Current Perspectives of City and Reserve Aboriginal Populations in Canada

Martina Talašová

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta humanitních studií
Ústav jazyků

akademický rok: 2007/2008

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE
(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Martina TALAŠOVÁ**

Studijní program: **B 7310 Filologie**

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**

Téma práce: **Současný pohled na život původních obyvatel Kanady ve městech a v rezervacích**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Historický kontext.
Původní obyvatelé v městských komunitách.
Původní obyvatelé v rezervacích.
Komparace.
Možná řešení.

Rozsah práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Cameau, Pauline, and Aldo Santin. The First Canadians: A Profile of Canadas Native People Today. Toronto:James Lorimer and Company, 1990.
Canada.Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. People to people, nation to nation:Highlights from the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1996.
Frideres, James S. Native Peoples in Canada:Contemporary Conflicts. Scarborough:Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1993.
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The Canadian Indian. Ottawa, 1986.
Muckle, Robert J. The First Nations of British Columbia. Vancouver:UBC Press, 1998.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Radka Sedláčková**
                                 Ústav jazyků

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **29. ledna 2008**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **30. května 2008**

Ve Zlíně dne 29. ledna 2008

L.S.

prof. PhDr. Vlastimil Švec, CSc.
děkan

Mgr. Věra Kozáková, Ph.D.
ředitel ústavu

ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá původními obyvateli Kanady a pohledem na jejich současný život v kanadské společnosti. Historický přehled poukazuje na formování vztahů s evropskými přistěhovalci. Hlavní pozornost je však věnována srovnání života původních obyvatel, kteří žijí ve městech a v rezervacích a především na srovnání úrovně bydlení, vzdělání a pracovních příležitostí.Na konci každé komparace jsou dány návrhy na zlepšení úrovně současných podmínek v každé z těchto oblastí.

Klíčová slova:

původní obyvatelé Kanady, kmen, asimilace, Indian Act, Bill C-31, migrace z měst a rezervací, kvalita bydlení, vzdělání, pracovní příležitosti, vládní dotace a programy

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis deals with the original inhabitants of Canada and their current life in the Canadian society. The historical context gives the evidence of forming relationships with the non-Aboriginal newcomers, but the main focus is on the comparison of Aboriginal people living on and off reserve, in the issues of adequate housing, education and employment opportunities. In the end of each comparison there are suggestions how to improve these issues and thus increase their quality of life.

Keywords:

Aboriginal people of Canada, tribe, assimilation, Indian Act, Bill C-31, migration on and off reserve, housing conditions, education, employment opportunities, federal funds and programs

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This bachelor thesis deals with the current life of the Aboriginal people of Canada. Nowadays, in the Canadian society, there live about 33 million inhabitants, who might be divided into four main groups. The first are the Aboriginal people, often called First Nations or Indians, who are the original inhabitants of Canadian territory. Second group is formed by Inuits who also belong to the original inhabitants, but they live in the North of Canada in Nunavut Territory. It was created in 1999 from Northwest Territories and it is a first step to self-governance given to the Aboriginal people. Métis are descendents of Aboriginal and French and English non-Aboriginal people. The last group represents all non-Aboriginal people. They are of European origin who started settling Canada in the 15th century, as well as other ethnic minorities from China, Japan, Zambia and Gambia.

This bachelor thesis shows the first relationships between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and the laws they issued to limit and affect the Aboriginal peoples' lives, in order to fully assimilate them into different society. But the main focus is the comparison of Aboriginal peoples, who nowadays live on reserves, as well as in the Canadian cities and to find out why they stay or leave reserve. The attention is given to their current social situation and to the factors that determine the quality of life, such as housing conditions, the level of education, the employment opportunities and their participation in the Canadian economy.

The differences in socio-economic conditions between the Aboriginal population and non-Aboriginal Canadians are apparent. The Aboriginal people reached higher rates of unemployment and thank to their low level of education they find it more difficult to have a sufficient job with high income, so they are forced to live in inadequate housing conditions. Recently, some Aboriginal reserves have started doing business, so their socio-economic conditions are increasing and they are expected to improve the well-being of their members, as well as other Aboriginals living in the cities, who have also the chance to establish and run a company.

As their life has been throughout the years influenced by very restrictive laws that have resulted into such bad conditions, the current non-Aboriginal population and government are trying to help them by many federal programs and funds to increase their quality of life and participation into the Canadian society and economy.

1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the first part of my work I would like to focus on the history of Aboriginal people, from early years of their arrival on American continent, till 1980s, when new attitudes towards the Aboriginal communities started to be formed. But in the centre of my attention are the relationships between Aboriginal people and European arrivals, their first attempts of assimilation, as well as the first laws issued to limit the Aboriginal people in Canada.

The history of the Aboriginal people in Canada dates back to 70,000 years B.C., when they probably came from north eastern Asia via Siberia and the Bering Strait in three major streams. The first wave came between 40,000 and 70,000 years B.C., the second wave around 25,000 years B.C. The first Inuit migrants appeared some 15,000 years ago. The last wave, Inuit maritime, came 5,500 years B.C[1]

These Aboriginal cultures varied as widely as the terrain of Canada itself and all of the groups had to adjust to the landscape. The Aboriginal tribes gradually settled in the whole Canadian area. A lot of Aboriginal tribes were nomadic, their life was based on the migration of buffalos, which provided meat and skins necessary for the Aboriginals' survival. The nomadic Aboriginal tribes did not establish permanent villages, they lived in the tee-pees, which were easily to build and migrate with. These migratory tribes mainly lived in the woodlands, east of the Great Lakes. They included Micmac, Beothuk and Montagnais. The Pacific Coast Aboriginals, Hurons and Iroquois, on the other hand evolved a very different culture. The numerous sources the sea provided made it possible for them to become fishermen and settle and establish permanent villages.[2]

In the northwest of Canada there were the bands such as Athapaskan, Slavey, Dogrib, Tutchone, Tlinget and Guii'Chen. In the Arctic settled the Inuit and in the plains established their homes the Blackfoot, Blood, Sarcee and Peigen.[3]

All these cultures had in common a deep spiritual relationship with the land and life forms it supported, as well as with the family and tribe. They refused personal possession, the

---

[1]Shades,"History of Native peoples in Canada," Native Trail,

http://www.angelfire.com/realm/shades/nativeamericans/historyquebec.htm.

[2] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *The Canadian Indian* (Ottawa, 1986), 5.

[3] Wilson W.R., "Historical Narratives of Early Canada," Wilson W.R.,

http://www.uppercanadahistory.ca/fn/fn1.html.

territory they occupied belonged to the whole tribe collectively and every member had the equal right to use the land, which was also claimed as the band's exclusive property.

However, with the arrival of European newcomers, this delicate balance of life forms was disrupted. The Europeans brought them gifts, such as horses, which they could use when cultivating the land, but the Aboriginal tribes were also given alcohol and firearms, which were previously unknown to the Aboriginals. Moreover, the newcomers brought diseases, such as influenza, chicken pox, smallpox, measles, which the Aboriginal tribes were not immune to and widespread devastation of the Aboriginal tribes started.[4]

1.1 Early contact

Throughout the years there were several attempts to conquer the land of Canada. First known attacks were led by Vikings, who landed in Newfoundland and tried to conquest over the Aboriginal populations there and in Labrador area. However, Aboriginals raids forced them to abandon their attempts to settle.

Another wave came with European explorers, after Christopher Columbus had discovered North America. After that, a lot of new fishing villages had been set up along the coast. These Europeans traded with Woodland Aboriginals in fur. The most required fur was from beavers, muskrats and raccoons. However, this fur trade had other consequences on traditional lifestyle of the Aboriginal populations. As the European newcomers gave them more effective weapons, it was easier for Aboriginals to hunt, but soon the animal population was dramatically reduced on the east coast.[5]

Moreover, some of the explorers thought that they had found a new source of slaves when approximately 50 Aboriginal men were kidnapped and taken to Lisbon by Alberto Cantino, who was the Portuguese sailor of Italian origin. The Aboriginals' upper bodies seemed to be well built for hard labour, and thus used as slaves. However, most had died en route and those who survived and landed in Lisbon died soon afterward of various European diseases, which they had no immunity to.[6]

---

[4] See, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *The Canadian Indian,*5.

[5] See, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *The Canadian Indian,*50.

[6] "A Brief History of Canada," http://www3.sympatico.ca/goweezer/canada/can0000.htm.

Another issue I would like to deal with is the health of the Aboriginal peoples that was radically influenced and suffered drastic changes after Europeans' arrival. Explorers, traders, settlers and missionaries brought a host of diseases to which the Aboriginal people had no immunity. The introduction of "new" diseases, particularly infections such as smallpox, measles, and influenza, resulted in epidemics, famines, and social disruptions. Across the land, many tribes were severely depopulated. Some groups, such as the Beothuk and the Sadlermiut Inuit on Southampton Island in the Arctic, suffered complete physical extinction, as well as Huron Nation in the Eastern Canada. There Smallpox epidemic was the reason why in 1640 half of the Huron population died.[7]

Within 200 years, 1600s-1800s, the whole Aboriginal population was reduced by 95% on average.

1.2 Assimilation

There were two ways for the Aboriginal tribes how to cope with the arrival of the Europeans. They could either fully assimilate with new, European culture and deny their own traditions and cultures or they could resist against the Europeans. All of the Aboriginal tribes refused to assimilate and accept new culture, so it was clear that a fundamental change was occurring in the relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

The first change was in a rapid and dramatic increase in the non-Aboriginal population because of massive immigration, especially from the British Isles. They were all interested in the establishment of permanent settlements on the lands which owned Aboriginal peoples. Although, the parcels of land were set aside for Aboriginal peoples of the region, squatting and other incursions on the Aboriginal land occurred. The new settlers wanted to use the land for agricultural purposes, and take advantages of timber, fish and other resources to meet their own needs or to supply the market. The loss of the land, the lack of game, threat of starvation and a host of diseases were some of the consequences that Aboriginal peoples suffered after the European arrival.[8]

---

[7] The Canadian Encyclopedia, "Native people, Health," Historica Foundation of Canada 2008, http://www.canadianencyclopedia.ca/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1SEC824940

[8] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "The Historical Context," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/matr/his_e.html.

The impact was more profound, because the Aboriginal peoples were displaced physically — they were denied access to their traditional territories and in many cases actually forced to move to new locations selected for them by colonial authorities. They were also displaced socially and culturally, subject to intensive missionary activity and the establishment of schools — which undermined their ability to pass on traditional values to their children, imposed to male-oriented Victorian values, and attacked traditional activities such as significant dances and other ceremonies (Potlatch, Sun Dance), which were closely connected with their spiritual life. In North America they were also displaced politically, forced by colonial laws to abandon or at least disguise traditional governing structures and processes in favour of colonial-style municipal institutions. Aboriginal peoples lost control and management of their own lands and resources, and their traditional customs and forms of organization were interfered with in the interest of remaking Aboriginal people in the image of the newcomers. This did not occur all at once across the country, and on the same extend, but gradually, even western and northern Aboriginal populations came under the influence of the new regime.[9]

All these new settlements on the Aboriginal land, the introduced educational program and the oppression of Aboriginal populations were some of the means of Canadian government that should lead to a full assimilation of Aboriginal people into new population. On the other hand, the first attempts were originally introduced by Jesus missionaries, who came there around 1630. Their idea was to spread Christianity among Indian tribes and remove their children from their homes and educate them either in France or in one of the new settlements. However, it was not very successful, majority of the children became depressed and ill. In the end of 18th century, several Christian schools were established.[10]

Another huge wave of the process of assimilation came with the Indian Act in the 19th century, which I will discuss later on.

---

[9] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Stage three: Displacement and Assimilation," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/cg6_e.pdf.

[10] See, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *The Canadian Indian,* 51.

1.3 First legislation

With the increasing number of non-Aboriginal newcomers into Canada and intensive efforts to influence and assimilate the Aboriginal people into Canadian society, the federal government had to pass laws that would help to determine the Aboriginals and would help to assimilate them.

Since 1850, the federal government has enacted legislation to define and determine Indian status, i.e. those who are Registered Indians, and band members.

