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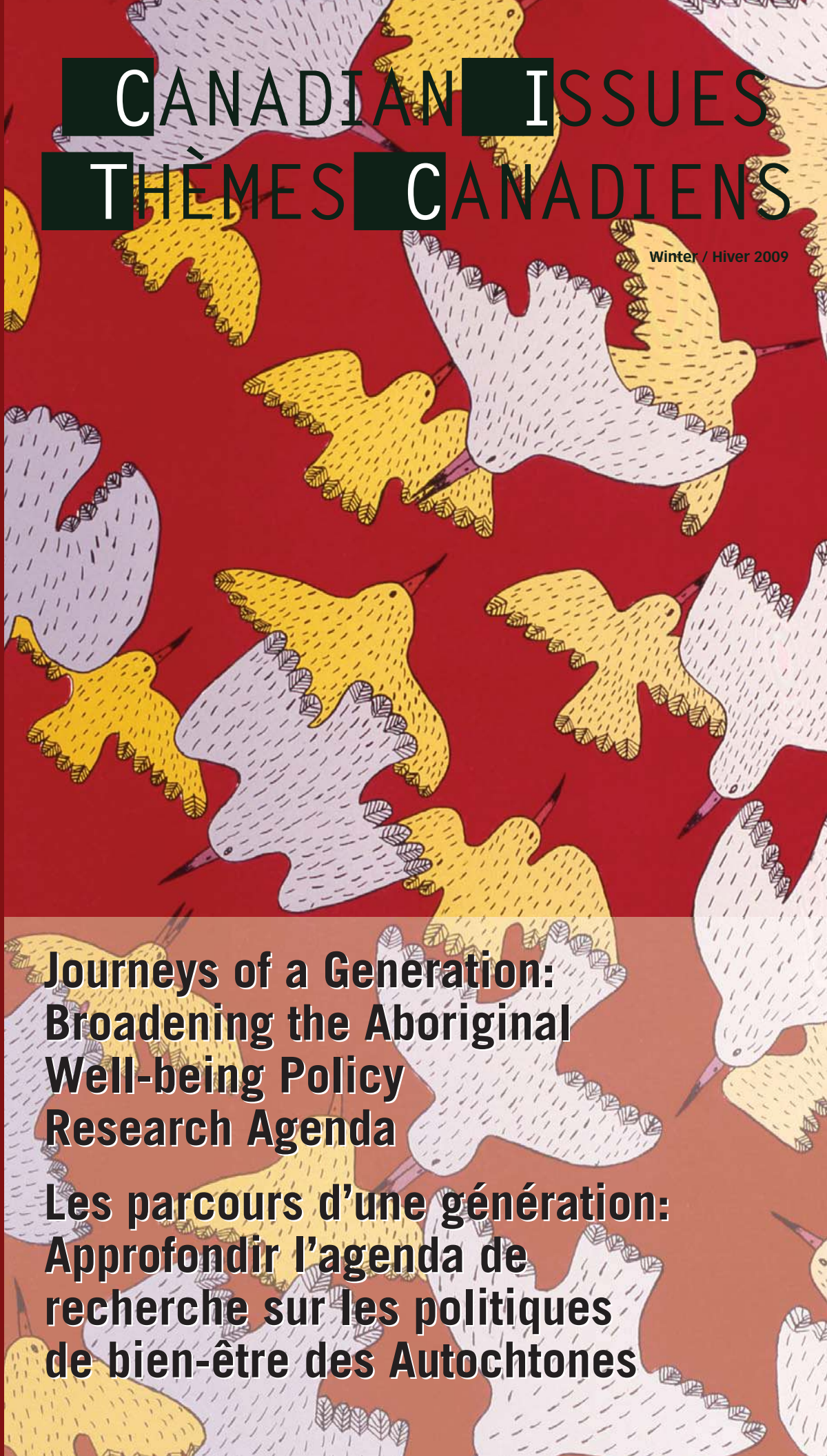

Journeys of a Generation: Broadening the Aboriginal Well-being Policy Research Agenda

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JOURNEYS OF A GENERATION: BROADENING THE ABORIGINAL WELL-BEING POLICY RESEARCH AGENDA

Dan Beavon is the Director of the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. He is also an Adjunct Research Professor in Sociology at the University of Western Ontario. Dan is the winner of the 2008 Gold Medal Award that is awarded each year to only one government scientist by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada: this award acknowledges recipients' outstanding scientific work and the contribution of that work to the improvement and enhancement of public well-being. / **Daniel Jetté** is a Strategic Research Manager with the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate at Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

On behalf of our colleagues in the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and our partners at the Association for Canadian Studies, we are pleased to welcome you to this special, Aboriginal-themed edition of *Canadian Issues.*

We are particularly pleased to be able to partner with the Association for Canadian Studies for not one, but two publications dedicated solely to Aboriginal policy research. Work is currently underway for a special edition of the association's *Canadian Diversity* journal. That volume, which is scheduled for release in late 2009, will feature works highlighting the diversity of Canada's First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples through geographic, cultural and socioeconomic lenses.

Four decades after the 1969 *White Paper on Indian Policy,* and over a decade since the release of the *Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,* old preconceptions and incomplete understandings about Aboriginal rights, peoples and communities continue to inhibit effective policy deliberations, and contribute to misinformed public discourse on Aboriginal issues. It is our belief that sound policy research, along with open discussion and debate of inherently diverse and complex issues, will lead to better public policy; further, it will enhance the public's understanding of important issues, create healthier relationships amongst different ethnic groups, and strengthen our pluralistic and democratic institutions. This belief drives virtually all of our work and will be the ethic that informs the special *Canadian Diversity* edition.

The objective of this volume, however, as indicated by the title, is more focused. Through such works as the adaptation of the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), as well as the Community Well-being Index (CWB), the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has been a pioneer in advancing the state of knowledge regarding the quality of life of Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. These initiatives, along with our partnerships with leading Canadian and international researchers, our collaborations with Aboriginal organizations, and our work with the University of Western Ontario and the National Association of Friendship Centres on the 2002, 2006 and 2009 Aboriginal Policy Research Conferences, have all been undertaken with one goal in mind: improving the foundation of knowledge about Canada's Aboriginal peoples so that federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal policymakers are better equipped to make meaningful improvements to the matrix of policies and programs that affect Aboriginal well-being.

And yet, it would be an overstatement to suggest that the work of achieving a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing Aboriginal well-being is complete. While efforts to maximize the analytical potential of the HDI and CWB continue, we are mindful of their limitations, particularly their emphasis on relatively basic measures of health and socioeconomic well-being. While these tools have been helpful in documenting the extent of the socioeconomic disadvantage affecting Canada's Aboriginal

"As we write these words, governments around the world, including our own, are attempting to grapple with the onset of the most significant global economic disturbance in half a century. It is almost universally understood that, with international efforts focussed squarely on the stabilization of the global economy, policymakers whose work is not directly related to that urgent effort can expect to be asked to do more with less."

peoples and in informing the setting of priorities for policy discussions, a broader approach to understanding the drivers of both individual and community well-being ultimately are required.

It is for that reason that we lead off this journal with an article discussing the utility of the lifecourse approach for analyzing factors that affect quality of life. As Cooke observes, an approach that calls on researchers to consider the implications for well-being of transitions and events at all stages of life may be particularly beneficial to better understanding drivers of Aboriginal well-being. First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples living in different communities or cultural contexts inevitably experience life paths that are markedly different from those of non-Aboriginal people, meaning that individual factors that contribute to the accumulated deficits, in terms of Aboriginal well-being, should be identifiable, measurable and – with the appropriate policy mix – preventable. In the same spirit, Guimond and Clatworthy demonstrate how sound analysis of demographic trends contributes to the formulation of policies that address Aboriginal well-being. We are also treated to a series of analytical snapshots analyses of Aboriginal demographic and socioeconomic data from the 2006 Census, as prepared by Steffler and Street, both of INAC's Socio-economic and Demographic Statistics Section.

The next set of articles latches onto the lifecourse theme, analyzing the well-being implications of issues that manifest themselves at birth (Mann; Eni et. al), and during early childhood (Ball) and young adulthood (Aman; Matthew; and Hull). As youth mature and become increasingly immersed in the social, cultural and economic realities that surround them, Jedwab, Fonda and Richmond show how the role of community networks and cultural institutions in promoting well-being should not be neglected by researchers genuinely interested in contributing to improvement of Aboriginal peoples' quality of life.

We conclude with a series of papers discussing alternative approaches to analyzing the well-being of Aboriginal peoples and communities. Lapointe et. al utilize the CWB framework to pioneer a detailed analysis of Métis communities. Liodakis takes a creative approach, employing a class structural analysis framework to underscore the extent of inequality both *between* Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples and *within* First Nation, Inuit and Métis populations. Waslander turns to Statistics Canada's Statistical Area Classification framework to analyze the relationship between the level of economic integration between urban centres and adjacent First Nation communities, and the socioeconomic outcomes observed in those communities. Finally, Fonda and Anderson take us on a trip to the Northwest Territories, where First Nations involved in the diamond industry are testing alternative approaches to tracking the impacts of resource exploration on the well-being of these communities.

As we write these words, in December 2008, governments around the world, including our own, are attempting to grapple with the onset of the most significant global economic disturbance in half a century. It is almost universally understood that, with international efforts focussed squarely on the stabilization of the global economy, policymakers whose work is not directly related to that urgent effort can expect to be asked to do more with less. In this context, some will inevitably argue, academic-level discussions and research about drivers of Aboriginal well-being are luxuries that we cannot afford.

We would argue that the opposite is true, that this is *precisely* the time to be renewing and strengthening our collective commitment to evidence-based policy development. In times of fiscal restraint, policymakers should be more concerned than ever with finding new ways to achieve maximum benefit from minimum investment. When the buffalo herd is on the move, it's usually not a good time to be standing still.

With that tortured metaphor mercifully behind us, we invite you to turn the page and join us in asking important questions about how best to ensure the next generation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have every opportunity to improve their well-being and that of their families and communities, at every point along their individual and collective journeys.

TAKING A LIFECOURSE PERSPECTIVE IN ABORIGINAL POLICY RESEARCH

Martin Cooke is an Assistant Professor in the departments of Sociology and Health Studies and Gerontology at the University of Waterloo. He is currently principal investigator of a SSHRC-funded research Project, titled "Aboriginal Inequality in Life Course Perspective".

ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

Lifecourse has become an important framework for academic and government policy research, offering a dynamic and multidimensional perspective on health, labour market experiences, family and marital transitions, as well as social participation and other activities. Its use has been proposed for research into the ongoing disadvantage of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. We explore the benefits of a life course approach to analyzing drivers of persistent Aboriginal inequality, but also identify some important considerations for viewing Aboriginal issues through a life course lens. These include the particular relationships between Aboriginal peoples and state programs, and the cultural content of the life course.

Le cours de la vie est devenu un cadre important pour la recherche universitaire et gouvernementale en matière de politiques, offrant une perspective dynamique et multidimensionnelle sur la santé, les expériences sur le marché du travail, les transitions familiales et conjugales ainsi que la participation sociale, entre autres activités. L'utilisation en a été proposée pour la recherche sur le désavantage continu des Autochtones au Canada. Nous explorons les bénéfices d'une approche du cours de la vie pour analyser les inducteurs de l'inégalité persistante des Autochtones, mais aussi pour déterminer certaines considérations importantes pour voir les difficultés des Autochtones à travers la lentille du cours de la vie, notamment les relations particulières entre les peuples autochtones et les programmes de l'État et le contenu culturel du cours de la vie.

One of the interesting recent developments in policy-related research is the use of the lifecourse as a lens for viewing the interaction of individual lives with various policies. Its adoption by academic, government and other researchers has grown over the past decade and for good reasons. The lifecourse gives us a dynamic view of lives that is intuitively attractive and offers a more accurate reflection of lived experience. Driven partly by the increasing availability of longitudinal data, lifecourse approaches see conditions such as poverty, unemployment, or ill health in their biographical contexts. It emphasizes the interrelationships between various aspects of life, including health, family and community as well as work and education (Kunz 2005). In this paper, we argue such an approach may be very useful for Aboriginal policy research and that the lack of longitudinal data should not be an impediment. However, the unique relationships between Aboriginal peoples and government policies, and the cultural content of the lifecourse, should be carefully considered.

LIFECOURSE AND POLICY RESEARCH

A 2004 discussion paper by the Policy Research Initiative (PRI) articulates a lifecourse approach to policy research, with a focus on the accumulation and depletion of resources over people's lives (PRI 2004). In the PRI's

framework these include time, financial resources, skills and services; and, they are derived from markets, family and community as well as government. Understanding how these resources are acquired, are used by individuals and families and vary across life would help policies provide appropriate types of support at times they are most needed. This focus would also help facilitate *transitions*, such as return to work after a layoff or full-time childcare, and help reduce the risk of persistent poverty or social exclusion as experienced by identifiable groups, including lone mothers, recent immigrants and Aboriginal peoples (Kunz 2005; PRI 2004).

There are other reasons for favouring a lifecourse perspective on inequality. It provides a prism through which to view disadvantage across the age span and the importance of early life experiences for conditions later in life. Moreover, the lifecourse approach provides space for considering multiple dimensions of disadvantage and how they may interact. Ageing is experienced differently by men and women but is also different for immigrant and Canadian-born men and for working- and middle-class women (Calasanti and Slevin 2001; McMullian 1995). The lifecourse also helps us understand how *timing,* as well as experience, matters and how resources are accumulated or depleted over lives. O'Rand's (1996) work on "cumulative advantage and disadvantage" has helped to show how those who have good beginnings, such as early completion of educational programs, can continue to gain advantage over those with more discontinuous trajectories, contributing to ongoing racial and ethnic inequality in the U.S.

The lifecourse can help bridge disciplines and integrate insights from sociology, economics, social epidemiology and gerontology. Access to resources is conditioned by social location and circumstance, the focus of much sociological thinking. However, lives are also shaped by decisions and actions of individuals and groups, a primary concern of microeconomics (Marshall and Mueller 2003). The lifecourse also helps link individual experience to history and social change through the different experiences of birth cohorts (Elder 1994; Riley 1988). To these social aspects of the lifecourse we can add biological effects, such as how conditions in infancy or *in utero*, themselves heavily influenced by social conditions, may result in health disparities later in life (Hertzman 2004). Psycho-social perspectives on health consider the implications of social conditions or psychological trauma at earlier ages for mental or physical health later in life Meyers and Hwang 2004). Although not a theory in itself, the lifecourse provides a way of incorporating these findings from multiple fields into a single framework.

ABORIGINAL INEQUALITY FROM A LIFECOURSE PERSPECTIVE

It is not hard to see why we think the lifecourse approach holds promise for research into the social, economic, and health conditions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. It is well-known that Aboriginal peoples are at higher risk to experiencing negative health, social and economic conditions (Box 1) and that this disparity has been resistant to change (Waldram *et al.* 2006; Cooke *et al.* 2004; Guimond and Cooke 2008). A dynamic, biographical view might help by directing attention to differences in lifecourse patterns, connections between various domains and the possible accumulation of disadvantage with age. Employment trajectories, for example, should be analytically connected to experiences in health and the family with focus on the timing of interrelated lifecourse events. Similarly, although lower average educational attainment is an important issue, Aboriginal peoples also tend to complete education later than other Canadians (Hull 2005), potentially resulting in less time with which to benefit from this education in the labour market. A lifecourse approach might help us identify some of the subtle mechanisms of the reproduction of Aboriginal disadvantage, with a view to policies that provide appropriate supports at critical times.

Despite the promise we hold for this approach, there are some reasons to apply it cautiously. Indeed, the lifecourses of Aboriginal peoples may vary from those of other Canadians, with implications for accumulation of resources. But although these differences can be made visible through comparisons, care must be taken not to set up an idealized "mainstream" Canadian lifecourse as the most desirable. "Early", "late", or "out-of-sequence" timing of transitions can indeed have negative consequences but this is, to a great degree, because of the resources available to support these transitions, not the events themselves. Lone parenthood (Norris *et al.* 2004) may contribute to negative outcomes for Aboriginal women and their children but only when adequate supports are unavailable, either from markets, family and community, or the state. Later educational attainment and return to formal education in adulthood might allow for other life experiences, such as family formation, work experience, or traditional activities, and may simply reflect a different life timetable. "Mainstream" institutions, that are oriented to a normative lifecourse and ill-equipped to deal with other patterns, may fail to adequately support transitions by Aboriginal peoples. High rates of mobility between First Nations and cities (Norris *et al.* 2004), for example, might disadvantage children who are moved between various schools (Hagan

Box 1: Examples of Lifecourse Risks faced by Aboriginal peoples in Childhood, Adulthood, and Older Adulthood.

Lifecourse domain	Childood and young adulthood	Adulthood	Older Adulthood
Work, Education and Income	Higher drop-out rates Lower rates of progression to post-secondary	Lower and later educational attainment Less continuous work, lower average income	Lower retirement incomes
Family/Community	Residential mobility crowding Family disruption Earlier childbearing	Lone parenthood Higher risk of victimization	Increased chance of widowhood Possibility higher risks of victimization
Health	Poor childhood nutrition Poor housing conditions Risk of substance abuse	Higher risks of chronic illness (diabetes, cardiopulminary disease)	Higher rates of disability, diabetes

et al. 1998). However, this might be attributed, at least in part, to expectations of the educational system in terms of continuous attendance and residential stability.

We should also consider how the lifecourses of Aboriginal peoples may be different *because* of policies and programmes. More than their American counterparts, European lifecourse researchers have been interested in how a standard lifecourse is institutionalized (Marshall and Mueller 2003). State programmes have been key to the tripartite working lifecourse, with education in early life and complete retirement after a working career (Kohli 1986).

Aboriginal peoples have historically been subject to different legislative and policy regimes than have other Canadians. This is more the case for Status Indians, who have had a distinct relationship with the federal government through the *Indian Act* and through the differential status

"Qualitative data can give us insight into not only the life courses of Aboriginal peoples but also into how these are understood. Lifecourse approaches to policy, if they are going to support people in making transitions, need to understand the goals and intentions behind these decisions."

of the northern territories relative to provinces; however, the *Indian Act* and associated regulations affect non-Status people and others through families and communities. For example, the recently changed Matrimonial Real Property (MRP) rules meant that women living in First Nations were subject to different rules regarding the division of property upon divorce, with implications for the economic well-being of women both on- and off-reserve (Abbott 2004). Until the late 1980s, income earned on-reserve or by working for band organizations was generally not subject to Canada/Quebec Pension Plan (C/QPP) deductions, affecting retirement income (Gyimah *et al.* 2004). The registration rules of the *Indian Act* itself, including the 1985 Bill C-31 changes, shape lives by defining who is, and who is not, eligible to be registered, forming a complex segmentation of populations and communities based on legal status and Band membership (Clatworthy 2001). It is also worth noting that Métis peoples' relationship with governments is also different; more to the point, it is evolving rapidly, with the inclusion of Métis peoples in the 1982 Constitution Act and the subsequent recognition of Métis Aboriginal rights via the 2003 *Powley* decision.

These examples of how policies have shaped – and continue to shape – the lives of Aboriginal peoples are minor when compared to the impacts of residential schooling or community relocation. One of the goals of the PRI's framework was to create a foundation for understanding "how social policies actually work" (PRI 2004) and a lifecourse approach to Aboriginal policy research should recognize the potential role of policy in creating lifecourse differences.

Our last concern with the application of a lifecourse framework is the possibility that ideas of trajectories, transitions and careers in various domains are loaded with cultural content and assumptions. The lifecourse's intuitive appeal is partly because many of us use these ideas to make sense of our own lives, in day-to-day interaction (Holstein and Gubrium 2007), but understandings of the lifecourse and expected progressions are culturally bound (Dannefur 2003). It might be that, for First Nations, Inuit or Métis people or for particular communities or cultures, the idea of a lifecourse as we have defined it above does not represent their own thinking about their lives. Castellano, for example, described the Anishnabeg conception of life paths as having a branching structure, recognizing that trajectories are not always linear (Castellano 2008). There also might be an inherent individualism in the conception of the lifecourse as trajectories (Mayer 1998), which may not reflect Aboriginal perspectives. Given these concerns, it would be necessary to first explore how Aboriginal peoples view the lifecourse framework and to what extent the framework needs to be adapted to specific cultural realities, before proceeding. However, we are confident that these concerns can be addressed and that a culturally appropriate lifecourse framework can be articulated and operationalized.

MOVING FORWARD WITH A LIFECOURSE APPROACH

As a final point, there is one potential argument against the use of a lifecourse framework for studying Aboriginal inequality with which we disagree – the lack of longitudinal data. The popularity of the framework has been greatly influenced by the development of panel studies and techniques for their analysis. Longitudinal surveys from Statistics Canada do not include enough First Nations, Inuit, or Métis people for complex analyses and, in any case, do not generally sample in Aboriginal communities. Nonetheless, data availability should not keep us from using the lifecourse as a guiding framework.

As we have tried to argue elsewhere, there is no reason to limit lifecourse thinking to topics on which we have longitudinal data (Cooke and Gazso, forthcoming), although such data sources should certainly be developed. While not designed with lifecourse in mind, existing national surveys such as the Aboriginal Peoples Surveys (APS) or the First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS)[1] collect some retrospective data, such as mobility histories, that can be useful for lifecourse analysis. Moreover, even current states should really be seen as aspects of the lifecourse for which observation is truncated. Seemingly static variables such as educational attainment or marital or family status can be seen as snapshots of otherwise unknown trajectories and still provide some information about those trajectories. The census can also provide valuable lifecourse information, by allowing us to follow cohorts as they move through various ages. Contrary to views of the lifecourse as only individual trajectories, cohorts allow us to see the effects of historical time, including changing policy regimes.

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Lastly, qualitative data can give us insight into not only the life courses of Aboriginal peoples but also into how these are understood. Lifecourse approaches to policy, if they are going to support people in making transitions, need to understand the goals and intentions behind these decisions, as well as the types of resources and supports that are required. This means incorporating Aboriginal perspectives into lifecourse research and investigating cultural differences in the understanding of life paths and how these might relate to policy.

NOTE

[1] Although longitudinal in design, only cross-sectional data are available from the First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS), at time of writing.

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ABORIGINAL POPULATIONS IN CANADIAN CITIES: WHY ARE THEY GROWING SO FAST?

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

Urban Aboriginal populations have been growing very quickly over the past decade. For most observers, migration would be the main driver of this spectacular growth. But research has repeatedly shown that the idea of a "mass exodus" of Aboriginal populations from Indian reserves to Canadian cities is a myth. Since 1966, there have been more people moving to reserves than leaving. In fact, traditional components of demographic growth – fertility, mortality and migration – cannot account for all of the observed growth. With this analysis, we show how ethnic mobility, defined as changes in self-reporting of ethnicity, has been and is likely to continue to be an important component to the growth of Aboriginal populations in Canadian cities.

Les populations autochtones en milieu urbain ont augmenté très rapidement au cours de la dernière décennie. Pour la plupart des observateurs, la migration pourrait être la principale composante de cette croissance spectaculaire. Mais la recherche a démontré à plusieurs reprises que l'idée d'un « exode massif » des populations autochtones des réserves indiennes vers les villes du Canada est un mythe. Depuis 1966, un plus grand nombre de personnes ont emménagé dans des réserves que celles l'ayant quité. De fait, les composantes traditionnelles de la croissance démographique – la natalité, la mortalité et la migration – ne peuvent pas totalement expliquer la croissance observée. Cette analyse démontre comment la mobilité ethnique, définie comme des changements dans l'autodéclaration de l'ethnicité, a été et continue probablement à être une composante importante de la croissance des populations autochtones dans les villes du Canada.

Improper interpretation of demographic data can have severe detrimental effects on one's understanding of socioeconomic trends, as well as on the formulation of policies directed at those trends. Consider a hypothetical scenario where a surge in demand for social assistance in a community triggered by massive migration of unemployed people from nearby rural areas is mistakenly attributed to poor job market preparation and/or postsecondary uptake among recent cohorts of high school graduates. In this scenario, policymakers would be oblivious to the root cause of the problem – lack of job opportunities in rural areas – and policy responses "would be geared to an erroneous interpretation of circumstances that in fact do not exist." (Guimond 2008)

Urban Aboriginal Canadian populations have been growing very quickly over the past decade. For most observers, migration would be the main driver of this spectacular growth. But as with our hypothetical scenario, research has repeatedly shown that the idea of a "mass exodus" of Aboriginal populations from Indian reserves to Canadian cities is a myth, and that other factors are at play. As researchers and Aboriginal community leaders continue their efforts to expand the foundation of knowledge regarding factors affecting Aboriginal well-being, it is crucial that these efforts be based on a sound demographic footing. This paper explores the phenomenon of urban Aboriginal population growth with the objective of separating myth from reality with respect to the factors contributing to the rapidly growing number of Aboriginal people in Canadian cities.

From 1996 to 2006, the overall Aboriginal population living in large Canadian cities[1] increased from 221,295 to 366,165 persons, growing by more than 5% annually on average (**Table 1**). By comparison, the non-Aboriginal population grew by less than 2% annually over the course of this decade.

There is great variation in growth among Aboriginal identity groups.[2] The North American Indian population, which accounts for more than half of the whole, rose from 129,700 persons in 1996 to 188,160 persons in 2006. While modest in comparison to the other groups, this pace of growth was nonetheless twice that registered by the non-Aboriginal population. In contrast, the second largest urban Aboriginal group, the Métis, literally exploded, doubling in size from 79,785 in 1996 to 160,870 in 2006. Inuit and individuals of other Aboriginal identities also experienced rapid growth, but their numbers are small relatively speaking; these two groups account for less than 5% of the urban Aboriginal population in 2006.

Overall, the observed increases for the Métis population greatly exceeded a maximum of 5.5% per yea that is theoretically possible for a population subject only to the natural movement of births and deaths (see textbox); North American Indian population growth was slower but still close to that threshold. What follows is an examination of the various phenomena at work here, including an analysis of the contribution of each.

A THEORETICAL MAXIMUM FOR NATURAL INCREASE

Theoretically, the maximum rate of natural increase is 5.5% per year. It is obtained from the highest birth rate (60 per 1,000 persons) observable in exceptional conditions –a young population, marrying young and practising no form of contraception– from which is subtracted the lowest death rate (5 per 1,000) persons observed at the time of this analysis. Such a combination of high fertility and low mortality has probably never been observed. Today, the highest national rates of natural increase in the world are at about 3.5% per year. A population maintaining a growth rate of 5.5% per year doubles every 13 years. After a hundred years, that population would be more than 200 times larger than at the outset. A growth rate in excess of 5.5% cannot be explained by natural increase alone: phenomena other than births and deaths are contributing to the increase (Guimond, 1999).

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

NATURAL INCREASE

The natural increase of a population is the difference between the number of children born and the number of persons who die in a given period. If Aboriginal populations perpetuated themselves solely through births, then natural increase and the total increase would necessarily be equal. But as Chart 1 reveals, this is not the case. For all groups and

TABLE 1: Population Size and Growth Rate, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Populations Living in Canadian Cities[i], Canada, 1996-2006.

	SIZE			AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	
	1996	2001	2006	1996-2001	2001-2006
Aboriginal Populations	221 295	279 875	366 165	4.8%	5.5%
North American Indian	129 700	151 770	188 160	3.2%	4.4%
Métis	79 785	114 085	160 870	7.4%	7.1%
Inuit	2 150	3 090	4 215	7.5%	6.4%
Multiple/Other[ii]	9 660	10 930	12 920	2.5%	3.4%
Non-Aboriginal Population (in thousands)	16 308.9	17 679.4	19 565.4	1.6%	2.0%

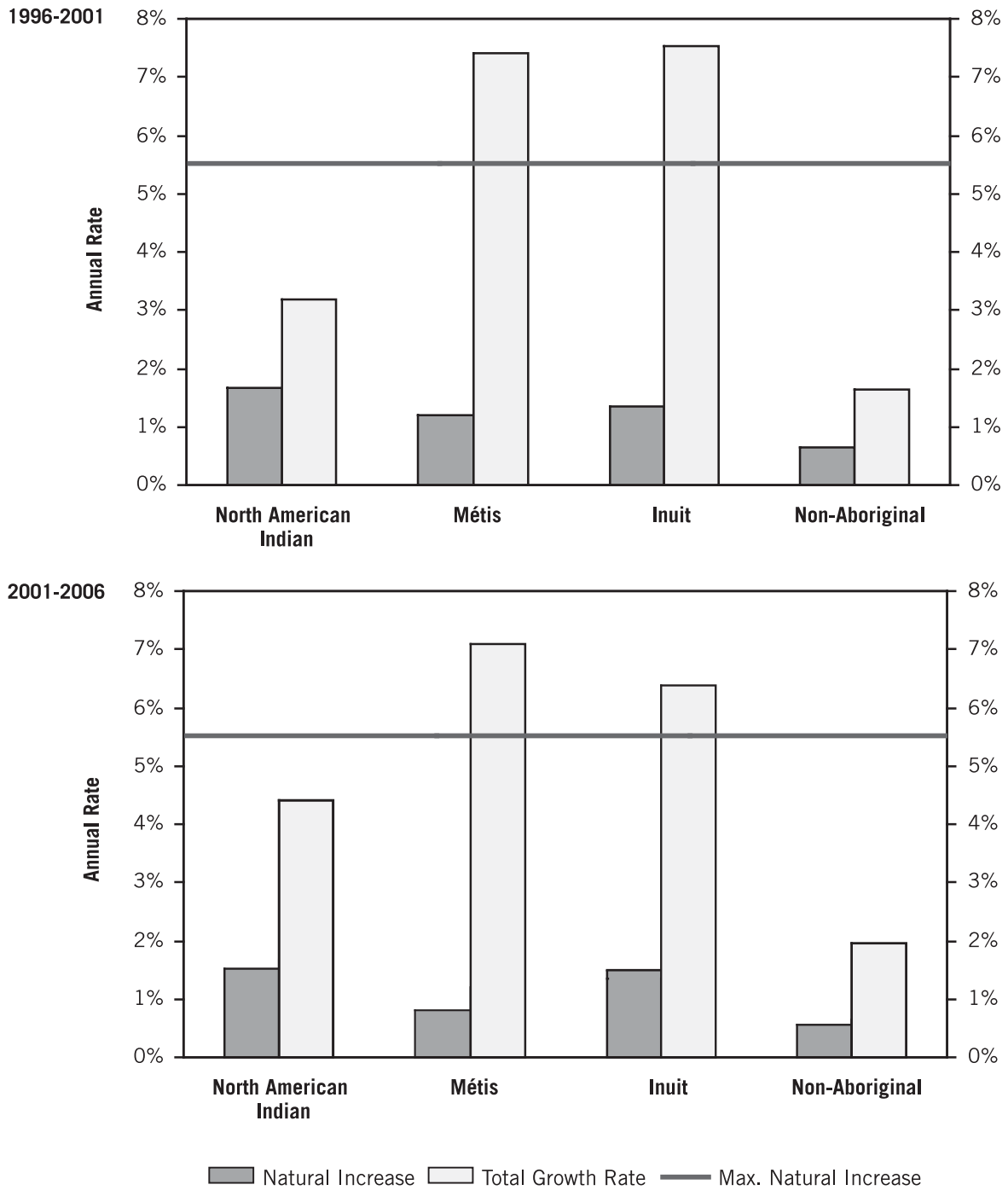
Notes:

[i] Includes all Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA), as defined by Statistics Canada, but excluding Indian reserves.

[ii] Includes: (i) persons who declared more than one Aboriginal identity; (ii) persons would did not declare an Aboriginal identity but reported being Registered or Treaty Indian; (iii) persons would did not declare an Aboriginal identity but reported being a Member of an Indian Band/First Nation.

Sources: Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2006 Censuses of Canada, custom tabulations.

CHART 1: Average Annual Natural Increase[i] and Total Growth Rate, Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal Populations in Canadian Cities[ii], Canada, 1996-2006



Notes:

[i] The birth rate was estimated using a child-population ratio approach and the death rate is assumed to be constant at 5 per 1,000.

[ii] Includes all Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA), as defined by Statistics Canada, but excluding Indian reserves.

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2001 and 2006 Censuses of Canada, custom tabulations.

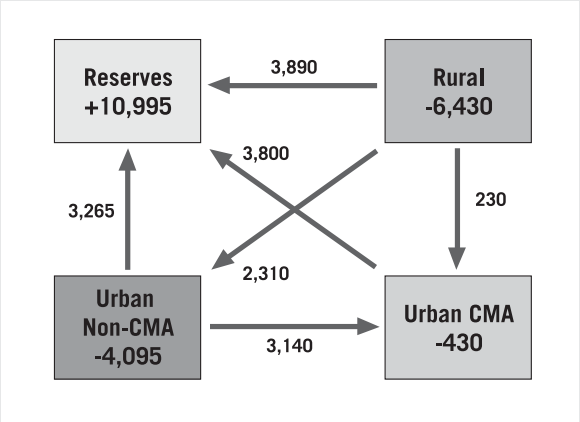
both intercensal periods, the observed growth rate of Aboriginal populations largely exceeds their natural increase. With respect to the Métis which have experienced a spectacular urban population growth in the last decade, the overall growth rate (7.4%; 7.1%) is six to seven times higher than what their natural movement of births and deaths has contributed to (1.2%; 1.0%).

Clearly, while the Aboriginal populations have higher fertility than the non-Aboriginal population, this alone cannot explain their exceptional growth in Canadian cities.

MIGRATION

Migration from Indian reserves is often alluded to in explanations of urban Aboriginal population growth. However, contrary to popular belief, there is no mass exodus from Indian reserves and settlements; in fact, analysis of census data on place of residence five years ago indicates that, overall, there has been a net inflow to Indian reserves since 1966 (Clatworth and Norris 2003; Siggner 1977).

CHART 2: Net Migration Flows of Aboriginal Identity Population Aged 5+ Years, Canada, 1996-2001



Source: Clatworthy and Norris (2003).

Analysis by Clatworthy and Norris (2003) of the 2001 census data show that the resulting impact of movement to and from Indian reserves between 1996 and 2001 is a positive net migration of +10,995 persons for these communities. For urban areas, the net migration is negative (-430 for urban CMAs; -4,095 for urban non-CMA areas), indicating that there are more Aboriginal people leaving the cities than moving to them for the 1996-2001 period. Preliminary analysis of 2006 census data indicates similar trends for the 2001-2006 period (Guimond and Robitalle 2008). Clearly, while Aboriginal populations are mobile, migration from Indian reserves and other rural communities does not explain the exceptional growth of the North American Indian and Métis populations in Canadian cities.

VARIATION IN THE QUALITY OF ENUMERATIONS

More informed users of census data on Aboriginal populations sometimes raise the issue of data quality as an explanation to the observed spectacular growth patterns. Every census, a certain number of individuals are missed (undercoverage), while others are counted by mistake or more than once (overcoverage). The difference between these two quantities is called net undercoverage. If the net undercoverage rate varies, the growth measure derived from the comparison of a population's size in two successive censuses is distorted: deterioration in quality of coverage results in an under-estimate of growth, while an improvement in quality results in an over-estimate of growth. If the quality of coverage is constant, we then have a "true" measure of relative growth. Although there is very little information about the undercoverage of Aboriginal populations in Canadian cities, available information points to a relative stability in the quality of enumeration between 1996 and 2006 (Statistics Canada 2005, 1989; Norris *et al*, 1995). It can therefore be said that the demographic explosion of Aboriginal populations in Canadian cities is not purely a statistical artefact.

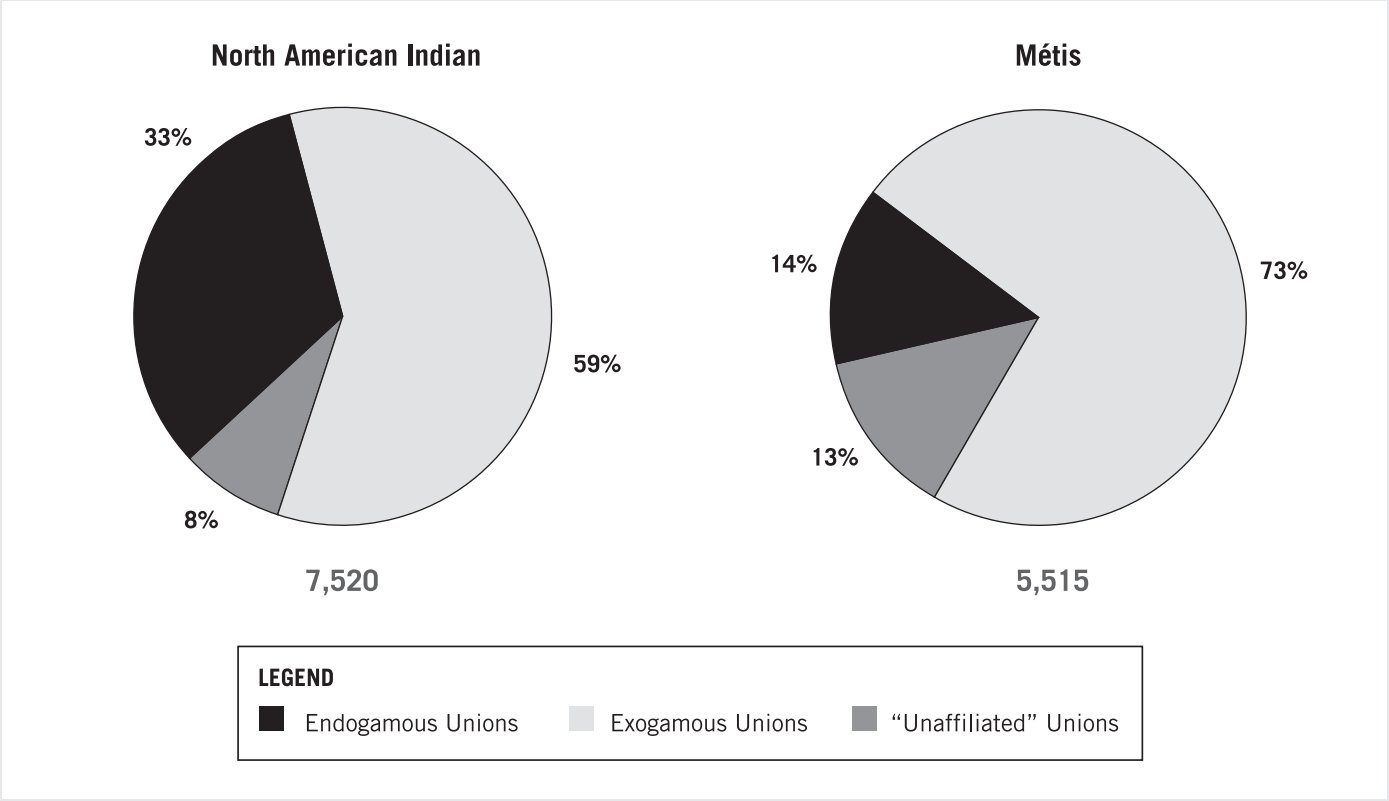
Clearly, the observed growth of Aboriginal populations is not limited to fertility, mortality, and migration, and is not simply the result of coverage errors. So what is the cause of such extraordinary growth?

ETHNIC MOBILITY

In light of the information available, the extraordinary growth of the Canada's Aboriginal populations in Canadian cities between 1996 and 2006 can be attributed, in variable proportions depending on the period and the Aboriginal identity group, to a phenomenon known as ethnic mobility. Different terms are used in the literature to designate this phenomenon: ethnic switching, passing, changing identities and changes in self-reporting of ethnic identity. There are two types of ethnic mobility: intergenerational and intragenerational (Robitaille and Choinière 1987).

Intergenerational ethnic mobility, which occurs within families, may happen when a child's ethnocultural affiliation is reported for the first time. Parents and children do not necessarily have the same affiliation, especially when the parents do not belong to the same ethnocultural group, i.e. when parents have intermarried. Intergenerational ethnic mobility has long been a component of the demographic growth of Aboriginal groups in Canada. The Métis, the second largest Aboriginal group, are a "product" of this type of ethnic mobility. Historical, geopolitical, commercial and cultural circumstances related to colonization of Western Canada led to the genesis of this

CHART 3: Distribution of Children Under the Age of Five Residing in Canadian Cities, According to the Type of Union of Parents, by Aboriginal Identity of the Child, Canada, 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada, custom tabulation.

Aboriginal cultural group, originally uniting descendents of North American Indian women and French men.

Contrary to popular belief, intermarriage and "inter-parenting" offer a great potential for demographic growth: a group of persons exhibiting a high rate of intermarriage has a higher potential for rapid population growth than a group with little or no intermarriage (Big Eagle and Guimond, in print; Robitaille and Guimond 2003). For Aboriginal groups in Canada, the realization of this potential rests with the members of these groups currently in mixed couples: how do they identify themselves and their children?

The analysis of 2001 census data on the cultural identity of children under the age of five reveals the importance of intermarriage and intergenerational ethnic mobility for Aboriginal groups in two respects. First, children of Aboriginal identity in Canadian cities are mainly from exogamous unions (i.e., only one parent belonging to the group) while less than a third are from endogamous unions (i.e., both parents belonging to the group). Secondly, about one Métis child in eight (13%) is from a union where no parent has Métis identity ("unaffiliated" union), and a majority (57%; not shown on graph) of these Métis children originate from an Indian/non-Aboriginal union. These observations provide ample evidence that intermarriage and intergenerational ethnic mobility are an integral component of the population growth of Aboriginal groups in Canada. These observations also reveal that the demographic dynamics which contributed to the ethnogenesis of the Métis in Canada during the 19th century are still at play at the start of the 21st century. The Métis population continues to benefit considerably from intergenerational ethnic mobility.

Intragenerational ethnic mobility results from a change in the ethnic affiliation of a person over time. This type of ethnic mobility has been identified as the primary source of the exceptional growth of Aboriginal populations. Estimates produced for the 1986-2001 period show that nearly 42 000 Indians living off-reserve in 2001 did not self-report as Indian in 1986, or one off-reserve Indian in eight (13%), and over 101 000 Métis in 2001 did not report as Métis in 1986, which amounts to four Métis in ten

"High rates of change in ethnic affiliation can affect not only the size of a population but also its composition, particularly if the socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., educational attainment, employment earnings, family size) of the pool of *ethnic drifters* are markedly different from those of the base population."

enumerated in 2001 (Guimond 2009). Moreover, analysis reveals that over 90% of *ethnic transfers* estimated nationally for the 1986-2001 period took place in urban areas. Preliminary analysis of the 2006 Census data indicate that intragenerational ethnic mobility is still the primary component of growth for the Métis population, especially in cities (Guimond and Robitaille 2008). The phenomenon of intragenerational ethnic mobility was also documented among Aboriginal populations in the United States (Passel, 1996) and Australia (Ross, 1996).

