



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Research Highlight No. 2
December 2003

IS WINNIPEG'S ABORIGINAL POPULATION GHETTOIZED?

Introduction

While direct religious and/or racial discrimination is no longer legally nor culturally sanctioned in most nations, a more insidious form of discrimination can exist. Housing markets, for instance, can restrict people in their access to certain neighbourhoods. This is typical of much non-white segregation in both the United States and Europe (Maxim et al. 2000).

Some authors have suggested that such discriminatory practices are evident within parts of Canada where the relatively higher residential concentration of Aboriginals in the core city areas may have led to ghetto effects that exacerbate the already low degree of integration of Aboriginals (Drost et al. 1995, Lee 2000, Hanselmann 2001). Issues of Aboriginal ghettos and their implications for cities and for urban Aboriginal people are also a matter of longstanding public and government debate.

The following Research Highlight explores residential segregation patterns for Aboriginal people in Winnipeg and attempts to answer the question as to whether Winnipeg's Aboriginal population is ghettoized.

Aboriginal Population Growth

According to Census statistics, there were 55,756 Aboriginal people in Winnipeg in 2001, comprising 8.4% of Winnipeg's total population. In 1996, 6.9% of Winnipeg's residents reported Aboriginal identity. The Aboriginal population is more concentrated in the inner city where approximately one of every five people identified themselves as an Aboriginal. This proportion is three to four times higher than in other areas where less than one in ten people claimed Aboriginal identity. The proportion falls to almost one in twenty in the non-inner city.

Winnipeg's Aboriginal population is continuing to increase as a result of a higher birth rate among this

group, and increased migration to the city due to limited employment opportunities on reserves. A study by the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics projected that the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg would increase by 71 per cent over a 25-year period, rising to 76,800 by 2016 and will represent 10.7 per cent of Winnipeg's population (Human Resources Development Canada 2002).

This growth of the Aboriginal population and its spatial concentration poses significant challenges for the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg, as well as for governments, social agencies, neighbourhood organizations, academic researchers and urban planners. The settlement patterns of Aboriginal people affect how programs are delivered and what services are necessary in certain areas. Concentrations have implications for discrimination and many other factors ranging from property values, employment opportunities and life chances to appropriate house design, and approaches to community policing. If poverty is a characteristic of the group, concentrations may also have considerable significance for urban decline and the type of programs necessary to arrest decline and stimulate urban revitalization. In the case of Aboriginal people, the issue of concentration may be an important factor to consider in the development of urban reserves.

Definition of Ghetto

The term comes from Venice's Ghetto: before this part of the city was reserved for the Jews it was an iron foundry (getto), hence the name ghetto. The first ghettos were created in Germany, Spain and Portugal in the 13th century, but some authors use the same term to indicate the destination towns to which the Roman Empire deported Jews from the first to the fourth century AD. Though the word was historically used in reference to restricted housing zones for Jews, it is now commonly used to refer to any poverty-stricken urban area.

According to Peach (1996), the ghetto has dual characteristics. First, a single ethnic or racial group forms the whole population of the residential district. Secondly, most members of that group in the city are found in such areas.

Measuring Residential Segregation

Residential segregation is the overall unevenness in the spatial distribution of two groups. Considerable discussion in the literature on residential segregation came to the conclusion that the index of dissimilarity is the most satisfactory measure of unevenness of residential distribution (Duncan and Duncan 1955, Peach 1996).

The index measures the distribution of two different populations over the same sub-set of residential areas of a city. It is equal to one-half the sum of the absolute differences between the percentage distribution of two specific population groups in the metropolitan area (Darden and Tabachneck 1980; Duncan and Duncan, 1955). The values of the index run from 0 (zero segregation) to 100 (complete segregation). The values can be interpreted as the percentage of one group that would have to shift its area of residence in order to achieve an identical distribution with the group, with which it is being compared. Generally, dissimilarity indices between 0 and 30 indicate a low degree of separation; indices between 30 and 60 suggest a moderate degree; and indices above 60 express a high degree of residential separation between groups (Massey and Denton 1988).