The term "Indian" was broadly defined and included:

- any person deemed to be aboriginal by birth or blood

- any person reputed to belong to a particular band or body of Indians

- any person who married an Indian or was adopted by Indians[11]

The key provision of the legislation was the concept of enfranchisement (loss of their Indian Status, and no longer are Registered Indians), which was the main aim of the government to totally assimilate the Aboriginal population into Canadian society. An Aboriginal man was able to voluntarily give up status and band membership, culture, traditions and any rights to land through enfranchisement to acquire full Canadian citizenship. His wife and children would automatically be enfranchised with him and their names do not need to be listed.[12]

After 1876 it was not only voluntary, but it was made automatically through the level of education. Any Aboriginal man who may be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Medicine, or to any other degree by any University of Learning, or who may be admitted in any Province of the Dominion to practise law either as an Advocate or as a Notary Public, or who may enter Holy Orders or who may be licensed by Christians as a Minister of the Gospel, shall become and be enfranchised and no longer be a Registered Indian. The descendants of this person usually lost their status too.[13]

---

[11] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Historical Legislation:1850-1970," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/qc/csi/hist1_e.pdf.

[12] See, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *The Canadian Indian,* 61.

[13] James S. Frideres, *Native peoples in Canada :contemporary conflicts* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1993), 30.

Over the years there have been added other circumstances, under which the Aboriginal people were enfranchised. In 1918, Aboriginals who lived away from their communities could at that time be enfranchised. The wife and unmarried minor children of such Aboriginal men were automatically enfranchised. And unmarried women and widows could also be enfranchised.

1.4 Indian Act of 1876

The legislation has undergone some changes in determining the Indian status and band membership and throughout the years there have been made amendments to this legislation that has also regulated the management of Indian reserve land. The first huge change was made in 1876, known as the *Indian Act.* With the establishment of the Indian Act and the subsequent establishment of a list of all status (legal) Indians, it became possible to track and identify who was or was not Indian. Those who met the new criteria, defining the Indian status and band membership, remained on the list and retained their Indian status. Those who did not measure up to these criteria were then dropped from the list and by definition were no longer Registered Indian.[14]

However, under this Act the eligibility for Indian status and band membership was narrowed to a much greater degree than in previous legislation. Male lineage was emphasized, as oppose to their strong belief of matriarchal. These were the new criteria issued under the Indian Act, determining the term "Indian":

- any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band
- any child of such person
- any woman who is or was lawfully married to such person[15]

This Act made it much easier to lose the Indian status or band membership, these people included:

a) Indian women who married Aboriginal men who were not recognized as Indians;

---

[14] See, Frideres, *Native peoples in Canada: contemporary conflicts,* 27.

[15] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Historical Legislation:1850-1970," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/qc/csi/hist1_e.pdf.

b) Indians who took "Half-breed Scrip" or were descended from someone who took scrip; Half-breed Scrip is related to Métis people (descendents of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people), who could claim for the 240 acres of the land or they could get $240;

c) Indians who were enfranchised for any reason, including wanting to vote, to drink, to own property, to live in another country, to become a lawyer or clergyman, along with their wives and children;

d) Indian children who lost status because of illegitimacy or whose mother's and father's mother were not entitled to be registered other than through their marriages;

e) Indians who were omitted from Band Lists or the Indian Register who otherwise should have been registered or Indians whose community was never recognized as Bands.

f) It might be the result of foreign residency for a period of over five years. If it was provided that any Indian was continuously living in a foreign country, he shall cease to be a member of his band and shall not be permitted to become again a member of this band or of any other.

g) or Indian women who married a non-Indian and the children of that marriage.[16]

Under this Act, some traditional Aboriginal ceremonies, such as Sun Dance and Potlatch, closely related to their culture, were officially suppressed. Both have been habitual ceremonies and the time when the Aboriginals got together. The Aboriginal people were dancing, singing and distributing the gifts to their guests. The chief of the band offered prestige presents, such as canoes, dishes or oil. The Canadian government was afraid of this unity and their traditions, so the government rather banned these ceremonies.

The government of Canada saw the Indian Act as a temporary measure to control Aboriginal peoples until they are fully assimilated.[17]

---

[16] Congress of Aboriginal peoples, "Indian Act/Bill C-31," Congress of Aboriginal peoples," http://www.abo-peoples.org/programs/C-31/c-31-1.html#Act%20is.

[17] Steve Hick, "Indian Act, 1876," Canada's unique, http://www.socialpolicy.ca/cush/m8/m8-t7.stm#top.

Another aim of the first consolidated *Indian Act* was to encourage individual property rights and landholding on reserves. The location tickets that are grandfathered were a means of introducing European concepts of individual property ownership and encouraging the assimilation of individuals holding them. Location tickets granted exclusive rights of occupancy and possession (but not ownership) of particular plots of reserve land.

Some Aboriginal people dealt with the threat of assimilation by refusing to make allotments to individuals or to cooperate with the federal system of registering such allotments. For a period of time, the federal government responded by removing the band council's power to make individual allotments and placing it with the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs (the Minister).[18]

1.5 20th century

In the first half of the 20th century the Aboriginal people had to live under the restrictions of the Indian Act, which limited their life in the bands, most of them being enfranchised and no possible changes occurred. During the WWII they had a compulsory service overseas, as the non-Aboriginal men, but about 3,000 of them served voluntarily. After the war, the Canadian government helped these soldiers monetarily, giving them donation of more than $23,000 and also some gifts of clothing. Their service in the war started the first changes in the non-Aboriginal attitude towards the Aboriginal people.[19]

> Until the mid-1950s federal government Indian agents had control over almost all aspects of Indian life on reserve, even they issued passes to allow the Indians to leave the reserve temporarily.
>
> The late 1940s marked a new era for Canadian Indian people. Indian leaders emerged, forcefully expressing their people's desire to gain their rightful position of equality with other Canadians, and at the same time, to maintain their culture heritage. Indian

---

[18] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "The Historical context, "Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/matr/his_e.html.

[19] Canadian Content Interactive Media, "Aboriginals and the Canadian Military," Canadian Content, http://forums.canadiancontent.net/history/54989-aboriginals-canadian-military.html.

people also formed provincially-based organizations to protect and advance their interests, mainly in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and in Ontario.

They criticized the idea of cultural assimilation into non-native society, the enforced enfranchisement provisions of the Indian Act and the extent of powers exercised by the government over their affairs.

As a result of their efforts, in 1946 the Parliament established a special committee that should have considered revisions to the Indian Act. This committee received briefs and representations from Indians, missionaries, schoolteachers and federal government administrators. From their hearings the Canadian public learned just how far Indians had fallen behind all other groups of citizens, in terms of living standards, health and education. Malnutrition and diseases caused by poor living conditions were widespread.[20]

The Indian Act was fully revised in 1951, but it did not greatly differ from any previous legislations. It did not change the involuntary enfranchisement sentences, nor the provisions that determined the Indian status. The provisions based on the discrimination against Indian women according to their sex remained unchanged, too. Moreover, there were added new restrictions to define the status. A good example is the so-called 'double mother' rule, whereby a child lost Indian status at age of 21 if his or her mother and grandmother had obtained their own status only through marriage. In short, someone born and raised on a reserve, whose father and grandfather were status Indians, would automatically lose Indian status at the age of 21. The loss of status, band membership too would be forfeited, as well as the right to continue to live on the reserve.[21]

The revised Act introduced some positive changes. Laws banning the Potlatch and other ceremonies connected with their culture were abolished and Aboriginal people were also given the right to enter public places, such as bars.

---

[20] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *The Canadian Indian* (Ottawa, 1986), 86.

[21] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "The 1951 INDIAN ACT Revision," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg27_e.html.

There were increasing and more intensive efforts to help the Aboriginals to achieve the equality with other Canadian citizens. These efforts led to the introduction of 1969 White Paper, which should address issues relevant to Aboriginal people. It had the official name "The Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy". It was more common under the White Paper name. This Paper had five basic principals:

1. Abolish the Indian Act and all special status.

2. Care of the Aboriginal people would be handed over to the provincial governments.

3. The Department of Indian Affairs would be dismantled within 5 years

4. Aboriginals would have control over their own lands

5. All Canadians would recognize the 'unique contribution' that the Aboriginals had made to Canada

The Canadian government wanted the reserves to implement this Paper. However, the Aboriginal people were shocked, because all status Indians should have lost their status and become regular Canadian citizens. As a consequence, a huge wave of resistance appeared across the country. The Aboriginal leaders were against this Paper, because they saw it as another attempt at assimilation and they were concerned that they would lose their sovereignty and their lands.

This negative reaction of Aboriginal people was so vehement that in 1970 the White Paper was abolished. Ironically, the new policy had helped to spread the awareness of their nationalism and for example the Indian Association of Alberta created their paper of counter-proposals "Citizens Plus", known as Red Paper, where they wanted all the benefits of the Canadian citizenship in addition to their special rights.[22]

The 1970s brought, on the other hand, small triumphs, because the Canadian government has been prodded into giving Aboriginal communities more local control. One of them was in 1972, when the National Indian Brotherhood presented the government its

---

[22] WordPress, " The White Paper 1969," WordPress, http://www.out-of-order.ca/politics/the-white-paper-1969/.

paper entitled "Indian Control of Indian Education". This paper should have allowed the reserves and Aboriginal communities to take the responsibility for the education of their children through their own board schools. This paper was based on parental involvement, local control, teacher training and the use of language and culture in the classroom that should all lead to strengthen Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal heritage. This policy was accepted by the DIAND (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) in 1973.[23]

There were other remarkable events in 1980s that have brought Indian people closer to their long-held goal of self-determination. The first one was the recognition in the 1982 Constitution Act of existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the Indian. The second historic breakthrough for Indian people was the First Ministers' Conference on Aboriginal Constitutional Matters held in March 1983. The federal government, the representatives of provincial governments and aboriginal leaders signed an accord to amend the country's constitution. These amendments included constitutional recognition of rights acquired through land claims agreements and the guarantee of aboriginal and treaty rights equally to men and women.[24]

As the non-Aboriginal people started to be more and more involved in the Aboriginal issues, and the Aboriginals themselves wanted to improve their position in the Canadian society, a new law that should end the era of the Aboriginal suppression had to be issued.

1.6 Bill C-31

Bill C-31, an *Act to Amend the Indian Act,* was the new law passed in 1985 that should bring the *Indian Act* into conformity with the right to gender equality under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Bill C-31 was also a focal point for the debate over self-government, and was seen by many as an infringement on Aboriginal sovereignty. In the end, Bill C-31 attempted to strike a balance between ending all gender discrimination

---

[23] See, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *The Canadian Indian,* 88.

[24] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *The Canadian Indian* (Ottawa, 1986), 95.

under the *Indian Act* while respecting the Aboriginal control of membership. Canada's three stated goals in creating Bill C-31 were: to end all gender discrimination within the *Indian Act* for the future, to restore Indian status and band membership rights to those who lost them under previous discriminatory provisions, and allow bands to control their own memberships as a step towards self-government.[25]

To achieve these goals, the *Indian Act* provisions for Indian registration and the Aboriginal membership were amended, which resulted in an immediate increase in the number of individuals eligible for Indian registration, and also Aboriginal membership.[26]

The new provisions had a major impact on entitlement rules and procedures. The most important changes were:

- women no longer gain or lose entitlement to registration as a result of marriage
- the practise of enfranchisement is abolished
- the marriage of parents is no longer be a factor in the entitlement of children
- bands can now choose to control their own membership
- restoration of Indian status to:

    a) women who had lost status by marrying non-Aboriginals

    b) children enfranchised as a result of their mother's marriage to non-Aboriginals

    c) persons removed from the Register as a result of protests based on non-Aboriginals paternity

    d) persons omitted or deleted from the Register under the double-mother clause[27]

Since Bill C-31 was passed, INAC (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) has received approximately 232,928 requests for registration. By 31 December 2000, 114,512 people

---

[25] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "A Select and Annotated Bibliography Regarding Bill C-31, Indian Registration and Band Membership, Aboriginal Identity, Women and Gender Issues," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/sab/sab_e.pdf.

[26] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, " A Select and Annotated Bibliography Regarding Bill C-31, Indian Registration and Band Membership, Aboriginal Identity, Women and Gender Issues," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/sab/sab_e.pdf.

[27] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Current Legislation:1985," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/qc/csi/present1_e.pdf.

had gained Indian status based on Bill C-31 amendments, while 44,199 applications had been denied.

