All Things Being Equal: Land Ownership and Ethnicity in Rural Canada, 1901

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The relationship between ethnicity and land ownership in rural Canada is explored here using the new national sample of the 1901 census developed by the Canadian Families Project. The data offer the first comparison, at a household level, of the factors affecting land ownership throughout the country. Multivariate regressions confirm recent findings that ethnicity was a relatively unimportant determinant of the variation in land ownership at the national level, although it did have an impact on access to farmland in the West. Like the findings of Gordon Darroch and Lee Soltow for Ontario in 1871, the 1901 data indicate that life cycle continued to be the most decisive predictor of farm size.

Cette étude se penche sur la relation entre l'ethnicité et la propriété foncière dans le Canada rural à l'aide du nouvel échantillon national du recensement de 1901 réuni par le Projet de recherche sur les familles canadiennes. Les données offrent la première comparaison, au niveau des ménages, des facteurs influant sur l'accession à la propriété foncière à travers le pays. Des régressions multivariées confirment les résultats récents selon lesquels l'ethnicité était un déterminant relativement peu important de la variation de l'accession à la propriété foncière à l'échelle nationale, quoiqu'elle ait eu un impact sur l'accès aux terres agricoles dans l'Ouest. Comme les résultats obtenus par Gordon Darroch et Lee Soltow pour l'Ontario en 1871, les données de 1901 indiquent que le cycle de vie demeurait le prédicteur le plus décisif de la taille des exploitations agricoles.

HOWARD PALMER once wrote that the entrance status of ethnic minorities in Canada left them on the margins of social and economic life. For generations after their arrival in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, non-French and non-British minorities remained under-represented in the

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political system. Palmer attributed the slow development of a distinctively ethnic politics in Canada to the relatively small size of the immigrant population and the conformist agendas of native-born elites.[1] Yet the pace of integration reflected more than mere numbers and patterns of political exclusion. The country's reputation as a "reluctant host" to immigrant workers was well deserved.[2] Enough of the foreign born found a comfortable niche among the nation's new farm owners in the West, however, to complicate our image of immigrants as predominantly urban or marginalized. Certainly, land ownership eluded sojourning Asian immigrants, who were excluded from the economic mainstream and ultimately denied entry into the country, but at least half of the country's immigrants were found in the countryside in 1901.[3] There, social and political integration came slowly, not so much because of material disadvantage but because immigrant farm owners focused more on their own affairs before concerning themselves with the *projets de société* defined by native-born elites.

It is understandable, perhaps, when historians live overwhelmingly in cities, that immigration history continues to have an urban focus.[4] Without some idea of the warmth of the welcome in rural life, however, in some ways, as Dirk Hoerder has argued, the literature can scarcely move beyond the nativist way in which Anglos first wrote about the "immigration problem" in the early part of the twentieth century.[5] How well did newcomers

1 Palmer used this description in his contribution to the Canadian Historical Association series on "Canada's Ethnic Groups". See Howard Palmer, *Ethnicity and Politics in Canada Since Confederation* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991).

2 Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896–1994* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995).

3 Madeline A. Kalbach and Warren E. Kalbach emphasize the rural concentration of immigrants to Canada in their "Demographic Overview of Ethnic Origin Groups in Canada" in Peter S. Li, ed., *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 21–51. The Canadian pattern contrasted sharply with the urban concentration of immigrants in the United States. See Joseph P. Ferrie, *Yankees Now: Immigrants in the Antebellum United States, 1840–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

4 The recent anthology edited by Franca Iacovetta, with Paula Draper and Robert Ventresca, *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s–1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), for instance, includes contributions on Ukrainian settlement in the West and workers in rural Canada, but is weighted overwhelmingly to the immigrant experience in urban life. Exceptions to the urban focus in the literature include Royden Loewen's *Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and New Worlds, 1850–1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), and his edited collection, *From the Inside Out: The Rural Worlds of Mennonite Diarists, 1863 to 1929* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999); and Frances Swyripa's *Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity 1891–1991* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

5 In "Ethnic Studies in Canada from the 1880s to 1962: A Historiographical Perspective and Critique", *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, vol. 26 (1994), pp. 1–18, Dirk Hoerder argues that Canadian academics contributed to the received wisdom by casting the study of immigration in an "immigration problem" paradigm. On the other hand, recent work in sociology largely discounts ethnicity as predictor of income. See, for instance, Jason Z. Lian and David Ralph Matthews, "Does the Vertical Mosaic Still

transfer their skills and cultures to rural life in Canada, and what were the social hierarchies that immigrants faced in the countryside? Recent work in historical sociology suggests that economic inequality was muted in nineteenth-century farm life. Whether the pattern, described by Gordon Darroch as middle class formation in Ontario and Gérard Bouchard as North American exceptionalism in Quebec, was shared elsewhere at the outset of the twentieth century is less clear.[6] Could farmers, from one end of the country to the other, identify themselves as self-employed owners of farmland? How easily did the "new" immigrants enter the core of this apparently expanding middle class?

The theme of landlessness has exercised considerable influence on the Canadian historical imagination, but recent census work discounts it as a sustained reality for the majority of the farm population. Lillian Gates and Leo Johnson first raised the issue when speculating about the origins of an industrial work force in Ontario, and more recently Catherine Anne Wilson and Terence Crowley have presented evidence of high rates of tenancy at mid-century.[7] Ambiguous instructions to enumerators in the nineteenth century have contributed to our confusion on ownership questions, and the state has always placed its imprint on the use of the raw information. John Irvine Little has suggested that the ranks of tenant farmers were inflated in the Eastern Townships, for instance, because enumerators simply reported squatters as non-proprietors, even when they paid no rent.[8] Similarly, Bruce Curtis has argued that the Tory minister responsible for the design of the

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Exist? Ethnicity and Income in Canada, 1991", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 35, no. 4 (1998), pp. 461–481; Jeffrey G. Reitz and Raymond Breton, *The Illusion of Difference: Realities of Ethnicity in Canada and the United States* (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1994).

6 Gordon Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes and Rural Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century Central Ontario", *Canadian Historical Review* , vol. 79, no. 4 (1998), pp. 621–659; Gordon Darroch and Lee Soltow, *Property and Inequality in Victorian Ontario: Structural Patterns and Cultural Communities in the 1871 Census* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Gérard Bouchard, *Quelques arpents d'Amérique : population, économie, famille au Saguenay, 1838–1971* (Montreal: Les Éditions du Boréal, 1996). Other census samples have consistently identified a middling stratum of farm owners, including Marvin McInnis's "The Size Structure of Farming, Canada West, 1861" in George Grantham and Carol S. Leonard, eds., *Agrarian Organization in the Century of Industrialization: Europe, Russia and North America, Research in Economic History*, Supplement 5 (1989), pp. 313–329.

7 Leo Johnson, "Land Policy, Population Growth and Social Structure in the Home District, 1793–1851", *Ontario History*, vol. 67 (1971), pp. 41–60; Lillian Gates, *Land Policies in Upper Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968); Catherine Anne Wilson, *A New Lease on Life: Landlords, Tenants, and Immigrants in Ireland and Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); Terry Crowley, "Rural Labour", in Paul Craven, ed., *Work and Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), pp. 13–102.

