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A Decade in Review, 1996 to 2006: Part Two*

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Aboriginal Languages in Selected Cities In Canada: A Decade in Review, 1996 to 2006: Part Two

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Abstract: *This article is the second of a two-part series by the author, the first of which appeared in aboriginal policy studies 1(2), that explores the issue of Aboriginal languages in urban areas from a demographic perspective. The series presents findings and indicators on the state, patterns, and trends of Aboriginal languages in urban areas over a decade, based on 1996 and 2006 Census data.. The first part of the series addressed urban areas in general. This second part focuses on specific cities, illustrating the significant variation in the state and diversity of the numerous Aboriginal languages spoken in cities across Canada. It presents indicators for twenty selected individual cities, including all thirteen cities of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS). Results reveal considerable heterogeneity within and across cities in the linguistic composition and state of their Aboriginal languages: in speaker numbers and characteristics; language use; and in transmission and learning. Findings suggest implications for policies and programs in urban Aboriginal language planning that reflect maintenance and revitalization activities based on city-specific needs and challenges.*

Introduction

This article¹ is the second of a two-part series by the author, the first appearing in *aboriginal policy studies* 1(2), that explores the issue of Aboriginal languages in urban areas from a demographic perspective. The series provides findings and indicators on the state, patterns, and trends of Aboriginal languages in urban areas over the decade between 1996 and 2006, and is based on data from the two most recent Censuses (1996 and 2006). The first part of the series addressed the demographics of Aboriginal languages for urban areas in general. This second part focuses on specific cities across Canada with significant Aboriginal populations. As with the first part of the series, this study builds on a previous 1996 Census-based study (Norris and Jantzen, 2003), which examined the Aboriginal language situation in individual cities as well as in urban areas more generally. It also presents indicators for twenty selected individual cities that include all thirteen cities of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS)² with urban Aboriginal communities. The UAS cities are comprised of Vancouver, Prince George, Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Winnipeg, Thompson, Toronto, Thunder Bay, and Ottawa (see Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2010a, 2010b).

Outline of Discussion

This article presents a census-based analysis of the demographics and diversity of Aboriginal languages spoken in twenty Canadian cities, which were selected on the basis of having at least 200 persons with an Aboriginal mother tongue. The results of this research have yielded useful insights into how Aboriginal languages have been faring within different cities across the country, with respect to: viability; size and diversity; language use, transmission and learning; and first and second language speaker composition. Findings demonstrate both similarities and differences in these patterns and, at the same time, illustrate the linguistic diversity and variation in the state of the numerous Aboriginal languages spoken in cities across Canada.

The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings in addressing the challenges and prospects ahead in maintaining and revitalizing Aboriginal languages in different cities across Canada, with a particular emphasis on “heterogeneity”—in this case, linguistic and cultural. Peters (2011), as discussed in the first part of this series, indicated that the considerable heterogeneity of Aboriginal peoples in urban areas needs to be recognized more as a basis for policy, in its relation to sense of community, identity, and well-being.

Before proceeding with the analysis and results, there will be a brief description about the Census-based Aboriginal population and city geography. The reader is referred to the first part of this series for more detailed discussion on these and related topics, such as: census data and definitions of language variables; approach, methodology, and limitations; measures and indicators; the significance of Aboriginal languages for Aboriginal culture, identity, and well-being; urban-related Aboriginal language research; and the diversity and state of the different Aboriginal languages themselves.

Census Data on Aboriginal Populations and Geography Used in This Study

Aboriginal Identity Population

The Census data on Aboriginal languages presented here have been analyzed specifically for the Aboriginal Identity population as a whole (comprising those who identify as North American Indian [First Nation], Métis, or Inuit, and/or who are Registered Indian and/or band members). Unlike the first part of this series, this study does not include separate analyses of the four individual Identity groups: Registered Indians, non-registered Indians, Métis, and Inuit.