IMPLICATIONS FOR WELL-BEING ANALYSIS

That ethnic mobility is such an important component of the demographic growth of Aboriginal groups in urban settings requires us to consider the implications for analysis of socioeconomic trends. High rates of change in ethnic affiliation can affect not only the size of a population but also its composition, particularly if the socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., educational attainment, employment earnings, family size) of the pool of *ethnic drifters* are markedly different from those of the base population. As such, trends with respect to socio-demographic characteristics of urban Aboriginal people, and particularly of Métis, need to be interpreted with caution and with awareness of the potential impact of ethnic mobility on these trends (Guimond, 2009, 2003).

CONCLUSION

The Aboriginal population is growing substantially faster than the non-Aboriginal population, especially in Canadian cities. Ethnic mobility is the primary component of the urban Aboriginal population explosion between 1996 and 2006, in particular among the Métis population. The misinterpretation of trends towards urbanization of Aboriginal populations could result in: (a) over-emphasis on migration from Indian reserve to cities; (b) a policy-shift away from First Nations and Inuit communities.

Though there is no definitive explanation for ethnic mobility among Aboriginal populations in Canada, three types of factors may be considered. First, there are predisposing demographic factors. In Canada's large urban centres, people of various ethnocultural backgrounds meet, form couples and have children. Given their mixed ethnocultural origins, once they are adults, those children may "choose" their ethnic affiliation, and such a choice may vary depending on the circumstances. In a nutshell, mixed origins most likely facilitate intragenerational ethnic mobility.

Social factors could also foster intragenerational ethnic mobility toward Aboriginal populations. Different socio-political events – spontaneous like the Oka crisis in the summer of 1990 or organized like the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples from 1991 to 1996 – as well as their media coverage raised public awareness and contributed to restoring Aboriginal people's pride. Increased public attention and an improved overall perception Aboriginal people have of themselves could therefore have induced some people to report as Aboriginal.

Finally, political and legal decisions could also further foster ethnic mobility toward Aboriginal populations, especially if such decisions have spin-offs considered to be favourable. For example, the 1985 amendments to the *Indian Act* had a considerable demographic impact on the size and growth of the Registered Indian population: as of December 31, 2005, 115,551 people had acquired (or reacquired) Indian status under the 1985 amendments.

The potential impact of ethnic mobility on the socio-demographic composition of urban Aboriginal populations was noted, although it is worth mentioning that measuring this impact is exceedingly difficult. More analysis is needed to improve our understanding of both the phenomenon of ethnic mobility and its consequences.

NOTES

[1] Includes all Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA), as defined by Statistics Canada, but excluding Indian reserves.

[2] Since the 1996 census, Aboriginal identity refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, i.e. North American Indian, Métis or Inuit (Eskimo), and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian as defined by the Indian Act of Canada and/or who were members of an Indian Band or First Nation. See Statistics Canada (2008).

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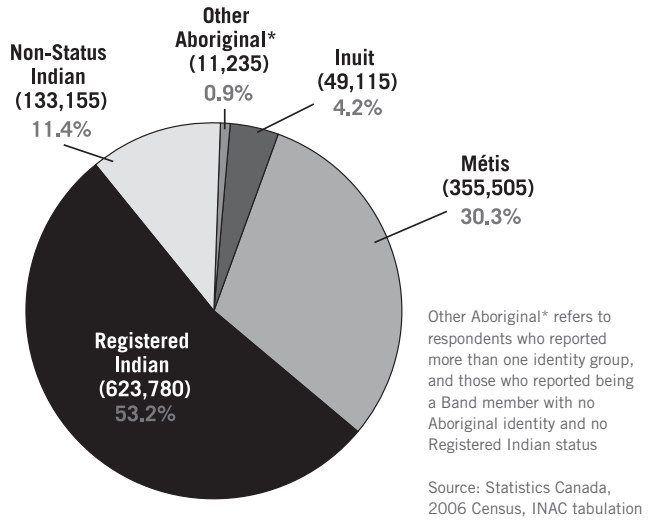
CANADIAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION... in numbers

FIGURE 1: Distribution of the Aboriginal Population, Canada, 2006



Other Aboriginal* refers to respondents who reported more than one identity group, and those who reported being a Band member with no Aboriginal identity and no Registered Indian status

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation

Demographic Growth

In 2006, **1.17 million** people in Canada identified themselves as Aboriginal representing 3.8% of the Canadian population.

The Aboriginal population is growing rapidly. Overall, it increased by 46.7% between 1996 and 2006 compared to 8.4% for the non-Aboriginal population.

The Aboriginal population is much younger than the non-Aboriginal population (Figure 2). Amongst the Aboriginal population 47.8% of individuals are the under age of 25, compared to less than 30.7% for the rest of the Canadian population. The Inuit population is the youngest of all Aboriginal groups.

The Aboriginal population is currently growing almost twice as fast as the Canadian population at an average of 1.8% per annum compared to 1.0% for the Canadian population. Population projections suggest this trend is expected well into the future. *(Aboriginal Population, Household and Family Projections, INAC and CMHC, 2007).*

There is great variation in growth rates among Aboriginal groups. Fertility, migration and changes to the *Indian Act* in 1985 (Bill C-31) can explain some of the growth in the Aboriginal population. However, a significant portion of the population growth is attributable to "ethnic mobility", a term used to define changes in self-reporting of cultural affiliation over time and over generations. (Guimond 2009), *L'explosion démographique des populations autochtones du Canada de 1986 à 2001.*)

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MEDIAN AGE BY ABORIGINAL GROUP

Aboriginal (total):
27 years

Registered Indian:
25 years

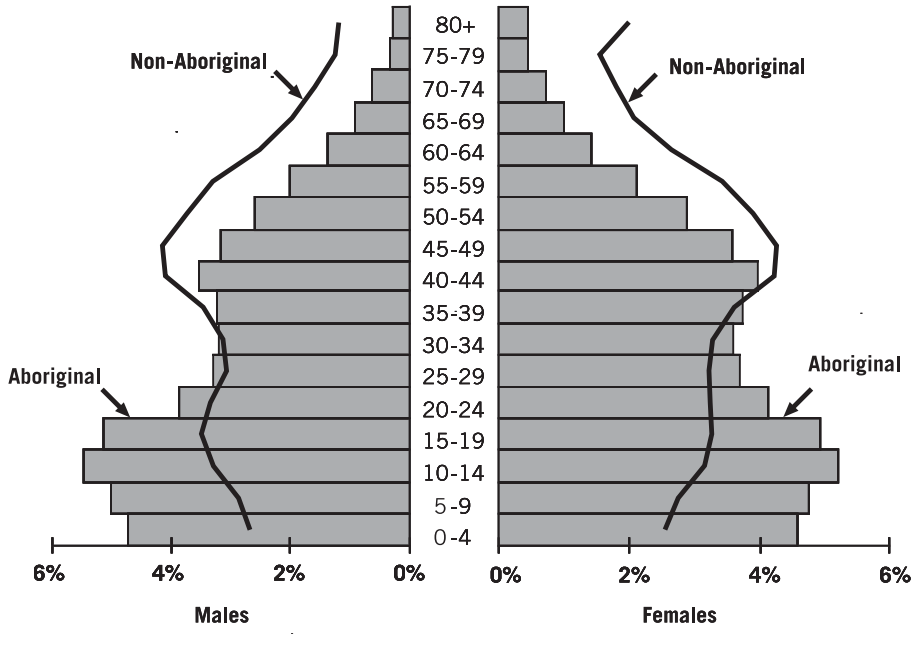
Métis:
29 years

Non-Status Indian:
26 years

Inuit:
21 years

Non-Aboriginal:
40 years

FIGURE 2: Age-Gender Pyramid, Canada, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation.

HOUSING NEEDS IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

While the extent of housing deficiencies in First Nations communities are well documented, little by way of prior research has attempted to quantify the scale of housing needs in First Nations communities and the capital investment required to address these needs. This study uses 2001 Census data and program data from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to provide estimates of new construction, renovations and stock modifications needed to bring Aboriginal housing conditions in First Nations communities in line with Canada's housing standards. Recent construction and renovation cost data provided by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation are then used to develop estimates of the level of capital investment required to achieve these standards.

L'étendue des carences en matière de logement dans les communautés des Premières nations est bien documentée, mais peu de recherche préalable a tenté de quantifier l'ampleur des besoins de logement dans les communautés autochtones et l'investissement de capitaux nécessaire pour répondre à ces besoins. Cette étude utilise les données du recensement de 2001 et celles de programmes d'Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada pour produire des estimations des nouvelles constructions, des travaux de rénovation et des modifications du parc de logements nécessaires pour aligner les conditions de logement des Autochtones dans les communautés des Premières nations sur les normes canadiennes en matière de logement. Les données récentes sur les coûts des travaux de construction et de rénovation fournies par la Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement servent ensuite à élaborer des estimations du niveau d'investissement en capital nécessaire pour respecter ces normes.

INTRODUCTION

Housing conditions in First Nations communities have been the subject of numerous articles in the news media over the past decade. Comprehensive research has also documented specific aspects of the housing consumption problems experienced by Canada's Aboriginal peoples (Clatworthy and Stevens, 1987; Ark Research Associates, 1996; Spurr Research Associates, 2001; and Jankubec and Engeland, 2004). Among Aboriginal populations living in First Nations communities, many of these problems appear to be linked to housing stock shortages which result in high levels of over-crowding, family doubling and occupancy of dwellings which fail to meet accepted standards of quality.

While the nature and scale of the housing deficiencies experienced by residents of First Nations communities have been documented, estimates of the scale of resources required to alleviate these deficiencies are scarce. This study provides an overview of the housing needs of Aboriginal households living in First Nations communities in 2001 and presents estimates of the financial resources (i.e., capital investment) required to address these needs. Analyses are reported at the provincial/regional and national levels.

CONCEPTS, DEFINITIONS AND MAIN SOURCES OF DATA

The study's focus relates to the housing needs of Aboriginal households living in First Nations communities. First Nation communities are defined to include Indian reserves and other Indian settlements as identified by Indian

and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). An Aboriginal household is defined as a "private" household containing one or more Aboriginal families or, in the case of non-family households, where 50 percent or more of the household's members reported Aboriginal identity, Indian registration status or membership in an Indian band on the 2001 Census of Canada.[1] An Aboriginal family is defined as a family in which at least one spouse or the single parent reported Aboriginal identity, Indian registration status or membership in an Indian band.

Throughout this study, estimates of prevalence of housing consumption deficiency are derived from analyses of unadjusted 2001 Census data. Estimates of housing needs, as well as of the new construction, renovations and other housing stock modifications needed to address these needs, are based on Census Aboriginal household and dwelling unit counts; these have been adjusted to address non-enumeration of reserves and survey under-coverage.[2]

Additional data contained on the Capital Assets Management System (CAMS) maintained by INAC have been used to identify the number of reserve dwelling units that have deteriorated to the point where they require replacement and as an additional source of information concerning the renovation requirements of the housing stock on-reserve.

Capital cost estimates associated with new construction requirements are based on analysis of construction cost data supplied by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for 3,544 new housing units built on-reserve under Section 91 of the National Housing Act during the 2001-2006 time period. Capital costs associated with renovation requirements are based on analysis of CMHC data for 4,098 units repaired under the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) during the 2003-2006 time period.[3] Per unit capital costs for housing-related infrastructure (e.g., site preparation and servicing) are based on data reported recently for First Nations housing construction by the Auditor General of Canada (2003). All capital cost estimates have been indexed to reflect 2004 dollars.

MEASURING HOUSING NEEDS IN CANADA

Housing needs in Canada are generally discussed and measured in relation to the following standards of housing consumption: affordability, adequacy (condition) and suitability. The presence of housing consumption deficiencies, however, should not necessarily be viewed as equating to a housing need: in some cases, a household which does not meet one of the consumption standards (e.g., suitability) may have the financial means to acquire appropriate housing without exceeding the affordability standard.

For purposes of measuring housing needs, CMHC has developed the concept of **core housing need.** A household is deemed to be experiencing core housing need if it fails to meet one or more of the consumption standards and its income is below that needed to obtain a dwelling unit that does meet all three standards in the local marketplace.

HOUSING NEEDS IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

Canada's housing standards and the notion of core housing need were developed within the conceptual framework of a *conventional* housing market, where housing consumption decisions are viewed to be made in relation to prices or rents and the household's needs, and ability and willingness to pay. The housing context in most First Nations communities differs greatly from a conventional market in that much of the housing stock is owned collectively (i.e., by the First Nation or by corporate entities owned or controlled by the First Nation) and allocated to households by the First Nation directly, rather than through a pricing or market mechanism.[4]

In such a context, the notions of housing affordability and the need for core housing are not applicable, as housing decisions can be constrained by both the availability of housing (e.g., appropriate housing units may not exist) and by the housing allocation process (e.g., appropriate housing units may not be accessible), even for those who are able and willing to pay for housing. As such, measures of housing affordability and core housing need are not constructed for populations residing in First Nations communities.

In light of the above, this study focuses on the remaining two dimensions of housing consumption: housing adequacy (condition) and suitability (overcrowding). In addition to these traditional measures of need, the study also examines the extent of "family doubling" or situations where more than one family share a single dwelling unit. This latter measure is also commonly viewed as a dimension of overcrowding, and represents a key component of the housing needs in First Nations communities.[5]

HOUSING CONSUMPTION DEFICIENCIES AMONG ABORIGINAL HOUSEHOLDS LIVING IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

HOUSING ADEQUACY AND SUITABILITY DEFICIENCIES

Indicators of prevalence of housing adequacy and suitability deficiencies experienced by Aboriginal households living in First Nations communities are

summarized in Table 1 by province/region and at the national level. In 2001, roughly 27% of all Aboriginal households living in First Nations communities reported no housing deficiencies and resided in dwellings which required only regular maintenance and which also met the national occupancy standard. An additional 25% of households reported that their dwelling required minor repairs but met the occupancy standard. These two groups of households, which jointly formed about 52% of all Aboriginal households living in First Nations communities, were deemed to have acceptable housing situations. The remaining 48% of households, which numbered about 37,850, experienced deficiencies with either dwelling unit condition (36%), overcrowding (22%) or both (10%).

The table also reveals that although housing adequacy and suitability deficiencies were experienced by a significant proportion of Aboriginal households in all regions, deficiencies were most common among households in the Prairie Provinces. In these provinces, a majority (more than 56%) of all Aboriginal households living in First Nations communities reported at least one housing deficiency. Multiple housing deficiencies were also much more common in these provinces.

More detailed analyses were undertaken to explore relationships between the prevalence of housing consumption deficiencies and household type (non-family households, couples with children, couples without children, lone parent families and multiple family households), household size, occupancy (i.e., overcrowding) status, household income, and tenure (home-owners versus occupants of band-owned or rental housing). These analyses revealed that:

- the prevalence of condition deficiencies did not vary widely by household type;
- overcrowding was concentrated among three types of households: multiple family households (65% overcrowded), couples with children under 18 years of age (27% overcrowded) and lone parent families (25% overcrowded);
- the prevalence of condition deficiencies was positively associated with household size, that is larger households were much more likely to report major repair needs;
- condition deficiencies were about 1.4 times more common among overcrowded households than households which met the national occupancy standard;
- households reporting higher incomes were much less likely to live in dwellings requiring major repairs. However, the reverse was true for overcrowding, where higher income households were much more likely to experience overcrowding; and,
- although homeowners were more likely than those who lived in rented or band-owned housing to occupy acceptable housing, this resulted primarily from a lower prevalence of overcrowding and not from a lower prevalence of housing condition deficiencies.

FAMILY DOUBLING

In addition to quality and suitability deficiencies, family doubling was also identified to be quite common among Aboriginal households living in First Nations communities. In 2001, nearly 12% of all Aboriginal family households living in First Nations communities contained more than one family. Rates of family doubling were identified to be higher among Aboriginal households living

TABLE 1: Incidence of Housing Consumption Deficiencies among Aboriginal Households Residing in First Nations Communities by Province/Region, Canada, 2001

PROVINCE/ REGION	HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS									
		MINOR REPAIR ONLY	MAJOR REPAIR ONLY	NOS[i] ONLY	MINOR REPAIR AND NOS	MAJOR REPAIR AND NOS	TOTAL MINOR REPAIR	TOTAL MAJOR REPAIR	TOTAL NOS	NO DEFICIENCIES	ACCEPTABLE HOUSING[ii]
Atlantic	4,850	26.7	31.2	3.0	3.7	5.9	30.4	37.1	12.6	29.6	56.3
Quebec	8,485	22.0	18.1	7.5	6.0	6.7	28.0	24.7	20.1	39.7	61.8
Ontario	10,890	24.4	27.0	5.2	5.0	8.5	29.3	35.5	18.7	29.9	54.3
Manitoba	12,620	24.2	27.6	5.6	9.3	14.3	33.5	41.9	29.1	19.0	43.2
Saskatchewan	11,125	23.7	25.0	7.1	9.5	14.6	33.2	39.6	31.2	20.2	43.9
Alberta	9,190	23.3	32.9	4.7	7.8	14.9	31.1	47.8	27.4	16.5	39.8
British Columbia	14,960	27.8	26.6	3.8	4.3	5.4	32.1	32.1	13.5	32.0	59.8
Yukon	850	28.2	24.1	5.9	6.5	4.7	34.7	28.8	17.1	31.8	60.0
NWT	4,105	25.9	18.1	8.9	6.5	6.5	32.4	24.6	21.8	34.2	60.2
All Regions	**78,835**	**24.7**	**26.1**	**5.5**	**6.6**	**9.9**	**31.3**	**36.0**	**22.1**	**27.1**	**51.9**

Notes:

[i] National Occupancy Standard

[ii] Acceptable housing is defined to include dwellings which do not require major repair and where the household meets the national occupancy standard.

Source: Custom tabulations from the 2001 Census of Canada (unadjusted).

in rented or band-owned housing and much higher among Aboriginal family households living in First Nations communities in Quebec and the Prairie provinces.

SUMMARY OF HOUSING DEFICIENCIES

Collectively, the study's results suggest that larger household sizes, overcrowding, and low household incomes - but not tenure - are the main factors contributing to the housing quality problems experienced by Aboriginal households living in First Nations communities. These factors appear to greatly affect housing quality among both homeowners and those who rent or occupy band-owned housing. By contrast, in terms of the suitability standard, homeowners are more likely than those who rent or occupy band-owned housing to live in dwellings large enough to meet their space needs; ownership is also associated with lower levels of family doubling.

HOUSING NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL HOUSEHOLDS IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

The study's estimates of existing housing needs in First Nations communities combines the results of the analyses presented above with Census-based Aboriginal household and family estimates which have been adjusted to address non-enumeration of reserves and survey under-coverage.

The housing needs component of the research focuses on four specific requirements associated with resolving the observed housing deficiencies in First Nations communities. These requirements relate to:

- providing sufficient and appropriate new housing stock to eliminate family doubling;
- constructing sufficient and appropriate new units to replace units that have deteriorated to the point where they cannot be renovated;
- modifying the size of the existing stock (through additions) to eliminate overcrowding; and
- renovating units that require major repairs.

Two sets of estimates of renovation requirements were developed for the study: one based on analysis of the state of dwelling unit repair data collected by the 2001 Census and a second developed from dwelling condition assessment data contained in INAC's CAMS database.[6]

The housing needs of Aboriginal households and families living in First Nations communities are summarized in Table 2. In 2001, these needs were estimated to include:

- 10,844 new units to provide housing to doubled families;
- 4,940 new units to replace units which have deteriorated to the point where they cannot be renovated;[7]
- the addition of 23,646 bedrooms to the existing stock of dwellings to address the space requirements of overcrowded households; and,
- the renovation of between 15,092 (if based on the CAMS renovation estimates) and 26,326 (if based on the Census renovation estimates) existing dwellings which require major repairs.

ESTIMATED FINANCIAL RESOURCES REQUIRED TO ADDRESS ABORIGINAL HOUSING NEEDS IN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

Estimates of the average construction cost of new housing units on-reserve by size of dwelling unit (developed from CMHC regional data for the 2001-2006 time period) were used to calculate the capital investment associated with new housing construction needed to eliminate family doubling and to replace deteriorated units. Capital investment associated with renovation requirements were calculated by applying the average per unit cost of reno-

TABLE 2: Estimates of New Construction and Renovation Needs of Aboriginal Households Living in First Nations Communities by Province/Region, Canada, 2001

PROVINCE/REGION	UNITS NEEDED TO ELIMINATE FAMILY DOUBLING	REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING UNITS	BEDROOMS NEEDED TO ELIMINATE OVERCROWDING	UNITS NEEDING MAJOR REPAIRS CENSUS ESTIMATES	UNITS NEEDING MAJOR REPAIRS CAMS ESTIMATES
Atlantic Region	319	206	751	1,687	743
Quebec	1,799	117	2,612	2,925	1,095
Ontario	1,314	1,059	3,570	5,189	3,003
Manitoba	1,983	1,346	4,736	4,094	2,370
Saskatchewan	1,883	324	4,664	4,164	1,238
Alberta	1,696	541	3,630	4,782	2,117
British Columbia	1,439	1,023	2,344	2,650	3,406
Yukon	28	60	221	176	178
Northwest Territories	382	263	1,118	659	942
All Regions	**10,844**	**4,940**	**23,646**	**26,326**	**15,092**

Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding error.

Source: Based on analysis of data contained on the 2001 Census of Canada and the 2004 Capital Assets Management System (INAC).

vations under CMHC's RRAP program (calculated from data for the 2003-2006 time period) to the estimated number of dwelling units requiring major repairs. Average construction costs per square foot were also developed from CMHC's new housing construction data and used to develop the capital investment required for stock modifications (i.e., bedroom additions) needed to eliminate overcrowding.[8]

Table 3 provides a summary of the capital resources (expressed in 2004 dollars) required to address the housing needs of all Aboriginal households living in First Nations communities in 2001. At the national level, the total capital requirements ranged from $2.75 billion (if based on the CAMS renovation estimates) to $2.99 billion (if based on the Census renovation estimates). Capital investment related to the construction of new dwelling units required to eliminate family doubling and to replace deteriorated units were estimated to total about $2.13 billion (including site preparation and servicing costs). Capital requirement associated with modifying the existing stock to eliminate overcrowding were estimated to total about $314 million. Renovation requirements were estimated to range between $308 million and $544 million, if based on the CAMS and Census housing condition data, respectively.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In 2001, about one-half of all Aboriginal households living in First Nations communities suffered from at least one form of housing deficiency, a rate roughly four times higher than that of the general Canadian population. More than one in every three Aboriginal households in First Nations communities occupied a dwelling requiring major repairs, more than one in every five households were overcrowded, and nearly one in every eight family households contained more than one family. In short, the Aboriginal populations of these communities continue to form some of the most poorly housed segments of Canadian society.

First Nations leaders have long argued that significant additional resources are required to address the housing needs of First Nations populations. Estimates prepared for this study suggest that a capital investment (conservatively estimated to be) in the range of $2.8 to $3.0 billion would be required to bring current Aboriginal housing conditions in First Nations communities in line with Canada's housing standards. The required level of investment to address current needs is four to six times higher than recent (2000-2004) annual capital allocations to First Nations to support housing renovation and construction initiatives. When viewed against the backdrop of increasing housing needs arising from future population growth and family formation, Canada First Nations communities clearly face a significant housing challenge, and one that is unlikely to be met within the constraints of current policies and fiscal arrangements related to the development and maintenance of First Nations housing.

NOTES

[1] The study excludes the population residing in various forms of institutional or collective (e.g. rooming houses or group homes) dwelling units.

[2] The adjusted household and family counts for 2001 were developed by the author and are discussed in a report prepared for the Research and Analysis Directorate of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada entitled "Projections of Aboriginal Households and Families for Canada, Provinces and Regions, 2001-2026", September, 2006.

TABLE 3: Estimated Capital Cost (in Millions of 2004$) of Addressing Existing Housing Needs among Aboriginal Households Living in First Nations Communities by Province/Region, Canada, 2001

PROVINCE/ REGION	NEW CONSTRUCTION COSTS (2004$M)			COST OF ADDITIONS TO ELIMINATE OVERCROWDING (2004$M)	RENOVATION COSTS FOR MAJOR REPAIRS (2004$M)		TOTAL COSTS (2004$M)	
	ELIMINATION OF FAMILY DOUBLING	REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING UNITS	SITE PREPARATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE		CENSUS PARAMETERS	CAMS PARAMETERS	CENSUS PARAMETERS	CAMS PARAMETERS
Atlantic Region	33.5	21.0	10.5	9.9	22.5	9.9	97.4	84.8
Quebec	234.3	14.5	38.3	44.3	77.2	28.9	408.6	360.3
Ontario	152.5	120.1	47.5	49.4	96.2	55.7	465.6	425.1
Manitoba	212.5	139.8	66.6	54.1	99.0	57.3	572.0	530.3
Saskatchewan	167.9	28.3	44.1	49.3	56.4	16.8	346.1	306.5
Alberta	202.2	63.1	44.8	45.7	129.8	57.4	485.7	413.3
British Columbia	174.1	121.8	49.2	32.3	43.5	55.9	421.0	433.4
Yukon	4.6	9.6	3.4	4.7	4.1	4.1	26.4	26.4
Northwest Territories	64.7	43.7	14.7	23.9	15.2	21.7	162.2	168.7
All Regions	**1,246.4**	**562.0**	**319.1**	**313.6**	**543.8**	**307.7**	**2,985.0**	**2,748.9**

Source: Based on analysis of data contained on the 2001 Census of Canada; the Capital Assets Management System (INAC), 2001; CMHC Section 91 data (2000-2006); and RRAP program data (2000-2003).

[3] The renovation cost estimates prepared for this study should be viewed as conservative, as the RRAP program places an upper limit on level of financial assistance provided per unit. As such, some projects assisted under the RRAP program may have restricted the level of renovations undertaken to fit the program's guidelines for assistance.

[4] Several First Nations do allow and encourage alternative forms of housing tenure through certificates of possession and other forms of ***evidence of title.*** The Indian Act, however, places Clatworthy, S.J. and H. Stevens. (1987). "An Overview of the Housing Conditions of Registered Indians in Canada". Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Ottawa. restrictions on the transfer of such properties which serve to limit the development and functioning of a reserve housing market. Currently, properties subject to evidence of title can only be transferred to another ***Registered Indian*** or ***member*** of the First Nation and transfers must be approved by the Minister. According to the 2001 Census, 30 percent of Aboriginal households residing on-reserve owned their dwelling unit, 55 percent lived in band-owned housing and 15 percent in rental housing (in many cases also owned or controlled by the band).

[5] Although family doubling can occur by choice, it is generally regarded to result from the inability of families to afford or acquire a separate dwelling unit. In on-reserve contexts, family doubling is believed to result primarily from housing stock shortages which require more than one family to share a dwelling. Clatworthy, S.J. (2007). "Aboriginal Housing Conditions and Needs on-reserve". Prepared for the Research and Analysis Directorate of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Ottawa,

[6] These two data sources differ in both respects to the extent of reserve dwellings covered and to the source of dwelling unit condition information. In the case of the Census, the information is based on the occupant's perception of the repair needs of their dwelling. State of repair data contained on the CAMS data base are provided by First Nations housing authorities and are likely to be subject to varying degrees of accuracy depending upon the method used by individual First Nations to collect the data and the frequency at which data are collected or updated. Both sources of data are based, to a large extent, on subjective assessments of repair needs and can be expected to provide only a rough indicator of the renovation needs of Aboriginal occupied dwellings in First Nations communities.

[7] The estimates of units needing replacement derive from analysis of data contained on INAC's CAMS database.

[8] The capital cost estimates for stock modifications needed to address overcrowding also assume an average requirement of 110 square feet per additional bedroom.

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TREND SETTING IN MANITOBA: THE CHALLENGE OF DESIGNING THE FIRST NATIONS MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH *STRENGTHENING FAMILIES* PROGRAM IN MANITOBA

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

Research surrounding home-visitation programming emanates primarily from programs implemented in North American mainstream / non-Aboriginal populations. As such, designing a program in a manner that is reflective of the cultural and contextual differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples are a challenge. It requires trying to balance evidence found in mainstream research while attempting to maintain Aboriginal cultural integrity which includes First Nation governance and empowerment. Manitoba Child Health a Canadian First Nations on-reserve home visiting program; Strengthening Families (MCH-SF) is the Manitoba regional component. This paper reviews how MCH-SF has incorporated several core elements from mainstream programs while responding to cultural integrity: MCH-SF is First Nations driven, supportive of self-governance, and formulated within a collaborative context; it involves the voices of families, and abides by the principles of self-determination; finally, it is engaged in continuous exploration of the underlying principles and theoretical perspectives guiding the program.

La recherche entourant les programmes de visites à domicile porte principalement sur les programmes mis en œuvre auprès de la population en général (non autochtone) en Amérique du Nord. C'est pourquoi la conception d'un programme qui reflète les différences culturelles et contextuelles qui existent entre les Autochtones et les non Autochtones constitue un défi. Elle doit tenter d'atteindre un équilibre entre les observations faites dans le cadre de la recherche habituelle tout en veillant à maintenir l'intégrité culturelle des Autochtones, ce qui comprend la gouvernance et l'autonomisation des Premières nations. Manitoba Child Health est un programme canadien de visites à domicile dans les foyers des Premières nations, dont Strengthening Families est la composante régionale au Manitoba. Cette communication examine comment le programme a intégré plusieurs éléments essentiels tirés des programmes réguliers tout en tenant compte des particularités culturelles. Ce programme axé sur les Premières nations appuie l'autonomie gouvernementale. Il a été élaboré en collaboration, tient compte des points de vue des familles et respecte les principes de l'autodétermination. Enfin, il joue un rôle actif dans l'exploration continue des principes sous-jacents et des perspectives théoriques qui le guident.

INTRODUCTION

The research surrounding home-visitation programming emanates primarily from programs implemented in North American mainstream/non-Aboriginal populations. As such, there is very little research regarding such programming within a Canadian First Nations context, and it cannot be readily assumed that program research which targets non-Aboriginal populations is applicable to First Nations; i.e., health is not a 'one-size-fits-all' concept. As the (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 2006) states: "(T)he causes and dynamics of ill health among Aboriginal people are not the same as among non-Aboriginal people — and because illness is not the same, prevention, cure and care cannot be the same either." Therefore, because First Nations- specific research for this type of programming is still in its infancy, questions are abound upon attempting to design a program of this kind. What should a First Nations home-visitation program look like? What are the theoretical underpinnings of such programming within First Nation cultural contexts? What are the meanings that First Nation communities hold for particular maternal and child health events?

This article describes the challenges involved designing the Manitoba the First Nations Maternal Child Health *Strengthening Families* (MCH-SF) home-visitation program within the context of limited First Nations research from which to draw and build upon. It speaks to the difficulty of needing to balance mainstream program design and research while attempting to maintain Aboriginal cultural integrity, including First Nations governance and empowerment.

We will begin by providing some background regarding home-visitation programs within a mainstream context and then provide an overview of programming in a First Nations context. Next we will introduce the First Nations Maternal Child Health (MCH) program in Canada, and then respond more specifically to its Manitoba regional component: *Strengthening Families*.

HOME-VISITATION PROGRAMMING AND "MAINSTREAM" POPULATIONS

Home-visitation programming for mothers and children is a widespread early intervention strategy in most industrialised nations. It is typically offered free-of-charge, voluntarily, and embedded within comprehensive maternal child health and social systems (Council on Child and Adolescent Health 1998).

The goals associated with home-visitation programs vary considerably. As outlined by (Council on Child and Adolescent Health 1998), home-visitation programs began in the United States in the late 19th century. Public health nurses and social workers provided in-home education and health care to women and children, primarily in poor urban environments. At the beginning of the 20th century, the New York City Health Department implemented a home visitor program, using student nurses to instruct mothers about breastfeeding and hygiene. In the late 20th century, home-visitation programs have focused on families with special problems such as premature or low-birth-weight infants, children with developmental delay, teenage parents, and families at risk for child abuse or neglect (Council on Child and Adolescent Health, 1998).

Over the past 20 years research has grown substantially to support the effectiveness of home-visitation programming of all types towards improving an enormous array of health and social outcomes, including prenatal, postnatal and long-term effects for children and their mothers. For instance, home-visitation programs aimed toward "high-risk" families is said to be premised on epidemiological studies that point to greater health risks associated with social and economic disadvantages to infants (i.e., injury, abuse, neglect, health problems and a reduced likelihood of prenatal healthcare) (Hodnett & Roberts 2007). Studies in the United States report benefits of home-visitation programming ranging from health improvements to moms and their infants and more supportive home environments (Olds *et al*. 2004b; Olds *et al*. 2004a) Other benefits of programs of this nature can include: lowered dependence on welfare and Medicaid, reduction in the use of substances, less arrest and incarcerations of the mothers (Olds *et al*. 2007) and efficient tracking of abuse and other causes of childhood injury for children birth to three years of age (Duggan *et al*. 2000; Stone *et al*. 2006).

In Manitoba, since 1999, the Healthy Child Manitoba Office has been funding and coordinating the province-wide *off-reserve* home-visiting program *BabyFirst* (now known as Families First). An important goal of the Manitoba program is to reduce the incidence of child maltreatment: "The maltreatment of children presents a significant threat to healthy child development. Given the devastating impact of maltreatment on children, it is imperative to prevent the occurrence of child abuse and neglect" (Brownell *et al*. 2007).

HOME-VISITATION PROGRAMMING AND FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES

For more than thirty years, Canadian provinces and territories have been strengthening their maternal and child health programs because they have had such positive effects on the lives of children, women and their families. Almost 20 years ago, Dr. C. Henry Kempe suggested that to ensure a child's right to comprehensive care, every pregnant woman should be assigned a home health visitor to work with their

family until the child begins school (Council on Child and Adolescent Health 1998). Yet prior to 2004, and the introduction of the First Nation Maternal Child Health Program (National and Regional), there has been no comprehensive approach to the delivery of maternal and child health care services in First Nation on-reserve communities that compares to what is available to families throughout the rest of Canada.

Historically, First Nation communities were not given the flexibility to develop community-driven frameworks nor adequate resources to implement anything beyond emergency or crisis response treatment (a.k.a. 'taking out fires'). To exacerbate the situation is the wide health disparity that exists between Canadian Aboriginals and their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

Across Canada, First Nation individuals face various health and social risks that have been shown to contribute significantly to overall differences between First Nation and other Canadians in mental and physical health and social outcomes (Guimond 2008). Current mortality rates for all age groups are higher among First Nations than other Canadians (Guimond 2008). Fertility of First Nation adolescents is seven times higher than for other Canadian youth. The rate is estimated to be as much as 18 times higher for girls under the age of 15 years (Guimond & Robitaille 2008). Elevated morbidity rates of childhood illnesses in First Nation communities include gastro-enteritis, otitis media, respiratory infections and childhood-onset Type II non-insulin-dependent diabetes (Martens 2002). Gestational diabetes and high birth weights are more common in First Nation communities (Harris *et al*. 1997). Lower immunization rates (MacMillan *et al*. 1996; Tarrant and Gregory 2001) and higher prevalence of FASD ((Burd & Moffatt 1994) have been recorded in the health literature. In essence, within broader conceptualizations of health offered through population health promotion frameworks, research has validated that regardless of the health, economic, or social circumstance First Nation people fare worse than all other Canadians.

Low participation rates in existing prenatal care services for women on-reserve further informs the extent of health disparity and/or risk. For instance, a 2002 evaluation of the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (Andersson *et al*. 2003) found that while 90% of First Nations women living on-reserve had "theoretical" access to prenatal care counselling and other services, only about 50% of on-reserve women we're taking advantage of these services. Moreover, it was found that prenatal care service uptake among First Nations women was concentrated among those considered to be lower risk levels, including: women who lived in non-remote communities; women who had graduated from high school; women who felt cared for during pregnancy and/or whose partners were supportive; and women who had access to child care. Among those women considered for the purposes of that study to be the most "vulnerable," only one in five were accessing any form of prenatal counselling. The 2002-03 Manitoba Regional Report of the *First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey* put the rate of participation in prenatal counselling/class attendance among First Nations women in that province at just 23%; that report did not include analysis by social risk factors. By way of comparison, as many as 60% of Canadian women attend some form of childbirth education class (Enkin 2008).

> "Perhaps more than any other group in Canada, Aboriginal people need the benefits to individuals, families and communities that are afforded by giving children a strong start in intervention during the "early years" is key to improving long term health status and to breaking the cycle of poor health in Canada's Aboriginal population. Early intervention to support neurobiological development influences the integrity of the biological pathways that are essential to life-long health and vitality. Research results have demonstrated that the quality of maternal child health care has immediate and long lasting effects on health status and quality of life across population groups and settings. This forms a foundation for other health programs (such as programs targeted at fetal alcohol syndrome, prenatal nutrition, immunization, early childhood development, etc.) to achieve maximum impact" (Smith 2002).

Indeed, according to the principles of the Canada Health Act (1984), Aboriginal people deserve access equal advances in health care practice. "Yet current maternal child health care in on-reserve First Nation communities falls short of the standards set for the majority of the country" (Smith 2002).

DEVELOPING A CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FIRST NATIONS HOME-VISITATION PROGRAM

It is evident that there is a definitive need for home-visitation programming in Canadian First Nation communities; however, the research towards understanding *how* to design a program in a manner that is effective in responding to this need is limited. Similarly to the (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 2006) outlined above, the implications derived from (Smith 2002) review is: "that

delivery of maternal child health care is significantly different in Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal populations… The reality of the health status, cultural and contextual differences requires that maternal child health care policy be very flexible and responsive to the unique situation, history, culture, strengths and readiness of each community." In addition, the results from Smith and colleagues (Smith *et al*. 2007) study show that evaluation of outcomes of care for pregnant and parenting Aboriginal people must recognize and appreciate the unique experiences of individuals, families and communities within a broader historical context of Aboriginal people's lives. Yet how exactly do we turn the understanding that there are cultural and contextual differences between Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal populations into a home-visitation program?

There is some research available regarding a movement beyond theoretical responses towards programming models. For instance, home visits utilizing the peer support model in Manitoba First Nation communities through the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program were successful in terms of building rapport between nurses and paraprofessional home visitors and in terms of implementing healthy pregnancy practices. In some communities in Manitoba, the program has encouraged participation in traditional Aboriginal childbearing practices (Eni 2005).

Further, a randomised, open trial of 57 Aboriginal households at the Six Nations Reserve in Ohsweken, Ontario evaluated a home-visit intervention program that focused on the promotion of healthy lifestyles in the community. The study reported some positive changes associated with the household-based intervention, e.g., changes in dietary practices and activity patterns (Anand *et al*. 2007).

Via analysis of chart audits and qualitative research technique, Martens evaluated the effectiveness of two breastfeeding initiatives at Sagkeeng First Nation (Manitoba): a prenatal instruction program delivered by a community health nurse and a postpartum peer counselor program for breastfeeding women. She discovered a significant increase in breastfeeding initiation rates with program participation, greater satisfaction and confidence with breastfeeding, with fewer problems and more information (Martens 2002).

Reflecting on the research, it becomes apparent that a First Nations home-visitation program design must begin with an understanding that mainstream literature may not have all the answers; i.e. a response to cultural and contextual appropriateness is essential.

A NATIONAL OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST NATIONS MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH PROGRAM

On September 13, 2004 at the Special Meeting of First Ministers and National Aboriginal Leaders, the Prime Minister announced additional funding for programs that promote the health status of Aboriginal people. The First Nation Maternal Child Health Program (MCH) was one of the programs announced at that meeting. The program was introduced by the federal government in response to disparities in childbearing and infant health of First Nation women compared to other Canadian women and children.

MCH is a First Nations on-reserve home visiting program. Supervised by public health nurses, paraprofessional home visitors work with families and offer support, advocacy and education to childbearing women, new moms and their families. The MCH program supports a comprehensive delivery approach through partnerships with: Elders; Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program – First Nations and Inuit Component (CPNP – FNIC); Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD); nursing services; Home and Community Care; Oral health; and, other community-based programs. With MCH, First Nations have an opportunity to design and deliver approaches to family and community health that are proactive, preventative and strategic. Furthermore, program designers are able to explore both contemporary and traditional Aboriginal approaches to health care.

MANITOBA OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST NATIONS MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAM

The *Manitoba First Nation Maternal Child Health 'Strengthening Families' Program* (MCH-SF) is the Manitoba regional component of the national First Nation Maternal Child Health Program. The program vision is to promote the realization of strong, healthy and supportive First Nations families living a holistic and balanced lifestyle. The program is currently being piloted from only 16 on-reserve communities (Figure 1). The goal of the programmers is to implement on-going and effective programming in all 64 Manitoba First Nation communities.

The MCH-SF program design derives from, and is interlinked with, the concept of collaboration between government, university, local, and regional governance. As such, the program is delivered through funding by Health Canada – FNIH and managed by the Assembly of

FIGURE 1: MCH-SF Program Sites

Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) through consultation by a regionally appointed First Nations Maternal Child Health Advisory Committee (FNAC). The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the First Nation MCH Advisory Committee (FNAC) were adamant that this program be First Nation designed, driven and developed; but what exactly does this entail?

The foundational standards for the MCH-SF program come from several contemporary and/or "mainstream" programs such as: Prevent Child Abuse America; Families First; Growing Great Kids Inc.; and Health Families Arizona. In other words, even though MCH-SF is stabilised within a First Nations community-driven, collaborative approach, several core elements from similar programs designed and delivered in mainstream North American populations were chosen as the foundation for the MCH-SF program. At the same time, this does *not* mean that MCH-SF is in and of itself "mainstream."

The initial idea behind adopting mainstream foundational support into a First Nations program was for lack of alternatives: MCH is the first program of its kind directed towards First Nation communities. Second, it is important to note, a health program of any kind is not static – it is constantly adapting and changing. With this, one of the fundamental challenges in the *continuous* designing of the MCH-SF program is to somehow, and collaboratively, figure out what is a healthy balance between *borrowing* and *developing* methodologies. What aspects of mainstream culture can be incorporated into programming to impact positive First Nation health profiles? What wisdoms are to be revived and cherished within First Nations communities? What should be incorporated into the programs, how, and by whom? In effect, what should First Nation maternal child health program look like? These are all ongoing challenges and ongoing questions. It is pertinent that the program designers keep asking questions, keep searching for answers, and try to adapt and implement changes to the program accordingly.

Towards this end MCH-SF partners are involved in a continuous exploration into the underlying principles and theoretical perspectives guiding the future of the program. Programming content and method are also issues considered as we strive to understand the potential of programming to impact First Nations health. This means not only the delivery of program activities but the impact of *actually* developing activities. In addition, we are continuously exploring principles attached to both forming *and* maintaining meaningful collaboration. This means a collaboration that supports self-determination and self-governance discourses, and acknowledges First Nations social and cultural differences. It also of great importance to expand linkages to not only involve, but also *incorporate* the voices of families living in the communities where programming activities are implemented and *impact* mothers, children and their families. The necessary process of including the voices of individuals and communities situated outside government or mainstream society allows for greater inter-cultural understandings as well as an emerging and continuing alternate set of questions. It enables us to better understand the balance between current ways of life with local traditions and aspirations; discover and revive culture and health within communities; and have communities actively engage in the process of health.