8 John Irvine Little, "Contested Land: Squatters and Agents in the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada", *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 80, no. 3 (1999), pp. 381–412.

1871 census, J. C. Taché, pushed an over-representation of things rural in order to place a pastoral stamp on Quebec.[9]

Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine that the Canadian state could impose its wishes on the manuscript returns of the temporary armies it appointed. The government certainly framed the questions and defined the information it considered important, but it could not distort the responses of a diverse and geographically dispersed population. A good indication of the veracity of the published census is how close sample results from a new national sample of the 1901 census come to the published census volumes. Very much as the government reported in its published accounts, landlessness was a limited feature of the farm economy. The new sample data largely confirm what has been argued in recent analysis of the 1871 census manuscripts in Ontario. Access to farmland was age-specific and extremes were rare. The level of inequality among farmers as a self-declared occupational group was virtually unchanged by century's end in spite of extensive industrialization and urbanization. The most dramatic change in the 30 years after 1871 was that the middle-class nature of farming became more sharply defined and the entry point into the profession for new farmers much closer to the overall mean of farm ownership. Moreover, in Ontario at least, the foreign born retained the advantages by century's end that were visible in 1871. In the West, however, the greater ethnic diversity of the "new" immigration meant that not all newcomers were welcomed into the farm population.

Asian immigrants are the most obvious example of the difference in the West. Although numerous in British Columbia, where they formed a significant proportion of the agricultural labour force, they faced various forms of legal discrimination and social hostility, and a pattern of nearly all-male immigration slowed and blocked their entry into farm ownership.[10] None of the 15 Chinese immigrants who identified themselves as farmers in the 1901 sample, for instance, reported owning any land, although some told the enumerators that they were leasing farmland. Laws like an 1884 statute in British Columbia, which barred Chinese immigrants from acquiring public lands

9 Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics and the Census of Canada, 1840–1875* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); "Calculating Canadians: Fundamentalist Religion, Science and the 1871 Census" (paper presented to Social Science History Association, Fort Worth, Texas, November 1999); "Administrative Infrastructure and Social Enquiry: Finding the Facts About Agriculture in Quebec, 1853–4", *Journal of Social History*, vol. 32 (1998), pp. 309–327; "Expert Knowledge and the Social Imaginary: The Case of the Montreal Check Census", *Histoire sociale/ Social History*, vol. 28, no. 56 (November 1995), pp. 313–331; and "On the Local Construction of Statistical Knowledge: Making up the 1861 Census of the Canadas", *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 7 (1994), pp. 416–434.

10 By British Columbia's official reckoning, 17.4% of Chinese in the provincial labour force worked as farm labourers in 1885, and a mere 1.3% as farmers and gardeners. According to the Census of Canada, the proportion of farmers and gardeners rose slightly to 3.6% of Chinese in the national labour force in 1921 and 4.2% by 1931. See Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 52, Table 4.2.

controlled by the province, did not, of course, prevent private land sales to these newcomers nor affect the rules governing the sale of the important public lands controlled by the federal government along the Canadian Pacific Railway's route.[11] By the eve of the First World War, Chinese market gardeners had carved out a niche supplying vegetables to urban markets near Vancouver and Calgary, in labour-intensive operations that took advantage of a nearly all-male Chinese labour force. Similarly, Japanese farmers took successfully to berry growing in the Fraser River Valley — in defiance of white growers who vowed not to sell land to Asian immigrants — largely because a gentlemen's agreement with Japan allowed family members to enter Canada.

As their numbers grew, as further samples of twentieth-century censuses may reveal in time, ethnic segmentation likely increased, particularly as immigration peaked in 1913. But at the outset of the new century, particularly in the West, the weight of the numbers is such that ethnicity presented very little barrier to land ownership, unless we choose to ethnicize race as a category in our analysis. As Cecilia Danysk, Sarah Carter, and others have written, entry into farming was restricted in many ways in the rural West, for farm hands, aboriginals, and others.[12] The weight that farming itself exercised had a great deal to do with the way in which the land system was conceived, however. Farms were generally very close in size and most importantly were generally not run very successfully unless they could depend on, or exploit, the unpaid labour of family members.[13] Immigrants who arrived in family units, with recent experience in agriculture, found the attraction of the West and the rural economy quite real.

The distribution of the foreign born in North America, seen in Table 1, is a testament to the effect of Canada's relatively late territorial expansion on its overall pattern of national development. Unlike the urban concentration of the foreign born in the United States, defined here as persons living in communities with 1,000 residents or more, 70 per cent of immigrants living in

11 Federal land remained open to all adult applicants except women. For a review of the relevant federal statutes and regulations, see the recent compilation by Kirk N. Lambrecht, *The Administration of Dominion Lands* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1991). On British Columbia's land regulations, see Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, pp. 31–37; and John Lutz, "Making 'Indians' in British Columbia: Power, Race and the Importance of Place" in Richard White and John M. Findlay, eds., *Power and Place in the North American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp. 61–84.

12 Among others, see Cecilia Danysk, *Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880–1930* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995); Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

13 Randy William Widdis addresses the geographical patterns of family-centred migration to the West in *With Scarcely a Ripple: Anglo-Canadian Migration into the United States and Western Canada, 1880–1920* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998); and I have touched on family labour patterns in Kenneth Michael Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism: Family, Culture, and Markets in Montcalm, Manitoba, 1870–1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

Table 1 Rural to Urban Distribution of Population, United States, 1900, and Canada, 1901, by Region and Nativity

Country	Region	Nativity	Total N	Rural %	Urban %
United States	Northeast	Foreign born	6,410	11	89
		Native born	21,384	28	72
		All	27,794	24	76
	Midwest	Foreign born	5,544	44	56
		Native born	28,667	58	42
		All	34,211	56	44
	South	Foreign born	769	44	56
		Native born	32,171	78	22
		All	32,940	78	22
	West	Foreign born	1,315	51	49
		Native born	4,037	57	43
		All	5,352	55	45
	All	Foreign born	14,062	30	70
		Native born	86,363	58	42
		All	100,425	54	46
Canada	Maritimes	Foreign born	2,062	49	51
		Native born	42,275	75	25
		All	44,337	73	27
	Quebec	Foreign born	4,269	32	68
		Native born	77,644	65	35
		All	81,913	64	36
	Ontario	Foreign born	13,505	47	53
		Native born	96,565	63	37
		All	110,070	61	39
	West	Foreign born	9,657	71	29
		Native born	18,115	72	28
		All	27,772	72	28
	All	Foreign born	30,106	53	47
		Native born	235,742	66	34
		All	265,848	65	35

Source: IPUMS, 1990; Canadian Families Project national sample, 1901.

the United States in 1900 were urban compared to just under 50 per cent of the foreign born living in Canada in 1901.[14] The Canadian West contained far less of the sparsely populated land that Donald Worster describes when he refers to the "arid" West in the United States, between New Mexico, Montana, and the Pacific. Even if we were to reclassify the American West

14 The United States data cited here are from the 1 in 760 sample of the 1900 census made available to the public in 1980 by Samuel L. Preston at the Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology at the University of Washington. The Minnesota Historical Census Projects have since converted the 1900 US PUMS to conform to its IPUMS format. Both are described in Stephen N. Graham, *1900 Public*

to encompass the western half of the continent, combining the "arid" West and the Great Plains states, the distinctiveness of the Canadian West would remain. While Quebec and the American Northeast shared a similar urban concentration of their foreign-born inhabitants, and the Maritimes, Ontario, and the American Midwest shared similar even distributions of immigrants, under a fifth of the population of the American West, even conceived as a larger region, was foreign born in 1900 and more than one-third of the population of the Canadian West was foreign born in 1901. More importantly, the foreign born were over-represented in farming, accounting for nearly half of all adult male farmers in the Canadian West. Most of the foreign born had little difficulty, it seems, gaining entry to the ranks of farm proprietorship.