Geography of Individual “Cities,” 1996 and 2006

Analysis of Aboriginal language characteristics has been made for selected individual cities across Canada, comprising those Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) and Census Agglomerations (CAs) that have a minimum Aboriginal mother tongue population of 200 persons, in both the 1996 and 2006 Censuses. Geographic distinctions with respect to place of residence within and outside reserves are provided for those cities where First Nation reserves are located within their CMA or CA boundaries. Due to intercensal CMA

and CA boundary changes, counts of the total reserve and non-reserve Aboriginal mother tongue populations residing within CMA/CAs are not always directly comparable between censuses. Boundary changes incorporating reserves have resulted in some CMA/CAs reporting significant populations with an Aboriginal mother tongue for the first time in 2006.³

Aboriginal Languages in Cities, 1996 and 2006

This section explores the demographics and diversity of Aboriginal languages within specific cities (CMAs and CAs) where Aboriginal languages are spoken—that is, where there is a sizable mother tongue population of at least 200 persons. As noted earlier, this criterion includes the thirteen cities of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS). While the sheer size of the Aboriginal population and its number of Aboriginal language speakers within a city is important, a range of other factors should be considered to provide a more complete picture of the state of Aboriginal languages. As in the first part of this series, these include: the proportion of the population reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue, home language or knowledge of an Aboriginal language, the average ages of the city's mother tongue and speaker populations, and the degree to which a language is being used in the home, whether on a “most often” basis (as a major home language) or, to a lesser extent, on a “regular” basis (but not as a major home language). Also important are the measures and indicators of language viability and learning associated with second language acquisition, including “continuity,” which is associated with the transmission of the language as a mother tongue through its use in the home, and the “ability” to speak an Aboriginal language. Other relevant considerations when looking at different cities are the extent of linguistic diversity within the city and the presence or not of reserve(s) within city boundaries or nearby. Taken together, these factors give a sense of the Aboriginal language situation within different cities over the past decade.

Urbanization of Aboriginal Languages

Before turning to the situation of Aboriginal languages in specific cities, it is necessary to explore the situation of the individual languages themselves first, since cities reflect the considerable linguistic diversity and variation in the degree of viability and endangerment, and the extensive distribution of Aboriginal languages throughout Canada. However, given that not all Aboriginal languages are similar in their degree of urbanization, cities do not completely mirror the linguistic situation outside their boundaries. Consequently, the composition of the urban population is not proportionately representative of Aboriginal language communities nation-wide.

The More Viable the Language, The Less Urbanized Its Speakers

In this study, the urbanization of a language is measured by the proportion of its mother tongue population residing in cities, CMAs, and CAs. Over the decade between 1996 and 2006, the extent of urbanization for most languages remained relatively the same, although most experienced some decline in their share of speakers residing in cities. This is consistent with the earlier observation in part one of this paper (Norris 2011a, Table 2a,

26) that the residential distribution of the overall Aboriginal mother tongue population saw a slight shift from their 1996 share of 15 percent in cities (excluding reserves) down to 13 percent in 2006 (Table 1).

Among individual languages, it appears that the more viable a language is, generally, the less urbanized it is. In the case of some of the smaller viable languages with high continuity, such as Montagnais / Naskapi, and Atikamekw, only 7 percent and 10 percent (respectively) of the non-reserve mother tongue populations resided in cities in 2006, representing slight increases over the decade. In contrast, about 27 percent of the population reporting one of the endangered Tsimishian languages as a mother tongue resided in cities in 2006, although this had decreased from about a third of the population ten years earlier. In the case of the three largest languages of Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut, about 15 percent of the population with a Cree mother tongue resided in cities in 2006, whereas Ojibway is more urbanized with about 22 percent of its mother tongue population in cities (although shares for both languages are slightly lower than their 1996 levels). On the other hand, Inuktitut, with a total mother tongue population of 32,500, is the least urbanized Aboriginal language, with only 4 percent of mother tongue speakers residing in cities in 2006, up slightly from ten years earlier (Table 1).