Index of Dissimilarity for Winnipeg

Indices of dissimilarity were calculated for the Winnipeg CMA, the inner city and non-inner city measuring evenness of the distribution of the Aboriginal group in relation to the non-Aboriginal population¹. Census tracts were chosen as the basis for residential segregation analysis. Census data on Aboriginal Identity was used, which refers to persons who identified themselves with at least one Aboriginal group².

¹ For an explanation of the methodology of this analysis, please visit the IUS website at www.uwinnipeg.ca/~ius

² 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. Statistics Canada 2001.

The index of dissimilarity for Aboriginals in the Winnipeg CMA is 36. This represents evidence of modest levels of residential segregation for the Aboriginal population. The index for the inner city is lower at 29.9, which means that Aboriginal people are distributed through the inner city more evenly. The same is true for non-inner city Winnipeg that has a dissimilarity index of 26.5. These findings are consistent with those of Maxim et al. (2000), Darden (2002) and others who suggest that Aboriginal peoples in most major Canadian communities are reasonably well integrated into the geographical urban landscape.

Concentrations of Aboriginal People

Nineteen percent of the inner city population are Aboriginal. When the distribution of the Aboriginal population in the inner city is examined by census tract, the highest concentration in a census tract is 52% (Table 1, Map 1). These concentrations, where just over half of the population in a census tract is Aboriginal, are low by international standards. In the United States, by comparison, tract-level percentages of 80 and more are common for African Americans (Peach 1996).

There are only 2 census tracts with concentrations of the Aboriginal population over 40%. They are located in Lord Selkirk Park, the east half of Dufferin, and the south half of William Whyte. Eight census tracts (almost 5%) contain concentrations of Aboriginals of 30-40%, and seven of them are located in the inner city neighbourhoods Spence, North Point Douglas, southeast St. Johns, northeast William Whyte, Centennial, and the east half of West Alexander. Ten census tracts (6%) have lower concentrations of 20-30%. The remaining 146 census tracts (88.5%) have concentrations of 20% or less.

When Aboriginal population percentages were calculated by dissemination areas³, seven areas had concentration values higher than at the census tract level. The highest value of 70% falls in the Burrows-Keewatin neighbourhood. The western portion of the neighbourhood has a concentration level of 54%. Concentrations of Aboriginals in most of Lord Selkirk Park and south central William Whyte are also high - 68% and 64%. East Centennial, central Centennial and southeast St. Johns have 62.5%, 61%, and 55% respectively.

³ The dissemination area is a small, relatively stable geographic unit composed of one or more blocks, with a population of 400 to 700 persons. It is the smallest standard geographic area for which all census data are disseminated. Statistics Canada 2001.

