

Immigration and Poverty in Canadian Cities, 1971-1991

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For decades the abiding immigrant narrative in Canada and the other major receiving nations, including the United States and Australia, has been one of upward social mobility over time. This story has been registered by a large number of studies that have chronicled immigrant earnings, or more generally income (for reviews, Sloan and Vaillancourt 1994; Li 1996). While typically immigrants face an initial penalty in personal earnings, after a decade or so earnings move close to the national norm, though with certain important variations. When other controls are in place, immigrant men are penalised more than women relative to the national average, while some visible minorities face a considerable earnings shortfall (Pendakur and Pendakur 1996). At the same time there is some evidence of worsening economic fortunes for immigrants in recent years, leading to the spectre of 'diminishing returns' to the immigration programme in both Canada and the United States (DeVoretz 1995; Borjas 1995). At what point in this apparently deteriorating trajectory do immigrants then become a significant part of the growing poverty population in Canada with its accompanying burdens of deprivation, homelessness and welfare dependency? The American evidence is that immigrants are disproportionately taking up welfare payments, but that this experience has not been observed in Canada, at least not up to 1990 (Baker and Benjamin 1995). More recent and as yet unpublished analysis of taxpayer files linked to immigrant landing records, however, is once again suggesting a deterioration in the economic circumstances of immigrants who landed in the 1990-1994 period (Benson 1998). A first objective of this paper is to consider to what extent immigrants are associated

with the distribution of poverty in urban Canada.

There is a second relevant consideration to add. Recent work on urban poverty, particularly in the United States, has heavily emphasised its spatiality, and the potential role that geographical concentration plays in the perpetuation of poverty conditions and, arguably, the development of a poverty sub-culture (Wilson 1987; Massey and Denton 1993; Jargowski 1996). While it has taken some time for this spatial emphasis to be taken up by Canadian research, the spatiality of Canadian poverty is a growing theme. Davis and Murdie (1993) pointed to the variable incidence of poverty across the Canadian urban system, while Hajnal (1995) in a preliminary comparative study argues that there are relatively more persons living in spatially concentrated urban poverty in Canada than in the United States, and that further there is a distinctive inter-metropolitan geography to deep poverty in Canada, with Montreal showing particularly alarming levels. This spatial initiative is spreading to an examination of intra-urban patterns of poverty, particularly in Toronto (Bourne 1993, 1997) and Montreal (Séguin 1997).

But Hajda has little to say about intra-urban distributions, or indeed about poverty's relation to immigrants. So too, in its primary focus upon Afro-American poverty, the American literature emphasising spatial concentration has paid scant attention to the immigrant connection. In Chicago, for example, the site of a number of the American studies, it seems as if new immigrants have tended to by-pass former inner city reception areas in favour of inner suburban districts beyond the reach of the deepest poverty (Greene 1997). Indeed one current typology of neighbourhoods in Chicago noted that the foreign-born accounted for less than three percent of the population of putatively 'underclass' districts (Morenoff and Tienda 1997).

In contrast, European discussions of spatially concentrated poverty have typically identified immigrants as a population at risk. This theme runs through a number of Dutch urban studies. In her discussion Van Kempen (1994: 1003) uses two poverty indicators; living on welfare is one, ethnic origin the other. Such neighbourhoods, Van Kempen explains, are those "where both the concentrations of ethnic minorities and people living on welfare are high and where poor turnout at elections and a high criminality rate underlie the socially peripheral character of the neighbourhood..." Such a definition suggests that in Dutch neighbourhoods at least, ethnic origin or immigrant status are considered reliable indicators of concentrated poverty (Roelandt and Veenman 1992). Similar associations have been noted in Copenhagen (Hjarno 1997), Stockholm, and many other European cities; in Britain especially, race crosscuts the issue of foreign origin. The "intersection of national origin, economic exclusion and spatial segregation" has also captured the attention of French researchers who have established that immigrants are disproportionately unemployed and overwhelmingly concentrated in deindustrialised, low income suburban peripheries (Silver 1993).

Echoes of this tendency appear in some recent Canadian research, particu-

larly studies in Toronto, which allude not only to the emergence of poverty areas in suburban communities but also that they are populated principally by immigrants and visible minorities (Henry 1995; Murdie 1994, 1997). The remainder of this paper will seek to establish more formally, using cartographic and statistical analysis in Canada's three major cities, the nature of the relationship between spatially concentrated urban poverty and the distribution of immigrants.

The Distribution of Concentrated Urban Poverty

In locating urban poverty empirically, we have followed the accepted American convention of identifying areas of extreme poverty as those where more than 40 percent of the population fall below the poverty threshold (Wilson 1987; Jargowski 1996); in the Canadian case the poverty line is defined by the arbitrary but widely accepted level of Statistics Canada's low-income cutoff, an index that has stood the test of time and is adjusted according to family and settlement size. Maps of the poverty population were prepared for census tracts in the Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver metropolitan areas from the 1991 Census of Canada (Figures 1, 2, 3).

Two conclusions emerge prominently from the poverty maps. First, all three cities exhibit a considerable number of extreme (over 40 percent) and high (over 30 percent) poverty tracts, though the incidence in Montreal is by far the most severe, characterising a number of inner city neighbourhoods, and including a marked concentration of over 20 contiguous tracts exceeding the 40 percent threshold in the city's east end, a regionalisation unequalled in the other cities. Second, in addition to the incidence of poverty, the maps also indicate locational diversity between cities. Some suburbanisation of poverty from Toronto has occurred into parts of York, North York and Scarborough, while Vancouver follows a more conventional American model of inner city poverty hugging the urban core in a compact set of tracts in its inner eastside districts. Montreal falls between the other two cases. While several dozen tracts north-east and south-west of downtown form solid blocks of extreme poverty, further concentrations occur in Plateau Mont-Royal and several older suburban districts. It is also apparent that in the central areas of the three cities, extreme and high poverty census tracts tend to be nested in, or adjacent to, more expansive areas of lesser poverty of 20 percent and more. Census tracts of extreme or high poverty found in suburban locations tend to stand alone, surrounded by wider communities of comparative affluence, as in the city of Scarborough, east of Toronto. An exception in Toronto is a poverty sector that runs fairly continuously from tracts west of downtown, and northwest through the Junction into the suburbs along the spine of the Jane Street corridor. East of downtown, extreme poverty tracts coincide with the public housing projects of Regent Park and Moss Park, and the inhospitable high density rentals of St. Jamestown. In parts of all three inner cities a thesis of spatially concentrated urban poverty might be supported.

