Urbanization and Migration Patterns of Aboriginal Populations in Canada:
A Half Century in Review (1951 to 2006)

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Preface

The mandate of the Office of the Federal Interlocutor (OFI) is to manage and strengthen federal strategies and relationships towards urban, Non-Status and Métis Aboriginal people in Canada. To be able to advise Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) on the specific needs of these groups, the OFI commissions research that aims to inform its work and provide policy recommendations.

This study examines Aboriginal urbanization and migration patterns within Canada over the past half century from 1951 to 2006. It builds upon preliminary research findings that were first presented by the authors at the “Session on Indigenous Urbanization Internationally: Geographic Variations” as part of the workshop “Indigenous Urbanization in International Perspective” held at the University of Saskatchewan in October of 2009.

In its concentration on those major urban areas in Canada with significant Aboriginal populations, the paper focuses on themes and findings that are relevant to the urban mandate of OFI, including the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS), given that many of the “UAS cities” are included in this study.
Executive Summary

This study explores the urbanization and migration patterns of Aboriginal populations in Canada’s urban areas over the past half-century, based on census data spanning the years from 1951 to 2006. To take into account long-term, as well as recent patterns in urbanization and migration, is to recognize the impact of historical trends in shaping the demographic and cultural characteristics of Aboriginal populations living in urban areas today.

While anticipating the future growth and trends of urban Aboriginal populations is important to the planning and development of urban Aboriginal strategies, also important is understanding how the dynamics and outcomes of past, as well as present, growth can influence, and provide a basis for addressing current characteristics, needs and services of urban Aboriginal populations. For example, while perhaps not obvious at first, urban Aboriginal organizations and governance can reflect the outcomes of long-term patterns of urbanization and migration in representing Aboriginal residents and their communities within cities.

In its focus on different major urban areas in Canada with significant Aboriginal populations, this study is relevant to the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS), operating in thirteen key urban centres with significant populations of Aboriginal people. Findings and implications, based on an analysis spanning a period of over 50 years from 1951 to 2006, have direct relevance for nine of these thirteen “UAS cities”, with the exceptions of Prince George, Prince Albert, Lethbridge and Thompson. The twelve major cities in this study comprise: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Hamilton, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Montreal, and Ottawa/Gatineau.
Trends in Urbanization and Migration

Within Canada, Aboriginal people have historically experienced significantly different levels and patterns of urbanization and migration from those of the mainstream populations, and as well, within their different populations of First Nations, including Registered and Non-Status Indians, Métis and Inuit.

It should be noted that there are some related considerations in this documentation of urbanization and migration patterns from the early 1950s on, which are not directly addressed in the discussion. For example, one is the presence of Aboriginal people in what are now urban areas before 1950, such that coming to Canada’s cities, in some cases at least, simply marked a return to traditional territory. Also, is the “urbanization” of Aboriginal territory, as in the case of Métis, such that Prairie cities grew up around Aboriginal people rather than Aboriginal people urbanizing (Newhouse and Peters, 2003).

Overall, the outcomes of long term patterns of urbanization and migration have certainly been dramatic over the past half century which has seen the total number of Aboriginal people residing in the twelve cities combined, increase more than a hundred-fold, from just 3,000 in 1951 to some 320,000 by 2006.

A Half Century of Trends - Significant growth after 1951

In the thirty years between 1951 and 1981, Aboriginal populations experienced significant growth in Canada’s urban areas, from only hundreds in most cities at the beginning of the period, but posting substantial increases over the period, of over 50 per cent between 1951 and 1961 in some cities. This early period of rapid growth in urban areas witnessed the movement of increasing numbers of Aboriginal people from rural areas and reserves to urban centres. And, although this phenomenon occurred in all regions of Canada, it tended to be especially pronounced in Canada’s western provinces, leading to the very rapid growth of Aboriginal populations in major prairie cities (Clatworthy, 1981).
In the decades following the initial period of urbanization over the sixties, growth in Aboriginal populations in urban areas continued over the 1970s and 1980s, and into the following decades, as numbers increased steadily and significantly. And, especially for some Prairie cities, the absolute increase between 1981 and 1991 was greater than the increase between 1971 and 1981” (Peters, 2000).

Census – based studies highlighted the phenomenal growth experienced by cities over the 20-year period from 1981 to 2001, many of which saw Aboriginal population more than doubled in 20 years and in some cities, such as Saskatoon, quadrupled (Siggner and Costa, 2005). The exceptional growth experienced by the Aboriginal identity population between 1986 and 1991, was most pronounced off Indian reserves, especially in urban areas (Guimond, 2003).

Migration and Urbanization:

To what extent has migration contributed to the rapid increase in the Aboriginal populations living off-reserve, in large urban areas?.

Both the literature and census – based analyses suggest that migration, as a component of population growth, contributed to the initial period of urbanization, particularly between 1951 and 1971. With respect to the growth of Aboriginal populations starting in the early decades after 1951, observers at the time attributed the substantial increases in Aboriginal population over 1951 -1961 and 1961-71 periods to migration; with for example the view in 1973 that “Clearly, the vast increases in the urban Indian population cannot be attributed to any other factor than migration from reserve areas.” (Nagler, 1973)

However, since this earlier period of urbanization, in spite of high levels of movement, the contribution of migration as a component of the dramatic growth of Aboriginal populations enumerated in urban areas diminished considerably. Other components, especially ethnic mobility, and to some extent natural
increase were accounting for much of urban growth overall. Ethnic mobility, the phenomenon by which individuals and families experience changes in their ethnic affiliation, is reflected in the changes in self-reporting of Aboriginal identity from one census to another. Demographic analyses have established that the impact of ethnic mobility (the self-identification of individuals in a census who did not indicate an Aboriginal identity in the previous census) offers an important explanation in the relatively recent demographic explosion of Aboriginal populations, especially in urban areas (Guimond, 2003). Overall, it is ethnic mobility, not the migration from reserves to cities that appears to be the most important factor in explaining the relatively recent dramatic growth of Aboriginal populations in urban areas overall (Clatworthy and Norris, 2007).

However, at the individual city level, while ethnic mobility and natural increase are factors in the high growth of their Aboriginal populations for many cities, for other urban areas, migration is a contributor to Aboriginal population growth. And, generally, while migration was a factor of growth at the beginning of urbanization, it is also the case that even if not a direct contributor at present, it may indirectly impact through natural increase. While the net effects of migration on population growth may be small, the age-gender compositional effects of migration, of Aboriginal youth and young adults migrating to cities could indirectly contribute to population growth through natural increase.

**A Preliminary Typology of Aboriginal Populations in Different Urban Areas**

The results of this census-based analysis for the twelve selected CMAs suggest the beginnings of a preliminary typology of different urban Aboriginal populations with respect to their growth patterns, size, and components. Findings demonstrate that urban areas differ significantly in the population characteristics of their Aboriginal residents, not only in terms of their population size, but also with respect to long-term and recent patterns of population growth and components of growth. Furthermore, such differences themselves have
implications for age-gender structure, duration of Aboriginal residency, and as well, the Aboriginal sub-groups comprising various urban Aboriginal populations.

A first attempt in outlining such a typology was developed for the twelve cities studied, by classifying them according to three major criteria, including: long-term (1951 to 2006) patterns of population growth; current (1996-2001) components of population growth; and size of the Aboriginal population. A fourth criteria for consideration, but not developed as yet, could be the First Nation, Métis and Inuit composition of their Aboriginal populations. The twelve urban areas were categorized into three major categories, based on three different patterns of long-term growth over the 1951 to 2006 period, in combination with different contributors to current growth. Cities within these three broad categories were further classified by the size of their current (2006) Aboriginal populations.

The first category of urban areas are characterized by rapid growth in Aboriginal populations at the beginning of the period of urbanization; with differentials in growth between previous and more recent periods of urbanization, and significant increases in absolute numbers over the 1981 to 1996 period. For these areas, natural increase is a major component of current growth, accounting for at least practically half of the growth in the city’s Aboriginal population. Cities which share these growth characteristics but also vary in the size of their Aboriginal populations include the three Prairie cities of: Regina, between 8,000 and less than 20,000, Saskatoon (20,000 to 30,000) and Winnipeg (with an Aboriginal population exceeding 68,000).

The second category represents urban areas with their generally highest growth occurring at the beginning of urbanization; with some differentials in growth over time, and with less pronounced increases over the 1981 - 96 period, but more recent high growth. For these areas, both natural increase and net migration are major contributors to their Aboriginal populations. The cities and their Aboriginal
population categories in this group include Thunder Bay and Hamilton (8,000 to 20,000); Calgary, Ottawa / Gatineau (20,000 - 30,000), and Edmonton (40,000+).

The third category represents urban areas experiencing relatively high growth in Aboriginal populations, in spite of net out – migration. In these cities ethnic mobility accounts for at least 80% of growth. The three cities similar in these characteristics are: Montreal (8,000 to 20,000); Toronto (20,000 to 30,000); and, Vancouver (40,000 +).

**Some initial implications of a preliminary typology of urban Aboriginal populations**

Some initial implications of the different types of long-term patterns and components of Aboriginal growth in urban areas, as outlined in the preliminary typology, concern variations in the characteristics, needs and services of Aboriginal populations. For example, cities with long established and large Aboriginal populations reflecting significant past growth, like Winnipeg, may be more likely to have third and fourth generations of urban residents, born and raised in urban areas; more urban Aboriginal community / neighbourhood organizations and services with increasing emphasis on organizational capacity and community infrastructure; programming requirements for older, as well as younger, generations; and, perhaps with the development of urban communities, impacts on changing ties and return migration to rural communities / reserves.

