

# Museums, Memory, and Empowerment

## The Tale of Two New Brunswicks

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# Survey Design

- National telephone survey of 3,419 people
  - 5 regions (BC, Prairies, Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic Canada)
  - 5 urban areas (Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver)
  - 3 special samples (Aboriginals, Acadians, recent immigrants)
  - RDD sample and next birthday selection
  - Response rate 55%

# Questionnaire

- 70-80 questions, depending on answers to previous questions
- Interviews lasted on average 22 minutes
- 11 open-ended questions (no list of answers to choose from)
- 93% of respondents gave permission to tape answers

# Questions

- General interest in the past
- Activities related to the past
- Understanding the past
- Trustworthiness of sources on the past
- Importance of various pasts
- Sense of the past

# New Brunswick 2001/06 Censuses

- Census Population: 750,000
- French ethnic origin: 29%
- French mother tongue: 34%
- Religion: Roman Catholic 54%, none 8%
- Rural/Urban: 44% in cities of 50,000 +
- Income: 16% more than \$50,000
- British, French, or Irish origins: 88%

# Ethnic Identities

- **New Brunswick Sample (104 respondents)**
  - English 19%
  - French/French Canadian 19%
  - Irish 14%
  - Canadian 12%
  - Scottish 11%
  - (French) Acadian 9%
  - British 4%
  - Don't Know/Refused 2%

# Ethnic Identities

## □ Acadian Sample

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| – French             | 44% |
| – Acadian            | 26% |
| – Canadian           | 7%  |
| – French Canadian    | 5%  |
| – French Acadian     | 3%  |
| – Other              | 11% |
| – Don't Know/Refused | 4%  |

# Francophone Identities

|                           | <b>NB</b> | <b>Acadian</b> |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>French</b>             | 15%       | 44%            |
| <b>(French) Acadian</b>   | 9%        | 29%            |
| <b>French Canadian</b>    | 4%        | 5%             |
| <b>Francophone</b>        | 2%        | 2%             |
| <b>Québécois</b>          | --        | 1%             |
| <b>Canadian</b>           | 12%       | 7%             |
| <b>Don't Know/Refused</b> | 2%        | 4%             |



## Interest in Various Pasts

|         | <b>Canada</b> | <b>NB</b> | <b>Acadian</b> |
|---------|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| History | 33%           | 31%       | 37%            |
| Family  | 52%           | 61%       | 57%            |
| Canada  | 32%           | 40%       | 35%            |

## Importance of Various Pasts

|          | Canada | NB         | Acadian    |
|----------|--------|------------|------------|
| Family   | 66%    | <b>80%</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| Religion | 32%    | <b>52%</b> | 40%        |
| Ethnic   | 39%    | 47%        | <b>74%</b> |
| Nation   | 42%    | <b>50%</b> | 43%        |
| Province | 35%    | <b>49%</b> | <b>54%</b> |

# Importance of Provincial History

- Newfoundland and Labrador 75%
- Acadian sample 54%
- Prince Edward Island 49%
- New Brunswick 49%
- Nova Scotia 48%
- Quebec 46%
- Canada 35%

# Sense of Place

|                     | <b>New Brunswick</b> | <b>Acadian</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| <b>Province</b>     | 41%                  | 22%            |
| <b>Maritimes</b>    | <b>27%</b>           | 5%             |
| <b>Atlantic Can</b> | 5%                   | 4%             |
| <b>Quebec</b>       | 3%                   | --             |
| <b>Acadia</b>       | 3%                   | <b>36%</b>     |
| <b>Community</b>    | --                   | <b>17%</b>     |

## Sense of Place

- « Les photos que j'ai regardées, c'était sur la ville d'où je viens, ici à Caraquet; donc les photos qui montraient la ville au 19e siècle début du 20e siècle, par exemple. Donc j'ai beaucoup plaisir à garder ces photos là. Je regarde pas systématiquement, mais disons que c'est les dernières photos. Je sais pas si les photos que j'ai regardées sont des photos accessibles ici dans la ville. » (Male, 51-64, Caraquet, AC ID 497).