An obvious question requiring attention concerns the reasons behind the

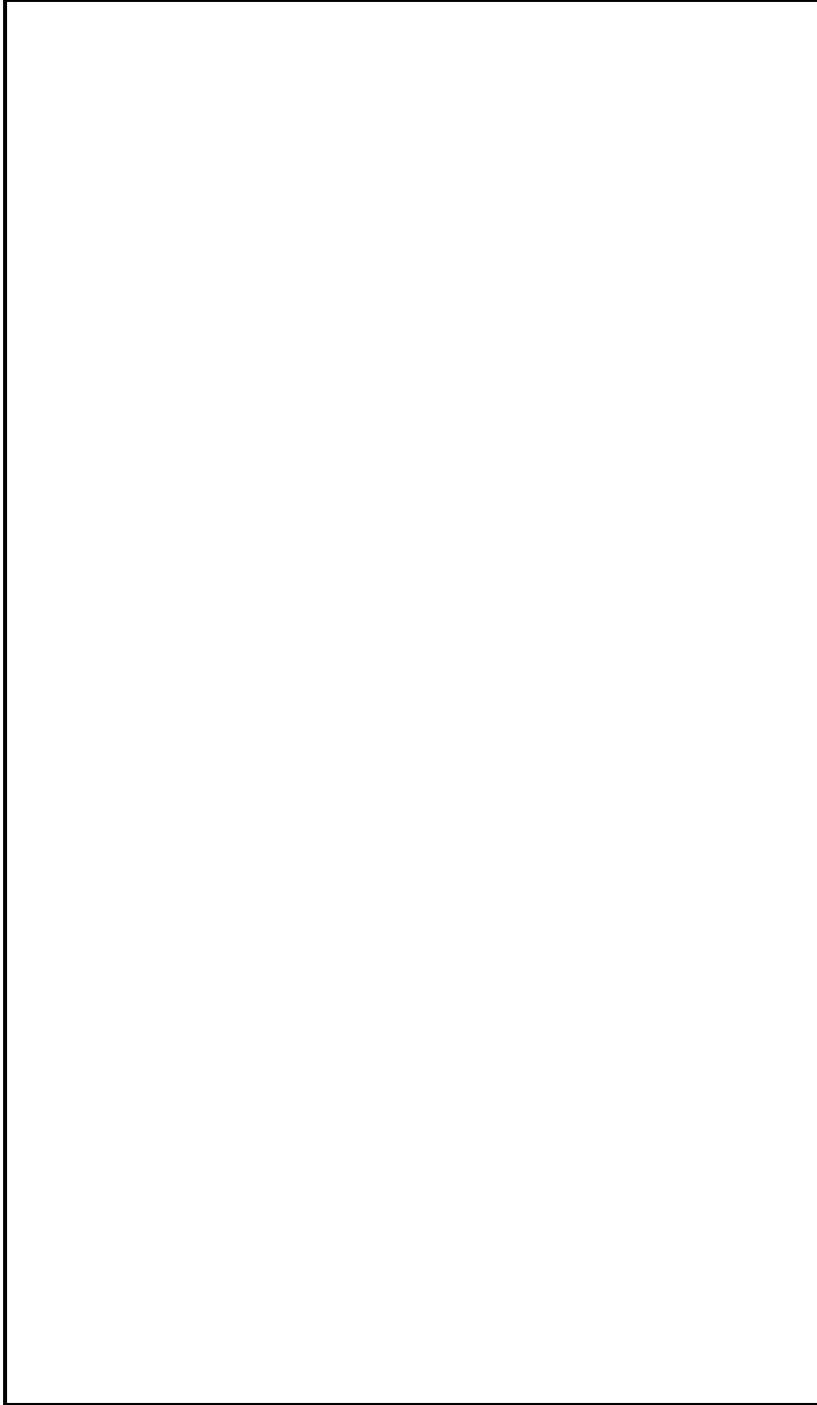


FIGURE 1 Incidence of Low Income Economic Families, Toronto CMA, 1991

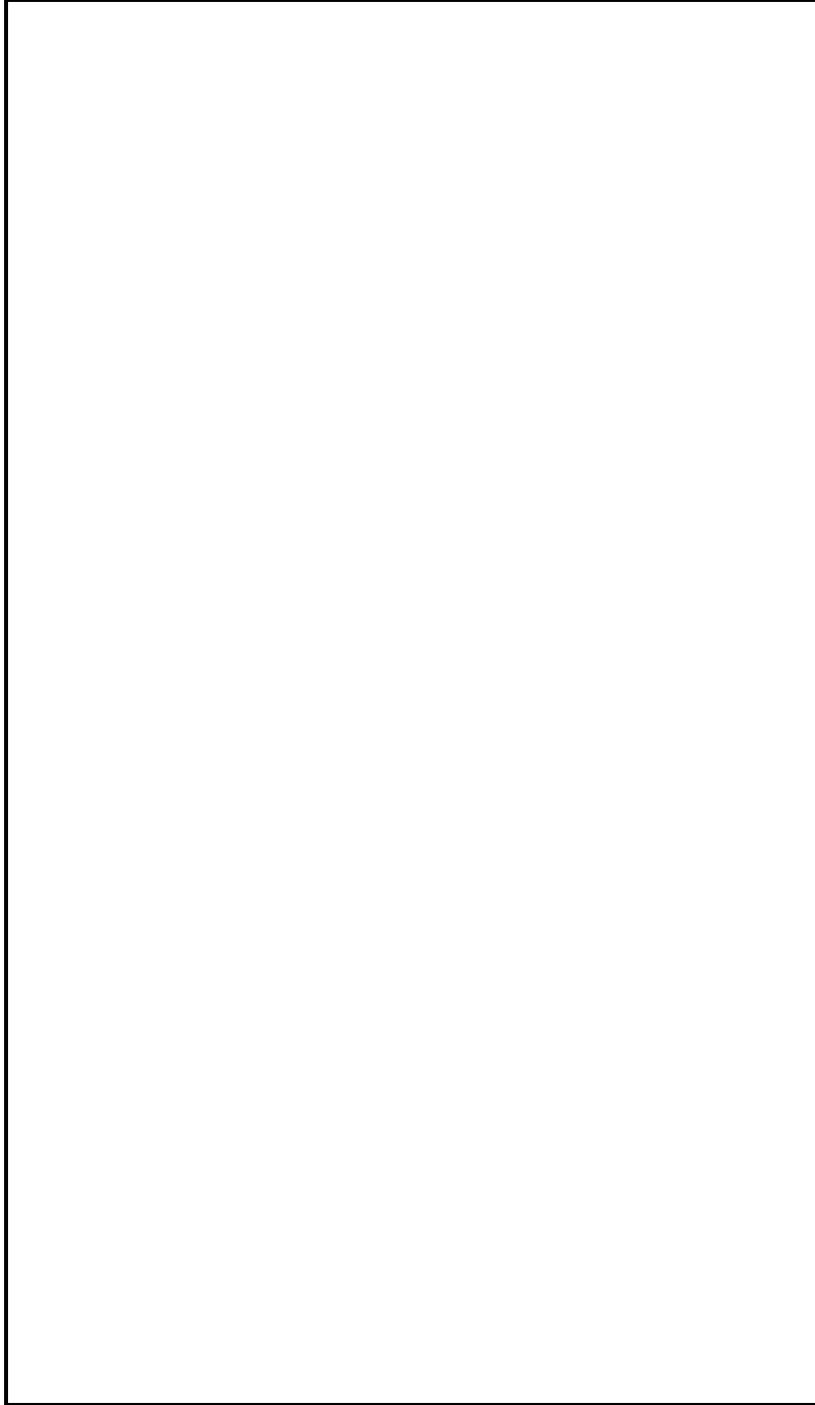


FIGURE 2 Incidence of Low Economic Families, Montreal CMA, 1991

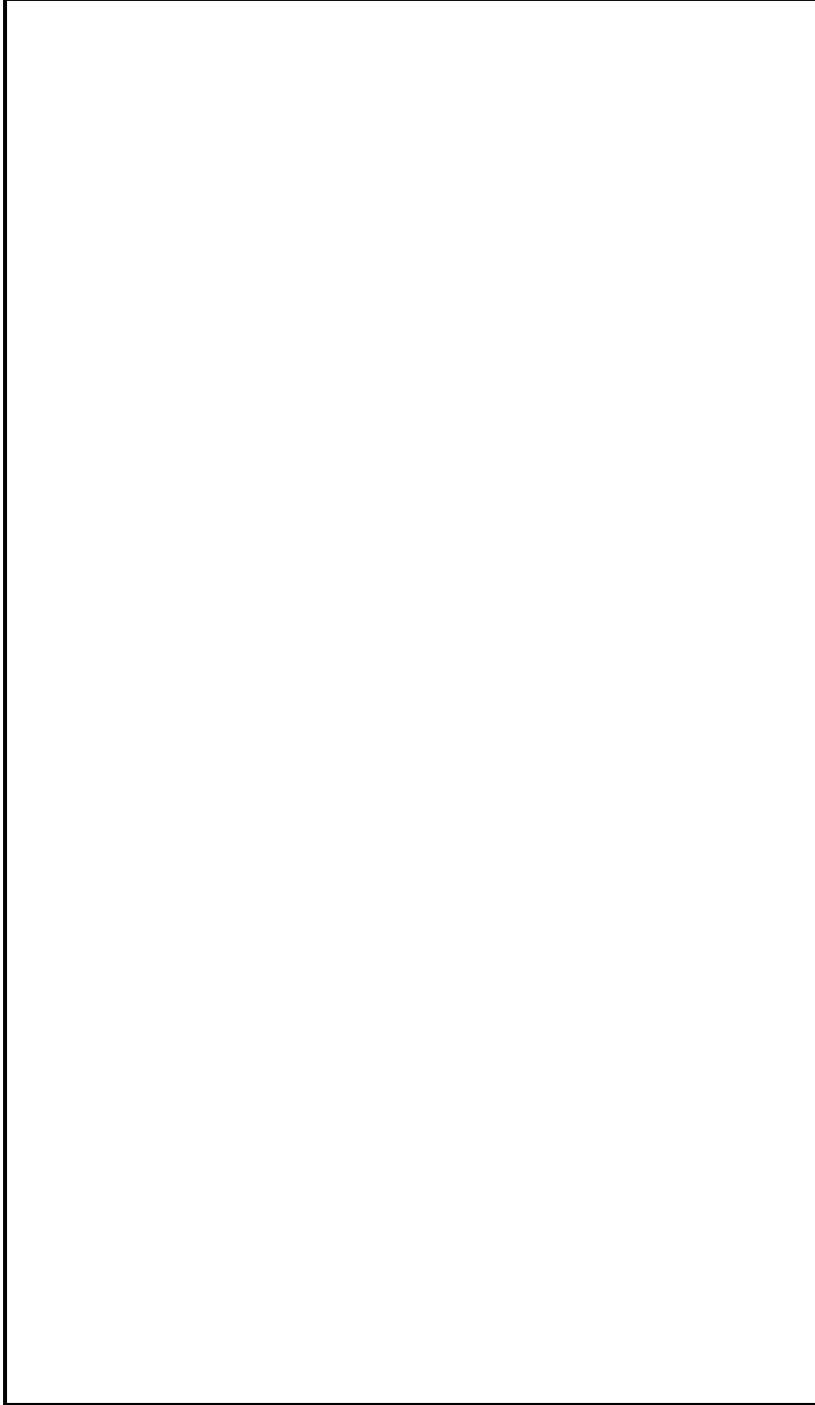


FIGURE 3 Incidence of Low Economic Families, Vancouver CMA, 1991

variable geographies of poverty between the cities. Our findings support other research that relates suburban poverty pockets with the location of public housing (Murdie 1994, 1997). A map of public housing we compiled for Metropolitan Toronto bears a strong coincidence with the location of poverty nodes, with the larger housing projects more likely to influence the characteristics of their census tracts. Decisions made concerning the location of public housing in the 1960s, often on greenfield sites, have, with the trend toward residualisation in public housing, become the homes of multiply deprived communities in the 1980s and 1990s. It is the same story in Vancouver, with the heaviest concentration of deep needs housing coinciding with the extreme poverty locale of the city's inner East Side. Non-market housing comprises over one-third of housing units in the three neighbourhoods that make up the core of this poverty region (City of Vancouver 1997).