In the first five years (1985-1990), the status Indian population rose by 19% as a result of the amendments. Women represented the majority of those who gained status, particularly of those who had status restored. It also had a positive influence on the increase of migrants, on and off reserve, which will be discussed in next part.[28]

Because most Bill C-31 registrants live off reserve, the amendments have added substantially to the off-reserve status Indian population, which more than doubled between 1981 and 1991. INAC estimated that 10% of Bill C-31 registrants would reside on reserve. Before the bill's introduction, seven out of ten status Indians lived on reserve. In 2000, fewer than six out of ten lived on reserve. The increase in the off-reserve population is largely attributed to the reinstatement of status under Bill C-31.[29]

The rapid growth in the status Indian population as a direct result of Bill C-31 had a major impact not only on federal programs and expenditures but also on Indian communities required to provide additional facilities and services. Status Indians living on or off reserve are eligible for non-insured health benefits and may apply for post-secondary assistance. For those living on reserve, the federal government provides funds for housing, elementary and secondary education, health services and social assistance. The growth in the number of status Indians living off reserve as a result of Bill C-31 has also increased the need to clarify the responsibilities of federal and provincial governments in providing and funding the services required. Problems have arisen, moreover, because many of the programs and funds for status Indians are available only to those who live on reserve. Some of those who wished to live on reserve could not, however, because of a lack of services, such as housing.

---

[28] Library of Parliament, "INDIAN STATUS AND BAND MEMBERSHIP ISSUES," Parliamentary Information and Research Service, http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/bp410-e.htm#împactstx.

[29] See, Library of Parliament, http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/bp410-e.htm#impactstx.

Furthermore, despite the increase in services, many off-reserve Bill C-31 registrants did not know how to access them and thus did not take advantage of them.[30]

Some features of Bill C-31 have left a continuing sense of discrimination. A Bill C-31 registrant woman cannot pass her own status on to her children: only children born with a status father will have status. This "second-generation cut-off" enacted in Bill C-31 means that cousins of the first degree will have different status under the Act depending on whether they descend in the male or the female line.[31]

In some cases, brothers and sisters have different ability to pass on their status to their children. It all resulted in continuing discrimination against Aboriginal women, who under Bill C-31 have to name the father of their children, and he must be status, before their children are eligible. Mothers who are restored to Indian status by Bill C-31 will be grandmothers of children who cannot claim status, as well as those who can, depending on the marital arrangements of their parents.[32]

The Bill C-31 has helped a lot of Aboriginal people to gain their Indian status back, but on the other hand other discriminatory factors have occurred. As mentioned, discrimination against Aboriginal women and their children continued, but it had other consequences. Some women have been denied to be members of the bands and they have not been permitted the residency on reserve. Other negative effects are in difficult access to different federal support programmes and funding, such as housing, educational and health support.

1.7 Conclusion

The Aboriginal history has been rich and full of different events. But there is also a little bit of irony. As the first Europeans arrived, they did not want to respect the Aboriginal land rights, their traditions and lifestyle, and started to take this land and passed laws, which

---

[30] Library of Parliament, "INDIAN STATUS AND BAND MEMBERSHIP ISSUES,"

http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/bp410-e.htm#impactstx.

[31] Department of Justice, "Bill C-31," Department of Justice, http://www.justice.gc.ca/chra/en/eberts.html.

[32] See, Department of Justice, http://www.justice.gc.ca/chra/en/eberts.html.

Aboriginal people had to obey. Moreover, the newcomers defined new way of life, how to educate Aboriginal children and as a result, the newcomers started to decide who has and who has not the Indian status. All these provisions put the Aboriginal people down in the society, the lack of knowledge of English language and new Europeans lifestyle were for Aboriginal people unknown and did not measure to their traditions.

In the 20th century, as the Aboriginal population was growing and there were tensions to change their position in the society, the non-Aboriginal people started to realize that they have to help Aboriginal peoples and improve their life which the European ancestors destroyed. Today, Canada is considered to be the most open society to all immigrants and to all nations, as well as to the Aboriginal communities. The public awareness of help is widespread and the government, as well as other non-Aboriginal people are building and reconstructing new relationships with the Aboriginal populations through federal programs and they are helping Aboriginal people to increase the development of their communities.

The positive thing in their relationship is the migration of the Aboriginal people to the cities, where they can experience new form of life and more get to know the traditions and culture of non-Aboriginals, rather than living on separate reserves.
Some of them are successful and fully assimilated with non-Aboriginal culture, some of them are not, but it will be discussed in next part.

2 MIGRATION PATTERNS

In this part of my bachelor thesis I would like to deal with the migration patterns of Aboriginal people during the last 40 years. These patterns were mainly influenced by a massive Aboriginal population, which started to leave reserves to live in the cities, and vice versa. As the migration has always been a part of Aboriginal peoples' lives, this is a new form of migration experienced by them – from and to reserves, as well as a shift between city and rural areas.

There is also a difference between men and women, as each group migrates from different reasons, as well as a difference in age groups, where mainly young Aboriginal people prevail.

2.1 First migration

The first suggestion that there was a large amount of migration from reserves into major Canadian cities was made by Harry Hawthorn in the late 1960s, who concluded in his two-volume study for the federal government: *A Survey of Contemporary Indians in Canada*, that there were large numbers of people moving from reserves, in search of better employment opportunities. He also predicted that many reserves could eventually cease to exist, because they could experience more out-migration than expected. However, in 1970s a new trend of migration appeared.[33]

The new trend is known as a "hyper mobile" population. Because of the lack of opportunities in the urban setting and some houses and job hopes on the reserves, the Aboriginal people slowly came to establish two home bases. Their home is in the city during winter months, where they can use some benefits, including heated accommodation and running water. And then they go back to the reserves to see family and friends and to live more traditional way of life during summer, when there is a season of fishing and hunting.[34]

---

[33] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Literature Review," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/rimm/litr_e.html.

[34] Pauline Comeau and Aldo Santin, *The First Canadians:A Profile of Canada's Native People Today* (Toronto:James Lorimer and Company, 1990), 42.

This trend was also supported by the 1971 Census data which showed that the destination for 28% of Registered Indians was a metropolitan area, while 27% of them moved from city to the reserve. Nevertheless, the outflow from the reserves was slowed down in the late 1970s. Due in part to the growing stream of Indians from urban areas, migrants to reserves outnumbered those leaving reserves over the 1976-81 period: 3,200 status Indians left reserves and settlements, while 10,700 moved in, yielding a net inflow of 7,500. Nearly two thirds of this net gain was due to the flow from urban areas.[35]

In the following years there were made a lot of studies, concerning the inter-provincial/regional migration of Canada's Aboriginal population. The years were divided into five-year periods that spanned the 1976-1991 period. For better illustrating the geographic patterns of migration, this period was further divided into 1976-1981 and 1986-1991 periods. Although net migration volumes for individual provinces/regions differ for the two time periods, in general the geographic patterns of migration are quite similar.[36]

---

[35] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Literature Review," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/rimm/litr_e.html.

[36] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Migration," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/execs/rece-5_e.html.

Figure 1 - Estimated Net Migration Among Registered Indians by Province/Region, Canada, 1976-1981 and 1986-1991[37]
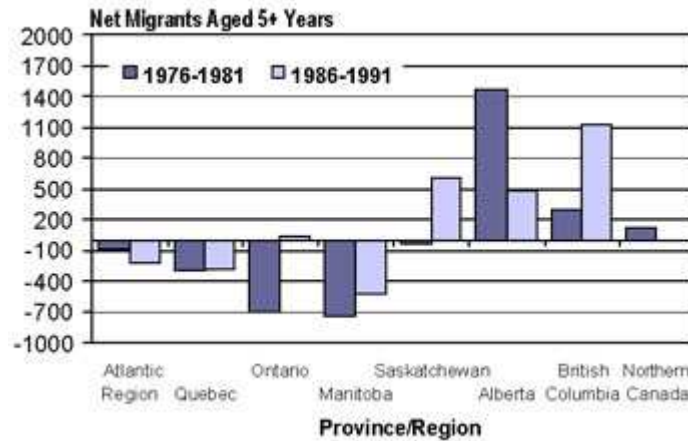
The Figure 1 represents the migration trend according to the Province/Region in both measured periods. Alberta and British Columbia gained Registered Indian population in both time periods, while the Atlantic region, Quebec and Manitoba reported net losses. In Ontario and Saskatchewan occurred the reversals. These provinces both first lost Registered Indian population during 1976-1981, but then during 1986-1991 gained them back.[38]

2.2 Migration patterns in the 1980s and 1990s

When the Bill C-31 in 1985 was passed, it has brought more significant changes in the migration, both to and from reserves. As the Aboriginal people were given back their status that they have lost under the previous legislation, they were also entitled to move back from the cities to their home reserves, because under the Bill C-31 they became again the members of their bands. The Bill C-31 reinstatements, leaving the reserves, could more easily enter the cities and use the beneficiary, to which they had a denied access

---

[37] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Migration," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/execs/rece-5_e.html.

[38] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Migration," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/execs/rece-5_e.html.

before. In the same period, the reserves also experienced a positive net migration, where the Bill C-31 reinstatements represented about 20% of this net migration.

The trend of migration patterns of the Aboriginal people continued also in the 1990s. Both, cities and reserves were the major destinations where the Aboriginals moved. Between 1991 and 1996, the reserves and cities gained almost the same number of the Aboriginals migrating from and to reserves. About 61% of migrants moved to the large urban areas, while 69% of Aboriginals living in the cities migrated to reserves. The rural areas were those, which lost most of them, because the cities and reserves started to attract the Aboriginal people more.

There were several reasons of their migration, mainly based on the experience or dissatisfaction of Aboriginal people, but it will be discussed later on.[39]

Numerous Aboriginal people migrating from and to reserves show that the migration process became the part of their life and that they are not afraid to try to live in the Canadian cities and that they are also searching to find better place to live in.

I would like to specify the reasons why the Aboriginal people migrate, either on or off reserve, and which age and gender prevail in the migration.

2.3 Reasons for migration

As the Aboriginal people move, they always hope to improve their life and social conditions and find better place to live. The decision to move or to stay is made after considering all the relative benefits that are available in the original community, relative benefits at the possible destinations and also the costs that could occur by moving. After that, the decision to move is a result of competing between "pushes" and "pulls", it means the benefits one can gain by moving somewhere else, when seeking to optimize one's quality of life. The factors that could evaluate the quality of life may include many social,

---

[39] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Migration Patterns:1991-1996," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inaec.gc.ca/pr/ra/rimm/migr_e.html.

economical and political characteristics, but different individuals value them differently, according to their personal situation.[40]

2.3.1 Reasons for leaving the reserves

Most studies of Native migration have focused on the individual, especially on the factors which lead the individuals to migrate to the urban areas from their reserves. The most important among the factors that have been identified as "pushes" have been the lack of employment opportunities which then results in difficult social conditions in many communities. Next to the employment opportunities, a lot of Aboriginal people, mainly young people, move to the city in order to get married or to escape boredom, because they might be attracted by the "bright lights" of the city, i.e. nightlife in the city, rush and hectic life on the streets, bars and pubs. A lack of health facilities, housing and educational opportunities on reserves are often cited as other reasons for leaving them.[41]

On some reserves, the structure of that particular reserve has an important influence on the Aboriginal migration patterns. The specific structural factors that were found important in affecting the decisions to move to the cities were: proximity of the reserve to an urban centre, road access, the size of the band and the degree of the community development. It has been found out that the bands with high community development, such as good educational preparation or enough job vacancies, are able to provide opportunities for their members, so they prefer to remain on the reserve. On the other hand, there are communities with high personal-resource development that encourage their members to migrate to the cities. However, there are bands with very low community development, so the members of such a band are forced off the reserve.[42]

---

[40] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Literature Review," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/rimm/litr_e.html.

[41] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Literature Review," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/rimm/litr_e.html.

[42] See, Frideres, *Native peoples in Canada: contemporary conflicts,* 264-265.

2.3.2 Reasons for leaving the cities

The migration from the cities to the reserves is an opposite phenomena that occurred in the end of 1970s. There are other factors that influenced the Aboriginals to leave cities and came back to live on the reserves. This migration is often characterized as a result from the inability of Aboriginal people to find employment or to cope with conditions in the city, because they fail in adjusting to the urban lifestyle. In this case, it is better to consider the "pulls" to the reserves. The reserves play a distinct role in the migration patterns of the Aboriginal people, as they are considered as a home to which the return is possible and relatively easy.

The life in the urban centres has some advantages, including the availability of services and larger job market, but on the other hand it also has a lot of disadvantages. These are a lack of affordable housing, combined with difficult social conditions which lead Aboriginals to leave the cities, as well as the pull of the family and friends, cultural activities and services that are available only on the reserves.[43]

---

[43] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Literature Review," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/rimm/litr_e.html.

