A spatial analysis of income inequality among Aboriginal people in Canada

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The definition of Aboriginal identity

The term 'Aboriginal identity' refers to whether the person reported being an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or being a Registered or Treaty Indian, (that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada) and/or being a member of a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the Constitution Act, 1982, section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.
The Aboriginal population at a glance, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Nations</th>
<th>Metis</th>
<th>Inuit</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>851,560</td>
<td>451,795</td>
<td>59,445</td>
<td>1,400,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Canadian population</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Aboriginal population</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Aboriginal population at a glance, 2011 (cont.)

Aboriginal identity population by Province/Territories, 2011

Note: Distribution of the population reporting an Aboriginal identity, NHS 2011
Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011
The Aboriginal population at a glance, 2011 (cont.)

Aboriginal identity population by Province, 2011

Note: Aboriginal identity population as a percentage of the total population, NHS 2011
Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011
Background

• Existing social research has exploited census data and extensively documented Aboriginals’ socioeconomic disadvantage in education, employment, and income:
  – substantial gains but rising social inequality within Aboriginal populations
  – limited reduction in the income gap between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canadians during the past 10 years
• Broadening economic disparities have contributed to worsening health outcomes for Canadians
• Little is known about the impact of growing socioeconomic inequalities on the health of Aboriginal children.
Context

• Research program about child poverty and nutrition among Aboriginal people in Canada
Objectives

• Explore the spatial distribution of income inequality among Aboriginal people from the 2012 Aboriginal people survey
Data

• **2012 Aboriginal People Survey**: national survey of Aboriginal people aged 6+ years living off reserve

• Sample drawn from respondents to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) who self-reported Aboriginal identity

• PUMF does not contain province information (only CMA/other urban/rural)

• Access via RTRA to master file
Methods

• Calculate median and coefficient of variation for total personal income by province and identity group

• Calculate proportion of Aboriginals below poverty line (according to Statcan’s low-income cutoffs for individuals) by province and identity group
Coefficient of variation (CV)

- A simple statistical method of representing the inequality of an income distribution.
- Divide the standard deviation of an income distribution by the mean of the same distribution.
- More equal income distributions will have smaller standard deviations; as such, the CV will be smaller in more equal societies.
Results: Median income among Aboriginals vs non-Aboriginals

Note: Median total income (dollars), 2011. Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 111-0008.

Note: Median total income (dollars) among Aboriginal People, APS 2012. Source: Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), 2012.
Results: Median income among Aboriginals vs non-Aboriginals (cont.)

- Yukon Territory
- Alberta
- Northwest Territories
- British Columbia
- Saskatchewan
- Manitoba
- Ontario
- Quebec
- Nova Scotia
- Newfoundland and... (placeholder)
- New Brunswick
- Nunavut
- Prince Edward Island

Median total income (dollars) (CANSIM table 111-0008)
Median total income (dollars) among Aboriginal identity population (APS 2012)
Results: Coefficient of variation

Income inequality (CV) among Aboriginal Peoples by Province, 2011

Note: Coefficient of variation (CV) of provincial total personal income, APS 2012.
Source: Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), 2012.
Results: Aboriginals below poverty line

Note: Low-income person (below LICO-AT) (%)
Source: Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), 2012.
Results: % Aboriginals below poverty line by identity group