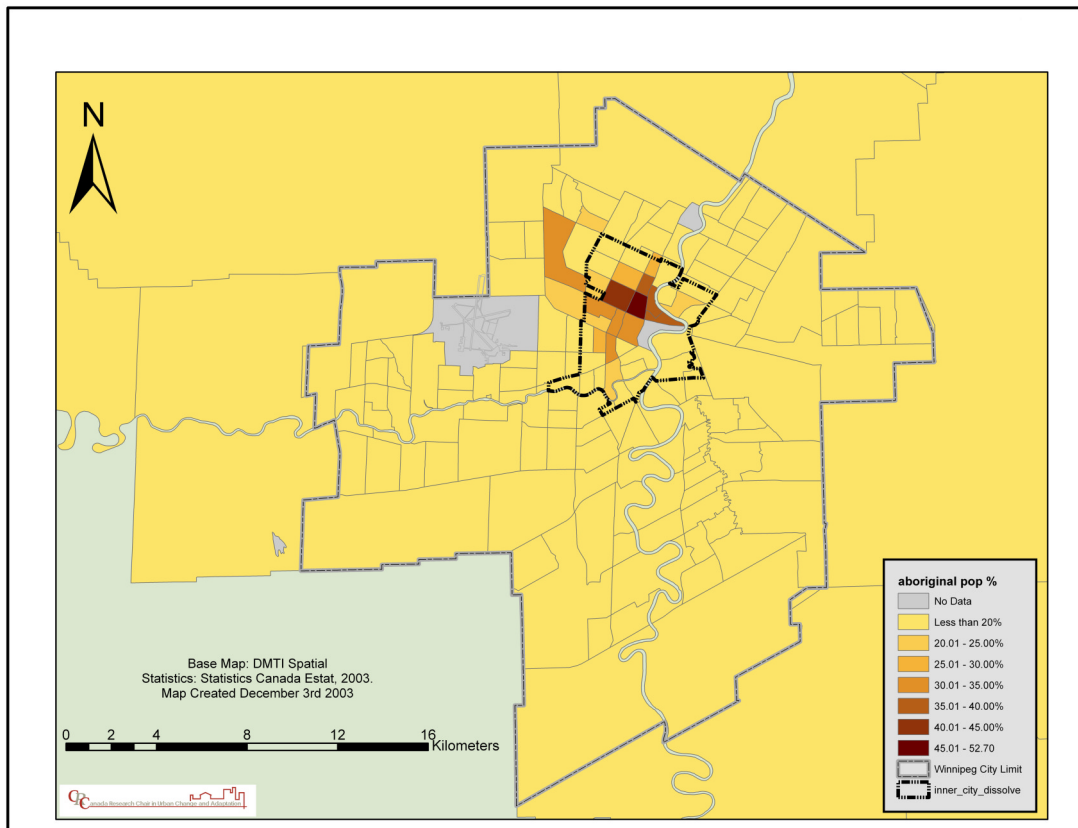
Table 1. Concentration of Aboriginal Population in a Census Tract

% of the total population in a census tract that is Aboriginal	Number of the census tracts	% of census tracts	Aboriginal population of these census tracts
45.01-52	1	0.61	1220
40.01-45	1	0.61	1705
35.01-40	3	1.82	1775
30.01-35	5	3.03	4115
25.01-30	3	1.82	3535
20.01-25	7	4.24	6015
Less than 20	146	88.48	38020

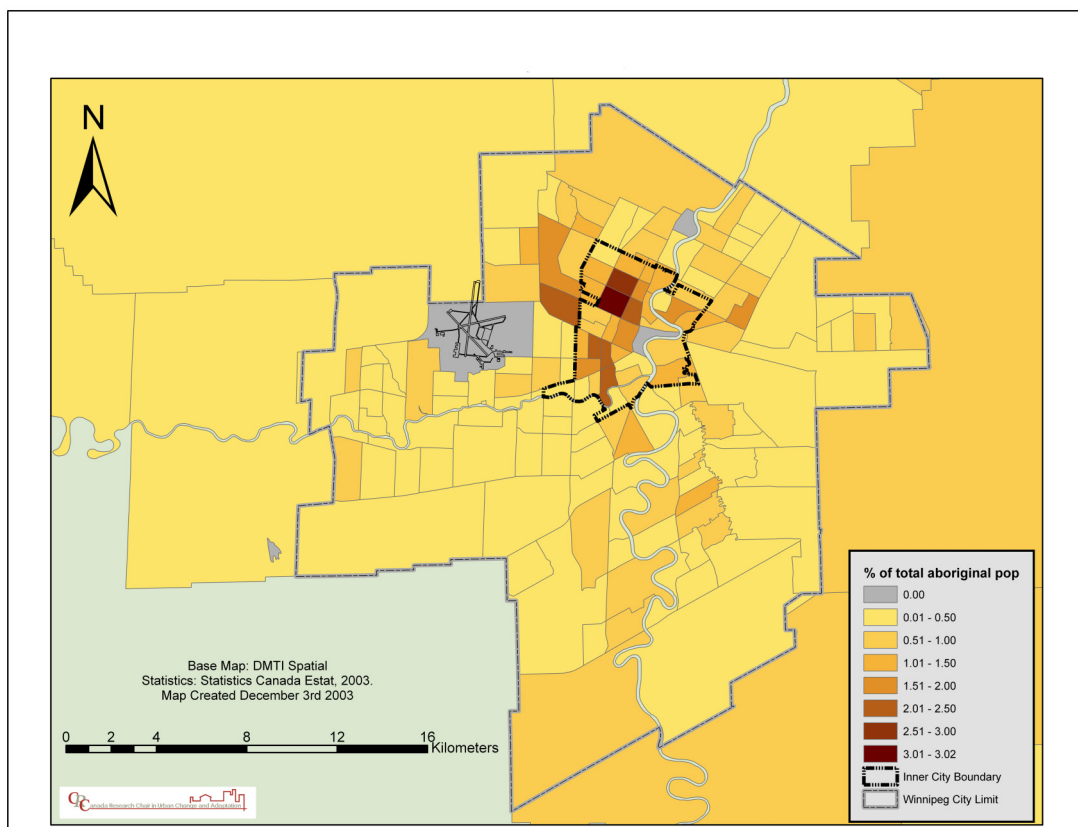
Table 2. The Percentage of the Total Aboriginal Identity Population in the City that is Contained in Each Census Tract