It appears that, over the decade, some of the least urbanized languages like Inuktitut and Atikamekw have seen slight residential shifts in speaker populations towards cities (perhaps through migration of speakers). In contrast, the more urbanized languages have tended to see slight shifts in speakers away from cities (Table 1), which may be in part a result of urban-reserve differentials in migration, fertility, mortality, and language transmission.

Linguistic Composition of Urban Speaker Populations Is Disproportionate to Canada Overall

As a consequence of significant differences in language urbanization, the linguistic composition of urban areas is disproportionate to the overall picture. For example, Inuktitut, with 32,500 first language speakers, accounts for 15 percent of the country's total Aboriginal mother tongue population of 219,200 in 2006, and is the second largest language group after Cree. However, among city dwellers, the 1,220 reporting an Inuktitut mother tongue represent only 4.3 percent of the some 28,000 persons with an Aboriginal mother tongue in total who reside in cities across Canada (excluding reserves within city boundaries—see Tables 1 and 3). In contrast, the total Ojibway mother tongue population of 25,400 represents 12 percent of Canada's Aboriginal mother tongue population, but the 5,600 first language Ojibway speakers in urban areas (excluding reserves) represent a disproportionately higher share (20%) of the some 28,000 city residents in Canada reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue population (Tables 1 and 3).

Urbanization can pose challenges for language continuity in general, as well as endangered languages, tending to exacerbate an already difficult situation (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People [RCAP] 1996b, 523–37; Norris and Jantzen 2003). Even Ojibway, while still viable as one of the three largest languages, is the most urbanized and has the lowest continuity of the three, with an overall continuity index in 2006 of 47, as compared to 62 for Cree (Norris 2011a, Table 1, 24). Some caution must be used in interpreting the role

of urbanization with respect to language maintenance and transmission within individual cities, since situations can also vary by specific language, region, and the presence of reserve communities nearby or within CMA or CA boundaries (e.g., Montagnais / Naskapi reserves in Sept-Îles).

City Profiles, 1996 and 2006

As the following analysis of individual cities demonstrates, the numbers, diversity, and characteristics of urban Aboriginal language speakers have remained relatively similar over the decade for most cities, along with variations across cities. For many cities, at the end of the decade under study, there are signs that their populations of speakers are older, and lower in both number and share of the city's total Aboriginal Identity population. As well, indicators of language continuity and second language acquisition suggest shifts for some cities in the first and second language composition of their Aboriginal language speakers.

Changes and shifts in speaker numbers, ages, and composition across cities are not just the outcome of changing practices in language maintenance (home use), language acquisition and revitalization (second language learning), and the state of individual languages themselves. To some extent, they can also be driven by the demographic processes associated with the growth and compositional effects of migration, fertility and natural increase (births minus deaths), and ethnic mobility. Nevertheless, it appears that the situation of Aboriginal languages over the decade for many cities still reflects the general overall challenges of language maintenance, transmission, and learning, especially within an urban environment.

Aboriginal Mother Tongue Population Sizes and Proportions

In both 1996 and 2006, Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Saskatoon had the largest populations with an Aboriginal mother tongue of all the cities (CMAs and CAs—excluding reserves within their boundaries) in Canada. In 2006, the population reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue numbered about 4,600 people in Winnipeg, followed by some 3,000 in Edmonton and 2,200 in Saskatoon (Figure 1). Combined, the mother tongue population of these three cities accounted for 35 percent of the total non-reserve Aboriginal mother tongue population in CMA and CAs across Canada (some 28,000); a share remarkably similar to that ten years earlier, when it was 34 percent. Similarly, in terms of their Aboriginal identity populations, these three cities have sizable Aboriginal populations, which account for significant shares of the total Aboriginal non-reserve population residing in CMAs and CAs. A few other cities have sizable Aboriginal populations as well, with the identity populations of Winnipeg (68,000), Edmonton (48,700), and Vancouver (37,500) accounting for 12 percent, 8 percent, and 6 percent respectively of the total 576,400 CMA / CA residents reporting an Aboriginal identity in 2006. They are followed by Calgary (5%), Toronto (5%), and Saskatoon (4%), which had 2006 shares very similar to 1996 percentages.