Figure 2
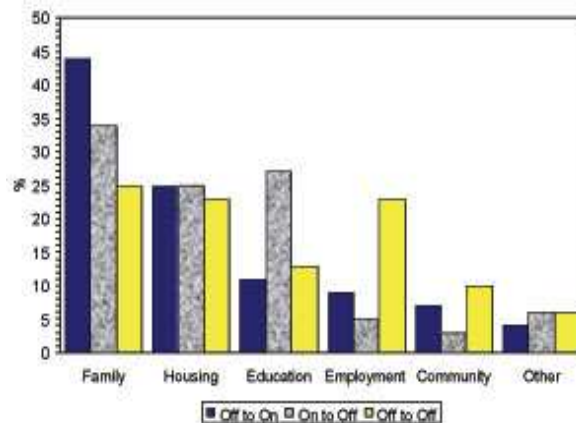**Reasons for Migration, 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Canada[44]**

Figure 2 shows an analysis of the 1991 APS, giving the reasons why Aboriginal people moved. There are examined three groups of them, according to the type of migration.

- Off- to on-reserve: those who moved to a reserve from an off-reserve location;

- On- to off-reserve: those who moved from a reserve to an off-reserve residence, and;

- Off- to off-reserve: those who moved from an off-reserve location to another off-reserve location (e.g., from one city to another city or from a rural community to city or vice versa).

As Figure 3 shows, the major reasons for leaving the cities to the reserves are due to family (44%), housing (25%) and education (11%). Those migrating to the cities gave almost the same reasons, the most important factors are the family (34%), education (25%) and housing (27%). Surprisingly, only a small amount of Aboriginal people (5%) cited the employment as the reason for leaving the reserve.[45]

From this analysis results that all three groups of Aboriginal people consider the family issues as number one reason for migration. Almost quarter of them agreed that improving the housing conditions is important, too.

---

[44] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Literature Review," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gs.ca/pr/ra/rimm/litr_e.html.

[45] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Literature Review," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/rimm/litr_e.html.

2.4 Characteristics of Migrants: Age and Gender

Now I would like to specify the age groups moving from and to reserves, as well as the main reasons for men and women migration.

There are distinct patterns of gender in the mobility of Aboriginal people, so it suggests that Aboriginal men and women migrate for different reasons, according to their experience with push/pull factors. While Aboriginal women predominate in the mobility from the reserves, the Aboriginal men rather leave the cities. The most important "push" factors for women are their families, poor education and housing conditions, as well as the problems in their home communities. The factors that "pull" Aboriginal men from the cities are mainly economic reasons and family-related issues as well.

1996 Census data shows that the mobility of younger people prevails in each of the flows between rural, urban and reserve areas. The most migrating age group for Aboriginal women, especially those leaving the reserve, is 20-24, while for men, entering the reserve, it is 25-29. For example, between 1991 and 1996, for every 1,000 Registered Indian women 829 had migrated over the five-year period, compared with 723 male migrants.[46]

As the Aboriginal people enter the city, they find a great difference between life on reserve and life in the city. This new world is frightening and strange for them and it is the reason why not everyone is able to adopt this life. Those who are unable or unwilling to participate into the White society rather move back to reserves or stay there, but become more and more dependent on the social-service organizations.[47]

Some of them have found out that the life in the city is not as good as they have dreamed, i.e. that there are not as many employment opportunities and better housing conditions as they have migrated for, and with the increasing business development of some reserves, the Aboriginal people rather move back to their home reserve. The standards of living and quality of life on reserves and in the cities are discussed in next part.

---

[46] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Migration Petterns:1991-1996," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/rimm/migr_e.html.

[47] See, Frideres, *Native peoples in Canada: contemporary conflicts,* 268.

3   LIVING CONDITIONS AND QUALITY OF LIFE

In this part of my bachelor thesis I would like to concentrate on the life of Aboriginal people, living on the reserves and in the cities and give evidence of their current life. The main attention is on their social situation and living conditions and whether the reserves or cities are for Aboriginal people better places to live. I focus on the Saskatchewan region and the city of Saskatoon.

"Living conditions" refers to specific objective factors that affect an Aboriginal peoples' ability to maintain a quality of life that can be comparable to that of other Canadians. This includes such considerations as the availability and quality of housing and the provision of community services such as health care and welfare, as well as other social factors that are important to fulfil the quality of life. These are employment opportunities, sufficient income, educational opportunities and the access to support services, as to mention some of them.[48]

I choose three social factors that I find the most important in determining the living conditions and quality of life. These are adequate housing, level of education and employment opportunities.

3.1 Housing

First, I would like to start with housing situation on the reserves and in the cities in Saskatchewan.

> Housing is a basic human necessity, and housing quality is considered by many as an important indicator of individual and community well-being. For individual households, poor housing may result in unacceptable living conditions for adults and children. Poor housing can affect adults' employability and credibility in the community, and housing instability can negatively affect children's school achievement. Poor housing also affects the overall quality of life in neighbourhoods and cities; extreme housing problems like overcrowding or homelessness can in fact be life-threatening. Because inadequate housing is a detriment both to individual

---

[48] See, Frideres, *Native peoples in Canada: contemporary conflicts,* 193.

households and the community as a whole, the public expects government to develop policies and programs to reduce the incidence and impact of housing problems.[49]

The adequate housing always shows the level of development of a country or a region, and when a well-being of a given country should be evaluated, the housing conditions, such as electricity and water supplies, are on a focal point. In Canada, both groups, on and off reserve Aboriginals, have lived in inadequate houses, so according to the housing evaluation, their living standards have been low.

All housing inadequacies faced by Aboriginal people are discussed in this part.

3.1.1 On-reserve Housing

All reserves are former places, where the Aboriginals lived according to their housing customs. Nowadays, the position of the Aboriginals in the Canadian society is changing, and there is a bigger pressure to increase the quality of housing on reserve.

Because of the geographical isolation and limited natural resources on reserves, most of them do not have the economic ability to meet the cost of various capital facilities, therefore housing, as one of the more important type of community facility, is being subsidized. It supports the individuals and bands to provide adequate housing construction and renovation.

Despite this spending, housing, water supplies and sanitation services for Aboriginal people fall far below Canadian standards in many communities. Overcrowded and dilapidated houses, unclean and limited supplies of water, inadequate disposal of human wastes – these are some of the conditions that Aboriginal people living on reserve have to face and that can cause other health problems.[50]

A recent study of the on-reserve housing revealed that about three-quarters of all existing housing were inadequate and that they failed to meet some of the basic standards

---

[49] The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, "Housing Policy," Canadian Plains Research Center, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/housing_policy.html.

[50] Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *People to people, nation to nation: Highlights from the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Minister of Supply and Services, 1996), 78.

of living. The housing conditions are measured by two factors. Whether the houses are crowded and whether they need major repairs.

According to 2006 Census data, crowding was very common on reserves in Saskatchewan, where over one-third (36%) of Aboriginal people lived in crowded conditions. (Crowding is defined that there is more than one person per room.). Moreover, in Saskatchewan region, over one half (54%) of the on-reserve people lived in the dwellings that needed the major repairs. All these dwellings were without piped water and other indoor plumbing.[51]

To improve these bad housing conditions, the federal government works with the Aboriginal people and wants to increase the availability of safe affordable housing in Aboriginal communities living on reserves. The Government of Canada invests approximately $261 million per year in on-reserve housing needs. This sum of money includes $138 million from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and $123 million from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). [52]

The INAC funding is provided through its capital program, which supports housing constructions, planning and renovation. Their policy also lets Aboriginal people to make key decisions about how, where and when housing funds are invested. This should encourage them to share the responsibility and have the access to the capital.

Because the Aboriginal people do not own the house, they live in and even do not own the land of the reserve (it is the federal land that is set aside only for their use), it is impossible to take out a loan, because they have nothing to as guarantee. To address these problems, the INAC provides Ministerial Loan Guarantees that should secure the regular mortgages.[53]

---

[51] Statistics Canada, "Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006:Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census: First Nations people," Statistics Canada, http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/aboriginal/decade.cfm.

[52] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, " First Nation Housing," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/hsg/cih/hs/index_e.html.

[53] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, " First Nations Housing," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/hsg/cih/hs/fnh_e.html.

The CMHC funding mainly supports the construction of new social housing units and the rehabilitation of the existing ones. From the 2005/2006 budget they want to build 4,400 new social housing units and renovate approximately 1,100.[54]

3.1.1.1 *Lac La Ronge Indian Band*

Lac La Ronge is a community 240km north of Prince Albert, in Saskatchewan region. This is one of the reserves in Saskatchewan whose members had to live in inappropriate conditions. The houses of this band were overcrowded and most of them needed major repairs. Moreover, as the land of their reserve was owned by the federal government, the members had the dream of home ownership.

Thank to the ability of the Band Council, they developed their own way to take control of their housing needs and to support private home ownership. In 2004 they launched their own home-ownership strategy and with the financial support from private sector, as well as from government, they started taking applications. The Bank of Montreal offered them a program that should help to build and mortgage homes. The INAC provided $1.7 million to launch this strategy.

Within months, 50 members applied for loans to buy or to renovate their existing homes, others wanted to build new ones. These energy-efficient home units meet and exceed National Building code standards, so it brought many homes to high standards of comfort and safety.[55]

3.1.2 Urban Housing

In Saskatchewan, the off-reserve Aboriginal people mainly live in larger urban centres, 33% live in three cities of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina. The highest number of them lives in Saskatoon, where they form 4% of total population.

---

[54] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "2005/2006 Budget-New Funding for On-Reserve Housing Programs," http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/hsg/cih/hs/nfo_e.html.

[55] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada," First Nations On-Reserve Housing: Building the Future," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/iss/orh/llr_e.html.

Aboriginal people move to the city for a variety of reasons –as discussed in previous part. They generally want to attend educational institutions, they have better access to employment opportunities and they seek medical assistance.[56]

After entering the city, they usually experience a high unemployment rate, low income and other social and economic factors that contribute to the difficulty of securing safe, affordable housing. This adequate and affordable housing has always been, and continues to be, the priority need for Aboriginal people living in urban centres. Low income families that have problems to meet the financial demands of rent at market value are usually the one, which suffers overcrowding and unsafe house conditions. The core problem of the cities was the lack of inexpensive, adequate and affordable housing from the private sector.[57]

This was the reason why the CMHC established the urban housing program for Aboriginal people to provide assistance in non-profit housing or cooperation to acquire, build or renovate rental houses. There were established about 90 Aboriginal urban housing corporations that should help them to finance and mortgage houses.[58]

One of such corporation is the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) that in 2000 defined the housing system as "part of a broader social structure involving the health, social services, education and economic systems all which affect neighbourhoods and communities"(quotation marks in original text). This corporation introduced four housing subsystems:

---

[56] Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, "Urban First Nations people Without Homes In Saskatchewan," Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, http://www.siit.sk.ca/PDFfiles/Homeless.pdf.

[57] Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, "Urban First Nations people Without Homes In Saskatchewan," Saskatchewan Institute of Technologies, http://www.siit.sk.ca/PDFfiles/Homeless.pdf.

[58] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Housing," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/ci4_e.pdf.

a) Market housing

Market housing is supplied by private sector, although the public sector plays an influencing role. Market housing may involve rental or ownership accommodation, as well as other forms such as life lease or reverse mortgage.

b) Affordable housing

Affordable housing is lower-cost housing that should supply the low-income households, because these households often have difficulty accessing adequate, affordable housing in the private market.

c) Social housing

This type of housing is also provided to low-income families that would otherwise have problems to afford safe and secure housing. These social tenants usually pay rent maximum of 25% of their income.

d) Housing with Support Services

Housing with support services is a complex set of connected interests whose main purpose is to provide permanent residence for individuals who require more than shelter to retain an independent lifestyle."[59]

By this housing subsystem, the SHC established a homeownership option for Aboriginal people and provide financial assistance to sponsor low-income families. This should also encourage urban Aboriginal people to have the will to own something, because homeownership offers many benefits to a family, such as stability, pride in ownership and the opportunity to build equity.

On the other hand, there are still low-income households, where main source of income is from social assistance and it is not possible to afford the adequate housing, although there is SHC and CMHC support. But this support is only limited and there exists a gap between people who need affordable housing and the availability of social and affordable housing. Very often there is a waiting list for social housing.[60]

---

[59] Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, "Urban First Nations People Without Homes In Saskatchewan," Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, http://www.siit.sk.ca/PDFfiles/Homeless.pdf.