The Source

Readers should note that the analysis offered here is limited to the ownership of land as reported in the property schedule of the 1901 census. Land use, on the other hand, was reported in a separate agricultural schedule that focused on occupancy for cultivation, and unfortunately those schedules have not survived. The key difference between the two forms of reporting was that the agricultural schedule limited its view of occupancy to the number of acres of land actually occupied for cultivation in a given census district. In the property schedule, by contrast, enumerators were instructed to include "all lands, buildings and manufacturing establishments which the person owns or otherwise holds in any part of the Dominion". Thus, the data represent a very full accounting of the extent of landed inequality between persons appearing in the population schedules.

There were problems of under-enumeration with all nineteenth-century censuses, and the 1901 census was not immune to these shortcomings. Various estimates of census accuracy suggest that between 10 and 15 per cent of the population was missed in national enumerations, and that the populations excluded tended to be younger and more marginal segments of the population such as immigrant groups.[15] To some extent these problems may have been mitigated in the Canadian context because of the more rural nature of

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Use Sample User's Handbook (Seattle: Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology, 1980) and the IPUMS guide authored by Steven Ruggles and Matthew Sobek, with Catherine A. Fitch, Patt Kelly Hall, and Chad Ronnander, *IPUMS-98 User's Guide* (Minneapolis: Historical Census Projects, University of Minnesota, 1997). The user's guide is available at www.ipums.umn.edu. The Canadian data used here are from the Canadian Families Project (CFP) national sample. The data represent a 5% sample of dwellings, and the sample point is the count of dwellings entered in column 1 of Schedule 1 of the 1901 Census of Canada. The sample contains 50,943 dwellings and 265,287 persons from a national population of 5,371,315. For further information, see Eric W. Sager, "The Canadian Families Project", *The History of the Family: An International Quarterly*, vol. 3 (1998), pp. 117–123, and the project's web page, http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/cfp/.

15 Donald Parkerson, "Comments on Underenumeration of the U.S. Census, 1850–1880", *Social Science History*, vol. 15, no. 4 (1991), pp. 509–516; Richard Steckel, "The Quality of Census Data for Historical Inquiry: A Research Agenda", *Social Science History*, vol. 15, no. 4 (1991), pp. 579–599.

the society and the rural concentration of immigrants.[16] As always, however, the interpretation of census data involves important questions of definition and meaning.

Identifying farmers as an occupational group is often complicated by the combination of secondary occupations reported by those working in agriculture. I have followed the lead of Gordon Darroch and Lee Soltow in taking the declared occupations of census respondents at face value. I have not imposed land requirements on my definition of who was a farmer, as many national censuses increasingly did in the twentieth century. Darroch suggests in his most recent work on land ownership that the inflation or deflation of this particular occupational universe depended on the wider social currency conveyed by the use of the occupational title. Added to this complexity is the question of how to view adult sons living in their parents' homes. Darroch notes how the inclusion of more specific instructions in the 1871 census, which charged enumerators to report the ownership of all household members, dramatically increased the proportion of small proprietors and landless farmers visible in his comparison of farmers in central Ontario between the 1861 and 1871 census.[17]

Similar instructions to the enumerators in 1901 were apparently not explicit enough, because a focus on heads of household appears to have returned. Nearly everyone who reported acreage owned, irrespective of occupation, gender, or place of residence, was a head of household. As the regional distribution in Table 2 shows, the only notable break from the national pattern was in the West, where just over 2 per cent of landowners indicated that they were sons living in a household headed by their parents. It is doubtful that the ownership of farmland was concentrated in the hands of heads of household to the degree suggested by the census. Inheritance strategies within farm households almost certainly made ownership arrangements more complex than the property schedule of the census allows us to see. The question represents an agenda that researchers have pursued by linking the census to other contemporary sources.[18] Nevertheless, the macro

16 Bruce Curtis continues his deconstruction of the social imaginary with a recent conference paper that argues that J. C. Taché, the Tory minister responsible for the design of the 1871 census, favoured an over-representation of all things rural in order to place a pastoral stamp on Quebec. See Curtis, "Calculating Canadians: Fundamentalist Religion, Science and the 1871 Census" and "Expert Knowledge and the Social Imaginary".

17 Darroch reports an increase from 6.4% to 35.4% in the proportion of farmers reporting less than 32 acres occupied between 1861 and 1871. More sobering is his finding that 13.7% of all male heads of household in his sample of the population schedules could not be found in the property schedule. See Gordon Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes and Rural Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century Central Ontario", *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 79, no. 4 (1998), pp. 621–659, especially pp. 628–629.

18 See Richard H. Steckel, "Census Manuscript Schedules Matched with Property Tax Lists: A Source of Information on Long-Term Trends in Wealth Inequality", *Historical Methods*, vol. 27 (1994), pp. 71–85; Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes", p. 628; Peter Knights, "Potholes in the Road of Improvement", *Social Science History*, vol. 15, no. 4 (1991), pp. 517–526. Patterns of reporting were similar in the

Table 2 Relationship to Head of Household of Persons Declaring Ownership, Canada, 1901

Relationship to head of household	Maritimes	Quebec	Ontario	West
Head	98.5	99.0	98.7	95.7
Son	0.8	0.3	0.6	2.3
Head's brother	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.8
Other	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.2
Total N	3,297	5,170	2,335	7,220

Source: Canadian Families Project national sample, 1901.

picture presented by the census is still a strong indicator of inequalities between households and a rough index of the wider social currency enjoyed by farming in different time periods.

Acquiring Farmland in Canada

Adding landless farmers and farm sons to the universe of adult male farmers in the present analysis permits some examination of life-cycle questions using a cross-sectional data set. Some caution is necessary because age patterns showing higher proportions of ownership and levels of ownership in middle age could simply be the product of a moment in time several years before the census was taken. On the other hand, a cross-section offers geographic breadth that allows us to examine intuitively the impact of those underlying conditions. Rather than complicating the analysis, the national data largely confirm the importance of life cycle by demonstrating how common the age patterns were across the country. Irrespective of different agricultural conditions and systems of land tenure, the scale of land ownership among farmers rose with age into mid-life and fell with the coming of old age. Even in regions like the West, where structural changes were more recent and pronounced, greater opportunities for land acquisition appear to have merely accentuated existing life-cycle patterns.

The consistency of the age distributions lends little support to the view that farm economies were closed after mid-century. Ontario is probably the most dramatic example of this. Although its public lands were exhausted in the 1860s and its farm population continued to grow, adult male farmers in Ontario owned land in very similar proportions at the end of the century as they had 30 years earlier. Access was only slightly reduced when compared with conditions in 1871, as the age distribution in Table 3 indicates. As a

1901 sample; see K. M. Sylvester, "Rural Land in the 1901 Census: Inequality, Gender and Property", *Historical Methods*, vol. 33, no. 4 (2000), pp. 243–246.