The analysis was repeated with data from the 1971 Census to explore two further properties of the poverty districts. First, American studies have demonstrated that considerable stability exists in the geography of concentrated poverty between decades. A typical tendency has been for one or several deprived nodes existing in 1970 to survive and anchor subsequent expansion; one Chicago study showed an erosion of less than five percent of designated 'underclass' tracts over a twenty-year period, while the initial cluster of tracts expanded ten-fold in number between 1970 and 1990 (Morenoff and Tienda 1997). There is a second reason for carrying the analysis of the largest Canadian cities back to 1971, for this census marked an important threshold in immigration history, with new legislation in 1967 transforming the regions of immigrant origin. In the mid 1960s, close to 90 percent of new arrivals originated in the traditional (and primarily Caucasian) source regions of Europe and the United States that had dominated immigration every year since Confederation. But over the next generation, directed by new legislation, a remarkable transition occurred, so that by 1996 this traditional migration accounted for only 20 percent of all arrivals, leaving the majority to new (and mainly non-Caucasian) source regions in Asia, Africa and Latin America. To what extent have relationships between poverty and immigration displayed any discontinuities across this threshold? This is not an idle question, for Borjas (1995) has identified a significant deterioration in the economic well-being of immigrants to the United States between 1970 and 1990, an argument with some clear resonances in Canada (DeVoretz 1995).