CONCLUSION

The dynamics of health are significantly different between Aboriginals versus non-Aboriginal populations in Canada, as are the cultural and contextual differences from where they arise. With this, the design and delivery of a home-visitation program aimed at First Nations people must somehow acknowledge these differences. The research surrounding home-visitation programming, however, emanates primarily from programs implemented in mainstream populations. The challenge, therefore, in

designing a Manitoba home-visitation program for First Nations communities lies in trying to balance evidence found in mainstream research while attempting to maintain Aboriginal cultural integrity which includes First Nation governance and empowerment.

Although MCH-SF has incorporated several core elements from mainstream programs, it responds to cultural integrity in a variety of ways. It is First Nations driven, supportive of self-governance, and formulated within a collaborative context. It involves the voices of families, and abides by the principles of self-determination. It is involved in the continuous exploration into the underlying principles and theoretical perspectives guiding the program.

The MCH-SF program is not static; rather it is a continuous endeavour whereupon knowledge is being gathered throughout all stages of the design and implementation process. It is hoped that as we work through the challenges and increase our knowledge we will be able to contribute to a body of research that is in desperate need of advancement. With this, it may be possible in the future that First Nations home-visitation programs will no longer be required to look towards mainstream programming and research to establish their foundational standards: First Nation standards will have been designed.

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DISPROPORTIONATE & UNJUSTIFIABLE: TEEN FIRST NATIONS MOTHERS AND UNSTATED PATERNITY POLICY

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This article explores the issue of unstated and unacknowledged paternity particular to the context of teen First Nations mothers and their children, and the implications of this phenomenon in terms of access to Registered Indian status and associated program benefits. The paper canvasses the causes of unstated paternity among teen First Nations mothers and their children, and the socio-economic implications of unstated paternity and resultant incorrect – or denied access to Registered Indian status. It is argued that the effects of policies that contribute to the high incidence of unstated paternity among young First Nations mothers may be considered discriminatory, and that redress via the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* may be possible. The paper concludes with a discussion of policy options for dealing with unstated paternity particular to the context of teen First Nations mothers and their children.

L'auteur de cet article explore la question de la paternité non déclarée et non reconnue particulière au contexte des mères adolescentes des Premières nations et de leurs enfants ainsi que les implications de ce phénomène en ce qui concerne l'accès au statut d'Indien inscrit et aux avantages connexes découlant de programmes. Cet article examine à fond les causes de la non-déclaration de la paternité de leurs enfants par les mères adolescentes des Premières nations, ainsi que les implications socioéconomiques de la non-déclaration de la paternité et l'accès incorrect – ou le refus de l'accès au statut d'Indien inscrit qui en résulte. L'auteur soutient que les effets des politiques qui contribuent à l'incidence élevée de non-déclaration de la paternité chez les jeunes mères des Premières nations peuvent être considérés discriminatoires, et que le recours à la *Charte des droits et libertés* pourrait être un moyen d'obtenir réparation. L'auteur conclut par présentation de pistes d'action pour aborder la question de la non-déclaration de la paternité particulière au contexte des mères adolescentes des Premières nations et de leurs enfants.

While the issue of unstated or "unacknowledged" paternity can impact detrimentally many First Nations women and the Indian status registration of their children, teenage mothers and their offspring suffer disproportionately. The two-parent rule contained in the *Indian Act* combined with proof of paternity requirements arguably constitutes discrimination against unmarried First Nations women and their children; this discrimination is even less justifiable when impacting teen First Nations mothers.

Contrary to general fertility statistics for First Nations women of all ages, First Nations teenage girls (under 20) have retained high fertility since 1986 at about 100 births per 1,000 women (Guimond & Robitaille 2008). In conjunction with this high fertility rate for First Nations teenage girls are high rates of unstated paternity of their children. It is these families who suffer disproportionately from government proof of paternity policy.

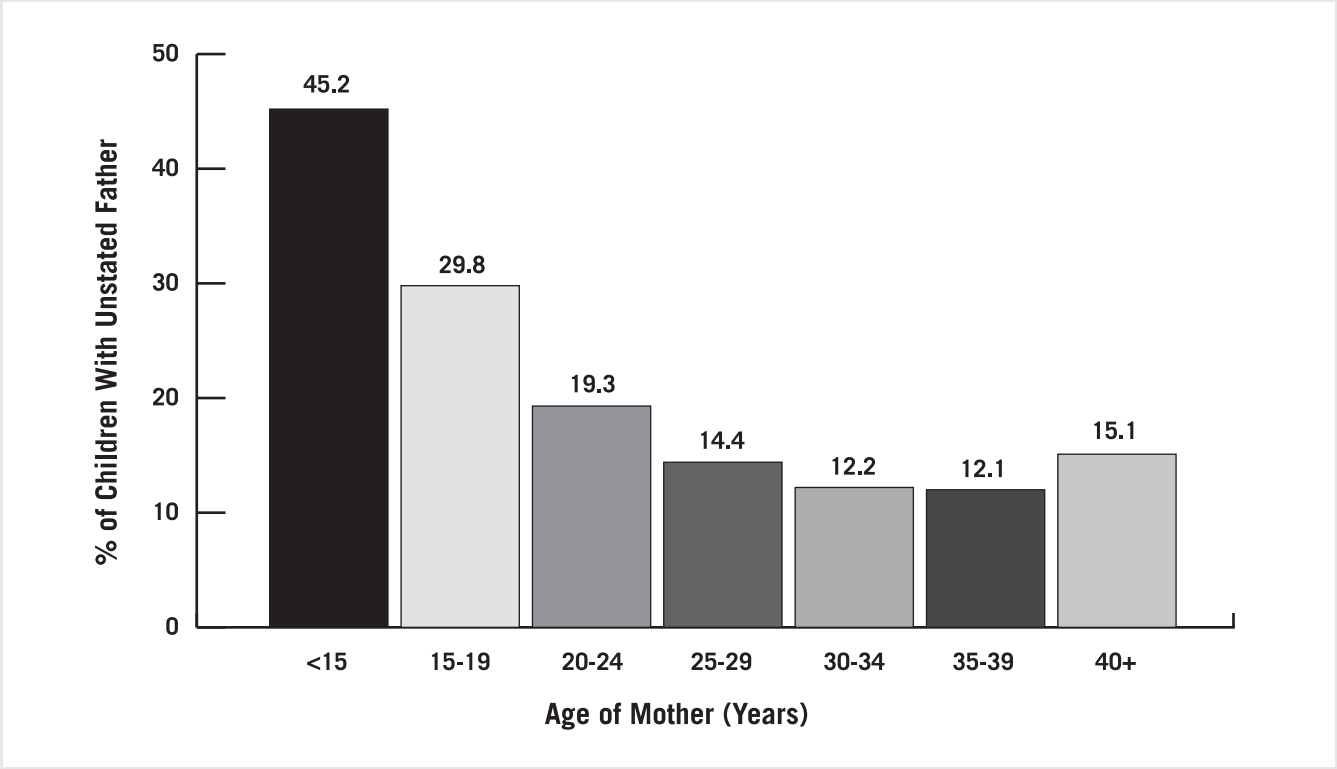
ORIGINS

Under the current *Indian Act*, a child's right to be registered as a status Indian is based on the registration characteristics of that child's parents. Where paternity is unstated by the mother, or stated but "unacknowledged" by the father or by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the child's entitlement can only be based on the mother's registration.[1] This can result in the loss of benefits and entitlements to either the child or the child's subsequent children, where there is successive "out-parenting".

Where parents are unmarried, Vital Statistics in most jurisdictions require the father's signature on the birth form. If there are any problems in obtaining the father's signature on the birth form, Indian registration is affected because INAC's policy requirements include paternal birth registration and other proof of paternity. While the two-parent descent rule is contained in the *Indian Act*, the requirements for proof of paternity are established entirely as a matter of INAC policy.

Approximately 50% of unstated paternity cases are considered to be unintentional, while the other 50% are deemed intentional (Clatworthy 2003b). Unintentional unstated paternity can stem from logistical problems due to the requirement for paternal signatures on the registration of birth and other forms; and, with the difficulties and expenses associated with amending forms after the fact. At the other end of the spectrum, the mother may decide not to state the father or the father may refuse to acknowledge

CHART 1: Children Born April 17, 1985 to December 31, 2004.



paternity: underlying causal factors may include the mother and father having an unstable relationship; concerns about confidentiality in a small community; the father's concerns of support payments; and, the mother's concerns about child custody and access or her own registration and membership (Clatworthy 2003a). In addition, the pregnancy may be the result of abuse, incest or rape, in which case the mother may be unwilling or unable to identify the father.

There are some unique causal factors impacting First Nations teen pregnancy and unstated paternity. Despite rates of First Nations teen sexual activity (AFN 2007), access to reproductive health services, including contraception, emergency contraception and abortion services may not always be readily available, particularly on-reserve and in remote areas. Additional factors indicated in teen First Nations pregnancies include: a casual attitude to sex that can cause youth to feel pressured; alcohol and drugs; and, abuse (Bobet 2005). In one study, 61% of the First Nations female youth questionnaire respondents reported having experienced some sort of sexual abuse; abused youth were found to be more likely to have unprotected sex, to have had more partners and to be involved in a teen pregnancy (White Circle 2002).

OUTCOMES

Early motherhood increases the vulnerability of a young First Nations woman, who is already disadvantaged socio-economically. She is at greater risk of academic under-achievement, reduced employability, an elevated risk of lone parenthood and an increased dependence on income assistance (Guimond & Robitalle 2008). In 2001, almost 16% of Registered Indian women aged 15 to 24 years were lone mothers (Hull 2004), and 80% of First Nations teenage mothers lived in a family with a total income of less than $15,000 per year, compared to 27% of First Nations mothers aged 20 years plus (Guimond and Robatille 2008).

The gravity of the unstated paternity problem for teen First Nations mothers is evident. For children born to mothers registered under subsection 6(1) of the *Indian Act* between 1985 and 2004, 45% of those born to mothers under the age of 15 had unstated paternity and 30% of those born to mothers aged 15-19 had unstated paternity. This is considerably higher than the comparable figures for mothers aged 20-24 (19%) and 30-34 (12%). (See Figure One)

It is worth noting that Indian registration confers tax benefits for those with reserve-based property, membership (and accompanying access to resources and programs) in bands whose membership is determined by INAC. Registration also provides access to national programs, such as post-secondary education and non-insured health benefits (NIHB). For example, Health Canada's NIHB program funds benefit claims for specified presecription and over-the-counter drugs, dental care, vision care, medical supplies and equipment, short-term crisis intervention, mental health counselling and medical transportation for status Indians. For a teen First Nations mother struggling for survival these financial benefits could be indispensable for her and her child. There are also additional non-tangible benefits of registration, such as personal, community and cultural identification that can be vital to well-being.

In short, First Nations women and their children suffer from an inaccurate registration or loss of status that can accompany unstated paternity. The more disadvantaged the mother and her child, the more they experience this loss.

THE *CHARTER*

The impact on First Nations women imparted via the two-parent rule and proof of paternity requirements has been alleged to constitute discrimination against First Nations women and their children. When both the causes of unstated paternity and its impacts are most egregious with respect to teen First Nations mothers, their situation could present a strongest case scenario for the purposes of a legal challenge. While there has been no definitive court decision on issues relating to Indian status registration and unstated paternity to date, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (the *Charter*) applies.

Section 7 provides for the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice. It could be argued that given the socio-economic conditions of children of teen First Nations mothers, the deprivation of Indian status due to unstated paternity contravenes their right to life and security of the person in a manner that is arbitrary. However, section 7 jurisprudence has typically been conservative - concluding that section 7 protects the citizen from government but does not require that government provide access to resources.

Subsection 15(1) provides for the equality of individuals before and under the law and the right to equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination. Where disadvantage is imposed based on negative stereotypes attached to a personal characteristic such as sex or family status and the effect is impairment of human dignity, discrimination will often be found.

Two separate but interconnected groups are impacted by the Registrar's unstated paternity policy: children of unwed parents and their mothers. First Nations lone mothers and their children might be compared to married First Nations parents and their children to establish discrimination on the basis of family status in the application of the unstated paternity policy. Where parents are married, most jurisdictions only require one signature,

"The unstated paternity policy could also be said to be discriminatory on the basis of gender. While the Registrar's policy appears to apply equally to men and women, the reality of its application shows gendered disadvantage."

resulting in recognition of paternity under the Registrar's policy. The requirement of two signatures where the parents are unmarried can result in incorrect status for a child where the father is a Registered Indian. As a result, it could be argued that both the lone mother and the child suffer discrimination based on family status.

The unstated paternity policy could also be said to be discriminatory on the basis of gender. While the Registrar's policy appears to apply equally to men and women, the reality of its application shows gendered disadvantage. Women are present at birth to sign forms and it is women, as primary caregivers, who suffer the impacts of the policy. Women, particularly teen mothers, may not provide the father's identity for gender specific reasons that include abuse and rape; equally, the father may be unwilling to be indentified. It could be argued that in not taking into account the realities of women's lives, the policy effectively discriminates against them and their child, impairing their human dignity and stripping the child of a benefit for reasons related to gender and family status. To the extent that negative stereotypes regarding the character of unmarried versus married mothers remain prevalent in certain contexts, the unstated paternity policy can also be said to impair the human dignity of at least some women and their children.

The Supreme Court of Canada has concluded that discriminatory effects constitute a violation of section 15 and that a benefit program which excludes a particular group in an arbitrary way that undercuts the overall purpose of the program is likely to be discriminatory (Supreme Court of Canada 2004). Status Indian registration could represent a benefits program from which children with unstated paternity may be arbitrarily excluded.

Interestingly, in a non-Aboriginal case, the Supreme Court of Canada concluded that while an absolute discretion conferred on mothers to 'unacknowledge' biological fathers was discriminatory, there are circumstances where a biological father will be appropriately "unacknowledged", including the case of a mother who has become pregnant as a result of rape or incest. The court concluded that an "unacknowledgement" process could be said to have ameliorative purposes for two disadvantaged groups pursuant to subsection 15(1) of the *Charter*: women who have valid reasons "to" "unacknowledge" a father and children (Supreme Court of Canada 2003).

Many First Nations teen mothers, not yet adults under the law, experience age related disproportionate causes and impacts related to unstated paternity. Legal arguments aside, one might question whether there is a moral obligation for government to provide remedial measures pertaining to status registration, when they are dealing with kids having kids.

JUSTIFICATION

Section 1 of the *Charter* allows the government to save a discriminatory law or policy where it can prove the impugned provision is a reasonable limit prescribed by law that can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. In order to save the unstated paternity policy in the wake of a successful *Charter* challenge, government would have to show that policy makers had considered the ramifications of the policy on status registration, specifically on First Nations mothers and their children. It would be necessary to show that the consequences of the policy were comprehended and that best efforts were made to prevent/remedy them while still achieving the governmental objective.

Clearly, there must be some delineation for Indian status so long as government delivers benefits based on it. However, does the paternity policy meet the minimal impairment test under section 1? Are the rights of First Nations women and their children minimally impaired in order to meet the desired governmental objective? Was and is there no way of achieving the objective via lesser or no impairment of rights? The justification test is complex, but government might face an uphill battle should the paternity policy be found to be discriminatory.

CONCLUSIONS

Given the breadth of reasons for unstated paternity, particularly among First Nations teenage girls, numerous policy initiatives could be implemented in an attempt to ameliorate the situation. Enhanced educational initiatives pertaining to paternity and Indian registration targeted to both male and female youth could be undertaken. Young men must receive an equal educational focus, since they are the fathers whose signatures may be missing or withheld. Paternity and Indian registration information could be

disseminated to teens through sex education in schools and through family planning services and pre-natal programs. Birth and Indian registration materials could be distributed to expectant parents prior to their departure for hospital to give birth. Greater efforts could also be made by INAC to facilitate access to necessary resources, financial and educational, where changes to birth registration are required.

Certainly, securing the father's paternity designation by remedying administrative barriers is an important step in facilitating fatherhood. However, given that the reasons behind First Nations teen pregnancy may skew more towards mothers, who have a reason for not disclosing paternity, and fathers, who are missing in action, and given the unconscionable burden borne by these mothers and their children, the Registrar's policy should be revised.

A policy wherein the child of a registered Indian woman, who swears that the father is also registered, is entitled to registration on the basis of both parent's heritage would remedy any discrimination arising from the current policy. The previous 1970 incarnation of the *Indian Act* provided that the child of a registered mother was entitled to registration unless the child's father was proven non-registered by the First Nation. There is no indication that this approach opened the floodgates to registration for children not so entitled. This would likely be even more the case where the mother bears some burden of proof by virtue of swearing a declaration. In order to obviate incorrect registrations, First Nations could once again have the right to challenge such declarations based on contrary evidence. Such an approach requires further investigation.

Alternatively, INAC policy could be changed to allow women whose pregnancies are the result of abuse, incest and rape and who want to "unacknowledge" the father, to make a declaration as to registered Indian paternity. Such a declaration could also be made where the father refuses to acknowledge paternity. This would be an ameliorative approach for all First Nations women with reasons to not state paternity and who are disadvantaged on the basis of sex. It would also help those children that are disadvantaged based on the conditions of their birth. Most particularly, this approach would improve the situation of the most disadvantaged: First Nations mothers who are not yet adults themselves and their children.

Clearly, such an approach would need to be developed in consultation with First Nations organizations and women's groups, so as to ensure the declaration rule does not inflict further harm on the First Nations woman. The declaration, however, seems to be the lesser of two evils by far.

Current paternity policy can have the effect of revictimizing the victim and even creating new victims – women with reason to 'unacknowledge' the father and their children. It is an ongoing cause of oppression that impairs human dignity: one that inherently imposes an age old value judgment on unmarried First Nations women and their children. It impacts teenage First Nations mothers and their children most gravely, as those persons with the highest rates of unstated paternity and most in need of the benefits Indian status confers.

NOTE

[1] For the purposes of this paper, unacknowledged paternity will be subsumed in the language of unstated paternity.

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CANADIAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION... in numbers

Where they live

The majority of Canada's Aboriginal population reside in the Western provinces. As per the 2006 Census, 59.8% of the total Aboriginal population in Canada resided in the western provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia, down from 62.1% in 2001 and 62.9% in 1996.

Nunavut has the highest concentration of Aboriginal population (85.0%) of all territories and provinces. Manitoba has the highest percentage of Aboriginal population of all provinces with 15.5% identifying as Aboriginal, followed by Saskatchewan (14.9%) and Alberta (5.8%).

TABLE 1: Top seven cities with highest proportion of Aboriginal population, 2006

Winnipeg	Regina	Saskatoon	Edmonton	Calgary	Vancouver	Ottawa/Gatineau
10.0%	8.9%	9.3%	5.1%	2.5%	1.9%	1.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation

In 2006, 53.2% of Aboriginal people resided in urban areas compared to 81.0% of non-Aboriginal people. One in 10 people who live in Winnipeg are Aboriginal (Table 1).

According to the 2006 Census, about half (48.1%) of Registered Indians live on-reserve.

There are 615 First Nations/Bands in Canada and an estimated 3,003 reserves where about 38% are inhabited, or potentially inhabited (Indian Lands Registry system as of Dec. 31, 2008).

Approximately 7 out of 10 Non-Status Indians and Métis live in urban areas (Figure 1). The Inuit live predominantly in northern rural communities (62.6%).

Between 2001 and 2006 some urban centres experienced a net in-migration of Aboriginal peoples while others experienced a net out-migration. Overall, reserves experienced net in-migration for the same time period. This trend has been consistent over the last four to five census cycles.

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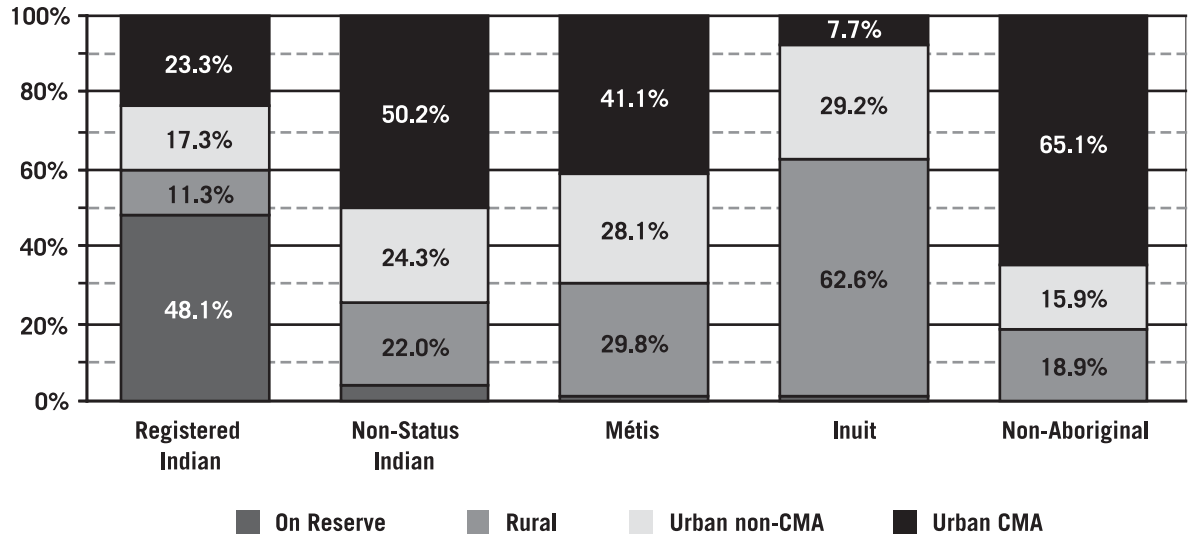
FIGURE 1: Population by Area of Residence, Canada, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation.

ABORIGINAL YOUNG CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: PROMISING PRACTICES AND NEEDS

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

Although improvements to the collection of population level data and early intervention research are sorely needed, reports from Aboriginal programs and organizations indicate the need for a comprehensive national strategy focusing on policies and programs that would help families and communities stimulate language development and access diagnostic and early intervention services for their young children when needed. This article highlights the foundational role of language in securing children's long-term academic, social and economic success, the importance of heritage language for cultural identity and belonging, and the contributions that a multi-level, multi-sectoral strategy could make in ensuring that Aboriginal children achieve optimal speech-language development outcomes.

Malgré le fait que le besoin d'améliorer la collecte de données auprès de la population et de faire de la recherche sur l'intervention précoce se fait fortement sentir, les rapports des programmes et des organisations autochtones indiquent le besoin d'une stratégie nationale exhaustive axée sur les politiques et les programmes qui aiderait les familles et les communautés à stimuler l'acquisition du langage et à accéder au besoin à des services de diagnostic et d'intervention précoce pour leurs jeunes enfants. Cet article souligne le rôle fondamental du langage chez les enfants pour qu'ils réussissent à long terme sur les plans scolaire, social et économique, l'importance des langues ancestrales pour l'identité culturelle et le sentiment d'appartenance ainsi que les contributions d'une éventuelle stratégie multisectorielle à niveaux multiples pour faire en sorte que les enfants autochtones obtiennent des résultats optimaux dans le développement de la parole et de l'acquisition du langage.

Giving Aboriginal children the best start in life is one of the most important investments we can make in Canada. This is especially so when we consider that the proportion of Aboriginal Canadians under 5 years of age is approximately 70% greater compared to the proportion of non-Aboriginal young children, which represents a birth rate 1.5 times that of the birth rate of non-Aboriginal peoples (Statistics Canada 2006). A particularly effective investment in this area would consist of supports for parents and other caregivers to engage in responsive language-mediated interactions with infants and young children at home. This should be complemented by community programs designed to stimulate language development.

Language develops most rapidly from infancy throughout the preschool years. Likewise, language delays and difficulties are best prevented and treated during these

early years. Decades of research in neuroscience, developmental psychology and economics has produced voluminous evidence showing that early interventions supporting the development of less advantaged children have much higher returns than later interventions after children have started formal schooling (Heckman 2006). This article summarizes what is known about language development of Aboriginal Canadians under six years old and efforts that are being taken, as well as those that could be taken, to support optimal language development among this growing young demographic.

NEED FOR A FOCUSED PROGRAM OF RESEARCH

It is worth stressing at the outset that there is an urgent need for research on Aboriginal children's speech-language development, needs and responses to interventions. At the time of writing, there were no population-based data for characterizing the speech-language strengths or difficulties of First Nations, Inuit or Métis children. Aboriginal children were not systematically sampled in the two national longitudinal cohort studies of the growth and development of Canadian children and youth (*National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth and Understanding the Early Years*). Further, most Aboriginal young children are never evaluated by developmental specialists (e.g., infant development consultants, child care practitioners, speech-language pathologists, pediatricians); speech-language services are extremely limited for children living on-reserve, since they are not eligible for provincially funded services and this is a service that most First Nations do not contract; and, well over half of Aboriginal children do not have access to child care programs where their speech-language development could be monitored and difficulties noticed. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, most existing monitoring, screening or diagnostic tools have not been validated for use with Aboriginal children: screening and assessment tools in current use in Canada are generally rooted in research involving children of European heritage in urban settings with English or French as their first language.[1]

Based on existing research on the living conditions, family life challenges, and health of Aboriginal youngsters and their academic outcomes, it is generally recognized that Aboriginal children face more challenges to fulfilling their developmental potential than any other population in Canada (Ball 2008; Council of Ministers of Education 2004). Overall, 52.1% of Aboriginal children are living below the poverty line, and have the highest rate of poverty compared to other equity groups: visible minority children and children with disabilities.

Low language proficiency may be an important contributor to these high rates of exclusion: strong language proficiency can increase the probability of success in school, participation in the work-force, economic security, and social inclusion (Brid and Akerman 2005). It is generally believed, though not well documented, that Aboriginal children are at elevated risk of language delays (Canada Council on Learning 2007; Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities 2003). At national and provincial conferences and training workshops involving practitioners in Aboriginal Infant Development and Early Childhood Care and Development, urgent calls are repeatedly heard for increased supports for home and community-based language stimulation programs and for diagnostic and speech-language therapy services. Speech-language delays and deficits have been identified as the most frequently occurring type of developmental challenge for Aboriginal young children seen in Aboriginal Head Start programs (e.g., Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada 2002), by the B.C. Aboriginal Child Care Society (2004), and by programs surveyed by a Task Force of the Centre of Excellence for Children and Adolescents with Special Needs (deLeeuw, Fiske and Greenwood 2002).

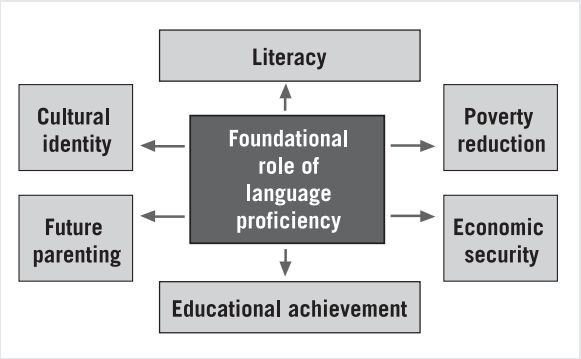
THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN DEVELOPMENT

Speech-language skills play a role in nearly all developmental outcomes, as shown in Figure 1. Early language learning contributes in primary ways to learning in all other domains; and, makes learning at later ages more efficient and easier, promoting self-motivation meaning that one is more likely to continue (Shonkoff and Phillips 2000). In particular, it is well known that success in school requires vast exposure to, practice with, and proficiency in oral language (Hart and Risley 1995). More generally, weak language skills in the preschool years are a strong predictor of lower academic achievement, particularly for children in lower socio-economic families (Schuelle 2001). Early interventions to increase language proficiency can significantly increase later success in school (Campbell and Ramey 1994).

HERITAGE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

For many children, being able to communicate across generations in their families and communities, and laying down the foundation for a coherent and positive cultural identity with links to the land, means being able to speak their heritage language (Battiste 2000; Norris 2007). Speaking the ancestral language is also seen by some as

FIGURE 1: The foundational role of speech-language proficiency.



Source: Jessica Ball 2008.

important to a child's spiritual life (Canadian Heritage 2005; Kirkness 2002). Yet, Aboriginal children are increasingly less likely to learn their Aboriginal language as a first language, if at all (Statistics Canada 2006): approximately 16% of Aboriginal children under the age of 14 years speak an Aboriginal language as a first or additional language (Norris 2007).

A basic value in Canada is that, regardless of where children live in this country and regardless of their ethnicity, programs for promoting their optimal development should be accessible, available and linguistically and culturally appropriate (Canadian Centre for Justice 2001). At the same time, colonial policies and values have excluded Aboriginal histories, cultures and languages from public school curricula (Battiste 2000; Philipson 1992). Programs that help Aboriginal children learn their heritage language, rather than treating European-heritage language skills as normative, can support their cultural identity formation, cultural knowledge and connectedness with their cultural community (Crystal 1997; Hebert 2000; Ignace 1998).

ABORIGINAL ENGLISH DIALECTS

The existence of Aboriginal English dialects in Canada is a factor that needs to be considered in the context of policy approaches to improving learning outcomes of Aboriginal children. Canadian Aboriginal English dialects have been studied by the linguistic community to a limited extent (see review by Ball, Bernhardt and Deby 2006). Linguistic features of these varieties of English may include vestiges of Indigenous languages carried over to English (or possibly French), resulting in variations on the 'standard' variety of the dominant language that are unique to particular heritage language groups. Further, language socialization in Aboriginal families embodies their cultures and includes varying pragmatics of communication that may also involve vestiges of their Indigenous language and traditional culture (Bernardt, Ball and Deby 2007). This phenomenon is not restricted to Canada: in Australia, Aboriginal English has been described as the main language of 80% of Aboriginal Australians (Speech Pathology Australia, Fact Sheet 2.4).

There is little understanding of the extent to which some Aboriginal children's use of a non-standard variety of English or French may be misinterpreted as language delay or language deficit and, thus, contribute to alarming high estimates of the prevalence of speech-language pathology among Aboriginal children (i.e., false positive interpretations of language pathology). Several scholars have noted that Aboriginal children, whose home language is either a non-standard variant of English, French or an Indigenous language, need some kind of bridging or transition support to prepare them to succeed in school (Philpott 2004; WaltonWalton 1993; Wright, Taylor and Macarthur 2000). Pioneering work has been done in Australia on 'English as a Second Dialect' (Malcom, Haig, Koningsberg, Rochecouste, Collard, Hill and Cahill 1999). Several provinces in Canada now have policies and funding to support school-based ESD programs; however, no report have come to light on the extent or nature of ESD initiatives involving Aboriginal children. Given the findings noted above, this is an area that warrants greater research attention.

AUDITORY PROBLEMS

Ear infections (*otitis media*) are a good example of the complex determinants of language development among Aboriginal children. Ear infections are much more prevalent among Aboriginal children (from 2.1% to 78% across communities) compared to non-Aboriginal children (about 1%), especially in the north (WHO/CIBA). In the High Arctic, an average of 67% of Inuit children has suffered some hearing loss by the time they reach school-age (Bowd 2005). In Aboriginal children, prevalent causes of ear infections are thought to include hereditary and constitutional factors, infant feeding practices, sleeping position and mold in poorly ventilated homes. Incidence of hearing loss may be reduced by addressing care-giving practices (e.g., promoting breastfeeding and nutritious solid foods, positioning babies on their back to sleep); ventilation in homes and other environmental risk factors (e.g., exposure to smoke and organochlorines); and, increasing community-based capacity to detect and refer affected children for treatment (Bowd 2005). These steps in turn could prevent speech-language delays and deficits, and also limit secondary effects such as learning challenges, social and behavioral difficulties.

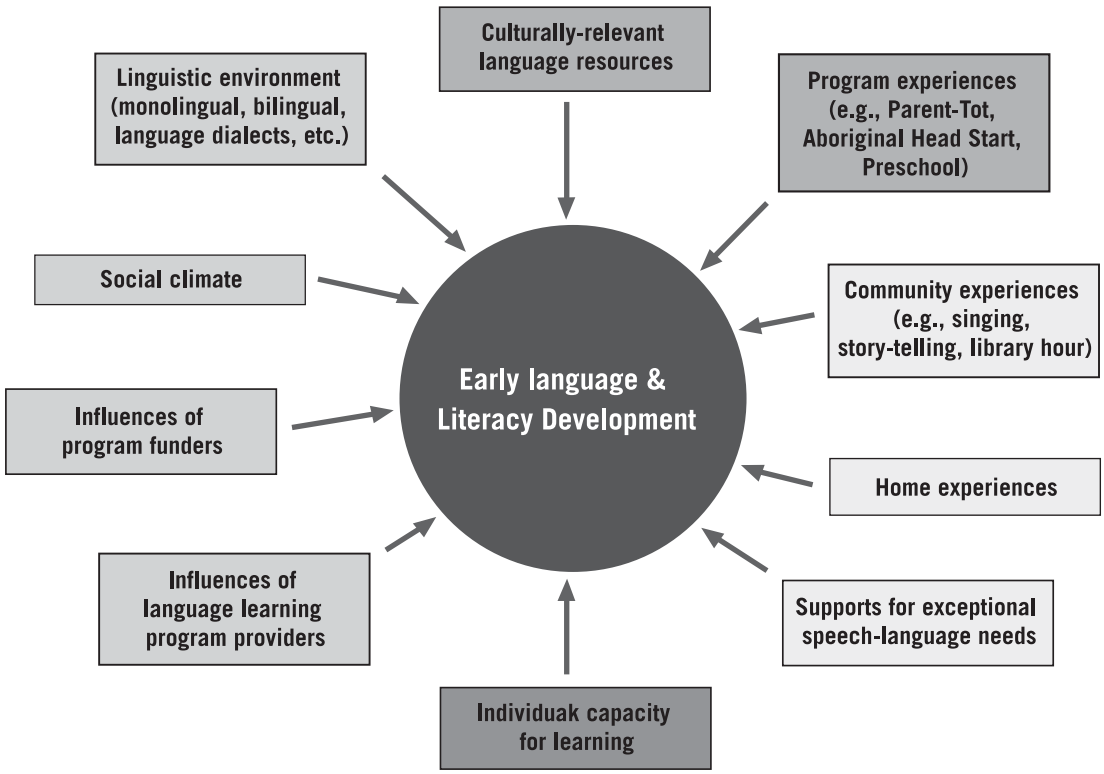
SUPPORTING EARLY LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Over the past decade, there have been substantial, primarily federal, initiatives to create quality Aboriginal early learning and child care programs. There are a number of community-based and community-involving programs aimed at supporting the language and literacy development of Aboriginal children. These include: Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities and First Nations Head start, Aboriginal Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, Hanen's You Make the Difference-Aboriginal Version, the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program and Moe the Mouse created by British Columbia's Aboriginal Child Care Society. In addition, individual communities have developed approaches for use in home visiting, nurseries and preschools, drawing on curriculum common to most early childhood programs, such as music and movement, story-telling, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy games as well as parenting skills programs. Many of these programs are culturally-rich and aim in part to reinforce positive cultural identity of Aboriginal youngsters and their families.

In spite of efforts to evaluate some of these initiatives, no body of evidence is yet available for identifying their impacts. Nevertheless, these community-based programs for Aboriginal young children and their families constitute an existing infrastructure in some communities within which capacity could be developed for early language facilitation and intervention.

Given the importance of early language development for social inclusion, cultural identity, cognitive development, school readiness and educational achievement, new investments of federal funds are needed for a national strategy to support Aboriginal early language and literacy. Figure 2 presents factors which can be optimized in a national strategy to support optimal language development among Aboriginal young children.

FIGURE 2: Key influences on early language development



Source: Jessica Ball, 2008.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DRIVEN APPROACHES

Recognizing the limited transportability of social knowledge and practice, many Aboriginal communities and organizations, along with researchers, educators and practitioners, are encouraging community-driven, dialogical and open-ended approaches to supporting children's development (Ball and Pence 2006; Bernhard 1995; Cole 1989). Community members are uniquely positioned to identify core features of language socialization, to understand the contexts of child development and care in the community and to offer insights to specialists, educators and investigators about the conditions, needs and goals of a family or community. The ethics and the prospective utility of collaborative, strengths-based approaches have been demonstrated by cross-cultural investigators (Ball 2002; Crago 1992; Johnston and Wong 2002; van Kleek 1994). A national strategy that includes a stream for supporting Aboriginal early language development should support implementation and evaluation of culturally grounded approaches developed in consultation with families and communities as demonstration projects.

AN ECOLOGICALLY COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

Figure 3 portrays the inter-dependent ecological systems in which Aboriginal young children and their families are nested. These are contexts where supportive interventions can be introduced to promote optimal language development. This schema situates the family as the core – or heart – of language-mediated relationships between caregivers and young children. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) also prioritized family development and community-based programs for children and families as the two most promising entry-points for promoting healthy communication, support and early detection of needs for extra supports.

Investments in the areas identified in Figure 3 would yield new knowledge and a potentially effective system of supports driven by Aboriginal community agendas and organizations. Partnerships across Aboriginal organizations, relevant Canadian Centres of Excellence, post-secondary institutions and such sectors as health, education and child care could support the development of new resources, capacity and program strategies. Support for Aboriginal early language and literacy facilitation can be expected to:

- reduce high rates of referral for speech-language therapy with their attendant expenses, long wait times, and dependencies on external supports;
- reduce high rates of diversion of Aboriginal children at school-entry to special programs for learning support, with their attendant sequelae of social stigma and exclusions;
- counteract prevalent misconstructions of cultural and language differences as communication and parenting deficits;
- promote cultural continuity and self-esteem;
- help to retain endangered heritage; and,
- promote the social inclusion of Aboriginal children within the fabric of Canadian society.

NOTE

[1] This means that until new assessment tools have been developed, of the validity of existing tools have been established and norms have been gathered, any epidemiological data obtained through "universal" screening and assessment of Aboriginal children would need to be interpreted and acted upon with extreme caution.

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FIGURE 3: Systems of support for Aboriginal young children's language development.

Source: Jessica Ball 2008.

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CANADIAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION... in numbers

Education

The youthfulness of the Aboriginal population will continue to have many implications for various socio-economic initiatives especially in the area of education. It is well documented that education attainment promotes labour-force participation, reduces an individual's dependence on government transfers and impacts social economic status. With a particular focus on investments in education, there are opportunities to improve the overall well being of the current and future generations of Aboriginal populations.

TABLE 1: Percent with less than high school, Aboriginal Group, Canada, 2006

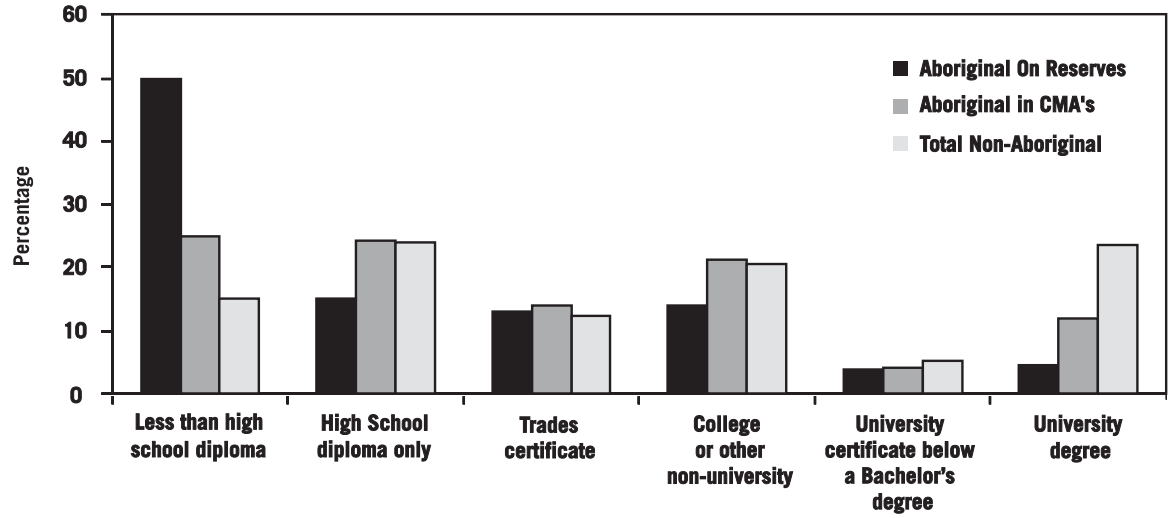
Registered Indian	39.7%
Métis	25.6%
Non-Status Indian	28.5%
Inuit	51.3%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation

In 2006, one in three (34.1%) Aboriginal people 25-64 years of age have less than high school educational attainment compared with 14.8% of the non-Aboriginal population of the same age. The percentage of those with less than high school educational attainment varies by Aboriginal group and by area of residence (Table 1 and Figure 1).

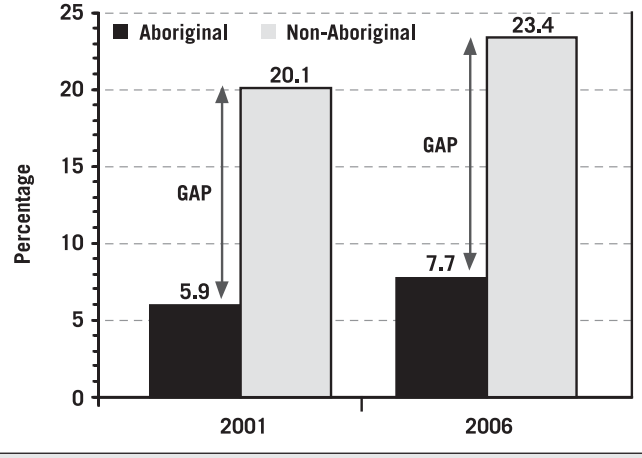
The Aboriginal population in Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) fares much better than those on-reserves in terms of educational attainment. In 2006, only 24.8% of Aboriginal people in CMAs reported having less than high school compared with 49.8% on-reserves.

FIGURE 1: Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree, Population 25-64 Years, by Area of Residence, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation

FIGURE 2: Percentage with a University Degree, Population 25-64 Years, Canada, 2001 and 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2008 and 2006 Censuses, INAC tabulations.

Between 2001 and 2006, the proportion of working age Aboriginal people with a university degree increased slightly (from 5.9% to 7.7%). These small gains were also observed across individual Aboriginal populations as well as for Aboriginal populations living on-reserves and across major cities.

However, Aboriginal people are still less likely to have a university degree when compared with non-Aboriginal people. In fact, this gap has widened since 2001.

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GENDER DIFFERENCES AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA'S K-12 ABORIGINAL POPULATION

Cheryl Aman holds a PhD in Education from the University of British Columbia. She is currently examining the educational trajectories of students for whom English is an additional language and pursuing research on school change in elementary and secondary schools for a broad range of student groups, including students of Aboriginal and First Nations ancestry.

ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

The British Columbia Ministry of Education reports that education outcomes of Aboriginal K-12 students have improved over the past seven years. However, there is a significant gap in these reports, in terms of gender analysis for the Aboriginal population. This study employs Ministry of Education data to analyze gender differences in the elementary and secondary school outcomes of Aboriginal students. The study, which utilizes a cohort analysis methodology, details results in terms of two Aboriginal groups, those with Band status, and those students who identify themselves as Aboriginal, but are not formally affiliated by a Band.

Selon le ministère de l'Éducation de la Colombie-Britannique, les résultats scolaires des élèves autochtones de la maternelle à la 12e année se sont améliorés au cours des sept dernières années. Cependant, ces rapports comportent une lacune importante en ce qui concerne l'analyse comparative entre les sexes pour la population autochtone. Cette étude utilise des données du ministère de l'Éducation pour analyser les différences entre les deux sexes dans les résultats scolaires des élèves autochtones aux niveaux primaire et secondaire. L'étude, qui utilise une méthodologie d'analyse par cohorte, expose en détail les résultats de deux groupes d'Autochtones, des élèves qui ont le statut d'Indien inscrit et d'autres qui s'identifient comme Autochtones, mais ne sont pas officiellement affiliés à une bande indienne.

THE STUDY

The British Columbia Ministry of Education reports that schooling outcomes of Aboriginal K-12 students have improved over the past seven years[1], although inequity in comparison to non-Aboriginal students persists. However, a significant gap in these reports exists in terms of gender analysis for the Aboriginal population, which comprises approximately 10% of the overall student population.

While differences between overall female and male student performance have been extensively analyzed in school, school district, and Ministry of Education reports[2], such gender differences are not delineated by specific subpopulations. This study examines differences between female and male Aboriginal students in schooling outcomes over elementary and secondary school years. The study, which employs a cohort analysis methodology, details results in terms of two Aboriginal groups: those with Band status (approximately 3% of the student population); and, those students who identify themselves as Aboriginal but are not formally affiliated by a Band[3] (approximately 7% of the population).

Data associated with several provincial cohorts[4] (approximately 50,000 students each) were used in this study. Cohorts were defined as all students who were enrolled in Kindergarten together province-wide in a given school year, plus students who entered the British Columbian system at later grade levels (typically 2% of the student population migrates to British Columbia each year). Three cohorts provided information on Kindergarten to Grade 7 years only. A fourth cohort provided information on Kindergarten to Grade 12, including (FSA) Foundation Skill Assessment results of a standardized Grade 10 testing regime. (There is only one cohort for whom this information exists, since the assessment at Grade 10 was discontinued in British Columbia.) Comparisons were made on schooling outcomes of Numeracy and Reading FSA exams held at Grade 4, Grade 7, Grade 10 and at school completion. Additional factors related to schooling (i.e., entry grade, enrolment in Band schools, excused status, grade level synchronicity and retention of assessment status over time) are discussed briefly. Finally, local variation of outcomes is outlined.

KEY QUESTIONS

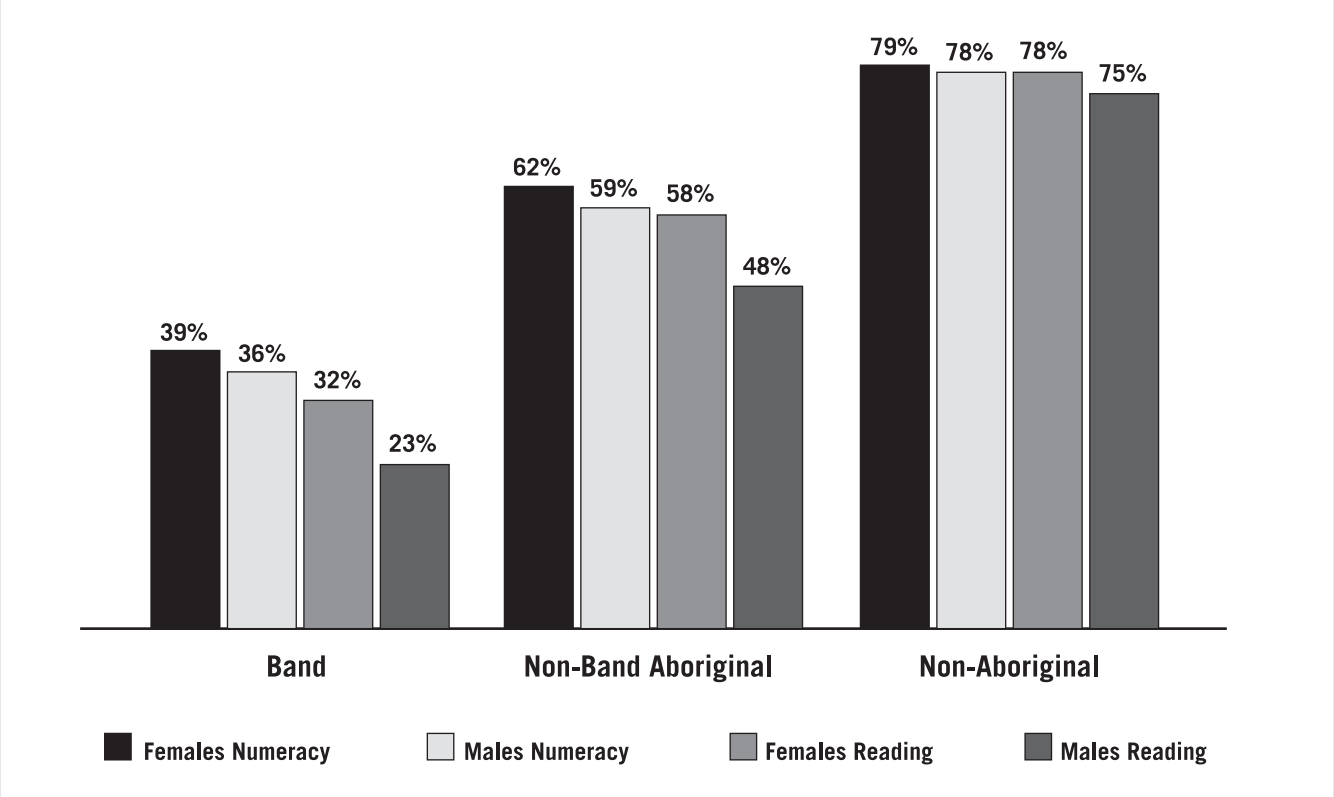
THIS STUDY ASKS THREE KEY QUESTIONS:

1) Are gender differences similar across Band, Non-Band Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal populations?
2) Are the gender differences similar between Numeracy and Reading skills?
3) Are gender differences similar at different grade levels over the school trajectory?

GENDER DIFFERENCE ON GRADE 4 AND GRADE 7 NUMERACY AND READING FSAs

FSA exams are written by all British Columbian students (unless they are excused in advance) each spring in Grade 4 and Grade 7. There are three standardized exams: Numeracy, Reading, and Writing. (A presentation of Writing results does not occur here, because the marking scale of this particular exam poses difficulties in interpretation.) Students are assigned a percentage score as well as a 5-point categorical score indicating whether

FIGURE 1: Gr. 4 FSA Numeracy and Reading: Gender Differences in Meeting Expectations (Average of 3 years)



expectations have been met. This study utilizes the 5-point categorical scores. It groups students into those who meet (or exceed) expectations and those who do not (i.e., students who provided an ungradable response, were excused, were absent from the exam, or were not at grade level are assigned "not meeting expectations" status, so that the calculation of percentage meeting expectations reflects the entire cohort rather than just exam writers as typically reported). Results were pooled for the three cohorts available with both FSA 4 and FSA 7.

At the FSA 4 level (see Figure 1), the inequities across student groups are evident, for all Aboriginal students and for Band students in particular. In terms of Numeracy, there is little gender difference among Non-Aboriginal students and only a slightly larger gender gap for Aboriginal groups. In terms of Reading, there is a small gender gap in Non-Aboriginal students. This gap is amplified in the Non-Band Aboriginal and Band student cohorts. Finally, in terms of equity across skill domains, Non-Aboriginal females perform equally well on both exams, while Aboriginal females do less well in Reading than in Numeracy. The pattern is similar for boys, though amplified in Aboriginal male groups.

At the Grade 7 FSA level, success rates of all groups decline, while the inequity across student groups persists. There is little gender differential when Aboriginal groups are compared to the Non-Aboriginal group (i.e., females and males are equally as far from the success rate of female and male Non-Aboriginal students.) However, skill differences are more evident. Again, Non-Aboriginal females still perform nearly equally as well on Numeracy and Reading. Non-Band Aboriginal girls also perform equally well on both exams. However, this is no longer true for Non-Aboriginal males. It is also not the case for Band females. The skill differential is most acute for Band males.

These Grade 4 and Grade 7 outcomes are the pooled results of three cohorts. It is possible to examine whether the "meets expectations" status of individuals changed for students who were enrolled in the system for both FSA test years. For two groups, there was no gender difference in the "meeting expectations" status on Numeracy FSA 4 *and* 7: These groups were Non-Aboriginal Females and Non-Band Aboriginal females. However, fewer males than females were able to retain this status in the Band group for both Numeracy FSAs. On the Reading FSAs, no males in any group were able to meet expectations on both Grade 4 and Grade 7 exams in

FIGURE 2: Gr. 4 FSA Numeracy and Reading: Gender Differences in Meeting Expectations (Average of 3 years)

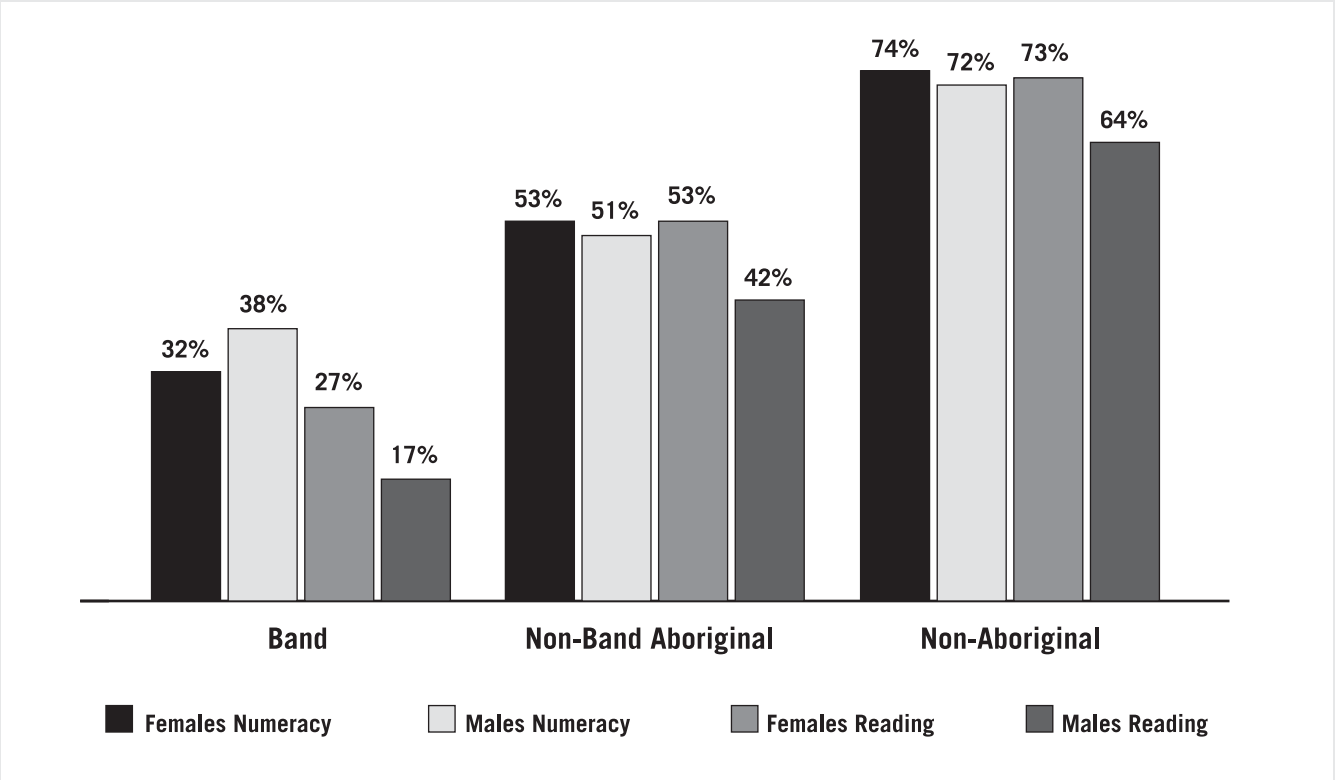
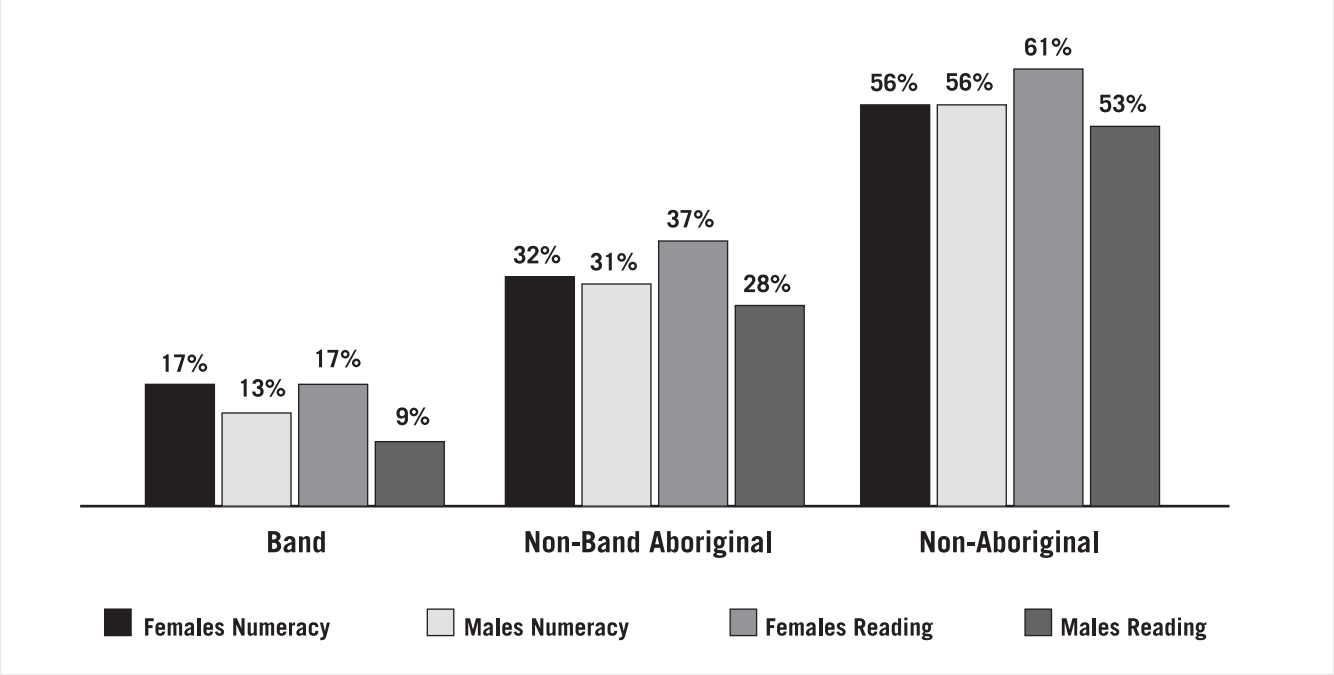


FIGURE 3: Gr. 4 FSA Numeracy and Reading: Gender Differences in Meeting Expectations (a single cohort)

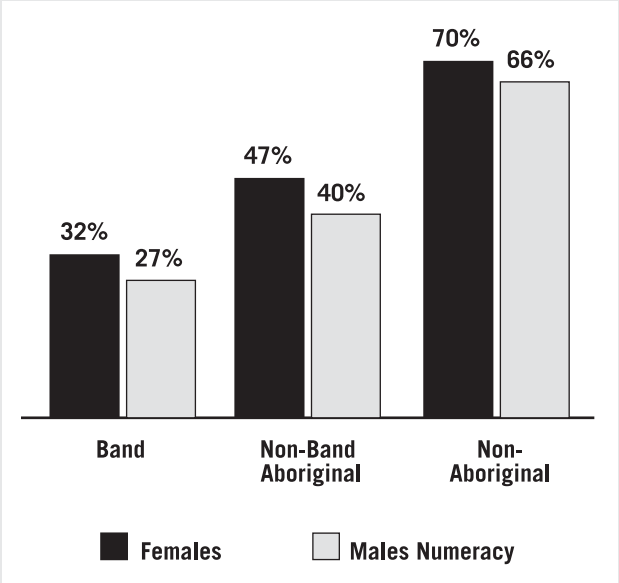


the same numbers as their female peers. Again, the differential between males and females was biggest in the Band group.

There is a single cohort for which results on Grade 10 FSAs are available in addition to information across the K-12 trajectory. Unfortunately, due to the timing and changes in British Columbia's testing regime, this cohort did not write Grade 4 and 7 FSAs. However, the results were felt to be of sufficient interest to include in this study (see Figure 3). First, inequity across student groups persists as with other cohorts analyzed. Second, and more alarmingly, less than 20% of the Band cohort meets expectations on either FSA. Gender differences in Numeracy for Band students are amplified, though gender differences in Reading results of Band students are not. The opposite pattern is exhibited in Non-Band Aboriginal students, where a male disadvantage in Reading is amplified. The performance of female Non-Aboriginal students is equal to that of males in Numeracy. Unlike in the case of the more recent K-7 cohorts, there is a substantial difference across skills for Non-Aboriginal females. At the secondary level, Non-Aboriginal females *are not equally successful* in both Numeracy and Reading.

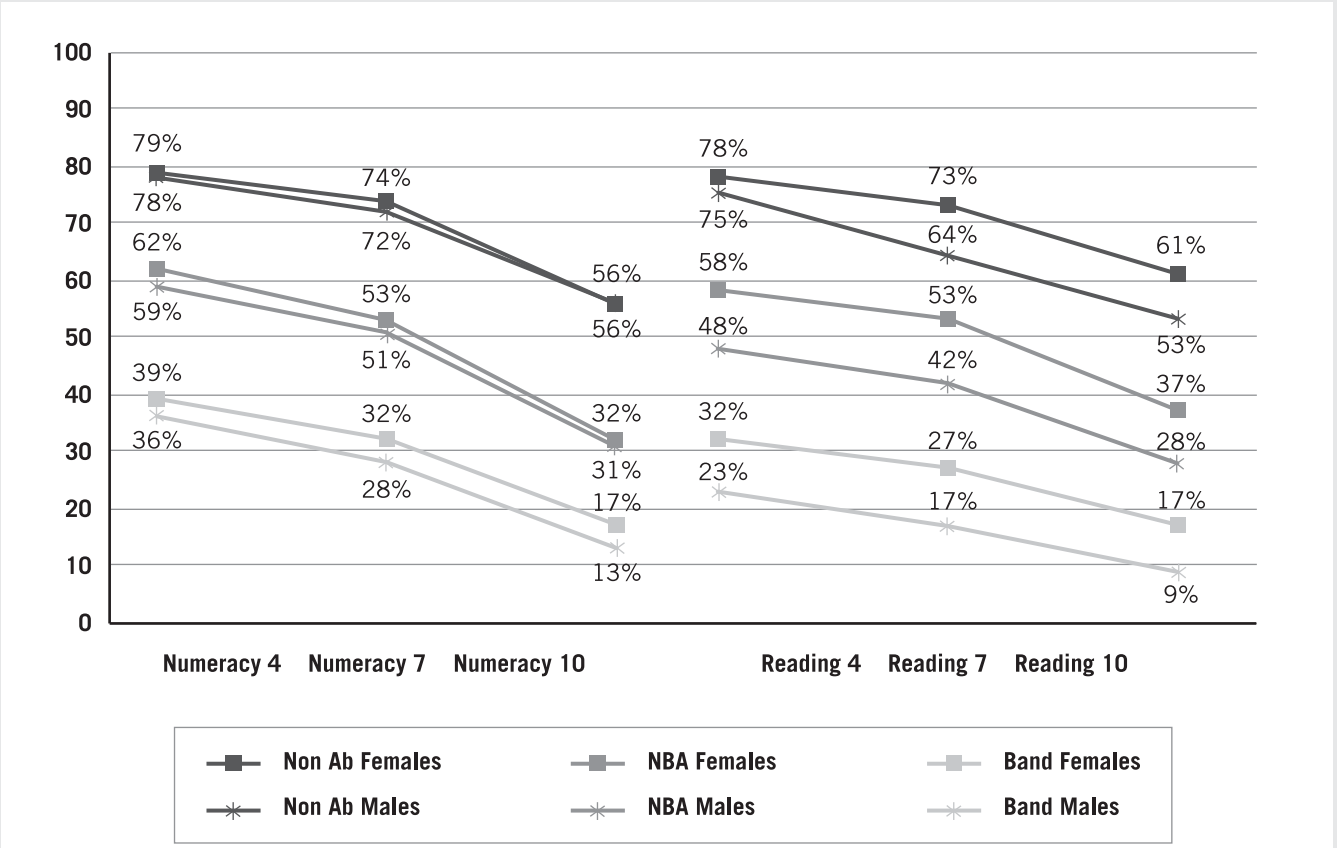
School completion is the ultimate outcome that can be calculated for a cohort. The school completion rates for a cohort that enrolled in Kindergarten[5] together is provided below (see Figure 4). As most descriptive results so far have supported, inequity of student groups is evident and, in all groups, females outperform male students.

FIGURE 4: School Completion: Gender Differences in Student Groups (a single cohort)



Using these findings, a diagram plotting the cohort success rate at different grade levels can be developed to provide a more clear sense of how groups of female and male

FIGURE 5: Gender and Student Group Differences in Meeting Expectations in Numeracy and Reading (Across Grade Levels)



students perform over the course of a school career (see Figure 5). Caution must be used in interpreting this diagram, since the Grade 10 results do not pertain to the same students providing the Grade 4 and Grade 7 results.

When results associated with different grade levels are plotted together, a clear downward trajectory exists for all groups. While gender differences in terms of numeracy are small over time; for Reading, the differences are stark. Where Non-Aboriginal males were similar to females in Grade 4 Reading, they did not retain similarity in later grade levels. Overall however, the most consistent pattern remains the persistent of inequity between Non-Aboriginal, Non-Band Aboriginal and Band student groups.

ADDITIONAL SCHOOLING FACTORS

DEFERRED ENTRY INTO SCHOOL SYSTEM

In British Columbia, students are not required to enrol at Kindergarten and may defer entry into the school system until Grade 1. A substantial proportion of Band-affiliated students (estimated 11%) defer entry. In contrast, an estimated 2% Non-Band Aboriginal students and Non-Aboriginal students defer entry. For both female and male students, students who defer entry to the school system fail to meet expectations on FSA exams to a higher degree than peers who enrol in Kindergarten.

NON SYNCHRONOUS GRADE LEVEL

By Grade 4, a high proportion (approximately 14%) of Band students are not enrolled in the expected grade level. The difference between Non-Band Aboriginal students (approximately 5%) and the Non-Aboriginal student population (approximately 3%) is more equitable. Male students are twice as likely to not be at the same grade level as their Grade 4 peers. By Grade 7, the proportions of student groups not at grade level are only slightly higher – 15% for Band students, 6% of Non-Band Aboriginal students and 4% Non-Aboriginal students. In Grade 10, 31% of Band students are not enrolled at the expected grade level

(22% of Non-Band Aboriginal and 12% Non-Aboriginal students). At this grade level, female students more are likely than at earlier grade levels to not be at their grade level. As noted above, this study categorizes students not enrolled in the expected grade level as "not meeting expectations." [6]

EXCUSED FROM FSA EXAMS

Very small proportions of students are excused from participation on the FSA 4 exam though Band students are excused to a greater degree than their non-Aboriginal peers. By Grade 7, the proportion of excused students increases in all groups. Approximately 10% of Band students are excused and 8% of Non-Band Aboriginal students are excused in contrast to 3% of non-Aboriginal students. Excused students are more likely to be female than male.

BAND SCHOOLS AND ALTERNATE SCHOOLS

A substantial proportion of Band students (approximately 20%) have been enrolled in Band schools at sometime in their grade trajectory. Band school students meet expectations on FSA exams in much lower proportions than Band peers enrolled in Public or Independent schools. Gender differences appear more pronounced in Band students enrolled in Band schools. Students enrolled in Band schools are about as half as likely to meet expectations on Grade 10 FSAs, when compared to their Band peers.

A higher proportion of Aboriginal secondary students (approximately 25%) have a history of having attended non standard schools (such as alternate schools) than Non-Aboriginal students (approximately 15%). There is little difference in the proportion of females and males in all groups enrolled in such schools. Females and males succeed to similar degree in these schools in on the Numeracy FSA; and, as is the case in standard schools, there is a gender gap in the Reading FSA results.

VARIANCE AT LOCAL LEVELS

Both FSA results and gender differentials vary across British Columbian, when the data is examined at the school district, community or school level. Band students are by no means a homogenous group – there are over 200 Bands located in British Columbia across a diverse range of economic and historic realities. The variance between Bands is high; but, there are few Bands with sufficient numbers of students in the cohort to conduct further analysis. However, preliminary Band-level analysis shows that neither poor success rates nor gender difference in success rates exist universally. Examples exist of Bands where students perform well and where females and male students perform equally well.

SUMMARY

The Introduction presented three questions for which we are now able to provide clear answers:

1) Are gender differences similar across Band, Non-Band Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal populations?
   Gender differences exist in each of the three student groups but they amplified in Aboriginal students, particularly Band students.
2) Are the gender differences similar between Numeracy and Reading skills?
   Gender differences typically exist between these two skill modalities. Typically greater success rates occur in Numeracy than Reading. The Non-Aboriginal female students often achieve parity between these skills; male students consistently have lower success rates in Reading compared to Numeracy.
3) Are gender differences similar at different grade levels over the school trajectory?
   Gender differences are similar in Numeracy and Reading results across the trajectory, though decline in cohort success rates is striking. The difference widens at later grade levels for Non-Aboriginal males.

This preliminary investigation of gender differences in British Columbia's Aboriginal student population yields positive and negative findings. On one hand, in *many* cases the gender differences are relatively stable within groups. In other words, male students are *generally* as far behind as their female peers within Aboriginal groups, when compared to Non-Aboriginal male or female students. (Where Non-Aboriginal students lose gender equity over time appears to consolidate the general gender difference pattern.) On the other hand, Aboriginal students have lower success rates. That is, there is a far more unmistakable consistency in the equity gap between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal student groups. The equity gap for Band students is large. Aboriginal male students and, most urgently, male Band students are highly vulnerable in terms of schooling outcomes. This equity gap does not change, even while cohort success rates decline over time; and, Reading skills emerge as particularly problematic for male students. One final conclusion comes to mind: there is a critical need for more nuanced investigation in order to fully understand the lessons that can be learned regarding both gender equity and high performance in Aboriginal student groups, where this occurs at the local level.

NOTES

[1] See **http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/performance.htm**, retrieved September 15th, 2008.

[2] For example, see **http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/levels/perf-bas.php,** retrieved September 15th 2008.

[3] British Columbia's Ministry of Education protocol regarding identification is followed: If a student ever self identifies as having Aboriginal ancestry that student is considered "Aboriginal" in subsequent analysis.

[4] Students who enrolled in Kindergarten in the 1996/1997, 1997/1998, and 1998/1999 school years were examined to determine elementary outcomes, and students enrolled in Kindergarten in the 1991/1992 school year were examined to determine secondary outcomes.

[5] Again, the cohort is defined as beginning Kindergarten together, so results will differ than those published regarding grade eight cohorts.

[6] When analysis is conducted removing these students from the calculation, the proportion of the cohort meeting expectations increases, however the sub group results do not change in relative position from one another.

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NURTURING OUR GARDEN: THE VOICES OF URBAN ABORIGINAL YOUTH ON ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This paper explores the perceptions of urban Aboriginal youth on engagement and participation in decision making processes in the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. It also explores the barriers and enablers of Aboriginal youth participation. The research uncovered a myriad of challenges to Aboriginal youth participation including poverty, discrimination, and tokenization. Though faced with these challenges the youth remain optimistic and hopeful for the future. The paper concludes with an exploration of protective factors and recommendations on how communities can best engage youth in a meaningful way that goes beyond tokenism to legitimacy and equality.

Cet article explore les perceptions de jeunes Autochtones en milieu urbain relativement à l'engagement et à la participation aux processus décisionnels dans les communautés autochtones et non autochtones. L'auteure explore aussi les obstacles et les éléments qui favorisent la participation des jeunes Autochtones. La recherche a révélé plusieurs difficultés faisant obstacle à la participation des jeunes Autochtones, notamment la pauvreté, la discrimination et les mesures purement symboliques. Malgré ces difficultés, les jeunes demeurent optimistes et pleins d'espoir pour l'avenir. La communication conclut par une exploration des facteurs de protection et des recommandations quant aux meilleurs moyens pour les communautés de mobiliser les jeunes de manière satisfaisante, allant au-delà des gestes symboliques vers la légitimité et l'égalité.

I just think there needs to be more nurturing and more capacity building... When those younger youth are downtown or slangin [selling drugs] we as a community messed up, WE messed up, WE let them fall through the cracks because WE weren't there to support them. (Jeri-lynn, 22)

INTRODUCTION

This study began as a *Discussion Paper on Aboriginal Youth Engagement* (Matthew 2005) as a result of discussions between the Centre for Native Policy and Research, Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association, RedWAY BC, Broadway Youth Resource Centre, the Child and Youth Office of BC and Redwire Native Youth Magazine in

Vancouver. The purpose of the discussions and the initial paper were to address the dissatisfaction of youth and youth organizations on how Aboriginal youth were being engaged, represented, and participated in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal government and organizations.

The initial discussion paper set out a protocol and guidelines for Aboriginal youth engagement and participation that was reviewed by 91 Aboriginal youth from throughout British Columbia at the *Inclusion, Involvement Inspiration 2005: The First Annual Policy Forum for Aboriginal Youth* (Barudin and Corigan 2005).

After the initial consultations were undertaken with youth on engagement and participation, face-to-face interviews were conducted with active youth advocates and representatives. A series of interviews was undertaken with 10 Aboriginal youth ranging from 15 to 31 years of age in the Greater Vancouver area, which sought to address the question: are Aboriginal youth currently participating in decision making in the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community? Participants were asked to explain if they had input into decision making in their community, and to identify enablers and barriers to their participation in the urban sphere.

All of the youth interviewed self-identified as Aboriginal with 60% of the participant being male and 40% female. Of the participants they were equally divided between the two age cohorts with 50% being 15-24 and 50% being 25-34 at the time of the interview.

The purpose of the research was to explore the perceptions and realities of the participation of urban Aboriginal youth in decision making. At the international and national level it has been affirmed in convention and policy that children and youth have agency in decisions that affect their lives. However, the reality for urban Aboriginal youth is quite different, as they are yet to realize equal participation and representation in decisions that affect them. It is exemplified in the beginning quote, that urban Aboriginal youth are imploring all of us to nurture and support them – otherwise, we have failed them.

This paper will first provide some background and context on youth participation and engagement. The paper will then provide a brief summary of three of the main themes of the study: assessing youth participation in decision-making; barriers to Aboriginal youth participation; and enablers to Aboriginal youth participation. The paper will conclude with recommendations on how we can best nurture youth participation and engagement.

CONTEXT

Since 1985, the International Youth Year, there has officially been a movement to support the rights of young people. This movement has recognized the intellectual capacity and agency that young people hold in making decisions that have relevance to their lives. The *Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes,* adopted in 1998 by the UN and the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, committed to active participation of youth in all decision making processes, gender-sensitive measures for equal access, and the promotion of education and facilitation of access for youth in the policy-making process (UNESCO 1998). The commitments of the *Lisbon Declaration* were further strengthened and affirmed for implementation by the *World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and Beyond,* adopted by the United Nations in 1995 and it outlines special protection for Indigenous youth (UN 1995). As well, the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* outlines in Article 12 that children have the right to participate in decision-making processes that are relevant to their lives, and the right to influence decisions taken on their behalf (UNHCHR 1989).

At the national level, *A Canada Fit for Children* is a national action plan, which is a commitment to support children's rights by implementing the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Implementation was required in local governance settings by the Canadian federal government in response to the United Nations Special Session on Children in May 2002 (UNESCO 2006).

In the Aboriginal context the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal People* (1996, para. 4.4.9) recommended that all governments pursue the goals of developing and implementing a Canada-wide Aboriginal youth policy of "youth participation at all levels, leadership development, economic development and cultural rebirth, youth involvement in nation building, and cultural and spiritual development." The *Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal People's* 2003 report similarly called for policy and program initiatives for urban Aboriginal youth. As well, key national Aboriginal organizations including the Assembly of First Nations, Métis National Council, Native Women's Association of Canada, and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, have affirmed the need for Aboriginal youth participation through the development of youth councils within their respective organizations.

Although policy has affirmed participation of youth in decision making for the urban Aboriginal youth population, it remains a challenge to implement. With such a young Aboriginal population in Canada, with almost half (48%) below the age of 25 (Statistics Canada 2006), active involvement of youth in decision-making is necessary to ensure representativeness. However, achieving this level of representativeness in urban settings poses significant challenges: the *Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal People* (Chalifoux and Johnson 2003) highlighted how urban areas lack defined Aboriginal governance structures; further,

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urban Aboriginal people are not homogenous, making it difficult to define representation. This creates further difficulty in determining how urban Aboriginal youth are represented.

As such a large portion of the Aboriginal population both on and off-reserve, youth need to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. It is acknowledged that steps have been taken to move towards youth participation within governments and organizations both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal but there must be a move towards entrenching the principles and guidelines for youth participation and engagement.

THEME I: IS OUR GARDEN GROWING? ASSESSING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING.

DIFFERENT INVOLVEMENT AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

The participants resoundingly agreed that, as a whole, we are failing to support and nurture them at the government and organizational level. The participants felt that governments and organizations have not supported their growth by providing equal and respectful opportunities for them to participate in decision making that affect their lives. At the non-Aboriginal community, governmental, and organizational levels most of the youth did not believe that they had input into the broader decisions that affected them. There was a general consensus that there was a long way to go in having true and meaningful representation that was beyond tokenism at all levels of government and organizations.

Participants explained that in the Aboriginal community they believed they were somewhat involved in decision-making. They expressed concern that representation of youth as a whole within the Aboriginal community was inadequate. All of the participants were actively engaged in the Aboriginal community but not in decision making. A resounding theme that emerged was the role of parents in initiating community participation; some identified the beginning of their involvement as the moment they were born Aboriginal. Many youth described how involvement was just something they did with their family,

from attending meetings, events and feasts to becoming involved in community activism and protests. Interviewees also discussed how there was a community responsibility to be involved – it was normal and expected.

The good news is that the young people interviewed believed that on a personal level they had input into decisions that affected their lives directly. They felt that self-reliance and having personal choice was important and empowering to them.

CONCERN OVER NEGATIVE ENGAGEMENT

There was concern expressed regarding the number of youth negatively engaged: in care or incarcerated; facing poverty; with health concerns (i.e., addictions) and/or low educational outcomes; homeless; and being exploited. These phenomena contribute to Aboriginal youth being negatively engaged within society and thus having no, or very little, influence over decisions that affected them.

PARTICIPATION A PART OF PERSONAL GROWTH

A number of older youth expressed that, when they were younger, they did not feel they had much input into their lives but as they became more involved and gained confidence they came to have greater input. Wayne Eagle (pseudonym), 27, said he took opportunities to help himself to make positive changes in his own life, as he was not given much to start with: "I was hungry, thirsty for a better life".

Gaining confidence and self-esteem was described by Stan, 30, as a "journey of learning to use your voice". He added that being involved in decision-making is a right which must be practiced: "We have rights to participate in decision making processes… It's your right and it's there but it's also your responsibility to practice that. If you don't practice that responsibility it diminishes the quality of that right" (Stan, 30).

THEME II: WEEDS ARE STIFLING THE GROWTH OF OUR GARDEN. BARRIERS TO URBAN ABORIGINAL YOUTH PARTICIPATION.

URBAN ABORIGINAL YOUTH CHALLENGED WITH DAILY SURVIVAL

It was heartbreaking to discover the myriad of challenges that these urban Aboriginal youth experience on a daily basis. Amanda, 24, discusses her life as a single mother: "Sometimes it's really overwhelming. Life's really overwhelming. I'm a single mother. I live in low-income housing". All of the youth discussed extreme barriers as a result of socio-economic factors, with poverty being the greatest factor impeding their participation and well-being in general. Youth discussed at length the issue of poverty and the inability to have basics for survival due to difficulty finding work, food and transport and homelessness/housing issues.

INEQUALITY, DISCRIMINATION AND TOKENISM A COMMON OCCURRENCE

All participants expressed frustration with having only token involvement in decision-making. They discussed their dissatisfaction with not being treated respectfully and with equality. This often involved being treated differently than adults, such as not having a vote within a Board of Directors or being limited to an advisory capacity. Some also said that older people and even older youth were holding onto decision-making positions too long.

One of the greatest barriers raised by the youth was the challenges with racism and stereotyping. Many of the youth talked about how it was difficult to be taken seriously by adults who often tokenized them and often racially profiled or stereotyped them.

LEGACY OF INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Participants spoke eloquently about inter-generational residential school issues within their families and communities. Most saw the connection between these issues and the need for healing within Aboriginal communities. They discussed the challenges of growing up in an unhealthy environment, without the support of family or in foster homes, and having to navigate through family and community dysfunction which made it extremely difficult to participate and be engaged in decision making when pressed with these issues on a constant basis.

THEME III: THE BASICS FOR GROWING OUR GARDEN. ENABLERS FOR URBAN ABORIGINAL YOUTH PARTICIPATION.

AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION AT ALL LEVELS

To get beyond the tokenism discussed in the previous theme the participants recommended that youth must be represented in governance at all levels of government and organizations - both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – though initial emphasis should be on representation in existing Aboriginal organizations. What is essential is that this participation be based on equality, including full participation in all levels of decision-making. not just those relevant to youth. Youth must also be afforded the same full and equal powers as their non-youth counterparts including the ability to speak at all meetings and with equal voting powers.

Authentic representation also means that an Aboriginal youth is recruited having the requisite knowledge, background, and experience to provide input. The participants also recommended gender parity that there should be both male and female youth representation.

ECONOMIC SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Participants stressed the importance of incentives to encourage participation, including food at meetings, honoraria, transportation to and from meetings, and child-care. These measures mitigate against economic barriers, and show youth their contributions and time is valued.

The majority of interviewees cited the importance of resources for programs and services, including core funding. They stressed the importance of youth being the central decision makers, developers, administrators, and evaluators of their own programming. Funding gaps in the past have resulted in the closure of offices and programs, which could easily result in death as Aboriginal youth are left to become drawn into crime, drugs, drinking and violence. Participants also identified training and capacity building as essential, as they enable Aboriginal youth to meaningfully participate in processes such as Board of Director governance by training to help them understanding financial statements and proposal assessments.

CREATING SAFE SPACES AND A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH

The concept of "safe spaces" for youth here refers to both physical spaces that they can create and have ownership over, and emotional "spaces" in terms of supportive and validating relationships and interactions with adults and among youth. In terms of physical spaces, many interviewees mentioned the importance of fora where they could engage without fear of marginalization. They also suggested holding events in culturally appropriate community spaces rather than sterile government offices.

Another major theme in the interviews was the role that networks had in initiating and sustaining their involvement in the community. Interviewees described how attending an event helped them establish their peer network, later this involvement lead many of them to work in the Aboriginal community.

In terms of emotional spaces, many youth discussed the importance of respect, of supportive and validating relationships, and of knowing their opinions were legitimized by adults. This included emotional support from family and friend: all interviewees spoke about the role their families had in their community involvement, and of the importance of a strong peer network. Mentorship and role models are also important: participants talked about how being inspired by older youth and adults who mentored them was essential to their growth and their work in the community.

EMPOWERING YOUTH – THEIR WAY

Although enhancing involvement and participation of youth is important, it is equally important that youth have a say in how they become involved. An important theme to emerge was the necessity for youth to find their own voice which helped them build self-esteem. This includes encouraging involvement in the arts: finding their voice and building self-esteem through singing, rapping, painting or theatre. Opportunities for youth to speak truth and express themselves in an open way helped them to deal with their frustrations and sorrows.

Respect for Aboriginal cultures within meetings and events is also key. Of great importance to many of the interviewees was knowledge sharing from Elder to youth, and of revitalizing traditional governance structures that maintained a role for Elders, youth, women, and men within the community.

PART IV: HARVESTING – BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER.

Perhaps the most important theme to emerge was that of resilience and self-reliance in Aboriginal youth, and the key role of community involvement in building that resilience. The emphasis on resiliency underscores that protective factors can reduce negative outcomes. This research has shown that participation promotes resilience, reduces risk, develops youths' competencies, enhances physical and emotional health, improves youth programs and services, and promotes youths' commitment to programs (McCreary Centre Society 2006). This is especially true for those growing up in poverty as their feelings of alienation and anomie from society can be overcome through volunteer experience that provides them with a sense of purpose and coherence (Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement 2003).

Aboriginal youth today face tremendous challenges, including economic disparity, stereotyping and addiction. Nevertheless, participants in this study remain optimistic despite the challenges they faced, and felt they were positively affecting those around them through their involvement in the community. While many acknowledged negative experiences and disappointments, most felt that community participation kept them out of trouble, and connected them to their community and peers: "I can go out and play hockey, instead of going out and doing drugs or whatever and drinking" (Cameron, 16). The staggeringly

high incidence of Aboriginal youth who are negatively engaged (i.e., are incarcerated, facing addiction, have health problems) is well-documented; it is essential to provide opportunities for youth to engage positively early and keep them there so they can go on to inspire others.

For the Aboriginal youth in the study finding their own voice – whether it be through speaking at conferences, rapping, singing or drama – is an important step in empowerment, decolonization, and healing through the acknowledgement of the tradition of oral history and storytelling. It is important to acknowledge the necessity of young people to speak for themselves in their own voice, with their own ideas, thoughts and opinions, particularly as they have historically gone unheard (Eckersley *et al.* 2006).

Participants in the study were clear that the best way to support youth involvement is by properly resourcing programs and providing training and capacity development opportunities. Principles and guidelines for engaging youth speak to the importance of meaningful participation of youth that goes far beyond tokenism to legitimacy and equality (Hart 1992; Sazama, Young and Bates 2002). A number of the participants of the study as well as from the youth forum (Barudin and Corrigan 2005) proposed developing an Aboriginal youth engagement policy, such as that proposed by the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* and *The Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal People's Report* to be adopted by organizations as a framework for engaging Aboriginal youth: participants felt this would set a standard for involving youth and protect them from tokenization and exploitation. Further work is needed at at the national level to define what an Aboriginal youth engagement policy would look like and how it would be implemented at the various levels.