Table 3 Proportion of Owners and Average Acres Owned Among Adult Male Farmers in Ontario, 1901 and 1871, by Age

Census year	Age	Size of sample		Landowner proportion	Average acreage	Gini index
		N	%			
1901	20–29	2,574	23.1	0.214	24.6	0.859
	30–39	2,651	23.8	0.641	71.3	0.566
	40–49	2,235	20.0	0.796	95.5	0.479
	50–59	1,671	15.0	0.850	114.5	0.456
	60–69	1,306	11.7	0.838	102.8	0.490
	70–79	713	6.4	0.785	94.2	0.548
	All	11,150	100.0	0.637	77.0	0.593
1871	20–29	835	30.1	0.249	27.8	0.841
	30–39	637	22.9	0.670	67.4	0.545
	40–49	515	18.6	0.851	106.3	0.444
	50–59	401	14.4	0.839	118.1	0.478
	60–69	270	9.7	0.882	113.0	0.437
	70–79	119	4.3	0.773	99.4	0.499
	All	2,777	100.0	0.626	75.8	0.594

Sources: Darroch and Soltow, *Property and Inequality*, p. 35, Table 2.4; Canadian Families Project national sample, 1901.

group, farmers were younger in 1871, with 30 per cent under age 30 compared to 23 per cent in 1901, and farm properties were larger on average in 1871 than in 1901. Undoubtedly this reflected growing urbanization, rising land costs, and emigration to the West in the years leading up to the census, but older farmers were also hanging on to properties longer, and this affected the prospects of ownership for would-be farmers. For all of the change that took place in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, however, there is a remarkable consistency in the proportion of ownership in each age group. Adult men who wanted to enter or remain in the profession still had a strong likelihood of ownership by middle age.

In the Maritimes the pattern of access was also very age-dependent in spite of the findings of recent studies of rural class formation in Atlantic Canada.[19] Using the same criteria to identify the farm population, the data in Table 4 reveal a pattern of access remarkably similar to that in Ontario. With a slightly older distribution of farmers, the Maritimes experienced a higher

19 Among others, see Beatrice Craig, "Agriculture and the Lumberman's Frontier in Upper St. John Valley, 1800–1870", *Journal of Forest History*, vol. 32 (1988), pp. 125–137; Steve Maynard, "Between Farm and Factory: The Productive Household and the Capitalist Transformation of the Maritime Countryside, Hopewell, Nova Scotia, 1869–1890" in Daniel Samson, ed., *Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800–1950* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994), pp. 70–104; Daniel Samson, "Dependency and Rural Industry: Inverness, Nova Scotia, 1899–1910" in Samson, ed., *Contested Countryside*, pp. 105–149; T. W. Acheson, "New Brunswick Agri-

Table 4 Proportion of Owners and Average Acres Owned Among Adult Male Farmers, Canada, 1901, by Region and Age

Region	Age	Size of sample		Landowner proportion	Average acreage	Gini index
		N	%			
Maritimes	20–29	1,059	23.4	0.214	23.3	0.879
	30–39	883	19.5	0.724	91.1	0.566
	40–49	862	19.1	0.897	116.3	0.476
	50–59	708	15.6	0.939	131.5	0.450
	60–69	665	14.7	0.950	133.0	0.454
	70–79	347	7.7	0.850	110.8	0.516
	All	4,524	100.0	0.714	94.0	0.586
Quebec	20–29	1,819	25.7	0.364	40.7	0.766
	30–39	1,572	22.2	0.786	92.3	0.475
	40–49	1,414	19.9	0.891	121.4	0.413
	50–59	1,144	16.1	0.906	135.8	0.424
	60–69	773	10.9	0.860	121.2	0.481
	70–79	369	5.2	0.737	87.1	0.604
	All	7,091	100.0	0.724	94.8	0.543
Ontario	20–29	2,574	23.1	0.214	24.6	0.859
	30–39	2,651	23.8	0.641	71.3	0.566
	40–49	2,235	20.0	0.796	95.5	0.479
	50–59	1,671	15.0	0.850	114.5	0.456
	60–69	1,306	11.7	0.838	102.8	0.490
	70–79	713	6.4	0.785	94.2	0.548
	All	11,150	100.0	0.637	77.0	0.593
West	20–29	830	26.4	0.495	102.4	0.617
	30–39	939	29.8	0.802	213.8	0.480
	40–49	652	20.7	0.851	238.7	0.436
	50–59	437	13.9	0.840	319.6	0.543
	60–69	218	6.9	0.885	238.8	0.471
	70–79	70	2.2	0.729	165.0	0.491
	All	3,146	100.0	0.741	204.9	0.532

Source: Canadian Families Project national sample, 1901.

overall proportion of ownership. From a roughly similar starting point in their twenties, however, Maritime farmers could expect to own farmland in greater proportions and in larger dimensions than their counterparts in Ontario.

culture at the End of the Colonial Era: A Reassessment" in Kris Inwood, ed., *Farm, Factory and Fortune: New Studies in the Economic History of the Maritimes* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993), pp. 37–60; L. D. McCann, "Seasons of Labour: Family, Work and Land in a 19th-Century Nova Scotia Shipbuilding Community", *The History of the Family: An International Quarterly*, vol. 4 (1999), pp. 485–527.

On the surface it would seem that this comparison challenges the emphasis on poverty and class dependency in recent studies of rural development in the Maritimes, but these findings do not fully restore the region's pastoral image as an essentially comfortable and egalitarian society in the nineteenth century. For one thing, although the average acres reported are higher in the Maritimes than in Ontario, there is no information in the 1901 sample on levels of improvement. The Department of Agriculture's aggregate summaries suggest that parcels larger than five acres were nearly two-thirds improved in Ontario in 1901, whereas in the Maritime provinces, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, the overall level of improvement barely rose above one-quarter of occupied acreage. Another way of expressing the difference, which stemmed mainly from the amount of forested land on Maritime farms, is that the improved acreage per occupier averaged 26 acres in Nova Scotia and 35 acres in New Brunswick versus 71 acres in Ontario.[20] The condition of the land base in both regions meant that greater disparities were generated in the Maritimes, even if they were not visible in the structure of ownership. The literature has emphasized the degree of occupational plurality in the Maritime farm sector and the wealth disparities evident in the rural non-farm economy. What the 1901 sample data add to the picture, then, is the appreciation that land acquisition, as much as it can be proxied by the age distribution in Table 4, was as age-dependent in the Maritimes as in the rest of the country. If inequalities were higher in the Maritimes, it was a function of what the land was capable of producing and the level of off-farm earnings needed to sustain farms, rather than the prior ownership of the land by particular generations or groups. In this sense, access to the land was less hierarchical than recent studies suggest.[21]

With their respective colonization projects underway, we would expect that Quebec and Western Canada experienced even higher levels of ownership. This was indeed the case, even though, or perhaps because, they were more likely to retain and attract younger farm populations. Settlement in the Saguenay region contributed in part to higher access experienced by farmers in their twenties in Quebec, and in Western Canada the availability of free public lands helped to raise the proportion of adult male farmers who owned land to nearly half of those at the same stage of life. Because of the higher access available to the young, both Quebec and Western Canada experienced lower inequalities in the ownership of farmland. The profile of both regions suggests that life cycle and structural change worked together. Greater access to farmland increased the degree of inheritance-related acquisition in

20 Canada, *Census*, 1901, vol. 2. These averages were calculated by dividing the total number of improved acres by the number of occupiers in each province. See Appendix 1 for the aggregate occupancy data reported in the published census.

