

Travel report - Allan Craigie

Research trip to Ontario, Allan Craigie, University of Edinburgh

Due to the generosity of the British Association for Canadian Studies and the Foundation for Canadian Studies, I had the opportunity to visit Canada during the summer of 2008 to conduct research at the Statistics Canada Research Data Centre (RDC) at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

The purpose of the trip was threefold. The primary objective was to access Statistic Canada's Ethnic Diversity Survey. This survey analysis was undertaken to support my research into territorial identity mobilization in Nova Scotia. The information is not available to the public due to privacy concerns. To access the data I first had to make a peer reviewed application to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Upon the success of this application, I had to undergo security clearance by Statistics Canada, which was complicated by not being based in Canada. Fortunately the clearance came through, but only on the day the research was scheduled to commence. Once at the RDC, I signed the security clearances and became a 'deemed employee' of Statistics Canada, subject to all the statutory regulations governing Statistics Canada.

The research conducted at the RDC was fruitful, but was impacted by two of Statistics Canada's rules, which protect the privacy of the respondents in the data sets. The first rule is that no data can leave the RDC without being examined by the RDC's Research Analyst. If any cell in an unweighted table is less than 10 it is not allowed to leave the RDC and is not available for public use. As the research was testing the sense of belonging people have to their provinces relative to Canada as a whole in relation to political attitudes, it meant that many of the results were not able to leave the RDC due to extremely high rates of belonging to Canada and the provinces-so few Canadians have weak attachments to either their province or the federation. The second rule is that to ensure no data leaves without being examined, no portable storage devices such as memory sticks or MP3 players are allowed in the RDC. As such, I was forced to spend my days running statistics programmes without music from my iPod to keep me sane.

The other purposes of the trip were to meet with academics at Queen's University who are experts in aspects of my research to discuss my work and gain feedback, and to access secondary sources not available in the United Kingdom. Both of these proved extremely successful, and the feedback I received will help inform my PhD Thesis.

This research contributed to my PhD Thesis and established the groundwork for future articles, which will expand upon my PhD research. I am extremely grateful to the Association for their continued support of my work.