[60] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Housing," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/ci4_e.pdf.

This lack of adequate and affordable housing and the limited number of urban housing programs can lead to homelessness.

The word "homelessness" can make the images of bag ladies and skid row bums who are sleeping outside or in the abandoned buildings. But these images are stereotyped and extreme definitions of homelessness and are not usually the experience of the urban Aboriginal people. There are two types of homelessness:

Absolute homelessness, which includes individuals who live on the street, and those who are victims of disaster (they lost their homes). Relative homelessness includes individuals living in houses that are considered substandard. These substandard houses do not provide adequate housing, safe water and sanitation, security and safety, and they are not affordable.[61]

The urban Aboriginal people experience the relative homelessness, because they usually live in overcrowded, inadequate and non-affordable housing. Those people are at high risk to become homeless. There are some factors that may contribute to homelessness, such as poverty, inadequate housing, lack of life skills, lack of job skills, health issues and policy change.[62]

One of the more important factors that can lead to homelessness is poverty. The poverty is a result of unemployment, under-employment, low wages, lack of educational opportunities and lack of access to support services. Those people, who do not have adequate income, are not able to seek or maintain adequate housing, and due to these low incomes, the urban Aboriginal people are more likely to live in poor housing. In Saskatoon, the poverty rate was approximately 65%.[63]

---

[61] See, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, http://www.siit.sk.ca/PDFfiles/Homeless.pdf.

[62] See, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, http://www.siit.sk.ca/PDFfiles/Homeless.pdf.

[63] See, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, http://www.siit.sk.ca/PDFfiles/Homeless.pdf.

3.1.3 Comparison

To compare the situation on-reserve and in the cities, I would say that those Aboriginal people who live on reserve are a little bit better off, as far as the housing is concerned. Although both groups have experienced bad housing conditions, such as overcrowding or living in houses that need major repairs, on the reserves, especially in Saskatchewan, they have achieved main changes. Thank to INAC and CMHC funding, they were able to improve the housing conditions by building new houses or reconstructing the old ones. Moreover, the bands are given money, so they can decide where to invest. The band community is responsible for the received money. Aboriginal people have also chance to take a loan and decorate or repair the houses on their own.

But the problem is that they do not own the land, they live on. So they may feel that everything they do, repair or reconstruct is not done for them but for government. They do not feel like working on their own land. I think that in this case the government should give or sell them the land. Aboriginal people will be given the right to be responsible for their own property and they will get the feeling that they own something, they could be proud of. Moreover, I think it will be another step to assimilate their life conditions to non-Aboriginal Canadians.

In contrast, in the cities there are also some supportive and funding programs, but they offer only loans or some help to renovate the houses. Those Aboriginal people are not given a sum of money to be responsible for and invest it on their own decision. Moreover, in most cases, urban Aboriginal people are not able to afford the houses, because they are too expensive for them, so they rather live in overcrowded homes. If they have money, there is a wait list for social housing that prolongs the improvement of urban housing conditions.

However, the main problem that urban people in Saskatoon have experienced is poverty and homelessness. I would say that they are closely connected to each other and I would call it a vicious circle. As Aboriginal people are usually unskilled persons with no experience and low education, they are given only low wages that do not cover their life costs and as a consequence they can not afford the housing in the city and therefore some of them become homeless. I think that either city or government should help them to improve the situation. I would suggest not paying the rent for one year, so they will be able to find job and educate themselves only to get higher wages. There should also be a better system in accessing the funds provided by government, because most of the urban

Aboriginal people have to overcome the obstacles to get the money from government, especially the racism and discrimination is common in the cities.

3.2 Education

Education is another key factor that enables the Aboriginal individuals and communities to develop to their full potential and achieve the quality of life that can be comparable to that of other Canadians. It is typical for industrialized societies that community prosperity requires a majority of adults to have jobs, which can generate reasonable earnings. But these jobs with reasonable earnings are not possible without adequate educational level. Across Canada, the Aboriginal educational levels are not adequate, forcing some of them to live in poverty.[64]

This is the reason, why they see education as more important for their children and youth, because they believe that early childhood education is necessary to increase their chances of completing the whole education.[65]

There is also a rising country's demand for skilled labour force due to an aging population and declining birth-rate of non-Aboriginal Canadians.
In contrast, the Aboriginal population is a youthful one, because they have more than 37% of the Aboriginal population between the age 15 and 29, so in the next 10 years it is expected that there will be a great increase in Aboriginal children that will pass through the educational system. Therefore, Aboriginal people need to meet their expectations and increase the education of their nation, or else it can put too many young and perspective Aboriginal people at risk of finding sufficient job and improve the quality of life.[66]

---

[64] C.D.Howe Institute Commentary,"Aboriginal off-reserve education:time for action," The gate Group, Inc, http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-21274083_ITM.

[65] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "THIRD NATIONAL SURVEY OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE ON-RESERVE REVEALS IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/2-02240_e.html.

[66] Human Resources and Social Development Canada, "Review of Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements-Synthesis of Findings," Human Resources and Social Development Canada, http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/publications_resources/evaluation/2004/sp_ah_667_12_04/page03.shtml.

Figure 3: Gap in educational attainment of the Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal populations, living on reserve vs non-reserve areas, 2001.[67]
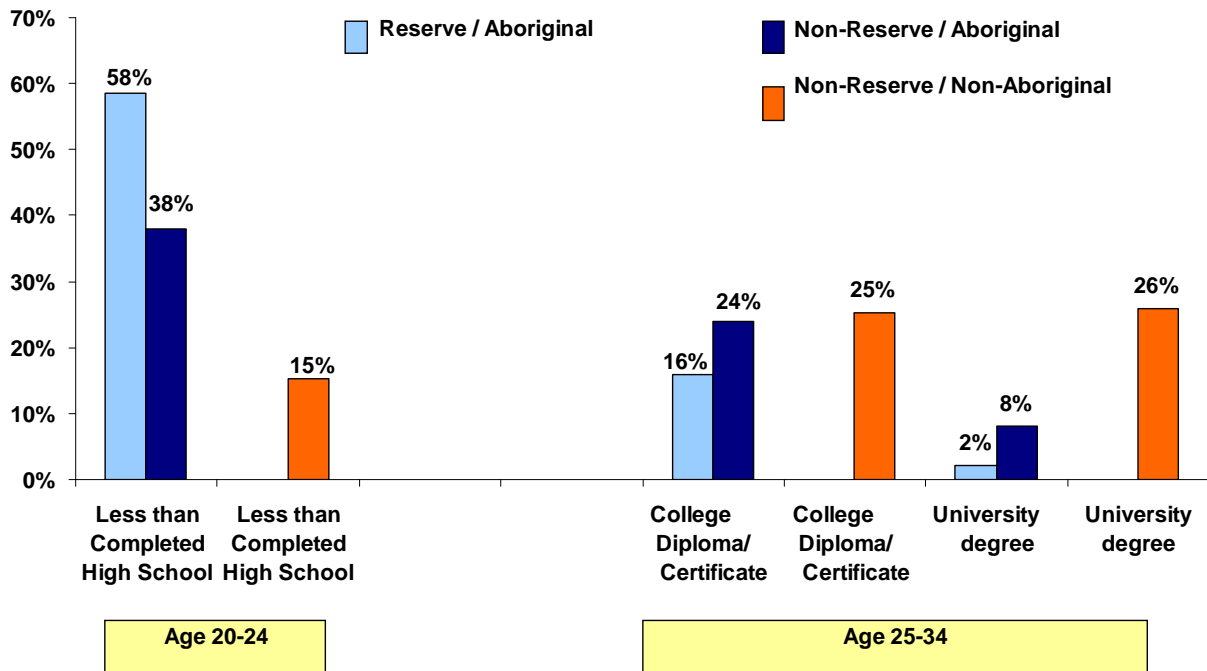

Figure 3 deals with the level of education of Aboriginals living on and off reserve, compared with the non-Aboriginals.

The level of on-reserve education is low, compared with the urban Aboriginals and non-Aboriginal population. More than 50% of on-reserve Aboriginal youth do not have high school education and only about 16% have college diploma. The urban Aboriginal people are a little bit better off. Almost two-thirds of them completed high school and about 24% have college diploma.

But still the level of education of non-Aboriginals is much higher than of both Aboriginal groups, because there are a lot of obstacles that make it more difficult for both groups of Aboriginal people to achieve such levels of education as the non-Aboriginals have.

These difficulties and obstacles are discussed later on.

---

[67] Siggner A., and R. Costa, "Overview of Education Conditions of the Urban Aboriginal Population in Canada," Statistics Canada, http://www.sfu.ca/mpp/aboriginal/colloquium/pdf/Siggner_Presentation.ppt.

To show the level of on and off reserve education, I focus on a survey made by Ekos Research Associates, whose main aim was to concentrate on a quality of education of Aboriginal people. The respondents were Aboriginal people living on and off reserve, as well as non-Aboriginal Canadians, who should have evaluated not only the quality of education, but also other social factors, such as drug and alcohol abuse, poverty or psychological issues.[68]

3.2.1 On-reserve Education

Aboriginals living on-reserve, see the lack of education as the most challenging issue that their children and youth have to face. They are aware that having sufficient education and enough skills is a good and important link to improve the standard of living in their Aboriginal communities.

According to their evaluation, almost half of Aboriginal people (48%) say that the quality of on-reserve education, which is received by their children and youth, is worse than that of other non-Aboriginal Canadians, and even some of the respondents are not satisfied with the education system compared to that of off-reserve Aboriginal people.[69]

The main factor causing their dissatisfaction with the quality of on-reserve education is the lack of qualified teachers, who they are not able to attract and keep. This is followed by poorly facilitated schools with insufficient teaching supplies and they also lack more parental and community involvement. Their dissatisfaction stems from the lack of access to certain types of courses, such as chemistry, and from the on-reserve teachers, who are often inexperienced and uncommitted.[70]

---

[68] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Highlights Of The Third Survey Of First Nations People Living On-reserve," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/02240bk_e.html.

[69] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Public Views on Aboriginal Education," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/lnd/sec4_e.html.

[70] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Highlights Of The Third Survey Of First Nations People Living On-reserve," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/02240bk_e.html.

3.2.2 Urban Education

The adequate education is one of the main reasons why the Aboriginal people leave reserves. They find the education and the quality of education as one of the most important issues and they see the education and sufficient skills as a challenging link to obtain a good job.

Despite their vision of the importance of education and skills, there are some obstacles that make it more difficult to get the right education. There are off-reserve respondents that want to finish high school or others who want to get post-secondary education, but there is a barrier - money.

The respondents of Ekos research have cited:

"I need to get my chainsaw [certificate] and then I'll be set, but I don't have the $500.00 to pay for it."

"They get funding for me as if I was still there, but I don't get to use it. I have a right to education, but they always say that there's no money left."[71]

According to their evaluation, money seem to be the most obvious barrier for the low-income off-reserve Aboriginal people to get education. They find it also difficult to go to school and at the same time support themselves or a family.[72]

Another issue, which makes it more demanding to get the education, is a discrimination, which off-reserve Aboriginal people have to face, particularly when they are trying to obtain funding for their education. Moreover, the funding they receive is not sufficient to cover the costs of books and basic living expenses.[73]

Both groups of Aboriginal people have the problems in accessing the quality education, either it is the lack of experienced teachers and sufficient supplies in the classrooms, or the lack of enough money. But Aboriginal people should concentrate not

---

[71] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada," Importance of Education and Skills Development," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/lnd/lscp/sec3_e.html.

[72] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada," Importance of Education and Skills Development," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/lnd/lscp/sec3_e.html.

[73] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada," Importance of Education and Skills Development," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/lnd/lscp/sec3_e.html

only on the children and youth education but also on the training and education throughout the whole life, which is called Lifelong learning. It contains both, children and youth education and adult training, as well.

3.2.3 Lifelong learning

It is defined as "the acquisition of knowledge and skills throughout an individual's lifespan."[74] It focuses not only on early children, post-secondary and high school education, but also on other training and skills development for adults and youth.

Lifelong learning enables Aboriginal people to develop the knowledge and skills to reinforce and strengthen their Aboriginal identity, fully participate in the Canadian economy and enjoy the quality of life that can be comparable to of non-Aboriginal Canadians.