On the other hand, urban areas experiencing more recent growth and gains of Aboriginal populations through migration may be more likely to have newcomers, from non-urban Aboriginal communities (Indian reserves; Inuit settlements); growing requirements for developing infrastructure, service delivery, housing; and, likely ongoing migration to and from communities of origin; as well as between cities – small and large. In the case of smaller cities - continued long-
term net out-migration may reflect less availability in general for new infrastructure, service delivery and organizational capacity.

Components of growth can also affect the socio-economic characteristics, as well as the demographic and group composition of Aboriginal populations in urban areas. Such consequences, particularly in relation to the impact of ethnic mobility, can have implications for the interpretation of trends in socio-demographic characteristics and urbanization. High rates of growth due to ethnic mobility, especially among the Métis, can affect not only the size of the Aboriginal population but also its composition, and as such, can have implications for the understanding and interpretation of both socio-demographic and urbanization trends:

**Conclusion**

Cities and urban areas across Canada clearly differ not only in the size of their Aboriginal populations, but also in outcomes associated with their long-term patterns, and current components of urbanization. As a consequence, Aboriginal residents in these different cities can also differ in their demographic and cultural characteristics, such as age-gender structure, generations of urban residents, and their composition of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples. Furthermore, these demographic and cultural differences play a role in shaping the range and variation across cities in the characteristics, needs and services of their urban Aboriginal populations. For example, in urban areas where Aboriginal populations are long-established, second and third generations of urban residents may be more likely to have developed their own institutional structures.

In conclusion, patterns and trends of Aboriginal urbanization and migration of over the past 50 years still hold considerable relevance for the characteristics and state of Aboriginal populations in urban areas today. Cities across Canada have experienced both different and similar histories and patterns of Aboriginal population growth and migration. Addressing such patterns as outlined in the preliminary typology of urban Aboriginal populations would serve to better
interpret and understand the various components shaping not only the growth, but also the different socio-demographic and group composition of Aboriginal populations in cities today, and the implications for needs and services.

With respect to further development, this typology could be extended to incorporate the population-related dimensions of age-gender structure, generations and Aboriginal group composition, and also, socio-economic characteristics. As such, the development and application of a typology of Aboriginal populations in different urban areas would be an area for future research, particular with respect to interpreting and understanding the implications for the growth, composition and needs and services of Aboriginal populations in different cities across Canada, including those of the UAS.
1 Introduction

Within Canada, Aboriginal populations have historically experienced significantly different levels and patterns of urbanization and migration from those of mainstream populations. This paper provides an overview of the urbanization and migration patterns of Aboriginal populations in Canada over the past half-century.

The study uses population and migration data from the census for twelve selected major urban areas to explore long-term trends in Aboriginal urbanization and migration, starting from 1951 to present (2006). The study’s findings address three key areas:

- patterns and trends in Aboriginal population growth in urban areas;
- the role played by migration as a factor in the urbanization of Aboriginal populations; and,
- components of Aboriginal recent population growth in urban areas.

Based on the analytical results for selected urban areas, the authors propose a preliminary typology which distinguishes urban Aboriginal populations on the basis of population size, trends and components of growth and duration of urban residence. The paper concludes with some discussion of the implications of variations in long-term patterns and components of Aboriginal population growth, as outlined in the preliminary typology, for the characteristics, needs and service demands of Aboriginal populations residing in various types of urban areas.

1.1 Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) and UAS Cities

In its focus on those major urban areas in Canada with significant Aboriginal populations, this study is relevant to the urban mandate of the Office of the Federal Interlocutor (OFI), including the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS), given that many of the “UAS cities” are included in this study. The UAS, which was first developed in 1997, “to help respond to the needs facing Aboriginal people living
in key urban centres… operates in thirteen cities whose Aboriginal population represents more than 25 percent of Canada's total Aboriginal population. The designated cities include: Vancouver, Prince George, Lethbridge, Calgary, Edmonton, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thompson, Toronto, Thunder Bay and Ottawa (retrieved from http://www.aic-inac.gc.ca/ai/ofi/uas/bkg-eng.asp, March 19th, 2010).

The analyses of urbanization and migration of Aboriginal population conducted for this study focuses on twelve cities including: Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Saskatoon, Ottawa/Gatineau, Montreal, Regina, Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Hamilton. Thus, with the exception of Prince George, Prince Albert, Lethbridge and Thompson, the findings and implications of this study will have direct relevance for nine of the thirteen UAS cities.

1.2 Background: History of Urbanization of Aboriginal Populations in Canada:

Observers of Aboriginal urbanization suggest that the beginnings of Aboriginal population growth in “urban” areas within the context of Canadian geography were starting to appear after the first half of the 20th century. According to the 1951 Census, few Aboriginal people resided in urban areas, numbering only in the hundreds in most cities. Between the 1951 and 1961 Censuses, urban Aboriginal populations (mainly “Indian”) started showing signs of growth with some urban areas experiencing increases of over 50% in their Aboriginal population. As Mark Nagle observed in his study “Indians in the City”, in 1973: “Census figures reveal that growth in the Indian urban population is substantial… Indians are entering urban areas at an unprecedented rate.”
By the time of the 1971 Census, the numbers of Aboriginal people living in urban areas had increased significantly as highlighted in the 1974 Statistics Canada “Perspective”, report. Quoting WT Stanbury: “The 1971 Census indicated that there were 1,000 or more Indians in twelve urban centres in Canada. In seven of these cities there were more than 2,000 Indian residents.”

The literature documents that in the decades following the initial period of urbanization of the 1960s, the numbers of Aboriginal peoples in urban areas continued to increase rapidly (Clatworthy, 1981; Peters, 2000). Growth of urban Aboriginal populations was especially pronounced during the 20-year period spanning 1981-2001, as documented in a number of recent demographic studies (Guimond, 2003; Siggner and Costa, 2005).

While migration of Aboriginal people to cities may have fuelled the urbanization of Aboriginal populations at the outset of the study period, demographic analyses has revealed that many other factors have come into play over the past 50 year period, not the least of which was Aboriginal “Identity”.

1.3 Objectives of a Census – Based Analysis

This research paper uses population and migration data from the Censuses of Canada for twelve selected major urban areas, including ten of the UAS cities where data permit, to explore long-term trends in Aboriginal urbanization and migration, starting from 1951 to present (2006). Among the different Aboriginal populations - First Nations - Registered and non-status Indians, Métis and Inuit - Registered Indians are the only Aboriginal group for whom reasonably consistent Census data extend back to the 1960s. The paper presents data on long-term trends in urbanization for the Aboriginal population overall, and where available, for the different Aboriginal groups. Although data and analyses for the early portion of the study period are based primarily on the Registered Indian
population, it is recognized that levels and patterns of urbanization and migration do vary across different Aboriginal populations (Norris et. al. 2003; Norris and Clatworthy, 2003, 2009).

This census – based analysis is designed to address several related research objectives, the first of which is to identify historical and long-term patterns of the urbanization of Aboriginal populations in Canada, for urban areas overall, and for selected cities, over the years from 1951 to 2006. A second major focus concerns migration as a factor in the urbanization of Aboriginal populations, from both historical and demographic perspectives, including its contribution to the more recent and rapid increase of Aboriginal population in large urban areas. A “components of growth” approach is used to assess the contribution of migration and other factors, including ethnic mobility and natural increase to recent growth of urban Aboriginal populations. As such, it clarifies some of the misinterpretations surrounding migration, such as the impression that the recent demographic explosion of urban populations is largely the result of an exodus from reserves.

Another major objective concerns the assessment of regional patterns, trends and variations in Aboriginal migration and population growth for specific selected urban areas across Canada. The analysis for these various urban areas provides an estimate of the impact of different components of Aboriginal population growth, such as natural increase, and the identification of the different types of long-term patterns and components of Aboriginal population growth across major urban areas.

Finally, the results of this census – based analysis for select urban areas are used to construct a preliminary typology of urban Aboriginal populations based on growth patterns, population size, and components of population growth. The
paper concludes with some initial thoughts on the relevance and implications of the typology in relation to the characteristics, needs and service demands of Aboriginal populations living in different urban areas.

2 Aboriginal Urbanization and Migration: Census Concepts, Data, Definitions and Coverage, 1951-2006

Censuses spanning the 1951 to 2006 period have seen significant changes with respect to concepts, definitions, geography and coverage. These changes affect data and analysis for the Canadian population in general, but are especially significant within the context of Aboriginal populations. As this section demonstrates, data on Aboriginal urbanization and migration are consequently not fully comparable across censuses. The following provides a discussion on current concepts and definitions, pertaining to the 1996 to 2006 Censuses, and as well, highlights of changes in concepts and definitions, geography, and variations in coverage, affecting data comparability across censuses.

2.1 Census Aboriginal Population Definitions


The most recent censuses of 1996, 2001 and 2006, allow for the Aboriginal population to be defined according to a number of different concepts and criteria, including: ethnic origin (ancestry), identity (self-reported affiliation with an Aboriginal group), Registered Indian status (legal status - registered or status Indian) and band membership.

Analyses presented in this paper for the 1996-2006 period are based on the population that reported an Aboriginal identity (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit) and/or reported registration under the Indian Act and/or reported...
membership in an Indian band or First Nation. According to the 2006 Census, this population numbered about 1,172,790 individuals, including 698,025 North American Indians (59.5 percent), 389,780 Métis (33.2 percent), 50,480 Inuit (4.3 percent) and 26,760 others who gave either multiple Aboriginal responses or did not report identity but did report Indian registration or band membership. The population reporting Indian registration numbered 623,780, representing about 53.2 percent of the total population reporting Aboriginal identity.