21 I am thinking in particular here of Rusty Bitterman's community study, "The Hierarchy of the Soil: Land and Labour in a Nineteenth Century Cape Breton Community", *Acadiensis*, vol. 18 (1988), pp. 33–55.

mid-life and encouraged transfers to younger farmers sooner. In both regions the decline in the proportions of farm ownership and in average acreages following mid-life is equally decisive, while the patterns in the Maritimes and Ontario remain much flatter.

Foreign Born

Situating the foreign born in the farm population indicates how small the impact of immigration had become in the farm economies of Quebec, the Maritimes, and to a lesser extent Ontario. Just after Confederation the foreign born represented half of Ontario's population. But the foreign-born farm population was not renewed in the last three decades of the nineteenth century because, understandably, immigrants tended to pursue land acquisition in the West, where the federal government offered grants of free 160-acre homesteads beginning in the 1870s. By the end of the nineteenth century, the foreign born represented a third of the general population in the West and nearly half of adult male farmers. The West had become a central barometer of Canada's immigrant reception experience.

Nationally the contrasts that emerge from the 1901 sample confirm the thrust of recent studies. In the countryside immigrant disadvantage remained slight. In Ontario the comparison between foreign-born and native-born farmers is particularly even-handed. The main difference, as elsewhere in the country, appears to be that the foreign born tended to own land in higher proportions at a young age. Otherwise the average acreage owned by immigrants tended to be larger in every region except the West. Younger immigrants appear to have had more difficulty acquiring land in Quebec, but the small size of the immigrant farm sample east of the Ottawa River makes the contrasts between the foreign and native born less meaningful. In the West the age distribution of foreign- and native-born farmers was more balanced. At each stage of the life cycle the foreign-born farm population matched the native-born in terms of access, but experienced a consistent disadvantage in average farm size. The gap is widest among the eldest members of the farm population and it is reversed among the youngest, where foreign-born farmers enjoyed a higher rate of access and owned larger acreages. The obvious implication of the data is that the foreign born emphasized access for the young and were more likely to make transfers of landed wealth. Nevertheless, the record of access is impressive given the over-representation of the foreign born in the western farm economy.

Unpacking Ethnicity

Immigrant disadvantage is more apparent when ethnicity is examined in greater detail. At the national level, the composition of the farm population demands considerable compression of diversity to achieve statistical significance. The semiotician's favoured category of the "other" is repository of all that was new at the turn of the century. The panels in Table 6, for instance, show that the foreign born enjoyed a widespread advantage. In most regions

Table 5 Proportion of Owners and Average Acreage Among Adult Male Farmers, Canada, 1901, by Region, Nativity, and Age

	Age	Maritimes Foreign born	Native born	Quebec Foreign born	Native born	Ontario Foreign born	Native born	West Foreign born	Native born	Total Foreign born	Native born
Sample proportion	20–29	0.003	0.231	0.004	0.253	0.007	0.224	0.106	0.158	0.017	0.225
	30–39	0.003	0.192	0.005	0.217	0.016	0.222	0.139	0.160	0.026	0.208
	40–49	0.003	0.187	0.004	0.195	0.020	0.181	0.117	0.091	0.024	0.175
	50–59	0.006	0.151	0.004	0.157	0.031	0.119	0.077	0.063	0.025	0.128
	60–69	0.014	0.133	0.007	0.102	0.043	0.074	0.041	0.028	0.028	0.087
	70–79	0.011	0.066	0.008	0.044	0.034	0.030	0.015	0.008	0.021	0.037
	Total	0.039	0.961	0.032	0.968	0.151	0.849	0.493	0.507	0.141	0.859
Landowner proportion	20–29	0.417	0.212	0.393	0.364	0.342	0.210	0.548	0.460	0.499	0.279
	30–39	0.929	0.720	0.735	0.787	0.636	0.641	0.792	0.811	0.750	0.711
	40–49	0.929	0.896	0.724	0.895	0.805	0.796	0.847	0.856	0.829	0.848
	50–59	1.000	0.937	0.839	0.908	0.833	0.855	0.830	0.848	0.839	0.889
	60–69	0.952	0.950	0.920	0.856	0.836	0.838	0.884	0.898	0.861	0.877
	70–79	0.880	0.845	0.862	0.714	0.802	0.767	0.652	0.917	0.803	0.778
	Total	0.899	0.707	0.778	0.722	0.780	0.612	0.762	0.720	0.778	0.672
Average acreage	20–29	78	23	37	41	46	24	109	98	186	126
	30–39	106	91	107	92	71	71	190	235	203	134
	40–49	159	116	88	122	98	95	211	274	199	140
	50–59	135	131	120	136	119	113	302	341	224	155
	60–69	142	132	144	120	110	99	217	271	156	138
	70–79	140	106	116	82	97	91	145	204	133	123
	Total	135	92	108	94	100	73	196	214	184	139
N		178	4,346	230	6,861	1,683	9,467	1,552	1,594	3,643	22,268

Source: Canadian Families Project national sample, 1901.

Table 6 Proportion of Owners and Average Acreage Among Adult Male Farmers, Canada, 1901, by Ethnicity, Region, and Nativity

			Origin						
	Region	Nativity	Other	Germany	France	Ireland	Scotland	England	All
Landowner proportion	Maritimes	Foreign	1.000	–	1.000	0.889	0.915	0.780	0.880
		Canadian	0.683	0.746	0.720	0.717	0.682	0.719	0.708
		All	0.730	0.746	0.722	0.730	0.693	0.721	0.715
	Quebec	Foreign	0.700	0.778	0.660	0.887	0.912	0.690	0.777
		Canadian	0.655	0.786	0.730	0.688	0.587	0.680	0.720
		All	0.667	0.783	0.729	0.718	0.628	0.682	0.722
	Ontario	Foreign	0.881	0.838	0.733	0.772	0.752	0.753	0.770
		Canadian	0.674	0.653	0.662	0.607	0.591	0.598	0.612
		All	0.701	0.682	0.664	0.630	0.623	0.628	0.637
	West	Foreign	0.682	0.832	0.638	0.803	0.768	0.760	0.761
		Canadian	0.632	0.557	0.719	0.780	0.703	0.723	0.720
		All	0.670	0.787	0.699	0.785	0.726	0.743	0.740
Average acreage	Maritimes	Foreign	101	–	149	144	140	106	131
		Canadian	104	85	69	103	96	98	93
		All	103	85	70	107	98	99	95
	Quebec	Foreign	97	142	67	153	100	88	107
		Canadian	48	103	95	106	86	83	94
		All	60	118	94	113	88	84	95
	Ontario	Foreign	86	91	90	104	101	95	99
		Canadian	60	67	69	77	78	69	73
		All	63	71	69	80	83	74	77
	West	Foreign	146	187	116	290	217	211	195
		Canadian	99	136	210	241	223	218	213
		All	135	179	187	251	221	214	205