This stage of the research, repeating the earlier analysis but with 1971 census data, was restricted to Toronto and Vancouver. This decision was partially made for practical reasons, since the preparation of census data required a costly reconstruction of 1971 variables by Statistics Canada in order to maintain consistency with 1991 variable definitions. The map of poverty tracts for Vancouver in 1971 showed little change in outline from 1991, though there were fewer suburban outliers than twenty years later. The greater compactness of poverty in the inner East Side at the earlier date is consistent with the protests of activists against what they see as the erosion of the district by redevelopment and

gentrification since 1986 (Ley 1994).

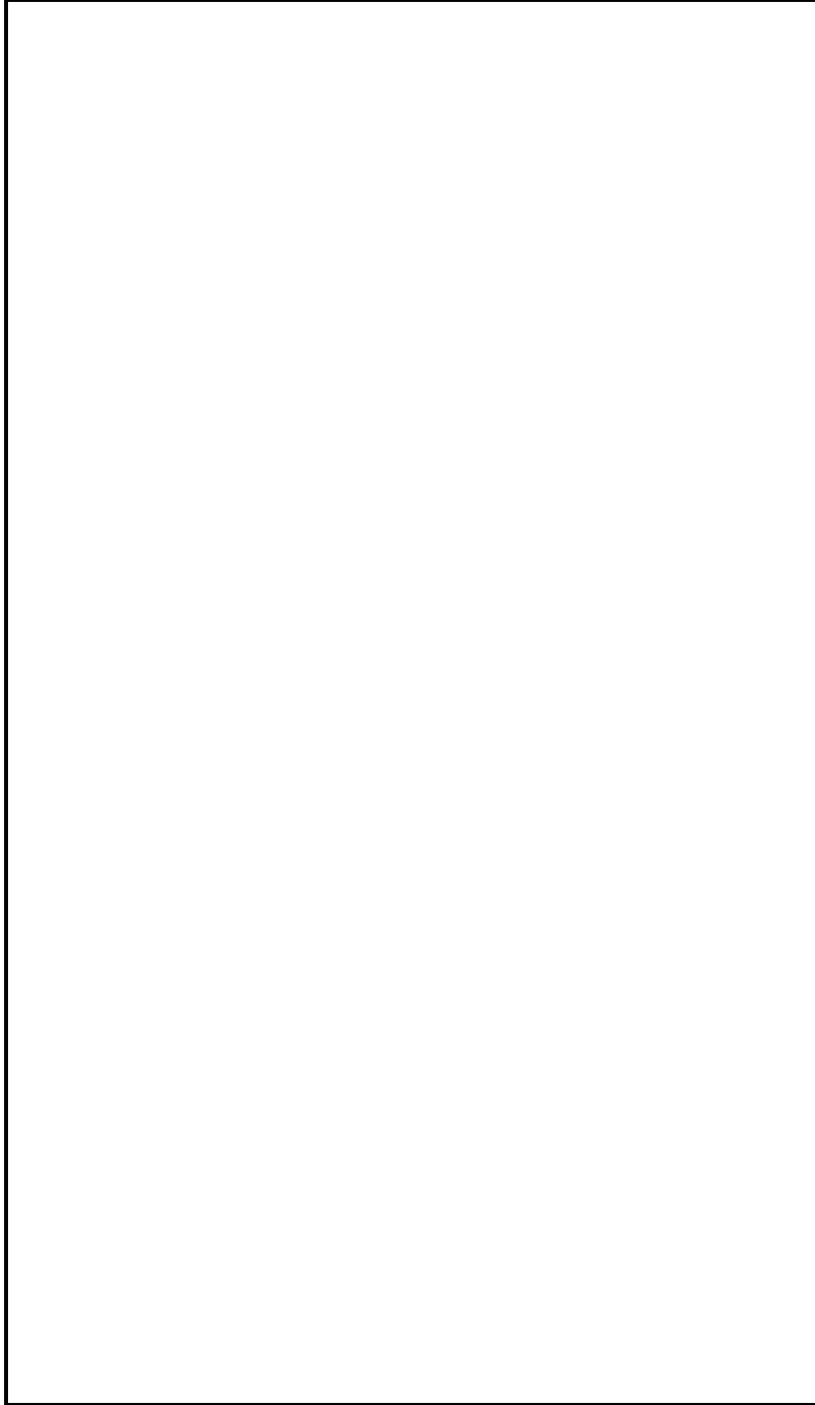


FIGURE 4 Incidence of Low Income Economic Families, Toronto CMA, 1971

The same trend existed but in more exaggerated form in Toronto (Figure 4). In 1971 poverty was strongly localised in the central city, west but particularly east of downtown, where a solid core of eight contiguous tracts exhibited poverty rates in excess of 40 percent arranged around the Regent Park and Moss Park public housing projects and the deteriorated private rental housing in adjacent districts. But over the following two decades the deprived area east of downtown (and to a lesser degree west of downtown) has been fragmented and massively displaced by gentrification and reinvestment (Ley 1996). In a significant departure from the American case, the region of eight extreme poverty tracts in 1971 had dwindled to four in 1991. In this regard, Toronto and Vancouver were much closer to the American condition of deep urban poverty in 1971 than they were twenty years later -- though this is not to say for a moment that there are not widespread zones of poverty in both cities in the 1990s.

Relations between Immigrant Concentrations and Districts of Urban Poverty

The next step in the analysis is to tease out the immigrant association with these maps of deep poverty. We begin by mapping the location of immigrants in the metropolitan areas (Figures 5, 6, 7). In the Vancouver CMA the most striking feature is the containment of the highest immigrant tracts (over 45 percent) within the City of Vancouver, with lower levels in all suburban tracts, though spillover is clearly underway to the southern suburb of Richmond and to Burnaby to the east. At the same time tracts with high immigrant numbers appear to overlap only modestly with the incidence of concentrated poverty. The map of immigrants in Toronto shows a remarkable dispersion across the metropolitan area, totally at odds with older models of immigrant reception areas clustered exclusively in inner city districts. Many tracts in Metro Toronto contain more than 60 percent foreign-born, with the largest single cluster in northwestern Scarborough. Indeed as one passes northward through Scarborough, and further from downtown, the immigrant share of the population increases. Ray (1994) has shown that a number of immigrant groups are more concentrated in the Metro suburbs than in the city itself. The lesser number of newcomers from overseas in the central city is due to the survival of the established elite sector of North Toronto, the encirclement of downtown by Canadian-born gentrifiers, and their subsequent diffusion through the eastern inner city (Ley 1996).

The other major feature of the immigrant map is the northwestern sector running from the inner city to the northern bounds of Metro. This sector describes a broad zone around the corridor of high poverty noted earlier, and it immediately forces the question of the relationship between immigration and poverty. At the same time the high immigration districts of north Scarborough and adjacent parts of North York and Markham show little sign of deep poverty.