In the study, data for the 1996-2006 period that distinguishes among Aboriginal populations have been configured into four sub-groups, including: 623,780 Registered Indians (regardless of Aboriginal group(s) identity), 133,160 non-registered Indians, 355,500 Métis (non-registered) and 49,110 Inuit (non-registered). Distinguishing the population on the basis of Indian registration status is important to any analysis of Aboriginal mobility or migration. Unlike other Aboriginal groups, individuals registered under the Indian Act have certain rights and benefits, especially if they live on reserve, such as access to funding for housing and post-secondary education, as well as land and treaty rights. These factors can be important to understanding differences in the migration patterns of the four Aboriginal sub-groups.

### 2.1.2 Censuses Prior to 1996

Since the 1871 Census, the Aboriginal population in Canada has been traced through the question on ethnic origin / ancestry/ race (ethnic affiliation of respondent’s ancestors). However, over time, censuses have seen changes in measuring ethnic origin or ancestry. Prior to 1981, only single responses to ethnic origin were allowed, traced on the father’s side. The 1981 Census saw the introduction of “multiple responses” for the first time and the inclusion of both paternal and maternal lineage.
With respect to the Aboriginal population, counts for the 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1986 and 1991 Censuses were based on the concept of ethnic “Origin”, with 1951, 1961 and 1971 employing the terms of “Indian” and “Inuit”. The 1981 Census saw the introduction of the “Registered Indian” category in lieu of the term “Band Indian”, and, for first time since 1941, the return of “Métis” as an ethnic origin. The 1986 Census first introduced the new concept of Aboriginal population based on ethnic identity - self-identification (North American Indian, Métis, Inuit). The concept of Aboriginal identity was also used in the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS); however, it was not until the 1996 Census that the question on Aboriginal identity was reintroduced and data were released.

2.2 Geographic Definitions of Urban Areas and Cities

2.2.1 Reserve, Rural and Urban Geographies

With respect to the census – based research on Aboriginal mobility and migration, patterns and flows have been examined within the context of four mutually exclusive and exhaustive geographic areas, including: Indian reserves and settlements, rural areas, urban non-census metropolitan areas (non-CMA’s) and urban census metropolitan areas (CMA’s). CMA’s are defined on the basis of urban areas with a minimum core population of 100,000. Urban non-CMA’s include all other urban areas, including those with a core population of at least 10,000, and smaller urban areas. In general an urban area “…has a population of at least 1,000 and no fewer than 400 persons per square kilometre... All territory outside urban areas is classified as rural. Taken together, urban and rural areas cover all of Canada. Urban population includes all population living in the urban cores, secondary urban cores and urban fringes of census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and census agglomerations (CAs), as well as the population living in urban areas outside CMAs and CAs” (Statistics Canada, 2010, p. 231).
In this study, apart from individual cities, urban geographies exclude Indian reserves and rural fringe areas located within the broader boundaries of the urban areas. Rural areas comprise all remaining areas, including the undeveloped fringes of urban areas, but excluding lands defined as Indian reserves and settlements. Rural and urban non-CMA areas would contain other Aboriginal communities (e.g. Inuit, Métis).

2.2.2 Geography of Twelve individual “cities” from 1951 to 2006

Aboriginal population data were available to this study for twelve cities from selected censuses spanning the period 1951 to 2006. These cities include: Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Saskatoon, Ottawa/Gatineau, Montreal, Regina, Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Hamilton.

The geography that was available for the twelve “cities” or urban Areas with Aboriginal populations varied from 1951 to 2006. For the period 1951 to 1981 data are provided for the urban area at the Census Subdivision level (CSD) with the CSD Type of “City”. “Census Subdivision” is the general term for a municipality or an area that is deemed to be equivalent to a municipality for statistical reporting purposes (e.g., as an Indian reserve or an unorganized territory). Census subdivisions are classified into 55 CSD types - the census subdivision type accompanies the census subdivision name in order to distinguish CSDs from each other (Statistics Canada, 2010, p. 211-212).

From 1971 to 2006 urban areas are based on the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) corresponding to the particular urban area. Thus for the Censuses 1971 and 1981 two sets of population counts are provided for the two different levels of geography, of CSD and CMA.

Note that with respect to individual urban areas, some urban areas include reserves within their boundaries (e.g. Montreal and Vancouver).
2.3 Census Migration Data and Definitions

The Census of Canada collects mobility and migration data using two questions:

Where did you live 5 years ago? and

Where did you live 1 year ago?

Data from either question can be configured to distinguish among three sub-groups, including:

- Non-movers, who lived at the same residence at the outset of the reference period (i.e. either 5 years ago or 1 year ago);
- Migrants, who lived in a different community (census subdivision (e.g. municipality, town, village, reserve…)) at the outset of the reference period; and
- Residential or non-migrant movers, who lived at a different residence in the same community at the outset of the reference period.

Thus, a “migrant” is a mover who changed communities, whereas a “residential” or “non-migrant” mover is a mover who changed residences within the same community. Combined, these latter two groups comprise the total population of movers during the reference period.

The migration components of the analyses presented in this paper use data from the 5-year mobility question. Migration rates are presented both as five – year and average annual rates computed for the 5-year period.

Census migration and mobility data present some conceptual limitations, some of which tend to be more pronounced for the five-year than the one-year question given the longer time period. For example, many characteristics of migrants (e.g. age, education, marital and family status and socio-economic attributes) are known only at the end of migration reference period (i.e. at the time of the census), and may differ at the time of migration. The census also does not capture multiple moves, migrants who leave and return to the same location, or
those who die during the time interval. Because of its shorter one-year interval period, the one-year data can provide a more accurate picture for a given year of migration patterns, volumes and characteristics as compared to the five-year question. However, the limitation is that it could be an unusual or volatile time period and may not be typical of the longer trends. In this sense, the five-year question provides a more reliable portrayal of mobility patterns and trends, and more so for migration (Norris and Clatworthy, 2003).

2.4 Coverage Issues

While the census provides the most complete and consistent set of data concerning the urbanization and migration patterns of Aboriginal peoples, census data are limited in a number of respects. Census questions on ethnicity, identity and mobility are only administered to a sample of the total census population which excludes individuals living in various institutions including prisons, chronic care facilities, and also those who are living in rooming houses. The fact that these persons are “missed” is a relevant consideration given the disproportionate high share of the Aboriginal population in these institutions and also in temporary accommodations, especially in urban areas, which have relatively high concentrations of Aboriginal people who are either living in rooming houses or are homeless.

Aboriginal population data from the census are also affected by incomplete enumeration of Indian reserves as well as survey under-coverage both on and off reserve. Incomplete enumeration and under-coverage can affect population counts and geographic distributions of all Aboriginal populations. Population counts of Registered Indians on reserves are under-estimated due to both incomplete enumeration of various reserves, and under-coverage in general. Off-reserve, counts of other Aboriginal populations, as well as those of Registered Indians are also affected by under-coverage in urban and rural areas. As a consequence, the geographic - residential distributions of Aboriginal populations
enumerated in the census can be biased with respect to proportions residing on or off reserve, or in urban or rural areas. In addition, the extent of incomplete enumeration and survey under-coverage varies from one census to another, and as a consequence can impact on estimates of inter-censal population growth.

The impact of under-coverage of Aboriginal populations in urban areas on census population counts is not new. In fact, under-enumeration of Aboriginal people in urban areas was recognized as early as the 1970s, as observed by Nagler, in his paper "Indians in the City":

"Anyone spending time in one of these (urban) centres would soon realize that Indians living in the city are grossly under-enumerated by the census. The under-enumeration occurs because many urban Indians reside with friends or in rented rooms ... hotels, and other transient dorms which seldom if ever fall under the scrutiny of the census taker." (Nagler, 1973)

The potential for underestimation of Aboriginal populations in urban areas that was stressed by Nagler in 1973, continues to remain an issue, especially in light of the high mobility of Aboriginal populations, and as well, the fact that census-based Aboriginal population counts do not include people in institutions (e.g., prisons, chronic care), rooming homes or other forms of collective dwellings.

### 2.5 Comparability across Censuses

In assessing the census – based data trends in Aboriginal urbanization and migration over the 1951 to 2006 period, it is important to consider the limitations regarding data comparability across censuses. Basically, time series data are not directly comparable owing to inter-censal changes in population definitions and concepts, geographic boundaries and coverage levels, all of which can impact on population counts and geographic distributions.
As the preceding discussion demonstrates, Census concepts, definitions and composition of Aboriginal populations vary over time: up to and including the 1991 Census, Aboriginal population data were based only on the concept of ethnic origin; from the 1996 Census on, Aboriginal data were also based on the concept of “Identity”. The 1981 Census introduced the possibility for multiple ethnic origin responses, the term “Registered Indian” and, for the first time since 1941, the inclusion of Métis as an Aboriginal ethnic origin.

In terms of composition, Aboriginal population estimates from the 1951 and 1961 Censuses include both Indian and Inuit; whereas published estimates for 1971 reflect Indian counts only. To some extent these changes may affect growth estimates, underestimating 1961-1971 growth, though this is less likely an issue in urban areas. Estimates of growth for the 1971-81 period may be overstated as a consequence of the inclusion of multiple responses (to ethnic origin) and Métis as an ethnic origin response. While the 1981 and 1996 Census counts are not directly comparable, they have been employed in comparisons across individual CMAs (see Siggner & Costa “Aboriginal Conditions in Census Metropolitan Areas, 1981-2001”).

