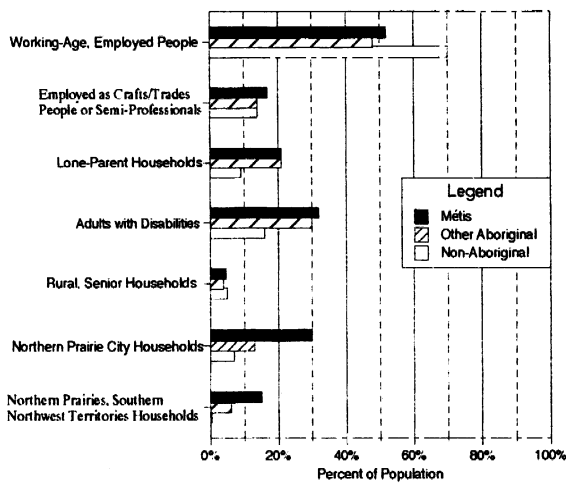


Figure 1: Proportion of Métis, Other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Population with Selected Characteristics



At *first* glance, M&tis fare slightly better economically than other Aboriginal people. In 1990, their average household income was a marginal 2% higher than that of other Aboriginal households. At the same time, 2% fewer Metis than other Aboriginal households fell below Statistics Canada's Low-income Cutoffs.

However, about the same proportion of Mdtis and other Aboriginal households fall into core housing need. That the Méns incur this similar level of core housing need to some degree reflects a number of small off-setting socio-demographic and labour force differences in comparison to other Aboriginal people. On the positive side:

- Mdtis working-age adults are more likely to be employed (52% versus 48%) and those with employment are much less likely to be in core housing need than those without employment (18% versus 44%); and
- Higher percentages of Mdtis work as semi-professionals or as skilled crafts/tradespersons (17% versus 14%). Among them, core housing need is again lower at 16%.

Figure 2: Level of Métis Core Housing Need by Selected Characteristics



On the other hand:

- While similar proportions of M-tis and other Aboriginal households include lone parents, Mdtis lone-parent households are more likely to be in core housing need (65% versus 60%). The great majority of Mdtis lone-parent households live in urban areas. There, they make up 22% of all M6tis households but just under half (47%) of M-tis households in housing need. Predominantly renters, the majority of these Mdtis lone parents are in core housing need and below the affordability standard.
- Thirty-two percent of Metis adults have disabilities, slightly above the 30% disability rate of other aboriginal adults. As among other Aboriginal people, levels of core housing need are higher among adults with a disability. Overall, 38% of Mdtis adults with a disability are in core housing need in contrast to 28% of those with no disability.

- Five percent of Mdtis households are led by seniors residing in rural areas, in contrast to 3% of other Aboriginal households. Forty percent of rural M&tis senior households are in core housing need. The great majority (81%) of rural M6tis seniors in core housing need own their home, and 9 out of 10 of these dwellings fall below the adequacy standard.

Geography and the Incidence of Housing Need

Thirty-two percent of off-reserve households are Mdtis. As 7 out of 10 reside in the Prairie Provinces they make up a majority of off-reserve prairie Aboriginal households. In this region, where Aboriginal housing conditions are particularly bad, M-tis core housing need peaks in the north and in a number of larger cities (see Figure 3). Nonetheless, even in these pockets, as in the

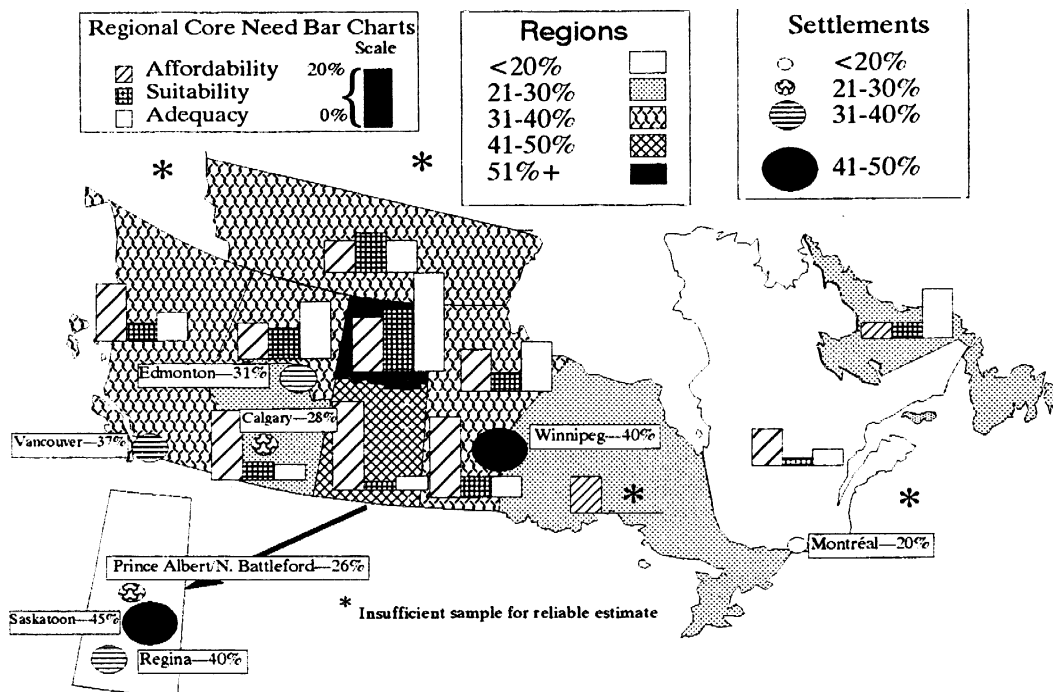
rest of the country, economic and housing circumstances among the Métis are never any worse, and are very often somewhat better than for their Aboriginal neighbours.