Correlations appear even weaker in Montreal. While immigrant clusters corres-

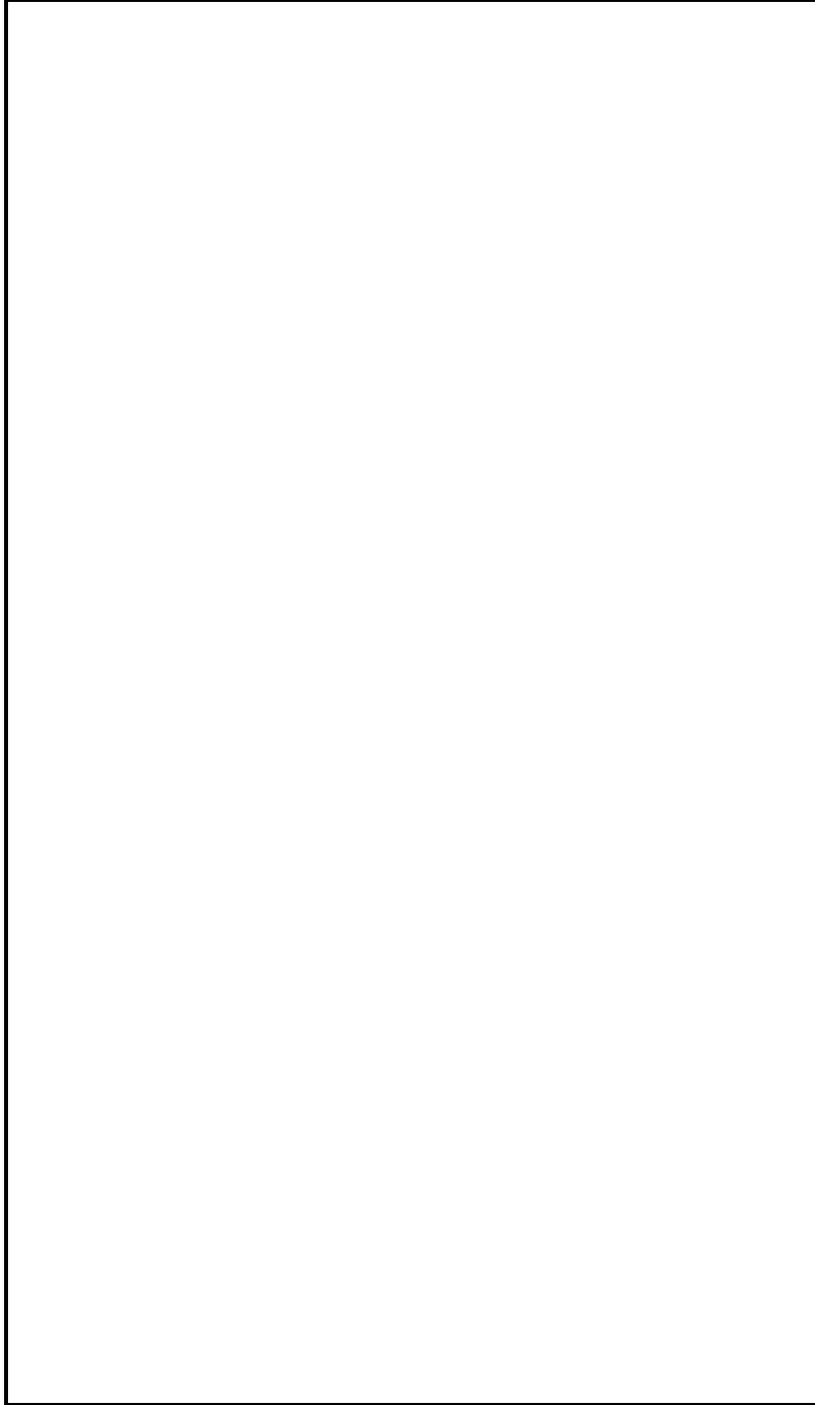


FIGURE 5 Per cent Census Tract Population Immigrant, Vancouver CMA, 1991

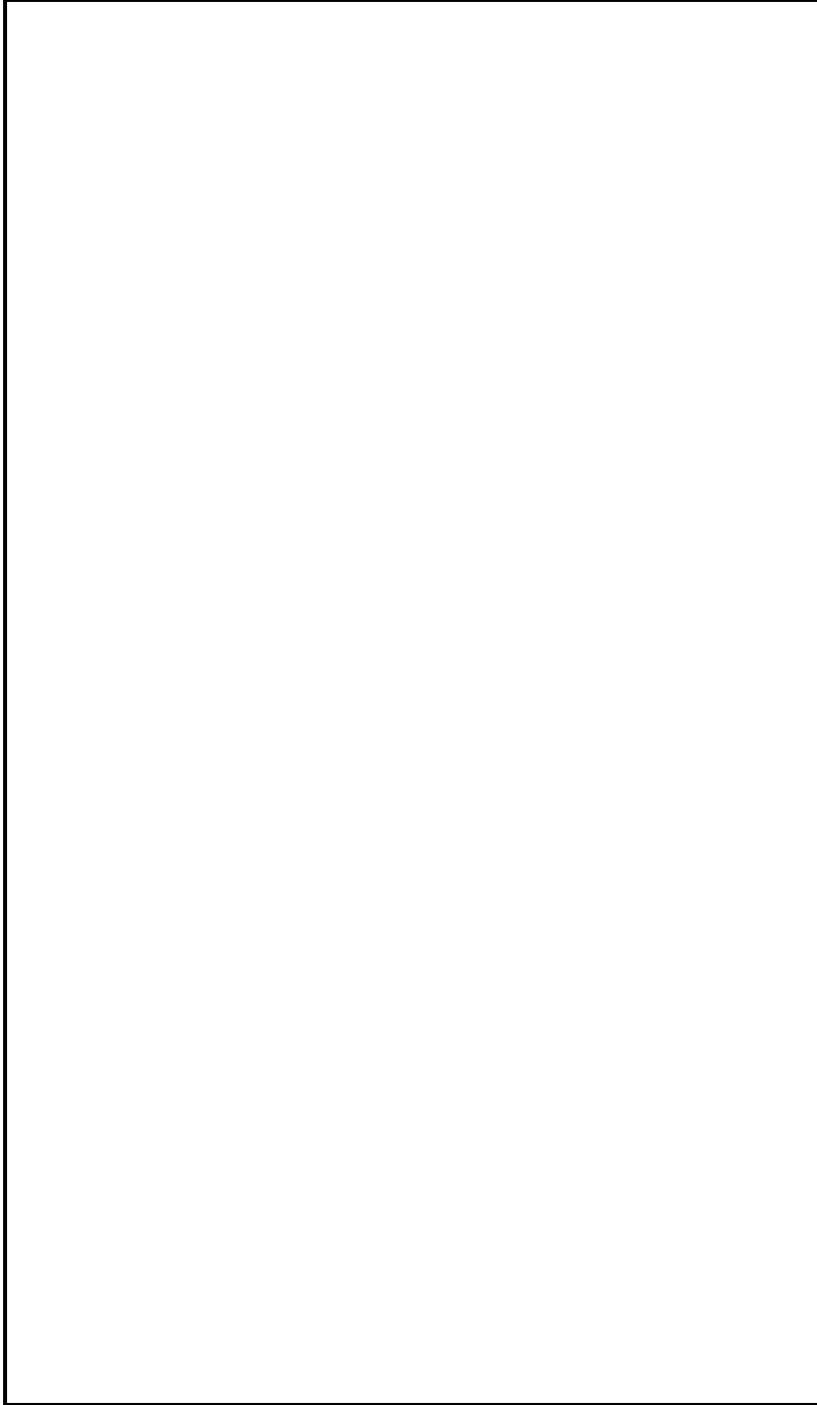


FIGURE 6 Per cent Census Tract Population Immigrant, Toronto CMA, 1991

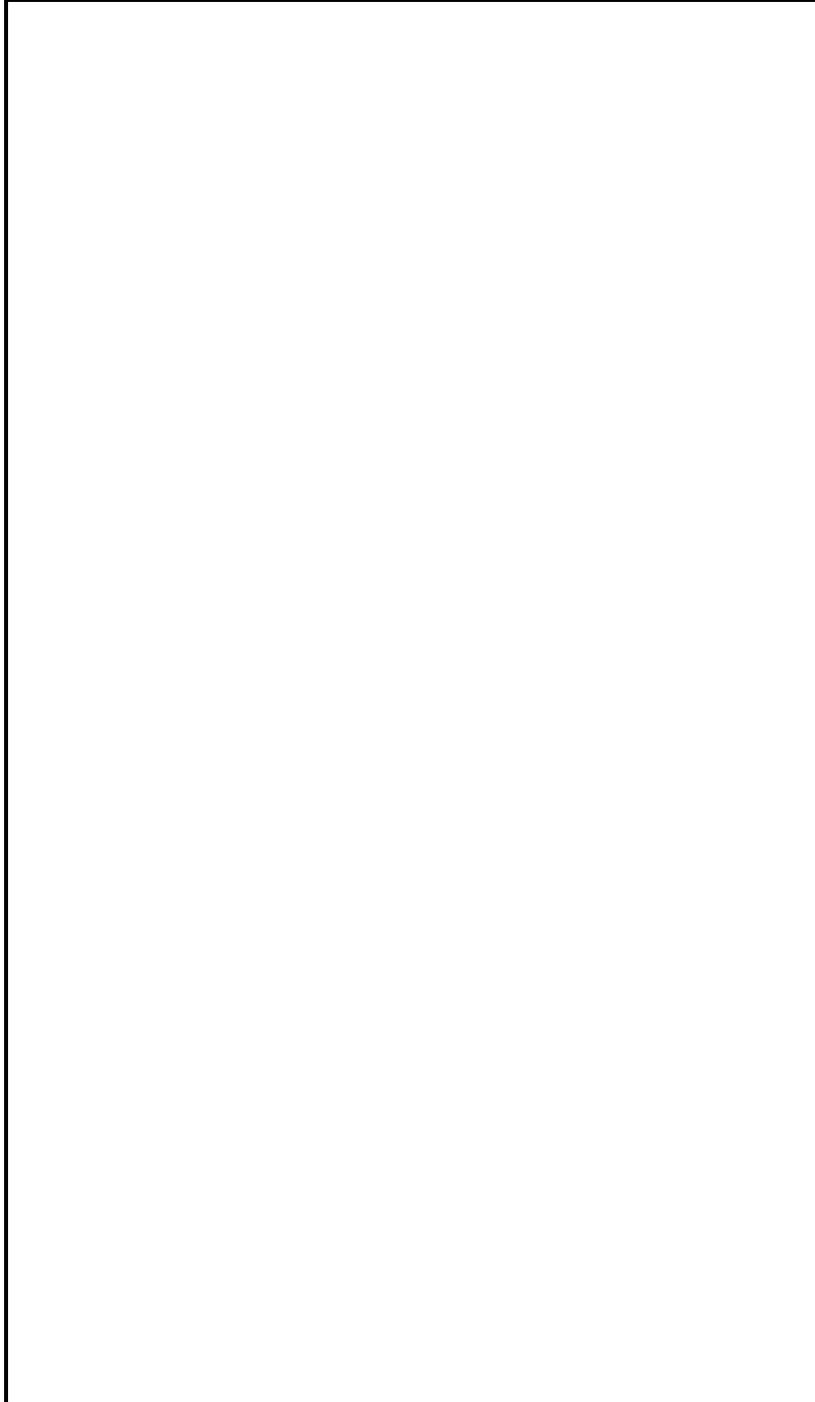


FIGURE 7 Per cent Census Tract Population Immigrant, Montreal CMA, 1991

pond with deprived tracts in some older suburbs (notably Côte-des-Neiges), the largest concentrations of multiple deprivation and poverty north-east and south-west of downtown contain relatively small numbers of immigrants.

Cartographic evidence was reinforced by a correlation and regression analysis that isolated urban poverty and considered its relations with ethno-cultural characteristics tied to immigration: the proportion of immigrants in a census tract, the share of traditional and new countries of origin, the ability to use an official language, and period of arrival in Canada. In addition, ethno-cultural features were joined by a set of more conventional socio-economic variables often associated with poverty, and typically employed in deprivation studies: the incidence of male unemployment, of female-led families, of failure to complete high school, and of dependency upon government transfer payments. The intent was to discover to what degree the set of ethno-cultural variables offered a separate and significant contribution to the spatial variation of urban poverty once the socio-economic factors had been controlled for. The observations were the set of census tracts in each of the three metropolitan areas in 1991. The dependent variable was the percentage of economic families that fell below Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off, available in the census for 1991 and reconstructed in a custom tabulation for 1971 -- in contrast to families, numbers of persons below the cut-off could not be reconstructed for 1971. To explore any changes brought about by the 'new' immigration since the late 1960s, the analysis was undertaken for 1991 and again for 1971, though for the earlier year only Toronto and Vancouver were examined.