In the case of geography, boundaries for reserves, cities and CMAs can change, as can their rural/urban classifications, from one census to the next, including the definitions of urbanization. In fact, to some degree, changes in the urbanization of Aboriginal people from one census to the next could be affected by the impact of intercensal growth of the population in general, such that areas previously classified as rural are later classified as urban in the next. An early example of this process of urbanization is reflected in the observation that in the case of Métis, Prairie cities grew up around Aboriginal people rather than Aboriginal people urbanizing (Newhouse and Peters, 2003).
3 Approach, Methodology, Limitations and Considerations

3.1 Approach and Methodology

With respect to the long-term analysis of urbanization, analyses are based on available published census data on Aboriginal populations in urban areas. Owing to constraints of time, data availability and comparability, not all census years, such as 1986 and 1991, are included in the trend analysis. The study also highlights longer-term population trends and patterns in urbanization for twelve selected major urban areas with large Aboriginal populations, using data for selected censuses spanning the 1951-2006 time period. Though limited with respect to data comparability over time, the approach and methodology provide a general idea of the trends and patterns in Aboriginal urbanization over the 1951 to 2006 period.

Trends in urbanization identified using census data are complemented with historical perspectives of urbanization and migration from the literature that reflect observations of migration and urbanization from various points in time over the study period.

A “components of growth” approach is employed to assess the contribution of migration and other factors to recent (1996-2001) urban growth. The approach separates population changes observed for the time period into four main components: natural increase (i.e. the excess of births over deaths), net migration (in-migrants minus out-migrants), changes in survey coverage, and ethnic mobility. Ethnic mobility or ethnic drift is defined as changes in self-reporting of ethnicity, and specifically in this study, refers to changes in individual self-reporting of Aboriginal identity - from one census to another; and
demographic research has demonstrated that this phenomenon has been a significant factor in the more recent growth of Aboriginal populations in Canada, especially in urban areas (Guimond, 1999, 2003a; 2003b; 2009).

Other aspects of the methodology include various migration measures, such as in, out and net migration rates in relation to the impact of migration on urban population change, and gross migration rates as indicators of urban population turnover.

3.2 Limitations:

Some caution is advised in the interpretation of census data, since the analysis of selected urban areas is limited, for a number of reasons. First, given that Aboriginal population trends do not include all censuses (e.g. 1986, 1991) their intercensal changes (1986-1991; 1991-1996) are masked over the longer 1981-96 period. However, although 1981 and 1996 censuses are not directly comparable, they provide comparison across individual CMAs, and were similarly employed in the analysis of “Aboriginal Conditions in Census Metropolitan Areas, 1981-2001” (Siggner & Costa, 2005).

The census data used in this long-term analysis have not been adjusted for intercensal variations in undercoverage and incomplete / partial enumeration, nor for changes in geographic boundaries over censuses. As well, with the exception of Montreal, reserves within individual CMAs are not excluded. In the case of Montreal, the reserve of Kahnawake was excluded from the 1981 Census count for comparability with later censuses, given the incomplete enumeration of the reserve in all censuses since 1981.
However, it should be stressed that it is difficult if not impossible to isolate and unravel all the impacts on census comparability, due to changing Aboriginal population composition and concepts (ancestry, identity); geographic boundaries and rural / urban classifications; and effects of transportation and accessibility on location, residence and migration.

3.3 Considerations re “Urbanization” of areas with existing Aboriginal populations

With respect to assessing long-terms trends in urbanization, this paper utilizes mainly a demographic component approach in assessing the contribution of different factors, including natural increase, migration and, for more recent periods, ethnic mobility to the growth of the Aboriginal populations in urban areas. However, as indicated earlier, another facet of Aboriginal urbanization, and one not directly addressed here, involves the geographic aspect of the “urbanization” of an area or “territory” with significant existing Aboriginal populations (as in the case of Métis in Prairie cities), such that cities grow up around Aboriginal people rather than Aboriginal people “urbanizing”.

Preliminary results from census-based research over the most recent ten-year period between the 1996 and 2006 Censuses (Jette and Snider, 2009) appear to provide some evidence and measure of the geographic component of “urbanization of areas with existing Aboriginal population” as a contributing factor in the trends of Aboriginal urbanization. Findings, controlling for intercensal changes in incomplete enumeration, show an increase of 11% in the number of North American Indian or First Nation (FN) CSDs that are “affiliated” or located within CA/CMA areas (from 176 to 196); representing a corresponding increase of 7% in the proportion of FN CSDs with a CA/CMA affiliation (from 16% to 18%).
As well, the population associated with the rising number of individual FN CSDs located within cities saw a 35% increase over the 10-year period, from 49,600 in 1996 to 66,700 in 2006, and a corresponding 9% increase in the proportion of FN residents living within CA/CMA areas (from 18% to 20%).

Assessment of the contributors to this growth include the factors and rules associated with the delineation of CA and CMA boundaries over time, such as commuting patterns, spatial contiguity and historical comparability. The authors found that:

“… most changes in the CA/CMA affiliation of First Nation communities are not attributable to changes in commuting patterns over intercensal periods, and conclude that “…based on available data, in most cases inclusion of First Nations in a CA/CMA cannot be attributed to factors occurring within the First Nation communities themselves; however in these cases their inclusion is nevertheless justified by external factors, i.e. urban growth/sprawl”… “These preliminary findings would suggest that the geographic affiliation of First Nation CSD communities with urban zones based on CA/CMA geography reflects the presence of phenomena - distinct from mobility trends or natural urban Aboriginal population growth - that are contributing to urbanization of the Aboriginal population in Canada.” (personal communication, D. Jette, May 7, 2010).

Thus, in this demographic analysis of long-term trends in Aboriginal urbanization, it is recognized that the geographic “urbanization of Aboriginal territory” also underlies some of the observed change over censuses in the Aboriginal population residing in urban areas. However, it should be emphasized that with respect to the demographic component approach, assessment of both population growth and the components of that growth (natural increase, migration and ethnic mobility) do control for intercensal changes in CA/CMA boundaries according to the most recent census (e.g. 2006 boundaries in the case of 2001 – 2006 change).
4 Historical (1951 to 1981) Patterns and Trends of Aboriginal Urbanization in the Literature

A Half Century of Trends - Significant growth after 1951

In the thirty years between 1951 and 1981, Aboriginal populations residing in Canada’s urban areas experienced considerable growth. In 1951, the Aboriginal populations of most urban areas numbered only in the hundreds. As noted by Nagler (1973), however, the populations of several urban areas posted increases of over 50% during 1951-1961 decade. By 1971, seven urban areas had more than 2,000 Aboriginal residents, including: Winnipeg (4940), Edmonton (4260), Montreal (3215), Vancouver (3,000), Toronto (2,990), Regina (2,860), and Calgary (2265) (Stanbury, 1974; Statistics Canada Perspectives, 1974).

As well, another separate indicator from the Indian Register of Indian and Northern Affairs on the proportion of Registered Indians living off reserve, also reflected population growth outside reserves over roughly the same time period, with the share residing off reserve increasing significantly over the sixties, from 17% in 1959 to 28% by 1972 (Stanbury, 1974).

Rapid growth of Aboriginal populations in urban areas appeared to be especially common in western Canada during this early period of urbanization. As Stewart Clatworthy observed in 1981, in reference to the twenty – year period of growth up to 1981:

“The past two decades have witnessed the movement of increasing numbers of native persons from rural areas and reservations to urban centres. Although this phenomenon has occurred in all regions of Canada, it has been especially pronounced in Canada’s western provinces and has led to the very rapid growth
of native populations in major prairie cities.” (Clatworthy, 1981, from Sharzer, p. 556).

5 More recent (1981 to 2006) Patterns and Trends of Aboriginal Urbanization in the Literature

Following the initial period of urbanization observed during the 1960s, substantial levels of growth in Aboriginal populations in urban areas continued during the 1970s and 1980s, especially for some prairie cities. As Evelyn Peters observed:

“By 1991, several prairie cities had very substantial populations of Aboriginal people, and it is likely that for many cities, the absolute increase between 1981 and 1991 was greater than the increase between 1971 and 1981.” (Peters, 2000)

In their (2005) study “Aboriginal Conditions in Census Metropolitan Areas, 1981 to 2001” Siggner and Costa highlighted the phenomenal growth experienced in cities with large Aboriginal populations:

“The Aboriginal population in these cites has grown dramatically over the 20-year period. ... The Aboriginal population in the selected CMAs more than doubled in 20 years and in some cities quadrupled, such as in Saskatoon.”

In his study of Aboriginal population growth, Eric Guimond observed that the Aboriginal identity population experienced exceptional growth, between 1986 and 1991, most notably in urban areas:

“The overall exceptional growth of Aboriginal identity populations during the period 1986-91 occurred off Indian reserves, especially in urban areas: 6.6
and 9.4 percent per year respectively in rural and urban areas.” (Guimond, 2003.

6 Selected Urban Areas: Patterns and Trends in Aboriginal Urbanization, 1951 to 2006 Censuses

6.1 All urban areas and CMAs

Now turning to the data, we begin with a look at long-term trends in the percentage of the total Aboriginal population residing in all urban areas (large and small combined), and in large census metropolitan areas (CMAs), from 1961 to 2006. Figure 1 shows that the proportion residing in urban areas has increased steadily, from just 13% in 1961 to 53% by 2006; while the proportion residing in CMAs rose from 7% to 31%.

Figure 1: Percentage of Total Aboriginal Population Residing in All Urban Areas, 1961 to 2006

From 1961 to 2006, the proportion of the Aboriginal population residing in urban areas has increased steadily, from just 13% to 53%; as well, increases in proportion residing in large metropolitan areas (CMAs) from 7% to 31%.