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES	Total Identity Population with an Aboriginal Mother Tongue		Mother Tongue Population in CMAs and CAs (Including Reserves within Boundaries) ¹			Mother Tongue Population in CMAs and CAs (Excluding Reserves within Boundaries)				% Home Language Speakers using Language on a "Regular" Basis (%)	
	Total M.T. Population (1)		CMA&CA Population (2)		CMA&CA Percent (%) of Total (3) = (2)/(1)		CMA&CA Population (4)		CMA&CA Percent (%) of Total (5) = (4)/(1)		
	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996		2006
Total Aboriginal Languages	207,050	219,155	39,545	42,060	19.1%	19.2%	31,545	27,920	15.2%	12.7%	28.1
Algonquian Family	145,845	151,505	30,700	32,970	21.0%	21.8%	24,285	21,335	16.7%	14.1%	29.1
Cree ²	87,055	83,955	15,300	13,255	17.6%	15.8%	14,725	12,185	16.9%	14.5%	28.8
Ojibway ²	25,775	25,385	7,205	6,125	28.0%	24.1%	6,630	5,585	25.7%	22.0%	43.8
Montagnais-Naskapi	9,065	10,685	2,230	2,805	24.6%	26.3%	540	790	6.0%	7.4%	7.9
Micmac	7,240	7,720	3,715	4,285	51.3%	55.5%	460	375	6.4%	4.9%	34.9
Oji-Cree ²	5,355	11,690 ²	340	755	6.3%	6.5%	340	760	6.3%	6.5%	21.8
Atikamekw ¹	3,975	5,250	285	3,240 ¹	7.2%	61.7%	285	520	7.2%	9.9%	4.7
Blackfoot	4,140	3,290	970	565	23.4%	17.2%	970	565	23.4%	17.2%	40.8
Algonquin ¹	2,250	2,065	220	1,330 ¹	9.8%	64.4%	220	210	9.8%	10.2%	58.9
Malecite	650	550	255	230	39.2%	41.8%	115	60	17.7%	10.9%	60.5
Algonquian, n.i.e.	340	930	180	300	52.9%	32.3%	180	295	52.9%	31.7%	63.2
Inuktitut Family	27,615	32,490	735	1,215	2.7%	3.7%	735	1,215	2.7%	3.7%	19.7
Athapaskan Family	19,925	20,145	3,060	2,790	15.4%	13.8%	2,610	2,285	13.1%	11.3%	27.8
Dene	8,950	10,185	570	890	6.4%	8.7%	570	735	6.4%	7.2%	16.1
South Slave ³	2,570	1,660	205	215	8.0%	13.0%	205	215	8.0%	13.0%	53.4
Dogrib	2,080	2,095	270	245	13.0%	11.7%	270	245	13.0%	11.7%	40.7
Carrier	2,185	1,860	560	425	25.6%	22.8%	465	315	21.3%	16.9%	36.7
Chipewyan	1,440	545	950	200	66.0%	36.7%	615	175	42.7%	32.1%	55.0
Athapaskan, n.i.e.	1,300	1,075	160	190	12.3%	17.7%	155	190	11.9%	17.7%	68.8
Chilcotin	705	1,235	255	395	36.2%	32.0%	240	260	34.0%	21.1%	25.6
Kutchin-Gwich'in (Loucheux)	425	400	55	50	12.9%	12.5%	55	50	12.9%	12.5%	86.2
North Slave ³	270	1,090	35	130	13.0%	11.9%	35	130	13.0%	11.9%	30.8
Dakota (Siouan Family)	4,270	5,690	710	880	16.6%	15.5%	495	405	11.6%	7.1%	21.6
Salish Family	3,190	3,610	1,485	1,575	46.6%	43.6%	560	365	17.6%	10.1%	67.7
Salish, n.i.e.	1,850	2,010	1,050	940	56.8%	46.8%	390	250	21.1%	12.4%	70.7
Shuswap	740	1,035	380	495	51.4%	47.8%	115	95	15.5%	9.2%	63.8
Thompson	600	560	55	140	9.2%	25.0%	55	25	9.2%	4.5%	65.8
Tsimishian Family	2,445	2,340	850	645	34.8%	27.6%	800	625	32.7%	26.7%	54.5
Gitksan	1,195	1,245	285	270	23.8%	21.7%	285	240	23.8%	19.3%	50.3
Nishga	785	735	330	245	42.0%	33.3%	325	175	41.4%	23.8%	57.8
Tsimishian	465	360	235	205	50.5%	56.9%	190	205	40.9%	56.9%	60.9
Wakashan Family	1,655	1,165	515	450	31.1%	38.6%	440	325	26.6%	27.9%	71.3
Wakashan, n.i.e.	1,065	775	235	300	22.1%	38.7%	200	205	18.8%	26.5%	64.2
Nootka	590	395	280	145	47.5%	36.7%	240	90	40.7%	22.8%	88.9
Iroquoian Family⁴	585	440	505	440	86.3%	100.0%	505	440	86.3%	100.0%	85.3
Mohawk	355	305	290	295	81.7%	96.7%	290	295	81.7%	96.7%	80.8
Iroquoian, n.i.e.	230	140	215	135	93.5%	96.4%	215	135	93.5%	96.4%	100.0
Haida Isolate	235	125	65	30	27.7%	24.0%	65	30	27.7%	24.0%	66.7
Tlingit Isolate	145	95	30	20	20.7%	21.1%	30	20	20.7%	21.1%	100.0
Kutenai Isolate	120	150	20	30	16.7%	20.0%	20	10	16.7%	6.7%	54.5
Aboriginal, n.i.e.	1,255	1,390	870	925	69.3%	66.5%	870	900	69.3%	64.7%	69.1