Source: Canadian Families Project national sample, 1901.

it was the immigrant generation of foreign-born Irish, Scots, English, German, and French who achieved higher levels of access to land ownership than their native-born offspring or native-born persons of the same ethnic origin. Even the ethnic groups lumped into the "other" category show a foreign advantage in terms of access to land relative to the native-born farmers within that same ethnic category. Looking at the West in isolation, however, we can see that the ethnic groups that fell into the "other" category experienced lower rates of ownership and owned far less land on average. Readers must bear in mind that these averages are not standardized for age. Part of what we see reflects the much younger age distribution of the immigrant farmers (see Table 5 for a sense of differences in age distributions). Nevertheless, in Western Canada, the advantages of the foreign born were less obvious. Native-born French, Scots, and English farmers held modest advantages over their foreign-born brethren, and foreign-born German and Irish displayed greater ambition than their native-born co-ethnics, but the economic advantage of each of these easily outpaced the position of ethnic newcomers crowded into the other category.

To examine the new ethnicity more closely, I eventually chose to focus a multivariate analysis of more refined ethnic categories on the West. This design of the model allowed me to flesh out a category for Eastern and Northern Europeans, as yet small groups on a national scale, and to look at a colour line in data by grouping together aboriginals and visible minorities who declared farming as their occupation.[22] Both of these groups are too small at a national level to develop statistically valid contrasts, but can generate significant results when the unit of analysis is Western Canada.

Given what we know of the intensity of racism in the West, it is not surprising that the dimensions of a clearly defined pecking order emerged with more detailed ethnic categories. In terms of immigrants with peasant origins or some experience in agriculture,[23] Asians faced the greatest hostility from

22 The 1901 census asked respondents to declare their origins in several ways. There were separate questions about birthplace, language, colour, and "racial" or tribal origin. Responses to this last question were to create ethnic categories similar to those of Darroch and Soltow's analysis of the 1871 census in Ontario. In the expanded ethnicity variable, persons who identified themselves as North American Native, Asian, Arab, African, and South American were classified as "Aboriginal/Visible Minority". Distinct categories were also created for Northern and Eastern Europeans. Icelanders, Norwegians, Swedes, and Finns accounted for most of the Northern European category, and Galicians, Poles, Ruthenians, Romanians, Russians, and Little Russians were grouped together in the Eastern European category. In only one instance were declarations on a question other than "racial" origin question used to create this classification of ethnicity relating to Western Canada. Because Ukrainians sometimes identified themselves as "Austrian", responses to the mother tongue question were used to regroup non-German-speaking "Austrians" into the Eastern European category. Other researchers may want to explore the possibilities for multi-variable, layered identities in the sample data, but for the analysis at hand these kinds of recombinations did not alter the results significantly.

23 Peter S. Li has sampled the federal government's register of Chinese immigrants entering Canada between 1885 and 1903. Of the 4,564 immigrants in his 10% sample, the stated occupation of 72% was labourer, 7% farmer, 6% laundrymen, and 5% merchant. More telling perhaps is that only 50

Table 7 Representation of Ethnic Groups Among Adult Male Farmers, Western Canada, 1901

Expanded ethnicity categories, Western Canada	Proportion of adult male population	Proportion of adult male farmers
Visible/ Aboriginal	15.2	3.6
Eastern European	3.3	6.7
Northern European	4.4	3.8
German	8.3	13.1
French	4.7	6.6
Irish	15.9	17.9
Scots	20.5	22.0
English	27.7	26.3
Total N	9,352	3,135

Source: Canadian Families Project national sample, 1901.

native-born Canadians, and Ukrainians and other East Europeans were also viewed with lesser degrees of suspicion and ethnocentrism. The general poverty of these newcomers when they arrived in Canada aroused concerns about their ability to become modern farmers. Howard Palmer emphasized that the general tone of the "debate [among Anglo-Canadians] over Slavs focused more and more on how they should be assimilated rather than whether they should be allowed to enter Canada. But the debate on Blacks, Chinese and Japanese focused on whether they should be allowed to come to Canada at all."[24] The segmentation created by racism and ethnocentrism is particularly evident when it is viewed at the level of the general population. In terms of prior restrictions, no other group was as under-represented in the movement into the farm economy as non-whites at the turn of the century. In the distribution of the adult male population in Western Canada presented in Table 7, non-whites formed 15.2 per cent of the adult male population but represented a mere 3.6 per cent of adult male farmers. By contrast, a much smaller population of East European men were significantly over-represented in farming. Although their numbers would grow by the First World War, in 1901 East European men represented a mere 3.3 per

women were found in the random sample. Li notes that most Chinese immigrants came from rural counties in the south of China, but their entry into farming in Canada was severely handicapped by the obvious challenges to family formation. Li emphasizes the sojourner orientation of most Chinese immigrants. *The Chinese in Canada*, pp. 23–24, Table 2.1.

24 Howard Palmer, "Strangers and Stereotypes: The Rise of Nativism, 1880–1920" in R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, eds., *The Prairie West: Historical Readings* (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), p. 315. For surveys of the experience of Asian minorities in Canada, see Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991); Li, *The Chinese in Canada*.

Table 8 Proportion of Owners and Unadjusted Average Acres Among Adult Male Farmers, Western Canada, 1901, by Ethnicity, Region, and Age (N = 3,139)

	Nativity	Visible/ Aboriginal	Eastern European	Northern European	Germany	France	Ireland	Scotland	England/ Wales	All
Sample proportion	Foreign	0.008	0.066	0.036	0.105	0.019	0.037	0.078	0.144	0.494
	Canadian	0.027	0.001	0.002	0.026	0.047	0.142	0.142	0.120	0.506
	All	0.036	0.067	0.038	0.131	0.066	0.179	0.220	0.263	1.000
Landowner proportion	Foreign	0.231	0.712	0.761	0.827	0.650	0.803	0.768	0.760	0.759
	Canadian	0.651	0.667	0.000	0.593	0.719	0.780	0.703	0.723	0.720
	All	0.554	0.711	0.729	0.780	0.699	0.785	0.726	0.743	0.739
Average acres	Foreign	30	112	155	192	126	239	217	190	180
	Canadian	97	108	–	140	187	234	223	209	208
	All	82	112	149	182	169	235	221	199	194

Source: Canadian Families Project national sample, 1901.

cent of the general adult male population in the West and 6.7 per cent of adult male farmers.

The contrasts apparent in the general population also carried over into the farm population. Among non-whites, only one in five foreign-born farmers reported land ownership compared to two-thirds of the Canadian born. Most of the landless non-white "farmers" were Asian and some did report leasing significant holdings. There were, for instance, fifteen Chinese farmers in the sample, five of whom leased land in the Cariboo region of British Columbia and may have rented it from the two or three Chinese merchants who declared land ownership. The fact that there were Asians in rural British Columbia who reported land ownership is a question worthy of further investigation, as is the question of ownership among aboriginals.[25] This helps to explain why the rate of ownership among the foreign born compared so unfavourably to that of the native born. Among non-whites in the sample, most native-born farm owners were of Métis or aboriginal origin. They clearly occupied something of a middle ground between the exclusion visited on Asians and the relative ease of entry experienced by nearly all European immigrants. More surprising is the finding that the position of East European men was perhaps not as marginal as we might expect given their generally impoverished beginnings and a disproportionate orientation toward farm life.[26] The proportion of ownership among East European farmers was only 3 percentage points below the average for the region as a whole, although they did own 82 acres less on average than the regional mean. However, these means are not adjusted in any way to account for the differences in age distribution between the foreign-born and native-born populations.