M.J. Norris and S. Clatworthy, March, 2010
Figure 2 provides the percentage of the Aboriginal Population residing in all urban areas (large and small) and CMAs, from 1961 to 2006, as in Figure 1, and by comparison, trends for the different Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations from 1981 to 2006. First of all, to situate the comparison, trends between 1961 and 2005 show the steady increases in the percentages of the Aboriginal population overall in urban areas and CMAs, rising to 53% and 31% respectively by 2006. In spite of increasing trends in urbanization, though, the Aboriginal population overall remains much less urbanized than the non-Aboriginal population: in 2006 81% of the non-Aboriginal population resided in urban areas; 65% in CMAs.

Although all Aboriginal groups have experienced increasing urbanization, they differ greatly in their degree of urbanization and geographic distribution. The most urbanized Aboriginal populations are non-status Indians (with their proportion in urban areas increasing from 70% in 1981 to 74% by 2006) and Métis (similarly with corresponding increases from 60% to 69%). In 2006, nearly one-half of Registered Indians reside on-reserve, while 40% live in urban areas outside reserves, an increase from 34% in 1981. Although the Inuit are the least urbanized of Aboriginal people, living primarily in rural communities, they nevertheless experienced the sharpest increase in their proportion residing in urban areas, from 20% in 1986 to 37% buy 2006 (Figure 2).

Figure 3 provides a comparison of the distribution of the different Aboriginal groups, and non-Aboriginal populations among the four types of geographic areas: reserves, rural areas, urban non-CMAs and urban CMAs. Differences among Aboriginal groups in terms of location and degree of urbanization are reflected in their mobility and migration patterns.
Aboriginal groups differ in their trends and degrees of urbanization although all have experienced increasing urbanization.

Overall, just over half of the Aboriginal Identity population resides in urban areas, with 31% in large urban areas (CMAs) and 22% in other urban non-CMA areas.

Differences among Aboriginal groups in terms of location and degree of urbanization are reflected in mobility and migration patterns.
6.2 Twelve Selected Cities: Aboriginal Population, 2006

Figure 4 shows the 2006 Aboriginal population estimates for the twelve urban areas highlighted in this study. The Aboriginal populations of these urban areas range in size from about 9,000 for Hamilton up to 68,400 for the city of Winnipeg. Collectively these cities account for the vast majority (about 90%) of Aboriginal residents in large urban areas.

Figure 4: Twelve Canadian Cities / CMAs with Significant Aboriginal Populations in 2006

6.3 Twelve Cities Combined: Aboriginal Population, 2006

Figure 5 provides estimates of the total Aboriginal population residing in these twelve urban areas combined for the 1951 to 2006 period. Data for the 1951 to 1981 period reflect ethnic origin-based Aboriginal population counts for the “City” Census Subdivision Type Classification of these urban areas; while data for 1981
to 2006 counts refer to the CMA–based classification of these urban areas. Origin-based population estimates are used for the 1971 and 1981 census years while Identity–based estimates are used for the 1996, 2001 and 2006 census years. Apart from Montreal in 1981, reserves have not been excluded from CMAs (1981 is shown twice, with and without the Kahnawake reserve within Montreal, which was excluded in 1981 for comparability with later censuses when the reserve has not been enumerated).

As revealed in the figure, the combined Aboriginal population of these twelve urban areas has increased dramatically, more than a hundred-fold, from just 3,000 in 1951 to some 320,000 by 2006 (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Total Aboriginal Population of Twelve Selected Cities and Census Metropolitan Areas, Canada, 1951 to 2006**
The Aboriginal population within these twelve urban areas overall has grown at a significantly higher rate than that residing outside of these major urban areas. With relatively small populations at the beginning, growth rates are high, but still remain relatively high, especially over the 1981-2001 period with large absolute increases in numbers. The proportion of the total Aboriginal population residing in these twelve urban areas (Cities / CMAs) reflects this rapid growth and has increased steadily over the past fifty-five years, from just 2% in 1951 to 27% by 2006 (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Percentage of Total Aboriginal Residing in Twelve Selected Cities and Census Metropolitan Areas, Canada, 1951 to 2006

The twelve selected urban areas (CMAs) represent most of the total Aboriginal population in all CMAs combined, since most, practically nine out of ten, Aboriginal residents who live in CMAs reside in these twelve CMAs. As Figure 7 illustrates, since 1971, the Aboriginal population residing in these twelve CMAs combined has accounted for most of the proportion of the total Aboriginal population living in all CMAs. For example in 2006, 27% of the Aboriginal
population resided in these twelve CMAs alone, representing most of the 31% of the Aboriginal population living in all CMAs.

**Figure 7: Percentage of Aboriginal Population Residing in Twelve Selected Cities and All Census Metropolitan Areas, Canada, 1951 to 2006**

![Graph showing percentage of Aboriginal population residing in twelve selected cities and all census metropolitan areas from 1951 to 2006.](image)

### 6.4 Twelve Cities Combined: Growth Rates over 1951 to 2006

Figure 8 shows the average annual growth rates of the total Aboriginal population residing in these twelve Cities/CMAs combined for selected intercensal periods from 1951-61 to 2001-06. Growth rates of the overall Aboriginal population residing in these twelve urban areas are high at beginning with relatively small populations, but rates are still relatively high, especially over the 1981-2001 period (due to 1986-1991 impact (not shown here)) with large absolute increases in numbers.

Figure 8: Average Annual Growth Rates of Total Aboriginal Residing in Twelve Selected Cities/CMAs, Selected Periods 1951-61 to 2001-06

Figure 9 compares the average annual rates of growth of the total Aboriginal population to those of Aboriginal populations residing within and outside of the twelve cities/CMAs for selected intercensal periods. It shows clearly that over the 1951-1961 to 2001-2006 periods of growth, that the Aboriginal population within the twelve urban areas overall has grown at a significantly higher rate than that residing outside of these major urban areas. For example, over the 15 – year period 1981 to 1996, the average annual growth rate of the total Aboriginal population was 3.3%; however, the Aboriginal population residing in these twelve CMAs experienced higher growth, with an average annual growth rate of 4.9%, and conversely, the Aboriginal population outside these areas grew at a lower average annual rate of 2.8%.
6.5 Twelve selected cities: Population Counts and Growth, 1951 to 2006

Canada’s different urban areas vary significantly across regions in the growth patterns of their Aboriginal populations over the past 50-years. The twelve-city analysis in this section explores how Canada’s cities differ in their historical patterns of Aboriginal population growth, and reveals, consistent with Clatworthy’s observation of urban Aboriginal growth over the decades leading up the 1980s, that while growth occurred in all regions of Canada, it was especially pronounced in Canada’s western provinces and resulted in quite large Aboriginal populations in all major prairie cities.
### 6.5.1 Cities with 2006 Aboriginal population of at least 40,000

Figure 10 shows the numbers of Aboriginal people living in cities from 1951 to 2006, having an Aboriginal Identity population of at least 40,000 in 2006. At the beginning of the period in 1951, Aboriginal populations in each of these cities numbered only in the hundreds, yet by 1981 they were well into the thousands. Significant growth occurred thereafter with large absolute increases in population counts between 1981 and 1996. For example, according to the 1981 Census the Aboriginal origin population in the CMA of Winnipeg numbered some 16,000; in 1996 there were close to 46,000 reporting an Aboriginal Identity in Winnipeg, climbing to 68,400 by 2006.

**Figure 10: Aboriginal Population Counts, 1951 to 2006, in CMAs with an Aboriginal Identity Population of at Least 40,000 in 2006**

Aboriginal populations in these cities continue to grow, with population increases over the most recent 5-year period (2001 to 2006) of 22% in Winnipeg, 27% in Edmonton and 9% in Vancouver (Figure11).
6.5.2 Cities with 2006 Aboriginal population between 20,000 to 30,000

Figure 12 shows Aboriginal population estimates for the 1951-2006 time period for the four CMAs with 2006 Aboriginal identity populations in the range of 20,000 to 30,000: Calgary, Toronto, Saskatoon and Ottawa/Gatineau.

At the beginning of 1951, Aboriginal populations in each of these cities numbered less than a hundred, apart from Toronto with 880, yet by 1981 they were into the thousands, with significant increases in numbers for later periods, especially for Saskatoon between 1981 and 1996. In the CMA of Saskatoon, the Aboriginal population climbed from less than a hundred in 1951, to some 4,000 by 1981, reaching 16,000 in 1996, and close to 22,000 by 2006. Calgary and Toronto have Aboriginal populations of similar size, of about 27,000, and also appear to share similar patterns of past growth.
While Saskatoon and Ottawa-Gatineau also have Aboriginal populations of similar size, of about 21,000, their patterns of growth tend to differ, such that Saskatoon saw greatest increases in numbers over the 1981-1996 period; whereas Ottawa/Gatineau also saw significant population increases over the more recent 2001-2006 period, as well as the earlier 1981-1996 period.

Aboriginal populations in these cities continue to grow, with population increases over the most recent 2001-06 5-year period of 26% in Calgary, 31% in Toronto, 6% in Saskatoon and a notable 52% in Ottawa/Gatineau (Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Aboriginal Population Counts, 1951 to 2006, in CMAs with an Aboriginal Identity Population between 20,000 to 30,000 in 2006**

![Aboriginal Population Counts](image_url)
6.5.3 Cities with 2006 Aboriginal population 8,000 to less than 20,000

Figure 14 shows Aboriginal population counts from 1951 to 2006 for the remaining five of the twelve CMAs with 2006 Aboriginal identity populations in the range of at least 8,000 and less than 20,000 - of Montreal, Regina, Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Hamilton. At the beginning of 1951, Aboriginal populations in each of these cities generally numbered in the hundreds, and by 1981 they were also into the thousands, with continued growth over later periods. Over the 1981 – 96 period, Regina especially, and to some extent Thunder Bay, saw significant increases in their absolute numbers of Aboriginal populations.