Through this research it was a privilege to hear the inspiring voices of the participants as they spoke in stark terms of the need for adults, programs, services and community to rally around youth and nurture them as one would a garden. Their courage, resilience and commitment stand as reason for real hope and optimism for the future.

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POST-SECONDARY COMPLETION RATES AMONG ON-RESERVE STUDENTS: RESULTS OF A FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

Jeremy Hull has been involved in Aboriginal educational and social research since the 1970s in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. He is currently working on a profile of Aboriginal housing based on the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, a study of Aboriginal post-secondary education based on the 2006 Census, and, is providing technical assistance to a First Nation involved in negotiating a self-government agreement.

ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

A survey of former applicants for post-secondary funding from a First Nation community, was conducted with results analyzed in terms of post-secondary completion rates among these students. It was found that the completion rates were related to a number of student characteristics, as well as characteristics of their schooling and post-secondary experiences. This study found that university completion rates were much lower than college completion rates; that the completion rates of women were higher than those of men; that those who attended the reserve high school had much lower completion rates than others; that those who transferred from one school to another frequently in elementary-secondary school had lower completion rates; and that the students had more success in friendly and cooperative post-secondary environments.

Les résultats d'une enquête sur des étudiants de communautés des Premières nations qui avaient déjà fait une demande de financement d'études postsecondaires sont analysés relativement aux taux d'achèvement des études postsecondaires de ces étudiants. On constate que les taux d'achèvement sont liés à certaines caractéristiques de ces étudiants ainsi qu'à des caractéristiques de l'expérience de leurs années d'école et des études postsecondaires. L'étude conclut que les taux d'achèvement d'études universitaires sont moindres que les taux d'achèvement d'études collégiales, que les taux d'achèvement des femmes sont plus élevés que ceux des hommes, que ceux qui ont fréquenté l'école secondaire de leur réserve ont des taux d'achèvement très inférieurs à ceux des autres, que ceux qui sont passés fréquemment d'une école à une autre aux niveaux primaire et secondaire ont des taux d'achèvement moindres et que les étudiants réussissent mieux dans des milieux où l'enseignement est combiné avec l'emploi.

Previous research concerning Aboriginal post-secondary education has pointed to both progress and continuing difficulties. While Aboriginal educational attainment has increased greatly over the years, the gap in attainment between the Aboriginal and general Canadian population has grown. In comparison to the non-Aboriginal population, Canada's Aboriginal population is far less likely to have graduated from high school and post-secondary institutions. Aboriginal rates of completion of university education are especially low (Hull 2005; Mendelson 2006).

Clearly there is a need to improve the success of Aboriginal students, particularly at the university level.

However, past research has not progressed very far in identifying factors that have a significant impact on Aboriginal student success at university. In order to help address this problem, a follow-up survey of former post-secondary students was designed and carried out in cooperation with a Manitoba First Nation and with funding support from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The purpose of the survey was to better understand the strengths and weaknesses in Aboriginal post-secondary education and to identify ways of improving university completion rates among First Nations students. The survey design was based on previous research concerning factors affecting post-secondary success and on issues raised by the Education Authority board and staff. It took place in the spring and summer of 2007 and focused on students who applied for post-secondary sponsorship in 2000-2001 or 2001-2002.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

A total of 221 former applicants for post-secondary assistance were identified from Education Authority files, of whom 159 (72%) received funding. Most were funded for both of the two target years, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. About 12% of the applicants did not receive funding in the target period but had previously received funding and another 7% did not receive funding at all. About 58% lived on-reserve when they applied and 38% lived off-reserve. (Addresses were unknown for the remainder.) The majority (59%) of those applying for funding were women; this held true both among those living on-reserve (57%) and off-reserve (66%).

Most interviews were carried out in person by a male research assistant, who was a well known resident of the community fluent in both English and the local Aboriginal language. A few interviews were self-administered at the request of the person being interviewed or because the individual lived off-reserve. In appreciation for their participation in the survey, an honorarium of $25 was paid to each person who completed an interview.

The initial sample was made up of every fifth name from the list of 221 applicants; however, it proved very difficult to contact those living off-reserve, even with the assistance of Education Authority, First Nation and local contacts. Within the initial sample a completion rate of 50% was achieved among those living on-reserve but only 6% among those living off-reserve. Additional names were drawn from the list of students and others were contacted opportunistically in the community by the research assistant in an effort to reach a target of 50 interviews. The resulting sample of 46 completed interviews was clearly biased towards on-reserve residents who made up 85% of those interviewed. In addition women were under-represented in the sample, making up 41% of those who completed interviews. Because of problems contacting and interviewing the off-reserve and female populations, the results of this survey should not be viewed as a representative sample. It reflects the population of First Nations post-secondary students, who were resident on-reserve when they applied for funding and who were still living on-reserve five or six years later. Those persons who may have been attending school off-reserve at the time of the survey, or who may have chosen to move off-reserve after attending post-secondary programs, are not part of the sample. At the same time these results may prove useful in exploring some of the issues that affect the on-reserve resident population.

POST-SECONDARY COMPLETION RATES

Post-secondary completion rates were defined as the number of certificates of any type received by students, divided by the number of programs they enrolled in. The survey allowed former students to describe their experiences in up to three separate programs and the 46 individuals in the sample reported their experiences in 138 different programs. In calculating completion rates and other statistics, each program attended was counted separately.

FINDINGS CONCERNING STUDENTS' PERSONAL AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS

Some of the findings confirm the findings of other research concerning the general population:

- Women had a substantially higher post-secondary completion rate (69%) than men (47%).
- Those who transferred from one school to another three or more times during their elementary-secondary years had a much lower completion rate (18%) than those who transferred less often (62%).
- Those whose parents expected them to complete high school or post-secondary education had higher completion rates (53% to 75%) than those whose parents did not expect them to complete high school (20% completion rate).
- Post-secondary completion rates increased with grade levels completed in high school completed, ranging from 33% among those with grade 9 education to 58% among those with high school graduation.
- Married students and students with dependents had higher completion rates (62% and 59%, respectively) than single students and those without dependents (35% and 50%, respectively).

Other findings were unexpected, including:

- Students who spoke both an Aboriginal language and English at home had much lower completion rates (33%) than those who spoke only one language, either Aboriginal (53%) or English (62%).
- Those who described their high school friends' attitudes towards education positively had a lower completion rate (52%) than those who described their friends' attitudes negatively (62%).
- Students who described their parents as highly active in the life of the community had had a *lower* completion rate (37%) than those whose parents were described as moderately active (64% completion rate).
- Those who reported the *lowest* level of participation in after school activities had the *highest* post-secondary completion rate (82%), while those with the *highest* level of participation had a much *lower* post-secondary completion rate (46%).
- One of the most dramatic findings was that students who had attended high school on-reserve had a much lower post-secondary completion rate (7%) than those who either attended the nearby town high school (63%) or other high schools (71%).
- Those who attended high school prior to 1990 had a higher completion rate (78%) than those who attended after 1990 (39%).

FINDINGS CONCERNING POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS AND ENVIRONMENTS

The survey asked about the post-secondary programs that students attended including the location, the services provided and the general school environment. Some students had attended community college programs only (53%), some had attended university programs only (13%) and others had attended both college and university programs (33%). One college, with a campus located close to the reserve, accounted for the 57% of all the student-programs attended.

Several aspects of the post-secondary programs and environments were related to completion rates, including the following:

- Those who attended programs located on or near the reserve had a higher completion rate (64%) than those who attended locations away from the reserve (46%).
- The completion rate of those attending college programs was much higher (63%) than among those attending university programs (38%).
- Those enrolled in skilled trades programs had the highest completion rate (86%) followed by those involved in business administration and management programs (70%) and technical or para-professional programs (62%). Those enrolled in general studies or upgrading had the lowest completion rate (23%).
- Those who attended for a longer time period had higher completion rates. 80% of those who had attended for 3 or 4 years and 100% of those who had attended for 5 years had completed their programs.

Students were asked to rate their learning environment in several ways. Higher completion rates were generally associated with a more positive view of the environment but some aspects of the environment seem to have a much larger effect than others. As shown in the figure below, the biggest differences in completion rates were found in relation to how easy it was to socialize with other students and how well students worked together. Where it was felt that it was easy to socialize, the completion rate was 61%, compared to 41% when students felt it was not easy to socialize. Similarly, where it was felt that students worked well together the completion rate was 62%, compared to 42% when it was not felt that students worked well together. In contrast, the provision of counselling and tutoring services do not seem to be as strongly related to student success.

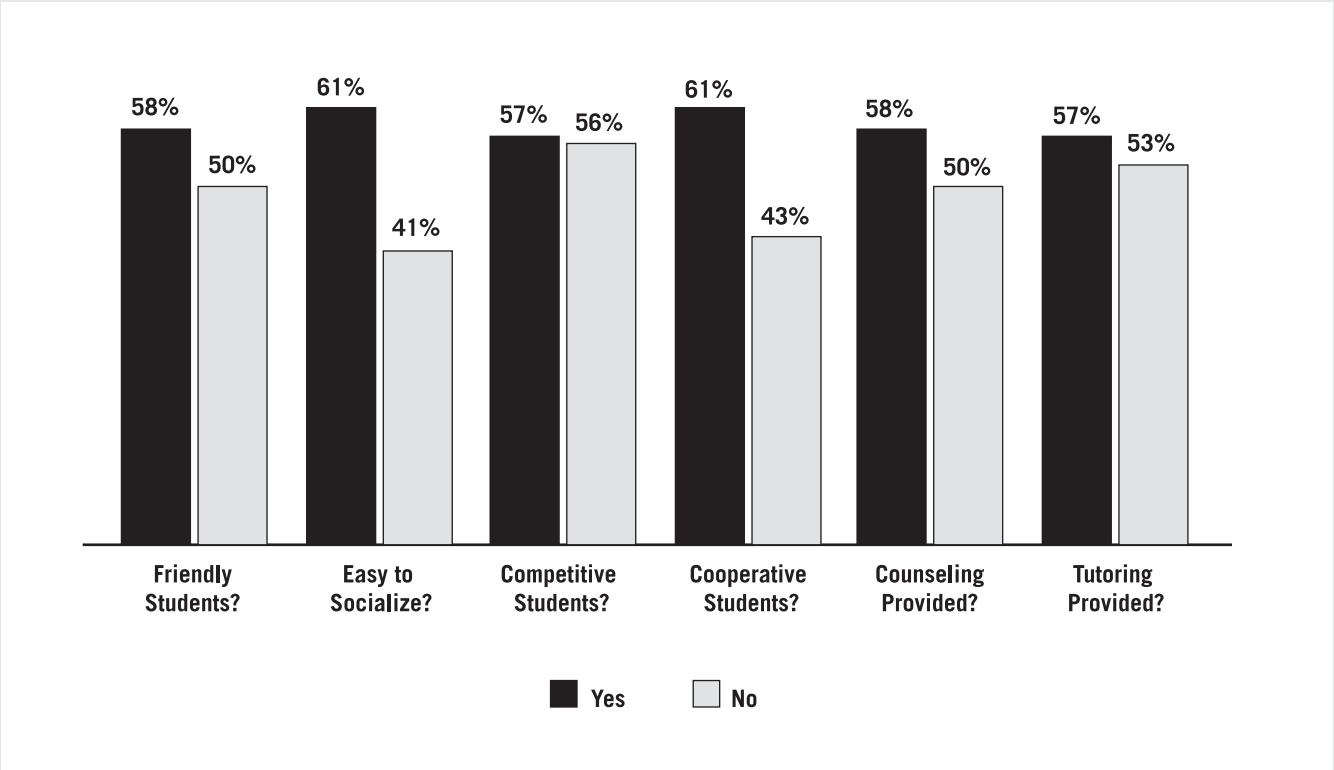
Students reported many more benefits than problems when living on-reserve and they reported slightly more problems than benefits identified when living off-reserve. Among those living on-reserve while attending school, the most frequently mentioned benefits did not have to pay for room and board and the support available from family and friends. Other benefits, such as being with the student's family and children, availability of transportation and babysitting were also mentioned. The most frequently mentioned issue for students living at the reserve was the problem of being distracted from their studies. Some people also mentioned that they experienced financial difficulties while studying and living at the reserve.

Those studying and living away from the reserve identified the benefits as learning to be more independent, having fewer distractions from studying and having a better quality of education or access to better facilities and equipment. On the negative side, financial problems were often identified among those living away from the reserve. A number of these students also mentioned the related issues of loneliness and having to adapt to the culture of the city. While a number of people identified the lack of distractions as a benefit of living away from the reserve, some said that they experienced more distractions when living away.

GENDER, MARITAL STATUS AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

The issue of marital status and presence of dependents was examined more closely in relation to gender. It was found that the completion rates of women and men follow

FIGURE 1: Post-Secondary Completion Rates and Aspects of the Post-Secondary Environment



different patterns in relation to marital status and dependents (see Figure 2). While women with dependents had higher completion rates than women without dependents, the opposite was true for men. This suggests that men have greater difficulty balancing the demands of school and children than women do. It is noteworthy that, in our survey we did not find any single men with dependents who had applied for post-secondary assistance.

The survey also asked former students whether or not family responsibilities had affected their studies. There was little difference in the completion rates of women who said that family responsibilities interfered with their studying (67%) and those who said it did not interfere (70%). But among men, those who said family responsibilities interfered with studying had much a lower completion rate (38%) than those who said it did not (59%).

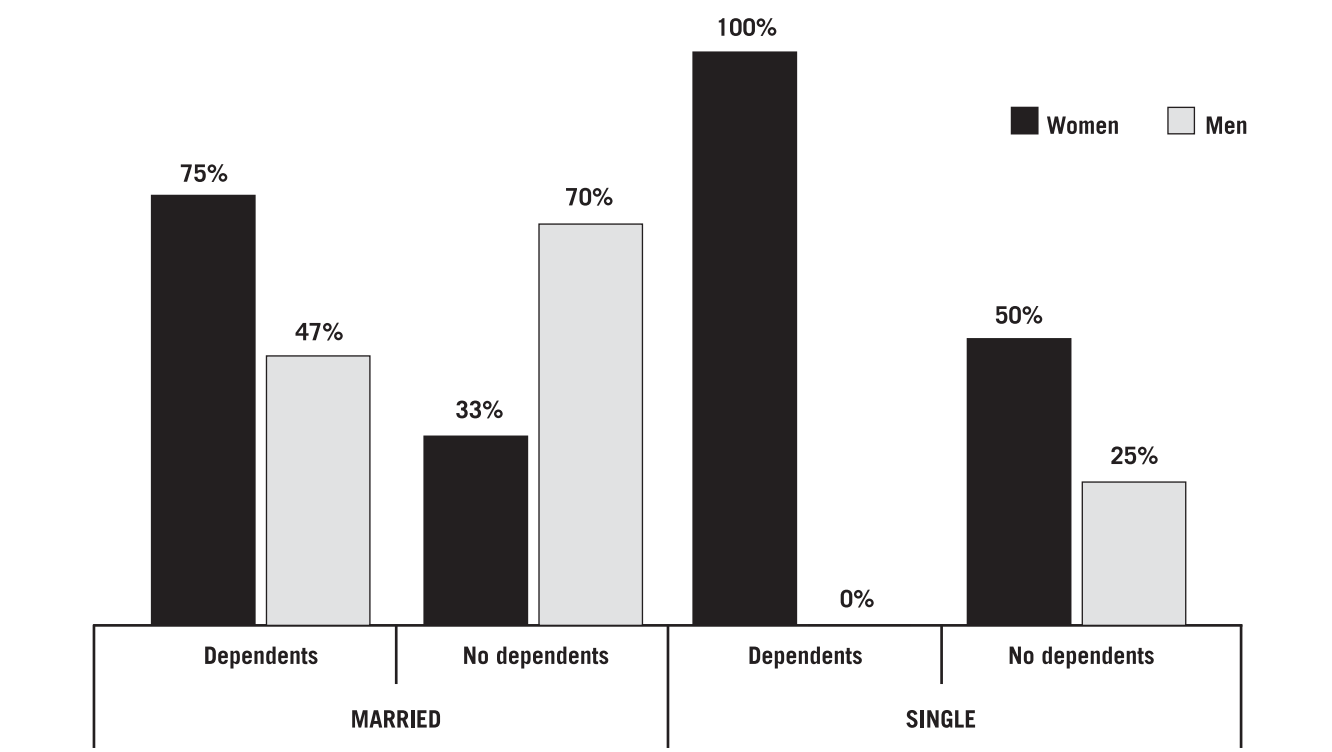
AGE AND COMPLETION RATES

The relationship between age and program completion is not straight forward. As shown in Figure 3, two groups of students appear to have more success than others: older students entering post-secondary programs for the first time and younger students entering their second or third programs before they reach the age of 25. Perhaps the first group represents mature individuals, who have decided on a career later in life and are well motivated to pursue that career. The second group may represent students who have been relatively successful in school and who have gone through a sequence of post-secondary programs relatively quickly, building on the skills gained in their first program to go on to a second or third program.

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND TIME PERIOD

Because the completion rate among those who attended the reserve high school was so low, this issue was explored in relation to whether or not the students actually completed high school. It was found that, even among the reserve school students who completed grade 12, the post-secondary completion rate was quite low (8%). Among those who attended the nearby town high school, those who graduated had a higher

FIGURE 2: Post-Secondary Completion Rates by Marital Status, Dependents and Sex

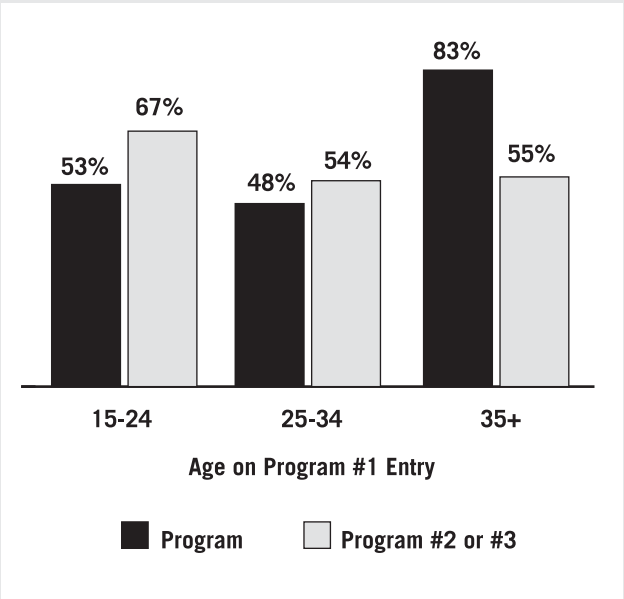


post-secondary completion rate (80%) than those who did not (33%).

As noted above it was found that students who attended prior to 1990 had a higher completion rate than others. This was examined in relation to the school attended. None of the students who attended the reserve school had attended prior to 1990. Among those who attended the nearby town high school, those who attended prior to 1990 had a higher post-secondary completion rate (76%) than those who attended after 1990 (33%). Among the students who attended other high schools, the post-secondary completion rates was slightly higher among thos who graduated (58%) compared to those who did not (52%).

The time period when the former students attended high school was important, at least among those attending the nearby town high school. Those who attended this high school before 1990 had a much higher completion rate (76%) than those who attended after 1990 (33%). Among the students who attended other high schools, the post-secondary completion rates were relatively high, whether they attended before 1990 (86%) or later (89%).

FIGURE 3: Post-Secondary Completion Rates by Age on Entry and Program Sequence



CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Following are some of the conclusions that arise from the findings.

CHALLENGES FACING RESERVE HIGH SCHOOLS

The growth of high school programs on reserves has been successful in making education more accessible to First Nations students and increasing high school participation and completion rates. However, the findings of this survey suggest that there may be a problem with the quality of education obtained in reserve schools, at least in terms of preparation for post-secondary studies. These findings may be related to the age of the students, their level of maturity and perhaps to a process of self-selection among students who attend the school. Nevertheless, they suggest that reserve schools are facing a major challenge in attempting to achieve both increased participation and strong preparation for post-secondary education.

SUCCESS OF WOMEN COMPARED TO MEN

Aboriginal women are consistently more successful than Aboriginal men in post-secondary education, as shown in Census-based and other studies. This survey of on-reserve students is consistent with this general trend, showing a large gap in success between women and men. The results also suggest that child care responsibilities do not prevent women from being successful; in fact, those with dependents are more successful than other women. In contrast, child care responsibilities appear to be a greater burden to male students.

PROGRAM LOCATION

In this survey it was found that students studying close to home had higher completion rates than those studying farther away. This finding must be interpreted cautiously, both because of the on-reserve bias in the sample and the differences in the types of programs offered near the community and those offered elsewhere. Still, Education Authority officials feel that local community-based programs have been more successful than other types of programs and the comments from the students indicate they experienced more challenges when living off-reserve, such as financial pressures and adapting to the culture of the city.

TYPE OF PROGRAM

College students, students enrolled in skilled trades, technical, administrative and paraprofessional programs have higher completion rates. The relatively high completion rate among college students is consistent with census findings.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The survey findings suggests that First Nations students do better where there is a friendly and cooperative atmosphere among students and that this may be more important than other factors.

YEARS IN THE PROGRAM

The survey has shown that greater success has been achieved by the students who stayed in their programs for longer periods of time. Those First Nation students who persevere have achieved success.

AGE AND MATURITY

The evidence from the survey concerning the effect of student age is not consistent. On the one hand, older students have higher success rates than younger students, when entering their first post-secondary program. On the other hand, younger students who quickly go on to a second or third post-secondary program do well. It seems likely that other factors besides age are involved.

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EXPLAINING THE PARADOX OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG ABORIGINAL CANADIANS

Chantelle Richmond is Ojibway of the Pic River First Nation in Ontario. She holds a PhD in Geography from McGill University. She is currently Assistant Professor in Geography and First Nation Studies at the University of Western Ontario. Chantelle's research seeks to understand how the physical and social environments can interact to influence the health and wellness of Indigenous Canadians.

ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

Societies that foster high quality social environments and integration produce healthier populations. The mechanisms underlying the protective effect of social integration appear to be through various forms of social support. Despite reportedly high rates of social support within the Aboriginal population, however, current patterns of health are overrepresented by social ills such as family violence, alcoholism and suicide. This paper explores this paradox through qualitative interviews with Aboriginal Community Health Representatives (CHR's). CHR's narratives point to two key explanations for the health-support paradox: (i) social support is not a widely accessible resource; and (ii) the negative health effects of social support can sometimes outweigh the positive ones. The formation of health behaviours and cultural norms that underpin social support is inextricably tied to the colonial legacy and poor material circumstances that characterize Canada's Aboriginal communities. The pathways through which the physical, material and social environments interact to influence the health of Aboriginal Canadians are complex; and, more qualitative research is needed to understand what these interactions mean for health and social support in the every day lives of Aboriginal Canadians. Policy efforts to initiate healthy behaviours cannot succeed without coinciding material investments.

Les sociétés qui favorisent les environnements sociaux de haute qualité et l'intégration produisent des populations en meilleure santé. Les mécanismes qui sous-tendent l'effet protecteur de l'intégration sociale semblent le faire par diverses formes de soutien social. Malgré des taux de soutien social qui seraient élevés au sein de la population autochtone, les tendances actuelles en matière de santé sont surreprésentées par des maux sociaux comme la violence familiale, l'alcoolisme et le suicide. Cet article explore ce paradoxe au moyen d'entrevues qualitatives de représentants autochtones en santé communautaire dont les récits soulignent la pertinence de deux raisons principales expliquant le paradoxe du soutien de santé : i) le soutien social n'est pas une ressource largement accessible, et ii) les effets négatifs du soutien social sur la santé peuvent parfois l'emporter sur les effets positifs. La formation de comportements et de normes culturelles en matière de santé qui sous-tendent le soutien social est inextricablement liée à l'héritage colonial et aux piètres circonstances matérielles qui caractérisent les communautés autochtones du Canada. Les voies par lesquelles les milieux physique, matériel et social interagissent pour influer sur la santé des Canadiens autochtones sont complexes, et il faut plus de recherche qualitative pour comprendre ce que signifient ces interactions pour le soutien en matière de santé et le soutien social dans la vie quotidienne des Canadiens autochtones. Les efforts visant à élaborer des politiques pour favoriser les comportements sains ne peuvent réussir sans investissements matériels coïncidents.

"Despite reportedly high rates of social support within the Aboriginal population, current patterns of health suggest that these social relationships are not working to promote Aboriginal health as the social support literature suggests it should. How do we explain these differences? Potential explanations relate explicitly to Aboriginal people's experience of colonialism as well as the socio-cultural disruption and material deprivation that have ensued in so many Aboriginal communities following years of environmental dispossession (Waldram *et al.* 2006; Adelson 2005; Kirmayer, *et al*. 2000)."

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, people who are vulnerable and socially disadvantaged have less access to health resources, they tend to get sick more often and they often die earlier than people in more privileged social positions (Evans *et al.* 2001). Poverty, social exclusion, poor housing and poor health systems are among the main social causes of ill health - those to which Rose (1992) refers to as the "cause of the causes". These causes of ill health refer to the *social conditions* that give rise to high risk of non-communicable disease, whether acting through unhealthy behaviours (e.g., smoking, drug use) or as a response to living under stressful life conditions (e.g., crowding, violence) (Marmot 2004). Compared with the general population of Canada, Aboriginal people experience a significantly higher burden of morbidity and mortality (Frohlich *et al.* 2006; Codon 2005; Adelson 2005; MacMillan *et al.* 1996), the roots of which lie in a legacy of colonial relations, dispossession from traditional lands and territories, rapid cultural change and dependency (Waldram *et al.* 2006; Bartlett 2003).

Over the past few decades, researchers have attempted to explain the roots of these disparities through the study of the larger societal conditions that influence health outcomes among the Aboriginal population. Particular focus has been on issues related to material disadvantage, urbanization, and political and environmental marginalization (Frohlich *et al.* 2006; Richmond *et al.* 2005; Waldram *et al.* 2006). Amidst this flurry of academic pursuit into the determinants of Aboriginal health, however, few researchers have examined how Aboriginal health may be influenced when features of the broader societal context (e.g., colonial legacy, poverty) interact with more proximal health determinants, such as social support. Societies that foster high quality social environments, trusting relationships and social support produce healthier populations (Berkman and Syme 1979). The health benefits of social affiliation have been widely recognized (House *et al.* 1988). The mechanisms underlying the protective effect of social integration appear to be through access to various forms of social support (Kawachi 1999), such as affection and intimacy, emotional support and positive social interaction (House 1981).

In the context of Aboriginal Canadians, recent statistical analyses suggest that social support is both a solid dimension of Aboriginal health (Richmond *et al.* 2007a) and a significant determinant of self-rated health among Aboriginal peoples (Richmond *et al.* 2007b). An interesting paradox emerges: Despite reportedly high rates of social support within the Aboriginal population, current patterns of health suggest that these social relationships are not working to promote Aboriginal health as the social support literature suggests it should. How do we explain these differences? Potential explanations relate explicitly to Aboriginal people's experience of colonialism as well as the socio-cultural disruption and material deprivation that have ensued in so many Aboriginal communities following years of environmental dispossession (Waldram *et al.* 2006; Adelson 2005; Kirmayer, *et al,* 2000). As evidenced in the social epidemiological literature, lower social position reduces access to kinds of interpersonal resources embodied in the concepts of social support and social networks (Link and Phelan 1995). This can negatively impact on adult behaviour and psychosocial characteristics (Lynch *et al.* 1995). The current paper explores this paradox of health and social support within the Aboriginal population and addresses two specific objectives: 1) to describe the types and sources of social support in Aboriginal communities and explore the mechanisms that determine access to these sources of support; and, 2) to explore the health-enhancing and health damaging effects of social support.

METHODS AND ANALYSES

As described elsewhere (Richmond 2007; Richmond and Ross 2008a, 2008b), this paper draws from narrative analyses of in-depth interviews with a national group of First Nation and Inuit Community Health Representatives (CHRs). At the community level, CHRs are front-line health workers who perform a broad range of in-house, health-related functions including environmental health, health

"As evidenced in the social epidemiological literature, lower social position reduces access to kinds of interpersonal resources embodied in the concepts of social support and social networks (Link and Phelan 1995). This can negtively impact on adult behaviour and psychosocial characteristics."

delivery, medical administration, counseling and home visits, education and community development as well as mental health. Such health services are necessary in communities who do not have a permanent doctor (e.g., doctors are regularly flown into some isolated communities). The breadth of the CHRs duties makes her a common fixture in the everyday community landscape. The cross-over between private and public spaces can make it very difficult for the CHR to maintain privacy in her own life; it also means that she is acutely aware of her social surroundings and the health needs of her fellow community members (many of whom may be family members, friends or neighbours). As a result, the CHR plays a vitally supportive, yet often devalued, role within her community. Even so, 23 of 26 respondents contributing to this study reported that they do the job because they want to help their communities. It was precisely because of the wide occupational context of CHRs and their dedicated passion to their communities, both which link so explicitly to provision of social support that CHRs were selected as the group ideally positioned to provide detailed information about the social support-health connection in their local communities.

In May 2005, CHRs were invited to participate in this research at the annual meeting of the National Indian and Inuit Community Health Representatives Organization (NIICHRO). In the months following the NIICHRO conference, telephone interviews were undertaken with 26 CHRs[1] in rural and remotely located First Nation and Inuit communities. The interviews focused on three key areas: (1) perceptions of community health and changes over time; (2) the nature of, and access to, social support; and, (3) how social supports can impact health. Depth interviews with CHRs provide a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental processes that affect health at the community level. Specifically, the CHR's narratives were examined to formulate explanations about the paradox around which this paper is theoretically centered; that is, in spite of reportedly high levels of social support among Aboriginal Canadians, current patterns of health and social indicators point overwhelmingly to social causes, thereby suggesting that social support is not working to improve and/or buffer health as it should. Based on narrative analyses of the interviews with CHRs, two key explanations emerged: (1) social support is not a widely accessible resource (Richmond 2007); and, (2) negative health effects of social support can sometimes outweigh the positive ones (Richmond and Ross 2008). These explanations are described below.

RESULTS

REDUCED ACCESS TO SOCIAL SUPPORT

CHRs pointed to two types of social support: institutional and intimate. Institutional supports were defined as those employed to provide support to their community members (e.g., Nurse, Social Worker). Intimate supports were defined as family, friends, and fellow community members. CHRs noted that in many of their communities, there exists significant overlap between these sources of social support, which can sometimes reduce *access* to social support. That is, the overlap in types of support (i.e., as one person fulfills the role of intimate support and institutional support) may lead to high levels of social integration in the community, but it can also lead to tension around the supportive *roles* community members are expected to fill. This can have negative consequences for those providing support as well as those on the receiving end. For example, the ease at which the types and sources of social supports can become muddied in the context of these small, often remotely located, communities was observed by "Dolly" who remarked that she could not escape her role as a CHR, even while not working:

> When you work in your community you can get called any time. I can be in the grocery store getting my groceries, and a person will come over and talk to me about their problem. It can be very hard because sometimes when you leave your job you like to go home and forget about your job, but you live here, you face it (Dolly).

Indeed, such tensions around the types and sources of support can significantly complicate one's access to social supports, as they intensify issues such as trust, confidentiality, community divisions and perceptions around social hierarchies, all of which may be exacerbated in small communities where privacy can be hard to come by.

Beyond these tensions around the types and sources of social support, CHRs described the post-colonial context of their communities as the most pervasive issue underpinning access to social support (Richmond 2007). The negative effects of environmental dispossession extend from historical times and well into the contemporary social fabric of communities. They shape the way people make a living; the community's access to educational and cultural opportunities; and, the means through which families and community members relate to one another socially. Among their fellow community members, CHRs described a shared experience of trauma related to forced assimilation (i.e., through attendance at residential schools), loss of lands and rapidly changing culture - all of which CHR's described to be at the root of many current-day social problems in their communities, including parenting skills, socioeconomic dependence, trust, group belonging and the nature of help. These findings are illustrated as a framework (*Figure 1*), which conceptualizes how features of the broader societal context of post-colonial communities can manifest in the local social conditions of places, thereby reducing access to social support. For example, widespread poverty is causing a shift in the meaning of help, meaning that less community members are willing to help "for free":

> The great voluntary base that we had before… Well, you don't really see that anymore. I think this community has come to a point where you can do something to help others, but then there are always dollars attached to it. Money talks (laughs). Today, I see that my kids expect to be paid in return for their help (*Margaret*).

CHRs identified the need for extra income to be so great in some communities that core beliefs about sharing and reciprocation are no longer heeded as important values. Another example relates to parenting skills, which have been affected by the residential school experience:

> This community had a residential school, and it was here for many years. A lot of them [students] were pretty young when they went in there…They had a really traumatic experience. *And so a lot of children that attended these residential schools now have children themselves?* Yes they have children, and it depends on the cycle, you know? If they themselves have been abused, then the abuse will keep going on and on, so that makes it very sad (*Martha*).

Health and social policy options must make efforts to recognize the post-colonial influences that affect Aboriginal peoples (Frohlich 2006; Waldram 2006; Adelson 2005; Browne and Smye 2004) as well as study the connections between these influences and how health determinants, like social support, play out in local places as a result of this legacy.

SOCIAL SUPPORT CAN HAVE HEALTH-DAMAGING CONSEQUENCES

Results of the CHRs interview data reveal that there are health-enhancing and health-damaging properties of social support. Furthermore, the negative properties of support can significantly outweigh the positive ones, particularly when they operate in response to conditions of poverty (Richmond and Ross 2008). CHRs identified social support to operate at varying structural levels, beginning with the individual and extending outward to family and community. CHRs identified the supportive behaviours associated with these varying levels of social structure as important for health, as they embed individuals within a social context, thereby reinforcing sense of identity, belonging and cultural norms.

CHRs stated, however, that these forms of belonging are not uniformly health-enhancing at the individual level. The social norms and health behaviours to which one subscribes in the identity-building process can sometimes harm health, for example, as a battered wife in the case of intimate partner violence or a drinking partner in the case of alcoholism. CHRs described these activities as occurring frequently in their communities; and, they identified that conformity pressure and loyalties associated with these ties, in conjunction with the small, isolated nature of First Nation and Inuit communities, can make it impossible to disobey the social rules associated with these relationships:

> Let's say you and 5 friends smoke cigarettes and 1 of you decides to quit and the others don't, so then what happens? You're abandoned. You are really kind of alienated and isolated because you lose your friendships. You hear them [community members] talking about that, not just with cigarettes but with drugs or drinking, they lose their friends (*Laura*).

CHR's recognized that one's loyalties to their social ties can actually 'trap' them within a normalized cycle of damaging health behaviours and, as such, healthy lifestyle changes (e.g., losing weight, becoming sober) may require an individual to physically remove himself/herself from the social environment or social relationship wherein such behaviours were enabled. In the following example, Nora explains how her husband had to do just that as he conquered his alcoholism:

> He has had to change his lifestyle, his friends, and he found friends on the outside [off the reserve] who support him. He had to find friends that are sober like him… In his program he learned that if he wants to change his lifestyle, he has got to change his friends as well. He couldn't continue with the same friends. He misses them and he will tell them 'if you want to join me you will just have to abstain from alcohol and not be a bad influence,' so he's really been helping his friends too, to try and abstain (*Nora*).

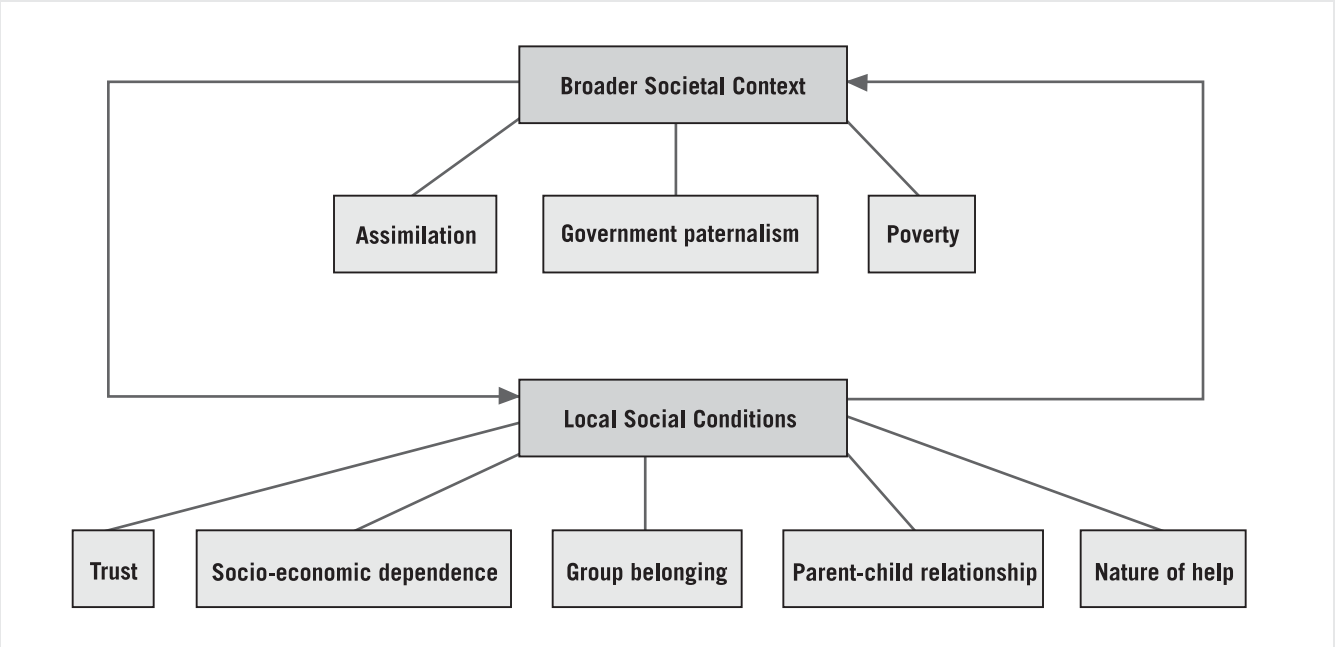
While these lifestyle changes may have positive consequences for physical health, they can be detrimental to one's emotional status, as they may lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. CHR's reported that these feelings often occur when youth leave their communities for the first time (e.g., for post-secondary education).

The CHR's narratives therefore emphasize that it is negative health behaviours shared within the context of socially supportive ties that be harmful for health. In the context of the overwhelming poverty that exists in so many First Nation and Inuit communities, these negative behaviours can be understood as basic coping mechanisms for those suffering the effects of living under stressful lifeconditions. CHR's indicated that such behaviours (e.g., smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, poor dietary practices) are invariably reflective of the social norms, values and expectations held at the family and community levels: As conditions related to poverty continue to prevail in the these communities, we may expect these behaviours to persist as well.

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR POLICY

Within the Aboriginal health literature, there has been little research directed at identifying or understanding the role of social support for health; however, recent analyses have identified social support as a strong dimension and determinant of Aboriginal health (Richmond *et al.* 2007a, 2007b). Still, the persistence of socially caused disease and mortality remains a common trend in the Aboriginal population (Adelson 2005). This phenomenon therefore begs the paradox around which this paper is theoretically centered: given what we know about the health protective properties of social support, how and why it is that patterns of social dysfunction continue to ravage indicators of population health?

FIGURE 1: Access to social support in the post colonial context



Source: Reproduced from: Richmond, 2007

"Environmental dispossession and the impending poverty it has inflicted on First Nation and Inuit communities is most starkly represented in patterns of morbidity and mortality. As Adelson (2005; S45) notes, health disparities are directly and indirectly associated with social, economic, cultural and political inequities. The end result of this is a disproportionate burden of ill health and social suffering upon Aboriginal populations of Canada."

The CHRs interviewed for this research were able to articulate the role of the post-colonial context, in particular that of poverty, as a fundamental cause (Link and Phelan 1995) of the current day social problems that plague their communities. The post-colonial context manifests in powerful ways to shape access and health benefit achieved from social support. However, increased access to social support does not necessarily translate into improved health. The CHRs discussed how the supportive behaviours of one's social ties can operate in both negative and positive ways. Strong connection to family and community provides sense of identity and sense of belonging, which is important for health; but the health behaviours shared within these social contexts can also harm health, for instance, when these behaviours operate in response to poverty and other forms of social disadvantage (Marmot 2002; Lynch *et al.* 1997).

As witnessed in health studies with other vulnerable populations (Krieger 2001; Navarro 1990), factors such as poverty and a low social position strongly influence patterns of Aboriginal health. Environmental dispossession and the impending poverty it has inflicted on First Nation and Inuit communities is most starkly represented in patterns of morbidity and mortality. As Adelson (2005; S45) notes, health disparities are directly and indirectly associated with social, economic, cultural and political inequities. The end result of this is a disproportionate burden of ill health and social suffering upon Aboriginal populations of Canada. Poverty cascades from the community level and down to that of the individual, wherein psychological responses to inequality with the greater Canadian population manifest, mainly through health behaviours, as widespread social dysfunction. These behaviours result as powerful responses to stress, anxiety and coping with the circumstances of living in poverty (Evans *et al.* 2001; Marmot 2004).

Two directions for policy emerge from these findings. First and foremost, changes in the health and wellness of Aboriginal peoples must be rooted in policy attempts focusing on eliminating poverty and improving the social environments of First Nation and Inuit communities. Health education is important for improving health behaviours at the individual and family levels. However, interventions designed to initiate healthy behaviours cannot succeed without coinciding material investments such as job creation, meaningful opportunities for training and safe social environments in which children, youth and adults can live, work and socialize (Marmot 2005; Rose 1992). Interventions that focus on issues related to poverty, social exclusion, poor housing and poor health systems are fundamental for improving the quality of Aboriginal social environments and for providing brighter futures among Aboriginal youth. Along these same lines, policy attempts to improve health and health behaviours must take into consideration the significant cultural value associated with connection to the physical environment.

Second, policy interventions must target not only individuals but families and communities as well (Richmond *et al.* 2007a; Browne and Smye 2004). Social support has been identified as a concrete health dimension and has been associated with thriving health. Improving quality of life among Canada's Aboriginal peoples, therefore, requires health policy and programs that address the social determinants of health in an inclusive and community-based way. Such holistic models are important for unifying communities and building on the innate resources of our First Nation and Inuit communities – the spirit of its people.

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TOWARDS CULTURAL WELL-BEING: IMPLICATIONS OF REVITALISING TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL RELIGION

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

After reviewing conflicting numbers from different surveys regarding the extent to which traditional Aboriginal 'Spirituality' is practiced on-reserve, this paper makes an argument for the potential well-being effects of revitalizing traditional Aboriginal religious practices by making an analogy to observed well-being impacts of revitalizing traditional languages. The conclusion is that language and religious practices are not only closely interrelated but also that their revitalization has demonstrable impacts on individual and community well-being.