Thirty percent of Métis households reside in four Prairie cities—Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, and Edmonton. In these cities, in 1990, although the incomes of Métis households averaged 10% higher than those of other Aboriginal households, they ranged from only two thirds to just over three quarters of those of non-Aboriginal households. As a result, despite the fact that Prairie urban shelter costs are among the lowest in Canada, the incidence of Métis core housing need still ranges from a low of 31% in Edmonton a high of 45% in Saskatoon. In these urban areas, Métis as well as other Aboriginal core need households predominantly rent and almost all are below the affordability standard. In addition, a small, but significant minority of renters in core need fall below both the suitability and affordability standards.

Another 15% of Métis households are located in the sparsely populated northern parts of the Prairie Provinces and the adjacent southern part of the Northwest Territories. There, they comprise two thirds of all off-reserve Aboriginal households and 40% of them are in core housing need. Housing adequacy is the most prevalent problem. While 26% of northern Métis households are in core housing need and below the adequacy standard, the problem peaks at 38% in northern Saskatchewan. This housing problem prevails even though a very large proportion of the stock in these areas is relatively new and subsidized through federal, provincial, and territorial housing programs. Climatic extremes, the high costs of transporting building materials to these remote areas and inadequate incomes to undertake needed maintenance all lead to the accelerated deterioration of many northern Aboriginal dwellings. As a result, high proportions of Canada's northern Métis households are in core housing need because their housing is in poor repair. Further, inadequate community water and sewage disposal facilities result in the absence of adequate bathroom facilities in a number of northern Aboriginal communities, a situation which is extremely rare to non-Aboriginal households in Canada.

High levels of core housing need occur in the Prairies where most Métis reside.

Figure 3: Core Need Levels in Métis Households by Region and Selected Métis Population Centres Showing Proportions Below Core Need Standards



In part of this area, a significant minority of households fall into core housing need and below the suitability standard. They live in crowded housing because of low incomes combined with a shortage of subsidized housing. The area of high suitability need stretches through northern Saskatchewan and Alberta to the adjacent southern Northwest Territories. There, 18% of households are in core need at least partially due to crowding. Crowding often leads to rapid housing deterioration and as a result, crowded core need households also often live below the adequacy standard.

Conclusion

In comparison to the non-Aboriginal population, the Métis face a number of disadvantages which translate into much higher levels of core housing need. They are much less likely to have any post-secondary schooling; they are much less likely to be employed; and when employed, much more likely to have low earnings. Further, a much higher proportion of families are headed by a lone parent and the disability rate among working-age adults is twice that of non-Aboriginal adults.

When the housing situation of the Métis is contrasted with that of other Aboriginal households, a number of small, but distinct differences emerge. In comparison to other Aboriginal people, a higher proportion of Métis working-age adults have the advantage of having found employment and many of these people are in relatively well-paying jobs. Core housing need among these people is relatively low. At the same time, however, higher proportions of the Métis are in core housing need because they have disabilities, are lone-parents or are seniors living in rural areas. Similar contrasts emerge as a result of Métis geography. In most parts of the country, Métis households are less susceptible to being in core housing need than their other Aboriginal neighbours. What seems to be an advantage, however, is off-set by the fact that most Métis reside in areas where the housing conditions of all Aboriginal peoples are likely to be at their worst—the larger urban areas of the northern Prairies, and the rural, remote areas stretching to their north and into the Northwest Territories.

This issue of *Research and Development Highlights* has been produced as part of a concerted research program that aims to better understand Aboriginal housing conditions in Canada today. This work draws on comprehensive studies of Aboriginal peoples and their housing conditions across the country. For further information about the contents of this highlight, contact John Engeland, Research Division, at (613) 748-2799, or e-mail: jengelan@cmhc.e-mail.com

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