While Montreal and Regina have Aboriginal populations of similar size, of about 17 to 18 thousand, their patterns of growth tend to differ, such that Regina saw sharp increases in numbers over the 1981-96 period; whereas Montreal saw significant population increases more over the most recent 2001-2006 period.
Also, while the three Ontario cities of Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Hamilton have Aboriginal populations of similar size, of 9 to 10 thousand, growth patterns were not the same: for example Hamilton did not experience the same sharp increase in numbers over the 1981-96 period.

Aboriginal populations in these cities continue to show growth, with population increases over the most recent (2001-2006) 5-year period of roughly 60% in Montreal, 9% in Regina, 23% in Thunder Bay, 35% in Sudbury and 22% in Hamilton (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Average Annual Growth Rates of Aboriginal Populations for Selected Periods 1951-61 to 2001-06 Within CMAs with 2006 Aboriginal Identity Population at least 8,000 and less than 20,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>City Average</th>
<th>CMA Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951-1961</td>
<td>City (10-year) Average</td>
<td>CMA (10-year) Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1971</td>
<td>City (10-year) Average</td>
<td>CMA (10-year) Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1981</td>
<td>City (10-year) Average</td>
<td>CMA (15-year) Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1996</td>
<td>City (10-year) Average</td>
<td>CMA (15-year) Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2006</td>
<td>City (5-year) Average</td>
<td>CMA (5-year) Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 Migration as a Factor in the Urbanization of Aboriginal Populations

The considerable growth of Aboriginal populations observed over the past half century in both urban areas in general and individual cities brings us to the subject of contributors to urban growth. Turning to migration as a factor in the urbanization of Aboriginal populations, we ask the question:

To what extent has migration contributed to the rapid increase in the Aboriginal population living in major urban areas?
7.1 Patterns and Trends in Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Migration

Census-based research has shown that the mobility and migration rates of Aboriginal populations, especially Registered Indians, have consistently been much higher than those of non-Aboriginal residents in Canada’s urban areas. The higher mobility of Aboriginal compared to non-Aboriginal people, reflects not only migration to/from reserves and cities, but also high levels of residential mobility (Clatworthy and Norris, 2007; forthcoming; Norris et al. 2003).

As well, patterns of Registered Indian migration differ from those of other Aboriginal groups - in the movement to and from reserves. While other (i.e. non-registered) Aboriginal groups tend to be more mobile compared to the mainstream population and Registered Indians in general, Registered Indians living in non-reserve areas, especially urban areas, display higher rates of mobility than their counterparts on-reserve, other Aboriginal groups living off reserve, as well as the general Canadian population: a pattern that has been consistently documented since the early 1970s (Clatworthy and Norris, 2007; Norris et al. 2003; Siggner, 1977; Norris, 1985). With respect to migration patterns (or moves from one community to another), it is the movement to and from reserves that distinguishes Registered Indians from other Aboriginal groups. Migration is a reciprocal process - in their roles as both origins and destinations, reserves serve to increase the “churn” to and from cities, such that the Registered Indian population tends to be more mobile than other Aboriginal groups in urban areas.

Historical analyses reveal that high levels of Aboriginal mobility and migration have persisted over long periods of time, however, recent data from the 2001 and 2006 censuses suggest that the mobility and migration rates of Aboriginal
populations have started to decline. In relation to earlier time periods, the volume of both Aboriginal mobility and migration observed for the 1996-2006 period was lower. In addition, 5-year migration rates during the 2001-2006 period for both Registered Indians and Inuit fell below the level of the non-Aboriginal population, in all locations except in urban areas (Clatworthy and Norris, forthcoming). Analyses of recent (post 1991) trends suggest that although the mobility rates of Aboriginal populations remain higher than that of non-Aboriginal populations in urban areas, levels of mobility and migration among the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations are converging.

7.1.1 Registered Indian Migration: Long-term patterns and trends

Due to changes in census population definitions, long term migration trends are available only for the Registered Indian population. Figure 16 provides trends in Registered Indian 5-year migration, based on average annual net migration rates by place of residence (on reserve, rural, urban non-CMAs and urban CMAs) from, 1966-71 to 2001-2006.

Net inflows of Registered Indian migrants to reserves, first reported for the 1966-1971 time period by Siggner (1977), have continued throughout the past 35-year period. Trends indicate a continuation of long–term patterns with net inflows of Registered Indian migrants to reserves, although relatively small in relation to reserve populations; and net out-migration of Registered Indians from rural areas and smaller urban areas.

However, a more complex trend of net migration exists for the larger urban areas (CMAs). As revealed in the figure, throughout most of the 1966-1991 time period large urban centres recorded net inflows of migrants - most significantly, the largest impact of net in-migration to urban CMAs occurred during 1966-71, when net in-migration played an important role in the process of Aboriginal urbanization. Thereafter, the role of migration as a factor in urban Aboriginal
population change has been greatly reduced and variable in direction. Net outflows of Aboriginal migrants were recorded during the 1976-1981 period and the period spanning 1991-2001. Relatively small net inflows of Aboriginal migrant to large urban areas were observed for the 1981-1991 period and for the most recent period, 2001-2006.

While, major focal points in Registered Indian migration continue to be urban areas and reserves, the impact of net migration is felt most significantly in rural areas, which have lost population through migration mainly to urban areas. The more recent impact of net migration on urban areas –whether positive or negative, is small relative to the size of the Registered Indian population in urban areas.

Figure 16: Trends in Registered Indian Average Annual Net Migration Rates by Location, Canada, 1966-71 to 2001-2006
7.2 Migration as a Factor of Urban Growth at beginning period of Urbanization

It would appear from both the literature and the census – based analysis that migration as component of growth contributed to the beginning period of Aboriginal urbanization, although declining thereafter. With respect to the growth of Aboriginal populations starting in the early decades after 1951, many observers attributed the substantial increases in Indian population over 1951 - 1961 and 1961-71 periods to migration; as Nagler observed in 1973:

“Clearly, the vast increases in the urban Indian population cannot be attributed to any other factor than migration from reserve areas.” (Nagler, 1973)

Census based analysis would also suggest that migration contributed to the growth of the Aboriginal population in urban areas during the beginning periods of urbanization, with migration accounting for roughly one quarter of growth of Registered Indian population in large urban areas. While not directly comparable, the size and direction of census – based on/off reserve migration of Band (Registered) Indians over the 1966-1971 period appears to be consistent with the average growth of the Indian population observed in the twelve urban areas over the 1961 – 1971. A crude estimate – based analysis suggests that the net in-migration of band Indians to urban CMAs, could yield an net inflow of roughly about 2500 migrants over 5 years or 500 annually (based on Siggner, 1977). Between 1961 and 1971, the twelve urban areas combined saw an increase in Aboriginal (Indian) population of about 21,000 over 10 years or 2100 annually. Assuming the 1966-71 direction and levels of net in-migration represent a continuation of the previous period of 1961-61 (migration data not available), then roughly on an annual basis, the estimated average annual gain of 500 migrants to urban areas would account for about a quarter of the average annual population increase of 2100.
7.3 Migration as a Factor of Urban Growth over 1986-1996 Period of Urbanization

While migration was a major factor at beginning period of Aboriginal urbanization, clearly its impact on urbanization diminished over later periods, with large urban areas experiencing either small net inflows or net out-flows of migrants. Table 1 provides data on Aboriginal population counts for CMAs as a whole (excluding Indian reserves) and net in / out migration levels by location of residence (Urban CMAs, urban non-CMAs, rural areas and reserves), for the two inter-censal periods of 1986-1991 and 1991-1996.

The comparison suggests that migration does not appear to be a major growth factor in large urban areas, even in the case of net in-migration. Although there was a net inflow of migrants to large metropolitan areas over the 1986-1991 period (+5,550), it accounted for just 7% of the observed growth (75,295) in urban areas between 1986 and 1991 (Guimond, 2003). And, in contrast to the large absolute increases in numbers of Aboriginal people in all urban areas (CMA and non-CMA combined) over 1986-91,1991-96, an overall net loss of migrants (-2,865; -12,420) occurred, indicating more Aboriginal people left urban areas than moved to them (Table 1).
Table 1: Migration as a Factor of Growth of Urban Aboriginal Identity Population over 1986-1996 periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Years</th>
<th>Intercensal Period</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986*</td>
<td>1991*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aboriginal Population in CMAs* (excluding Indian reserves)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Increase/Decrease</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban CMAs</td>
<td>+5,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-6,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Non-CMA Areas</td>
<td>-8405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-6,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Areas</td>
<td>-6,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves</td>
<td>+9,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+12,215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Guimond, 2003 a (Not Strangers); Clatworthy, 1994; Norris&Clatworthy, 2003 (Not Strangers); Norris and Beavon (2000) (WIRA)

Population estimates based on percentage urban in 1986 (41%) and 1996 (47%) in Guimond, 2003a; 1986-1991 increase in urban population in Guimond, 2003 b; yielding 43% urban in 1991

7.4 Migration as a Factor of Urban Growth over 1996-2006 period of Urbanization

As a factor of growth, migration remained marginal in the observed growth of Aboriginal Identity population living in CMAs over the 1996-2006 period. As in the two previous intercensal periods of 1986-1991 and 1991-1996, migration was not a major factor in the growth of the urban Aboriginal population over the more recent 1996-2001 and 2001-2006 periods. Again, as illustrated in Table 2, even with a net inflow of migrants to urban areas, the impact of migration in relation to population growth is minimal. Between 2001 and 2006, the net migration of +3,570 Aboriginal people to CMAs represents only 4% of the observed growth (86,290) of the Aboriginal Identity population between 2001 and 2006.
Table 2: Migration as a Factor of Growth of Urban Aboriginal Population over 1996-2006 periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Years</th>
<th>Intercensal Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Population in CMAs* (excluding Indian reserves)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221,295</td>
<td>279,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>366,165</td>
<td>58,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86,290</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Net In / Out Migration of Aboriginal Population by Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Intercensal Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban CMAs</td>
<td>-430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Non-CMA Areas</td>
<td>-4,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Areas</td>
<td>-6,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves</td>
<td>+10,995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Guimond, 2009 (Canadian Issues); Clatworthy and Norris, 2003, 2009.

