus-group kit to assist in their task. This kit included (amongst other things) a pair of audiocassettes for the taping of the meetings, a homemade training video, (produced specifically for this study), and a set of detailed instructions, outlining the specific categories and proportions of individuals which were to be recruited from amongst different sectors of the community (ex. women, Azorean Portuguese, white-collar professionals, etc.). As a check on this process, moderators were instructed to fill-in a chart

*“I disagree when I hear people saying ‘the system has failed us’. Yes, they have, in many ways. But we’ve failed ourselves. We let the system fail us. It takes two to work together.”*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

*“The governments are not hearing us. Why? Because we’re small groups, not organized. We need a national organization to organize us... ..if there’s an issue, organize us on that issue and let’s choose a position.”*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

*“The community needs an organization which can represent the Portuguese in general... ..an organization with substance. One which is capable; which would not allow itself to be dominated by political tendencies or manipulations, of the sort that we all know about.”*

*(Montreal, Que.)*

outlining the actual composition of each group (individual participants were not identified). These charts, along with the tapes and notes from each meeting, were returned to the National Office, for analysis. Most of the groups were peopled by a representative mixture of participants. However, 3 meetings were purposely restricted to youth and 1 to Azorean Portuguese.

*“A lone person cannot do anything. But if [an issue] is debated within the community and afterwards sent to the Congress and the Congress brings a bit of pressure to bear, many things can be resolved and we can become more on par with the other communities.”*

*(Sudbury, Ont.)*

*“Because if it is not [the Congress], we ourselves will be much less able to do this. So, if not for them, everything will be lost.”*

*(Osoyoos, B. C.)*

- **A brief profile of the Portuguese in Canada** was also compiled from figures provided by the 1991 census.
- **A newsletter** (3 issues) was produced to inform the community on the development of the project and other Congress activities.
- **A media campaign** was initiated, to promote the project.

#### **D. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The major limitation of this study was the inadequate level of funding, in relation to the desired outcomes. Because of this constraint, this project was only completed through the contribution of significant amounts of volunteer time, on the part of the Research Coordinator, the Steering Committee and numerous local volunteers.

The limited financial resources also made it untenable to apply the questionnaire to the Luso-Canadian population-at-large, or to conduct a similarly random telephone survey. For this reason, the Steering Committee decided to apply the survey only *to those individuals who are most involved in community organizations or community development*. The names of these individuals were drawn from nationwide contact lists of the Congress and the Portuguese Interagency Network. Because of this nonrandom sampling, *caution should thus be taken when generalizing the results of the questionnaire to the community-at-large* as these represent only the opinions of those who are most involved with community affairs.

Unlike the case with the survey, the people attending the focus group meetings constituted a fairly representative cross-section of the Luso-Canadian community and the information arising from these meetings may thus be better generalized. Despite these cautions, it is important to note that, nonetheless, there was still a high degree of parallel between the issues described by people through both methods.

Other limitations were the low number of total questionnaire returns (which made it unreasonable to carry out more sophisticated statistical analyses) and the fact that in some regions of significant Luso-Canadian concentrations, (ex. Kitimat, B.C.) no volunteers could be secured to carry out a focus group.

### III. A CENSUS PROFILE OF THE COMMUNITY

In the first part of this study, figures from the 1991 Census were collected, in order to compile a broad profile of the state of Luso-Canadians. In most cases, numbers were accessed for both individuals of Portuguese ethnic origin (i.e. including the Canadian-born)<sup>4</sup> as well as for Portuguese immigrants (i.e. all those born in Portugal, including those who may already be Canadian citizens).<sup>5</sup>

*“All of these problems that we are here facing arise practically from only one term: ‘mentality.’ That is what is very important. And... our community... suffers... from a very closed mentality...”*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

*“... and we are ashamed... ..to be Portuguese, because it is a small country... and here.... what they look at is not the intrinsic value of things. They look at the appearances of things. There is more value in appearances than in ‘being.’”*

*(Quebec City, Que.)*

#### A. THE DEBATE ABOUT POPULATION NUMBERS

According to the 1991 Canadian Census, there are approximately 292,185 people living in Canada who claim a Portuguese ethnic origin (See Table 3.1). Of these, 161,180 were immigrants.<sup>6</sup> The vast majority of ethnic Portuguese - approximately 200,00 - live in Ontario, and the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, while in Quebec, 36,000 live in Montreal, thus making these the two areas the largest urban concentrations of Portuguese in Canada (See Table 3.2).

Yet, the validity of the Statistics Canada numbers have often been challenged by sources within the community. For example, the Portuguese Embassy in Ottawa has pegged the number of Portuguese-Canadians at approximately 525,000 people, including 145,000 in the City of Toronto, 70,000 in Montreal, 47,000 in Vancouver and 8,000 in Ottawa-Hull.<sup>7</sup> According to Dr. José Carlos Teixeira, a Luso-Canadian geographer and researcher, a number of factors relating to the census make it difficult to determine the actual numbers of Portuguese living in Canada.<sup>8</sup> These include: The lack of participation of many Luso-Canadians in the census, (in particular those who may be living here illegally), as well as the

**Table 3.1**  
**Portuguese-Canadian Population by Ethnic Origin and Sex**  
Single and Multiple Responses, for Canada, Provinces and Territories, 1991 Census - 20% Sample Data

PROVINCE	RESPONSES	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Ontario	single	88,665	87,635	176,300
	multiple	13,200	12,895	26,095
Quebec	single	18,750	18,420	37,165
	multiple	2,905	2,905	5,810
British Columbia	single	8,710	8,160	16,865
	multiple	3,540	2,975	6,515
Alberta	single	3,475	3,355	6,830
	multiple	1,575	1,405	2,925
Manitoba	single	4,360	3,865	8,220
	multiple	625	685	1,310
Nova Scotia	single	255	255	510
	multiple	605	635	1,240
New Brunswick	single	160	100	260
	multiple	315	290	610
Saskatchewan	single	215	260	475
	multiple	180	140	320
Newfoundland	single	135	55	190
	multiple	140	115	255
Prince Edward Island	single	25	20	40
	multiple	30	55	85
Yukon Territory	single	10	10	15
	multiple	30	45	80
Northwest Territories	single	10	-	15
	multiple	25	35	65
Canada	single	124,760	122,125	246,890
	multiple	23,125	22,175	45,290

Source: Compiled from Statistics Canada, *Ethnic Origin*, Ottawa: Industry, Science and Technology Canada, 1993. Catalogue number 93-315. Table 2A, pp. 60-95

**Table 3.2**  
**Portuguese-Canadian Population by Ethnic Origin and Sex for Selected Census Metropolitan Areas**  
Single and Multiple Responses, 1991 Census - 20% Sample Data

C. M. A.	RESPONSES	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	C. M. A.	RESPONSES	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Toronto	single	62,075	62,260	124,330	Halifax	single	185	175	355
	multiple	8,280	8,300	16,580		multiple	315	315	630
Montreal	single	16,080	16,245	32,325	Windsor	single	380	315	700
	multiple	2,235	2,250	4,485		multiple	95	155	250
Kitchener	single	7,075	6,680	13,760	Québec	single	405	310	710
	multiple	800	585	1,390		multiple	120	105	225
Vancouver	single	4,790	4,460	9,255	St. Catharines-Niagara	single	185	215	395
	multiple	1,820	1,460	3,280		multiple	265	175	445
Hamilton	single	4,900	4,725	9,625	Saskatoon	single	150	185	340
	multiple	615	620	1,240		multiple	55	50	105
Winnipeg	single	4,230	3,745	7,970	Sudbury	single	155	150	300
	multiple	580	630	1,210		multiple	30	20	50
Ottawa-Hull	single	3,375	3,205	6,580	Saint John	single	60	45	110
	multiple	685	780	1,465		multiple	95	90	185
London	single	3,230	3,100	6,330	St. John's	single	50	30	80
	multiple	410	510	915		multiple	80	60	135
Edmonton	single	2,405	2,280	4,685	Sherbrooke	single	60	75	140
	multiple	665	715	1,385		multiple	20	-	25
Calgary	single	845	905	1,755	Regina	single	45	35	80
	multiple	495	395	895		multiple	45	20	65
Victoria	single	865	810	1,675	Chicoutimi-Jonquière	single	30	15	70
	multiple	395	365	760		multiple	35	15	25
Oshawa	single	710	755	1,465	Trois-Rivières	single	25	-	30
	multiple	335	360	695		multiple	10	15	20
Thunder Bay	single	450	360	810					
	multiple	85	95	175					

Source: Compiled from Statistics Canada, *Ethnic Origin*, Ottawa: Industry, Science and Technology Canada, 1993. Catalogue number 93-315. Table 2b, pp. 96-127.

“...there is a great fear... fear of school... an inferiority complex... of going to school and not being able to learn anything. We have a very small percentage of people who would be able to overcome... ..the barrier of going back to school... the barrier of going back to English classes.”

(Winnipeg, Man.)

“[Our] children today continue with this closed mentality. They don't know anything ('eles não conhecem nada'), they do not know the things that this country has to offer... they go and copy their parents..”

(Toronto, Ont.)

difficulties which many experience in understanding, and correctly answering, the survey instrument. For example, many Portuguese will list their - or their children's - mother-tongue or ethnic origin as “English” or “Canadian,” although they may still speak and/or understand Portuguese and identify with a Portuguese ethnic origin.

### B. AGE DISTRIBUTION

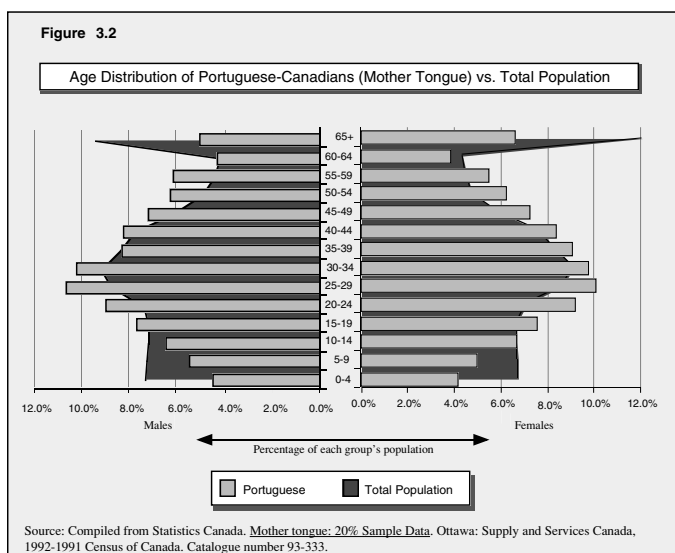
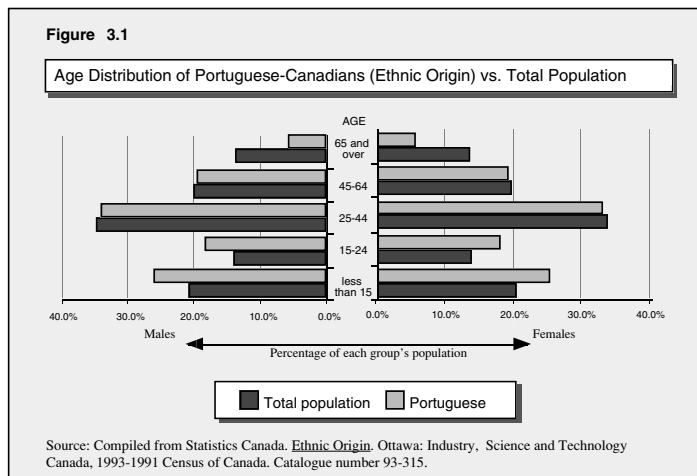
When looking at the age distributions of Portuguese-Canadians, one can see significant differences from the general population, in the proportions of younger and older individuals.

Demographic figures from the census would seem to indicate that, amongst the Portuguese community there appears to be a greater proportion of youth (i.e. 24 years of age or younger) and a smaller proportion

of those aged 65 and over, than is the case with the population-at-large (Figure 3.1). However, when similar data is accessed for *mother tongue*, (see Figure 3.2), one can see that Portuguese youth 14 and under are now *underrepresented*, in comparison to the country-at-large. More significantly, the proportion of Portuguese speakers decreases

substantially as one moves from the older to the younger aged groupings (i.e. from 10-14 years to 0-4 years).

The most plausible explanations for the difference between these two sets of data are, most likely, that many Luso-Canadians are not teaching the Portuguese language to their children, that they are not using it in their homes, or simply that they are not citing its usage on the census forms. This evidence of decreasing language use supports the concerns of respondents, who stated throughout this study that the rapid loss of the Portuguese language and culture amongst the younger

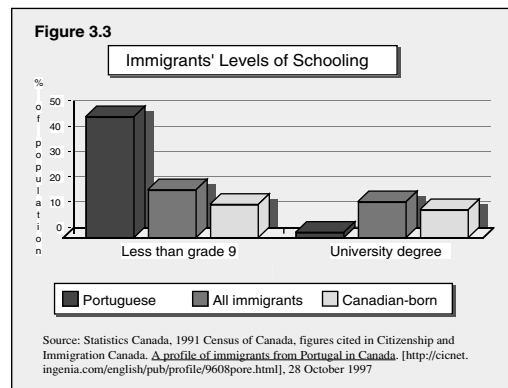


generations is one of the primary issues affecting the Portuguese-Canadian community (see “Cultural Issues”).

### C. EDUCATION

Statistics from the 1991 census also give some indication that, as a group, Luso-Canadians display *significantly lower levels of formal education* than either the general population or other minorities and that they have *significantly fewer individuals with post-secondary studies*.

Census figures show that Portuguese immigrants (i.e. only those born in Portugal) are much *more likely* than other immigrants and Canadian-born individuals, to have *less than a grade 9 education*, (48%

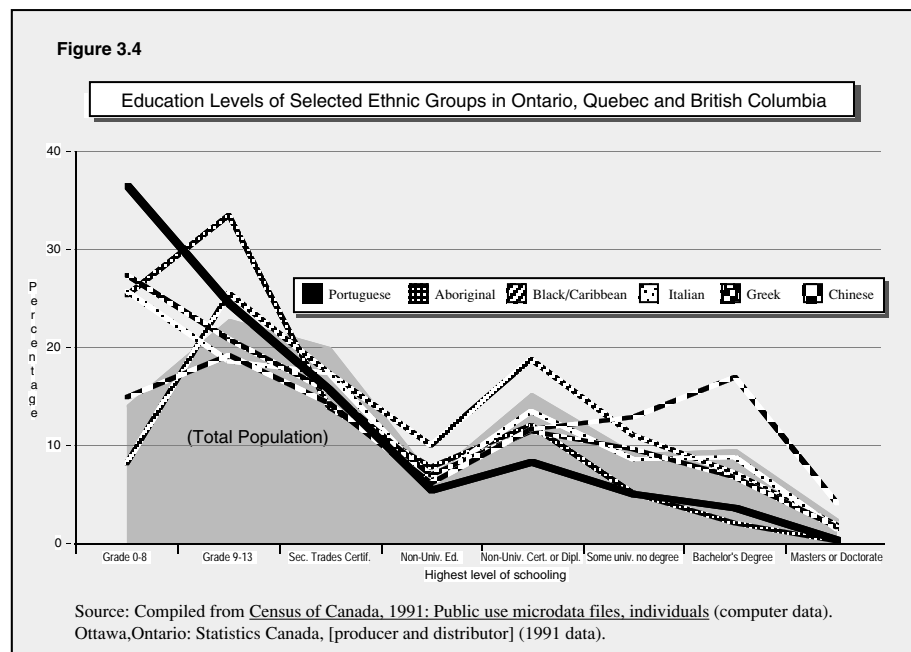


for Portuguese vs. 19% for other immigrants and 13% for Canadian-born). They are also *less likely* to have a university degree (2% vs. 14% and 11%) (Figure 3.3).<sup>10</sup> Similarly, as Figure 3.4 illustrates, in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia - where almost 92% of all Luso-Canadians reside - the

“If our children do not complete high-school... do not go to University, we are going to continue to have a Portuguese community that is the mirror image of ...the first generation. This is my biggest worry, it is seeing that the second generation is following in the footsteps of the first.... I think that, if we do not pay attention to this, [this will turn into] a great calamity for the Portuguese community. This is the key issue that we have to discuss.”

(Toronto, Ont.)

proportions of individuals of a Portuguese *ethnic origin* (i.e. both immigrant and Canadian-born Portuguese) with *less than*, or equivalent to, grade 13 is consistently *greater* than the norm (nearly 3 times higher, for those with grade 8 or less), while the proportion of those with education above grade 13 is consistently *less than* the rate amongst the general population.<sup>11</sup> Even when compared to minority groups who for years have reported severe underachievement problems amongst their own youth, (ex. Black Caribbean, Aborigines)<sup>12</sup> the Portuguese still display the *highest* percentage of individuals who possess no more



“I know before in the past, there were some parents who would not encourage their kids to go further because [they would say] ‘Yeah, finish grade twelve. But then go work... and then I’ll have half of your paycheque.’ or, ‘I’ll have your paycheque until you get married, and until you move out.’ And, I think that’s why some kids probably didn’t go further. Because their parents instilled in their mind, ‘work after grade twelve and make money,’ and, not looking at the long-term consequences of doing that.”

(Winnipeg, Man.)

“I think that if you explain to your parents ‘I could make a lot more money doing this as a doctor, than I could as being... a carpenter,’ then I think your parents will agree with that. They want you to do what’s best for you. But... ..we don’t have the extra money to put our kids through school. Speaking for myself, my father works hard, and.... he doesn’t have enough money to put me through school. I’m putting myself through school. The thing is, we’re not as affluent as some cultures and I think that should be recognized.”

(Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.)

than a primary school education and one of the *lowest* overall proportions of individuals with any type of schooling above the level of secondary trade certificate, (which includes all of those with studies in apprenticeship programmes, community colleges, technical training institutes and university). In fact, with the exception of those people who have acquired, or are studying towards a Bachelor’s degree, the Portuguese display proportions of post-secondary schooling which are comparable to and, in some cases, *lower than* the levels reported for the Aboriginal communities in these provinces. Only approximately 4% of all the Portuguese in these communities, and only 2% of Portuguese immigrants, have achieved any kind of a university degree, (vs. 14% for all immigrants and 11% for all people born in Canada).

These figures provide evidence to suggest that, as a community, Luso-Canadians are in a greater position of educational disadvantage than what has previously been understood. These numbers also corroborate the importance which people throughout this study have placed upon the issue of the lack of educational advancement of Luso-Canadian youth. Furthermore, they serve to buttress the appeals of some of the younger focus group participants, who called for the Portuguese to be included in government and school “*affirmative action*” programmes, that are designed to provide equality of opportunity in education and employment to visible minorities and Aboriginals.

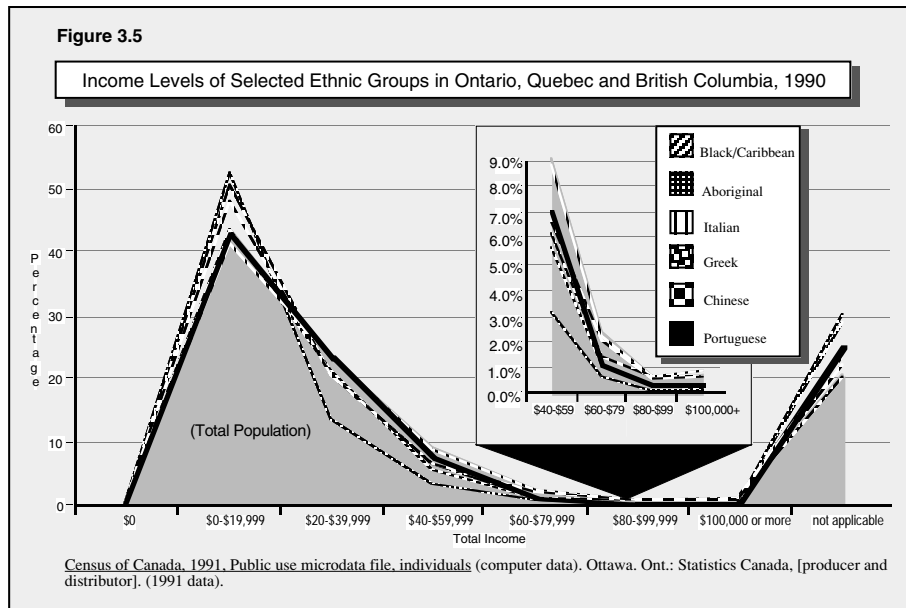
**D. INCOME**

Information from the 1991 Census, (from both immigrant<sup>13</sup> and ethnic-origin data<sup>14</sup>), was also gathered in order to describe and compare the 1990 earnings levels of Portuguese-Canadians. These figures suggest that there are *not* disproportionate numbers of Portuguese who are living in low-income situations. However, the numbers also show that the Portuguese display one of the lowest percentages of individuals earning above \$40,000 and that this group also earns significantly lower *average* incomes than their counterparts. This is particularly true of Luso-Canadian women, youth and seniors, with the latter having significantly lower incomes than other immigrant or mainstream seniors and relying

**Table 3.3**  
Individual 1990 Income Levels for Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia

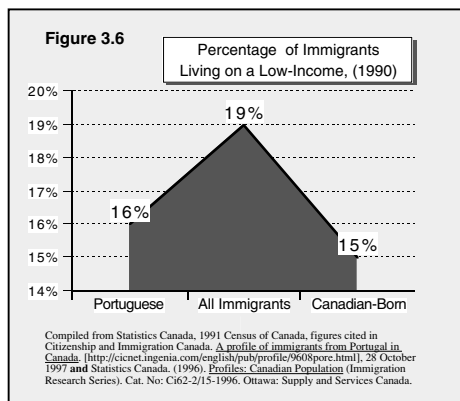
	\$0	\$0-\$19,999	\$20-\$39,999	\$40-\$59,999	\$60-\$79,999	\$80-\$99,999	\$100,000+	not applicable
Total population	0.1%	43.4%	23.0%	9.0%	2.4%	0.7%	0.9%	20.5%
Portuguese	0.1%	42.8%	23.2%	7.1%	1.0%	0.3%	0.3%	25.2%
Black/Caribbean	0.0%	43.3%	20.9%	5.6%	1.0%	0.3%	0.2%	28.7%
Aboriginal	0.1%	52.4%	13.6%	3.1%	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%	30.1%
Italian	0.1%	41.2%	23.2%	8.8%	2.2%	0.6%	0.8%	23.1%
Greek	0.2%	50.4%	20.7%	6.2%	1.4%	0.6%	0.6%	20.1%
Chinese	0.1%	47.7%	20.6%	6.6%	2.0%	0.5%	0.7%	21.8%

Census of Canada, 1991, Public use microdata file, individuals (computer data). Ottawa, Ont.: Statistics Canada, [producer and distributor]. (1991 data).



much more heavily than their peers on government transfer payments.