## Most Important Past

|                 | Canada | NB         | Acadian    |
|-----------------|--------|------------|------------|
| <b>Family</b>   | 52%    | <b>63%</b> | 56%        |
| <b>Religion</b> | 8%     | <b>14%</b> | 4%         |
| <b>Ethnic</b>   | 3%     | 2%         | <b>19%</b> |
| <b>Nation</b>   | 8%     | 5%         | 6%         |
| <b>Province</b> | 4%     | 3%         | 0%         |
| <b>Other</b>    | 24%    | 13%        | 15%        |

## Sense of Change over Time

|                 | <b>Canada</b> | <b>NB</b>  | <b>Acadian</b> |
|-----------------|---------------|------------|----------------|
| <b>Improved</b> | 43%           | 35%        | <b>62%</b>     |
| <b>Worse</b>    | 19%           | <b>26%</b> | 19%            |
| <b>Both</b>     | 20%           | 20%        | 6%             |

# Improvements over Time

- « La culture acadienne. On était assimilé. On avait pas l'enseignement français. Puis, depuis 1965 plus ou moins, on a finalement l'éducation francophone. Donc c'est l'amélioration. » (AC, 474)
- « Les Acadiens, on a plus de respect intelligent. On est voulu. On est moins soumis. » (AC ID 86)
- Moi, je dirai, dans nos cultures, c'est une question de l'éducation. Ici on a l'Université de Moncton. C'est un gros, gros, gros point. Donc les gens sont tout capables d'aller à l'université pour s'éduquer, d'avoir des professions dans la société. Si on recule les derniers cinquante ans, c'est incroyable. » (AC ID 50)



# Activities

| <b>Activity</b> | <b>Canada (%)</b> | <b>NB</b> | <b>Acadian</b> |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| photos          | 83                | 86        | 88             |
| movies          | 78                | 73        | <b>56</b>      |
| heirlooms       | 74                | 75        | 70             |
| family places   | 57                | 67        | 62             |
| documents       | 56                | 49        | 62             |
| historic sites  | 49                | 45        | 47             |

# Activities

| Activity      | Canada (%) | NB        | Acadian   |
|---------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| museums       | 43         | 31        | <b>29</b> |
| Internet      | 40         | <b>22</b> | 30        |
| family tree   | 20         | 18        | 16        |
| archives      | 15         | 6         | 13        |
| history games | 8          | 8         | 3         |
| other         | 26         | 25        | 13        |

# Sense of the Past

- **History is part of my everyday life rather than something I think about when I go to a museum.**

|                 |     |          |     |
|-----------------|-----|----------|-----|
| – New Brunswick | 52% | Prairies | 42% |
| – Acadian       | 50% | Ontario  | 40% |
| – Quebec        | 48% | NL       | 38% |
| – Canada        | 42% | PEI      | 38% |
| – BC            | 42% | NS       | 36% |

# Genealogy

- « On a des réunions des LeBlanc. On a été aux fêtes des Acadiens le 15 août. C'est tous les ans : un gros party! C'est toutes des choses acadiennes, toutes des chansons françaises. Ils viennent jouer... it's a good time. C'est tous les chanteurs acadiens qui sont là. ...J'ai su que j'ai eu une descendante de M. Daniel LeBlanc de la France... dans les années 1600. Puis c'est parce que je savais qu'il y avait deux descendants de LeBlanc, deux chaînes, puis moi je suis sur le bord de Daniel. Je savais pas ça. Puis je trouve ça très intéressant... que j'ai de la parenté avec plusieurs LeBlanc dans la région. » (Female, 51-64, Dieppe, AC ID 43)