Table 1. Percentage of Aboriginal Mother Tongue (MT) Populations residing in CMAs/CAs 1996 and 2006; and Percentage of Aboriginal Home Language Speakers Using Language on a "Regular" Basis, 2006, by Aboriginal Languages, Canada. Source: 1996 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data).

Large Aboriginal Populations in Cities Do Not Necessarily Imply High Proportions of Speakers

While some cities with sizable Aboriginal populations also tend to have a significant proportion reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue, it is not always the case. Although Winnipeg and Edmonton both had the largest 2006 Aboriginal and mother tongue populations in their cities, their mother tongue populations nevertheless only represent 7 percent and 6 percent respectively of their total Aboriginal populations. Furthermore, Vancouver's relatively large Aboriginal population has an even smaller share reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue—one of the lowest of the cities studied here—at just under 3 percent. In contrast, while the Aboriginal population in Thompson is much smaller, at some 5,000, at 21 percent it has one of the highest proportions of city populations reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue (about 1,000 persons). Among CMA and CAs (non-reserve areas), the highest proportion of Aboriginal people reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue is found in Sept-Îles, which is attributable to the fact that there is a reserve within CA boundaries (Figure 2).

Lowered Numbers and Proportions with an Aboriginal Mother Tongue in Cities By End of Decade

Many cities saw declines over the decade between 1996 and 2006 in the numbers and/or proportions of their Aboriginal residents reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue. Winnipeg's Aboriginal population for example, saw a decrease in both its numbers and proportion reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue. In the meantime, Edmonton's mother tongue population increased in size but its share of the city's Aboriginal population decreased, as the growth of its Aboriginal population overall outpaced that of its mother tongue population. Vancouver experienced one of the most significant decreases in the size of its Aboriginal mother tongue population, dropping by 45 percent to 1,000 people in 2006, while its proportion of Aboriginal residents with an Aboriginal mother tongue decreased from 7 percent to just 3 percent (Figures 1 and 2). For some cities, declines in speaker proportions can also be driven to a certain extent by rapid population increase owing to the impact of ethnic mobility. For example, the cities of Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal, which had experienced declines in their mother tongue proportions, are also the same cities that posted significant growth in Aboriginal populations over the 1996-2001 period, largely due to ethnic mobility (Norris and Clatworthy 2011). In Montreal, the share of the city's Aboriginal residents reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue declined over the decade, even though the population reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue did not decrease (Figures 1 and 2).