All these learning programs should reflect Aboriginal values, traditions, languages and achieve positive education outcome for Aboriginal people.

There were funded 59 programs and services in 2004-05 by $ 1.9 billion to increase the participation and success in early learning, education, training and skills development.[75]

The federal government funds concentrate on core educational services for Aboriginal people, such as elementary and secondary education and these programs are delivered at the community level, for those living on-reserve.

For urban Aboriginal people, the programs providing early training and childcare programs, elementary and secondary education programs, are delivered by provinces and territories.

INAC also provides support to Aboriginal learners in accessing post-secondary education. For instance, they provided $ 297.6 million for Post Secondary Education for both on and off reserve Aboriginal people and other scholarships for Aboriginal students.[76]

---

[74] Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, "Aboriginal Peoples," Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/report/govrev/05/cp-rc09_e.asp.

[75] See, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/report/govrev/05/cp-rc09_e.asp.

[76] See, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/report/govrev/05/cp-rc09_e.asp.

In the area of skills development programs is the most important the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS), which I will mention later.

3.2.4   Aboriginal Head Start Program

As both groups, on and off reserve Aboriginal people, see the early children education as the most important, I would like to focus on one program, funded by federal government, which has been accessible to both groups. It is the Aboriginal Head Start program (AHS).

This program was first created and implemented for urban Aboriginal people in 1995, where the main goal of AHS program was to instil the environment for pre-school children and prepare them for life long learning. "AHS is a school readiness and early intervention program involving parents, guardians and communities to support the developmental needs of children."[77]

As AHS leads to significant improvement in reading skills, cognitive development and improved health, the Aboriginal people living on reserve also wanted this program to be expanded on reserve, because they needed any resource and the best possible opportunity to develop and achieve a full potential of their children, too.[78]

The development and implementation of the AHS On Reserve program is the result of collaborative efforts, both at national and regional levels of First Nations communities and organizations, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB), Health Canada; Population and Public Health Branch (PPHB), Health Canada; Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC); and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), (...)
The AHS On Reserve program is designed to prepare young First Nations children for their school years by meeting their emotional, social, health, nutritional and psychological needs. The AHS program framework was adjusted to reflect the First Nations operating environment and considered such things as existing child development initiatives and community activities. The AHS On Reserve program

---

[77] Health Canada, "2000-2001 Annual Report," Health Canada, http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spni/pubs/develop/2000-01_ahs-papa-rpt/intro_e.html#top.

[78] See, Health Canada, http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spni/pubs/develop/2000-01_ahs-papa-rpt/intro_e.html#top

retains the six core components including: culture and language, education, health promotion, nutrition, social support, and parental and family involvement.[79]

The AHS is the only program that is designed to introduce the basics of many Aboriginal languages. The urban Aboriginal children and youth learn the Aboriginal language very often as a second language, and teachers are the persons from whom they receive the help in learning the Aboriginal languages. Those Aboriginal children living on-reserve are taught the Aboriginal language mainly by their parents or grandparents, and thank to the AHS a part of the responsibility is conveyed on schools. According to the 2001 Census data, about 68% of the Aboriginal children and youth understand and are able to speak in an Aboriginal language.[80]

Currently, there are 126 AHS (both on and off reserve) across Canada in nine provinces and three territories, where approximately 3,900 Aboriginal children are enrolled.[81]

The AHS program is determined only to pre-school children to prepare them to the obligation and increase the awareness of going to school to learn important things, which they will need in future. Nowadays, there is a problem that the Aboriginal people, and mainly youth, with post-secondary degree or certificate lack in various fields. Only about half of them has certificate or degree, compared to non-Aboriginal Canadians. The fields, where there are major shortages of Aboriginal people with certificate are mainly economics, community planning and development, business management, forestry,

---

[79] Health Canada, "2000-2001 Annual Report," Health Canada, http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spni/pubs/develop/2000-01_ahs-papa-rpt/intro_e.html#top.

[80] Statistics Canada, "Aboriginal languages," Statistics Canada, http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-589-XIE/language.htm.

[81] Public Health Agency of Canada, "Program Overview," Public Health Agency of Canada, http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/ahs_overview_e.html.

biology, geology and agriculture. There are also gaps in the fields, where math or science are required, such as engineering and the health sciences.[82]

3.2.5   Comparison

Education is seen by both groups of Aboriginal people as the most important issue determining the quality of life, because with high-school education or a university degree, they can find better jobs with sufficient income. To compare the quality of education provided on reserves and in the cities, I would say that the Aboriginals living in the cities receive better education than those living on reserves. It can be measured from the number of Aboriginals, who have a certificate or a university degree. However, there are some problems and difficulties in achieving the education on reserve, as well as in the cities.

Those children living on-reserve have to face and cooperate with teachers who are not qualified and often helpless, so the Aboriginal children can not find any motivation of going to school. And this I find as a fault number one, because teachers are the most important persons who can influence and motivate children and teach them to find a positive way to the learning and studying, and create the awareness of going to school from pre-school age. I think that either government, territory council or the band should try to search such teachers who will meet all the requirements of the Aboriginal people and will be able to teach the Aboriginal children together with Aboriginal culture, traditions and nationhood. These teachers might also be the Aboriginals themselves, who best know the culture and their bands.

The second problem are the school facilities. As there is a huge lack of enough teaching aids, the Aboriginal children can not properly learn all the subjects and the result of their effort is null. They lack not only teachers' supplies, but also books to study from. Moreover, the core problem is also in the subjects themselves that are taught on reserves, where the Aboriginal children miss some of them. And as a consequence, in youth age or after finishing the school system, they can not be specialized in some fields, such as economics, engineering, because they have not learnt them from childhood. I think the

---

[82] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Education and Training," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sh87_e.html#2.8%20Education%20and%20Training.

government should create a new teaching plan for the on-reserve children and include those subjects that are missing, to avoid the lack of specialization in youth and adult age.

Those children living in the cities do not have problems with unqualified teachers and insufficient teaching aids, because the schools in the cities are better facilitated than those on reserves, but the Aboriginal children have to face other difficulties, such as the lack of money. The living costs in the cities are higher than on reserves, so these children have to ask for funds to get the education, but the received money hardly cover the books expenses. I think that in this case the government should either increase the sum of money given to the Aboriginal children, or provide them with books and other teaching aids.

I find the discrimination as more serious problem, which the urban children and youth have to deal with, when asking for funds. The discrimination is a hidden threat, and I think that the government or the Aboriginal people themselves should fight against it by developing the awareness of their culture and the awareness of their effort to fully assimilate into the Canadian society.

3.3 Employment opportunities

Employment is together with adequate housing and education the key element determining the well-being of Aboriginals. However, the Aboriginal communities mostly experience higher rates of unemployment, lower rates of labour participation and higher rates of social assistance, compared to non-Aboriginal Canadians.

There also exists a link between education, employment and income. Aboriginal communities usually have lower levels of education, lower earnings from employment and therefore lower incomes. Moreover, many Aboriginal people live in remote communities, where there is a limited access to employment and resources, but the costs of living are high.[83]

---

[83] Human Resources and Social Development Canada, " Review of Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements-Synthesis of Findings," Human Resources and Social Development Canada, http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/publications_resources/evaluation/2004/sp_ah_667_12_04/page03.shtml.

In general, the success in the labour market is positively related to the level of education. According to 2001 Census data, the Aboriginal working age population has significantly lower education than the total working non-Aboriginal population. About 58% of on-reserve Aboriginal population over 15 and 38% of the off reserve population did not have high-school graduation, compared to 15% of non-Aboriginal Canadians.[84]

The consequence of low education is then in the low rate, at which they participate in the labour market. Under the 2001 Census data, it is especially true in the case of on-reserve Aboriginal people, where almost 50% of them do not have jobs. So this is the reason why there is such a huge unemployment rate among Aboriginal people, in general. The unemployment rate of Aboriginal people living on-reserve was in 2001 27.6%, which is almost twice as high as the rate of off-reserve Aboriginal people. Their unemployment rate was in 2001 16.5%. [85]

On the other hand, education is not the only problem causing low participation and therefore low incomes among Aboriginal communities. The other obstacle are children. As nearly one-third of on-reserve children and almost a half in the urban areas live only with one parent, the parents, and mainly women, find it difficult to seek and maintain jobs, because there is a lack in providing childcare to them. Moreover, women continue to carry the primary responsibility for the children and other family members, so their ability to participate into the economy and access programs is limited. Thus, there is a high rate of Aboriginal women, who are self-employed. According to 2001 Census, about 36% of Aboriginal women were self-employed. One of the factors causing their self-employment are the differences between men and women, as women working full-time tend to earn less than men working full-time, too.[86]

---

[84] See, Human Resources and Social Development Canada,

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/publications_resources/evaluation/2004/sp_ah_667_12_04/page03.shtml.

[85] See, Human Resources and Social Development Canada,

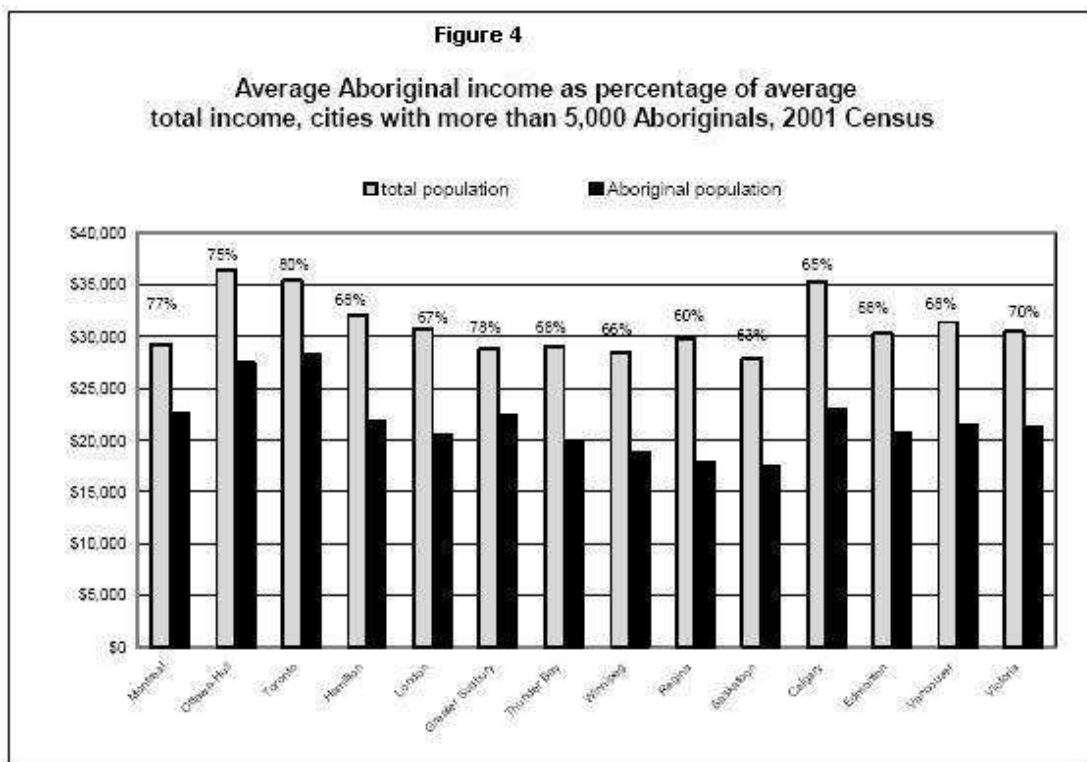http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/publications_resources/evaluation/2004/sp_ah_667_12_04/page03.shtml

[86] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Gender Equality Analysis," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/ae/ev/02-02/02-02_08_e.html.

According to 2001 Census data, the employment rate of the Aboriginal people is increasing, depending on the region they live in. The factor determining their labour market participation is the level of education. The employment rate is higher of those Aboriginals who have completed university or college education than those with no education or with only high school. Moreover, in some Canadian cities the employment rate among Aboriginals with the university degree is higher than of non-Aboriginals. This occurred mainly in Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto and Calgary. A huge gap in the employment rate of degree-holders is still in Saskatchewan, especially in Regina and Saskatoon.[87]

The unemployment rate therefore influences the earnings of the Aboriginal people, as the Figure 4 shows.[88]

Figure 4

Average Aboriginal income as percentage of average total income, cities with more than 5,000 Aboriginals, 2001 Census

---

[87] Statistics Canada, "Study: Aboriginal people living in metropolitan areas," Statistics Canada, http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/050623/d050623b.htm.