Table 1 lists the simple correlations between the incidence of low-income families and the two sets of independent variables for census tracts in 1991. The similarity between the three metropolitan areas is notable, indeed remarkable, suggesting a very similar socio-spatial patterning across each of them. In each city, the suite of socio-economic variables are more significant in their covariation with the incidence of low-income economic families than the ethno-cultural set. The incidence of female-led families, male unemployment, and government transfer payments supply the strongest correlations; interestingly, failure to complete high school does not figure as prominently. It is not difficult to establish causal arguments linking poverty and these factors -- though presumably in most accounts the level of transfer payments would feature as an effect rather than a cause of poverty. Causal arguments are aided by multiple regression that shows a high coefficient of determination (R^2) linking the incidence of socio-economic variables and the map of low income families, ranging from 0.80 in Montreal to 0.82 in Toronto and 0.85 in Vancouver.

In contrast the ethno-cultural indicators display more modest correlations and a weaker coefficient of determination. The percentage of immigrants in a tract has a moderate positive correlation with the poverty measure, ranging from 0.28 in Montreal to 0.42 in Vancouver and 0.56 in Toronto. Several reasons might be suggested for this variation. Two factors that would deflate the association in Montreal are, first, a significant level of native-born poverty -- the

largest single concentration of extreme poverty neighbourhoods, in the zone east of downtown, **Table 1 Geographical Correlates of the Incidence of Low-Income Economic Families, 1991**

	Vancouver (N = 297)	Toronto (N = 801)	Montreal (N = 732)
% Male unemployment	0.82	0.75	0.81
% Female-led families	0.75	0.84	0.82
% No high school diploma	0.46	0.53	0.61
% Income from Gov't transfers	0.75	0.74	0.84
% Immigrants	0.42	0.56	0.28
% Traditional sources	-0.48	-0.44	-0.47
% New sources	0.48	0.45	0.47
% No official language	0.57	0.62	0.49
% No official language at home	0.51	0.62	0.43
% Arrived pre 1961	-0.40	-0.45	-0.42
% Arrived 1961-1970	-0.43	-0.45	-0.45
% Arrived 1971-1980	0.11	0.13	0.01
% Arrived 1981-1990	0.50	0.62	0.61

contains a very low immigrant population -- and, second, the relative paucity of more recent immigrants relative to Toronto and Vancouver which means that the city does not contain as large a share of newcomers in their early years of lower economic achievement. Both Toronto and Vancouver are major immigrant destinations, but Toronto consistently has a higher share of impoverished refugees, leading to a stronger association with poverty, while Vancouver receives few refugees but a disproportionately high level of economically successful immigrants, contributing to a weaker correlation with low incomes.

There is less variation among the cities in spatial associations between poverty and immigrant attributes. There are consistently positive, but modest, correlations with lack of use of the official languages, ranging between 0.43 and 0.62, and with an origin in one of the 'new' immigrant source regions ($r = 0.45$ to 0.48), a proxy as noted earlier for visible minority status. But this latter effect is confounded by time of arrival, for immigrants from the 'new' regions of origin have also arrived disproportionately in the 1980s, with correlations between recent arrival and new source regions ranging from 0.80 in Vancouver, to 0.78 in Toronto, and 0.66 in Montreal. As we saw earlier, there is a regular trend whereby length of residence in Canada is consistently related to economic success. The regularity of this progression is quite striking in each of the three cities; in Toronto, for example, the association with family poverty is negative for immigrants who arrived before 1961 (-0.45) and from 1961 to 1971 (-0.45), inconsequential for arrivals in the 1970s ($r = 0.13$), but clearly positive for newcomers in the most recent decade of 1981-1990 ($r = 0.62$). Of no less significance, recency of immigration shows a stronger relationship with the map of poverty than region of origin. In other words, time of arrival offers a better

predictor of poverty status than region of origin, and thereby visible minority status.

The predictive power of the ethno-cultural variables as a set in 'explaining' the location of poverty is considerably weaker than the socio-economic indicators. The R^2 value in the three cities falls in the range of 0.43-0.55, well below the levels of the socio-economic group. The secondary rather than primary role of ethno-cultural variables in shaping the map of poverty is indicated when the two sets are combined in a joint regression equation against the incidence of low-income families. The coefficient of determination is enhanced by between only two and six percentage points in the three cities beyond the statistical explanation offered by the socio-economic variables alone. Consider the standardised beta coefficients for the independent variables in the regressions for each of the 1991 joint equations, where y is the percentage of low-income economic families in a census tract:

- **Toronto:** $y = a + 0.504$ female-led families + 0.246 no official language + 0.188 government transfers + 0.143 arrived 1981-1990 + 0.095 male unemployment
- **Montreal:** $y = a + 0.341$ female-led families + 0.320 government transfers + 0.191 no official language + 0.167 male unemployment + 0.140 arrived 1981-90
- **Vancouver:** $y = a + 0.361$ male unemployment + 0.341 female-led families + 0.268 government transfers + 0.154 arrived 81-90

While female-led families, government transfers, and male unemployment appear in each of the equations, only immigrant arrival in the 1981-1990 cohort and (in Toronto and Montreal) inability to speak an official language represent the ethno-cultural variables, and never in top rank. The prominence of the incidence of female-led families is particularly notable in its spatial association with census tracts experiencing high levels of family poverty. In other words, once the socio-economic variables have been accounted for, the immigration and ethno-cultural variables offer minor additional explanation of the spatial variation in urban family poverty.

This line of analysis was repeated for 1971 to examine the level of stability in the relationships at an earlier period when Canada had a markedly different immigration regime. Table 2 shows the simple correlations for Vancouver and Toronto. The consistency of relationships with the pattern for 1991 is striking. Socio-economic characteristics of census tracts -- male unemployment, government transfers, female headed families, and (to a lesser degree) lack of a high school diploma -- supply strong correlations with the incidence of low income families, and in multiple regression combine to effect a high coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.87 in Vancouver and 0.84 in Toronto. In contrast the ethno-cultural variables once more assume a secondary position with R^2 values of 0.49 (Vancouver) and 0.55 (Toronto). The direction and strength of simple correlations are consistent with the 1991 results. Failure to speak an official language and recency of immigration contribute to poverty status, while im-

migrants resident in Canada for 10-25 years have succeeded in escaping the low-income districts. The combined regression with both socio-economic and ethno-cultural variables again shows little improvement (R^2 of 0.89 in Vancouver, 0.90

Table 2 Geographical Correlates of the Incidence of Low-Income Economic Families, 1971