% of the total city's Aboriginal population contained in each census tract	Number of the census tracts	% of census tracts	Aboriginal population of these census tracts
2.5-3.02	2	1.21	3210
2.0-2.5	5	3.03	6585
1.5-2	6	3.64	5690
1-1.5	16	9.70	10955
0.5-1	45	27.27	16515
0-0.5	91	55.15	13430

Map 1. Aboriginal Identity Population as a Percentage of the Total Population in a Census Tract



Map 2. The Percentage of the Total Aboriginal Identity Population in the City that is Contained in Each Census Tract



The maximum proportion of the total Aboriginal population in the CMA that lives in anyone census tract is low – just slightly over 3% (Table 2, Map 2).

Only 2 census tracts in the city (1.2% of the total) contain 2.5-3.02% of the total city's Aboriginal population. These are in east Dufferin, William Whyte, south half of Inkster-Faraday, and southwest St. Johns. Five census tracts contain 2-2.5% of the total Aboriginal population. Four of them are in the inner-city neighbourhoods - east half of Daniel McIntyre, Spence, West Broadway, Lord Selkirk Park, and southeast part of William Whyte. Twenty two census tracts (13.3%) contain from 1 to 2% of the total city's Aboriginal residents. The remaining 136 census tracts (77%) have less than 1% of the total city's Aboriginal residents in each tract.

Conclusion

Evidence from the 2001 Census demonstrates that the American ghetto model of residential segregation does not apply to Winnipeg's Aboriginal population. Levels of segregation of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg are modest. However, the Aboriginal population is unevenly distributed throughout the city with the highest levels of concentration in the inner city.

Aboriginal people form relatively high percentages of the population in some inner-city census tracts – up to 52 per cent. At the same time Aboriginals living in these areas do not form a majority of the total city's Aboriginal population. Altogether, the inner-city census tracts contain 42 per cent of Winnipeg's Aboriginal population, which means that such areas are not true "ghettoes".

Winnipeg's Aboriginal population does not conform to the conditions of the dual ghetto definition

The current settlement pattern, however, is important to acknowledge when developing programs to meet the needs of Aboriginal people. Future research highlights will examine the distribution of services for the Aboriginal population and its relationship to the settlement pattern.

The settlement pattern also has implications for Aboriginal self-government in Winnipeg. The rapid population growth, characteristics and distribution of Aboriginal people will shape dimensions of self-government, generating some opportunities and some limits. Further investigation is needed to explore possible forms of self-government that can be put forward in order to address challenges facing the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg.

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