Therefore, to clarify the independent contributions of age and ethnicity in the patterns seen in the panel data, two linear regression models were developed.[27] One reproduced the ethnic categories used in the national panels, and the other limited its unit of analysis to Western Canada and incorporated the more detailed ethnic categories discussed above. To preserve comparability with the analysis of landowning in Darroch and Soltow's *Property and Inequality*, I retained religion and nativity as independent variables. Separate regressions were run on each of the regional data sets that preserve the origi-

25 John Lutz notes that detailed studies of pre-emption practices in the province have yet to emerge. See his "Making 'Indians' in British Columbia". For a more general view of human geography in B.C., see Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographic Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998).

26 Orest Subtelny presents a sobering picture of the conditions in the Austro-Hungarian province of Galicia, where most Ukrainians originated. In 1900 about 95% of Ukrainians worked in agriculture, and the average landholding fell from 3 hectares in 1880 to 2.5 in 1902. Subtelny also contrasts the rural destinations of Ukrainians in Canada with their overwhelming urban orientation in the United States. See *Ukrainians in North America: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 7, 11–60.

27 I used the General Linear Model procedure in SPSS, a categorical-variable-friendly version of the Ordinary Least Squares Linear Regression procedure.

Table 9 General Linear Model Regression of Acres Owned Among Adult Male Farmers, Canada, 1901

		B	Standard error	t	Significance
	Intercept	83.7	4.8	17.5	0.000
Age	20–29	–71.4	4.1	–17.6	0.000
	30–39	–10.8	4.1	–2.6	0.008
	40–49	15.0	4.1	3.7	0.000
	50–59	39.1	4.2	9.3	0.000
	60–69	21.4	4.4	4.9	0.000
	70–79	0.0	–	–	–
Religion	Other	–5.9	4.9	–1.2	0.227
	Presbyterian	–1.2	3.6	–0.3	0.745
	Methodist	–0.7	3.3	–0.2	0.831
	Baptist	–3.9	4.4	–0.9	0.377
	Catholic	–10.6	3.9	–2.7	0.007
	Anglican	0.0	–	–	–
Ethnicity	Other	–42.8	5.3	–8.1	0.000
	Germany	–9.9	4.1	–2.4	0.016
	France	4.8	4.2	1.1	0.258
	Ireland	14.2	2.8	5.1	0.000
	Scotland	6.1	3.2	1.9	0.056
	England, Wales	0.0	–	–	–
Nativity	Foreign born	–0.1	2.9	0.0	0.970
	Native born	0.0	–	–	–
Region	Maritimes	17.8	2.6	6.8	0.000
	Quebec	24.9	3.1	8.1	0.000
	West	140.0	3.1	45.7	0.000
	Ontario	0.0	–	–	–

Cases in corrected model: 25,677
Adjusted *R*-squared: 0.144

Source: Canadian Families Project national sample, 1901.

nal design of Darroch and Soltow's work with the 1871 census.[28] For the national run reported in Table 9, however, region was added as an independent variable. The inclusion of "farmers" who reported no acres in the dependent variable raised a statistical issue in the regressions concerning normal distribution of a continuous variable. In the end, I decided not to perform a log transformation of the dependent variable to satisfy this assumption in regression analysis, in order to preserve the comparability of the parameter estimates with existing work. The parameter estimates appear,

28 I have left these to the appendices.

therefore, in their original unit of analysis (as acres) in spite of the loss to the overall explanatory power (goodness of fit) of the model. Tobit analysis was also applied to address the issue of the left censoring of the data. In spite of the inclusion of farmers without farms in the regressions, the parameter estimates from Tobit were quite similar to the magnitude and order of contrasts in the estimates presented here using linear regression.[29]

The overwhelming impression furnished by the regressions is that there was simply not much variation in the ownership of farmland. Even the magnitude of the contrasts Darroch and Soltow identified in Ontario in 1871, for instance, did not remain at the turn of the century. While the age of adult male farmers continued to be important, religion, ethnicity, and nativity were all relatively insignificant predictors of variation in landholding among adult male farmers. The life-cycle patterns in the national data are clearly the most important predictor, aside from the obvious contribution of region. In each of the separate runs on regional data sets, the age variable had the highest contributing effect of any variable in the regression design.[30]

The most striking feature of the data on land ownership may be the eclipse of the religious cleavages that framed nineteenth-century experience and the emergence of patterns of exclusion and segmentation that would frame change in the twentieth century. Rural Canada was still a land of modest inequalities, and the overwhelming majority of farmers owned properties not much larger than their neighbours at the same stages of life. In Ontario, as we have seen, the level of inequality remained virtually unchanged from 30 years earlier. Like those of 1871 in Ontario, the 1901 data show that the foreign born maintained their advantages. In Ontario landed proprietorship was based on strong expectations of ownership among those who called themselves farmers. With time, however, the entry point into the profession had risen substantially. Whereas Darroch and Soltow report an intercept of 9 acres in their linear regression on the 1871 ownership data from Ontario, by 1901 a similar regression design yields an intercept of 88 acres.[31] Perhaps

29 The Tobit estimates for the 3,020 adult male farmers in the 1901 sample in Western Canada were ACRES = 215.0 –38.6$age_{20–29}$ +39.6$age_{30–39}$ +76.0$age_{40–49}$ +153.9$age_{50–59}$ +55.2$age_{60–69}$ –19.0otherreligion –23.4Presbyterian –14.5Methodist –49.2Baptist –52.0Catholic –132.8visibleminority –57.0EasternEur –53.57NorthernEur –15.7German +10.1French +32.6Irish +11.8Scot –29.9foreignborn, with an R^2 of 0.06. The contrasts for 40-, 50-, and 60-year-olds were statistically significant at the 0.05 level, as were but the estimates for visible minorities, Eastern Europeans, Northern Europeans, and Irish. Foreign born was statistically significant, but only the negative contrast for Baptists was significant in the estimates for religion.

30 See Appendix 2.

31 The regression equation, cited in Darroch and Soltow, *Property and Inequality*, pp. 58–59, gives the parameters for the 2,777 adult male farmers in the 1871 sample of AC = 9.9 + 41.0$age_{30–39}$ +81.5$age_{40–49}$ +94.5$age_{50–59}$ +89.0$age_{60–69}$ +75.3$age_{70–79}$ +1.8Catholic +18.3Baptist +12.3Methodist +3.9Presbyterian +10.2otherreligion +17.5Scot +23.1Irish +2.6German +10.6French –1.9otherorigin –5.3foreignborn, with an R^2 of 0.120. All of the age contrasts were statistically significant, but the estimates for Catholics, Baptists, Presbyterians, other religion, German, French, other origin, and foreign born exceeded two standard errors. See the split file regression for Ontario in Appendix 2 to compare.

equally telling is the finding that religious differences in land ownership had all but disappeared.