Après avoir examiné des chiffres contradictoires résultant de différentes enquêtes sur la mesure dans laquelle la « spiritualité » autochtone est pratiquée dans les réserves, les auteurs de cet article soutiennent, par analogie avec les répercussions observées sur le bien-être de la revitalisation des langues ancestrales, que la revitalisation des pratiques religieuses autochtones traditionnelles peut avoir des effets sur le bien-être. Les auteurs en viennent à la conclusion que non seulement les langues et les pratiques religieuses sont étroitement liées, mais que la revitalisation des unes et des autres a des répercussions démontrables sur le bien-être individuel et communautaire.

"Why is it important to revitalize traditional Aboriginal religions?" some might ask. This is an important question, which merits a serious response. A great deal of research effort has been dedicated in recent years to better understanding the potential impact on well-being of revitalizing traditional Aboriginal languages and/or governance institutions, or of culturally relevant programming in fields such as justice or education. As well, at least in non-Aboriginal settings, there is some evidence that strong religious institutions can correlate positively with some measures of well-being. However, there is not a great deal of research on the specific question of the potential benefit in terms of well-being to be derived from revitalizing traditional Aboriginal religions. This paper seeks to chart a path towards an evidence-based response to that question, by developing an argument by analogy regarding the impacts of revitalizing traditional Aboriginal languages.

First, we look at the available data regarding the religions in which Canada's Aboriginal people claim to participate. We then compare numbers of Aboriginal persons claiming to participate in traditional Aboriginal religious traditions as found in the 2001 Census of Canada, the 2002-03 First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS), and the 2001 *Tenuous Connections* report. What we find is that these three sources provide conflicting numbers.

The 2001 Census was the last occasion on which the religion question was asked; the next instance will be in 2011. Of the 1,359,010 respondents self-identifying as Aboriginal in 2001, 27,745 (or 2%) claimed "'Aboriginal spirituality". In contrast, 577,975 (42.5%) Aboriginal persons claimed to be Catholic; 384,185 (22.1%) claimed a version of Protestantism; and, 299,685 (28.2%) said they participate in no religion.[1] When we consider the numbers of persons on-reserve, we find a similar picture: of the 321,855 Aboriginal persons living on-reserve, 14,455 (4.5%) claimed "Aboriginal spirituality". By far the vast majority of respondents on-reserve claimed Catholicism (142,785 – 44.2%); the bulk of the remaining selected a form of Protestantism (102,130 – 31.7%); or, no religion (51,730 – 16.1%).

The 2002-03 RHS surveyed 22,602 Aboriginal Individuals living in 238 First Nations communities across Canada, with the exclusion of Nunavut.[2] With regard to questions regarding religions, we find that 76.4% of the respondents consider traditional "spirituality" and 70.3% "religion", such as Christianity, important. This suggests that many Aboriginal persons value both Christian and traditional Aboriginal religions (RHS 2005: 35).[3] They may also practice both – but RHS does not ask this question and Census does not provide space for multiple responses.

The *Tenuous Connections* report was prepared by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC). It queried 340 participants in Ontario: 255 of them were youth interviews, 33 focus group participants and 52 additional interviews with parents, front-line workers and Elders. (OFIFC 2002:11-17) This survey was explicitly about Aboriginal youth sexual practices and their outcomes but some questions have relevance to traditional religions.[4] Participants were queried whether they followed "Native," Christian or other spiritual traditions: 43% identified with "Native" spiritual traditions, 28% with no tradition, "13% identified exclusively as Christian, and 11% said they followed both "Native" and Christian Spiritual ways." (OFIFC 2002:48)

The table below provides a summary of the percentage of individuals valuing or claiming they participate in traditional Aboriginal religions in each source:

Obviously, there are issues regarding the comparability of sample size and scope. Nonetheless, we find significant differences in terms of the percentages of people claiming to participate in, or who value, traditional Aboriginal religions. The discrepancies range from an order of 10 (Census vs. *Tenuous Connections*) to 17 (Census vs. RHS). However, it is not methodologically sound to assume that "valuing" traditional Aboriginal religions can be taken directly as the number of respondents actively engaging in these practices. Let us assume, therefore, that at least half of the 17,268 RHS respondents "valuing" traditional religions practice them regularly. This leaves us with 42.1% of the respondents or 8,634 persons. This represents a factor just under ten when compared to the percentage of Census respondents noted above.

SOURCE / # RESPONDENTS	CENSUS/1.36M OR 322K ON-RESERVE	RHS/22K	TENUOUS CONNECTIONS/340
% Traditional religions	2% total 4.5% on-reserve	90%	43%

Next, I explore the positive well-being impacts that revitalizing traditional Aboriginal languages can bring. I use language revitalization as a proxy for revitalizing traditional religions. There are several good reasons to look to the case of language revitalization for insight into the potential impacts of revitalizing traditional Aboriginal religions. First, it is worth noting that the body of research available on the impacts of language revitalization is much more extensive than is the case for religious revitalization (RHS 2005:33). More importantly for this discussion however, religion, like language, constitutes one of the main cultural drivers of a society; it is deeply implicated in establishing and maintaining a culture's worldview, identity and continuity. One might add that language and religion are not separated in the Aboriginal world view[5]: it could be said, for example, that involvement in traditional ceremonies is antecedent to learning one's traditional language.[6]

In terms of conclusive findings regarding the impact on well-being of language revitalization, the research is split between economic and non-economic aspects of well-being. Research with respect to economic benefits to be gained from language revitalization can be fairly described as inconclusive. From the viewpoint of human capital theory, languages are a resource people can draw upon to increase their relative productivity, and to promote local cohesion and workforce self-confidence (Crystal 2000: 27-31). Further, as a form of human capital (as versus physical capital such as transportation infrastructure, for which laws of scarcity inform calculations of value), a language increases in value as the number of people using it increases. Nonetheless, Muhlhauser and Samania (2004:21-23) note that existing economic studies of minority languages lack sophistication, adding that while language preservation and economic development are not mutually exclusive, computing the benefits of language revitalization is a challenging, imprecise task. (Muhlhauser & Samania 2004:34-36)

Research regarding the impacts of Aboriginal language vitality on non-economic aspects of well-being is more promising. UBC psychologist Michael Chandler's 20 years of research on the relationship between well-being and "cultural continuity" in First Nations communities in British Columbia has been extensively reported. Chandler's

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working hypothesis is that the suicide rates should vary as a function of the degree to which Indigenous communities have strategies in place that help preserve a measure of cultural continuity in face of all the dramatic changes resulting from colonization. (Chandler & Proulx 2006a:16) As his work has shown, high suicide rates among First Nations in B.C. are an "actuarial fiction": 90% of all Aboriginal youth suicides take place in 15% of the bands while more than half of the province's bands did not experience a suicide during the fourteen years Chandler's research on suicide was active. (Chandler & Proulx 2006a:16) Community-level analysis shows that those First Nations that were successful in preserving ties to their past and achieving a measure of local control over their present and future are characterized by significantly lower youth suicide rates, while bands that did not achieve similar means to maintain cultural continuity "typically suffer youth suicide rates many hundreds of times higher than the national average." (Chandler & Proulx 2006a:16)

Chandler argues that that the risk of suicide "rises, in important part, as a consequence of disruptions for those key individual and cultural identity-preserving practices that are required to sustain responsible ownership of a past and a hopeful commitment to the future. (Chandler & Proulx 2006b:8; cf., Chandler & Proulx 2006a:16ff) Early studies (Chandler & Lalonde 1998, 2004) analyzed community-level suicide rates according to degree of local control over key institutions, including health, education and – notably – "programs or facilities to maintain or transmit cultural resources" as well as presence of women in government and local control of child protection programs.

In 2007, vitality of traditional languages was added as an indicator. They found that those bands with greater than 50% of language knowledge had fewer suicides than those

"Revitalizing traditional Aboriginal religions could be another means by which individuals and cultures can locate themselves in time, which can improve personal and cultural continuity and increase well-being. The RHS (2005:39) recommends language protection in the form of "urgent remedial action" using "multiple mutually reinforcing strategies."

with language knowledge lower than 50%. Those bands with higher levels of language knowledge averaged 13 suicides per 100,000, well below the national average for youth in general. Those bands with lower language knowledge had suicide rates six times the national average (i.e., 96.5 per 100,000). When combined with the eight aforementioned indicators, it was found that language combined with any one indicator reduced the suicide rate close to zero in all instances, except when there were four indicators present. Even then the suicide rate was less than half the corresponding rate for those bands without the language factor (37.12 vs. 77.68 per 100,000). (Chandler & Lalonde 2007:6-7)

Chandler *et al.,* are not alone in finding positive impacts emanating from language revitalization. Tulloch (2008), writing on the impacts among Inuit youth of (re)learning their traditional language, notes: "…language brings and binds community members together. Without it, some Inuit feel disconnected; they miss acceptance and the opportunity to participate fully in their community." (Tulloch 2008:73) For Inuit youth Inuktitut is a tool for self-expression and for bonding with family and community; it aids co-operation and advancement. Moreover, "[b]reakdowns in language competence are linked to interruptions in the social network" and that the reverse is also true – increased language competence can result in increased opportunities for community engagement. (Tulloch 2008:74) Learning their language is not a luxury for Inuit youth, "any more than communicating with one's parents and grandparents, knowing where one comes from, and being able to gain the kind of education one values" (Tulloch 2008:75); it is an essential contributor to social capital and cohesion.

We have seen that revitalizing traditional languages has impacts on community continuity and well-being. And, when language is tied to other proxies, indicators such as youth suicide and education outcomes improve. We might also find better mental and physical health outcomes over time. If we accept that language and religion are intertwined, we can hypothesize that revitalizing both can help improve community and cultural well-being. As Crystal puts it:

> …it [language] is the chief mechanism of their [a people's or a culture's] rituals; it is the means of conveying ancient myths and legends, and their beliefs about the spirit world, to new generations; it is away of expressing their network of social relationships… (Crystal 2000:48f)

The RHS (2005:35) provides some supporting evidence to this supposition: respondents that viewed traditional cultural events as important were also more likely to perceive community progress in such areas as:

- The renewal of First Nations "spirituality", traditional ceremonies and approaches to healing;
- Renewed relationships with the land; and,
- An increase in the use of First Nations languages.

All are related to traditional Aboriginal religions and can provide net benefits to Aboriginal well-being. As RHS (2005:39) points out "The apparent strength of culture… suggests resilience and offers hope."

We know that in Canada, as elsewhere, Indigenous people's languages are at risk. For instance, the RHS tells us that 41% of First Nations communities in Canada had local languages that were either endangered or critical. (RHS 2005:34) According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) a language is found to be endangered when less than 30% of children in a community learn that languages as a mother tongue. The 2001 Census showed that only 15% of Aboriginal children in Canada under the age of five learned an indigenous mother tongue. (Norris 2006:199) This loss of language knowledge undermines community and cultural continuity; given the close intertwining of traditional language and traditional religion, coupled with evidence pertaining to the impact of cultural continuity on well-being, policies to support the revitalization of both traditional languages and traditional spiritual institutions and practices would seem eminently justifiable.

While it has been argued that there are no authentic traditional languages (or religions) per se – they changed as a result of contact and changes in social and natural ecologies (Muhlhauser & Samania 2004:21) – there are benefits in revitalizing traditional languages, that also apply to religion traditions: providing motivation for integration into traditional societies and social healing. Revitalizing traditional Aboriginal religions could be another means by which individuals and cultures can locate themselves in time, which can improve personal and cultural continuity

and increase well-being. The RHS (2005:39) recommends language protection in the form of "urgent remedial action" using "multiple mutually reinforcing strategies." Policies supporting the revitalization of traditional Aboriginal religions and ceremonial activities fit this bill.

By way of discussion, I note that there is no way of knowing now what the impacts of traditional or Christian religions have on First Nations' well-being. We need empirical investigation specific to this question. However, we can speculate that since Chandler's indicators are all about measures leading to greater self-reliance and determination in Indigenous communities, activities designed to help revitalize traditional Aboriginal religions should also help improve community well-being.

Previously, I mentioned the possibility of developing cultural well-being measures based on traditional languages and religions. We know that both are deeply interrelated. We have seen the positive impacts on youth suicide that language knowledge can bring to First Nations communities. What these things suggest is an opportunity to develop a series of cultural well-being measures that can complement the Community Well-being Index (White, Beavon & Spence 2008) developed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada researchers. The issue is, of course, developing measurable indicators and proxies as well as ensuring comparability. This entails a lot of work but some of it is already done: the Census asks the religion and language question, RHS does the same and asks questions related to cultural activities and health outcomes – both mental and physical.

Finally, I would remind us of an observation made above: in terms of languages and religions, value is related to use. If they are not used, their value is of limited impact and they will be lost.

NOTES

[1] A note of caution is necessary here. Many Aboriginal communities do not participate in the Canadian Census, resulting in less than reliable numbers regarding Aboriginal individuals in Canada in its Census. In fact, in 2001 DIAND's Indian Registry reported some 610,101 First Nations individuals in Canada, as per definitions instituted by the Indian Act. And some 57.5% (or 396,685) were reported as living in FN communities or on crown land. The remainder were living outside of First Nations lands, generally in rural or urban settings. Not only does the Indian Registry report greater numbers of Aboriginal persons living on-reserve, it also reports a lower number of persons identified as Aboriginal than does the Canadian census. Explanations for this latter discrepancy can be found in differences owing to institutionalized, governmental definitions of Aboriginality (and the rights pertaining to) as per the Indian Act and persons who self-identify as Aboriginal on the Census (Clatworthy & Norris, 2007; Clatworthy, Norris & Guimond, 2007).

[2] The RHS nonetheless included some Inuit communities, whereas in the Census the numbers of persons living on-reserve does not include Inuit communities – but the total Aboriginal population numbers will include Inuit respondents as well as other persons self-identifying as Aboriginal.

[3] There are many Aboriginal Christians in Manitoba, at least, who dance powwow because they believe that it is not religious but cultural. This is a distinction based on their Christian teaching that is not made by Traditionalists). Personal communication with Mark F. Ruml, October 21, 2008.

[4] For instance, one of the guiding questions of the survey is as follows: "Are the youth influenced by Native traditional knowledge and ethics, or are there other spiritual ethics that influence their approach to sex and parenting?" (OFIFC, 2002:13, 48)

[5] In an email discussion on this topic with Dr. Mark F. Ruml, Assistant Professor of Aboriginal religions at the University of Winnipeg, I was told: "Another thing that I notice with language revitalization is that people who attend ceremonies get stimulated to learn their language, especially in order to understand the songs. I "shamed" several buddies of mine to learn their language as I was regularly called upon by the Elder to translate the meaning of the songs. I have seen many students and community members get interested in learning their language after becoming involved in ceremonies. In Manitoba, it seems that involvement in ceremonies is an antecedent to learning ones language." (Personal communication with Dr. Mark F. Ruml, September 2008) In a second personal communication (October 21,2008), Ruml says "I was also at a Midewiwin ceremony where the head Mide priest honoured one of the youths for becoming fluent in his language in such a short period of time. He was honoured for his dedication, commitment, and hard work."

[6] Personal communication with Dr. Mark F. Ruml, October 21, 2008.

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INSTITUTIONAL "INCOMPLETEDNESS": THE CHALLENGES IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF CANADA'S URBAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

A substantial share of Canada's Aboriginal people live in cities where the provision of services is often rendered complex owing to a wide variety of residential patterns. The institutional response to addressing the needs of the growing urban aboriginal population is the Aboriginal Friendship Centre. First established by Aboriginal people in the 1950's the AFC's are today the largest off-reserve Aboriginal network of institutions in the country and provide an extensive range of programs and services. On the basis of an analysis of a national survey of aboriginal opinion around the effectiveness of the AFC's, it is contended here that while these institutions are seen as generally successful in responding to the cultural needs of their constituents, AFC's will need to better define roles and relationships with the broader institutional network when it comes to addressing the economic condition of aboriginal peoples.

Une grande partie des peoples autochtones habitent où l'offre des services est compliquée par une grande variété de tendances résidentielles. La réponse institutionnelle pour remplir les besoins d'une population autochtone grandissante est le Programme des centres d'amitié autochtones. Établis par les Autochtones dans les années 1950s, les Centres d'amitié autochtones sont aujourd'hui les réseaux autochtones les plus importants hors des réserves et fournissent une gamme de programmes et services. En se basant sur une analyse d'une enquête nationale sur l'opinion autochtone de l'efficacité des Centres, cet article affirme que bien que ces institutions répondent généralement avec succès aux besoins culturels de leurs membres, les Centres doivent définir leur rôle et leurs relations à un réseau institutionnel plus large pour adresser la condition économique des peuples autochtones.

INTRODUCTION

In his widely acclaimed work on the institutional completeness of ethnic communities, sociologist Raymond Breton (1964) maintained that the greater the degree of a community's organizational capacity, the stronger its sense of group consciousness. Institutional completeness is characterized by the degree to which a given group possesses a network of institutions that can respond to the needs of those who identify with the community. Breton contended that the wider the range of services the community could deliver, the greater the opportunity for the preservation of the group's identity. Over time, supporters and detractors of the idea have respectively contributed to refining the concept. Amongst the issues raised was the source of funds for community institutions and the conditions set out by organizational stakeholders with regards to the priority in the delivery of services. This further raised the issue of a group's institutional autonomy, notably where government is the principal source of funding.

In Canada, the role of preserving Aboriginal identities is undoubtedly influenced by the extent to which the communities are institutionally complete. Among the indicators for assessing whether community institutions contribute to the wellness of their constituents are such things as the degree of awareness of the institutions, the extent to which the services are being employed by constituents and the perceived impact of the program in attaining prescribed objectives. How and by whom such issues are evaluated has an important bearing on community governance, which in turn has an impact on the establishment of priorities.

This paper examines the role of Aboriginal Friendship Centre(s) (hereafter AFCs) and the extent to which they meet the criteria for contributing to institutional completeness. The findings will be based in large part on an evaluation of AFCs done by the department of Canadian Heritage in 2003 and, in particular, a survey commissioned by the firm EKOS to provide a more detailed assessment. The survey involved 606 completed interviews with Aboriginal people (16 years of age or older) living in urban communities where AFCs are located (the margin of error is +/-4.0% for the entire sample and +/-7 to +/-12% for most sub-groups).

In analyzing the extent to which Aboriginal people perceive AFCs to be effective, particular attention will be directed at two sub-groups: those who have lived on a reserve or First Nations community for at least six months; and, those who have not. We will also consider the issue of whether the AFCs strengthen ties between Aboriginal people and, if so, whether this occurs at the expense of building bridges with Non-Aboriginal people.

BACKGROUND

Established by Aboriginal peoples in the 1950's, AFCs were the principal institutional response to addressing the needs of the growing urban Aboriginal population. The first AFCs were intended to be "drop-in centres" where social interaction and networking took place often in Aboriginal languages. By 1968, there were over 25 AFCs across Canada and they took on greater responsibilities by providing referral or direct access to various services. Today, AFC's are the largest off-reserve Aboriginal service infrastructure in Canada. They provide services in such areas as housing, education, human resource development and employment, youth and family, health, recreation and culture to off-reserve First Nations, Non-Status Indian, Métis and Inuit people.

AFCs initially relied on volunteers, fundraising events, private donations, grants from foundations, and project funding from provincial and federal governments. In 1972, federal funding was extended under the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program (AFCP) to support the activities that encourage equal access and participation in Canadian society of urban Aboriginal people while fostering and strengthening Aboriginal cultural distinctiveness. To effectively deliver programs, AFCs have developed a diverse network of community and government linkages.

The effectiveness of AFC's is of considerable importance to its stakeholders – perhaps more so today than ever. As has been documented extensively elsewhere, including in this journal (see paper by Guimond), the urban Aboriginal population continues to grow in both size and complexity. In this context, the relevance of programming designed to support urban Aboriginal people is clear – as is the importance of ensuring that this programming responds to the needs and concerns of urban Aboriginal communities.

KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF THE AFCs

As noted above, among the criteria for determining the degree of completeness is the level of awareness of the institutions on the part of community membership. Aboriginal residents were asked to rate their own level of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and what they do. The EKOS survey asked two question of Aboriginal residents living in areas where AFCs are located to test their awareness. On the basis of an unprompted question, some one quarter of respondents referred to AFCs when asked whether they were able to identify any organizations offering services for Aboriginal people in their community. Some 53% were able to identify organizations other than AFCs. Approximately one in three were unable to identify such organizations. When asked,

however, in a follow up question whether they had heard of AFCs, an important majority (82%) responded positively. Probing yet further about how knowledgeable they were about AFCs, some 14% rated themselves as very knowledgeable, another 43% as somewhat knowledgeable, and 42% saying they were not very knowledgeable. Not surprisingly, there is a link between knowledge and use of AFCs: those who have visited an AFC are far more inclined to rate themselves as very knowledgeable, than those who have not visited a centre.

As to the use of AFCs, overall 58% of Aboriginal residents have visited a Centre, whereas 42% have not. Some two-thirds that are aware of the Centres (67%) indicated that they have visited them. A majority of that group had been to a Centre within the past two years. Hence, one-third of Aboriginal residents that are aware of AFCs have never been to one. Although they provide a variety of services to Aboriginal people, a social visit is the most common reason for visiting an AFC (this accounts for half of all responses for those visiting a local AFC in the previous two years). Others services most frequently sought in visiting AFCs are education and culture (39% each), programs for youth (36%) and employment (34%). Health and child-related programs and information are sought approximately one-quarter of the time (28 and 25 per cent, respectively). One in five visitors to AFCs said that they have not used a program or service.

The table below provides figures for the actual number of programs in each area and the number of participants. As to program expenditure during the year 2003-2004, most funds were directed at health programming (37%), youth programming (21%) and housing (9%), Justice (6.5%) and housing (6.5%).

TABLE 1: Participants in AFC Programs, (2003-2004)

TYPE OF PROGRAMMING	# OF PROGRAMS	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Health	302	110,205
Justice	78	29,526
Education	62	8,147
Employment	75	32,721
Language	8	1,435
Youth	197	92,771
Sports (not recreational)	12	10,647
Cultural	55	98,258
Housing	25	35,115
Economic Development	7	28,442
Other	81	58,193
Total	902	

SATISFACTION AND PURPOSE OF FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

When asked about satisfaction with programs and services used, between 81 and 84 per cent of program users said that they are satisfied. There is no one program or service that engenders more (or less) satisfaction than the others. Virtually everyone who attends a program or uses a service is satisfied with it (at least four in five are), with little difference in satisfaction levels between the different programs. About half of the visitors obtain referrals to a program or service and satisfaction levels are equally high on this front.

Close to three-quarters of Aboriginal people surveyed by EKOS agree that AFCs are a place to participate in activities in their language and relate to their culture. A similar percentage agree that they help Aboriginal people to feel connected to their community. Two-thirds remark that AFCs provide a safe haven for urban Aboriginal people. Agreement with the view that AFCs offer a place to participate in activities in their language and to relate to their culture declines with age (from 81% of those under 35 to 68 per cent of those 55 and older) because they tend to not know about them.

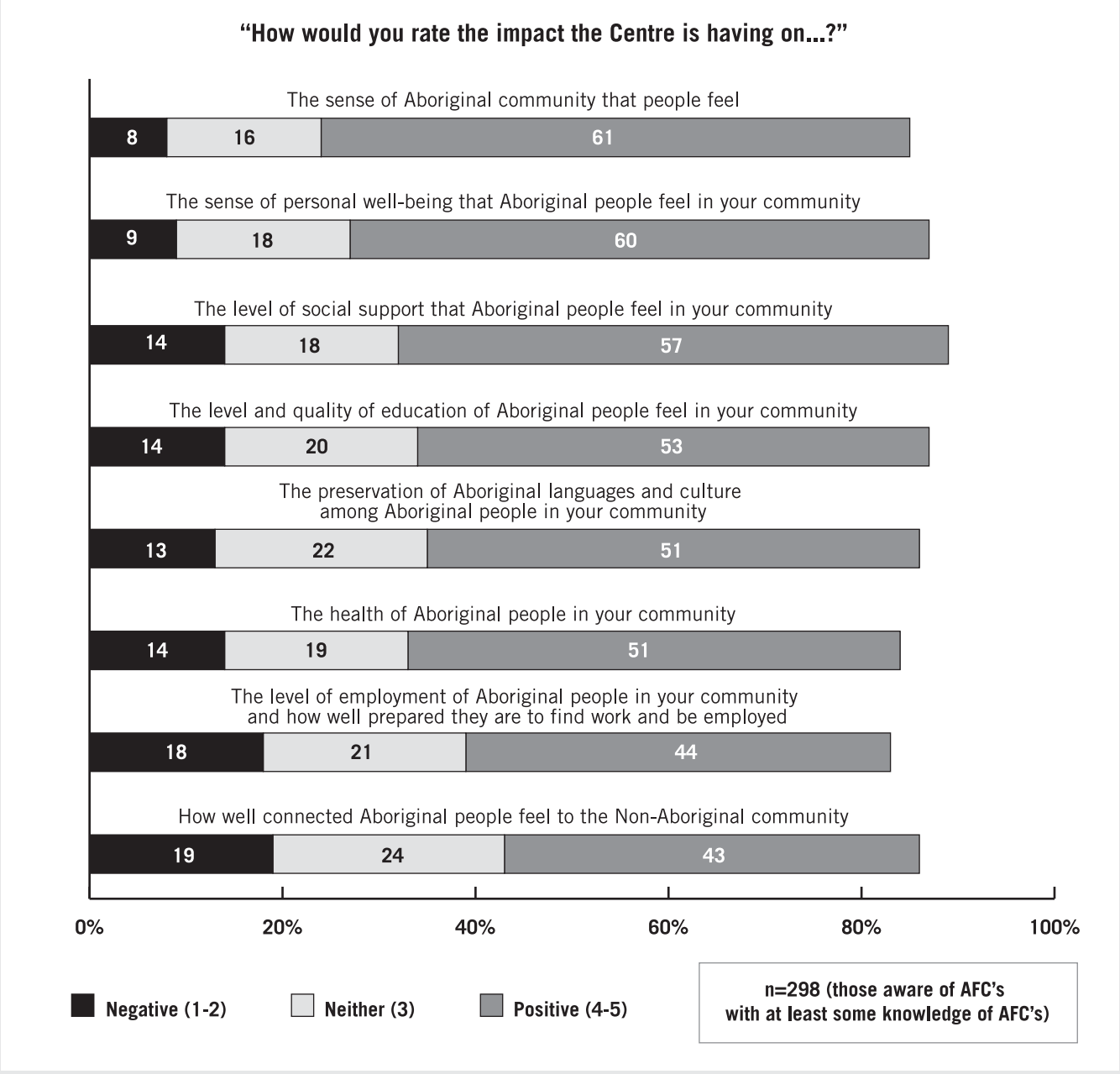
The impact of AFCs appears to be viewed as moderate when rated by Aboriginal respondents with some awareness of them. As illustrated in the table below, six in ten respondents agree that AFCs have a positive impact on the sense of Aboriginal community as well as on the sense of personal well-being. Just less than six in ten agree that AFCs have a positive impact in the community on the level of social support. About one in two agree that AFCs have a positive impact on the level and quality of education (53%), the health of Aboriginal people, and preservation of Aboriginal languages and culture (51%). Respondents felt that the AFC's had a lesser impact on the level of employment of Aboriginal people to the non-Aboriginal community (43%).

In the next section, we will examine the degree to which those respondents that have lived on a reserve or in a First Nation community for at least six months and those that did not differ on the extent to which they perceive AFCs to be effective. We focus on those persons that have heard of AFCs. Whether or not one reported living on a First Nation community, the percentage contending that friendship centers provide a safe haven for urban Aboriginal people is roughly similar, with two in three in agreement with this view. While the majority agree that the sense of connection to the Aboriginal community created by AFCs is good, those who lived on a reserve (68%) are less likely than those who did not (78%) to give a positive assessment in this regard.

As to the impact of the AFCs on a variety of factors (see Table 1), one observes

that the most important difference between the two groups is with respect to the preservation of Aboriginal languages and culture among Aboriginal people in your

FIGURE 1: Impact of Friendship Centres



Sources: EKOS Reasearch Associates Inc. Aboriginal Friendship Centre Survey, n=606, 2004

community. Those who have lived on a reserve for more than six months are less likely to rate the impact as positive compared to those who have not lived on-reserve for an extended period of time. Those who have lived on-reserve or in a First Nation community are less likely to favorably rate the AFCs on issues of employment but are more likely to positively evaluate the level of social support.

ARE AFCs BRIDGING AND/OR BONDING?

A concern around institutional completeness of groups with a shared identity is that they risk becoming insular when they target raising group consciousness in the extension of services. Hence, they do bonding as opposed to bridging between groups as characterized by the respected American scholar Robert Putnam in his

TABLE 1

VERY AND SOMEWHAT POSITIVE IMPACT COMBINED	I HAVE HEARD OF ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRES	
	LIVED ON A RESERVE OR IN A FIRST NATION COMMUNITY FOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS OF THE YEAR	DID NOT LIVE ON A RESERVE OR IN A FIRST NATION COMMUNITY FOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS OF THE YEAR
The level of employment of Aboriginal people in your community, and how well prepared they are to find work and be employed	32.8	40.7
The preservation of Aboriginal languages and culture among Aboriginal people in your community	37.0	52.8
The sense of Aboriginal community that people feel	48.1	54.6
The sense of personal well-being that Aboriginal people feel in your community	55.5	56.4
The level of social support that Aboriginal people feel in your community	58.2	51.8
The health of Aboriginal people in your community	43.6	44.4

discussion of social capital in his seminal work entitled *Bowling Alone*. One of the goals of the funding provided by the government of Canada to the AFCs is to ensure the creation of "…a bridge for urban Aboriginal peoples, enabling them to derive strength from their peers as a means of relating to the rest of the urban population." Indeed, in the formal evaluation of the AFCs conducted by the Department of Canadian Heritage, several AFC leaders pointed to the "…individual and collective role played in expressing, and at times representing, the views of urban Aboriginal peoples…" Half (52%) agree that Friendship Centres help Aboriginal people to feel connected to the non-Aboriginal community. Some 57% of those who have lived on a reserve or in a First Nations community for more than six months (versus 44% who have not done so) feel that AFCs help make such connections. As to whether they feel more connected to their own community, some 70% agree that AFCs do so with two in three that have lived on a reserve for more than six months sharing that view and three in four feeling as such amongst the group that have not lived on-reserve for more than six months.

While survey respondents feel that AFCs are more effective in bridging than bonding, it would be wrong to conclude that bonding represents an obstacle to bridging. As observed in the Table Above, those who strongly agree that AFCs help Aboriginal people feel connected to their own community are more likely to also strongly agree that AFCs help Aboriginal people in their community to feel connected to the non-Aboriginal community

CONCLUSION

We have attempted to determine whether, from the perspective of Aboriginal peoples, AFCs could be described as offering a complete range of services to the community. But the idea is not to limit assessment to whether the services exist; rather this study has sought to to determine the perceived level of effectiveness of each of the services provided. Indeed, simply identifying whether a given group has services to extend in several areas makes for an inadequate evaluation of institutional completeness if the services are not sufficiently effective in strengthening group consciousness. Moreover, a proper analysis of institutional completeness will also consider whether after review a community is best positioned to deliver the service and if not should the service be offered outside the community or is some partnership called for? These questions are somewhat outside the scope of the discussion above.

But in this preliminary research, it is fair to contend that the AFCs get a positive review from most Aboriginal people around the preservation of culture and identities. When it comes to matters related to wellness (i.e. social support) the ratings are also favorable. When it comes to employment however, the AFCs get a somewhat weaker rating. It is not clear however from our analysis to what extent AFCs want to invest resources in employment services and we assume that this varies across the cities where they are located. Still the question emerges as to whether the mix of offering employment assistance and cultural programming represents the best practice for AFCs. The means to provide services may exist; however if the AFC in a particular community is not best positioned to deliver said services, it may detract from broader efforts to meaningfully reinforce group identities. These questions need further examination.

Finally, the data presented here refute the argument advanced in some quarters that the reinforcement of the bonds between Aboriginal people and building of bridges between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples are mutually exclusive goals. While not necessarily a surprising finding, it is nevertheless worth highlighting. Recall the definition of "institutional completedness" provided above: to the extent that both strong bonds among Aboriginal people and healthy relationships between Aboriginal and

TABLE 2

AGREEMENT WITH: FRIENDSHIP CENTRES HELP ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN MY COMMUNITY TO FEEL CONNECTED TO THE NON-ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY	FRIENDSHIP CENTRES HELP ABORIGINAL PEOPLE TO FEEL CONNECTED TO THEIR OWN COMMUNITY				
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Strongly disagree	45,8%	25,9%	15,6%	8,9%	4,4%
Somewhat disagree	8,3%	25,9%	15,6%	14,0%	3,1%
Neither agree nor disagree	12,5%	3,7%	50,0%	17,8%	16,2%
Somewhat agree	20,8%	29,6%	14,1%	38,9%	31,6%
Strongly Agree	8,3%	7,4%	3,1%	12,7%	37,7%

non-Aboriginal people may be viewed by urban Aboriginal people as "needs," it is exciting to be able to report that AFCs are making important contributions to both the well-being and the institutional completedness of Canada's urban Aboriginal community.

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THE WELL-BEING OF COMMUNITIES WITH SIGNIFICANT MÉTIS POPULATION IN CANADA

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This paper examines the Community Well-Being of Métis Census Subdivisions in Canada. Theses communities are identified based upon population size, geographic location and change over 1991 to 2001 Census years. This is an initial attempt at analyzing Métis communities in a similar fashion that other aboriginal communities in Canada have. It compares the educational levels, labour levels, income and housing quality and quantity levels.

Cet article examine le bien-être communautaire des subdivisions de recensement métisses au Canada. Ces communautés sont identifiées d'après la taille de leur population, leur emplacement géographique et les changements survenus entre le recensement de 1991 et celui de 2001. Il s'agit d'une première tentative en vue d'analyser les communautés métisses comme on l'a fait pour les autres communautés autochtones au Canada. L'étude porte sur les niveaux de scolarité, d'emploi, de revenu et de qualité et quantité de logements.

INTRODUCTION

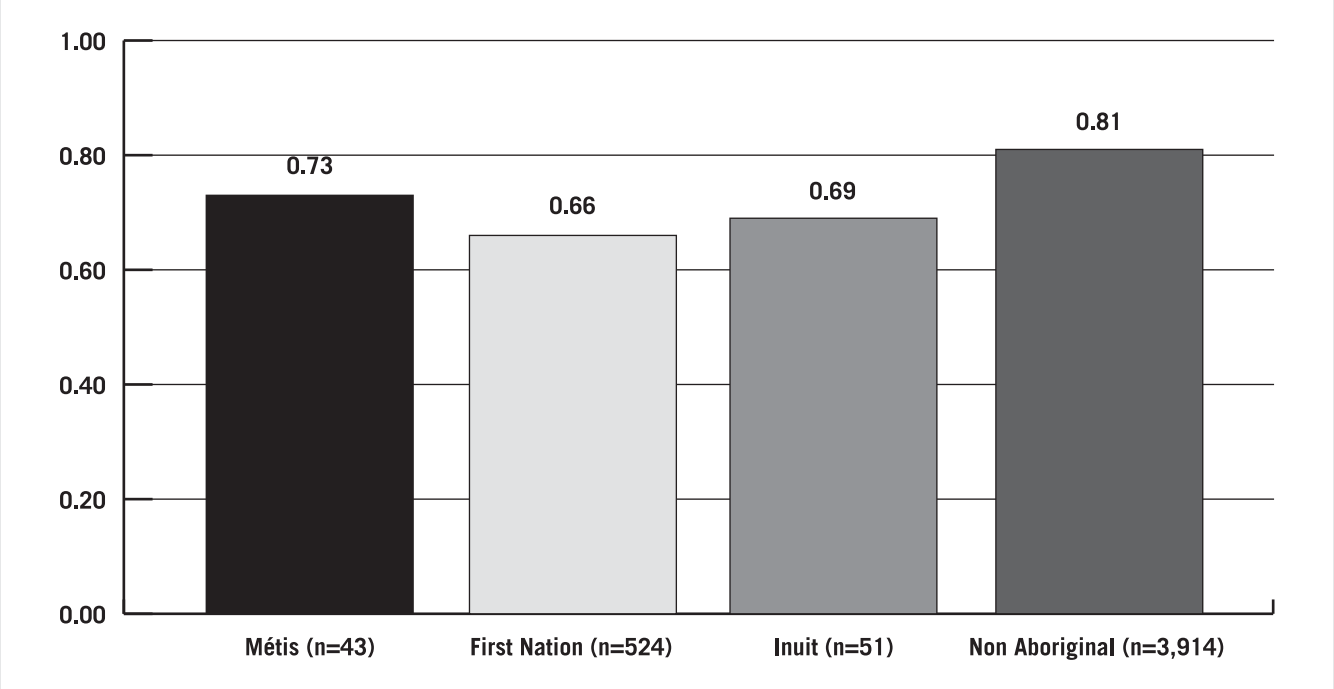
There have been a number of examinations of the living conditions and well-being of Aboriginal communities in Canada. Recently, researchers with the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate (SRAD) at Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) introduced the Community Well-Being (CWB) index methodology as one way of quantitatively measuring socio-economic well-being at the community level. This index has been applied to measurements of the conditions of First Nation and Inuit communities.[1]

This paper marks a new phase in the analysis of Aboriginal community well-being via the CWB methodology by examining communities with significant Métis population in Canada. This will provide an opportunity to compare the well-being of such communities to that of other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Canada.

THE COMMUNITY WELL-BEING (CWB) INDEX

The Community Well-Being Index is a method of examining the relative well-being of communities within

FIGURE 1: Average Community Well-Being Score by Community Type, 2001 n = 4,685



Source: Special calculations based on the 2001 Census.

Canada. An in-depth explanation of the CWB Index and its methodology is provided by Mindy McHardy and Erin O'Sullivan in their 2004 report;[2] briefly, the Index is a composite of four equally weighted key indicators all derived from the Census: education, housing, labour, and income. They are combined to create a score ranging from 0 and 1. The resulting scores highlight the well-being of communities as a whole, as opposed to a specific sub-group within the community; however this does not prevent us from deriving conclusions about a sub-group from community-level findings, provided the sub-group in question (in this case, self-identified Métis) makes up a significant percentage of the community population.

Comprehensive understanding of CWB scores requires that one take into account trends in CWB level over time. By looking at overall CWB levels and CWB component scores over time, certain factors can be identified to explain potential changes in CWB levels. Factors such as demographics, migration to and from communities and fluctuating economic indicators can have an effect on the CWB of communities. This paper examines change in CWB scores through three censuses, in 1991, 1996 and 2001.[3]

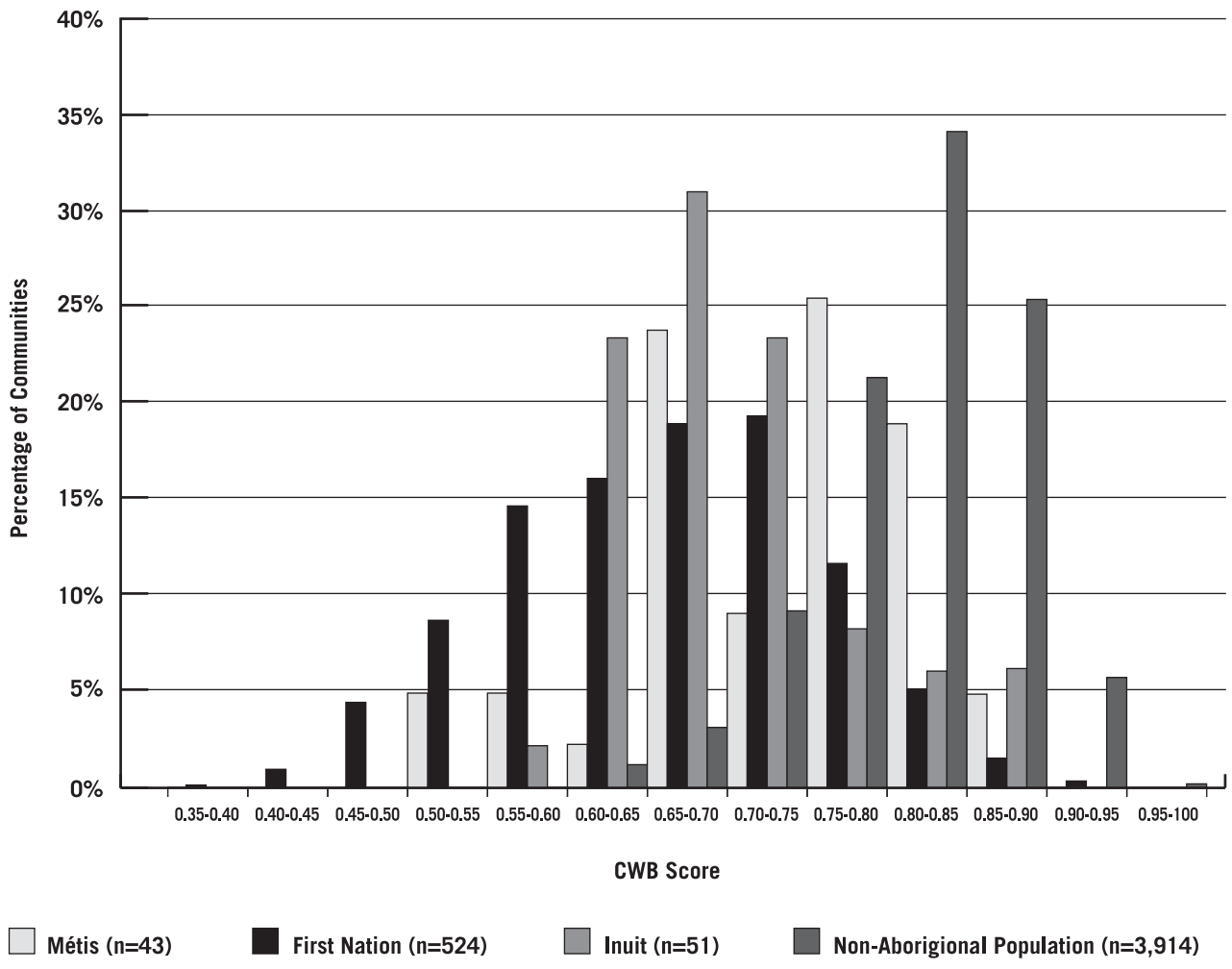
MÉTIS COMMUNITIES IN CANADA

There has been a consistent increase in the number of people who have self-identified as Métis in the last decade. From 1996 to 2001, the percentage of Métis population within the overall Aboriginal population increased from 25.6% to 33.2% respectively; whereas the percentage of First Nations of the overall Aboriginal population decreased from 66.2% to 59.5%.[4] When looking at the Métis share of the total Aboriginal population at the provincial level, Alberta (43.0%), Manitoba (38.9%), Saskatchewan (34.2%), Ontario (29.4%) and British Columbia (27.6%) all have significant Métis populations.