Census figures show that, in 1990, the majority of the population in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia earned less than \$40,000 a year (70%), and that the Portuguese had roughly the same *percentage* of people earning *below* \$40,000 as the general and ethnic-minority populations (Table 3.3 and Figure 3.5). In fact, there were proportionately *fewer* Portuguese who earned even less than \$20,000 (42.8%) than there were in the general population (50%), or in the Chinese, Greek, Aboriginal and Black-Caribbean communities. Furthermore, as Figure 3.6 illustrates, the percentage of Portuguese *immigrants* living on a low-income (16%) (as defined by the Statistics Canada Low-income Cut-offs) was *less* than was the case for all immigrant groups (19%) and only slightly above the figures for people born in Canada (15%).<sup>15</sup> Finally, Portuguese-Canadian male youth displayed the highest unemployment rate of any age group in their community (15.7%). However, their unemployment rate was *below* that for all immigrant and Canadian-born male youth (17.6% and 16.3%).<sup>16</sup>



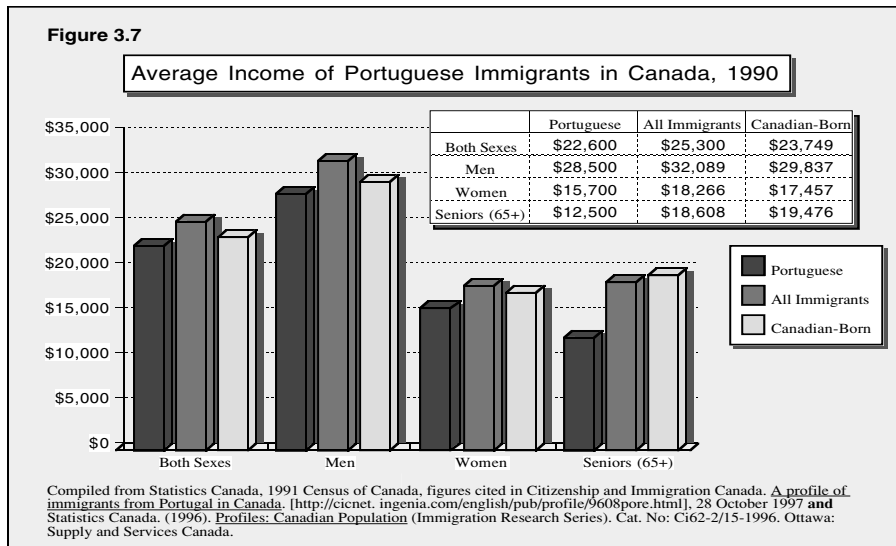
Yet, despite the fact that there was not a disproportionately large lower-earning population amongst the Luso-Canadian community in 1990, census figures showed, nevertheless, that Portuguese immigrants tended to have lower average incomes than other Canadians and immigrants and that proportionately very few Portuguese earned over \$40,000 a

“...one of the problems within the Azorean community is that practically all of its youth... work part-time... ..I think it is impossible for a child ... ..who is sixteen years old, who works four or five hours a night...to continue to function very well [in school].... ..I have had the chance to [ask] parents... ..‘why do you let you son or daughter work five or six hours a night?’ [and they reply] ‘Oh, I don’t mind. What they earn is for themselves and, in this way, I don’t have to buy them shoes... ..and whatever else they need. This is out of my reach.’ Therefore, it is a relief for them that they don’t have to give their children what their children need... ..I think that this is a problem which has much to do with the level of education which we see in our schools.”

(Toronto, Ont.)

“At work they send us here and there to the hardest jobs that there are in the factories, or in construction, because we don’t know how to defend ourselves, we don’t have the language, or anyone who can help us...I think this is what affects us greatly.”

(Edmonton, Alb.)



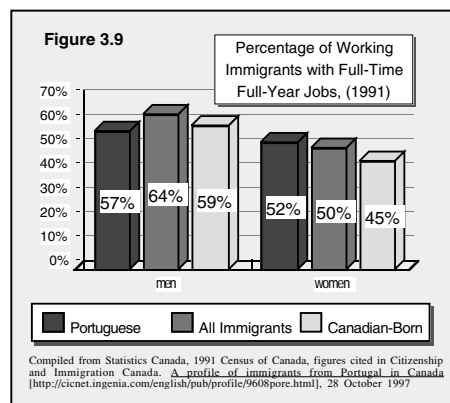
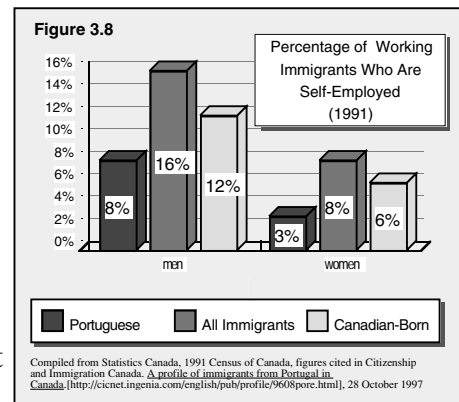
year, in comparison to the norm and to other groups. As Figure 3.7 illustrates, in 1990, Portuguese immigrants earned an average individual income that was between \$1,150 to \$2,700 less than either the Canadian-born population or the total immigrant population, (depending on whether age standardization was applied).<sup>17</sup> Portuguese

immigrants are also less likely to be self-employed (Figure 3.8) and, in the case of men, to have full-time, full-year jobs (Figure 3.9).

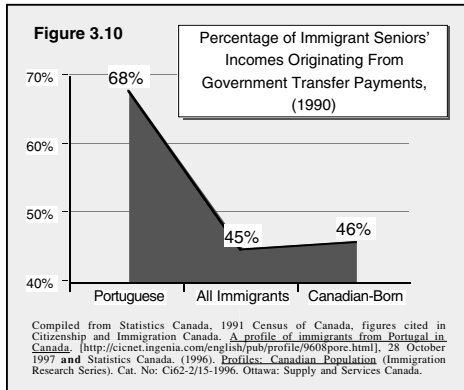
*“...this is a traditional problem, which the community brought with it, from the Azores. I think that education was a problem in general until, let’s say, the beginning of the 60’s, for both men and women, and most certainly much worse for women. Which means to say that [amongst] Azorean women in Canada, who are, for the most part I would say, between 40 and 60 years of age there are very few who can read or write, which puts them in a very difficult situation, in relation to their jobs... As I have said, it is a historical problem.”*

(Toronto, Ont.)

The income difference between Luso-Canadians and other immigrants was especially acute in the case of women, youth (i.e. 15 to 25) and, particularly, Portuguese seniors (i.e. 65+), who tended to have significantly lower incomes than the Canadian-born and immigrant elderly (almost \$7,000 less). Furthermore, both Portuguese immigrant seniors and youth displayed higher percentages of individuals living on low incomes than their Luso-Canadian counterparts of other age groups (22% of seniors, and 19% of youth). Portuguese immigrant seniors also relied much more heavily on government transfer payments than their counterparts in both the general and immigrant communities, since a much larger share of their income was comprised of these payments (68%) (Figure 3.10).



The proportions of Portuguese who earned above \$40,000 a year in 1990 were also significantly lower than those for the total population and a number of other large minority groups, (proportionately between one-half to one-third as many). In fact, Portuguese-Canadians have proportions of higher income earners

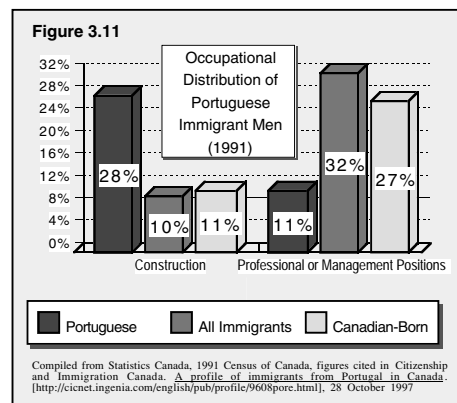


that are roughly *equal* to those in the Black/Caribbean community and *second-lowest* behind only those of Aboriginal Canadians (see Table 3.3 and Fig. 3.5)

In summary, the evidence indicates that there do not appear to be disproportionate *numbers* of Portuguese-Canadians who are living in dire poverty (as defined by the Low-Income Cutoff).

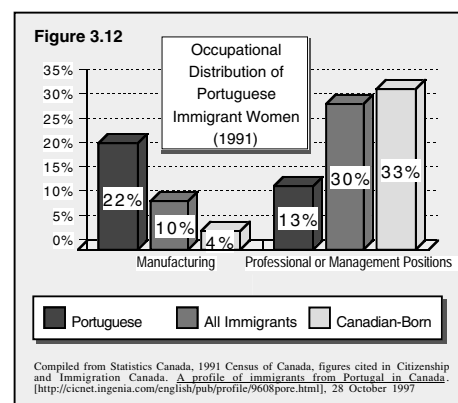
Nevertheless, *on average*, individuals in the Portuguese community tend to earn *less* than is the case with all immigrants or the general population and there are also *disproportionately few* Luso-Canadians earning above \$40,000, even in comparison to other low-earning groups.

The lack of a high-earning sector in the community is most certainly a reflection of the scarcity of Portuguese-Canadians in positions of higher responsibility, (such as the skilled trades, technical postings and management) and of their concentrations in lower-wage,



blue-collar positions (see Figures 3.11 and 3.12). While this measure is an especially useful instrument to gauge the economic vigour of a community, in the case of the Portuguese, it also provides evidence of another, more significant concern: The lack of individuals in higher earning positions also suggests that the Portuguese comprise one of the

communities with the least significant sector with the necessary education, experience and economic clout to effectively lobby governments against disadvantaging policies or cutbacks. This is an especially relevant concern for Portuguese elderly who, as we have seen, rely much more heavily on government transfer payments than other seniors and who will consequently be hit much harder than their mainstream or immigrant counterparts by any future government austerity measures targeting pensions or social assistance.



*"I don't need to speak French, in order to work. And even the boss was very grateful because... he would say, 'This is the kind of worker that I want. These kinds of workers don't waste their time talking to anyone...'"*

(Montreal, Que.)

*"...there are many retirees scattered around here who have financial difficulties, because they retired many years ago with a pension which they, at that time, believed to be good; and they thought of going back to Portugal... ..But, today, one can't live very well with the same pension with which one lived before; and they also face difficulties here. And the Portuguese government... ..still does not give them any subsidy.... ..I know that there are many [Portuguese] throughout Canada... ..who are not living very well, for this reason."*

(Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.)

*"Luckily, we have a special name: The 'Portuguese' name. Where a Portuguese works [once], he soon has [more] work... ..We only need a little bit more help, because with our hands, our experience, and with the way in which we are, we always survive in this country, although with some difficulty."*

(Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.)

## IV. PROFILE OF CONGRESS MEMBERS AND INDIVIDUALS MOST INVOLVED IN LUSO-CANADIAN ORGANIZATIONS

*“Youth... at this point... is... a little bit confused. Ultimately, they don't know the direction to which they should turn. They don't see any support coming from our country... one of saying 'ok, my parents are Portuguese. What is the interest... that I have in really having ties to this whole situation.' And one can see that the majority begin to forget and [to say] 'I am Canadian.' But, one thing is for sure, one is also already seeing youth, at this moment in time, seeking their roots... They are really looking for something which is forgotten in time. Someone should be supporting these youth, so that they can really start to accomplish something.”*

*(Ottawa-Hull)*

*“We are Canadians but, if we are here, we are Portuguese. We are the children of immigrants.”*

*(Montreal, Que.)*

Information was gathered from the 168 individuals who responded to the questionnaire, most of whom were members of the Congress and/or involved in other community organizations and development.

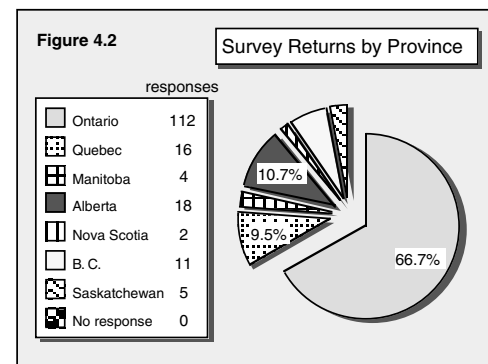
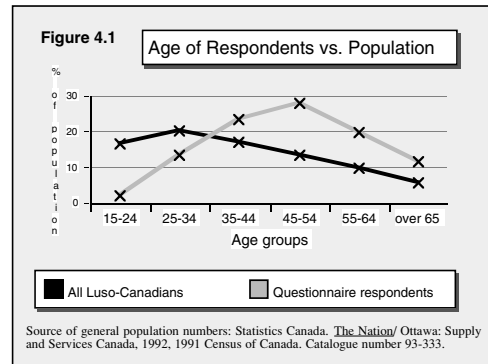
QUESTION	RESPONSES								
<b>Sex</b>	Men 57.7%	Women 41.7%	no response 0.6%						
<b>Age</b>	15-24 2.4%	25-34 13.7%	35-44 23.8%	45-54 28.0%	55-64 20.2%	65-74 9.5%	75+ 2.4%		
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married 76.8%	Single 10.0%	Widowed 5.0%	Divorced 4.2%	Separated 2.4%		no response 1.2%		
<b>Province</b>	Ontario 66.7%	Alberta 10.7%	Quebec 9.5%	B. C. 6.5%	Sask. 3.0%	Manitoba 2.4%	Nova Scotia 1.2%		
<b>Place of birth</b>	Continent 66.7%	Azores 22.6%	Madeira 0.6%	Canada 3.6%	Other 5.4%	no response 1.2%			
<b>Congress member</b>	Yes 74.4%	No 23.8%							
<b>Members of another Lusio-Canadian assoc.</b>	Yes 73.8%	No 23.2%							
<b>Year of immigration</b>	before 1950 0.6%	1950-59 3.6%	1960-69 35.1%	1970-79 35.1%	1980-89 14.3%	1990-present 1.8%	no response 9.5%		
<b>Citizenship</b>	Portuguese 13.1%	Canadian 20.2%	Dual 64.3%	Other 1.8%	no response 0.6%				
<b>Nº of children residing at home</b>	none 35.1%	one 29.2%	two 26.8%	three 4.8%	four 1.8%	five 0.0%	no response 2.4%		
<b>Employment</b>	By other 52.4%	self-empl. 12.5%	retired-age 11.3%	-disability 7.8%	housewife 3.0%	student 1.8%	laid off 1.2%	injury-leave 2.4%	other 1.8%
<b>Annual family income (thousands of \$)</b>	\$0-\$19 17.3%	\$20-\$39 26.8%	\$40-\$59 23.8%	\$60-\$79 7.8%	\$80+ 12.5%	no response 11.9%			
<b>Level of schooling (incl. partial completion)</b>	none 2.4%	1-4 24.4%	5-6 4.2%	7-11 17.1%	vocational 7.1%	university 42.3%	no response 2.4%		

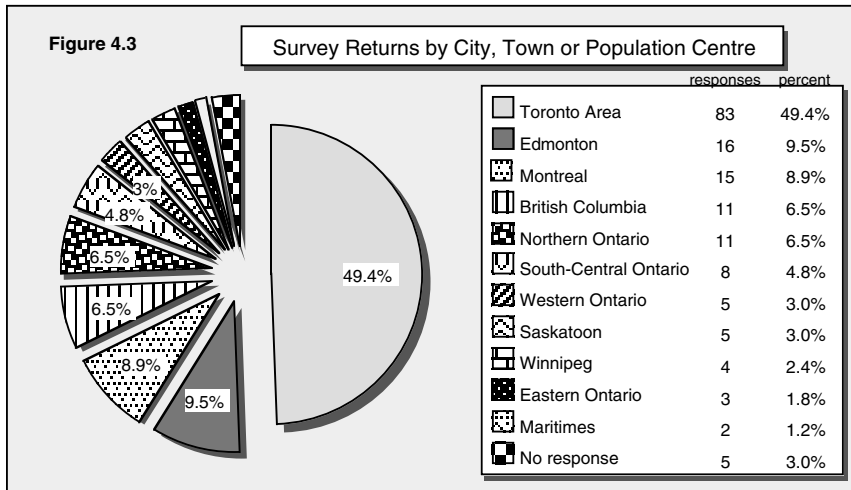
Questions were asked in order to gather a general profile of this population. Others were also posed to determine the *level of integration*, of these individuals, the way in which they *resolved common problems* and how they *accessed community services*.

Because these people represent only one segment of the Portuguese-Canadian community, their answers must *not* be generalized to all Lusio-Canadians.

### A. GENERAL PROFILE

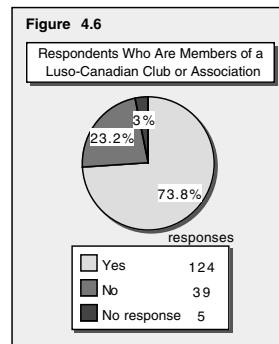
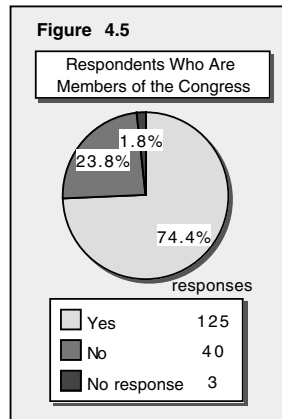
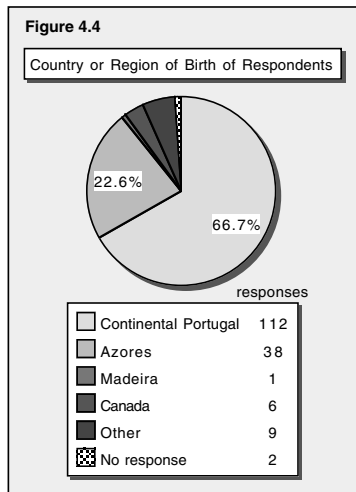
The first part of the questionnaire was used to gather a general profile of the





*“I am a mother of three children and I have always had a lot pride in my sons being active in the Portuguese community. However, people with whom I have spoken, including members of my family, and people my own age, are very surprised that I have maintained my children involved with the association, the church, the Portuguese school and other cultural activities.”*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*



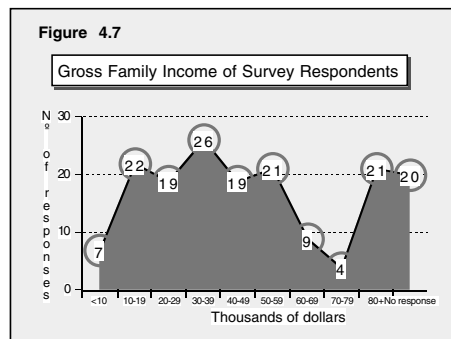
respondents. The results indicate that

those individuals who answered the survey tended to be *middle-aged Portuguese from the European mainland*, most of whom were *living in Ontario* (see Table 4.1 and Figures 4.1 through 4.9). Nearly half originated from the Toronto area, (Figure 4.3) and three quarters were members of the Congress, or of another Luso-Canadian organization (Fig's 4.5 & 4.6).