	Vancouver (N = 176)	Toronto (N = 442)
% Male unemployment	0.82	0.86
% Female-led families	0.71	0.75
% No high-school diploma	0.63	0.59
% Income from Gov't transfers	0.84	0.84
% Immigrants	0.43	0.49
% Traditional sources	-0.59	-0.45
% New sources	0.59	0.45
% No official language	0.65	0.52
% No official language at home	0.61	0.52
% Arrived pre 1946	0.18	-0.05
% Arrived 1946-60	-0.45	-0.56
% Arrived 1961-70	0.21	0.50

in Toronto) over the equation with socio-economic factors alone. There are some other points of interest in the 1971 correlation matrix. Census tracts with immigrants from new (that is, primarily visible-minority) source regions continue to be associated with the then most recent (1961-70) wave of arrivals ($r = 0.44$ in Vancouver, 0.51 in Toronto), and this cohort tends to perform poorly in income terms. However, if we follow this same 1961-70 cohort of arrivals forward to the 1991 Census we find it to be negatively correlated with the distribution of family poverty at this later time period. Care in interpretation is needed here for we are dealing with aggregate not individual data, but there are some grounds for optimism in seeing the first postwar cohort that included significant numbers of visible minorities, having difficulties of adjustment in the 1960s, but performing well by the time of the 1991 data. Moreover, Toronto tracts containing visible-minority immigrants in 1991 were no more likely to be experiencing family poverty in 1991 than they were in 1971; in Vancouver tracts with substantial numbers of visible minority immigrants showed a lower correlation with family poverty in 1991 than they had in 1971. There is no evidence here to suggest that immigrants from new source regions are performing more poorly economically in 1991 than they had been twenty years earlier. In contrast, partitioning the data not by region of origin but instead by time of arrival, we find that recent immigrants in 1991 were more likely than their counterparts in 1971 to be associated with tracts containing low income economic families. Here there is evidence to support the thesis of a declining level of immigrant performance, but it is important to repeat that this relation by time of arrival is stronger than any identification with the 'new' immigration by region of origin or visible minority status.

Another relevant theme is the pattern of relationships with government transfers (Table 3). Tracts scoring highly on the immigration and ethno-cultural variables show only modest correlations with the level of state transfer payments.

Table 3 Geographical Correlates of Levels of Government Transfer Payments

	Vancouver		Toronto		Montreal
	1971 (N = 176)	1991 (N = 297)	1971 (N = 442)	1991 (N = 801)	1991 (N = 732)
% Low-income families	0.84	0.75	0.84	0.74	0.84
% Male unemploymt	0.85	0.78	0.79	0.67	0.78
% Female-led families	0.50	0.48	0.70	0.64	0.78
% No highschool dipl	0.66	0.65	0.57	0.51	0.75
% Immigrant	0.50	0.23	0.24	0.39	0.11
% Traditional sources	-0.55	-0.21	-0.31	-0.09	-0.33
% New sources	0.55	0.21	0.31	0.10	0.33
% No official lang	0.72	0.51	0.30	0.53	0.37
% No off lang home	0.63	0.34	0.30	0.51	0.28
% Arrived < 1946	0.42	--	0.25	--	--
% Arrived 1946-60	-0.49	--	-0.50	--	--
% Arrived 1961-70	-0.05	-0.30	0.21	-0.29	-0.41
% Arrived 1971-80	--	-0.10	--	-0.12	-0.07
% Arrived 1981-90	--	0.13	--	0.28	0.48

Despite the tendency for recent immigrants to perform less well in income terms, tracts where they were concentrated have made quite modest calls upon transfer payments. In Vancouver, the correlation for the most recent cohort of immigrants against the level of state benefits was insignificant, -0.05 in 1971 and 0.13 in 1991; for Toronto the figures were 0.21 and 0.28. Only in Montreal in 1991 did the correlation assume any importance, with a value of 0.48. The higher Toronto and Montreal figures are likely a product of their particular immigration composition with a higher number of refugees; Baker and Benjamin (1995) suggested the refugee connection as contributing to a rise in social assistance payments in the late 1980s. The fact that nonetheless these correlations are consistently below those for the incidence of poverty among recent immigrants raises an interesting question about their take-up of benefits. Of course this needs to be balanced against the fact that immigrants may not qualify for the full suite of transfer payments, as Shamsuddin and DeVoretz (1997) have noted in the case of old age pensions. More generally, and except for Vancouver in 1971, the ethno-cultural variables as a whole show weaker associations against transfer payments than they do against family poverty. Correlations between the incidence of immigrants from new source regions (the visible minorities) and the size of welfare state payments in 1991 ranged from 0.10 in Toronto to 0.21 in Vancouver and 0.33 in Montreal. Interestingly these correlations were lower than the corresponding values in Toronto (0.31) and Vancouver (0.55) in 1971. More disaggregation is required to be confident of the precision of these relationships, but at first cut they do not support the argument that a disproportionate welfare burden accrues from

payments to immigrants from newer regions of origin, or that this burden is increasing.

Conclusions and Further Work

In Canada's major cities concentrated poverty does involve the recently arrived foreign-born, though they play a more secondary role than implied by a number of European studies. Beyond this, we have seen differences in the geography of poverty among the three cities, with the greatest incidence of deep poverty in Montreal, and increased suburbanisation of poverty households in Metro Toronto deriving in part from decisions about the location of public housing made in the 1960s. In 1971 poverty was concentrated in compact inner city clusters. However, over the next twenty years and especially in Toronto significant dispersion of poverty occurred associated with gentrification of the private sector stock in the inner city, and the residualisation process in public housing in the suburbs as well as the centre city. But whatever the geography of concentrated poverty, immigrants, more precisely recent immigrants and only a portion of them, are only one group among a range of Canadians whose opportunities are limited within these demoralising conditions.

Nor can we see a major departure in spatial associations after 1971 that would coincide with the significant shift in Canada's immigration regime. The 'loosening up' of 1971 poverty areas at the census tract scale over the following two decades coincided with the arrival of large numbers of visible minority immigrants; while enclaves may exist, ghettos (and the semantic baggage they convey) do not. The structure of Canadian immigration in 1991 was one where recency of arrival and ability to speak English or French is more important than region of origin and visible minority status in shaping economic performance. Moreover, ethno-cultural variables are consistently less important than more conventional socio-economic variables in their spatial association with deep poverty. In multiple regressions immigration and ethno-cultural variables contribute little additional explanation to predictive equations once such factors as male unemployment and mother-led families are taken into account.

A number of questions remain for subsequent research. This analysis has worked with aggregate, tract-scale data -- with the big picture -- but further research might extend its consideration to individual households, to uncover more detailed relations; for example, one could disaggregate country of origin with more specificity than we have been willing to do with aggregate statistics. This work is in progress using special Census tabulations for Vancouver. A second relevant strategy, assuming the availability of appropriately disaggregated tax returns, would be to follow the mobility trajectory of immigrant households over time whose initial residence in Canada is in a poverty district. Such monitoring would enable questions about the longevity of poverty conditions to be answered, and give a sense of immigrant profiles that are associated with slow or rapid

escape from the least desirable of urban environments. A third and necessary extension of the present work is more qualitative ethnographic research that may more readily address the cultural aspects of poverty that cannot be accessed by formal census statistics.

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