The definition of who the Métis people are, what constitutes a Métis community, and where these communities are historically located has been and remains the focus of much discussion. This report does not attempt to address these issues. Rather, we rely solely on Census data, and use self-reported Métis identity as the population base.

For the purposes of this study, Métis communities were defined as those CSDs with a total population of 65[5] or more, of which the self-identified Métis population makes up at least 25%. Forty-three communities were identified

FIGURE 2: Distribution of Métis, First Nations, Inuit and Non-Aboriginal Communities by Community Well-Being Score, 2001

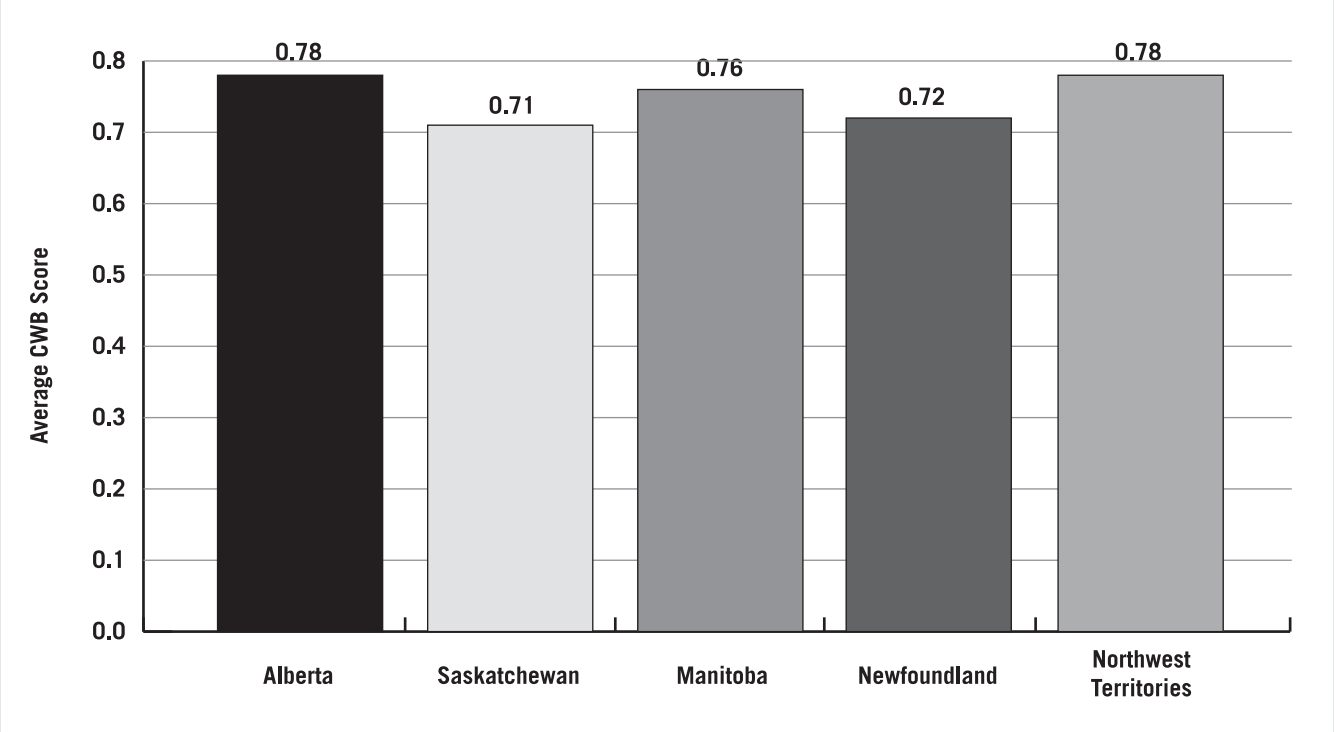


Source: Special Calculations based on the 2001 Census

TABLE 1: Community Well-Being (CWB): Distribution of Métis Communities by Province and Territory, 2001

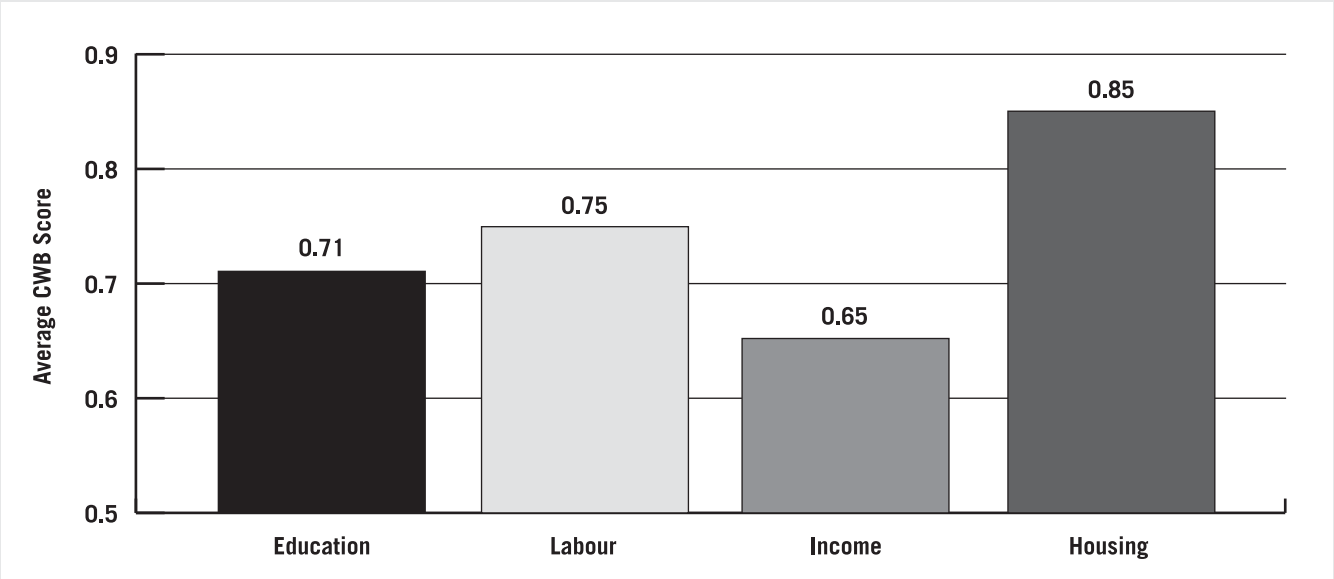
PROVINCE	CWB SCORE RANGE								
	0.50.- 0.55	0.55 - 0.60	0.60 - 0.65	0.65 - 0.70	0.70 - 0.75	0.75 - 0.80	0.80 - 0.85	0.85 - 0.90	TOTAL
Alberta	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	5
Manitoba	0	0	0	1	2	2	4	0	9
Newfoundland	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	4
Northwest Territories	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Saskatchewan	2	2	1	6	2	6	3	1	23
Total	2	2	1	9	6	12	9	2	43

FIGURE 3: Average Métis Community Well-Being Score by Province and Territory, 2001



Source: Special calculations based on the 2001 Census.

FIGURE 4: National Métis Component Scores, 2001 (n=29)



Source: Special Calculations based on the 2001 Census.

using this rule: twenty-three in Saskatchewan, nine in Manitoba, five in Alberta, four in Newfoundland and Labrador and two in the Northwest Territories.

RESULTS

OVERALL COMMUNITY WELL-BEING SCORES

The overall CWB score for the Métis communities examined was higher than those of other Aboriginal CSDs, but lower than that of Non-Aboriginal communities, as Figure 1 shows. These findings reinforce findings from population-level analysis of Métis well-being.

Further dividing communities to examine the number of communities with certain CWB scores it can be seen that Métis community CWB scores range from .53 to .87. As seen in Figure 2, there are two peaks along the range of Métis communities' scores: the first peak occurs in the .65 to .70 range with 10 communities; the second falls in the .75 to .80 range with 11 communities.

None of the other categories of communities have the same pattern. The scores of First Nation communities are spread out from .35 to .92 with the number of communities peaking in the .70 to .75 range at 100 communities. For Inuit communities CWB scores of most communities clustered between the .60 and .75 ranges. The majority of the non-Aboriginal communities ranged between .75 to .95 ranges. Table 2 also reveals the range of CWB levels of the 43 communities by the province/territory in which they are located. The range of scores shows that only in Saskatchewan does one find Métis communities with CWB score less than 0.65.

In comparing the average CWB scores for the 43 Métis communities across the provinces and territory, there are no large differences between them except in Saskatchewan, where the variance of scores ranges from 0.53 to 0.80. As Figure 3 demonstrates, averages CWB scores in the provinces and territories vary between .71 and .78.

COMPONENT SCORES

The individual component scores provide a deeper understanding of the patterns observed in the overall CWB score. As noted above, CWB component scores are only calculated for CSDs with a population of 250 or more.

Average component scores for the 29 Métis communities for which component score analysis was possible are shown in chart 4. Regionally, housing rated the highest everywhere except in the Northwest Territories, where housing was second to the Labour component. The Labour component score is the second highest score in all the provinces, except for Newfoundland and Labrador were it is the lowest. The Education and Income components ranked third and fourth respectively in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. The most significant gap between these components occurs in Saskatchewan where the Income component score is .58 but the housing is at .82.

When the Métis CWB component scores are examined against those of other community types, clear differences are highlighted. As can be seen in Table 2, Métis communities show much higher component scores than First Nation communities in the areas of income and housing. The non-Aboriginal communities place first in all categories with the Métis communities placing second in all the categories except labour where it was third behind Inuit communities.

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING TIME SERIES

One of the key challenges in analysing the well-being of Métis communities over time is the changing composition of communities – specifically, the fact that the Métis identity population has grown rapidly during over the past 3 Census periods can have implications for interpreting Métis CWB scores. As Guimond has shown elsewhere in this journal , ethnic mobility is a significant factor driving Métis identity population growth over the past 15 years. Self-identification as Métis for the Census is inherently subjective, and not comparable to self-identification as a First Nations or Inuit person where parameters for Registered Indian status or Inuit landclaim membership are relatively firmly established. With relatively unclear parameters for determining who is Métis,decisions made when self-identifying can be more easily affected by external factors, such as court decisions, during intercensal periods. This phenomenon alters the natural progression of the population base which makes analysis of socioeconomic trends problematic.

For the purposes of this study, it must be noted that some of the 43 communities identified as having significant Métis population in 2001 did not meet the Métis population density criterion established above in 1996 and/or 1991. (See Table 3). Only 27 of the 43 communities identified met both the 25% Métis population density threshold and 250 minimum population in both 1996 and 2001.

Since 1991, the average CWB score of Métis communities has increased (Table 4). There was an increase in the average CWB score for Métis communities from 1991 to 1996 and then to 2001 as it jumped .12 points overall. The increase from 1991 to 1996 was twice as great as from 1996 to 2001. The minimum CWB Score also increased by 0.10

TABLE 2: National Average CWB Component Score and Ranking by Community Type, 2001

COMMUNITY TYPE	EDUCATION	LABOUR	INCOME	HOUSING
Non-Aboriginal Community (n=3501)	0.77(1)	0.82(1)	0.73(1)	0.93(1)
Métis (n=29)	0.71(2)	0.75(3)	0.65(2)	0.85(2)
Inuit (n=45)	0.64(4)	0.80(2)	0.60(3)	0.71(3)
First Nation (n=314)	0.68(3)	0.69(4)	0.50(4)	0.70(4)

Note: numbers in brackets indicate the ranking across types of communities

Source: Special Calculations based on the 2001 Census.

TABLE 3: Number of Métis Communities that meet the CWB Criteria for Measurement

	1996	2001
Métis CSDs with CWB Scores only (Population greater than 65)	39	43
Métis CSDs with CWB components Scores (Population greater than 250)	27	29

TABLE 4: Descriptive Statistics of the CWB Index Across Time for Métis Communities (n=27), Canada

	AVERAGE CWB SCORE	STANDARD DEVIATION	MINIMUM CWB SCORE	MAXIMUM CWB SCORE
1991	0.66	0.086	0.39	0.82
1996	0.70	0.092	0.49	0.85
2001	0.72	0.103	0.53	0.86

Source: Special Calculations based on the 2001 Census

points from 1991 to 1996 with a more modest increase of .4 points in the 1996 to 2001 period .These increases in CWB levels are similar to those of Inuit and First Nations communities during the same period (Senécal and O'Sullivan, 2006 and O'Sullivan and McHardy 2004).

The increase in well-being scores for Métis communities parallels that of other community types from 1991 to 2001. As can be seen in Figure 5, all Aboriginal communities experienced similar increases from 1991 to 1996 and from 1996 to 2001, but the rate of the increase was not as great in the later period compared to the first. All four community types in Figure 5 were weighted by population size and this calculation lead to the reduction of the number of CSDs for all community types because these communities did not make the 25 percent ratio in all three years indicated.

Table 5 shows how individual community CWB scores changed from 1991 to 2001. In all categories, most CSDs saw positive changes in their CWB scores; however Métis communities were less likely to experience a negative change than First Nation, Inuit or non-Aboriginal communities. In fact, it was among non-Aboriginal communities that the highest rate of negative CWB score change occurred.

Of the four community types shown in Table 6, the largest average variation occurred in the First Nation communities followed by non-Aboriginal communities and then Métis. The Minimum Variation of the communities follows a similar pattern except with the Métis Community and the Inuit Community trading places with the former scoring -0.04 and the later scoring -0.07.

TABLE 5: The Percentage of Positive, Negative and No Change for all Community Types of CSDs that were Weighted over the Census Years 1991 to 2001

	POSITIVE CHANGE	NO CHANGE	NEGATIVE CHANGE
Métis n=39	89.7%	5.1%	5.1%
Inuit n=51	90.2%	2.0%	7.8%
First Nations n=386	86.5%	4.4%	9.1%
Non-Aboriginal n=3359	79.2%	6.8%	14.0%

Source: Special Calculations based on the 2001 Census.

The number of CSDs for each of the communities measured here is dependent upon the ability of each individual CSD achieving the criteria of 25 percent of the total population of the CSD in each of the three years measured.

CONCLUSION

Using a population density approach to define Métis communities and the Community Well-being Index methodology, this report analyzes the well-being of Métis communities in comparison to that of other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

The findings illustrate that there exist noteworthy differences in the well-being of Aboriginal communities compared to non-Aboriginal communities but also amongst Aboriginal community types. Comparisons show that Métis communities typically experience a somewhat higher level of well-being which is closer to that of non-Aboriginal communities when contrasted to both Inuit and First Nations communities. It is important to point out however that while Métis communities compare favourably to First Nation and Inuit communities in terms of CWB score, this does not mean that these communities are necessarily "well

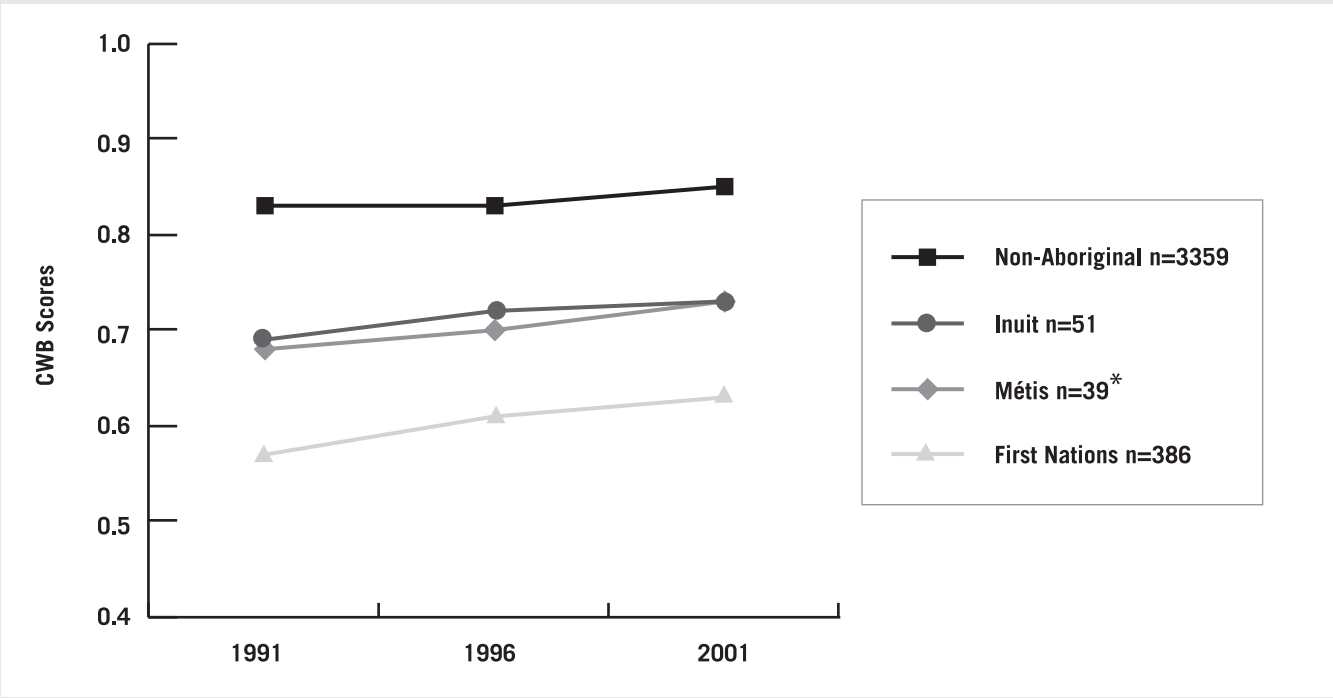
TABLE 6: Descriptive Statistics of the Evolution of Community Well-Being Scores by Community Type, Between 1991 and 2001

COMMUNITY TYPE	STANDARD DEVIATION	AVERAGE VARIATION	MINIMUM VARIATION	MAXIMUM VARIATION
Métis n=39	0.05	0.07	-0.04	0.21
Inuit n=51	0.04	0.06	-0.07	0.14
First Nations n= 386	0.06	0.07	-0.07	0.29
Non-Aboriginal n=3,501	0.04	0.03	-0.17	0.26

Source: Special Calculations based on the 2001 Census.

The number of CSDs for each community is based on those who meet the criteria of a population over 250 to be able to provide scores for all components.

FIGURE 5: Weighted CWB Scores for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal CSD for Census Years 1991, 1996 and 2001[i]



Source: Special Calculations based on the 2001 Census.

i The number of CSDs for each of the communities measured here is dependent upon the ability of each individual CSD achieving the criteria of 25 percent of the total population of the CSD in each of the three years measured (Lapointe *et al.*).

off" as indeed some do experience issues tied to poverty, unemployment and homelessness.

CWB component score analysis identifies several characteristics of communities with significant Métis population that ought to be of critical interest for policy makers. Of particular interest, there is a need to explore why Métis communities show relatively high housing scores but at the same time relatively low rates of income and education, two factors that have an influence on the ability to purchase or rent good housing.

This report only constitutes a first step in applying the CWB Index to Métis communities. Clearer definitions – both in terms of who are Métis and which communities are recognized as Métis communities – are needed to provide more reliable time series analysis. Ongoing efforts in this area will be crucial for all concerned – researchers, policy-makers, and most importantly, Canada's Métis people.

APPENDIX A

CENSUS SUBDIVISION NUMBER	NAME	PROVINCE OR TERRITORY
1010009	Port Hope Simpson	Newfoundland
1010010	St. Lewis	Newfoundland
1010011	Mary's Harbour	Newfoundland
1010013	Charlottetown (Labrador)	Newfoundland
4601075	Powerview	Manitoba
4615048	Ellice	Manitoba
4615051	St-Lazare	Manitoba
4616063	Park (North)	Manitoba
4617026	Alonsa	Manitoba
4617040	Ste. Rose	Manitoba
4618040	St. Laurent	Manitoba
4620055	Mountain (North)	Manitoba
4621025	Grand Rapids	Manitoba
4705044	Gerald	Saskatchewan
4706049	Lebret	Saskatchewan
4714091	Love	Saskatchewan
4715058	Domremy	Saskatchewan
4715059	St. Louis	Saskatchewan
4715062	Duck Lake	Saskatchewan
4716061	Leoville	Saskatchewan
4716077	Chitek Lake	Saskatchewan
4717006	Meota	Saskatchewan
4717057	Makwa	Saskatchewan
4718005	Cumberland House	Saskatchewan
4718015	Weyakwin	Saskatchewan
4718021	Green Lake	Saskatchewan
4718028	Cole Bay	Saskatchewan
4718030	Jans Bay	Saskatchewan
4718033	Beauval	Saskatchewan
4718065	Pinehouse	Saskatchewan
4718067	Île-à-la-Crosse	Saskatchewan
4718069	Patuanak	Saskatchewan
4718070	Buffalo Narrows	Saskatchewan
4718072	Michel Village	Saskatchewan
4718074	La Loche	Saskatchewan
4718075	Turnor Lake	Saskatchewan
4810032	Minburn	Alberta
4812022	Smoky Lake County	Alberta
4812035	Lac la Biche	Alberta
4813061	Whispering Hills	Alberta
4817027	Big Lakes	Alberta
6106001	Fort Smith	Northwest Territories
6106018	Fort Resolution	Northwest Territories

NOTES

[1] McHardy & O'Sullivan (2004); Senécal, O'Sullivan, Guimond & Uppal (2007).

[2] McHardy and O'Sullivan, (2004).

[3] In some cases, the boundaries of communities are changed so extensively between censuses that the communities cannot really be regarded as the same entities. All the CSDs identified as Métis for the purpose of this paper were deemed comparable overtime which was not the case for First Nations and non-Aboriginal communities. For an in-depth description of the steps taken to ensure comparability as well as details on the resulting set of communities, see O'Sullivan and McHardy, 2004.

[4] Special Calculations based on the 1996 and 2001 Censuses. The 2006 Census is not being focused on in this paper.

[5] Calculation of overall CWB scores requires a CSD population of 65 or more. Calculation of individual CWB component scores requires a CSD population of 250 or more; of the 43 Métis communities identified, 29 meet the population threshold to allow for component score analysis.

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THE SOCIAL CLASS AND GENDER DIFFERENCES WITHIN ABORIGINAL GROUPS IN CANADA: 1995-2000

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This paper utilizes a multilayer class structure analysis framework to consider the nature and extent of inequality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada, including gender-specific dynamics and differential patterns among First Nation, Inuit and Métis populations.

Cet article utilise une analyse multicouches fondée sur la structure de classe pour examiner la nature et l'étendue de l'inégalité entre les Autochtones et les non Autochtones au Canada, y compris la dynamique sexospécifique et les tendances différentes entre les populations des Premières nations, les populations inuites et les populations métisses.

The application of ethnic deficit or "problem" analytical frameworks to issues affecting Aboriginal peoples has been a staple of Canadian political discourse since before Confederation. Since at least the 1857 enactment in Upper *Canada of the Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in this Province,* analysis of high rates of poverty and social problems in Aboriginal communities have inevitably become entangled with the argument that the "problem" Aboriginal peoples face is the unwillingness of Aboriginal individuals to engage fully in the "mainstream" economy and society.

The specific philosophical foundations of the ethnic deficit model as applied to Aboriginal people have been extensively documented. They include a number of particularly tenuous presumptions: that the "problem," as it were, rests exclusively with the "troublesome behaviour" of Aboriginal people (RCAP 1996), and their refusal to desist in such behaviour; that the problem is the existence of Aboriginal people as individuals with distinct legal status; that the problem is by definition temporary, since resolution through assimilation into the dominant social, economic and cultural groups is inevitable "(Dunn 1994; Newhouse, *et al* 2005). Perhaps most significantly, the Aboriginal deficit framework tends to paint all individuals with indigenous ancestry with the same brush: be they from First Nations, Inuit or Métis communities; from reserves or cities, from North or South of the 60th parallel.

Fortunately, Aboriginal policy scholarship over the past two decades has done a great deal to expose the false pretences that sustain the Aboriginal deficit model. The *Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* underscored the central role of colonial and early Canadian government policy decisions in contributing to Aboriginal poverty (RCAP 1996). Recent works by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, based on the United Nations Human Development Index or their own Community Well-being Index which allow for comparative analysis (both between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations and among

Aboriginal communities and sub-populations) according to basic measures of health and material well-being, highlight both the different realities faced by different Aboriginal communities and peoples, and the notable socioeconomic progress made by Aboriginal peoples relative to their non-Aboriginal peers. Finally, the ethnic deficit model has increasingly been subjected to challenges from Aboriginal scholars dedicated to highlighting the positive contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada (Newhouse *et al* 2005).

And yet, it would be a mistake to suggest that the ethnic deficit model is no longer a major factor in Canadian Aboriginal policy discourse. In their analysis of their mandate, the commissioners of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples noted the presence of the Aboriginal "problem" in political discussions surrounding their mandate, even as they refused to be constrained by its philosophical underpinnings. (RCAP 1996) Writing in 2005 in the Preface to their book, *Hidden in Plain Sight: Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian Identity and Culture,* Aboriginal researchers David Newhouse, Cora Voyageur and Dan Beavon observed that the "problem" discourse remains prevalent in both the academic research and federal public service milieus. Newhouse wrote how all three "continually encounter notions about Indigenous peoples as highly resistant to change" (Newhouse 2005); Beavon described how the tendency within the public service to gravitate to negativist constructions of Aboriginal peoples "produces a distorted view in which [Aboriginal people] are portrayed as a people unable to do things for themselves or of proposing solutions to problems." (Beavon 2005)

This paper argues that continued effort towards the rejection of the ethnic deficit discourse as a framework for analyzing Aboriginal issues in Canada is necessary, and that success in eliminating this discourse as an active factor in public policy formulation is achievable – if the policy research community in particular is prepared to open the door to alternative analytical frameworks, including those that consider the role of social class structure in contributing to poverty and inequality. This paper argues that application of a class structure analysis framework would be useful in furthering analysis of the nature of inequality within Aboriginal populations. This argument rests on three presumptions, which are summarized here but not elaborated upon: first, that a class structure framework based on relations among labour, physical and financial capital (as opposed to one that sorts individuals according to income level or occupational status) remains a relevant, important lens through which to analyze social inequality, provided it can be reliably operationalized with existing data; second, that class structure is a preferable alternative to the ethnic deficit model as a means of enhancing understanding of issues affecting Aboriginal peoples; and third, given that processes of class formation, relations and structure of Aboriginal people have been largely ignored in the class analysis literature (with the commendable exceptions of Clement 1975, Mitchell 1996, Adams 1999, Wotherspoon 2003 & 2007), application of a class structure framework would yield new and useful knowledge.

We employ an adaptation of the multi-layer class framework originally developed by Erik Olin Wright (1983). This framework (workers, semi-autonomous workers, managers and supervisors, "petty bourgeois," and small employers) locates classes according to the following relations: degree of ownership/control of financial capital; degree of ownership/control of physical capital; and, degree of control of labour power and process. Wright's schema is attractive for two reasons: first, it can be operationalized using Canadian Census Public Use Microdata Files (PUMF) data; and, second, it provides more detailed analysis relative to other class structure frameworks separating a broad middle class into two categories (semi-autonomous workers and managers/supervisors), and thus offers a greater potential for analysis (see also Li, 1988, 1992).

For this study, the framework is constructed by recoding and combining the variables COWP (class of worker) and OCC91P (Occupation) for the 1996 census, and COWP (class of worker) and NOCHRDP (Occupation - Employment Equity Designations - based on The National Occupational Classification) for the 2001 census. The analysis utilizes data from the 1996 and 2001 PUMF. Analysis focuses on the 2.7% and the 2.8% probability samples of the 1996 and 2001 censuses, who were over eighteen years of age the year before the Census was taken, had worked at least one week the year before, and resided in Canada except the Maritimes and the Territories.[1]

FINDINGS

As Table 1 shows, there existed in 1995 important differences in the social class composition both between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents, as well as within Aboriginal people, especially when the gender dimension of class is examined. Aboriginal people were more likely to be in the "workers" class, and less likely to belong to any other social class, when compared with non-Aboriginal people. Treating both groups as homogeneous entities, however, conceals the important gender dimensions of class inequalities within groups: for example, if we compare gender groups within the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, we see that whereas non-Aboriginal women are overrepresented in the "workers" class relative to non-Aboriginal males, the reverse is true for the Aboriginal population; however, for other classes, gender patterns are similar for both populations.

Treating all Aboriginal people as a homogeneous population also conceals some minor, but nonetheless noteworthy, differences among identity groups. Single North American Indians are slightly over-represented in the "workers" class (68%) relative to Single Métis (66%) and the Single Inuit (61%); they are also underrepresented in the "semi-autonomous workers," "manager/supervisor" and "petty bourgeois" classes. In the class of small employers, Single North American Indians are very slightly underrepresented when compared with Métis (2.7% to 3.1%), and somewhat overrepresented when compared with Inuit (1%).

Examination of 2000 data (Table 2) reveals that, compared with 1995, there was a shift from the "workers" class to the "semi-autonomous workers" and "manager/supervisor" classes in the non-Aboriginal group. The proportion of individuals in the "workers" class declined (from 56.7% in 1995 to 52.9% in 2000), while increases were observed for the corresponding figures for the "semi-autonomous workers" (from 19.2% in 1995 to 22% in 2000), and manager/supervisor (from 10.7% to 12.4%) classes. There do not appear to be any major gender differences underlying these shifts.

The above patterns, in terms of change from 1995 to 2000, generally hold for the combined Aboriginal population, as upward class mobility was observed in all five class categories. There was an overall decline in the proportion of individuals in the "workers" class (from 68% in 1995 to 66% in 2000; an increase in the "semi-autonomous workers" class (from 17% to 22%); and very minor increases for the "manager/supervisor" (from 8.8% to 9%) and "small employers" (from 2% to 2.7%) classes.

However, gender analysis at the identity group level reveals some small, but noteworthy, differential patterns. The number of Single North American Indian men in the "workers" class increased by 0.6% from 1995, whereas representation of both Inuit and Métis men in that class decreased. In the case of women, 62.8% of Métis women were "workers" in 2000 (a minor increase of 0.6% from 1995), compared to 62.2% of Single North American Indian women (a decrease of 3.6% from 1995), and 51.7% of Inuit women (a decrease of 2.4% from 1995).

Minor changes are discernible in the remaining classes. Not all gender groups, in all social classes experienced upward mobility, and certainly not equally. For example, 5.8% of Métis women were in the "petty bourgeoisie" class in 2000, an increase of 1.9% from 1995; Inuit and North American Indian women saw slightly smaller increases. Métis men enjoyed minor progress in terms of representation in this class, while Inuit and North American Indian men saw their representation in this class decrease slightly (of 0.8%, and 0.3%, respectively) from 1995 to 2000. Similar patterns are observed for the "small employer" class among men; however among women progress observed for the Métis population was contrasted by losses for Inuit and North American Indian women.

TABLE 1: The Class Composition of Aboriginal People by Sex, Canada, 1995

	CLASSES IN %[i]				
	WORKERS	SEMI-AUTONOMOUS WORKERS	MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS	PETTY BOURGEOIS	SMALL EMPLOYERS
Single North American Indian n=7,982	**68.0**	**17.3**	**7.8**	**4.0**	**2.7**
Females n=3,736	65.8	23.4	6.0	3.1	1.7
Males n=4,246	70.0	12.0	9.4	4.9	3.6
Single Métis n=4,451	**66.0**	**17.5**	**8.4**	**5.0**	**3.1**
Females n=2,047	62.2	25.5	7.2	3.9	1.2
Males n=2,404	69.2	10.7	9.5	5.9	4.7
Single Inuit n=782	**61.2**	**23.9**	**9.1**	**4.6**	**1.0**
Females n=362	54.1	32.1	8.4	4.3	1.2
Males n=420	67.4	16.9	9.8	4.9	0.9
All Aboriginal [ii] n=13,479	**68.2**	**17.0**	**8.8**	**4.0**	**2.0**
Females n=6,268	64.5	23.8	7.0	3.3	1.4
Males n=7,211	71.5	11.0	10.3	4.6	2.6
Non-Aboriginal n=454,242	**56.7**	**19.2**	**10.7**	**7.7**	**5.6**
Females n=214,856	60.5	22.0	7.7	6.4	3.4
Males n=239,386	53.3	16.7	13.5	8.9	7.6

i Percentages may not always add up to 100% due to rounding.
ii Includes Multiple Aboriginal Responses in the 1996 PUMF and Multiple Aboriginal Responses and Aboriginal responses not included elsewhere in the 2001 PUMF.

TABLE 2: The Class Composition of Aboriginal People by Sex, Canada, 2000

	CLASSES IN %[i]				
	WORKERS	SEMI-AUTONOMOUS WORKERS	MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS	PETTY BOURGEOIS	SMALL EMPLOYERS
Single North American Indian n=8,586	**66.6**	**18.5**	**8.7**	**4.3**	**1.9**
Females n=4,121	62.2	25.5	7.2	3.9	1.2
Males n=4,465	70.6	12.1	10.1	4.6	2.6
Single Métis n=4,923	**65.8**	**14.6**	**9.4**	**6.0**	**4.1**
Females n=2,269	62.8	20.2	8.0	5.8	2.9
Males n=2,654	68.4	9.9	10.4	6.2	5.1
Single Inuit n=806	**59.3**	**25.3**	**9.4**	**5.0**	**1.0**
Females n=379	51.7	34.4	8.3	4.4	1.1
Males n=427	66.0	17.2	10.3	5.4	1.0
All Aboriginal [ii] n=14,651	**65.8**	**17.7**	**9.0**	**4.9**	**2.7**
Females n=6,927	61.7	24.3	7.7	4.6	1.7
Males n=7,724	69.5	11.7	10.2	5.2	3.5
Non-Aboriginal n=468,832	**52.9**	**22.0**	**12.4**	**7.5**	**5.1**
Females n=222,695	55.2	25.6	9.6	6.5	3.2
Males n=246,137	50.8	18.8	15.0	8.5	6.9

i Percentages may not always add up to 100% due to rounding.
ii Includes Multiple Aboriginal Responses in the 1996 PUMF and Multiple Aboriginal Responses and Aboriginal responses not included elsewhere in the 2001 PUMF.

CONCLUSIONS

Application of the Wright class structure schema to data from the 1996 and 2001 PUMF on Individuals reveals some notable differential patterns between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, as well as among Aboriginal identity groups and between men and women. First, Aboriginal people are overrepresented in the "worker" class and underrepresented in all other classes. Second, whereas non-Aboriginal women are overrepresented in the "worker" class relative to non-Aboriginal men, the opposite is true for Aboriginal women and men. Aboriginal men are more likely to be workers than Aboriginal women. This pattern holds within all three Aboriginal groups examined. And third, there exists significant class-gender variations between and within Aboriginal groups, such that treating Aboriginal people as a homogeneous group for analytical purposes distorts the diverse realities faced by North American Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples.

It is necessary to recognize that, for the most part, these findings reflect other analyses of gender and/or identity group differences in well-being; the relatively higher socioeconomic standing of the Métis identity population, for example, has been extensively documented (Hull 2004; see also paper by Guimond elsewhere in this volume), as has the counter-intuitive findings with respect to well-being of Aboriginal women (Cooke and Guimond 2006). It would be interesting to see additional research efforts dedicated to determining whether class structure analysis can shed some light on some of the contributors to these differences.

What is undeniable is the fact that application of the ethnic deficit model to analysis of Aboriginal inequality does researchers, policymakers and Aboriginal people a great disservice. In masking important gender and identity differences, the deficit model inhibits effective analysis while perpetuating negative stereotypes and attitudes that inevitably colour the political discourse. This should be seen as unacceptable to all, regardless of one's background or ideological bent. While class structure analysis may not be the only available alternative to the ethnic deficit model, it is this author's hope that social policy formation and implementation recognize the danger in failing to recognize the inequities within Aboriginal populations that are underscored through consideration of social class relations.

NOTE

[1] The geographical areas excluded from the PUMF (Maritimes and Territories) files place limitations on the number of Aboriginal people in the samples, especially the Inuit. In addition, there were 264 Multiple Aboriginal responses in the 1996 PUMF and 336 Multiple Aboriginal responses/Aboriginal responses not included elsewhere in the 2001 PUMF. Given that there also exist missing cases in several variables involved in this analysis (Class of worker, Occupation, Sex, Aboriginal Self-reporting, etc.), the percentage distribution of classes among the various categories may by slightly affected. Any discrepancies, however, are minor and do not seem to affect the overall picture of class distribution by sex among Aboriginal people.

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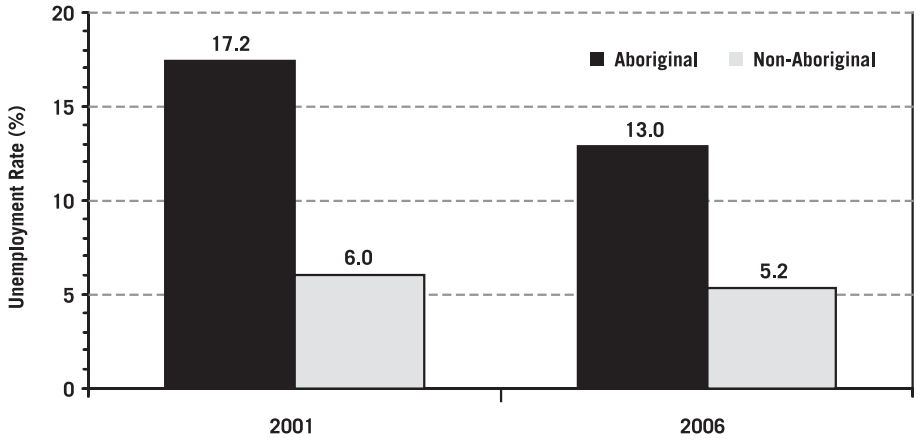
CANADIAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION... in numbers

Labour, Income and Housing

Labour
The working-age Aboriginal population (i.e., 15-64 years old) is growing. Between 1996 and 2001, this population increased by 25.0% (from 490,280 to 612,670) for the Aboriginal population compared with an increase of only 4.3% for the non-Aboriginal population. Between 2001 and 2006, it increased further by 25.3% (from 612,670 to 767,420) for the Aboriginal population, about four times the increase for the non-Aboriginal population (5.9%).

The Aboriginal population is young and represents a wealth of future labour resources. With the aging Canadian population the Aboriginal population will become a substantial source of labour in the future providing education and training is sufficient for them to compete adequately in the labour market. Between 2001 and 2026, more than 600,000 Aboriginal youth will come of age to enter the labour market. The 15-29 age group, in particular, is projected to grow by 37% compared with 6% for the general Canadian population (Hull J. 2008, "Aboriginal Youth in the Canadian Labour Market, " *Hope or Heartbreak: Aboriginal Youth and Canada's future, Horizons*).

FIGURE 1: Figure 1: Unemployment rate, Population 25-64 years, Canada, 2001 and 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 and 2006 Censuses, INAC tabulations.

Since 2001, the employment rate for the working age Aboriginal population has increased from 58.5% to 63.0% but it still remains much lower than for non-Aboriginal people (76.3%).

Despite substantial gains between 2001 and 2006, Aboriginal people continue to be three times more likely to be unemployed then non-Aboriginal people (13.0% vs 5.2%).

Income
In 2006, the median income for Aboriginal people (aged 15 years and over) was $16,752 compared to $25,955 for non-Aboriginal people. For Registered Indians living on-reserve, median income was less than half that of non-Aboriginal people at $11,229.

Housing
A rapidly growing population comes with opportunities, but also with challenges. As Aboriginal youth grow older and start forming households and families, additional pressure can also be expected on existing resources, such as the demand for housing. Recent household and family projections indicate that the demand for housing could be expected to be most prevalent on-reserves and in urban areas (Aboriginal Population, Household and Family Projections, INAC, 2007).

Aboriginal households are four times more likely to experience crowding compared to non-Aboriginal households (4.3% vs. 1.4%). Almost one-quarter (22.8%) of Inuit households in the Inuit land claim regions (Inuit Nunaat) experience crowding. on-reserve, 12.5% of Registered Indian households experience crowding.

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FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES AND URBAN ECONOMIES

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

First Nation communities generally do not enjoy the same levels of employment and income as other small communities. These economic disparities are stubbornly persistent. Much hope has been vested in the natural resource sectors, and the recent boom has rekindled those hopes. This study offers an alternative vision that posits economic integration with local urban centres as a key driving force of economic development. The performance of First Nation economies in light of their connection to urban centres is reviewed, and the role of urban centres in economic development is discussed.

Les communautés des Premières nations ne bénéficient pas en général des mêmes niveaux d'emploi et de revenu que les autres petites collectivités. Ces disparités économiques sont obstinément tenaces. Beaucoup d'espoir a été fondé dans le secteur des ressources naturelles et l'essor récent de ce secteur a attisé ces espoirs. Cette étude offre une autre vision, posant comme postulat l'intégration économique aux centres urbains comme moteur du développement économique. L'auteur examine le rendement des économies des Premières nations à la lumière de leur lien avec les centres urbains et le rôle des centres urbains dans le développement économique.

First Nation communities generally do not enjoy the same levels of employment and income as other small communities. These economic disparities are stubbornly persistent. Much hope has been vested in the natural resource sectors and the recent boom has rekindled those hopes. Here we offer an alternative vision that posits economic integration with urban centres as a key driving force for the economic development of small communities. We review the performance of First Nation economies in light of their connection to urban centres and briefly discuss the role of urban centres in economic development.

AN ECONOMIC LINK TO AN URBAN CENTRE

One crucial economic link between a small community and an urban centre is the extent to which residents of a small community participate in the labour market of the urban area, i. e., commute to work in the urban area. Statistics Canada's Statistical Area Classification (SAC) subdivides communities into seven groups according to the strength of this link, ranging from those that are part of a metropolitan area to those that have no connection at all to an urban centre (See text box; overleaf).

There are 615 First Nations in Canada that have some 2,800 parcels of land of various sizes. The 2001 census enumerated 307 separate First Nation territories with a population of 250 or more in the ten provinces.[1] The average population of these communities is 478 people, and the largest has 5,022 residents. The communities are very small and most are not close to a large urban centre.

In this study we compare these First Nation communities with other small communities south of sixty. To avoid comparing apples to oranges, we limit the population size of other communities to the same range as that of First Nations, i.e., 250 to 5,500 residents. There are nearly 3,000 non-First-Nation communities in Canada with such small populations.