A rough comparison of this summary with census data further showed that, amongst questionnaire respondents, there was an *overrepresentation of the elderly and retired* (Figure 4.1 & 4.9) *the self-employed* (Figure 4.9, next page) and especially of *those who had a higher education and income* (Figures 4.7 and 4.8). For example, over 42% of respondents stated that they had experienced some years of study at university or college (Table 4.1 and Figure 4.8), in contrast with only about 9% of similarly schooled individuals in

*“I think that the woman, as long as she wants to get involved [in community matters] can become involved as much as her husband.... The husband has to be understanding... I was twelve years involved in an association... many times neglecting my home and my family... But why? Because I had the support of my husband.”*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*



*“I’ve seen Portuguese who are extremely well placed, in universities, hospitals, very high occupations of whom our community is not aware. They place themselves in their own little world, educate themselves, and have nothing to do with us. They don’t want to be recognized, they don’t want link themselves to our community... ..those who have become interested in education, seem to close their eyes to our community [and say] ‘we’re Canadians, we’re no longer Portuguese-Canadians.’”*

(Ottawa-Hull)

*“I say ‘I am Canadian, I am a Quebecois’, [they say] ‘Oh, no. You are Portuguese.’ I am not Portuguese, I am of Portuguese origin, but I was born here. Many Quebecois don’t consider us as Quebecois, because our parents are immigrants. So, this means that we also, in some way, are immigrants.”*

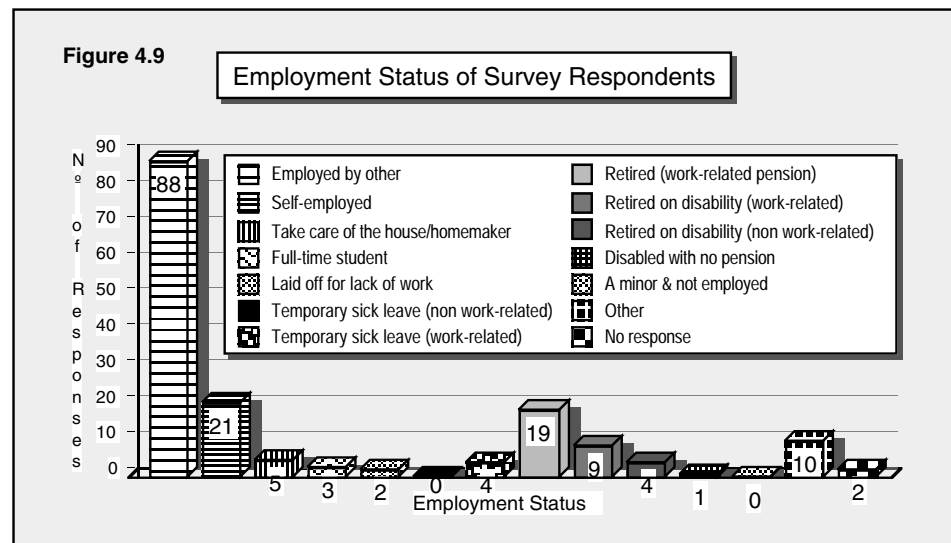
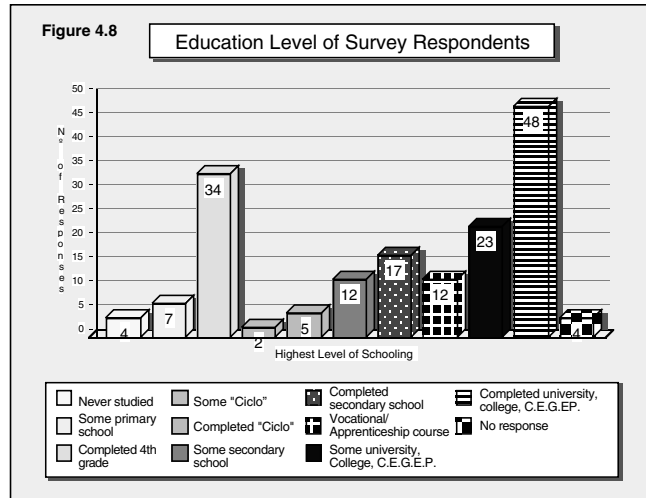
(Montreal, Que.)

the general community (see Figure 3.4). Adversely, relatively few young people and Portuguese of Azorean background responded to the survey (Figures 4.1 and 4.4). There was also a low return from certain significant Luso-Canadian

communities, such as Montreal, and a disproportionately high return from Alberta, a region of relatively few Portuguese (Figure 4.2).

In summary, the questionnaire profile indicates that those who answered the survey (who were mostly Congress members and individuals who are actively involved in community organizations) generally do not reflect the wider Luso-Canadian population, in terms of age distributions, regions of origin, income and education levels. Amongst these populations, there are greater proportions of older, more educated and higher income individuals and consequently, their answers to the other parts of the questionnaire must not be generalized to the community-at-large.<sup>18</sup>

This profile draws attention to a number of important issues. Firstly, these results clearly show that there is the need for the Congress (and other Luso-Canadian organizations) to reach out to Azorean Portuguese and Luso-Canadian youth, as well as to further raise their



*profile amongst the grass-roots community.* Secondly, the high proportions of both the retired and of better educated professionals involved in the Congress and in Luso-Canadian associations is evidence that these organizations have at their disposal *a potentially effective volunteer base, for lobbying or mentoring purposes*, if the latter can be successfully mobilized. Finally, what may also warrant further analysis is the seemingly high proportion of individuals who reported that they had retired on a disability pension resulting from a work-related injury. This may indicate that Luso-Canadians run greater risks of being disabled in workplace accidents, than those in the general population; or, it may simply mean that community organizations somehow attract a disproportionate number of disabled individuals.

*“The [young] people that you probably see that are going to the gangs, are people that are probably not involved in the Portuguese community, as a whole. They’re probably the people who wouldn’t say that they were Portuguese... ..They’re the people who are ‘Canadian.’”*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

## **B. LEVEL OF INTEGRATION**

The next set of questions gauged the *level of integration* of the individuals who answered the survey. Questions were asked regarding *language abilities in English and French, cultural maintenance, political activities and educational expectations.*

### ***i. language***

Of those who replied to the questions regarding language, *the vast majority indicated that they could understand, speak and read all, or most, of what they wanted, in English* (about 50% “all” and 20% “most”), while only 4% indicated that they understood, spoke or read nothing in that language. With regards to French, the largest groups of respondents were those who indicated that they understood, spoke, or read little or nothing of the language (from 42% to 54%).

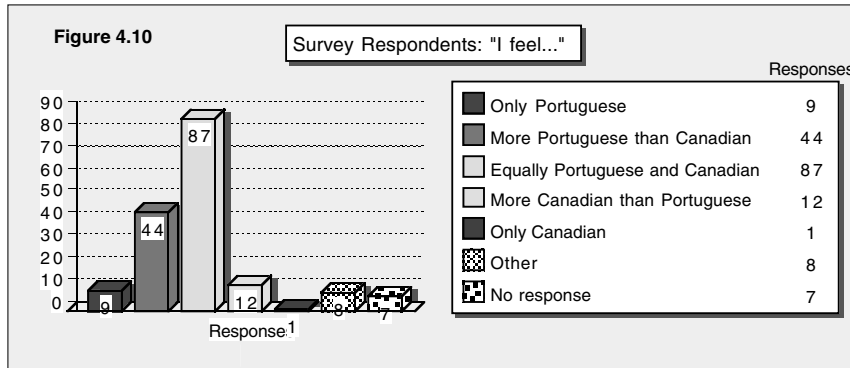
Notwithstanding the negative French-language results, there still was *a surprisingly high percentage of people who indicated that they could understand, speak or read most, or everything, of what they wanted in that language*, (from 26% to 40%). This was particularly unexpected, because relatively few responses were received from Quebec (approximately 8%, and mainly from Montreal). This widespread fluency in French may possibly be attributed to the disproportionate number of better-educated individuals amongst the membership of the Congress and of Luso-Canadian organizations, or it may also reflect the proximity of the French language to the Portuguese.

*“Youth before did not want to learn Portuguese. But, I think that now many young people want to return to Portugal. And now they become more interested in learning Portuguese. They do not like living here any-more...”*

*(Halifax, N.S.)*

### ***ii. cultural maintenance***

The next few questions gauged the *degree of attachment of respondents to the Portuguese culture and identity.* People were asked questions on the degree to which they felt themselves to be Portuguese



or Canadian, whether they intended to permanently return to Portugal, the importance which they attributed to the maintenance of the Portuguese culture and whether they participated regularly in any organized religious activity.

The largest group of

respondents (54%) described themselves as “*equally Portuguese and Canadian*”, while 27% felt “*more Portuguese than Canadian*” and 7% felt “*more Canadian than Portuguese*” (Figure 4.10). The largest proportion of people, nearly 60%, also indicated that they did not intend to return

permanently to Portugal, (Figure 4.11).<sup>19</sup>

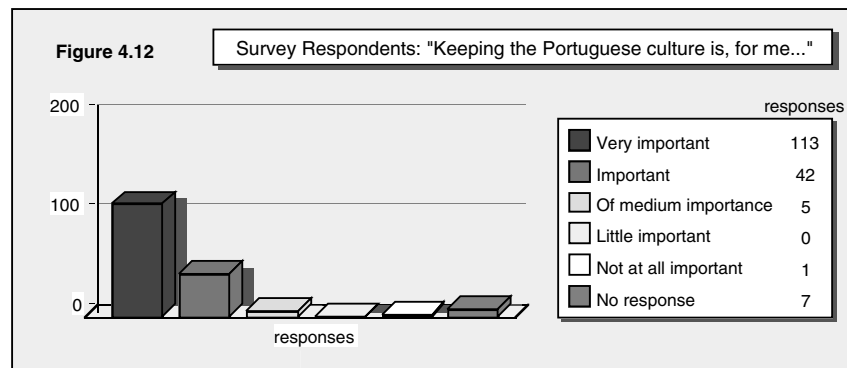
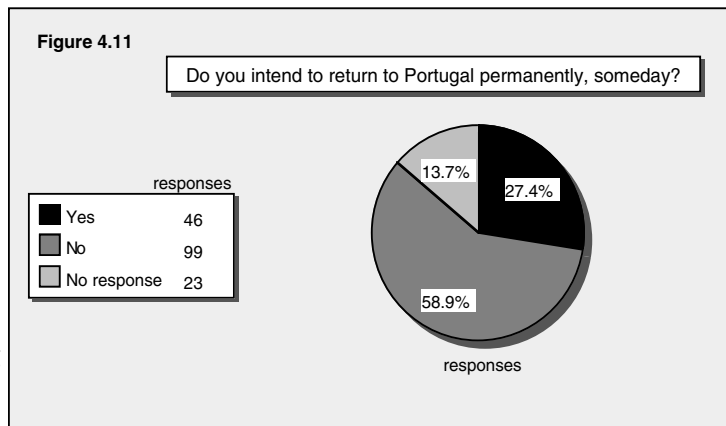
An overwhelming 92% of respondents also affirmed that maintaining the Portuguese culture was

“*very important*” or “*important*”) (Figure 4.12).<sup>20</sup> Finally, approximately half of the individuals responded that they participated regularly in some kind of organized religious activity (50.6%) (Figure 4.13).

It is interesting to note that, while a large majority of individuals stated that keeping the Portuguese culture was very important to them (92%), most also indicated that they felt equally Canadian as well as Portuguese and almost 60% asserted that they did not intend to return to Portugal. Thus, it would appear that, while many of those who are

*“I have friends who went to... how do I put it?... totally ‘white’ schools, with very few immigrants - in the south part of Winnipeg - who had to get assimilated, where they could not bring out their own culture. It was just not the thing to do. Because no one really understood. If you tried, no one would understand what you were doing. So you would have to assimilate yourself. And, when you were asked ‘what are you’, [you would say] ‘I’m Canadian’. ‘Well, what are your parents?’, ‘Well, they’re Portuguese. But, I’m Canadian.’*

(Winnipeg, Man.)



involved in community organizations display a strong need for a sense of rootedness in the Portuguese culture (which is probably one of the reasons why

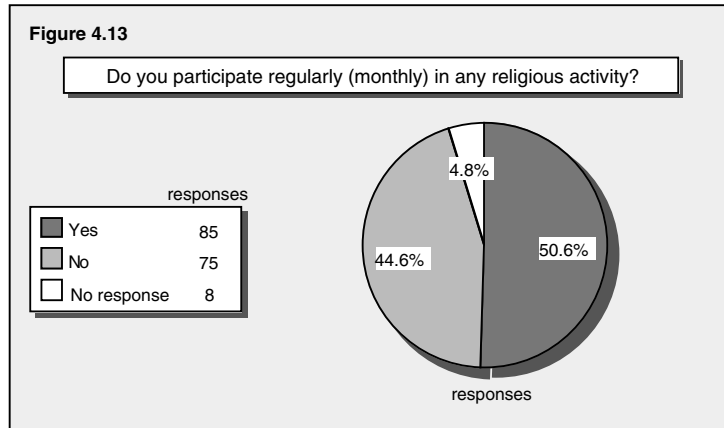
they are involved) nonetheless, these individuals also appear to be firmly committed to living in this country and have developed a strong sense of a Canadian identity. This apparent dichotomy has obvious implications for Canadian cultural and multicultural programmes as well as for the planning of the activities of the Portuguese government, around cultural promotion at home and abroad.

The relatively substantial rate of religious participation would also seem indicative of the continued importance that is given to organized religion by many of the members of this segment of Luso-Canadian society. This pattern is not surprising, when one considers that the largest proportion of questionnaire respondents tended to be over 35. However, an equally disproportionate number of those answering this survey also tended to be from amongst the better-educated and economically privileged segment of the community; a group which one might expect to have abandoned the church in greater proportions.

**iii. political activity**

When asked about their political involvement, 83.3% of the respondents indicated that they had voted in the last provincial, federal or municipal elections (Figure 4.14). In the following question, almost 20% also indicated that they belonged to a Canadian political party.

This relatively substantial rate of adherence to a political party is probably due to the fact that the Congress tends to attract a fairly large number of people who are more politically active. Yet, amongst the 27 individuals who indicated that they had not even voted in the previous elections, 22 cited as the reason the fact that they did not hold Canadian citizenship

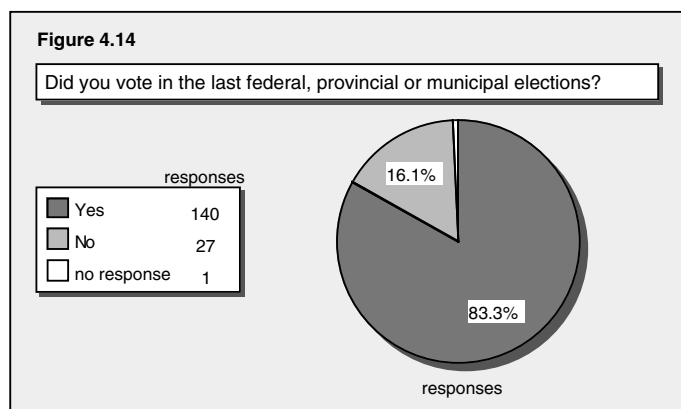


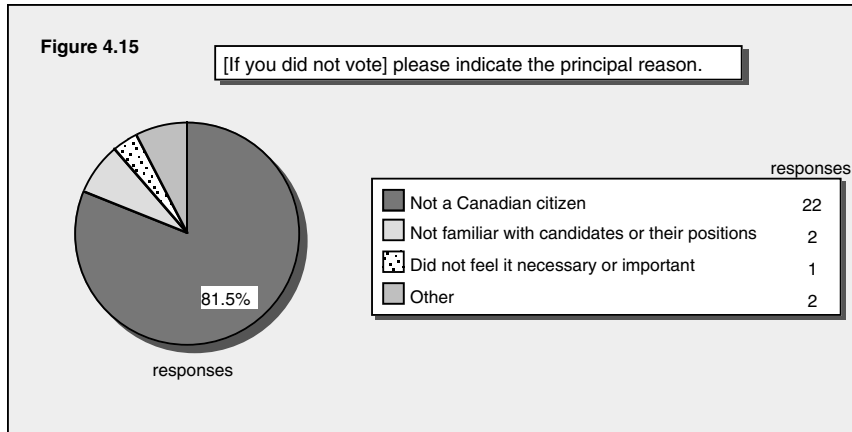
*“The Portuguese keeps so much to himself and to his homelife [é tão metido em si, tão metido em casa]... that from the start he doesn’t concern himself with political issues.”*

(Ottawa-Hull)

*“Those people who are older, their English is not sufficient for them to involve themselves in issues of politics. And, in everything that the Portuguese could talk about, it all leads to the same thing: The speaking of English, writing English and reading English. It always comes knocking at the same door... in every problem which exists.”*

(Osoyoos, B.C.)





(Figure 4.15) This indicates the need for the Congress to promote more vigorously the idea of citizenship amongst its membership and the community-at-large.

**iv. educational expectations**

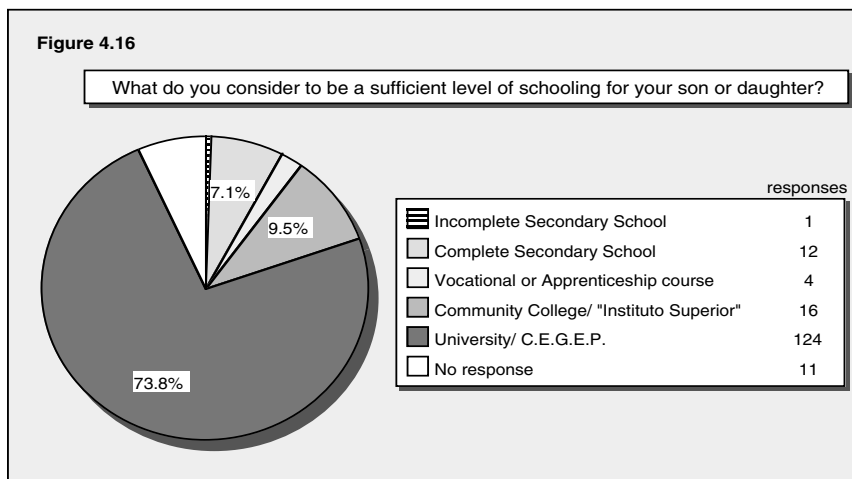
In this part of the survey, respondents were asked what they considered to be a

*“There are many Portuguese parents who want their children to go to university. There are also others, I would guess that it’s half and half... who do not care if their children have secondary five or if they don’t have secondary five, for them it’s ok. But, there are Portuguese who, I think, would not accept that their children would drop out of school to go to work, because they know that for them, it wasn’t easy not having schooling and having to look for a job.”*

(Montreal, Que.)

sufficient level of schooling for their children. This question is important in light of the widespread generalization that many Portuguese parents do not “value” education, or do not understand the necessity of post-secondary studies. The results of this question illustrated that a majority of respondents, regardless of their educational backgrounds, felt overwhelmingly that a university education is the target to be desired, for their children (Figure 4.16). One hundred and twenty-four respondents, or 78% of these individuals, coming equally from amongst those with varying levels of schooling, indicated “University or C.E.G.E.P.” In fact, those with no formal education whatsoever and those who had some years of “ciclo preparatório” (equivalent to the later years of elementary school) were amongst the people with the highest frequency of this response. The group who had the lowest proportion of their numbers answering “university” were individuals who had completed only a partial high-school programme (only 50% answered in this fashion). Nonetheless, these respondents had the highest proportion of those who answered “community college” (33%).

Yet, despite the fact that most people identified university as a desired educational goal, the results also showed that a large minority



still felt that high school is a sufficient level of education. An unexpected 8.2% of those who answered this question (or, 13 people) still regarded some level of “secondary schooling” as being sufficient for their children. Furthermore, all of the individuals who answered in this fashion had some degree of formal education. Eleven of these

individuals had a few years of primary schooling, while 2 had partial, or complete, secondary schooling. This would indicate the need to *conduct more education amongst Luso-Canadian clubs and associations, on the value of a post-secondary education.*

### C. THE RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS

The third part of the questionnaire gauged how respondents to the survey *resolved immediate life problems or needs.* Through a series of questions, people were asked *to whom they first turned* when they faced such issues as: Understanding official letters; dealing with mainstream institutions, work-related, legal, and health-related difficulties; and solving problems with their spouse (or partner) and their children.

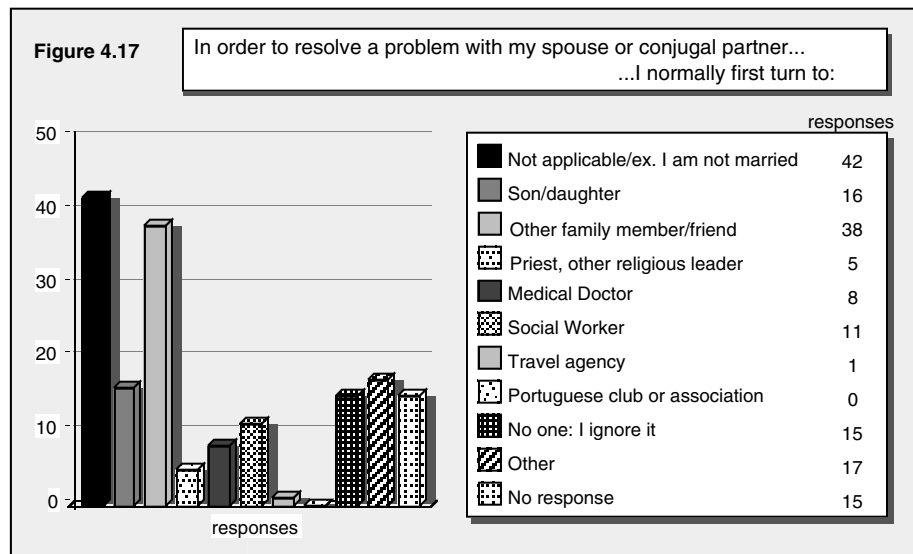
The results indicate that those who answered the survey *seem to be highly capable of resolving issues on their own.* However, *a very heavy reliance appears to be placed on sons and daughters* to first help resolve all types of life problems (Figure 4.17). A final noteworthy point is the *substantial percentage of individuals, particularly males, who responded that they simply ignored conjugal problems.*

When asked the questions in this part of the survey, the majority of people in each case indicated that they were able, by themselves, to understand a formal letter written in English or French (68.5%), resolve a problem at work (58.1%) and communicate with Canadian institutions (72%). The majority also stated that they first turned to a lawyer (51.8%) and a family doctor (94.6%) in order to solve legal difficulties and health concerns, and to their spouse or partner to solve a problem with their children (50.6%). Finally, in dealing with a problem with their spouse or partner, the largest group of respondents - although not the absolute majority - (22.6%) were those who indicated that they first turned to another family member or friend.

None of these answers are surprising. However, what was most significant was the *relatively large numbers of people who stated that they first turned to their sons or daughters* to deal with such diverse problems as reading letters (20.2%), dealing with difficulties related to work (11.3%),

*“I know a lady who... is 51 years old and her husband doesn't understand the language. This lady is dying and they have never understood one hundred percent what the doctor explained to them. A serious illness, cancer... and neither one nor the other have ever understood one hundred percent. Why? They don't have anyone... Where are these people going to turn? To the financial help which the church provides?”*

(Ottawa-Hull)



*“Why doesn’t [a man] go home and talk to his wife, instead of going to the café and talking to his friends and getting drunk? Why does he do this? He has financial pressures, he has to discuss them with his wife, to say.... ‘how are we going to resolve this problem?’ Let’s reach an agreement, let’s try the best way that we can.’ No. It’s not by dismissing his whole family, going to the café, shaking the hand of this, or that one, [and saying] ‘Hey! Bring a round of beer for everyone!’ Our community is like this: If one pays, all want to pay. Sure, so at the end of the day, the guy has drunk too much. He comes home, argues with his wife, because of the problems that are behind all of this... ..’ This is completely wrong... this is one of the serious problems that affects our community, nowadays...”*

(Toronto, Ont.)