# Acadian Cultural Celebrations

- Ici à Petit-Rocher, on ferme la rue à 3h l'après-midi jusqu'à 6h-6h30. Les gens se promènent dans la rue habillés avec les couleurs de l'Acadie. À 6h, ce sont des discours officiels. C'est le Tantemar, est le Tantemar...sa faire la plus de bruit possible. Chacun se promène avec son chaudron... ou tout qui peut faire du bruit... Tout le village se trouve au centre du village. On peut marcher dans la rue, les voitures doivent faire un détour. Il y a des chants dans la rue, la musique, les violons. (AC ID 345)

# Memory Keeping

- We are keeping] all the old photos and especially the verbal history from my grandparents who we were raised with, some of the recipes that were handed down, some of the language that is slowly disappearing, that we realize is important because Acadien is like a slang, so it's important that, even though there...are headways – you know, they are preserving it –but it's still up to the immediate families and the generations to do so. [NB 48]

# Scrapbooking

- J'ai fait un livre de scrapbooking pour ma mère qui était de tout ses onze enfants. Puis j'ai fait tout chacun avec leur famille, c'était un livre au complet. J'ai commencé avec ma mère quand elle était jeune. Puis ça finit avec mon père puis mon frère qui est mort à la dernière page. Puis après ça, j'ai fait un livre aussi de mes filles, depuis qu'ils sont tous petits bébés... Puis je suis grand-maman... pas long, depuis 14 juillet. Alors j'en commence un avec eux autres. (Female, 40-50, Petit-Rocher, AC ID 352)

# Personal Pasts

- “It'd be nice to know where everybody, you know, came from and that, so, like, my mother's past is... they're from a different country altogether, so. Yeah. The guys with the... like, helmets with horns sticking out of them.” (NB ID 1118)
- “I wanna know who they were, what they did, where they fit in society. I wanna know my bloodline. Are we from kings or paupers? ... I'm told the family members came over on the *Mayflower* and ...had land grants in the province of New Brunswick.” (NB ID 1150)



## Personal Pasts

- “My father as a young man worked at logging and some of the names that he said then about places in New Brunswick...still make me remember him. And he was a very fine patriot, I think, and ...also made me be very proud to be a Canadian.” (Female + 75, Woodstock, NB ID 1027)

# Trustworthy Sources

|                  | NB | Acadian | Canadian |
|------------------|----|---------|----------|
| ☐ Museums        | 59 | 61      | 66       |
| ☐ Historic Sites | 53 | 52      | 55       |
| ☐ Family Stories | 39 | 42      | 33       |
| ☐ History books  | 32 | 45      | 41       |
| ☐ Teachers       | 28 | 28      | 30       |
| ☐ Internet       | 5  | 13      | 8        |

# The Communications Revolution

- I think museums are moving into the digital age. I don't know if you talked about that in any of your other meetings, but it seems as if there's a danger in this because you don't want to give people another reason not to come into the building. (Saint John, New Brunswick, 2006)

# Conclusions

- Paradox of New Brunswickers being interested in and valuing history, but less engaged in activities relating to the past than most Canadians
- Different sense of the past reported by Anglophone and Francophone respondents
- No common *provincial* narrative of the past but a shared attachment to Canadian history

# Implications

- History serves as a vehicle for empowerment for Acadians but not for most others in New Brunswick.
- Failure to develop a shared provincial narrative about the past leads to disengagement of non-Francophone populations.
- These two solitudes reflect in how heritage is commemorated/celebrated and tourism (one of the province's major industries) is promoted.

# Questions

- Can we move beyond, “your past, my past” approach to a commonly shared history?
- *Should* we move beyond, your past, my past approach to a commonly shared history?
- How do museums fit into the future of the past in New Brunswick in the digital age?

# Acknowledgements

- David Northrup, ISR, Associate Director
- John Pollard, ISR, Project Director
- Mirka Ondrack, ISR, Data Analyst
- Maurice Basque and Marc Robichaud, Institute d'études acadiennes
- Jeanne Mance Cormier, Musée acadien de l'Université de Moncton
- Other members of the Pasts Team: Jocelyn Létourneau (Principal Investigator), Kadriye Ercikan, Gerald Friesen, Del Muise, Peter Seixas