[88] Michael Mendelson, "Aboriginal Peoples and Postsecondary Education in Canada," The Caledon Institute of Social Policy, http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/595ENG.pdf.

Figure 4 deals with the average income received by Aboriginals and non-Aboriginal people, according to the city they live.

In general, the non-Aboriginals have higher incomes than the Aboriginal communities in all cities. It is mainly caused by the low education of Aboriginal people, as it was discussed in previous part. But still, there are differences in the earnings of the Aboriginal people themselves. The average income is lowest in the cities of Regina and Saskatoon, in the Saskatchewan region. The highest earnings of the Aboriginal people are in the capital city of Ottawa, Toronto and Calgary. Those earnings can be comparable to some of non-Aboriginal Canadians' incomes.

There is also evidence that the Aboriginal women of both, on and off reserve, in the labour market rather work in sales and services (34%); business, finance, administration (22%); or social science, education and government services (22%), while men usually work in trades and transportation (32%), sales and services (19%) and primary industry (15%).[89]

Some of the urban Aboriginals in Saskatoon have also the chance to work in an urban reserve. It is the Muskeg Lake Cree First Nation Urban Reserve that was established in 1988 in Saskatoon, which was a time when a lot of Aboriginals migrated from reserves. The city of Saskatoon agreed to provide all municipal services, such as garbage pick up, police protection, electricity and water supplies, to support the development of this business park. Nowadays, there are about 40 businesses run by Aboriginals, as well as by non-Aboriginals. The businesses owned by the Aboriginal people are mainly restaurants, law companies, retail stores and a travel agency. Those run by non-Aboriginals include engineering company, accountant firm and insurance brokers.[90]

The main purpose of creating such an urban reserve was to achieve a higher level of economic participation of the Aboriginal people, as well as to increase the employment

---

[89] Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Gender Equality Analysis," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/ae/ev/02-02/02-02_08_e.html.

[90] Western Economic Diversification Canada, "Urban Reserves in Saskatchewan," Western Economic Diversification Canada, http://www.wd.gc.ca/rpts/research/urban_reserves/1a_e.asp.

opportunities for urban Aboriginals. Currently, in Saskatoon there are employed about 400 people, 300 of them are Aboriginals.

There is also other advantage in doing business and working in Muskeg Lake urban reserve. Those Aboriginal people who are employed there do not have to pay an income tax from their earnings, so they have more money and are able to support their families, or invest the money in housing and thus improve the living conditions. As the Muskeg Lake urban reserve has been successful, other cities tried to establish their own urban reserves. Nowadays, they are also in Prince Albert, Yorkton and Meadow Lake.[91]

Although the Muskeg lake urban reserve has been economically successful story, the low level of education is responsible that there are still on and off reserve Aboriginals, who do not have such high employment opportunities and therefore high incomes from their earnings.

Closing the gap in education and employment is not only the effort of both groups of Aboriginal people, but also the aim of federal government that want to increase their participation in the labour market and therefore improve the quality of life. The federal government help Aboriginal people by many supporting programs and services to develop their employment skills and to fully participate in the Canadian economy.

One of such a program, dealing with the improvement of employability and skills of Aboriginal people is the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy.

3.3.1 The Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS)

This is a federal program, which is mainly design to expand the employment opportunities of all Aboriginal people. Under this strategy, there are Aboriginal organizations and Agreement Holders, who are responsible for designing and delivering employment programs and services, best suited to meet the needs of their communities. These Aboriginal organizations are on community level and they have the authority to make

---

[91] Errol Black, Jim Silver, "Urban Reserves Have A Place In Winnipeg's Aboriginal Strategy," Winnipeg's Digital Magazine, http://www.newwinnipeg.com/news/2003/09-19aboriginal.htm.

decisions that will meet the needs of their community. Currently, there are about 80 Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements across Canada.[92]

The main purpose of AHRDS is to assist Aboriginal people to prepare for, find and keep jobs. All Aboriginal people have the right to access these programs and services, which include:

a) labour market development programs to assist Aboriginal people, including Aboriginal persons with disabilities, prepare for, obtain and maintain meaningful and sustainable employment;

b) special programs to assist Aboriginal youth make successful transitions from school to work (the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy) or to support their return to school;

c) child care programs[93]

The AHRDS was first introduced in 1999 and within years it has helped almost 60,000 Aboriginal clients to find job and increase their employability.

As the first five years after implementation of AHRDS were successful, in 2004 this Strategy was renewed and the federal government expected more Aboriginal people to participate in it, because it enables them to improve their skills, needed for employment, increase their participation in the labour market and thus close the gap between Aboriginal people and other Canadians, as far as the employment is concerned.[94]

---

[92] Human Resources and Social Development Canada, "The Strategy," Human resources and Social Development Canada, http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/employment/aboriginal_employment/strategy/index.shtml.

[93] Treasury Board of Canada secretariat, " Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy," Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/eppi-ibdrp/hrdb-rhbd/dep-min/hrdc-rhdsc/ahrds-sdrha/description_e.asp.

[94] Human Resources and Social Development Canada, "Government of Canada renews its strategy to increase Aboriginal employment," Human Resources and Social Development Canada, http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/comm/news/2003/031202.shtml.

3.3.2 Comparison

The employment opportunities were one of the reasons why the Aboriginal people migrated from reserves to cities. They hoped to find more job vacancies and earn more money, but thank to low level of education they had problems to be employed.

The situation on reserves is nowadays a little bit worse than in cities, The unemployment rate is much higher than the rate experienced by the Aboriginals in the cities. I would say that the reason for such a high rate is still the lack of good services provided on reserves, as far as the childcare is concerned. Especially women are those who are unemployed on reserves. I think that the band itself should start providing such a service. There will be created new jobs that will employ other people and it will increase the employment rate of the women, too. In the urban centres, the childcare service is provided, but it is expensive, so the women rather stay at home with children. In this case, the city or the government should consider some free service for the urban Aboriginal women, because then they can participate in the Canadian economy more.

There are some Canadians cities, where the urban Aboriginal people have advantage – urban reserve, as the one in Saskatoon. This urban reserve has brought success and a lot of pluses to the urban Aboriginals. Not only they can find there work and thus have the advantage of not paying income tax, but also it is a place, where the Aboriginal people themselves can run a business and therefore have the participation in the Canadian economy. I think that the government should support the creation of such urban reserves in other cities, because it gives the Aboriginal people the possibility to own a company, and the earnings from it could increase the living conditions and well-being of Aboriginal people.

CONCLUSION

Before writing this thesis I thought that the Aboriginal people of Canada mainly live on reserves and in national parks of Canada and are trying to keep their traditional way of life, such as hunting. To my surprise, I found that today more than half of them (about 55%) live in the Canadian cities and I started to be more and more involved in their communities, lives and life conditions.

Both, life and living conditions, have been influenced and shaped by the relationships and attitudes of the European newcomers who claimed rights to their lands and passed laws to limit their traditional way of life and ignored their rights. The European culture was so different that they had problems to cope with it and the laws, the non-Aboriginals passed should have made it easier for them to assimilate.

The current social situation is a consequence of these passed laws and attitudes of the non-Aboriginal people. I concentrated on three factors that determine the quality of life and in all of them, both on and off Aboriginals, are in a very low position in the society, compared to non-Aboriginal Canadians. Better living conditions, more employment opportunities and quality of life were reasons why the Aboriginal people migrated from reserves to cities. They wanted to improve their standards of living. But the reality they have experienced shows that the life in the cities is in some cases more difficult than life on reserves.

Generally, both groups of Aboriginals have lived in overcrowded and in inadequate houses that need major repairs, their level of education is low and as a consequence so are the employment opportunities and thus the unemployment rate is high, compared to non-Aboriginals. After Bill C-31 was passed, the federal government started to create various programs and provide funds to help the Aboriginal people to integrate into the Canadian society. The living conditions of Aboriginal people have improved in the last 10 years, but still there is a huge gap between them and non-Aboriginals. There are also successful Aboriginal people who work as lawyers, doctors, journalists or are running their own company.

The Aboriginal people do not have to be dependent only on the federal funds and programs, but they can themselves try to improve the living conditions. The urban Aboriginals have the possibility to run a company in the urban reserves, while the on-reserve Aboriginals have a chance as a whole reserve to start to do businesses and thus

have more money for improvements. It all depends on the reserve management-band council.

The relationships with the non-Aboriginal Canadians are still developing, the public awareness of their culture and nation should be more widespread. There are Canadians who are very involved in their culture and nation and want to help them, but also people who make obstacles in accessing the federal programs and funds and use the racisms as a tool to harden their life. The relationships should be strengthen with federal and provincial governments and with those people, the Aboriginals meet when asking for fund. The relationships should be based on cooperation and on respecting each other.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cameau, Pauline, and Aldo Santin. *The First Canadians: A Profile of Canada's Native People Today.* Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1990.

Canada. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. *People to People, nation to nation: Highlights from the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.* Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1996.

Frideres, James S. *Native Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts.* Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1993.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. *The Canadian Indian.* Ottawa, 1986.

Muckle, Robert J. *The First Nations of British Columbia.* Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998.

"A Brief History of Canada." http://www3.sympatico.ca/goweezer/canada/can0000.htm (accessed January 15, 2008).

C.D.Howe Institute Commentary. "Aboriginal off-reserve education: time for action." The gate Group, Inc. http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-21274083_ITM (accessed April 1, 2004).

Canadian Content Interactive Media. "Aboriginals and the Canadian Military." Canadian Content. http://forums.canadiancontent.net/history/54989-aboriginals-canadian-military.html (accessed June 21, 2006).

Congress of Aboriginal peoples. "Indian Act/Bill C-31." Congress of Aboriginal peoples. http://www.abo-peoples.org/programs/C-31/c-31-1.html#Act%20is (accessed January 15, 2008).

Department of Justice. "Bill C-31." Department of Justice. http://www.justice.gc.ca/chra/en/eberts.html (accessed February 15, 2008).

Errol Black, Jim Silver. "Urban Reserves Have A Place In Winnipeg's Aboriginal Strategy." Winnipeg's Digital Magazine. http://www.newwinnipeg.com/news/2003/09-19aboriginal.htm (accessed September 19, 2003).

Health Canada, "2000-2001 Annual Report." Health Canada. http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spni/pubs/develop/2000-01_ahs-papa-rpt/intro_e.html#top (accessed October 21, 2005).

Human Resources and Social Development Canada. "Government of Canada renews its strategy to increase Aboriginal employment." Human Resources and Social Development Canada. http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/comm/news/2003/031202.shtml (accessed February 4, 2004).

Human Resources and Social Development Canada. "The Strategy." Human resources and Social Development Canada. http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/employment/aboriginal_employment/strategy/index.shtml (accessed February 28, 2007).

Human Resources and Social Development Canada. "Review of Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements-Synthesis of Findings." Human Resources and Social Development Canada. http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/publications_resources/evaluation/2004/sp_ah_667_12_04/ page03.shtml (accessed August 23, 2007).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Historical Legislation:1850-1970." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/qc/csi/hist1_e.pdf (accessed January 15, 2008).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. " First Nation Housing." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/hsg/cih/hs/index_e.html (accessed October 19, 2007).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. " First Nations Housing." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/hsg/cih/hs/fnh_e.html (accessed May 2, 2006).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "2005/2006 Budget-New Funding for On-Reserve Housing Programs." http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/hsg/cih/hs/nfo_e.html (accessed May 2, 2006).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "A Select and Annotated Bibliography Regarding Bill C-31, Indian Registration and Band Membership, Aboriginal Identity, Women and Gender Issues." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/sab/sab_e.pdf (accessed January 23, 2008).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Current Legislation:1985." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/qc/csi/present1_e.pdf (accessed January 23, 2008).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Education and Training." Indian and Northern
    Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-
    inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sh87_e.html#2.8%20Education%20and%20Training (accessed
    February 8, 2006).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Gender Equality Analysis." Indian and Northern
    Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/ae/ev/02-02/02-02_08_e.html
    (accessed August 24, 2007).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Housing." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.
    http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/ci4_e.pdf (accessed April 4, 2008).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Literature Review." Indian and Northern Affairs
    Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/rimm/litr_e.html (accessed April 23, 2004).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Migration Patterns:1991-1996." Indian and Northern
    Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inaec.gc.ca/pr/ra/rimm/migr_e.html (accessed
    February 15, 2008).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Migration." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.
    http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/execs/rece-5_e.html (accessed August 16, 2004).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Public Views on Aboriginal Education." Indian and
    Northern Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/lnd/sec4_e.html (accessed
    May 11, 2005).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Stage three: Displacement and Assimilation." Indian
    and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/cg6_e.pdf
    (accessed January 15, 2008).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "The 1951 INDIAN ACT Revision." Indian and
    Northern Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg27_e.html (accessed
    February 8, 2006).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "The Historical Context." Indian and Northern Affairs
    Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/matr/his_e.html (accessed January 15,
    2008).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "THIRD NATIONAL SURVEY OF FIRST
    NATIONS PEOPLE ON-RESERVE REVEALS IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION
    AND CULTURE." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-
    inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/2-02240_e.html (accessed December 14, 2005).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Highlights Of The Third Survey Of First Nations People Living On-reserve." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/j-a2003/02240bk_e.html (accessed April 23, 2004).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada." First Nations On-Reserve Housing: Building the Future." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/iss/orh/llr_e.html (accessed April 20, 2007).