*“Many times, in cases where the husband became intoxicated, beat his wife... he comes to court various times. The judge passes sentence... that he has to seek counselling; it’s mandated by law. He doesn’t speak English, doesn’t understand English. Where is he going to go? Where is he going to get this help...? There are many such cases, many cases.”*

(Ottawa-Hull)

mainstream institutions (16.7%), legal affairs (8.9%) and even conjugal problems (9.5%). In fact, this answer constituted the 2nd most frequent response in 4 of the 7 questions that were asked and the 3rd most cited response, in the case of legal difficulties, (counting only those people who indicated that they sought out another person for help). To put it another way, *more people first turned to their sons or daughters than first sought out their unions, social workers, doctors, priests, travel agencies, or family friends.*

A second significant pattern was the disproportionate number of people who failed to answer question which gauged coping patterns to conjugal problems (8.9%), as well as those who wrote “*not applicable*” (25%) “*other*” (10.1%) and “*no one: I ignore it*” (8.9%), (most of those who responded “*other*” did not specify the individuals to whom they were referring). It is also important to note that the vast majority of those indicating that they ignored spousal problems were *men*.

The failure to answer this question may possibly be attributable to the sensitive nature of this subject, or to an unwillingness on the part of many individuals to deal with these issues, especially on the part of men. This may ultimately have implications for the manner in which Luso-Canadian associations, social service agencies and churches choose to approach issues related to the family, such as youth delinquency, family violence, etc. For example, it may suggest a road to action, to place *more of a focus on males* and in the way in which these deal (or fail to deal) with problems which may arise in their family relationships.

#### **D. ACCESS TO SERVICES AND TRAINING**

The next set of questions attempted to identify how respondents had been served, in the past, by the agencies making up our social service network. The results indicate that, by and large, *these individuals have not used the social service system to a great extent* and most are able to access services in English or French. However, *nearly 20% of these still indicated the lack of services in Portuguese as a barrier.*

Almost 70% of all who answered indicated that they had never used a social service centre, community centre or community health centre, while the principle reason given was that these had never been needed (60%). Most also indicated that they had never used any of the listed social services in the Portuguese language, in their region, (85%). Amongst those who had never used a service in Portuguese, the principal reasons given were that these individuals were fluent in either English or French (37.5%), that these services had never been needed (34.4%) or that none of the services was available in Portuguese, in their area (20.3%) (Figure 4.18).

A majority of people also indicated that they had previously used

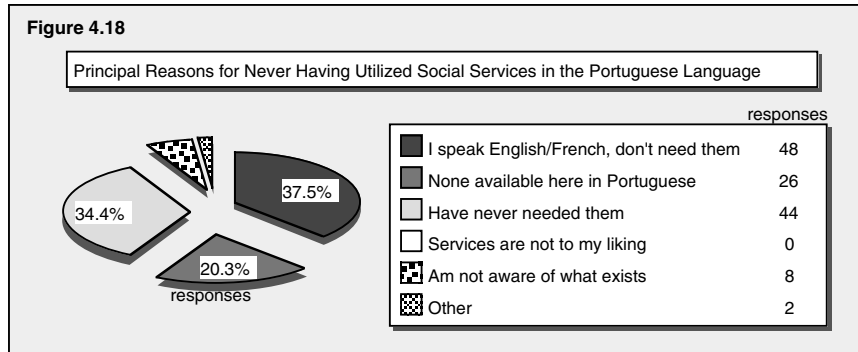
the services of the Immigration Department (55.4%) and Unemployment Insurance (Chômage) (61.3%), while the majority also indicated that they had never used Worker's Compensation (62%), Social Assistance/Welfare (85%) or Legal Aid (83%). In each of

these cases, the principle reason given by those who had not used these services was that these had never been needed.

Significantly, 6 individuals indicated that they did not know what was "Compensation." Another did not know what was "Welfare" and another cited the lack of English/French as a barrier. Almost 5% indicated that they had never used Legal Aid because they did not know the eligibility requirements, 2 individuals did not know what was Legal Aid, while another 2 cited the lack of such a service in their area.

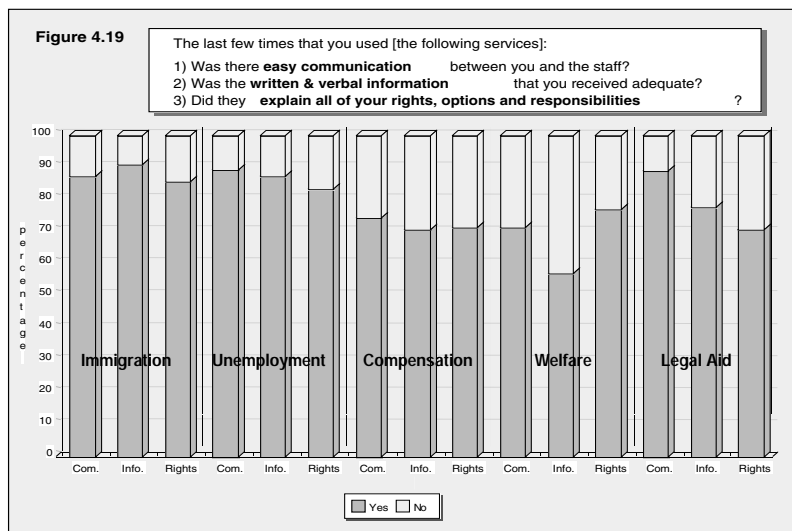
Questions were also asked regarding the *quality of service* which the users of these services had received. Respondents were asked whether there had been easy communication between themselves and staff, whether the written communication which they had received had been adequate and whether officers had adequately explained to them their rights, options and responsibilities (Figure 4.19).

The *majority of people* (between 50% to 90% of all those who responded) indicated that they *had been adequately served*, in all three categories. The most *favourable* response seemed to have been given with regards to the services rendered by the *Immigration Department and Unemployment Insurance*. The *least favourable* appeared to be the *Worker's Compensation and Welfare offices*. Almost 50% of those who said that they had used Welfare indicated that they had *not* received adequate written communication, while 30% were also dissatisfied with the communication between themselves and staff. Meanwhile almost 30% of respondents were dissatisfied with the verbal and written communication and the explanation of their rights that were given by Worker's Compensation. Those who had



*"It's hard to see someone whose cheque was not deposited, who has nothing to eat and who needs to go to Welfare, but who is unable to go there because they have no one to go with them, because they don't speak English. This still happens many time in our community."*

(Winnipeg, Man.)



received Legal Aid cited a good record of communication, but 30% indicated that their rights had *not* been adequately explained.

A series of questions were also asked regarding the service which respondents had received at their local Portuguese Consulates. *It should be noted that these answers reflect the impressions of services received up to the start of 1996 and that the situation in some regions may have since changed.*

The vast majority of people indicated that they *had previously used a Consulate* (90%), while most of those who answered also stated that they had *easy access* to their local offices (77%) (Figure 4.20).

However, those who indicated that they *did not have easy access* were mostly from the *Maritimes, Saskatoon, Northern and South-Central Ontario*, as well as 15% of those in the *Toronto area*.

When asked to evaluate the quality of service which they had received, approximately *equal proportions* rated it as “good” to “excellent” (35%), “reasonable” (31%), or “bad” to “terrible” (33%) (see Figure 4.21). The *largest groups* were those who rated their service as “reasonable” (28%)

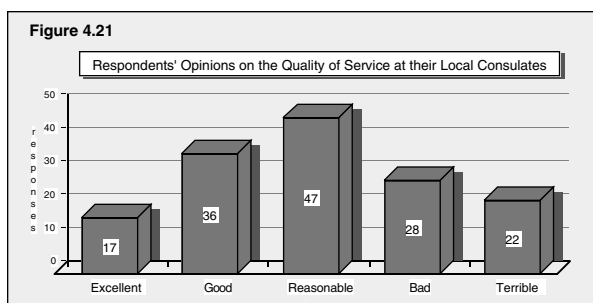
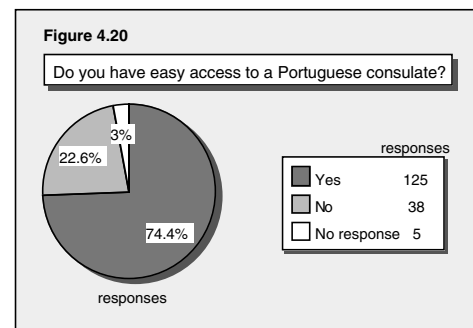
while the *smallest*, (10%) rated it as “excellent.” However, a number of those who declared that their service had been “excellent” also qualified their answer by stating how they felt that this same level of service was *not extended to others*. One person

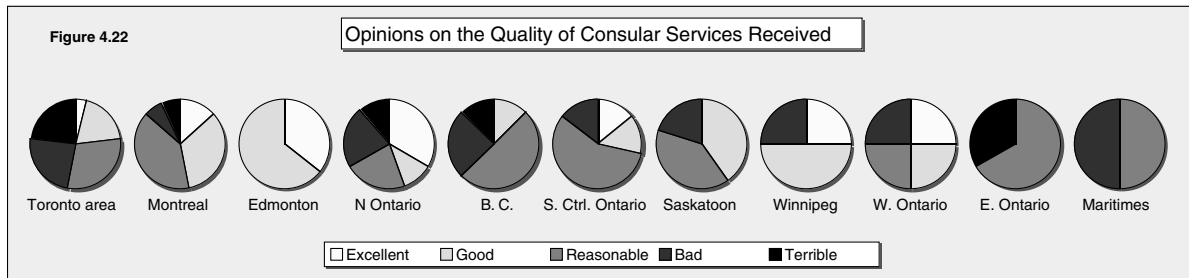
wrote, “‘excellent’ because I know someone in the consulate. But, I know many people receive bad service.” Another noted, “My service is good, because I am well recognized. But, it is clear that many receive awful service.” Yet another declared, “Not being an immigrant myself, I am treated with deference and consideration.” As Figure 4.22 illustrates, the best ratings for the quality of Consular service came from Edmonton and Winnipeg while the worst were provided by those in Eastern Ontario and the Maritimes. (*However, in interpreting these figures, it must be pointed out that the results for South Central, Western and Eastern Ontario, Saskatoon, Winnipeg and the Maritimes were based on fewer than 10 responses each*).

People were also asked, to *provide an opinion of how their local consular services could be improved*. The major theme of these suggestions appeared to be the need for *more courtesy, staff development and training, especially in the areas of public relations, the addition of more employees, as well as the*

*“Last week, I needed help from Portugal... I tried to make a call [to the Embassy, to the Portuguese Consul] and, forget it! ...We are completely abandoned here. And, if you see Portuguese television every day in Portugal, [they are always saying that] ‘Portugal helps the emigrants... everything for the emigrants...’ But, here we are abandoned, here in the Maritimes.”*

(Halifax, N.S.)





reduction of bureaucracy (Figure 4.23).

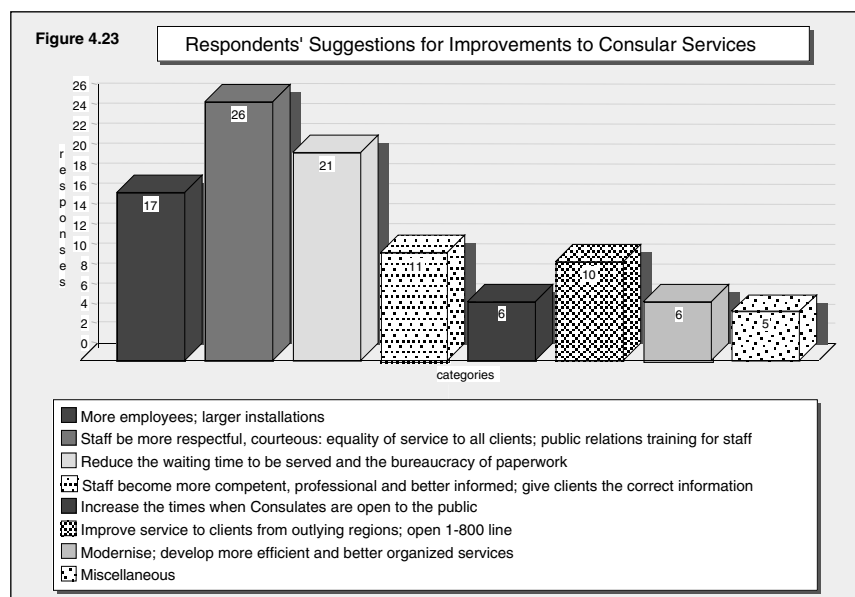
The largest category of comments were suggestions that staff should be *more courteous and respectful of clients*, that *public relations training be provided* to staff and that *equality of service* be provided to all clients (i.e. no favouritism) (22.6% of those who answered the question). This question was also often marked by strong emotional appeals, ranging from calls for more courtesy and greater professional demeanour amongst staff to more strongly-worded comments such as: “*I found the employees distant and rude.*”

“[Consular employees] could treat people with more respect; that is, not assume an attitude of superiority...”

(Toronto, Ont.)

The second-largest category of responses was the call to *reduce the waiting time to be served*, as well as the *bureaucracy involved in paperwork* (18.3%). The third-largest was the suggestion that *more staff be hired* and put to work at the counters and that *larger installations be opened* (14.8%). A number of people also responded that staff should become *more competent and better informed*, so as not to give people the wrong information (9.6%). There was also a call for *improved services to outlying regions* (8.7%).

A final series of questions were also asked regarding *past attendance at English- and French-as-a-second-language classes and adult education programmes*. Approximately *half* of those responding indicated that *they had never attended ESL or FSL classes* (49%). The main reasons given was that people had *prior knowledge* of these languages, or had learned them in infancy, (53% of all “no” answers). The second most frequent response was that the *classes had been offered at inconvenient times of the day or year* (19% of all “no” answers). On a more positive note, the *vast majority* of those who indicated that they had taken



“Many would not go to school because, unfortunately, when they arrived from Portugal, they came with immediate necessities... to earn a living. Thus, they worked ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen hours a day. When they got home at night - poor souls - tired, usually hungry, they did not have time to go to school to learn English.”

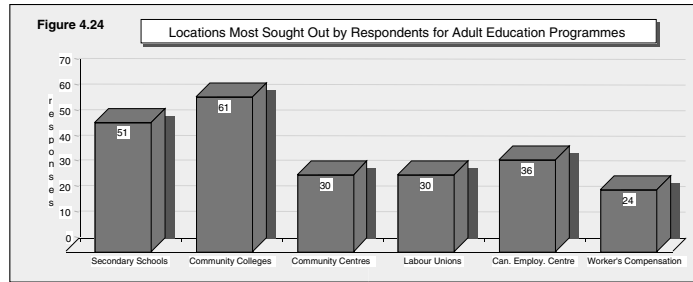
(Halifax, N.S.)

“[How could I] arrive here, as I did, and go to school along with my wife... ..to learn English... ..if we don't have anyone who will help us to survive in this manner...? ...[if] we are going to learn English, how will we earn a living?”

(Sudbury, Ont.)

You want the immigrants who arrive to speak French, but you refuse them in the C.E.G.E.P., because they don't speak French. This makes no sense at all.”

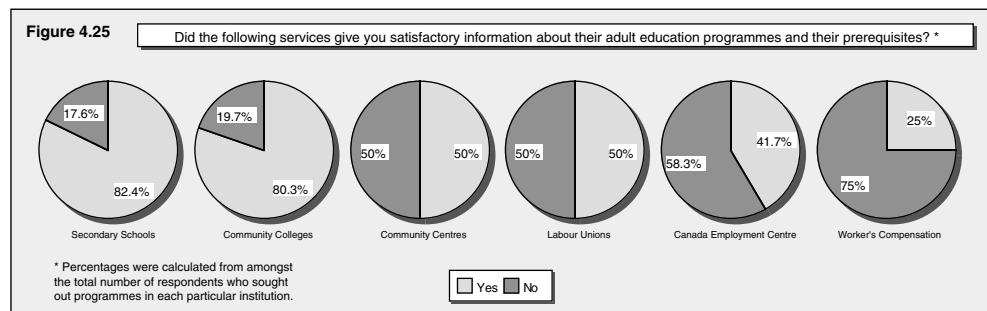
(Quebec City, P.Q.)



language classes rated these as “very useful” or “useful” (84% of those who answered “yes”). This pattern of

answers would seem to indicate that agencies could improve current ESL or FSL attendance by better accommodating courses to the time needs of prospective students.

Respondents were also asked where they had sought out adult education courses and whether they had received satisfactory information about course offerings. Unfortunately, this series of questions had a very high non-response rate, (from 25% to 41%).<sup>21</sup> However, some indication was given that community colleges and secondary schools were the places that were most accessed for adult education courses (Figure 4.24), while the least mentioned were Workers’ Compensation, Labour Unions and Community Centres. Furthermore, those respondents who had approached secondary schools and community colleges were the ones who most indicated that they had received satisfactory information about programmes and prerequisites, (82% and 80% of all of those who sought out information in these places), while those who indicated the most dissatisfaction had accessed such information from Worker’s Compensation and Canada Employment Centres (75% and 58.3% respectively (Figure 4.25). This would indicate the need for these two agencies to improve their communication concerning adult retraining programmes.



## V. MAJOR ISSUES IDENTIFIED

In the next part of the study, people in both the *questionnaire* and in the *focus groups* were asked to identify the *major issues*, or problems, which they felt were affecting their communities, both locally and nationally. Significantly, both the survey and focus group respondents identified similar issues. Thus, this section summarizes the responses from *both* research methods, as well as the youth-only focus groups.

### A. EDUCATION ISSUES

The theme of “*education*,” in its various forms (i.e. of young people, adults, the community) was cited by both the respondents to the *questionnaire* and the *focus groups* as the most important local and national issue which the community was facing. People raised such issues as the *academic underachievement of Luso-Canadian youth*, the *lack of English and French language skills amongst their parents*, the *inadequate programs and structures for the teaching of Portuguese* and various *problems in the functioning of the Canadian education system*.

#### *i. The “academic underachievement” of Portuguese-Canadian youth.*

One of the themes most often identified in this study was the perception that Portuguese-Canadian students were *disproportionately failing to succeed* within the Canadian school system. A total of 46 survey respondents, and 8 focus groups, described the major issues as:

- ***A disproportionate number of Luso-Canadian high-school students are “dropping out”***  
Many of the respondents to the questionnaire, as well as the participants in the Winnipeg, Hamilton and Toronto meetings, voiced the concern that many Portuguese students were prematurely abandoning high-school and failing to graduate. People in Hamilton and Toronto made such comments as “*our children do not study*” and there is a “*school problem*,” to voice these concerns. Those at the Winnipeg meeting also spoke of the large numbers of youth who were “*anxious to leave school*” and who did not think about how this would impact upon their future.
- ***Too few Luso-Canadian students are entering post-secondary education, especially the academic streams***  
Not everyone mentioned early-school-leaving, when describing the educational problems of the community's youth. Some spoke instead about how relatively few Luso-Canadian young people

### MAJOR EDUCATION ISSUES

- Academic underachievement
- Lack of English or French
- Lack of structures for the teaching of Portuguese
- Problems of the school system

“*These youth are anxious to leave school. I don’t know why. And they leave school knowing full well that they will not be able [to find a job], or that, at least, they will have much more difficulty if they don’t finish their schooling... ..even so, they don’t care. I have a number of personal examples that I know of. And, frankly, I can’t find a solution for this problem. And, I live it also. They want to leave school and they don’t think about the future.*”

(Winnipeg, Manitoba)

“*I think the [major problem] is the one of finishing high-school.... If they finish high-school, they are encouraged and they go to university. If they don’t finish high-school, they don’t go.*”

(Toronto, Ont.)

*“In Brampton... .. the high-school where I went... .. if you make it to the actual high-school graduation, it’s a big thing. And then, if you actually go on to university, it’s an extra big thing. I mean, you either drop out within high-school, or you drop out after high-school... ..Everyone is too worried about... buying a car... ..a full-time job... ..So no one really thinks about school.”*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

*“... we as a Portuguese community... will find ourselves in the future.... with a population of underdeveloped individuals, who do not have the preparation to meet the challenges of the extremely advanced society in which we live... ..we will find, for example... ..that a certain percentage of youth of Portuguese origin will not have a place in society.”*

*(Montreal, Que.)*

*“A lot of Portuguese fathers and mothers... sit back and say ‘ok, education, education, education.. Oh! How much are you making? Fourteen dollars and hour? Ok. Stop! You’re at your perfect job; I don’t care if you’re a secretary, I don’t care what you’re doing...”*

*(Vancouver, B.C.)*

were choosing to enter college and university. In fact, equal numbers of respondents identified this issue in the survey as those who cited the dropout problem. Similarly, some of the people in the Winnipeg and Montreal (youth) meetings felt that there were relatively few Portuguese dropouts in their areas and that those who were in high schools or in universities were hard-working and generally able to compete. However, most agreed that there were relatively few Luso-Canadian students choosing to attend post-secondary education. Some participants in Montreal also spoke about how many students study at lower levels or drop difficult subjects and that some Portuguese parents sometimes pressure their children to go to work, (according to one participant, about “*about half and half*” ).