7.5 Aboriginal Migration and Population Growth in Selected CMAs

As noted earlier, gross migration rates, which combine in and out migration rates to an area provide some indication of the amount of turnover or ‘churn’ in the urban Aboriginal population. Movement to and from large urban areas, is a significant component of Aboriginal migration: this “churn effect” is quite large among Aboriginal populations in CMAs. As Figure 17 indicates for selected CMAs over the 1996-2001 migration period, Aboriginal residents experience significantly higher rates of in and out migration compared to non-Aboriginal residents. For example, in cities with large Aboriginal populations, Aboriginal migration rates, ranging from 54.0 per 1,000 population in Montreal to 92.4 in Saskatoon, exceed those of the non-Aboriginal population by a wide margin (Figure 17).
In terms of different Aboriginal groups, Registered Indians consistently have highest rates of both in- and out- and gross-migration, followed by other Aboriginal groups (mainly Métis, Non-Status Indians); non-Aboriginal have lowest rates (Figure 18).

The impact of in and out migration to CMAs varies across the different CMAs and Aboriginal groups. While some CMAs posted net losses of Aboriginal populations through migration, others, like Ottawa-Hull, Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton experienced net gains of both Registered Indian and “other Aboriginal” migrants; while Thunder Bay posted net inflows of Registered Indian migrants (Figure 19). 

Figure 17: Gross Migration Rates by Select Major Urban Centres, Canada, 1996 -2001

![Gross Migration Rates by Select Major Urban Centres, Canada, 1996 -2001](image-url)
Figure 18: Five-Year Gross Migration Rates for Select Major Urban Areas, by Registered Indian, Other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Populations, Canada, 1996-2001

Registered Indians consistently have highest rates of both in- and out- and gross-migration, followed by other Aboriginal groups (mainly Métis, Non-Status Indians); non-Aboriginal have lowest rates.


M.J. Norris and S. Clatworthy, March, 2010

Figure 19: Net Migration Rates for Select Major Urban Areas, Registered Indian, Other Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal Populations, 1996-2001

While some CMAs posted net losses of Aboriginal populations through migration, others, like Ottawa-Hull, Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton experienced net gains of Registered Indian and “other Aboriginal” migrants; Thunder Bay – Registered Indian.


M.J. Norris and S. Clatworthy, March, 2010

With respect to the components of Aboriginal growth in urban areas, migration is not the only component under consideration; of course natural increase is a major demographic factor. However, research has shown that in the case of Aboriginal population growth there are other non-demographic factors to consider, such as legislative changes (pertaining to the Indian Act) and ethnic mobility, concerning changes in self-reporting of Aboriginal identity over censuses. It is ethnic mobility that appears to be the most important factor in explaining the relatively recent dramatic growth of Aboriginal populations in urban areas overall... not the migration from reserves to cities.

8.1 Aboriginal Population Growth in Major CMAs, 1996-2001

The impact of different components of growth can be assessed for CMAs with significant Aboriginal populations, between 1996 and 2001. Each of these major urban areas with large Aboriginal populations (combined representing about 25% of Aboriginal peoples) reported high levels of Aboriginal population growth (in excess of 10%) between 1996 and 2001. Extremely large population increases of 40% or more were recorded for Ottawa-Hull, Toronto, Hamilton, Edmonton and Calgary; increases exceeding 30% occurred in Montreal and Vancouver; and major urban areas (Regina and Saskatoon) in Saskatchewan and Winnipeg in Manitoba recorded growth ranging from 18% to 29% (Figure 20).
8.1.1 Average Annual Growth and Net Migration in Major CMAs, 1996-2001

The relative impact of net migration on the growth of the Aboriginal population in CMAs between 1996 and 2001 is assessed by comparing annual net migration rates with annual growth rates. Of the ten CMAs shown in Figure 21, six posted net in-migration with Calgary, Edmonton and Thunder Bay having the highest rates of about 10, 9 and 8 per thousand Aboriginal residents respectively. While these CMAs had net inflows of migrants, net migration rates generally accounted for only a small component of the total growth rates, with the exception of Thunder Bay where the net in-migration rate accounted for about a quarter of the average annual growth of its Aboriginal population.
Furthermore, in the other four cities, even though they saw net outflows of Aboriginal migrants (Montreal, Toronto, Regina, and Vancouver) they nevertheless still experience high rates of population growth, especially Toronto. These findings would suggest that for most major urban areas, growth in Aboriginal populations must have resulted not from migration, but from other factors, such as natural increase and ethnic mobility.

8.2 Components of Aboriginal Population Growth, for Selected Major CMAs, 1996-2001

Figure 22 shows the decomposition of the growth of the Aboriginal population in absolute numbers for selected CMAs over the 1996 -2001 period. The first bar represents estimated population change due to natural increase, the second bar
net migration; the third ethnic mobility, and the fourth bar total population growth. It should be noted that in the case of natural increase and ethnic mobility that these components are estimated, and that estimates take into account growth due to differential net under coverage (not shown).

Beginning with the component of migration, it appears that migration is generally not a major factor in Aboriginal population growth. Although seven of the cites posted net inflows of Aboriginal migrants over the 5-year period, the impact of net migration accounted for a relatively small share of their overall growth, with perhaps the exception of Thunder Bay (at about 25%) and Hamilton (12%). While the other four cities of Vancouver, Toronto, Regina and Montreal saw net losses of population through migration, all these cities, especially Toronto, nevertheless recorded high rates of population growth.

Ethnic mobility appears to be the largest component of growth for most cities, and in some cities, such as Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa-Hull and Montreal, tends to account for a large majority of the growth observed during the period.

However, it is also important to note that natural increase, compared to population changes from other components, remains a significant contributor to Aboriginal population growth in most of the CMAs, and especially so in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina and Thunder Bay. In other cities like Vancouver and Calgary, natural increase accounted for a smaller share of total population growth.

Figure 23 also shows the decomposition of the growth of the Aboriginal population for the same components but in terms of their percentage share of the growth in the CMA’s Aboriginal population over the 1996 to 2001 period.
This analysis demonstrates that the significance of ethnic mobility in explaining the dramatic growth in urban areas does vary widely from city to city; and that natural increase is also an important factor for some cities. Natural increase appears to be a relatively major contributor to Aboriginal population growth, accounting for the largest share of growth in the prairie cities of Winnipeg (47%), Saskatoon (55%) and notably Regina (80%), as well as Thunder Bay (63%). Both natural increase and net migration are relatively significant contributors to population increases in Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa-Hull, Thunder Bay and Hamilton. In the major urban areas of Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal which saw net losses of population through migration (net outflow of migrants), ethnic mobility accounts for at least 80% of the growth of their Aboriginal populations.
In other words, the analyses discussed above suggest that not only has urban Aboriginal population growth occurred at varying rates among the highlighted urban areas, growth among these urban areas has also resulted from different processes.
9 Aboriginal Populations in Urban Areas: A Preliminary Typology of Growth Patterns, Components, Size and Composition

The findings of this census – based analysis suggest that urban areas differ significantly in the population characteristics of their Aboriginal residents, not only in terms of their population size, but also with respect to long–term and recent patterns of population growth and components of growth. Furthermore, such differences themselves have implications for age–gender structure, duration of Aboriginal residency, and as well, the Aboriginal sub–groups comprising various urban Aboriginal populations. Thus, various dimensions of urban Aboriginal populations could be considered in distinguishing different types of urban areas, according to population characteristics.

The results of this analysis for the twelve selected CMAs suggest that it may be useful to develop a typology that distinguishes urban Aboriginal populations on the basis of their growth patterns, size, growth components and other relevant factors. A first attempt at developing such a typology is presented in Table 3 which groups the twelve CMAs highlighted in this study according to three major criteria, including: long–term (1951 to 2006) patterns of population growth; current (1996-2001) components of population growth; and size of the Aboriginal population. A fourth criteria for consideration, but not developed as yet, could be the First Nation, Métis and Inuit composition of the Aboriginal population in the urban area. The following provides a brief discussion surrounding concerning the classification of the twelve CMAs by each of the typology’s three criteria.

Based on the analysis of population changes for the twelve CMAs over the 1951 to 2006 period, three patterns of growth in Aboriginal populations can be identified. Patterns of long-term growth have been combined the results of the components of growth analysis for the 1996-2001 period to assign each of the 12 urban areas into groups based on population growth profiles. Urban areas falling within each group were further classified by the size of their Aboriginal populations. These categories, and their corresponding CMAs as outlined in Table 3, are as follows:

1. Urban areas with rapid growth in Aboriginal population at the beginning of the period of urbanization; with differentials in growth between previous and more recent periods of urbanization, and posting significant increases in absolute numbers over the 1981-96 period. For these areas, natural increase is a major component of current growth, accounting for at least practically half of the growth in the city’s Aboriginal population.

CMAs which share these growth characteristics are the Prairie cities of Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Regina. These cities vary in the size of their Aboriginal populations, with Regina falling into the category of between 8,000 and less than 20,000; Saskatoon with between 20,000 and 30,000; and Winnipeg with an Aboriginal population exceeding 68,000.