Table 1 shows that First Nation communities are not as closely linked to urban labour markets as other

TABLE 1: Communities with a population of 250 to 5,500, by SAC type and reserve status

			NUMBER OF CSDs		SHARE OF TOTAL	
			FIRST NATION	OTHER	FIRST NATION	OTHER
Small community is part of an urban centre	1	Metropolitan	16	153	5%	5%
	2	Large urban	10	31	3%	1%
	3	Small urban	26	167	8%	6%
Small community is not part of an urban centre but has an economic link to it that is	4	Strong	7	428	2%	14%
	5	Moderate	55	1,113	18%	37%
	6	Weak	78	782	25%	26%
	7	None	15	298	37%	10%
Total			207	2972	98%	98%

communities. More than three in five First Nation communities have a weak or no link to an urban centre (categories 6 and 7), whereas one in two other communities have either a moderate or a strong connection to an urban centre.

COMMUNITIES AND THE STATISTICAL AREA CLASSIFICATION (SAC) SYSTEM

Each small community considered in this study is some type of municipality or a populated reserve. According to Statistics Canada, each such community is a Census Subdivision (CSD), a geographic unit for the purpose of the population census. A few First Nations have more than one separate populated territory or CSD but most have just a single one.

According to Statistics Canada's Statistical Area Classification (SAC), a CSD can be a part of:

1) a census metropolitan area (CMA), an urban centre with a population of more than 100,000
2) a "tracted" census agglomeration (CA), an urban centre with a population of 50,000 to 100,000
3) a non-tracted census agglomeration, having a population of 10,000 to 50,000.

Generally, a community is considered part of the urban centre if more than one-half of the employed labour force of the community works in the urban centre outside the community.

CSDs that are not part of an urban centre are subdivided according to the share of the employed labour force that commutes to the urban centre, as follows:

4) Strong influence: 30% to 50%;
5) Moderate influence: 5% to 30%;
6) Weak influence: less than 5% but more than 0%;
1) No influence: no commuting at all.

For these four categories, the SAC classification does not indicate the size of the urban centre the community is connected to. Communities north of sixty make up an eighth category not included in this review.

INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

According to the 2001 census, income per capita in First Nation communities ($9,634) is only 56% of that in other communities ($17,228). Employment income, other market income and transfer payments are all lower in First Nation communities, with employment income accounting for most of the difference in total income (Figure 1, leftmost column).

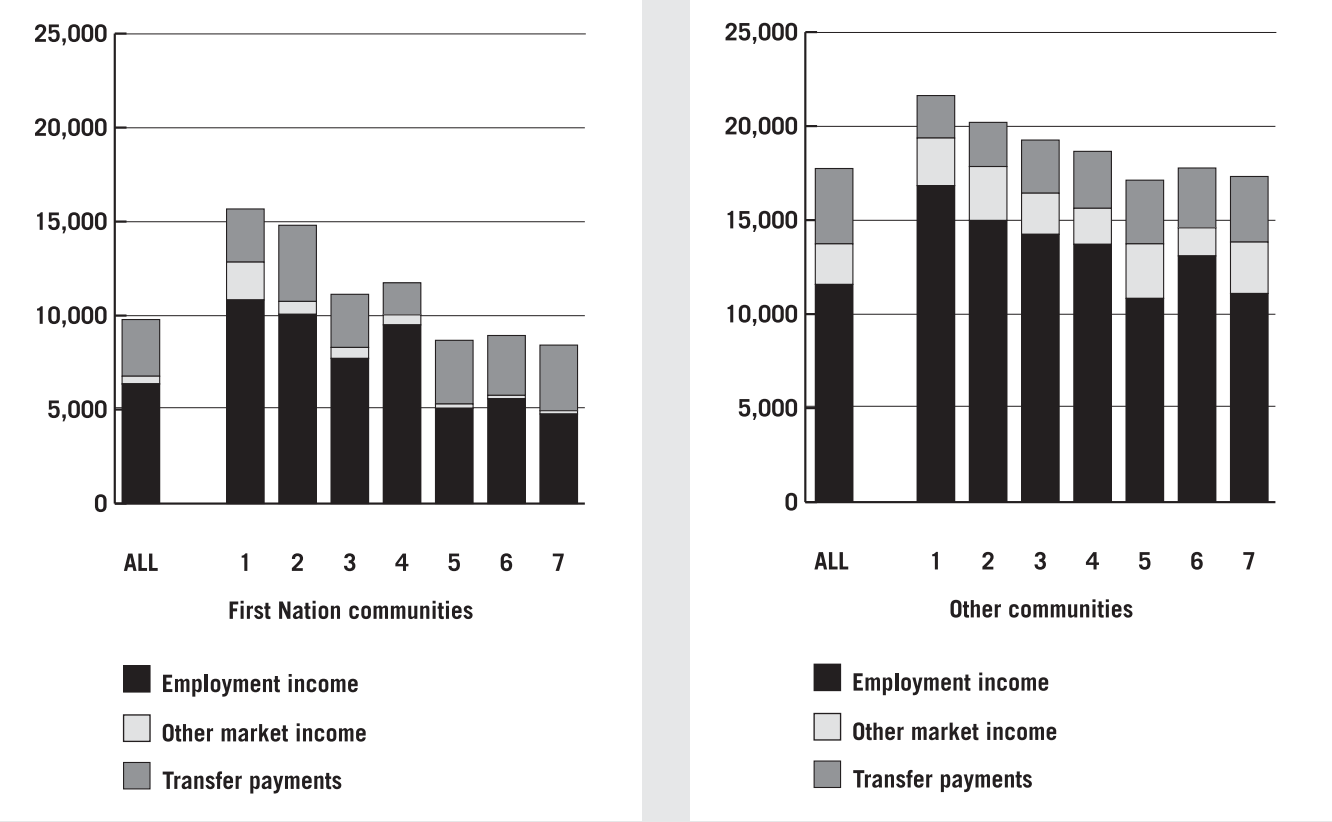
A major reason for lower employment income in First Nation communities is lower employment (Figure 2). Employment as a share of the working-age population in First Nation communities is only 75% of that in other communities (Figure 3). Earnings per employed person are also lower in First Nation communities: they are only 78% of what employed people in other communities earn (Figure 3).

These differences are well known, and they have not changed very much between recent censuses. Figures 1, 2 and 3 also show the same indicators for communities subdivided by the strength of their link to the labour market of an urban centre. For First Nation communities, the stronger this link, the higher income and employment are. For other communities, income also varies depending on the link to an urban centre but employment is more or less the same regardless of this link. The weaker the links to an urban centre, the lower earnings are per employed person and employment in First Nation communities relative to other communities (Figure 3).

What accounts for these patterns? As a general rule, better-paying jobs tend to be in urban centres where one finds more head offices of businesses, more highly qualified people in the public and business services sectors and a better-educated labour force. Communities that are located in or near cities can participate in the high-wage economies of those cities, as both First Nation and other communities appear to do. However, First Nations do not draw the same level of high earnings as do other communities resulting from their participation in urban labour markets.

First Nation communities have more public sector employment than their counterparts – i.e., jobs in public

FIGURE 1: Total income per capita and its three components, small communities by connection to an urban centre*



* Columns 1 to 7 in reflect the seven SAC categories described in the text box

administration, infrastructure (roads, water and utilities and security), education and health care and social services. On average, these jobs may provide good if not very high levels of pay. Even so, earnings per employed person in First Nations communities without a strong link to urban centres are relatively low. This suggests there are no or few well-paying private sector jobs in rural and remote First Nation communities.

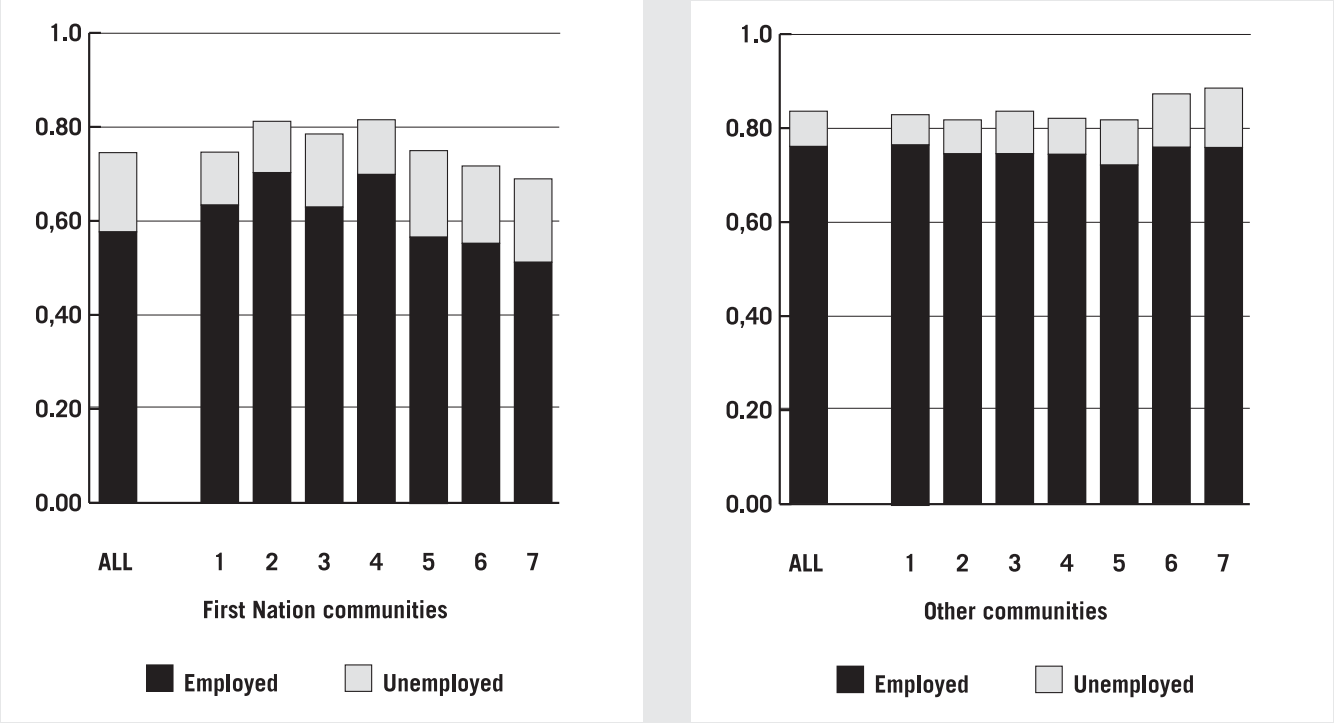
That employment in other communities does not vary with the link to an urban centre may well be due to the fact that, by and large, people live where there are jobs. Settlements arise and grow where there is economic opportunity. When employment in a small community becomes less plentiful, people move away and sometimes the community ceases to exist. By contrast, First Nations communities are located in the traditional territories and frequently at some distance from such activity. In many of these places there has been little opportunity for market-based economic activity. Out-migration has taken place but communities have continued to exist in spite of lack of jobs.

TRANSFER PAYMENT INCOME

Government transfers to persons are lower in First Nation communities than in other small communities (Figure 4, leftmost column). This reflects differences in population structure (Figure 5) as well as in income and employment. Child benefits are high in First Nation communities where children are numerous, whereas transfers to the old-aged are much higher in other communities, where seniors make up a large share of the population. Low incomes in First Nation communities make for higher child benefits; while, in other communities CPP-QPP benefits per senior are higher because these people have been employed for much of their working lives.

First Nation communities receive much less in EI benefits than their counterparts, but much more of "Other transfer payments" (Figures 4 and 6). Other government transfers consist of social assistance payments and a variety of small tax credits and benefits that tend to be associated with low income from other sources.

FIGURE 2: Employment and unemployment as a share of the population of working age; small communities by connection to an urban centre



The amounts of transfers to people of working age (i.e., EI benefits and other transfer payments) do not seem to vary according to the strength of the link to an urban centre. However, EI benefits in other communities are high where there is no or only a weak or moderate link to an urban centre (Figure 4). Higher EI benefits in rural and remote places reflect the higher unemployment rates and more seasonal employment and lower qualification requirements for EI benefits. The number of hours of employment needed to qualify for benefits depends on the regional unemployment rate.

First Nation communities with a weak link to an urban centre are also often found in regions with higher unemployment and easier qualification for EI benefits; but, the amount of EI benefits; but, the amount of EI benefits received is rather low. As shown in Figure 6, EI benefits per unemployed person are only 30% to 40% of those in similar other communities that are not part of or have no strong link to an urban centre. This must be because employment is so scarce that people fail to qualify for EI benefits even where it does not take many weeks of employment to qualify for benefits.

This brief overview illustrates a profound difference: most First Nation communities do not have an economic rationale for their existence in terms of the contemporary global market economy. Other communities, generally, would not come into being without an economic base and would decline and even disappear, if their economic base fell away. Some First Nation communities have been able to participate in the economy of a nearby urban centre but most have not.

THE DRIVING FORCES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The history of the development of Canada after contact with Europe is well described by the "staples theory" of Harold Innis, who saw settlement of Canada resulting from an abundance of natural resources that were in demand. Communities developed in agricultural regions and around sawmills as well as pulp and paper plants and mines. Gateways to the hinterland grew into towns and cities.

In the latter part of the 20th century, natural resources were not the engine of growth they were when Canada was a frontier society. For the most part, the regions of Canada had to look to other sources of economic growth. As Higgins and Savoie (1997) put it, the challenge of economic

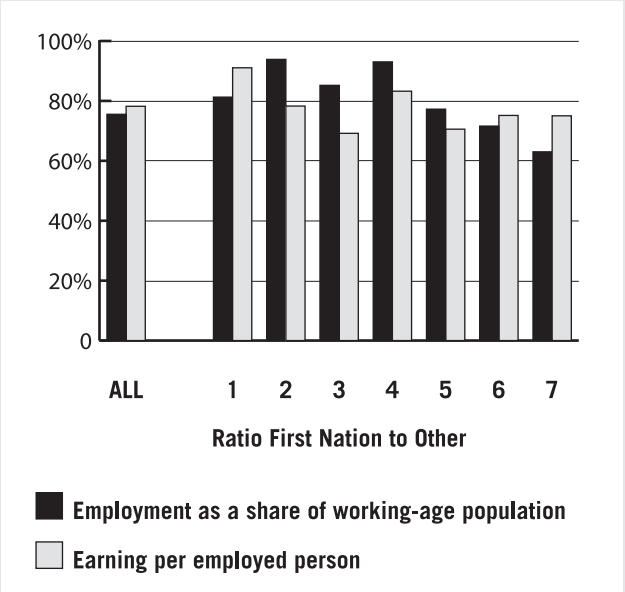
"This is far from a definitive analysis. We have viewed the economies of small communities through a single lens: the extent of commuting into the urban labour market. We have not considered geographic distance as a barrier to participation in urban economies."

development for Canada is to transform the economy from exploitation of natural resources to exploitation of new technologies and development of new products and services, i.e., from a natural-resource-based to a human-resource-based economy. Michael Porter, Ann Markusen and Jane Jacobs are some of the leading observers of this new economy.

- Michael Porter (1998) argues that industrial "clusters", i.e., groups of related sectors concentrated in a region may generate a competitive advantage for the region and a leading role in world markets. The basic factors that have determined location of industry for so long – a ready source of energy, literate workers, and so on – are now available anywhere in the world. A region's success in the modern economy increasingly depends on factor conditions that are man-made, specialized and are the result of long-term investments. Examples include workers with uncommon expertise and research institutions specialising in key technologies – specialised human resources of high quality.
- Ann Markusen (1999) focuses on the life cycle of industries from birth to growth, stagnation and decline. In the early stages of development of new products, an industry is necessarily concentrated in one or a few areas. Chance plays a large role in determining these areas, although regions can enhance their chance of harbouring a new industry by creating favourable conditions to attract high-quality human resources, researchers and entrepreneurs. During this early stage, a new industry tends to be very profitable and grow rapidly. As the industry matures, competition increases, and success depends more on cost of production. Firms would then locate in lower-cost areas or close to large markets. At some point, growth levels off and decline may set in. Many countries and regions are vying to be the place where major new industries are born, as success at this brings high incomes and rapid growth. This is known as the "first mover advantage".
- Consistent with the theories of Porter and Markusen is the idea that population size makes a difference. A large city tends to have more diversity of economic activity, more specialisation, and cross-fertilisation, known in economic science as "agglomeration economies". Larger cities have more dynamic economies capable of generating growth. Jane Jacobs (1970) regards cities as the locus of innovation leading to economic growth. More specifically, she sees import replacement as the engine that can generate explosive growth.

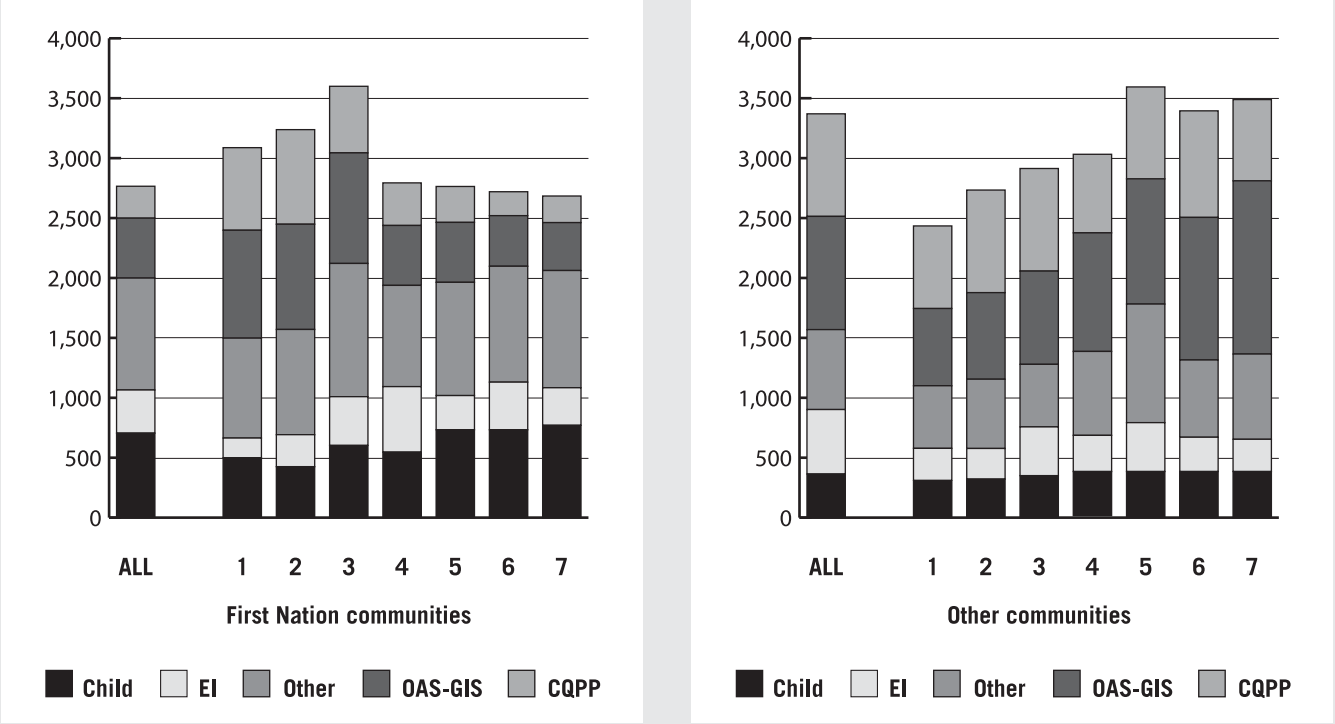
Persistent differences in average income among Canada's regions are consistent with the idea that a small, scattered population and lack of a large city are a disadvantage in economic development. This insight has led governments to make efforts to concentrate development in "growth poles", by, among other things, attracting "footloose industries". These methods have not met with lasting success. Efforts then turned to community economic development: stimulating small business development, developing local talent and building local capacity. Today, local, regional and provincial governments commit significant resources to this form of economic development. Across the country there exists quite a large network of community development corporations engaged in small

FIGURE 3: Employment income and other market income; small communities by connection to an urban centre



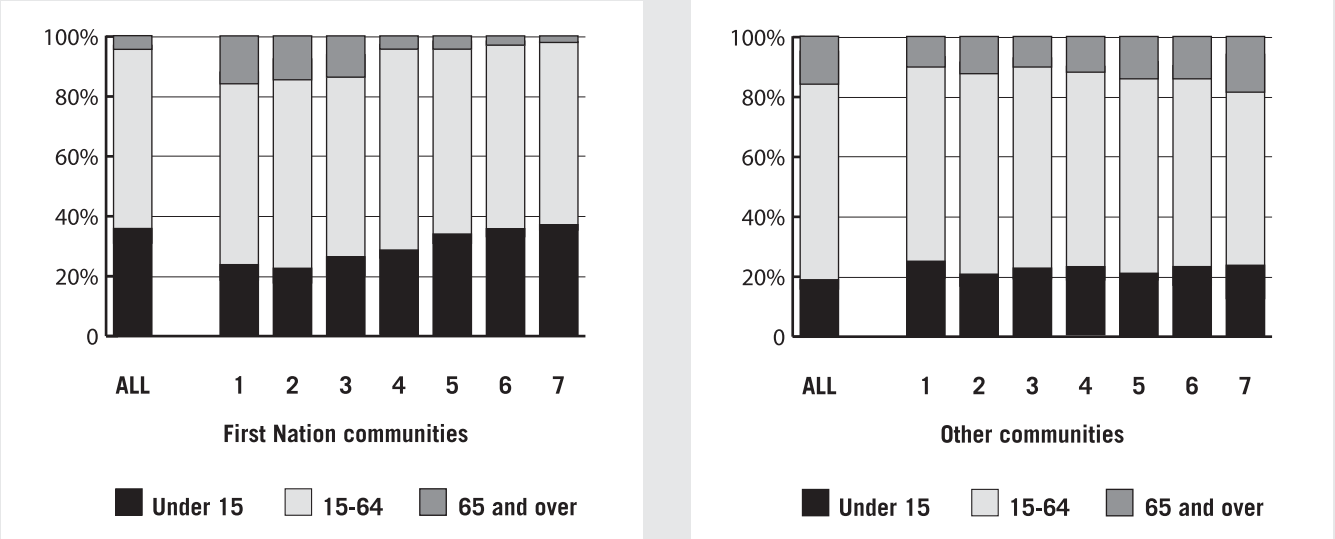
[1] Other market income consists of investment income and pension income.

FIGURE 4: Transfer payment income per capita; small communities by connection to an urban centre



[1] Child: federal and provincial child benefits. EI: Employment Insurance benefits. Other transfer payment income: social assistance benefits and a variety of other transfers that tend to be associated with low income from other sources. OAS-GIS: Old Age Security benefits and the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors. CPP-QPP: Canada and Quebec Pension Plan benefits.

FIGURE 5: Age structure of the population; small communities by connection to an urban centre



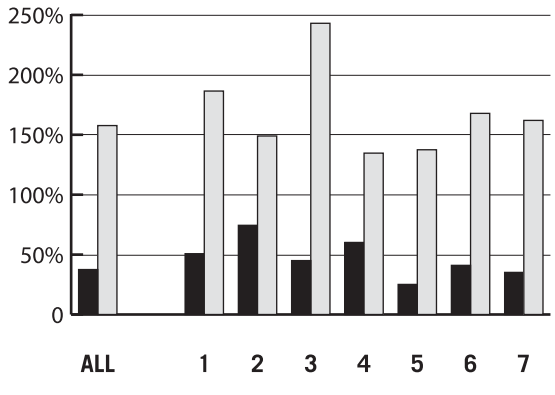
business development and financing, management training and local economic planning.

In spite of considerable efforts by governments, smaller rural and remote communities have generally not fared well in the last quarter of the 20th century, as noted in the study by Higgins and Savoie mentioned earlier. In agricultural areas, small communities have declined and disappeared. As farming required ever fewer workers, the family farm made way for farming corporations and distance became less important. Similarly, mechanisation and automation reduced the amount of local labour involved in mining and forestry and often replaced it with highly trained operators brought in from urban centres. Provinces struggle to define rural strategies to bolster some rural and remote communities amidst the general decline.

First Nations, on the whole, did not participate in the natural-resource-driven economic development of Canada. Moreover, they are not fully participating in contemporary urban-driven economic growth. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP 1996) attributes this primarily to historical exclusion, institutional factors like the special legal environment on reserves and various disruptions including the introduction of welfare payments. RCAP also notes that many Aboriginal communities are isolated, with little employment in the surrounding area. We would add to this that there is a high incidence of physical and mental health problems in First Nation communities and that a lack of economic development over a long period of time undermines the capacity to participate in development.

In the early years of the 21st century, world demand for natural resources has strengthened due in large part to rapid economic growth in Asia. Indeed, it seems that natural resources, particularly oil and gas, are once again the major economic driving force, with major impacts where the resources are found. However, many of Canada's small communities are not positively impacted by this perhaps temporary boom. Their economic future may lie in ties to the dynamism of Canada's urban centres. We believe that sharing in the economic growth of urban economies is an essential ingredient for lasting economic success of smaller communities.

FIGURE 6: Other transfer payments and Employment Insurance benefits; small communities by connection to an urban centre



CONCLUSION

In this brief review we could do no more than present a perspective on economic development and offer some general comments on patterns found in the charts. This is far from a definitive analysis. We have viewed the economies of small communities through a single lens: the extent of commuting into the urban labour market. We have not considered geographic distance as a barrier to participation in urban economies. Furthermore, we aggregated large and small urban centres, even though they may have very different economic dynamics.

Even so, we believe that the facts we have shown are striking enough to consider economic links to an urban centre a major factor in the economic development of small communities including First Nation communities. Strengthening these links may be a way of overcoming the exclusion of many First Nation communities from the larger economy that was noted by RCAP. In a recent report, the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (2006) discussed this challenge. The committee points in three directions:

- Small communities should work together to pursue common economic development objectives.
- Remote First Nations should have an urban strategy.
- Many communities need better basic infrastructure.

Of these directions, the notion of an urban strategy for First Nations fits well with the perspective taken in this paper. Working together to overcome size limitations and investing in infrastructure are constructive ideas; and, improving the level of education is, of course, also a vital

ingredient. We hope that this brief review of economic self-reliance will contribute to a sharper focus on the challenge of economic development of small, remote First Nations and more and sustained action to meet that challenge by building economic links to urban centres.

NOTE

[1] Statistics Canada does not publish income data for communities with a population of less than 250 persons.

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DIAMONDS IN CANADA'S NORTH: A LESSON IN MEASURING SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This paper reviews efforts made in the North West Territories to measure socio-economic impacts of diamond mining. It critically compares the more traditional forms of measurement, which use readily available statistical sources to track socio-economic impacts and trends, to a community based monitoring projects – the West Kitikmeot/Slave Study – that is based in traditional knowledge and reviews community health among other issues. The hope is that this critical comparison will help in identifying the advantages and disadvantages of these two very difference methods of measurement which may eventually lead to a hybridized means of simultaneously measuring economic impacts as well as cultural and community well-bring.

Cet article examine les efforts déployés dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest pour mesurer les répercussions socioéconomiques de l'exploitation des mines de diamants. Les auteurs font une comparaison critique des formes de mesure les plus traditionnelles, qui utilisent des sources de statistiques facilement accessibles pour suivre les répercussions et les tendances socioéconomiques, à des projets communautaires de surveillance _ l'Étude des provinces du Kitikmeot Ouest et des Esclaves, fondée sur le savoir traditionnel, et examine la question de la santé communautaire, entre autres. Les auteurs espèrent que cette comparaison critique aidera à déterminer les avantages et les désavantages de ces deux méthodes de mesure très différentes, qui pourraient mener finalement à un moyen hybride de mesurer simultanément les répercussions économiques ainsi que le bien-être culturel et communautaire.

INTRODUCTION

Diamonds are a government's best friend. Or so it would seem when one reads the various socio-economic reports prepared by the three mining companies active in the Northwest Territories (NWT): De Beers (Snap Lake), BHP Billiton (Ekati), and Diavik. This impression is reinforced by the Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) own "Diamond Facts" (2006b), supported by Statistics Canada's analysis (2004) and the GNWT's "Benefit Cost Analysis" (2006a). These documents invariably paint a picture of an industry performing at a stellar level.

Impacts on local Aboriginal communities are a key component of these documents. Each reports on conventional measures of employment and targets of hiring northerners and Aboriginal persons and person years, as well as employment benefits (e.g., literacy programs, apprenticeship/training and career development opportunities), business opportunities/spending, purchasing statistics, capital operating and social investments (BHP Bilton 2007; De Beers 2006; Diavik 2007).

The GNWT "Diamond Facts" adds information on such items as its regulatory and economic development responsibilities and the economic scope of the industry, including value added opportunities. The GNWT also produces an annual publication called "Communities and Diamonds" (most recent is from 2006). This report, a requirement under socio-economic agreements made with the three diamond mining companies, goes beyond employment and spending to focus on well-being at the community, family and individual levels, cultural well-being and traditional economy, the non-traditional economy and the net effect on government. An overarching goal of all of these reports is to use readily available statistical sources to track socio-economic impacts and trends.

The Community Based Monitoring Project of the West Kitikmeot/Slave Study (WKSS), in contrast, represents a multi-year, multi-stakeholder funded initiative designed to track changes in the communities' health from the communities' own perspectives and understandings. This article reviews these efforts to measure socio-economic impacts from NWT diamond mines in the hope of identifying advantages and disadvantages of two very different methods.

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MONITORING METHOD

The general impression from the "Communities and Diamonds" reports is that small local communities - those most impacted by the mines - have experienced relative improvement in economic terms since mining activity began. Communities have also seen an increase in rates of indicators associated with social and family dysfunction such as lone-parent families and children receiving services (see Table 1). However, little of either of these changes can be directly attributed to diamond mining. Even in those few instances where rates and trends for small local communities differ from remaining NWT communities, it is not possible to attribute these differences solely to impact from the mine; in fact, it is not at all clear that the measures permit a rigorous assessment of the impacts to community, family and individual well being, except as measured in very conventional, economic terms. This is because the data is primarily drawn from existing sources rather than being specifically gathered for monitoring purposes in relation to the mines.

Understanding the impacts of diamond mining on Northern Aboriginal communities requires an appreciation of the complex, highly inter-related nature of cultural, social, economic and environmental dynamics. These communities are characterized by traditional, mixed and wage economies; consequently, many of the indicators employed, while still necessary, maybe insufficient to measure economic activity and growth. Moreover, roles and responsibilities for action in response to fluctuations in these indicators are weakly defined. There appears to be no mechanism established to analyze and respond to impacts on Aboriginal community well-being based on community values, needs and visions. In this sense, there is a perceived lack of control for the communities involved as well as non-participation and poor governance opportunities.

Gibson and Klinck (2006) have observed that the impacts of mining in the NWT is an under researched area. However, they point to related studies of the impacts of mining in similar situations that are useful for predicting negative impacts. For instance, jobs in mines create significant mental stress, anxiety and exhaustion; there are also significant risks of increased substance abuse, gambling, prostitution and HIV/AIDs and STDs, contributing to increases in various adverse health effects, child neglect, family conflict and dissolution.

There is tension between the local communities' culturally driven approach to land use and sustainable economies and the Eurocentric, capitalistic values and institutions directing resource extraction (Rattle 2008). Citing a 2002 report by the North Slave Lake Métis Association, Gibson and Klinck note that 71% of mine workers are spending less time on the land and, thus, are unable to learn or transmit traditional skills and ecological knowledge to younger generations. Fumoleau (1975) shows that adopting a wage-based labour system results in a cultural orientation towards greater individualism, which is antithetical to Aboriginal values (North Slave Métis Association 2002) and collective responsibility. Increased individualism can also affect social networks (Littlebear 2000) including extended families and communities, which has implications in terms of family support for raising children. The GNWT's own "Communities and Diamonds" (2006b) notes trends of increasing violent crime in Yellowknife, increasing instances of reported STDs, increasing instances of single parent families and children receiving services in small local communities and a reduced proportion of high income earners. Bielawski noted that cultural activities had been cancelled due to a lack of drummers, many of whom had been denied cultural leave by BHP (2003).

There are also potential gender inequity issues in a predominantly male based industry. The "Communities and Diamonds" reports include indicators of teen births and women and children using shelters, single-parent families and spousal assault complaints. However, there is no generalised gender disaggregation of data for a better understanding of how the impacts from mining activity may be felt differently by women and men. Finally, Wilkinson and Marmot (1999) show how mining activities stratify

TABLE 1: Selected SEMA results trends tables

INDICATOR	COMPANY PREDICTED TRENDS			GNWT OBSERVED TREND	
	BHP	DIAVIK	DE BEERS	SMALL LOCAL COMMUNITIES	YELLOWKNIFE
Years lost (early death)	Up	Up	Down	Down	No change
Injuries	Up	Up	Down	No change	Down
Suicides	No change	No change	Up	No change	No change
Sexually Transmitted Diseases	No change	Up	Up	Up	Up
Teen births	No change	No change	Up	Down	No change
Single parent families	Up	No change	Up	Up	No change
Children receiving services	Up	Up	No change	Up	No change
Family Violence	Up	Up	Up	No change	No change
Crime	Up	Up	Up	No change	Up
Violent Crimes	Up	Up	Up	No change	Up
Property Crimes	Up	Up	Up	Down	No change
Federal statute crimes	Up	Up	Up	Up	No change
Housing (ownership/sharing)	Up	UP	UP	No change	Up
Crowding	Down	Down	Down	Down	No Change
Core need	Down	Down	Down	Down	Up
Home language use to mother tongue	Down	Down	Down	No change	Down
Workforce aged engaged in traditional activities: Trapping	Down	Down	No change	Up	No change
Hunting and fishing	Down	Up	No change	Up	Down
Non-traditional economy: Average income	Up	Up	Up	Up	Up
Proportion of high income earners	Up	Up	Up	Down	Down
Income assistance cases	Down	Down	Down	Down	Down
Employment rate	Up	Up	Up	Up	No Change
Unemployment rate	Down	Down	Down	Down	No change
Participation Rate	Up	Up	Up	No change	No Change
Education: High school completion	Up	Up	Up	Up	Up
Less than grade 9	Down	Down	Down	Down	Down
Sustainable development: Secondary industry	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change

Source: GNWT (2006)

communities into "haves" and "have-nots". These are just some of the potential negative impacts mining can bring Aboriginal communities.

It needs to be acknowledged that for all the challenges brought to bear, diamond mining also brings tangible benefits, including GDP growth, opportunities for increased employment and income, training and education as well as business growth. Moreover, the "Communities and Diamonds" (2006b) report shows progress with respect to housing (e.g., increased availability and reduced crowding), non-traditional economies, income assistance, educational attainment, early deaths and so on. However, some of this enthusiasm has been tempered in recognition of the economic costs associated with secondary industries (GNWT 2006a) – while the diamond industry accounts for over 50% of the NWT GDP, development of secondary industries have come at considerable costs to the GNWT and with that comes significant financial risk. It is further worth noting in this context that empirical and applied research demonstrates that human well-being diverges

significantly from GDP per capita beyond a relatively modest income level (Max-Neef 1995; Coleman 2001; Young and Einarsson 2004).

Overall, the image provided by reports based on conventional measures and relying on preexisting data is one of tension between the apparent successes of the NWT diamond industry and the potential weakening of other indicators for community and individual well-being. Is this satisfactory? We know that well-being in the Aboriginal context is closely related to health and the integrity of the eco-system. One conclusion, therefore, might be that reporting should seek to go beyond simple economic cost-benefit analysis and apply instead a holistic approach that clearly links complex interrelationships of social, economic, political and cultural determinants to the natural environment. It could also take into account the aspirations of the affected communities. Aboriginal values and practices reflect this: when elders speak of important issues or indicators identified by the community, they do not speak of them in isolation from one another.

Following this observation, there are certain inherent weaknesses in the aforementioned socio-economic monitoring agreements (SEMAs) that should be addressed. First, they generally appear to incorporate a limited scope of effects primarily related to economic impacts on social engagement – jobs, income, training, and education, business opportunities and development as well as capacity development. Second, while cultural and community well-being are included in most cases, they are based on fewer indicators for which opportunities to assess progress and identify mitigative measures are constrained relative to economic indicators

Later SEMAs have improved on such shortcomings. However there remains a significant lack of indicator disaggregation to allow monitoring of the details of community well-being at the individual community level. Further, all small communities located close to the mines are aggregated together and compared to Yellowknife and the rest of the NWT; hence, it is not possible to determine how any single community is faring in comparison to the other local communities let alone with Yellowknife, the rest of the NWT or the rest of Canada. Overall, the data continue to show stellar performance on indicators related to jobs and employment, health service results and income. However, the evidence is inconclusive on cultural well-being and overall quality of life changes. The socio-economic indicators being used remain aligned with Eurocentric measurement approaches, which mean that they are crude instruments at best for determining the effect of diamond mining on community and cultural well-being.

A radically different approach to measuring well-being was taken by the Community Based Monitoring Project of the WKSS. Researchers worked with the community of Lutzel K'e on a traditional knowledge study of community health to develop a set of indicators, measure trends over time using regular surveys of community members and create a community based monitoring system and toolkit that could be used by other affected communities. The most recent incarnation of this project, termed "Watching the Land" (2005), continues to monitor indicators developed in the earlier analysis, including both environmental and socio-economic components. It concludes that Chipewyan language use and traditional skills are rapidly declining among youth and that few individuals take part in traditional cultural activities.

The WKSS seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the social impacts on Aboriginal communities than could be hoped from pre-existing, usually inadequate, data sources. However, it is more expensive to develop and maintain and more onerous on the community. "Watching the Land" (WKSS 2005) for example, contains a long litany of data gathering and interpretation problems related to funding, capacity and staff training and turnover. This type of analysis, which reflects the shared values internal to a given community, also suffers from a lack of comparable data with other communities.

The confines of this form of monitoring are also reflected by the limited objective of providing the community with the tools necessary to take whatever corrective measures that are within its power related to changes brought about by the diamond mines. This is a laudable goal and a necessary coping mechanism for the community. There is much that industry and governments can also learn from such an alternative methodology.

CONCLUSION

Based on this discussion, we conclude that the existing monitoring function of SEMAs is in need of enhancement. Specifically, we believe there is need for improved integration of existing monitoring methods as well as better indicators, greater disaggregation and more advanced analysis (see also Rattle 2008). One key challenge: the reports point to economic growth as evidence of progress but fail to situate economic growth within the broader context of community well-being, which is bothersome since these same reports reveal limited connection between economic growth and community well-being. In contrast, there is significant evidence that, where cultures depend on the environment for their spiritual, physical, social and cultural well-being, those elements of well-being are often negatively impacted by local and regional economic growth.

What is ultimately required is a socio-economic monitoring system that is neither limited to conventional measures of economic well-being nor reliant on existing data sources. A system is required that takes Aboriginal interests into consideration and is able to measure direct

social impacts from a community's own observations. Ellen Bielawski (2003) offers a number of recommendations in *Rouge Diamonds*, including ensuring sufficient on-the-ground support for environmental, health and cultural monitoring. Such a system would recognize that the communities in question have wage, mixed and traditional economies; that wage economy measures ignore the contribution of traditional practices to Aboriginal community well-being; and, that a growing body of evidence shows that income, beyond a certain level, does not necessarily correlate with improved well-being.

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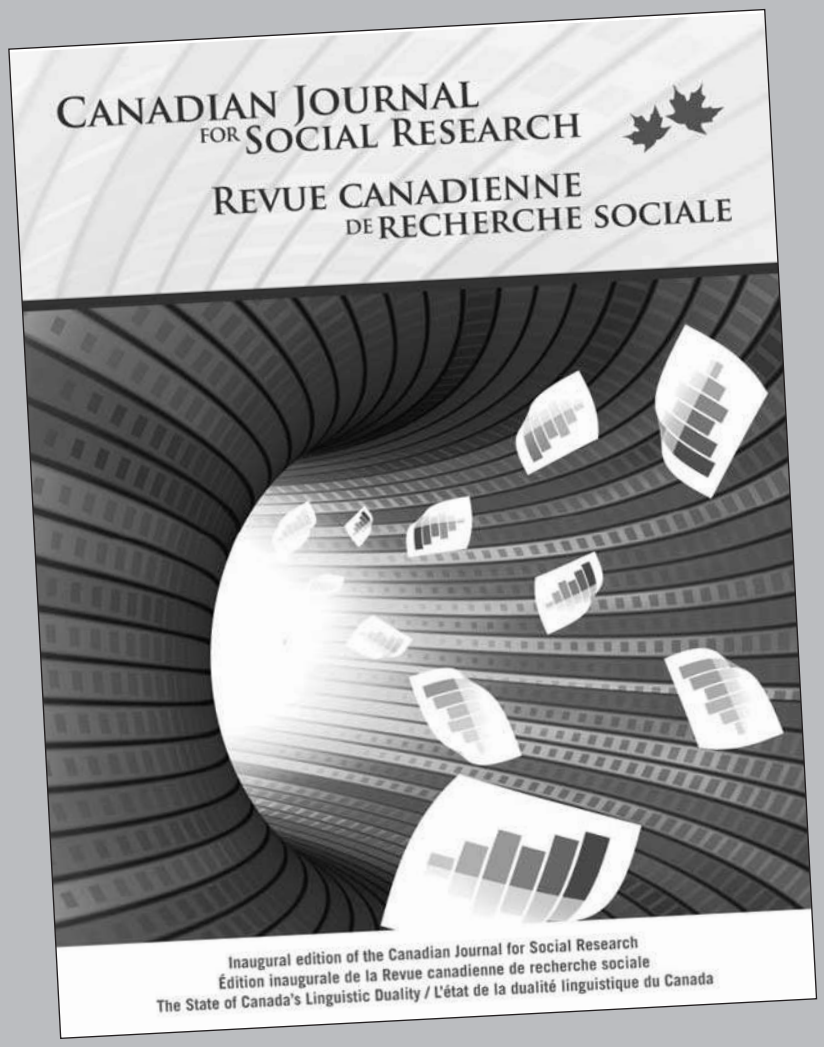

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A History of Policy and Program Development

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LES RELATIONS DU CANADA AVEC LES INUIT

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Canada

Restoring the Balance

First Nations Women, Community, and Culture

RESTORING THE BALANCE

First Nations Women, Community, and Culture

First Nations peoples believe the eagle flies with a female wing and a male wing, showing the importance of balance between the feminine and the masculine in all aspects of individual and community experiences. Centuries of colonialist oppression, however, have devalued the traditional roles of First Nations women, causing a great gender imbalance that limits the abilities of men, women, and their communities in achieving self-actualization.

Restoring the Balance brings to light the work First Nations women have performed, and continue to perform, in cultural continuity and community development. It illustrates the challenges and successes they have had in the areas of law, politics, education, community healing, language, art, and cultural retention, while suggesting significant options for sustained improvement of individual, family, and community well-being. Written by fifteen Aboriginal scholars, activists, and community leaders, the book combines life histories and biographical accounts with historical and critical analyses grounded in traditional thought and approaches.

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