- ***The community's youth are experiencing economic marginalization and social reproduction (i.e. they are entering into the same working-class economic role as their parents)***  
Some of the participants in the groups in Hamilton, Winnipeg and Montreal also focussed upon how many of the Luso-Canadian youth who drop out of school are entering into the same economic roles which their parents currently occupy and expressed their fears that this will lead to the perpetuation of the marginalization of the Portuguese community. The youth groups in Winnipeg and Toronto also added how Portuguese youth are not accessing “*nontraditional*” jobs and thus are not able, like their peers, to participate in all levels of society and the economy.
- ***Many Portuguese-Canadian parents do not encourage their children to continue with their studies***  
Other individuals in this study described the lack of promotion of their children's education on the part of some Luso-Canadian parents and the community as the major educational problem. In fact, this constituted the second-largest category of answers in the questionnaire. Participants in Quebec City, Hamilton, Winnipeg and in all three Toronto meetings indicted parents for such practices as not encouraging their children to continue their studies, for actively urging their sons and daughters to go to work prematurely, to help pay off the mortgage, for not being more involved in their children’s education and for sometimes imposing their career choices upon their children. A few even offered their belief that there was a “*lack of dedication to youth*” on the part of some people in the community.

Those in the youth focus groups also identified many of the aforementioned issues. However the younger people

participating in this study tended to be slightly less critical of the role of Luso-Canadian parents in the underachievement problem than those from other age groups. For example, the individuals in the youth focus groups generally tempered this criticism of Portuguese parents by explaining how the lack of experience with formal schooling and the lowered financial means of those in the "first generation" had left these with a difficulty in truly comprehending the benefits of a higher education and in helping their children in school-related matters. Others, in particular those in the Montreal group, also discussed how some parents actually place inordinate pressure on their children to succeed in school and how this factor is often demoralizing to those students. The youth group participants placed much more of a responsibility than those in the mixed groups on the norms and attitudes of the wider Luso-Canadian community, especially on the attitudes and practices of its leadership. They also stressed the contributing role of certain practices of the school system, such as "streaming," the barriers to advancement from Basic to Advanced Levels of study, labelling and peer pressure, many of which were not discussed by other focus groups.

The participants in all 8 groups also engaged in extensive discussions into other issues which they also implicated in this pattern of underachievement:

- *The community places a disproportionate value on work, over schooling and/or retraining.*
- *Some Portuguese parents place earning a living, and/or the need to pay off their home, ahead of their children's education.*
- *Some Portuguese parents do not devote enough time to their children's affairs.*
- *Many people in the community are unable to see the linkage between education and economic prosperity.*
- *There are very few role models for Luso-Canadian youth.*
- *Low levels of formal education and a working-class status don't allow Portuguese parents the skills to assist their children with the educational choices and issues surrounding their schooling.*
- *Portuguese parents are not able to understand, nor appreciate, the academic pressures affecting students.*
- *The community holds a negative stigma of itself.*
- *Many schools are not prepared to serve working-class students.*
- *Many schools are ignoring the wishes of Portuguese parents, regarding the manner in which they would like their children to be taught and disciplined.*

*"There are many people who are not interested in their children going to school. They would rather see their children come through the door with \$100 or \$200 a week..."*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

*"...there are many Portuguese [who] put a lot of pressure on their children, because... many... did not have much schooling and... at a certain age, had to go to work... they want the best for their kids. So, they put a lot of pressure on them [saying] 'you have to go to school; you have to study; you have to get good marks... because I didn't have that opportunity..."*

*(Montreal, Que.)*

*"...my parents really push you to 'go to university.' But, if you need any help, they don't know how. Because my parents only have a grade four education.... our parents want to help us, but they can't..."*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

*"My dream is to have a house, to provide for my children and, that's it.... to be secure.... I can't say... 'look at Mister H,' because I don't know what he does.... I can't say 'look at the Consul' because I've never seen him..."*

*(Youth, Vancouver, B.C.)*

*“In Portugal, I only wanted to study... ..when I got here, [and started working] in the factory, I would look at girls who were thirteen, fourteen, who had come here as young girls, and think to myself, ‘what I had to endure with my father...’ .... And they, here, with so much opportunity [to study], carrying bundles of blue-jeans on their backs. This for me... ..it would leave me saddened. Because I did not have the opportunity to come here when I was young... .. And, I think that this continues. Those mothers who dedicated themselves to the factory... their children today are doing what their mothers did.”*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

*“people are not interested in learning” and “...they are not interested in anything. Only working and fixing up [their house]...”*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

*“The principal issues arise from language. Without the language, it is impossible for us to go anywhere [progress].”*

*(Osoyoos, B.C.)*

- *The school system makes it extremely difficult for Basic- and General-level students to move to a higher academic level.*
- *Labelling and condescending treatment of General- and Basic-level students lead many of them to drop out.*
- *Students, as well as parents, have very little practical knowledge of the higher-education system.*
- *Virtually no mechanisms exist to provide academic support to Luso-Canadian students.*
- *There are few community incentives, to encourage students to continue their education.*
- *Some Luso-Canadian youth rebel against their parents’ focus on work and frugality, by dropping out and going to work, in order to purchase those things which they were never able to buy.*
- *Market forces induce young people to prematurely become consumers and to join an underpaid youth workforce.*
- *Dropping out is a reaction to academic and peer pressures*

Participants in a few of the groups also made some recommendations regarding the future courses of action to help to resolve the problem of underachievement:

- *Educate the community to better support education.*
- *Defend the interests of Portuguese students with local school boards and governments.*
- *Conduct research to discover why Luso-Canadian students are dropping out.*

## **ii. The lack of English- or French-language skills amongst the first generation**

Another education issue which was frequently identified in the focus groups was the widespread lack of English- and French-language skills amongst those of the first generation. People (mostly those in the Anglophone regions) mentioned how there are many Luso-Canadians, especially the elderly, who are still unable to communicate in English, even after having resided in Canada for many years and having acquired Canadian citizenship. They described how the inability to speak and read English lies at the root of most problems, how it prevents people from getting better jobs and often goes hand-in-hand with a lack of integration in Canadian society (namely, in preventing political participation and access to services). Some in the focus groups also lamented that there are many people who have never learned either language out of sheer complacency and who, consequently, have done a great disservice to themselves and their children. Some of the groups

also engaged in extensive discussions into the reasons behind this lack of facility in English. These included:

- *Lack of interest.*
- *Inappropriate teaching styles.*
- *Lack of accessible child-care.*
- *The immediate need to work, faced by new immigrants, in order to quickly obtain some measure of security in this new land.*
- *“Fear” of returning to school, due to a limited formal education.*
- *Many parents have relied on their children as interpreters, so they have never needed to learn English or French.*
- *Some E.S.L. programmes are not open to Canadian citizens and are thus not available to many Luso-Canadians (ex. the LINC - Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada programme).*

### ***iii. The lack of structures and facilities for the teaching of Portuguese to the second generation***

The educational issue which was most cited in the *questionnaire* was a complaint about the *lack of structures and facilities for the teaching and promotion of the Portuguese language*. Twenty-seven respondents commented on the lack of teachers, classroom space, material support and activities for the promotion of the Portuguese language and culture. People in the focus groups also raised this problem quite frequently, especially those in the smaller and more isolated communities; however, these were more inclined to regard this as a cultural, rather than educational, issue. Similarly, the youth focus groups gave a great deal of prominence to the problem of the loss of the Portuguese language and culture amongst the younger generations (see “*E. Cultural Issues*”), yet these generally did not discuss issues related to the *teaching* of Portuguese, except for *calls for more student input* into the functioning of community schools.

### ***iv. Problems of the school system***

Participants across the country also voiced a number of concerns regarding the way in which their children were being educated in local schools. The majority of these were complaints about how their local schools were *too lax in discipline* and how *child-protection laws were often used by school officials to disempower parents* from teaching their children right from wrong. People also voiced concerns related to the manner in which local schools *failed to communicate with Portuguese parents*, and *failed to relate to Portuguese students and the Portuguese culture*.

*“Azoreans do whatever they can so that they never go to school. They do whatever they can to go and work. They think that they get ahead this way but they only fall behind. Starting with myself. When I came to this country, I went to apply to study. The school said they would pay me \$75 a week. I didn’t want to go to school. I went to work for \$65.”*

*( Toronto, Ont.)*

*“The help which we have had until now from the Portuguese government has been very little....  
...Just because we are far away, we should not be so far from our community...  
...In this way, we’re getting further from our own people. We’re all alone... We need to have Portuguese culture. Our children need to learn our Portuguese language.”*

*(Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.)*

*“The teaching of the history of Canada, for example, or the history of Quebec, teaches us also about the role which the Portuguese have played, or that other ethnic communities have played in the development of the country - which is something that is completely lacking in today’s curriculum.”*

*(Quebec City, Que.)*

*“I speak in a soft tone to him and he [tells me off]. And I speak to him in this tone, almost with my heart in my hands [in a pleading tone]. So, for me, there doesn't exist any education... within our schools.”*

(Toronto, Ont.)

*“ I don't agree that one should be asked to enrol one's child in “Religion and Morality” ... And what is the moral that is given to children?... ...‘if your father should give you a slap in the face, come and tell us or call the police...’ ...at home we give our children one kind of [discipline] and when they get to school, they receive exactly the opposite.... ...That is not ‘morality’ that is an ‘immorality.’”*

(Montreal, Que.)

*“A child that was very rebellious, our neighbour.... One day he hit his leg and went to school and told the teacher that his father had hit him.. ... they went to his home, asking questions of the father, and to the boys, if the father normally beat his children.... ... If the neighbours had not said ‘no, no, the boy is bad. He does this and that’, the poor man would have gone to jail. Is this right? No, it is not. In this respect, Canada is very backward... Very!”*

(Toronto, Ont.)

- ***A perceived lack of discipline and moral education in schools***  
The most often repeated complaint that was levelled against the school system was that these failed to discipline children effectively and that they neglected to teach young people right from wrong. Participants in the July Toronto group attributed the “generation gap” between parents and their children to this perceived lack of discipline and moral education in Canadian schools. They complained about how young people in school today are allowed to smoke in school and to wear “provocative” clothing and decried the “disrespectful” way in which the schools have taught children to relate to authority. Those in Saskatoon also warned about how the lack of school-based moral education is leading to future social problems amongst all Canadians.
- ***Current child-protection laws and practices prevent parents from effectively disciplining their children***  
Some groups spoke disapprovingly of Canadian child-protection laws and procedures, which they believed outlawed spanking in the home and prevented many of them from giving their children a proper moral education. Still other parents blamed these laws, and overeager school officials, for setting some young people against their own parent. They accused officials of taking the words of some children at face value and, consequently, sometimes unfairly accusing innocent mothers and fathers of child abuse. One individual in the Ottawa-Hull meeting spoke of the need to explain current child-abuse laws and practices to Portuguese parents and to give them workable alternatives to physical punishment since, as he further explained, the act of removing a child from the home is often little understood or accepted in the context of traditional Portuguese culture and is traumatic for both parents and children.
- ***Schools are not working with Portuguese parents to inform these and to reflect their wishes***  
Another criticism of the education system was how schools are not doing an adequate job of informing Portuguese parents about the functioning of the education system, (including changes, when they occur) and how they are neither helping nor allowing parents to take the action, which some have felt necessary, to help their children academically. For example, some of the participants described how they were not allowed to transfer their children to other schools, when the latter were having difficulties.

- ***Schools are not inclusive of the diversity of Canada's ethnic cultures***

Another criticism of the education system was the way in which the contribution of the different Canadian ethnic groups in the formation of Canada are not being taught to children.

Participants in groups such as Quebec City, the Maritimes and Vancouver decried the fact that local schools did not teach their children about the role which the Portuguese have played in the development of this country. One participant in Quebec stated “Our [Portuguese] history is integrated with Canadian history, it makes up part of it” and lamented the fact that Portuguese youth “...don't have any notion of the richness of Portuguese history.” Those in Vancouver spoke of the ethnocentric tendencies in the school curriculum, which often ignores the contributions of non-Anglo-Saxon cultures. Participants in Ottawa-Hull also decried the fact that many Luso-Canadian youth have never been made familiar with the Portuguese culture or language, and cited this as one reason for the “*confusion*” of these young people. In the same spirit, participants in the Winnipeg youth group stated that the maintenance of a positive Portuguese-Canadian identity was important for the development and success of most Luso-Canadian youth. However, they also affirmed that, whether a school fostered, or discouraged, the development of a sense of their Portuguese identity depended upon the climate and practices of that particular school and whether or not it had a large Portuguese student presence. They noted that the environment in some schools actively dissuaded the expression of the ethnic differences between students and that it was very hard for those young people who attended schools with very few Portuguese to assert their ethnic identity.

- ***The school system makes it extremely difficult for students to move to a higher level, from Basic- and General-levels***

Participants in the Toronto youth group described how, under the current system of “*streaming*,” (where students are placed into different levels of study based on ability levels), secondary schools place severe barriers to the advancement of Basic- and General-level students to higher levels. Two of the participants in the Toronto group described being required to repeat two years of previous grades, before they were allowed to enter the Advanced level of their grade. One of these described how he finished high school with 49 credits, but not before being made to go from “Grade 9 Basic to 10 Basic and then 9 General to 12 General, 9 Advanced, 12 Advanced, plus 13 Advanced...” Participants in

“I wanted to change my son from one school to another, exactly because of a serious attendance problem that he was having. I submitted the [transfer] papers.... The school refused him. Every day they refused him. Every day he couldn't go to school... He was three months at home without attending school.”

(Toronto, Ont.)

“When I went to high school, or actually, even in the elementary school, I never heard about the Portuguese sailors that went over and did this, did that... Magellan... And I was so proud to hear that, you know.”

(Vancouver, B.C.)

“When I first came to Canada, what the school did to me was incredible. Because I didn't know how to speak English, they put me in the General level... ..I started getting really high marks... ..I tried to go on to the Advanced... ..They told me I had to start all over again... ..So I repeated grade 9 with all General, then I repeated Grade 9 with all Advanced, before I could move on... ..I graduated, I think with 52 (credits)... ..And then, at graduation they gave me a best achievement award.”

(Toronto, Ont.)

"They labelled me as a basic student, so the teachers kind of tried to push me towards lower education, but... ..I have the will and I got grade 13 math and grade 13 English. Now, I'm... ..not a good speaker... ..I'd go home every time and complain to my parents. My parents would say... 'stick with it, go ahead with it, just think of it... ..the more education you have, the better it's going to be for you', so I kept going, going, going... Every day, at home, we'd have a fight or something about... school, or whatever. I take it out on them ... ..I'm supposed to take it out on the teachers, but... I just try to do the best I can."

(Toronto, Ont.)

Toronto also described the condescending manner in which Basic- and General-level students are treated by their instructors and how this labelling leads many of them to drop out.

- **Portuguese youth are excluded as a target group for "affirmative action" and "anti-racist" initiatives**

Some of the youth who responded to this study described how Luso-Canadians suffer under many of the same problems of access to education as visible minorities and how community members earn average salaries that are often *lower* than the wages of those in most of these groups. However, they also decried the fact that the Portuguese are not covered by the same "anti-racist" and "affirmative action" programmes, that are designed to help those minorities address these issues. The young participants in Vancouver and the Maritimes stated their belief that this circumstance is unfair and that it discourages many Portuguese youth from continuing to post-secondary education. They called on Portuguese organizations to lobby the government and post-secondary institutions, to include the Portuguese in anti-racism and equity initiatives. They also asked that colleges and universities facilitate the entrance of Portuguese students who seek to work as professionals within their currently underserved community (ex. as doctors, teachers).

### MAJOR ECONOMIC ISSUES

- Unemployment
- Low-paying, low-status jobs
- Financial difficulties
- Workers not upgrading skills or specializing
- Disadvantaging labour laws
- Many disabled workers and lack of support from Compensation
- Young people's fear of not finding suitable employment

## B. ECONOMIC ISSUES

The problems of *unemployment* and *youth unemployment* were identified in both the questionnaire and the focus group meetings as the most important local and national economic problems that are affecting the community. A related concern was the fact that *disproportionate numbers of Portuguese are employed in jobs which afford them low salaries and a low social status*. A host of other divergent issues were also cited in the questionnaire and these dealt mainly with the community's vulnerable economic and educational status.

### *i. The high rate of unemployment / lack of jobs*

Both the participants to the focus groups as well as the respondents to the questionnaire identified *unemployment* in general and *youth unemployment* in particular, as the most important local and national economic issue for Portuguese-Canadians.

Participants in the focus groups in Hamilton, Edmonton, Toronto, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Saskatoon, the Maritimes and Winnipeg mentioned the fact that, today, there are many fewer jobs available in traditional areas, such as construction, and spoke of the need to improve

the situation of the economy and to increase the number of available jobs, especially for youth. Participants in the Montreal group also had mixed views on whether the Congress should involve itself in such a difficult and global issue as unemployment.

The high rates of unemployment and seasonal employment amongst Portuguese parents were also identified by the youth group in Winnipeg, as important issues for young people; ones which directly disadvantage Luso-Canadian youth and limit their academic opportunities by placing an extra burden on them to contribute financially to the family. They also felt that the recent changes to the unemployment insurance plan would aggravate this situation.

***ii. Many Portuguese are employed in low paying, unskilled, low-status jobs***

Respondents to the questionnaire, as well as the focus groups in Toronto, Montreal and Sault Ste. Marie described how many Portuguese tend to hold jobs where they earn substantially less than other Canadians, where they have much less job security and where they occupy a very low social status. They further spoke about how a lower-than-average income often leads Portuguese students to after-school and summer jobs (which encourages early-school-leaving) and described how these young people lack the same white-collar contacts that individuals from other groups often take for granted; contacts which are often crucial for job networking and career mentoring.

***iii. Many Portuguese are experiencing financial difficulties***

In discussing the hardships of economic problems, a few of the focus group participants asserted their opinion that most Portuguese in Canada have a work-ethic, an ability to adapt and a willingness to take any kind of work, all of which usually allow them to survive in difficult economic times. However, the people in at least two of the meetings also mentioned that they knew of many individuals in the community who were currently experiencing severe financial difficulties. They related stories of individuals being forced to return to Portugal in financial ruin and described the humiliation which they, or others, had suffered at being forced to settle for inferior wages.

- ***The lack of financial resources amongst seniors***

The presence of financial difficulties was seen as affecting seniors especially hard. Those in Sault Ste. Marie spoke of the lack of financial resources of some of the elderly in their community and of the negative effects of inflation and inadequate pensions.

*“I have been a mechanic for 32 years. I took a seven-year mechanics course. I was in Angola, in Africa, in Saudi Arabia, I’ve been practically to the entire world. I got here... .. I went to a shop where I worked for a week for 50 hours. They gave me \$150. I went to work in another, they gave me \$8 an hour for 56 hours. Can one accept this?... ..I picked up my toolbox... and threw it into my car. One becomes angry. This is exactly what happens to men... many times they become angry as a result of the economic situation... There is work [out there]. They just don’t want to pay.”*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

*“I know two individual... ..they were making twelve, thirteen, fourteen dollars an hour - today, they are making six, seven dollars... ..I also know people... who were forced to sell their house, losing thirty, forty and in some cases even fifty percent, in order to go back to Portugal, because they couldn’t make a living in this country.”*

*(Montreal, Que.)*

*"...I don't think anyone in this city, not even women in Canadian mainstream society suffer as much abuse as the Portuguese women who work in office cleaning. It is unimaginable and I think it is something which has been very, but I mean, very much ignored.... I think that in most cases... if the Portuguese community were interested and would send inspectors from the Ministry of Labour to look into the work that these women do, in the majority of the cases, the companies would be held responsible, because these women do tasks that would not be accepted... and no one has been doing anything about this."*

(Toronto, Ont.)

*"...there are [Compensation] cases which take two, three, four, five, six years to be resolved.... We are being punished - I think there is no other word for it - we are being greatly punished because of this."*

(Halifax, N. S.)

***iv. Workers are not upgrading their skills or are failing to enter into more specialized areas of traditional employment.***

Another economic issue which was identified was the fact that there are very few options available for those Portuguese who desired to receive job training or retraining. People described how there were many people in the community who were not able to enter better and higher-paying employment, because they themselves do not seek to upgrade, or acquire, new job skills. However, they attributed this tendency to the fact that there are very few job retraining programmes are geared towards those who have little fluency in the official languages and/or a limited formal education. People in the focus groups also spoke about how those who were in traditional jobs (ex. construction) do not generally attempt to enter more specialized areas of their fields due to a fear of school, to language and education barriers and to a limited knowledge of available funding for retraining programs.

***v. Disadvantaging labour laws***

A few of the participants in the November Toronto focus group also described how the repeal of pay equity laws in Ontario and the enactment of new legislation designed to curb the power of unions will severely affect the situation of Portuguese workers in occupations such as office cleaning. People must be told of the need to upgrade their skills and youth must be advised to pursue more education and training.

***vi. The high number of disabled workers and the lack of adequate support from Worker's Compensation***

People in a few of the focus groups and in the questionnaire discussed the issue of the high number of people in the community, who are disabled as a result of work-related accidents. They also spoke about how Worker's Compensation is not doing enough to allow these individuals a "dignified" life, and how disability claims are taking an exorbitantly long time to process.

***vii. Young people's fear of not finding suitable employment after finishing school***

The young people in the Montreal youth group expressed concerns that, after finishing their studies, they will not be able to find suitable employment or enter the field in which they are qualified. Those in the Vancouver group stated that the Portuguese should be included in the various "affirmative action" and "anti-racist" initiatives which have been initiated by government and other institutions, to help other minorities overcome barriers to employment and education.

### C. SOCIAL ISSUES

When asked to list the greatest social problems in their local communities, people in both the focus groups and the questionnaires identified the top three issues of concern as: *The lack of integration of Portuguese-Canadians into Canadian society*; *the inexistence of appropriate social and community services*; and *a lack of community unity*. People also identified a number of other social issues which specifically impact upon the well-being of women and elderly Luso-Canadians. Respondents to the questionnaire also described the top national issue as the *lack of adequate services*.