Immigrant disadvantage was more obvious in the West, in large measure because of the differences between whites and non-whites. If we trust the comparisons to 1871, it is evident that farm proprietorship developed a kind of middling equilibrium by century's end. Even though levels of inequality had not increased (not in terms of indicators like the gini coefficient), the farm profession in Ontario had grown older and the entry point into the profession had risen dramatically. This assured middle-class stature for those who described themselves as members of the profession, but in the West it restricted entry for those, like Asians, who could have acquired smaller farms from the time of their arrival if the basic size structure of farming had not, among the other factors, presented a formidable impediment. In the West, high levels of entry (an estimated starting point of 222 acres in the model) and reliance on the unpaid labour of family for most of the year worked against migrants who did not arrive in family units and had little opportunity to form families in Canada. Even if government authorities had not been racist in immigration and land policies, the initial size structure of farming hindered Asian immigrants. At the same time, in spite of similar privation in their homelands and some experience with sojourning, Eastern Europeans peasants were initially, it seems, more likely to form families and gain entry into the patterns of middling farm proprietorship. The data presented here indicate, for the early immigration experience anyway, that the independent effect of ethnicity, after modelling for the effects of age, nativity, and religion, narrowed the gap between Eastern Europeans and the reference group (English-origin farm owners) to only 63 acres. Northern Europeans who left behind similar conditions of small proprietorship, as tenants or peasants, started with even more of an initial disadvantage, some 68 acres below the reference. However, most newcomers probably took great comfort in only being that far from the reference point in Western Canada, where entry into farming was set at a much higher level because of the basic architecture of the federal government's land granting system.

Conclusion

Rural society was never really a place of great extremes in nineteenth-century Canada. Although pronounced in specific places and times, social divisions never overwhelmed the overall structure of land ownership, and the beginning of the twentieth century represented a unique moment of social equilibrium. This analysis reminds us that, however large the rural middle class had become by the turn of the century, it still had to reproduce itself each generation, and it was not so smug or comfortable that it could close itself off to newcomers. However much the government promoted larger farms and scientific agriculture and the agrarian press mirrored the consumerist impulses of urban middle-class life, the margin of comfort in rural life remained thin, and the grasp of the rural middle class, measured. Even in mid-life, few farm proprietors owned more than two basic farm lots. In the

Table 10 General Linear Model Regression of Acres Owned Among Adult Male Farmers, Western Canada, 1901

		B	Standard error	t	Significance
	Intercept	221.7	38.0	5.8	0.000
Age	20–29	–80.7	36.1	–2.2	0.025
	30–39	32.1	35.9	0.9	0.371
	40–49	65.3	36.4	1.8	0.073
	50–59	144.7	37.2	3.9	0.000
	60–69	64.1	39.7	1.6	0.107
	70–79	0.0	–	–	–
Religion	Other	–22.5	22.7	–1.0	0.323
	Presbyterian	–28.9	18.8	–1.5	0.123
	Methodist	–22.7	18.1	–1.3	0.209
	Baptist	–62.7	27.7	–2.3	0.024
	Catholic	–33.8	26.1	–1.3	0.196
	Anglican	0.0	–	–	–
Ethnicity expanded	Visible minority	–136.7	31.8	–4.3	0.000
	East European	–62.7	27.1	–2.3	0.021
	North European	–68.0	33.5	–2.0	0.043
	German	–21.6	21.7	–1.0	0.320
	French	–18.4	32.0	–0.6	0.565
	Irish	27.8	16.6	1.7	0.094
	Scots	9.1	17.8	0.5	0.609
	English	0.0	–	–	–
Nativity	Foreign born	–21.2	12.4	–1.7	0.088
	Native born	0.0	–	–	–

Cases in corrected model: 3,020
Adjusted *R*-squared: 0.074

Source: Canadian Families Project national sample, 1901.

West this happened to be twice the size of a farm owned in eastern Canada. However daunting the difference may have been for newcomers, it generally did not stop them from gravitating in disproportionate numbers to the rural West. While social historians of immigration and immigrant communities have argued convincingly for Canada's reputation as a "reluctant host", emphasizing marginalization and isolation, the roots of inequality had less to do with land tenure than previously thought. Marginalization is at once too weak and too strong a metaphor for the complex economic and social immigrant experience in rural Canada. As in the past, most European immigrants had little difficulty acquiring a middling status, even if they counted themselves among the most disadvantaged of peasant peoples. But the coldness of the welcome for visible minorities was only a taste of things to come in the twentieth century.

Appendix 1

Summary of Occupied Land Areas by Provinces, Canada, 1901

Farms (5 acres or more)	Occupiers of land	Acres occupied	Average acres occupied	Proportion owned	Proportion leased	Proportion improved	Proportion improved less forest
British Columbia	5,938	1,496,448	252.0	0.860	0.140	0.316	0.527
Manitoba	31,812	8,842,359	278.0	0.913	0.087	0.452	0.511
New Brunswick	35,051	4,438,937	126.6	0.961	0.039	0.280	0.730
Nova Scotia	47,597	5,064,968	106.4	0.979	0.021	0.246	0.588
Ontario	185,415	21,305,714	114.9	0.851	0.149	0.621	0.993
P.E.I.	13,149	1,193,158	90.7	0.972	0.028	0.608	0.895
Quebec	130,158	14,424,428	110.8	0.932	0.068	0.514	0.928
The Territories	22,813	6,568,803	287.9	0.932	0.068	0.243	0.266

Source: Canada *Census*, 1901, vol. 2, Table 25.

Appendix 2

General Linear Model Regression of Acres Owned Among Adult Male Farmers, 1901, by Region

		Maritimes B	Quebec B	Ontario B	West B
	Intercept	102.85***	68.74***	88.09***	211.97***
Age	20–29	–84.20***	–45.48***	–65.88***	–77.62*
	30–39	–16.90*	6.07	–18.90***	35.34
	40–49	8.00	36.01***	5.11	68.48
	50–59	23.98**	50.00***	23.67***	147.59***
	60–69	22.40**	35.10***	10.73**	65.86
	70–79	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Religion	Other	13.27	–15.58	3.01	–13.68
	Presbyterian	5.36	4.75	–0.64	–25.58
	Methodist	15.15	–3.42	–1.72	–17.25
	Baptist	9.30	–0.31	–8.64*	–56.06*
	Catholic	–12.84	8.26	–1.95	–38.04
	Anglican	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ethnicity	Other	0.13	–26.42	–11.51*	–82.12***
	Germany	–14.36	24.31	–5.90	–30.66
	France	–3.29	9.97	0.97	–7.27
	Ireland	19.66**	25.90**	8.03***	29.80
	Scotland	5.50	4.95	7.40**	9.85
	England, Wales	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nativity	Foreign born	17.36	13.80	6.49*	–14.38
	Native born	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Contribution effects (Eta squared)	Age	0.097	0.103	0.109	0.062
	Religion	0.004	0.001	0.001	0.002
	Ethnicity	0.004	0.003	0.003	0.009
	Nativity	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000
	R-squared	0.111	0.107	0.121	0.078
	Cases	4,507	7,046	11,098	3,023

* $p < 0.05$
** $p < 0.01$
*** $p < 0.001$