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada." Importance of Education and Skills Development." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/lnd/lscp/sec3_e.html (accessed May 8, 2006).

Library of Parliament. "INDIAN STATUS AND BAND MEMBERSHIP ISSUES." Parliamentary Information and Research Service. http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/bp410-e.htm#împactstx (accessed February 12, 2008).

Mendelson, Michael. "Aboriginal Peoples and Postsecondary Education in Canada." The Caledon Institute of Social Policy. http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/595ENG.pdf (accessed July, 2006).

Public Health Agency of Canada. "Program Overview." Public Health Agency of Canada. http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/ahs_overview_e.html (accessed February 16, 2004).

Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. "Urban First Nations people Without Homes In Saskatchewan." Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. http://www.siit.sk.ca/PDFfiles/Homeless.pdf (accessed April 23, 2008).

Shades. "History of Native peoples in Canada." Native Trail. http://www.angelfire.com/realm/shades/nativeamericans/historyquebec.htm (accessed January 15, 2008).

Siggner A., and R. Costa. "Overview of Education Conditions of the Urban Aboriginal Population in Canada." Statistics Canada. http://www.sfu.ca/mpp/aboriginal/colloquium/pdf/Siggner_Presentation.ppt (accessed May 27, 2005).

Statistics Canada. "Aboriginal languages." Statistics Canada. http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-589-XIE/language.htm (accessed March 4, 2004).

Statistics Canada. "Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006:Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census: First Nations people." Statistics Canada. http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/aboriginal/decade.cfm (accessed January 10, 2008).

Statistics Canada. "Study: Aboriginal people living in metropolitan areas." Statistics Canada. http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/050623/d050623b.htm (accessed June 23, 2005).

Steve Hick. "Indian Act, 1876." Canada's unique. http://www.socialpolicy.ca/cush/m8/m8-t7.stm#top (accessed January 15, 2008).

The Canadian Encyclopedia. "Native people, Health." Historica Foundation of Canada 2008.http://www.canadianencyclopedia.ca/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1SEC8 24940 (accessed January 15, 2008).

The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan. "Housing Policy." Canadian Plains Research Center. http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/housing_policy.html (accessed April 9, 2008).

Treasury Board of Canada secretariat. " Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy." Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/eppi-ibdrp/hrdb-rhbd/dep-min/hrdc-rhdsc/ahrds-sdrha/description_e.asp (accessed July 6, 2007).

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. "Aboriginal Peoples." Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/report/govrev/05/cp-rc09_e.asp (accessed November 23, 2005).

Western Economic Diversification Canada. "Urban Reserves in Saskatchewan." Western Economic Diversification Canada. http://www.wd.gc.ca/rpts/research/urban_reserves/1a_e.asp (accessed May 16, 2008).

Wilson W.R. "Historical Narratives of Early Canada." Wilson W.R. http://www.uppercanadahistory.ca/fn/fn1.html (accessed May 12, 2008).

WordPress. "The White Paper 1969." WordPress. http://www.out-of-order.ca/politics/the-white-paper-1969/ (accessed January 23, 2008).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DIAND   Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

INAC   Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

APS   Aboriginal Peoples Survey

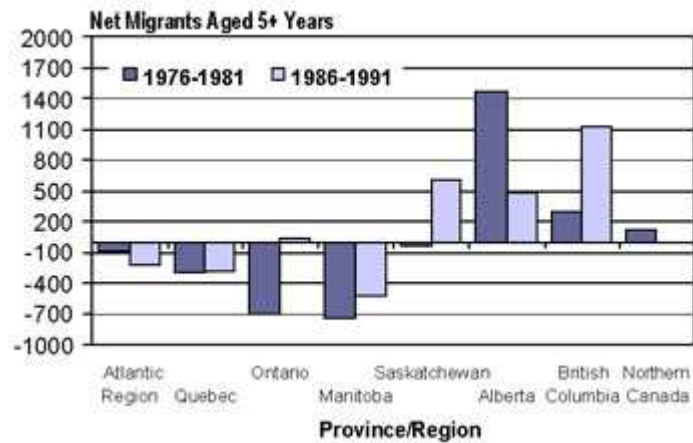CMHC   Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

SHC   Saskatchewan Housing Corporation
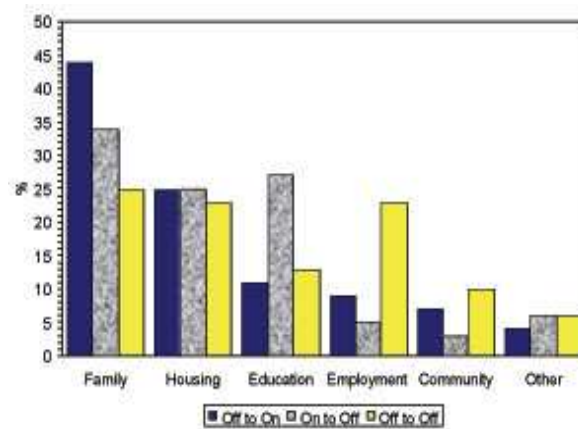
AHS   Aboriginal Head Start program

AHRDS   Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy
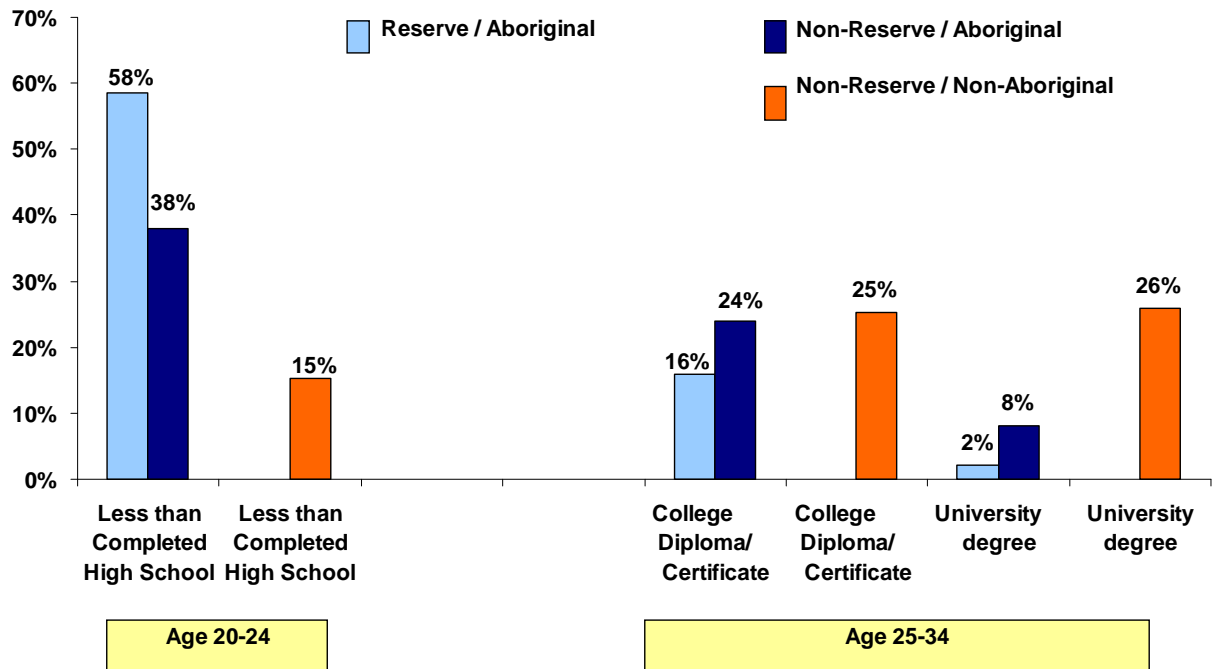
LIST OF FIGURES

**Figure 1 - Estimated Net Migration Among Registered Indians by Province/Region,
Canada, 1976-1981 and 1986-1991**

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Migration." Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.
http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/execs/rece-5_e.html (accessed August 16, 2004).

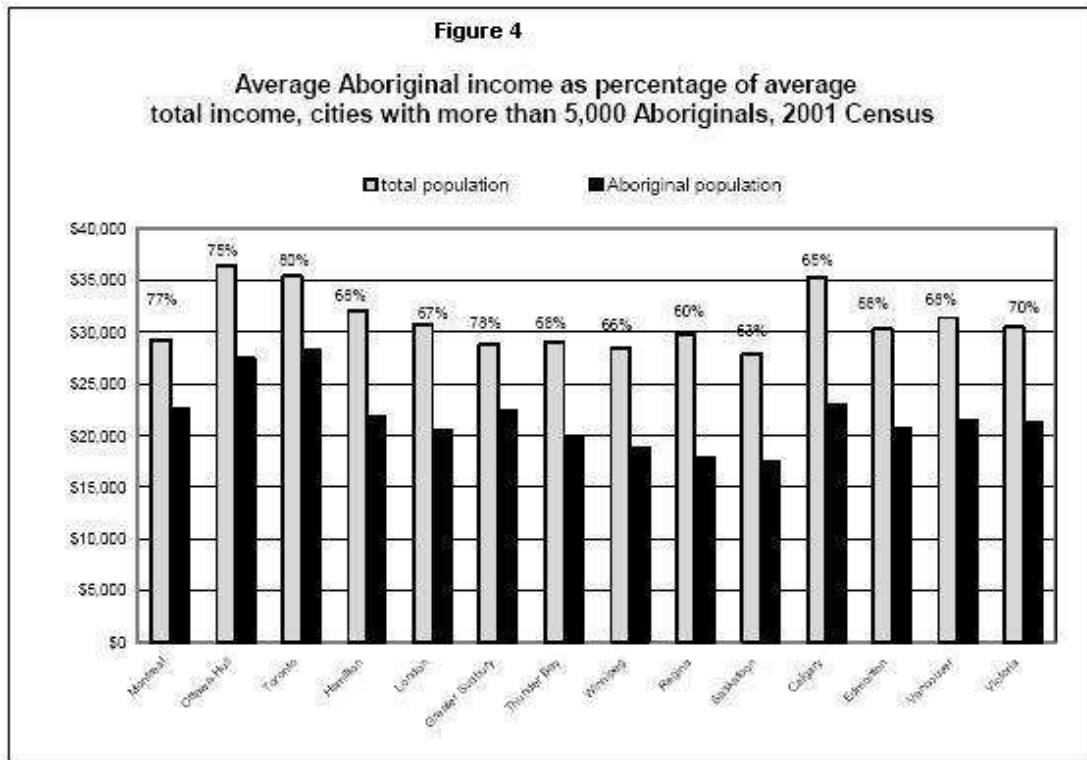**Figure 2 - Reasons for Migration, 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Canada**

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Literature Review." Indian and Northern Affairs

Canada. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/rimm/litr_e.html (accessed April 23, 2004).

Figure 3 - Gap in educational attainment of the Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal

populations, living on reserve vs non-reserve areas, 2001.

Siggner A., and R. Costa. "Overview of Education Conditions of the Urban Aboriginal

Population in Canada." Statistics Canada.

http://www.sfu.ca/mpp/aboriginal/colloquium/pdf/Siggner_Presentation.ppt (accessed

May 27, 2005).

Figure 4

Average Aboriginal income as percentage of average total income, cities with more than 5,000 Aboriginals, 2001 Census

□ total population ■ Aboriginal population

Mendelson, Michael. "Aboriginal Peoples and Postsecondary Education in Canada." The

Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/595ENG.pdf (accessed July, 2006).

APPENDICES

Map of Canada

Canadian Topographic Maps,

http://www.maptown.com/canadiantopographical/ntscanadafull.jpg