#### *i. The lack of integration in Canadian society*

Both the respondents from the questionnaire, as well as the participants in many of the focus groups, described the *lack of integration of "first generation" Portuguese in Canadian society* as the prime social issue of concern. The people in the Winnipeg, Ottawa-Hull, Sudbury and Toronto focus groups discussed how the lack of English-language skills amongst many of this generation, along with the community's low education levels, often go hand-in-hand with a tendency amongst some immigrants towards isolation from mainstream society. This problem was seen to be especially acute amongst Portuguese seniors (due also, in part, to a lack of recreational and occupational activities) and those who confine their sphere of activities to their local church. A number of Azorean participants in Toronto also described how the low prominence which is given to their regional culture in the community media, events and institutions often leads many Azorean Portuguese from participating in Luso-Canadian public life. These further described how those Azorean Portuguese with lower education levels are often very conscious of their limitations. For those people, such things as the use of inaccessible levels of Portuguese in community meetings and educational campaigns often reinforce their desire to remain apart.

#### *ii. The disunity and division of the community*

Another major issue identified in the survey and in the focus groups in Toronto, Vancouver, Quebec City, Ottawa-Hull, Winnipeg and Sault Ste. Marie, was the *disunity* prevalent in the community. The people at these meetings described how Luso-Canadians are sometimes divided along political, personal and regional lines (ex. those from the Azores versus those from the European mainland). Some of the people at the meetings attributed this division to community leaders who carry on long-standing grudges with each other and who only approach the community for their own personal or professional gain. Participants also

### MAJOR SOCIAL ISSUES

- Lack of integration
- Disunity
- Lack of linguistically appropriate social services
- Conflict between parents and youth
- Issues affecting women
- Isolation of seniors
- Lack of seniors' housing
- Need for daycare
- Stereotyping and discrimination
- Increase in substance abuse and gang involvement

*"They accept perfectly the fact that they are only construction workers and cleaners, and they live within this stigma perfectly content."*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

*"This meeting, for example, if it was with people with education, well, I probably wouldn't even be here. Because, I don't have the education to be amongst people who say two or three things and I, afterwards, don't even understand what they have said."*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

*“The man... didn’t know how to speak English, to ask for a bedpan... ..he wanted to go to the bathroom. But, the nurse wouldn’t let him. He tried to get up four times, and he managed to take a few steps, and the nurse would come and push him back into bed. This man was distraught. He had already been four days in hospital and he had never yet gone to empty his bowels... ..The man was already in a cold sweat. But, to the nurse, he said that he didn’t understand. But, she thought that the cold sweat was due to the exertion of getting up. It wasn’t. It was because the man needed to go relieve himself... ..This [other] man went over because he had heard the nurse talking angrily to the man.... He asked the nurse, ‘does he not speak English?’” She said ‘No. What language do you speak?’ ... The other man said in an agitated state ‘You speak Portuguese? Oh, you’re Portuguese?! I need to go to the bathroom. I’m bursting! I need to go to the bathroom.’ After that, the man and the nurse understood each other. But, only because the [other] appeared. [If not for the other] what would have happened to the poor man? What shame would he have had to endure if he had had to defecate in his bed?”*

*(Vancouver, B.C.)*

mentioned how there are many educated and qualified people who, as a result of these feuds, choose not to become involved in the community. They also attributed these divisions to the fact that, until now, there was no organization which represented a unifying force in the community.

**iii. The lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate social services and of information regarding important issues and services**

People in both the questionnaire and in the groups in Vancouver, Ottawa-Hull, Winnipeg, Sault Ste. Marie, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Osoyoos, Hamilton and the Maritimes spoke of the need for the social and health systems to better serve the Luso-Canadian community, by providing services in Portuguese. They asked for more public service information to be made available in this language and recommended that more Portuguese-speaking professionals (namely social workers, psychologists / therapists, marital counsellors) be hired and appointed to positions of responsibility, to deal with issues such as psychological and marital problems, domestic violence and alcoholism. They asked for more interpreters. They further suggested that Portuguese people could be placed together in hospitals, nursing homes, schools, etc. Those in the Maritimes also spoke of the need for Portuguese language training for youth in their region and for the services of a priest.

- ***Portuguese elderly cannot access the social and health services***  
The participants in many of the focus groups were especially concerned that the lack of culturally and linguistically accessible social services affects the elderly of the Portuguese community more acutely than other. These are the individuals who often do not speak English or French and who, as a consequence, cannot access the health-care system as readily as mainstream seniors.
- ***The lack of information about important issues and services.***  
Another theme which arose throughout the study was the lack of access to information about important issues and available social, health, education and business development services. People in the focus groups described how available services were not being promoted in the Portuguese community and how there are few, or no, places for the Portuguese to go to find this information. Some also discussed the need to bring information about government cuts in social services and education to the attention of the community and mentioned that the Congress could play this role. The Canadian government was also urged to give prospective immigrants more information about their rights and obligations as well as details on the kind of life that they will encounter.

- ***The need to establish a series of local community, social services and referral centres***

The participants in Ottawa-Hull, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Osoyoos B.C., Edmonton and Saskatoon called for the creation of a series of integrated, multipurpose centres in their regions, which could serve the needs of their isolated communities. They mentioned how they felt abandoned by the government and by the larger Portuguese communities and how there were virtually no places where people could go to receive guidance and information. They also cited the need to have a place where Portuguese seniors who are retired could pass the time and associate with other Portuguese. They saw multipurpose centres as a “clearinghouse,” where people could go for information on such things as pensions, legal rights, referrals, etc. and which could provide services such as community education programmes, settlement services, a senior’s centre, daycare, health clinics, language courses, youth recreation and groups, summer student employment, and cultural activities.

“One of the things that we need is a services centre... This centre would be the ‘language centre’ that we spoke about, where there could also be soccer in the floor below, a library, a recreation centre... There might even be restaurants, and there might be a library with the teaching of everything that one might imagine. But there should also be an infirmary, a hospital - some such thing, or a part of it - such as what they have in Toronto.”

(Vancouver, B.C.)

#### ***iv. Conflict and difficulty in communication between Portuguese-Canadian parents and youth***

The most consistent theme which surfaced throughout all three youth focus groups (as well as in a few of the mixed-age groups) was the presence of an ongoing conflict and a difficulty in communication between Luso-Canadian parents and youth. This issue was given much greater prominence in the Montreal and Winnipeg youth groups than in Toronto, where the main issue was the academic underachievement of Portuguese-Canadian young people. However, youth in all three meetings recognized this problem and also discussed what they believed to be some of its contributing factors:

- *Differences in “culture” or “mentality” between parents and youth, which are brought about by the presence of a wide generational, language and culture gap.*
- *Some parents preserve rigidly traditional values and cultural norms, (many of which are no longer followed in Portugal).*
- *There is often difficulty in understanding each other’s position between parents and youth.*
- *Some parents place severe restrictions on the freedom of their daughters to associate with their peers, date, work and study in the fields of their choice.*
- *Some parents don’t accept their children becoming romantically involved with youth from other cultures or races.*

“I think the people in Portugal have progressed and they are much more liberated now. But, the Portuguese people here in Canada haven’t been exposed to that liberation. They’ve maintained their very traditional ideas and they haven’t moved. And so, when their kids are trying to adopt some of these Canadian values... (laughter) ...‘modern’ values - but, your parents always label them as ‘Canadian’ - ...your parents don’t understand. And, unless you can talk about them and make them understand, they have a problem. And, if they don’t want to understand, you’re going to rebel.”

(Winnipeg, Man.)

“The woman here... subjugates herself to her man. And she doesn't have to subjugate herself in this way... She accepts this because she was educated this way...”

(Toronto, Ont.)

“In some communities, we see that the man and the woman are on an equal level. While... in the Portuguese, we see that the man is on top and the woman is below.”

(Toronto, Ont.)

“There is an Azorean woman, who lives in a hospital for the mentally ill... She's been there for at least six years. She's not 'crazy' and the very Director of this hospitals' services... tried to communicate with someone who spoke Portuguese.... to ask them if there was a Portuguese place where this woman could be placed... ....We don't have anything. So, we had no other recourse. We went to pick her up a few times... ...it's sad... a woman who is not 'crazy', she is merely frightened because she doesn't speak English... And she's been there for six years. She only goes outside when we go and pick her up.”

(Vancouver, B.C.)

- Some youth rebel against parents who exercise strict control.
- There is a lack of discussion of sexual matters, within the Portuguese-Canadian family.
- Many Luso-Canadian youth have feelings of shame, inferiority and cultural ambivalence regarding their parent's culture.

#### **v. Issues affecting the health and well-being of women**

A number of participants and respondents also described a series of issues affecting Luso-Canadian women, ranging from the *submission of women* and a community *patriarchy* to issues of *domestic violence*. These comprised the fourth-largest group of responses to the question in the survey on important “*social issues*.” It is important to note, that neither the questionnaire respondents nor the focus group participants were given directions specifically instructing them to discuss women's issues, so that these answers reflect the concerns of a number of people that matters affecting women are prime social issues in the community.

##### • **Violence against women / domestic violence**

A number of respondents to the questionnaire described such issues as “*violence against women*”, “*conjugal violence*”, “*domestic violence*” and the “*abuse of women*,” as the most important social problem which their community was facing. Of note however is the fact that, apart from scattered comments in the Hamilton and Toronto focus groups, the issue of domestic violence was never raised in any of the meetings. This might be an indication of a reticence to publicly discuss this problem.

##### • **The subjugation of women in a patriarchal society**

Participants in two of the Toronto focus groups and in Hamilton described how Portuguese women in their communities, in general, maintained the traditional patterns of relationships and allowed their spouse to run their's and their families' lives. Participants in Hamilton also decried what they saw as the “*patriarchal nature of society*.” They mentioned how the clear division of work in traditional Portuguese society often relegates women to unequal positions of power. They also mentioned how, in more contemporary settings, women in traditional families often have added responsibilities, yet still do not enjoy many of the same benefits as men.

#### **vi. Isolation amongst seniors**

Participants in a number of focus groups described how many Portuguese elderly face both cultural and psychological isolation and

talked about how the isolation of seniors is often exacerbated by the lack of Portuguese-language recreation programmes. People in Montreal, Hamilton, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver discussed how many Portuguese seniors are isolated and alone, either at home or in nursing homes, where no one speaks their language and how many are not even able to communicate with their own grandchildren. These groups also spoke of the “*lack of respect*” in the treatment of some seniors. They further mentioned how some are brought over from Portugal simply to baby-sit grandchildren, and how seniors are sometimes overmedicated.

**vii. The lack of culturally / linguistically appropriate seniors’ housing**

Participants in many of the focus groups specifically mentioned how there exists a pressing need to construct more (and more affordable) housing for Portuguese seniors in their local areas. This includes such facilities as seniors’ residences, nursing homes and seniors’ care facilities. This need is particularly acute in the smaller or more dispersed Portuguese populations. Because of the urgency of this housing crisis, the group in Vancouver especially urged the Congress to work with the Portuguese-Canadian Seniors’ Foundation, which is trying to build a Lusio-Canadian seniors’ home, in that region.

**viii. The lack of affordable daycare for Portuguese children**

Participants in Hamilton, Osoyoos B.C. and the Maritimes spoke specifically about the need to create affordable daycare for the Lusio-Canadian children in their regions, where these can have exposure to the Portuguese language and culture.

**ix. Stereotyping, discrimination and denigration of the Portuguese**

Many of the people in the focus group meetings stated that they had never personally experienced *overt* racism or discrimination, or that they had never been subjected to a treatment that was different from that which individuals from other minorities must endure. In particular, in those groups where discrimination was discussed, the participants said that they did not perceive much *overt discrimination* against themselves in matters such as housing, health and social services, education and employment. Similarly, only a few respondents mentioned the topic of discrimination or racism against the Portuguese, in the survey.

However, some of the participants in the Quebec City, Maritimes and Toronto focus groups, as well as the Montreal youth groups, did speak, at-length, of the existence of more *subtle* forms of “*discrimination*” and stereotyping against the Portuguese in their regions. Some of the participants in one of the Toronto meetings voiced

“...many of these [seniors] are practically prisoners within their own families. Since their families work, they can’t leave the house. They don’t go to church, they don’t go to soccer games, they don’t go anywhere. So, those Portuguese could be suffering a lot of consequences, which could even be tragic.

(Vancouver, B.C.)

“I know a woman who is in a senior’s home... Unfortunately, that home is Canadian and she is the only Portuguese who is there. That poor lady, it’s almost like she’s in a prison.... ..she goes up to a Polish person, speaks to them, they respond in Polish. She goes up to an English person, she speaks to them in Portuguese. The English person must say ‘this one is crazy... she doesn’t know what she is saying.’

(Toronto, Ont.)

“...they see that [you’re] Portuguese, it almost seems as if they put you in the corner. Even in the hospitals and everything...”

(Toronto, Ont.)

“...While I worked... I was always well received.... [However], at the moment when I needed to... ..sell my services... ..as an independent... ..I began to see that when a tender arrives with the name ‘Silva’\* at the bottom, it doesn’t have the same value as one which has the name ‘Tremblay’. One can say what they want, but it’s reality... ..This is a dream that is so difficult to achieve, that I hope to achieve it for my children. I tell them, many times humourously, ‘Well, someday, the name ‘Silva’ will be the same as Tremblay.’”

(Quebec City, Que.)

\*Not the participant’s real name)

“Sometimes they take advantage of us. They say ‘You are Portuguese, you’d better go back home.’ Only sometimes. But it is always said jokingly. But one isn’t sure if it is only a joke.”

(Halifax, N.S.)

“Here, as long as there is respect, as long as one has a little bit of manners and as long as there is a little bit of understanding... ..one has no problems.”

(Halifax, N.S.)

their belief that the Portuguese community in that city - as a group - is actively discriminated in the provision of services, by such sectors as the police, the Justice and health-care systems. The people in the Maritimes also described how some of the Portuguese who have been longtime residents in that region suffered stereotyping and reprisals as a result of the mid 90's fisheries dispute between Canada and the European Community. They further mentioned how the Portuguese are sometimes seen as taking away now-scarce jobs from native-born Canadians.

Finally, those in Quebec city were the most vocal in describing how the Portuguese in their area suffer from labelling by the host community (which will not accept them as “*Quebecois*”), Particularly affected are those Portuguese who attempt to strike out on their own as professionals or in politics. Similarly, those in the Montreal youth group described how many “*Quebecois*” often regard Luso-Canadian youth as outsiders and “*immigrants*,” even in cases where these were born in this country. They mentioned how this often leads to strong feelings of cultural duality in Luso-Quebec youth and, in some, to a reaffirmation of their Portuguese identity.

#### ***x. The increase in substance abuse and gang involvement amongst Luso-Canadian youth***

Participants in the Toronto and Winnipeg youth groups spoke of how there had been a general increase in gang membership and drug use amongst all youth and that, consequently, this is also affecting the young Portuguese in their communities. However, the people in both groups did not feel that these problems were any more severe in the Portuguese community than in society-at-large. Participants also commented that the issues of gangs and drugs often result from the lack of communication between parents and their children.

#### **D. POLITICAL ISSUES**

The lack of *political voice, representation, participation* and *representative organizations* amongst Luso-Canadians was identified by virtually every focus group, as well as by many of the questionnaire respondents, as major local issues. Many focus group participants commented on how the very low political representation of the Portuguese at all levels of Canadian government, the absence of a strong political leadership and the lack of participation in, and knowledge about, the political process were at the root of many other community problems. The lack of representation was also cited in the survey as the most pressing national political issue.

***i. Lack of political representation***

Participants in many of the focus groups cited how there was a great *lack of political representation* at the municipal, provincial and federal level. People in Quebec City, Ottawa-Hull, Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury, Winnipeg, Edmonton, as well as in the Maritimes lamented the fact that no Luso-Canadians have yet been elected to national political office and that virtually none also serve at local levels. They also felt that not enough Luso-Canadians are placed in appointed positions of responsibility. They described how this results in the Portuguese having very little profile in the community-at-large, as well as fewer services and programmes than other communities.

***ii. Lack of a strong national voice and representative organizations***

A similar issue that was raised by other groups was the *lack of a strong national voice* and representative organizations, which could lobby governments on behalf of the communities. One person in Vancouver mentioned the need to have a "*loud voice*" because in this country it is only "*the squeaky wheel*" which gets fixed. Others at this meeting and in Sudbury mentioned the difficulties in having a strong voice, when the community is sparsely populated and widely scattered, when amongst their numbers there are many unskilled workers and a relatively small business class.

Another related complaint which surfaced mainly in the discussion of the Montreal group was the lack of organizations that were truly representative of the community-at-large, as well as the inability of grass-roots Luso-Canadians to become more involved in existing groups. These comments were often veiled criticisms of the manner in which the Congress has failed to more effectively communicate its activities to the community-at-large and to broaden its membership. People at this meeting mentioned a need to nurture representative organizations at the local level and for the Congress to develop a more popular base. One suggestion was for the Congress to increase the numbers of Directors or delegates that it allows for such regions as Northern Ontario, which are characterized by wide distances and scattered communities.

***iii. Lack of political participation and/or interest in politics***

The participants in a number of focus groups also discussed how this lack of representation is but a symptom of a lack of unity and general reticence amongst the community-at-large to become involved in political matters. Some of the groups, most notably those in Hamilton, Montreal, Ontario, Ottawa-Hull and Vancouver, attributed this lack of participation to a general apathy on the part of the population-at-large regarding political matters.

**MAJOR  
POLITICAL  
ISSUES**

- Lack of representation
- Lack of a strong national voice
- Lack of participation or interest
- Lack of knowledge of the political process

*"We should already have here, at the level of Ottawa, someone who could speak for us, within the government. We are a very substantial community within Canada and here in Ottawa we don't have anyone. The Italians have a representative there, all the communities have a representative. We Portuguese are a zero [somos um zero]."*

*(Ottawa-Hull)*

*"Political activity on the part of the Portuguese, in relation to the Federal, Provincial or local governments is non-existent. We have no one who can speak on our behalf to the Provincial government - which is the one that affects us the most here - or even to the Federal Government. We have no one there who [can say] 'We are working for the interests of the Portuguese community in Edmonton, or in Canada.'"*

*(Edmonton, Alb.)*

*“The Portuguese don’t spring to action, they don’t act. They don’t pressure their politicians, they resign themselves to total silence. They stay in their little corner, playing cards, they watch television and Benfica by satellite, and they let the boat drift. By letting the boat drift, what has happened is that, in the last eight years, the subsidies to the Portuguese community in Quebec have been on the order of twenty or thirty thousand dollars. Why is this? Because no representations are made towards the political powers. And these even lose their respect for the Portuguese because of this.”*

*(Montreal, Que.)*

*“They don’t even know for whom they are voting; if it is for the municipal... provincial... or federal elections. So, when there are conventions for the election of the general president of the Liberal or the Conservative party, then people are totally lost.”*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

People in the Winnipeg and Montreal youth groups also described how many Portuguese-Canadian youth are reluctant to become involved in politics, at either the community or school level. People cited how Portuguese youth are generally much more involved in high-school politics, but that this participation is often influenced by whether or not they know someone who is already involved. Both groups mentioned that Luso-Canadian youth generally tend not to be involved in such things as student councils.

***iv. Lack of knowledge of, or familiarity with, the political process***

A few of the focus groups attributed the lack of involvement of Portuguese-Canadians in the political process to their lack of formal education, to a lack of knowledge regarding the political process and to the fact that the vast majority of the community is employed in lower-wage, lower status occupations, many with little job security. According to these groups, these are factors which lead most Portuguese to focus upon their economic survival, to the detriment of other aspects of their lives. Another important point which was raised by people at the Hamilton meeting was the lack of experience of most Portuguese in political involvement. People in this group felt that the legacy of the long-running dictatorship in Portugal left most Luso-Canadians with a lack of skills, experience, and education, which is not conducive to becoming more politically involved in Canadian society. For example, they mentioned how most of the directors of the various Portuguese community clubs do not have the political experience or the education to be able to represent the community to government agencies.

Participants also analyzed other issues that were also implicated in the lack of political voice, participation and knowledge:

- *The “closed-minded” mentality of the community, leading to a lack of culture and economic ambition (cited by the younger participants in the March Toronto meeting).*
- *A lack of willingness in the community (and particularly, its leaders) to take responsibility for its own problems, to openly discuss and confront them.*
- *The Portuguese-Canadian media ignores community problems, focuses on unimportant social events or petty rivalries and thus fails to educate and inform Luso-Canadians.*
- *A history of reacting to problems, rather than being proactive has led to a lack of preparation for the future.*

## E. CULTURAL ISSUES

Participants in both the *focus groups* and the *questionnaire* regarded the primary cultural concern of the community as the *loss of the Portuguese language and culture*, especially amongst young people and in the smaller or more remote communities, exacerbated by the *lack of government promotion and support for linguistic and cultural activities*. Young people in Quebec also discussed strong feelings of *cultural duality* amongst some of the youth in that region.

These answers reflect the desire of those who participated in this study for a national programme of support for the Portuguese language and culture. Yet, despite this result, it must also be pointed out that the largest single cultural *issue* that was mentioned in the questionnaire was also a lament about the “*traditionalism*” of Luso-Canadians and of their modes of cultural expression. Many people also cited “*lack of integration*” as an issue. This would seem to indicate that, although many Portuguese involved in associations desire to preserve their language and culture, many would also like to see *a greater and more contemporary variety of cultural expression*.