2. Urban areas with their generally highest growth occurring at the outset of the period of urbanization (i.e. the 1950s and 1960s); with some differentials in growth over time, and with the 1981-1996 period of increases less pronounced; and experiencing high growth more recently. For these areas,
both natural increase and net migration are major contributors to their Aboriginal populations.

CMAs which share these growth characteristics are the cities of Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa-Hull/Gatineau, Thunder Bay and Hamilton. Again, these cities vary in the size of their Aboriginal populations, with Thunder Bay and Hamilton in the category of between 8,000 and less than 20,000 Aboriginal residents; Calgary, Ottawa-Hull/Gatineau with between 20,000 and 30,000; and Edmonton with an Aboriginal population of at least 40,000.

3. Urban areas with ongoing growth, some experiencing recently high growth in Aboriginal populations, in spite of net out – migration. In these cities ethnic mobility accounts for at least 80% of growth.

CMAs which share these growth characteristics are the cities of Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. These cities also vary in the size of their Aboriginal populations, with Montreal in the category of between 8,000 and less than 20,000 Aboriginal residents; Toronto with between 20,000 and 30,000; and Vancouver with an Aboriginal population of at least 40,000.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapid growth at beginning; differentials between past &amp; recent growth; significant increases in absolute numbers over 1981-96</td>
<td>Natural increase is a major component, accounts for at least practically half of growth in prairie cities</td>
<td>At Least 40,000</td>
<td>Winnipeg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally highest growth at beginning; some cities differentials over time, and 1991-96 increases less pronounced; recent high growth</td>
<td>Both natural increase and net migration contributors to growth</td>
<td>Between 8,000 and 20,000</td>
<td>Edmonton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing and continued growth – some cities with recent high growth</td>
<td>Ethnic mobility accounts for at least 80% of growth; negative net migration (net outflow of migrants)</td>
<td>At Least 40,000</td>
<td>Calgary, Ottawa-Hull/Gatineau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Between 20,000 and 30,000</td>
<td>Toronto, Thunder Bay, Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Between 8,000 and less than 20,000</td>
<td>Montreal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M.J. Norris and S. Clatworthy, March, 2010
10 Initial Implications of Typology for Aboriginal Populations in Different Urban Areas

This section explores some initial implications of the different types of long-term patterns and components of Aboriginal population growth, as outlined in the preliminary typology, which could be possibly relevant in addressing the characteristics, needs and services of Aboriginal populations across different urban areas, including those of the UAS cities.

10.1 Implications of Long-term growth patterns and size of Aboriginal Populations in Urban Areas

For example, cities with long established and large Aboriginal populations reflecting significant past growth, like Winnipeg, may be more likely to have:

- Third and fourth generations of urban residents, as successive generations / descendents of migrants are born and raised in urban areas;
- More urban Aboriginal community / neighbourhood organizations and services with increasing emphasis on organizational capacity and community infrastructure;
- Programming requirements for older, as well as younger, generations; and,
- Perhaps less migration to and from reserves as Aboriginal communities develop in urban areas

On the other hand, urban areas experiencing more recent growth and gains of Aboriginal populations through migration may be more likely to have:

- Newcomers, from non-urban Aboriginal communities: mainly Indian reserves; Inuit settlements;
- Requirements for developing, putting in place infrastructure, service delivery, housing; and,
- Perhaps ongoing migration to and from communities of origin; as well as between cities – small and large.
In the case of smaller (non-CMA) cities - continued long-term net out-migration over 1951-2006 may reflect less availability in general for new infrastructure, service delivery and organizational capacity.

10.2 Implications of Components of Growth for Aboriginal Populations in Urban Areas

Even with minimal net migration, high rates of in and out migration to and from cities “churn”, along with high residential mobility, can impact service delivery; areas such as education (attendance, turnover, achievement). Apart from the net gain or loss of migrants, the impact of migration on age-gender composition of urban Aboriginal population can also affect population growth indirectly, through natural increase with the influx of youth, young adult migrants to cities, and consequently, the needs and services of young families (e.g. housing).

As the findings of this analysis demonstrated, while ethnic mobility can have a significant impact on the growth of Aboriginal populations in urban areas, its impact does vary across cities, and may reflect a number of factors, such as:

- Regional variations in identity (such as Métis) associated with cultural, historical, and political dimensions;
- Effects of older generations of earlier migrants residing in cities who may have indicated their Aboriginal identity at a later time period; and,
- Effects of growing population with Aboriginal origins, a potential source of Identity populations.

Variations in the First Nation, Inuit, and Métis composition of Aboriginal populations across cities may also reflect differences in trends and levels of urbanization, associated with migration and other components of growth, such as natural increase, ethnic mobility and legislation (e.g. 1985 Indian Act revisions and reinstatements). For example, prior to 1985, more women characterized the
out-flow of Registered Indian migrants from reserves to cities, leading to gender imbalance and bias both on reserve and in urban areas, whereas recent migration patterns are more gender balanced (Clatworthy and Norris, forthcoming).

In addition to the impacts of different components of growth on the demographic and group composition of Aboriginal populations in urban areas, are the effects on the socio-economic characteristics of the population. Such consequences, particularly in relation to the impact of ethnic mobility, can have implications for the interpretation of trends. High rates of growth due to ethnic mobility, especially among the Métis, can affect not only the size of the Aboriginal population but also its composition, with implications for interpretation of both socio-economic and urbanization trends:

“As such trends with respect to socio-demographic characteristics of urban Aboriginal people, and particularly Métis, need to be interpreted with caution and with awareness of the potential impact of ethnic mobility on these trends (Guimond, 2009,2003). …The misinterpretation of trends towards urbanization could result in: (a) over-emphasis on migration from Indian reserve to cities; (b) a policy shift away from First Nations and Inuit communities” (Guimond, 2009, p. 16).

11 Conclusion

11.1 Role of Migration in Aboriginal Urbanization:

To what extent has migration contributed to the rapid increase in the Aboriginal populations living off-reserve, in large urban areas? ....
During the initial period of urbanization, particularly between 1951 and 1971, migration appeared to be a contributing factor to the growth of the Aboriginal population in urban areas overall. However, since this earlier period of urbanization, in spite of high levels of movement, the contribution of migration as a component of Aboriginal growth has diminished considerably in urban areas overall, with ethnic mobility and to some extent natural increase accounting for much of urban growth in general. However, at the individual city level, migration is a factor in the growth of Aboriginal populations for some specific cities. For many urban areas though, high rates of Aboriginal population are due to the other factors of ethnic mobility and natural increase.

As well, there are some underlying factors to consider in the interplay of migration and urbanization. For example, the recent lessening of high mobility of Aboriginal populations, may suggest eventual convergence towards non-Aboriginal rates owing to greater residential stability of Aboriginal populations in urban areas over time. And, while net migration effects are small, the age-gender compositional effects of migration, of Aboriginal youth and young adults migrating to cities could indirectly contribute to population growth through natural increase. As we saw, in some CMAs, like Winnipeg, natural increase is as major a contributor as ethnic mobility to Aboriginal population growth; in contrast, to say Toronto, where natural increase is much less significant than ethnic mobility.

Thus, while migration originally contributed directly to the growth of Aboriginal populations in urban areas at the beginning of urbanization, it would appear that it has not been a direct contributor since, although it may indirectly impact through natural increase. For now, though, ethnic mobility generally appears to be the most important factor in explaining dramatic growth of Aboriginal populations in urban areas overall.
11.2 Typology of Aboriginal Population Growth, Size and Composition

As the findings of this study demonstrated, cities / urban areas across Canada clearly do differ not only in the size of their Aboriginal populations, but also in their long-term patterns of Aboriginal population growth and their current components of growth. As a consequence of these differences, Aboriginal populations in these different cities can also differ in their age-gender structure, the number of generations residing in urban areas, and the First Nation, Inuit and Métis composition.

All of these demographic differences play a role in shaping the range and variation across cities in the characteristics, needs and services of their urban Aboriginal populations. For example, as the previous discussion noted, in urban areas where Aboriginal populations are long-established, generations of urban residents are more likely to have developed their own urban institutional structures and completeness; which could impact on changing ties and reduced migration back to home “reserve” communities.

In conclusion, patterns and trends of Aboriginal urbanization and migration of over the past 50 years still hold considerable relevance for the characteristics and state of Aboriginal populations in urban areas today. Cities across Canada have experienced both different and similar histories and patterns of Aboriginal population growth and migration. Addressing such patterns as outlined in the preliminary typology of urban Aboriginal populations would serve to better interpret and understand the various components shaping not only the growth, but also the socio-demographic and group composition of their Aboriginal populations today, and the implications for needs and services.
Furthermore, this typology could be extended to incorporate the population-related dimensions of age-gender structure, generations and Aboriginal group composition, and socio-economic characteristics. As such, the development and application of a typology of Aboriginal populations in different urban areas would be an area for future research, particular with respect to interpreting and understanding the implications for the growth, composition and needs and services of Aboriginal populations in different cities across Canada, including those of the UAS.
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1 This paper builds on preliminary research findings that were presented by the authors at the “Session on Indigenous Urbanization Internationally: Geographic Variations” as part of the workshop “Indigenous Urbanization in International Perspective” held at the University of Saskatchewan in October, 2009.

2 See comment on history of urbanization among indigenous populations in United States, by Matthew Snipp (to be added here when available).

3 While the concept of Aboriginal identity was first introduced in the 1986 Census, data on identity were never officially released owing to reporting errors detected within the population reporting no Aboriginal origin; however data on identity with Aboriginal origin are reliable (Guimond, 2003).

4 Settlements include Crown land and other communities with Aboriginal populations as defined by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. This category, which is grouped with Indian reserves in this study, includes some, but not all, Métis and Inuit communities.