### ***i. The loss and lack of promotion of the Portuguese language and culture among second-generation Luso-Canadians***

The loss of the Portuguese language and culture was identified in both the questionnaires as well as in the focus groups (including the youth groups) as the primary cultural issue which people were facing in their regions. This was almost always accompanied by comments on the part of participants, decrying the lack of promotion and support provided by the Portuguese and Canadian governments. This problem was of special significance to the individuals in the smaller or more isolated communities of Edmonton, Osoyoos, Vancouver, the Maritimes, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, and Winnipeg. A few of the groups regarded this loss as the key barrier to the effective functioning of the community, one which needed to be breached in order for the Portuguese culture to remain viable in their regions and to foster pride and self-esteem on the part of Portuguese youth. For example, participants in the Winnipeg youth group described how many Luso-Canadian youth are losing their culture and language and, as a result, are becoming isolated from their parents and their community. In particular, those young people who attend schools where there are few Portuguese, or where there is little cultural diversity, are frequently under greater pressure to assimilate. These youth often do not speak Portuguese and sometimes have trouble communicating with their parents, not only because they don't speak their language but also because they don't understand Portuguese society. Intergenerational relationships are also strained by the inability

### MAJOR CULTURAL ISSUES

- Loss of the Portuguese language and culture / Lack of promotion
- Cultural duality of youth

*“Our language is the most important thing that we need... After language come all the other issues. But, it is sad to see that there are few people from the second generation who speak Portuguese...”*

*(Vancouver, B.C.)*

*“Our language, if we don't continue with it [promote it], in a few years it is liable to die off here in Edmonton. This is something which I lament greatly... the fact of allowing our language and culture to pass away.”*

*(Edmonton, Alb.)*

*“...many people don't know how to speak Portuguese, only English... and then, we want to speak to our parents and we aren't able... because its half-Portuguese, half-English.”*

*(Halifax, N. S.)*

to communicate. The people at this meeting were of the opinion that the maintenance of a strong cultural identity was important for the development of most Luso-Canadian youth.

*“Being Azorean, I notice that there is a great lack... [a great need] for people to pay more attention to our culture, especially the part of the Azores. This even shocks, at times... the way in which I have my children here, at school, at church, and I see that people are so wrong and that they haven’t even been able to understand us. For example, myself, or another person, who wants to bring our children closer [to our culture], we are the ones that are always [told].... ‘oh! I don’t know why! I don’t know why! They’re wasting time. And tomorrow they are not even going to speak Portuguese.’ I think that this is behind it all in our culture.”*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

*“I know of some families, for example, their parents just want to become assimilated...Canadian. They don’t teach their kids Portuguese, they don’t come to the Portuguese centre. They just don’t give two hoots. They don’t care what their kids do with their culture.”*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

Participants in all of these groups also described a number of issues related to the rapid loss of the Portuguese language and culture:

- ***The lack of adequate government support for the promotion of the Portuguese language and culture***

Most of the groups saw the lack of Portuguese government support for cultural and linguistic activities as directly contributing to the problem of the loss of the Portuguese language and culture from their region. This was particularly an issue for the groups from outlying communities, such as Osoyoos, B.C., Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Ontario, and Winnipeg, Manitoba, who decried the historic lack of assistance on the part of the Portuguese government for the creation of Portuguese schools and for the promotion of cultural activities in their areas. Many of these pleaded for more assistance for their local groups, in order that these could help to stem the isolation and rapid assimilation of their community. The group in Montreal also raised a concern about the declining support on the part of Canada’s governments for the maintenance of the cultures and languages of this country’s ethnic and racial minorities. In particular, there was a call for the government to assist Portuguese private schools.

- ***Local needs for a Portuguese school or a teacher (especially in the remote regions)***

Related to the above was the immediate need to provide Portuguese teachers and school materials to outlying regions. The participants in Osoyoos, B.C., Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and in the Maritimes specifically cited the need to bring to their regions a Portuguese teacher who could begin teaching the language to the community’s children. They also mentioned the need to provide the necessary curriculum assistance, in the form of books and other school material in the Portuguese language.

- ***The lack of interest amongst youth in the Portuguese language and culture***

The participants in the focus groups in Winnipeg, Vancouver and Osoyoos cited the apparent lack of interest of local youth in the Portuguese language and culture as one of the most salient reasons for the rapid disappearance of the Portuguese presence in

their regions. The Vancouver group stated how, while there are many youth who are "dying to be Portuguese," there are also others who are ashamed of their parents and their traditions. Many of the groups implicated the lack of the promotion of Portuguese culture in the disinterest shown by many youth.

- ***Portuguese associations are not "open" to youth and not receptive to their initiatives***

The people in the Winnipeg and Montreal youth focus groups raised the point that many Portuguese associations are not receptive to youth involvement and to youth initiatives. They described how these have few activities which are geared towards adolescents and young adults, how many do not conduct outreach to youth and how others discourage, or fail to support, youth initiatives. They also mentioned how the associations in their regions are not really willing to allow young people the freedom to structure their own activities.

- ***Portuguese-language television and media do not serve youth***

Younger participants further criticized Portuguese-language television and community newspapers for being irrelevant for their age group and for generally lacking in quality. Those in Toronto also lamented the fact that the most important Portuguese community television programme was a Brazilian soap opera and they called for more Portuguese programming.

- ***Portuguese school should be structured and operated in a manner which better serves youth and allows for their input***

None of the young people who took part in this study questioned the value of Portuguese-language community schools. For example, those in the Montreal youth meeting commented on how they initially had not liked Portuguese school but afterwards saw its value. They cited a number of benefits, such as gaining an appreciation of the historical importance of the Portuguese in world history and also associating with other Portuguese youth. However, some people complained that these schools give little regard to input from students concerning, school activities, discipline, class scheduling and how these are made to function.

- ***Luso-Canadian parents do not speak Portuguese at home***

People in some of the focus groups blamed the loss of the Portuguese language, in part, on parents who do not speak Portuguese with their children. In the opinion of a number of participants - including some of Azorean background - this

*"I wanted to learn Portuguese, however, I am learning Spanish because there were no Portuguese classes."*

*(Halifax, N. S.)*

*"Unfortunately, when you have these associations that we have, a lot of times, it's the same people who are always involved. And, it's very difficult. Even though a young person might want to get their foot in the door, a lot of times, their foot is kicked out..."*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

*"When I got to the secondary level, I began to see how we learned more about the culture and I began to see how Portuguese wasn't something which got in the way, and that knowing the language wasn't something that interfered. When going to get a job, the more languages you speak, the better..."*

*(Montreal, Que.)*

*“Here we are isolated... we don’t have our people... [Portuguese-language] television... we don’t have anything. We are completely isolated from everything. It’s up to the Portuguese and Canadian governments to do something so that we can find our identity [culture] here in this country.”*

*(Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.)*

*“[Sometimes an older person says to a child] ‘Sing in Portuguese’ or, ‘Do this in Portuguese’ Sometimes this can be very amusing, very nice, but it is also very hard on a young person.... A young person does not like to be conspicuous, so what does he do? He puts himself at the level of everyone else... He stops speaking Portuguese. He starts doing exactly as others do, or else... The example of my brother is very good to show this. They called us names. My brother reacted in such a fashion that he always spoke French, so that he would never give the impression that he was of any other origin but French.”*

*(Quebec City, Que.)*

tendency was especially acute amongst Azorean families. According to these participants, some parents do not speak to their children in Portuguese and do not send them to Portuguese school because they attempt to use them to learn English. Other participants also stated how some parents mistakenly believe that learning two languages simultaneously will confuse their children, so that their English or French skills will suffer.

- ***Lack of Portuguese-language television, (ex. CFMT, RTP on cable), in Northern Ontario***

An issue related to the isolation of the communities in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie was the lack of Portuguese-language television which could potentially serve people in this region (ex. offered through the local cable company).

Participants in all groups also made recommendations on ways to promote the Portuguese language and culture:

- *The Portuguese and Canadian governments should better support the teaching of the Portuguese language and the promotion of Portuguese cultural activities.*
- *Develop a core leadership for cultural and linguistic promotion.*
- *Local organizations should use the Portuguese language.*
- *Encourage parents to speak Portuguese with their children.*
- *Introduce Portuguese into local schools and universities.*
- *Promote of the Portuguese language and culture amongst youth.*
- *Promote cultural activities that are specifically targeted to youth.*

- ii. ***The cultural duality of Luso-Canadian youth***

Participants in the Montreal youth meeting gave evidence of the existence of a strong feeling of cultural “duality” and “cultural conflict” amongst Portuguese youth in that city and in the province of Quebec. On the one hand, many of these young people affirmed that they felt themselves to be “Canadian” and “Quebecois.” They described how they sometimes struggled with their non-Portuguese peers for their acknowledgement of this identity. On the other, they also spoke at length about how many “Quebecois” often regard them as outsiders and “immigrants” a rejection which has sometimes led to a reaffirmation of their Portuguese identity, even in those cases where the participant was not born in Canada. The result was a complex combination of feelings of belonging and rejection on the part of these individuals, with some (who had been born in Canada) even voicing a desire to return to Portugal.

## F. OTHER ISSUES

A number of other issues were described in the focus groups and questionnaire which did not fall into any of the categories already listed.

### *i. The isolation of the small and remote Portuguese communities*

One of the main themes which arose from the focus group meetings that were held in places such as Osoyoos, B.C. , the Maritimes and Saskatoon was the problem of the isolation of these smaller and more remote communities, from the larger Luso-Canadian centres. Participants in these regions, along with their counterparts in Quebec City, Edmonton, Sault Ste. Marie, and Winnipeg described how their geographical and cultural isolation impedes the communication between themselves and the national communities, leaves youth devoid of cultural references and contributes to a lack of ethno-specific services. Some in these groups cited the need for *local multipurpose centres* which could provide a place for social, cultural and educational services. They also discussed a few issues that were related to this isolation:

- ***The lack of communication between the scattered Luso-Canadian communities***  
People in the Toronto and Winnipeg youth groups also spoke about how the isolation and lack of communication between communities does not allow young Portuguese-Canadians in places such as Winnipeg to have a sense as to what exists in other Luso-Canadian communities, nor to foster a greater sense of identity with Luso-Canadians from other regions. Participants in the Toronto meeting also mentioned how they received very little information about other Portuguese communities and, as a result, were not able to comment on national issues.
- ***The rapid disappearance of small communities***  
More ominously, the participants in Sault Ste Marie, and Osoyoos described how these factors - coupled with the lack of opportunities for the young people in these regions - is contributing to the rapid demise of their communities. Those young people who want to continue their studies in College or University, or who seek skilled employment, have little choice but to move away, thus slowly depleting the Luso-Canadian presence in these areas. Furthermore, the higher cost of educating youth, who must leave the community in order to continue their studies, is placing a serious burden on some families in these areas.

### OTHER MAJOR ISSUES

- Isolation of remote communities
- Lack of service, communication and cultural promotion by Consulates
- Need to provide support to business--people

*“It is really a pity that there aren’t more Portuguese in this city, that there isn’t a centre where people can meet and associate.... ..Certain problems... ..would exist in the same way... however, they might not be as difficult to bear, as difficult for us to accept; especially for people who have no family support and who feel all alone, in a country that is not totally alien to them, but which still continues to be a bit alien. This is the reason why I say, maybe I won’t be here very much longer.”*

*(Saskatoon, Sask.)*

*“It is the number one problem amongst youth, their disappearing from here... ..Here there is nothing. And our Portuguese language is disappearing little by little... for this same reason: Because they are forced to leave here to find work, or because they can’t continue here, for whatever other reasons.”*

*(Osoyoos, B.C.)*

*“Up to what point does our Embassy.. give support to the [local] Portuguese social institutions? None at all. Their mission is a diplomatic mission, and they only concern themselves with the problems of diplomacy. I simply feel that the representatives in an embassy, in a consulate, should have to provide social support... We need to make them understand this... we need to fight to make them understand that we need social support.... on the part of the Embassy.”*

(Ottawa-Hull)

*“When you start a business, you're on your own. You don't know people yourself, that's it. There's not another Portuguese person that's gonna come to you and say, 'don't worry, I have these connections. I have these contacts. I can help you.' You don't find that.”*

(Vancouver, B.C.)

*“Many people notice that the Portuguese are the last ones to support Portuguese businesses. The motive for this... we don't know why. We have spoken in various meetings and we have not been able to reach a conclusion as to the reason.”*

(Winnipeg, Man.)

**ii. The lack of communication, service and cultural promotion on the part of local consulates**

A number of the focus groups - especially those held in the smaller communities in Ontario and British Columbia - cited the lack of communication, service provision and cultural promotion on the part of their local Consulates and the Portuguese Embassy as one of the major reasons behind their social and cultural isolation. Many people's complaints regarding their local consulates also went beyond the provision of cultural services to include criticism of the way in which the everyday consular services are delivered. People asked for more and better trained staff, the reduction of bureaucracy (ie. an end to the excessive waiting time to process paperwork), a more respectful attitude shown to clients by staff and the halt to the preferential treatment of certain clients over others. Finally, many were also concerned that staff often give people the wrong information, thus causing them to lose weeks, or even months, of their time.

**iii. The need to provide education, information, support and intercommunication to scattered Luso-Canadian business people**

Participants in the Vancouver and Winnipeg focus groups also discussed how Luso-Canadian businesses in their regions would benefit from assistance in the form of community support, the facilitation of communication between businesspeople, and the development of a greater creativity and entrepreneurial spirit amongst the younger generation. People in a number of other meetings also attributed many of the community's problems, and its inability to lobby government for needed reforms, to the community's lack of a strong and established business class.

**ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THE YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS**

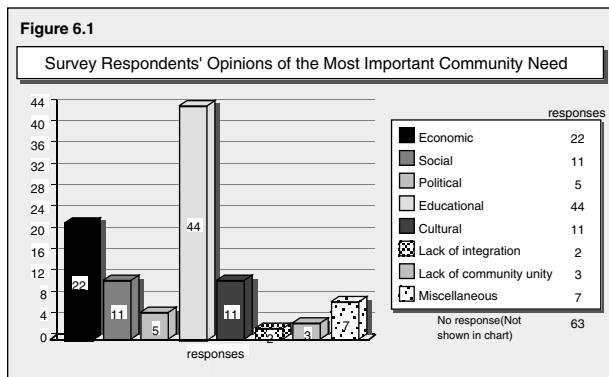
- Conflict and difficulty in communication with parents
- Academic underachievement
- Loss of the Portuguese language and culture
- Cultural duality  
(Quebec: Lack of acceptance of Luso-Canadian youth as “Quebecois”)
- Isolation of the Portuguese communities
- Lack of involvement of youth in the political process
- Luso-Canadian organizations are not receptive to youth initiatives
- Increase of substance abuse and gang involvement
- Fear of not finding suitable employment after graduating
- Unemployment and seasonal employment amongst parents

## VI. PRIORITIES AND CONGRESS ROLES

Both *questionnaire respondents* as well as *focus group participants*, were given the opportunity to *prioritize* the issues which they had identified and to comment on how the Congress should best go about resolving these problems. Through a series of both open- and close-ended questions, those in the questionnaire were first asked to rank issues by order of greatest urgency and then to indicate which of these the Congress should attempt to tackle. In a similar light, participants in the *focus groups* were asked what they felt to be the role of the Congress in the resolution of these problems.

### A. PRIORITIZING ISSUES (QUESTIONNAIRE ONLY)

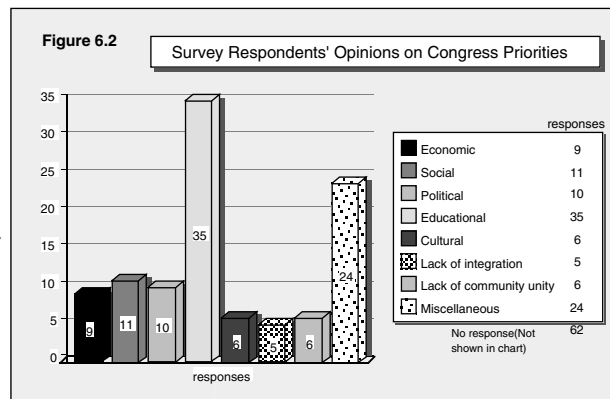
When respondents to the survey were asked which issue was *most important* in their community, the largest groups of people were those who regarded *educational* and *economic* issues as paramount



(with twice as many people citing *educational* problems)(Figure 6.1). The next largest groups of answers were *political, cultural and social* issues. When asked where

should best place its efforts, the largest group of people were also those who felt that *education* should also become the organization's main priority (Figure 6.2). This would include such activities as *community education*, working on the *underachievement* issue and *fostering more political participation* amongst community members.

Finally, when asked specifically to prioritize some suggested ways to help solve the community's *economic problems*, more people ranked the *promotion of post-secondary education amongst Luso-Canadian youth*



*"If Portuguese want to prepare themselves for economic issues in the future - which is what we have to try to do, [since] a lot of those problems that exist, we're not going to solve - we have to stress the value of education and tell people what's coming. Because if people aren't prepared, its going to be a painful situation."*

(Toronto, Ont.)

*"...many Portuguese are not recognizing the fact that the economy is changing in a drastic fashion and that, in five or six years, a person with less than grade 12 and [those with] four or five years of College or University will not be able to get a job. These are statistics that will affect our community in an alarming fashion. If we think that the problem is bad now, it will be ten or twenty times worse in a few years."*

(Toronto, Ont.)

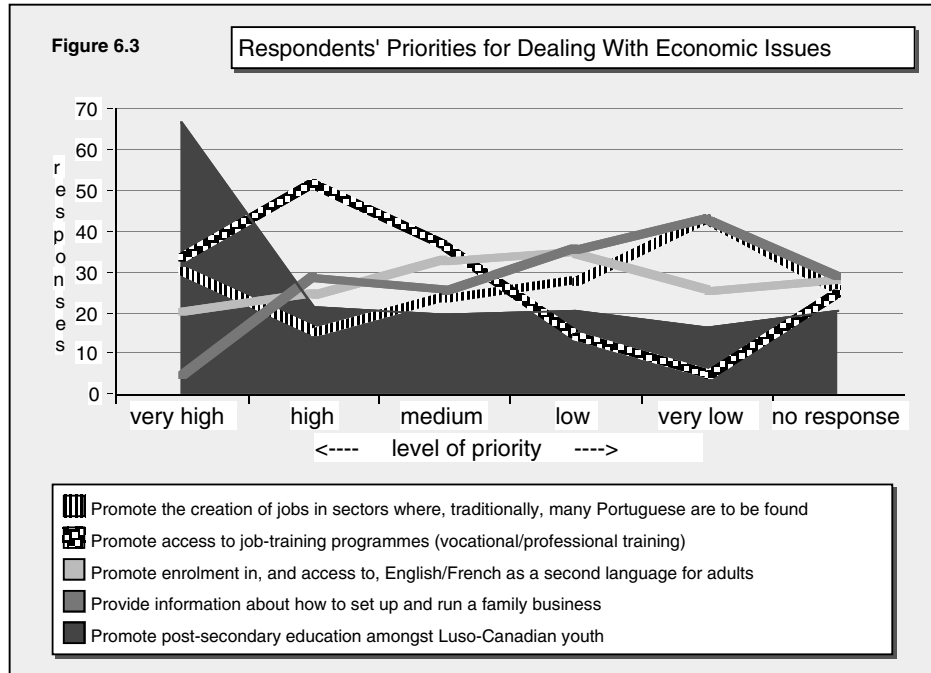
“Even a tree knows better [than these young people].... ...if the sun is up at a certain time the tree knows, ‘ok, I’ll point over here because here there is sun... ...This plant knows better [than these young people]... ...someone who doesn’t know anything only thinks like this: ‘ok, I’m going to make my ten dollars an hour because my father makes ten dollars an hour and I’m going to buy a house.’ In reality, there’s no way you’re going to buy a house with that money. Not now. Your parents lived in another time. But, they [these young people] don’t know...”

(Toronto, Ont.)

### OPINIONS ON THE ROLE OF THE CONGRESS

- Provide leadership by being an active political voice
- Educate, inform and mobilize
- Unify the community
- Become more open to the community
- Foster more diverse representation in the Congress
- Better utilize the community’s human resources
- Promote the involvement of youth

and the promotion of access to job-training programmes as “very high” and “high” priorities than any other issues (Figure 6.3).



### B. OUTLINING THE ROLE OF THE CONGRESS (FOCUS GROUPS ONLY)

In a similar fashion, people in the *focus groups* were also asked their opinion regarding Congress priorities and how the organization should work to resolve the issues that were identified. The participants in most of the mixed-age groups felt that the main roles of the Congress should be to *act as the strong political voice of Luso-Canadians* across this country and to *educate the community*. Those in the 3 youth focus groups had very similar preferences to those in the mixed-age meetings; however, these young people tended to place more of an emphasis upon the *promotion of unity* amongst all Luso-Canadians.

#### *i. Provide leadership by serving as the active political voice of the Luso-Canadian community*

Participants in nearly all groups urged the Congress to show more political leadership than they have in recent years. They suggested that the organization adopt the following:

- ***Become more vocal, visible and aggressive***

Participants in Vancouver, Winnipeg and in all three Toronto groups related their view that, in its role as the voice of the Portuguese community, the Congress needs to become more vocal, outspoken and aggressive than what it has been until now.

- **Prioritize activities and create a national plan of action**  
Participants in Quebec City, Winnipeg, Sault Ste. Marie, as well as the youth groups in Toronto and Winnipeg, commented on the futility of the Congress trying to be all things to all people. One person in Quebec described how many past attempts in the community to initiate important changes were never seen to completion; a fact which he felt demoralizes people and contributes to the unwillingness of many Luso-Canadians, especially youth, to join in community initiatives. According to these groups, the Congress should *first work with local communities* to identify and prioritize important issues, then bring Portuguese-Canadians to work together on a national plan of action. Resolving these issues would create a climate of optimism, which will allow the community to look at other problems in a better light.

*“Collect all of the information and then portray it as one strong voice, with a fist.”*

*(Vancouver, B.C.)*

- **Defend the interests of small, isolated communities**  
Participants in a number of focus groups in the smaller centres described how there is a need for the Congress to act decisively as the voice of isolated Portuguese communities with the various governments, on such issues as bettering the access to services of the Portuguese government and securing an improvement in local Canadian social services. According to some of these groups, another way for the Congress to assist them in defending their interests is by providing direct assistance in helping build a local multipurpose community centre in their community (See section on “*Social Issues.*”) These centres would provide such services as Portuguese and English language instruction, seniors’ centres, health clinics, daycares, and would become the prime focal point of these communities’ cultural and recreational activities.

*“...the community hasn’t matured yet... hasn’t reached its age. A lot of ideas are old ideas... The community isn’t yet to par. It’s still not yet taken responsibility for its own problems. We need strong leadership... We need centralized, strong leadership... and... goals set. We’re always trying to solve problems, we’re not saying ‘this is what we’d like to see in ten years.’ The first thing we need to do is admit we have problems, instead of hiding, (like with this education thing).”*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

## **ii. Educate, inform and mobilize the community**

People in the 3 Toronto groups, Edmonton, Vancouver, Montreal, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Hamilton and Saskatoon felt that one of the major roles of the Congress should be to provide information, education and to foster involvement in important problems. They identified two issues which the Congress should focus upon:

- **Promote the benefits of post-secondary education to Portuguese parents and youth**  
The groups in Toronto, Hamilton, Sault Ste. Marie, Vancouver, as well as the youth groups in Toronto and Winnipeg, spoke at

*“The Congress... can intervene on behalf of small Portuguese communities which are scattered across Canada, which... because of their small numbers... don’t have the [political and economic] power... The Congress should intervene with the Canadian government, so that the government concerns itself a little bit more with these small communities...”*

*(Saskatoon, Sask.)*

*“I think we’re recognizing that a grade twelve diploma is not sufficient, and that we have to get a post-secondary education, in order to improve our life. And, I think the Portuguese youth could do that. They just have to be... ..informed what’s out there, what services are out there; that they could use to further their post-secondary education. And also inform parents... ..encourage them, not only financially but emotionally, and support them.”*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

*“I’ve been here for six years and, many times, I’ve seen cultural events, that were funded by the government of Portugal - for whom I also pay taxes - be directed only to Toronto. And there never was a word about Winnipeg, where there are 18,000 [Portuguese]. We are few, but we also have our needs.”*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

length about how the Congress must deal with the problem of the disproportionate academic underachievement of Portuguese-Canadian youth. People felt that this could be addressed by motivating these young people to continue their studies, and educating the community-at-large on the value of a good education. Those in the youth groups also spoke about how the community needs to be given information on the functioning of the education system and on the different options, such as student loans or bursaries, which are available to help those young people who would like to continue their studies. They also felt that the Congress could coordinate programmes to help at-risk students (ex. tutoring, scholarships, mentoring, etc.) Finally, some of the members called for the Congress to promote the inclusion of the Portuguese in “*affirmative action*” programmes, that are designed to assist other minorities to achieve equality of educational opportunities.

- ***Promote the Portuguese language and culture***

A number of the focus groups expressed the desire to see the Congress promote Portuguese language and culture amongst the Portuguese-Canadian and mainstream communities, especially amongst young Luso-Canadians and in isolated pockets across the country. Participants in the larger centres wished to see a greater diversity of cultural activities (ex., book fair and publishing, theatre and poetry reading). Those in more remote locations called for help with securing the teaching of the Portuguese language and with bringing more cultural activities to their regions, as well as to work towards getting Portuguese-language television programming into Northern Ontario communities and into other isolated pockets of Luso-Canadians.

- iii. ***Unify the community***

A number of groups proposed that the Congress had an important role to play in unifying the community, both by *promoting better communication* between the different groups as well as by *providing leadership* on important issues. The people in the youth group in Winnipeg believed that the following contributed to the creation of this unity:

- ***Foster the existence and maintenance of a strong Luso-Canadian community***

The young people in this meetings saw the fostering of a strong Portuguese-Canadian profile in this country as contributing to

unity and, in particular, to the promotion of a sense of well-being and identity amongst youth.

- ***Facilitate communication and information-sharing between communities and associations***

Various groups suggested that the Congress could serve as a communication link between the different organizations and associations throughout the country. This could be achieved by such activities as regular meetings, assisting Portuguese clubs and businesses to exchange resources, as well as helping businesses to diversify and compete.

*“We know our community in Winnipeg. But, personally, I don’t really know anything about any other community in Canada. We know that there are Portuguese people in this city, or that city, all over Canada. But we don’t really know anything about [them]...”*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

***iv. Become more open to the community-at-large***

Participants in a number of focus groups expressed the opinion that the Congress must become much *more visible in the community* than what is currently the case; that it needs to find more effective ways to *communicate its activities* to the community, and that it must *dramatically increase its membership* amongst the community-at-large. There were a number of suggestions on how this could be accomplished.

*“...the isolation, the lack of communication and contact between one another. There is a separation, a certain politic, in this community which separates [divides] many, many individuals, in certain activities, which could be undertaken and are not... due to politics.”*

*(Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.)*

- ***Improve communication regarding Congress activities to Congress members, Directors and the community-at-large***

A constant theme throughout many of the meetings was the need for the Congress to improve the manner in which it communicates activities to its members, Directors and the general Luso-Canadian population. In addition, people also urged the organization's Directors to have more frequent and direct personal contact with the community.

*“...the attempts which have been made are unsuccessful for one reason, which is obvious to me: This is that, these were attempts from the top downwards, instead of from the bottom upwards.”*

*(Montreal, Que.)*

- ***Provide more local representation and material support***

Another recommendation was to create more regional and local representation, and to provide more support for local Congress officials. People stated that there should be a Congress representative in each centre where there are significant proportions of Portuguese and that the organization should confer a greater communication, financial and material assistance to local Directors. Those in the Maritimes also felt that the Congress Board should be restructured so as to open a regional Vice-Presidency for that region.

***v. Foster more diverse representation amongst Congress members***

Some of the groups also felt that the Congress should actively foster more participation in the organization from amongst Portuguese-

Canadians of more diverse origins and age groups. In particular, some participants called for the greater inclusion of more *Azorean Portuguese* and *youth* amongst the ranks of Congress members.

*“As a Portuguese of Azorean descent, I am very much more worried in relation to all of these problems that we have discussed here, in relation to the Azorean community... I continue to believe that many of these problems are more severe amongst those of Azorean origins.”*

*(Toronto, Ont.)*

- ***Promote more participation from Portuguese of Azorean background***

Participants in the March and November Toronto groups felt that there is a great need for the Congress to actively reach out to the Azorean community in order to better include them in the dialogue on community problems and their resolution.

- ***Create more youth involvement through subcommittees***

The participants at the youth meetings and those in Sault Ste. Marie, also urged the Congress to create more youth involvement at the grass-roots level. One means suggested was the creation of local youth subcommittees.

***vi. Better utilize the community’s human resources***

The groups in Vancouver and Toronto also recommended that the Congress could better utilize the untapped human resources of the communities as well as develop leadership and support excellence, by more aggressively working towards the following goals:

*“I think that the Congress is much more important [than this]... ..Expanding the Congress is a necessity... ..bringing the Congress to the awareness of all the Portuguese, or Luso-Canadians... ..to all, if that’s possible... ..through the various organizations... ..to all the members... ..all of them... ..so that tomorrow, years from now, there won’t be one Portuguese who will be able to say that they don’t know that the Congress exists.”*

*(Winnipeg, Man.)*

- ***A wider recruitment of volunteers and more delegation of responsibility***

Participants felt that the Congress should be more aggressively recruiting and utilizing those community members who have unique skills and abilities. People further suggested that Congress Directors could delegate specific responsibilities within the organization to those who have the best talents.

- ***Create more Congress subgroups, such as a network of professionals and a “media-watch” committee.***

Participants in the March Toronto meeting also suggested the creation of a network of professionals that would be willing to visit media on a regular basis to talk about important issues to the community. They also advised creating a “media-watch” committee composed of these same individuals who could react on issues which required immediate public response from the Congress and who could advise the Directors.

- ***Assist local organizations to secure the resources and funding which they need to resolve local issues***

People in a number of groups expressed their desire that a more active political voice of the Congress also be married to a capacity to *work more closely with local communities* and their associations. Some of the people in the meetings in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Montreal, Vancouver and in the Winnipeg and Toronto youth groups suggested that the Congress should first be *assisting grass-roots associations with their projects*, rather than waiting for these to participate in Congress matters. They called on the Congress to help local clubs, associations, schools and unions to mobilize the necessary resources to resolve their own problems and also to teach them how to access current government programmes. For example, a number of focus groups specifically asked the Congress to assist local organizations with information on available government grants and how to apply for them. Participants also saw this cooperation with local associations as the means through which the Congress could assure a better representation.

According to participants in the Winnipeg and Toronto youth focus groups, people have a “*natural fear*” of involvement in organizations that work in ways that they may not understand, or with issues in which they have never been involved; especially if they already have responsibilities for their own local group. According to these participants, assisting local organizations with their own projects *first*, helping these to develop their own skills base, and then slowly bringing them into working on wider national issues can help these individuals to lessen these fears and become more active in national issues.

***vii. Promote the involvement of Portuguese youth in the community***

Some of the participants in the Winnipeg youth group felt that the Congress should provide a basis for Portuguese youth across Canada to work together and become more involved in the community. People suggested that the Congress could:

- *Create a “youth wing” in the Congress.*
- *Reach out to those youth who are not in school by participating in grass-roots youth activities, especially those that are already successful.*

“...people are afraid of what the Congress represents. They think when you (say) ‘well, why don’t you want to get involved in something?’ they think they’re going to have to pull money out of their pocket to pay for this... And... it’s true, a lot of the Portuguese... are afraid that they’re going to have to pay for something, if it means getting involved in it...”

(Toronto, Ont.)

“There are many Portuguese here.... who have the idea that in Portugal things were this way or that and, when they talk to their children they say things like ‘If this was in Portugal, you wouldn’t be able to do this’ ... These are things which don’t help young people to want to be near to their Portuguese roots. So what is their reaction? It is to run away from these roots and to identify ever more with the country where they are living. It is this confrontation. And, here in Quebec, it is possibly even stronger because we have nothing Portuguese here. The only thing which we have is a restaurant... once in a while there is a Portuguese course in the university... But, there is nothing else.”

(Quebec City, Que.)

## VII. THE FUNCTIONING AND STRUCTURE OF THE CONGRESS

### OPINIONS ON CONGRESS FUNCTIONING AND STRUCTURE

- Regular mailings and more personal contact with community
- More questionnaires and contact with local representatives
- More local representation and increased communication
- Create more youth positions
- Member organizations should not have more votes than individuals
- No consensus on method for selecting the Executive
- Voting should be conducted at the local level

In this final part of the study, people were asked to provide suggestions on ways to improve communication between Directors and members, refine the mechanisms for gathering community concerns, better the representation of all Luso-Canadians and improve the process of voting and selection of Congress directors.

### A. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION, OPINION-GATHERING AND REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE CONGRESS

When asked about preferred methods of communicating Congress activities and gathering concerns, people tended to downplay the importance of the traditional media and favoured more *personal and direct methods of communication*, more *contact with the community*, and *increasing local representation* in the decision-making process, (especially for youth and for remote communities).

#### *i. Improve communication through regular bulletins, questionnaires and more contact with people*

Respondents to the survey saw the use of *regular, direct-mail bulletins* or *community meetings* (or a combination of the two, plus other methods) as more important than the traditional media (ex. radio, television, newspapers), in disseminating information about Congress activities. On the other hand, focus group participants tended to favour those methods which promoted *direct contact between people*, (ex. community meetings, cultural activities, storefront offices, door-to-door canvassing, etc.).

#### *ii. Gather community concerns through questionnaires and more direct contact with local representatives*

When asked about the preferred methods for gathering community opinions on important issues, the largest category of answers were *questionnaires* along with *a greater personal contact with local community representatives, on the part of Congress Directors*.

#### *iii. Improve representativeness through more local representation and increased communication*

When asked for ways in which the Congress could assure that it is representative of the community-at-large, the single most numerous

*“Firstly, we have to be better informed.... to better understand what the Congress is, the people who are behind it, what are the goals and the reasons for its existence. You have to better expose the Congress, to have more information.”*

*(Ottawa-Hull)*

response was a call for the *promotion of more local representation and for the creation of local committees*, as well as for *elections to be held at the local level*. Other suggestions were working through local organizations and working closer with the “grass-roots” community. Those in the more isolated centres focussed upon the need to create more representation in those regions and to provide the people in these areas with the resources to better organize. Those in the youth meetings also stated that a fairer regional representation should be developed, so that areas of higher population have more Directors, (or subcommittees which could work with the different segments of the population).

The focus groups also saw improved communications and a greater and more direct contact with people as the means by which the Congress could increase representativeness, (ex. community forums, door-to-door canvassing, meetings organized around community events, round-table discussions, the creation of a media-watch committee, opening a storefront office and organizing more varied cultural activities, such as a book-fair). They also specifically advocated reaching out more actively to the Azorean community.

***iv. Enhance representativeness of young people by creating more youth positions and ensuring a fair regional representation***

People in the youth focus groups also described 3 ways to better representation: Creating more positions for young people in the organization, (one person suggested the creation of a “youth wing”); ensuring a fair regional representation, so that those areas which have a greater number of people should also have a greater number of Directors; creating one or more youth position in each region and on the Executive.

**B. PREFERENCES FOR VOTING AND SELECTION OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**

People in the survey and focus groups were asked their preferences regarding the number of votes which should be granted to member-organizations, the method of voting on important issues and how the National Executive should be chosen. As the responses indicated, *no strong preferences were registered on voting or on the best way to select the National Executive*. However, two *minor* tendencies did emerge from the general and the youth focus groups: *Organizations should be allowed no more votes than individuals* (or perhaps even no voting or membership rights at all); secondly, *voting on important issues should be conducted at the local level*.

*“For youth to be involved, they have to be informed...”*

*(Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.)*

*“If we are going to fight to clean up discrimination, we have to start by cleaning up the discrimination which occurs here, in this group, in this National Congress, and have a more appropriate representation for the Maritime Provinces.”*

*(Halifax, N.S.)*

*“The Congress should have structures at the regional level. In this manner, it would be closer to its membership and to their needs.”*

*(Edmonton, Alb.)*

*“The Congress should be there for a Portuguese person. If they are uncomfortable going to their M.P.... If they feel more comfortable going to the Congress, that’s where [it] plays an important part, because the Portuguese person feels more comfortable going to them... Then the Congress can take [their problem] to the M.P.”*

*(Sudbury, Ont.)*

*“I think that if [voting] is [conducted by] members, another Portuguese association will be created. We’ll start to create another club. I think that every Portuguese should have the right to vote.”*

*(Ottawa-Hull)*

*...our [local Director] has absolutely no authority . He has to go begging favours of the.... Vice President... to give him a few minutes of attention, or to write to him... If the representative of the Maritimes were in the position of Vice-President, I think that he would be able to contact the President directly, in the case of any necessity, instead of waiting for any Vice-President to give him attention....”*

*(Halifax, N.S.)*

*...they have to prove they are doing a [good] job”.*

*(Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.)*

***i. Member-organizations should be allowed no more votes than individual members, or no voting and membership privileges***

While questionnaire respondents were almost equally divided in their opinions on the number of votes which should be granted to member-organizations, focus group participants tended to prefer only *one vote per organizational member* (Vancouver, Osoyoos, Edmonton, Maritimes). Those in Toronto (March), Quebec City, Winnipeg and Ottawa-Hull even felt that membership and *voting rights should only be extended to individuals*. They believed that this would help to persuade associations to urge their members to join the Congress. Another suggestion from the Ottawa-Hull group was that any Portuguese or Portuguese descendant should be allowed to become a member and vote at a general meeting, regardless of whether or not they had paid a membership fee.

***ii. No consensus on the method of selection of the National Executive***

Survey respondents tended to favour the selection of the National Executive through a *direct vote of Congress members* at a general meeting, or through a mail-in ballot. However, those in the focus groups tended to favour *selection by local Directors or Delegates*. In their opinions, a direct election might be dominated by the more heavily-populated regions, while those in small and isolated communities, would also find it difficult to become familiar with the candidates. However, the groups in Quebec City and Toronto (July) and the youth focus group in Winnipeg preferred a direct vote, since they felt that this would make the process more open and less prone to patronage.

***iii. Voting should be conducted at the local level***

Participants in many of the smaller or outlying areas, such as the Maritimes, Ottawa-Hull, Winnipeg and Vancouver stated that voting at the local level should become the process by which the Congress deals with most important issues, such as the selection of the National Executive, local delegates and Directors. After the local voting process, delegates could then be sent to vote at national-level delegates-only meetings, or could take the completed ballots from their regions to a national meeting.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Luso-Canadians have historically had few vehicles through which to effectively voice their concerns, dreams and aspirations. The creation of the Portuguese-Canadian National Congress in March of 1993, and the commissioning of this first-ever study of the Portuguese in Canada, have represented merely the first steps, in attempting to redress this need. Much more needs to be done, if this community is to realize the goal of full and equal participation in the social, political and economic development of this country.

Yet, despite the tentative nature of this process and the limitations of the present study - the inadequate resources and the concessions which this inevitably forced - this project has nevertheless produced some important outcomes.

Firstly, it has traced some badly needed direction. The individuals participating in this study have identified *community education*, as the most crucial issue to be faced in the coming years; especially as it concerns the problems of the academic underachievement of Luso-Canadian youth, the lack of English- and French-language skills and the promotion of the Portuguese language and culture. They have also urged the Congress to help bring about a greater unity *amongst all Luso-Canadians*, and to exercise *a more active political voice*, especially when it comes to advocating for important local social and cultural services, and in defense of the interests of small or isolated communities.

However, the participants have also clearly stated that this greater unity should not be realized through more centralization of decision-making, but rather through *an improved communication on the part of the Congress*, coupled with *a greater empowerment and support of Luso-Canadians at the local level*. Many also see this unity as being concomitant with the promotion of *a greater diversity of participation in the organization*, especially from youth and those of Azorean descent.

Yet, despite the direction which has arisen from this study, its greatest outcome has been less tangible but, nonetheless, no less important. In contributing to this project, those who participated - and, most particularly, the many dedicated Luso-Canadian volunteers across this country who so graciously contributed their time and efforts to assist in its realization - have provided a clear and resounding reaffirmation of the mission and mandate of the Congress. Through their efforts, they have laid a path on a national scale to be followed by all organizations and levels of government that would purport to serve this segment of Canadian society. More importantly, they have helped to bring voice to a previously voiceless community and, in so doing, have laid the groundwork for a brighter future for themselves and their children.

*“We are Portuguese and have pleasure in being so.... ..when we become strong and united, everything else will come about in the way in which we want it to.”*

*(Quebec City, Que.)*

**NOTES**

- <sup>1</sup> “Lusitania” was an ancient Roman province, encompassing Portugal and parts of western Spain, and which gave rise to the term “*Luso*” being applied to the Portuguese.
- <sup>2</sup> Single and multiple responses combined.
- <sup>3</sup> Costa, A. (1995). *From coast to coast: A community in transition*. Toronto: Portuguese Interagency Network, (85 Glendale Ave., Toronto, M6R 2S8).
- <sup>4</sup> *Census of Canada, 1991, Public use microdata file, individuals* (computer data). Ottawa. Ont.: Statistics Canada, [producer and distributor]. (1991 data).
- <sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada, 1991 Census of Canada, figures cited in Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *A profile of immigrants from Portugal in Canada*. [<http://cicnet.ingenia.com/english/pub/profile/9608pore.html>], 28 October 1997
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Personal communication with the Portuguese Embassy, November 21, 1996.
- <sup>8</sup> From Carlos Teixeira (Forthcoming). “An encyclopedia of Canada’s people”. Multicultural History Society of Ontario.
- <sup>10</sup> Citizenship and Immigration Canada, op. cit.
- <sup>11</sup> These figures only include those individuals who are 15 years of age and over. In addition, only Ontario, Quebec and B.C. were profiled because data are not available for the Portuguese in the Atlantic Provinces. There are so few Portuguese in these regions that such data would compromise anonymity.
- <sup>12</sup> The Black/Caribbean and Aboriginal communities were chosen for comparison purposes because these are two groups which have well-documented educational and economic disadvantage. The Greek and Italian groups were selected because they display certain cultural affinities with the Portuguese, (ex. similar religion, a strong focus on the family, rural origins, etc.). The Chinese were selected because they are regarded as a relatively successful immigrant group, in educational terms.
- <sup>13</sup> *Census of Canada, 1991, Public use microdata file, individuals*, op. cit.
- <sup>14</sup> Citizenship and Immigration Canada. op. cit.
- <sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada’s Low-income Cutoff in 1991 was \$30,011 for a family of 4, which was living in a centre of more than 500,000 people. Statistics Canada. (1995). *Income distribution by size in Canada*. (Publication #13-207). Ottawa: Supply and Services Can.
- <sup>16</sup> Citizenship and Immigration Canada. op. cit.
- <sup>17</sup> Direct comparisons of socioeconomic indicators, such as income and education, between specific immigrant groups and the general population is often affected by differences in the age distributions of these groups. Therefore, in order to compare such indicators between two or more populations, Statistics Canada often adjusts the target populations, so that they have the same age-structure as the Canadian-born population and so that comparisons may be rendered more meaningful.
- <sup>18</sup> The same reservations did not apply to the focus groups, since these were more representative. Thus the opinions gathered from these meetings may be generalized.
- <sup>19</sup> This question had a very high non-response rate, (13.7%) and a number of these non-respondents actually wrote next to the question that they did not know what they intended. The lack of inclusion of a “*don’t know*” category was not an oversight, but rather a deliberate attempt to ask people to commit themselves to an answer. Asking for an intention is different from asking respondents whether they believe they will “*probably*” return, because a question such as this measures the degree of commitment to the idea of return, rather than the realistic expectation of such an event.
- <sup>20</sup> The predominance of responses in these two categories must be interpreted in light of the assumption that Portuguese-Canadian organizations, (such as the Congress) would probably tend to attract a disproportionate number of people who are interested in maintaining their Portuguese heritage.
- <sup>21</sup> People *appeared* to have answered *only* those questions relating to institutions where they had previously sought out programmes. However, there is no way of confirming this interpretation of each non-response.