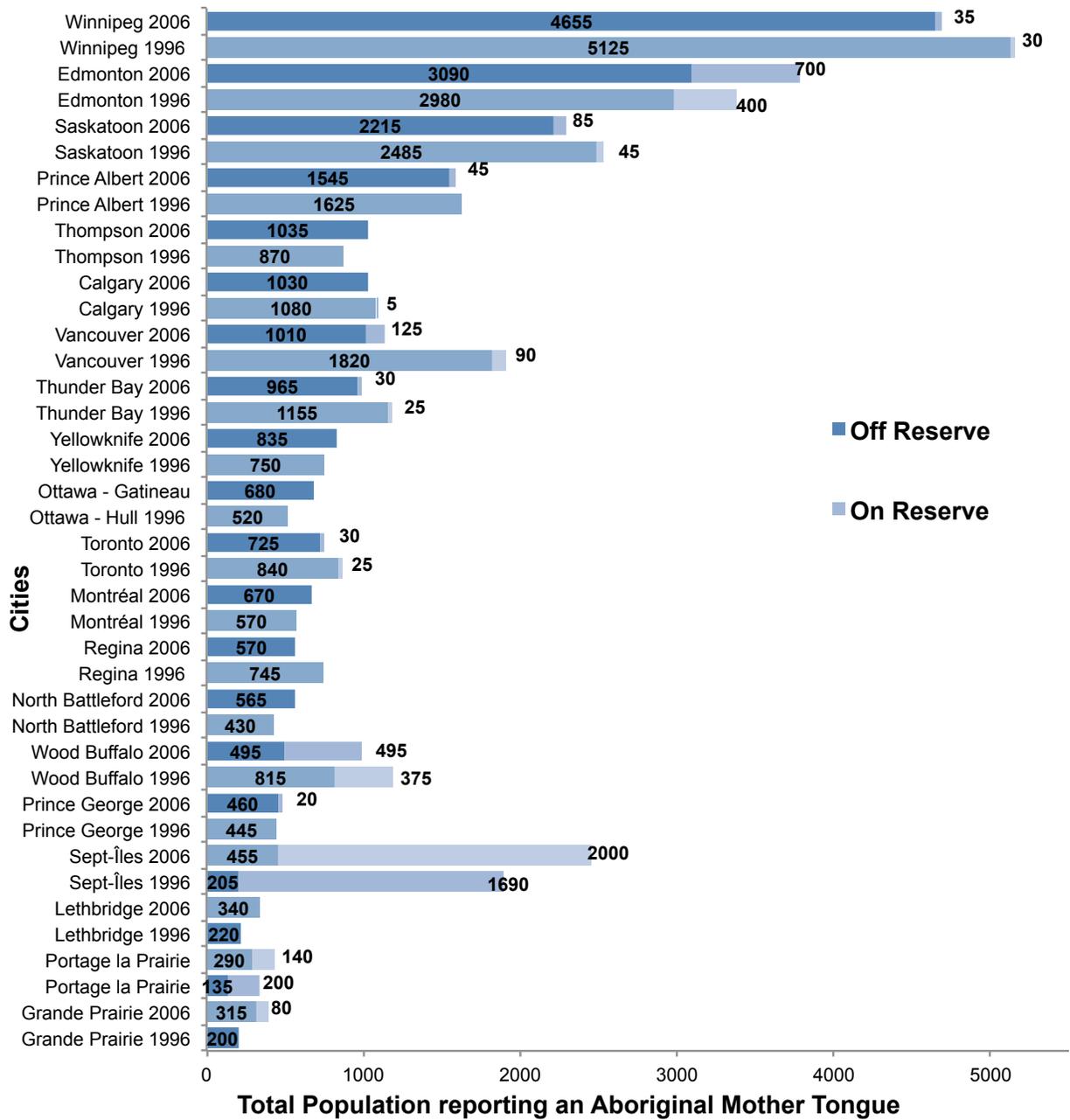
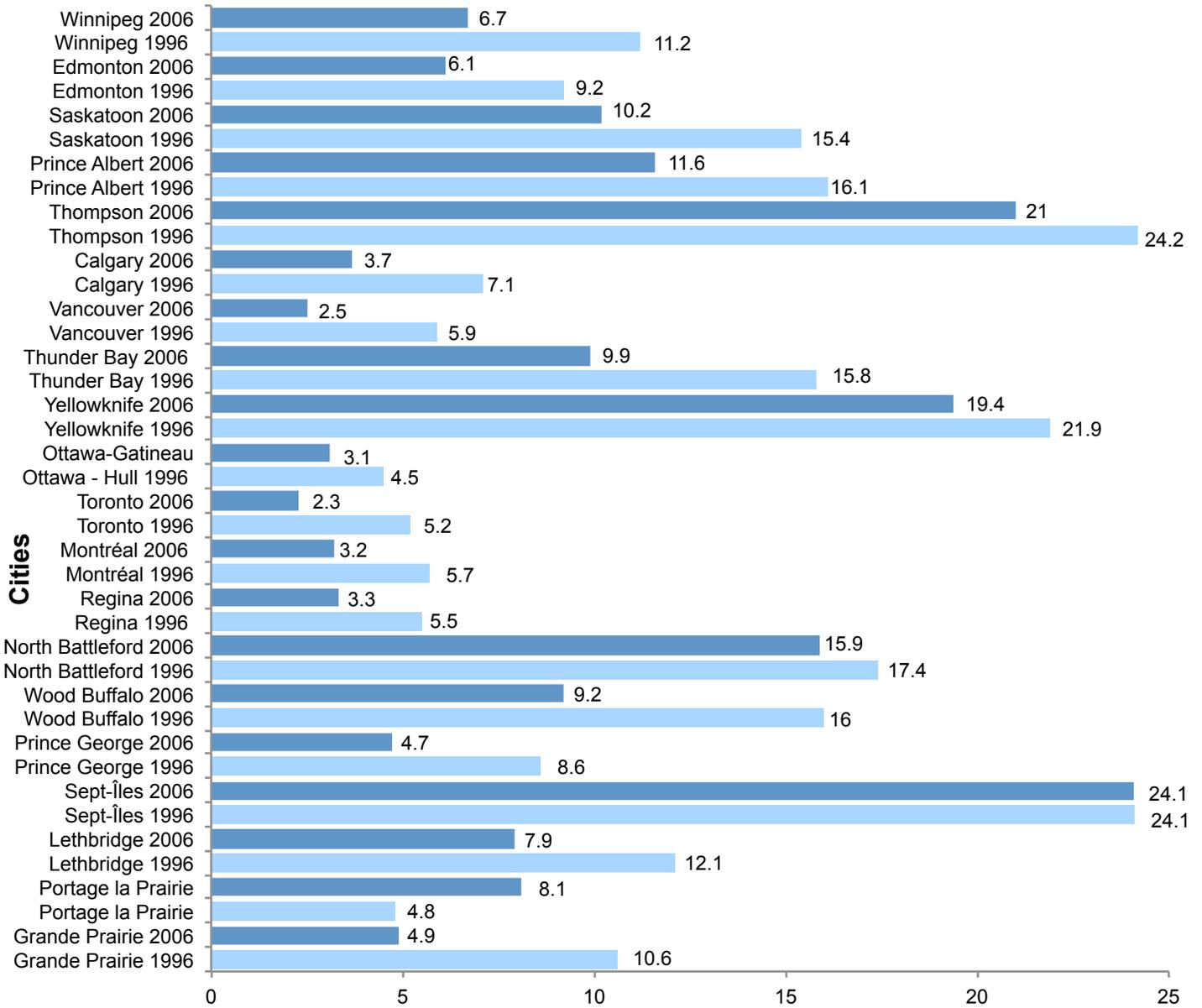


Figure 1. “Top 20” Cities Ranked by Size of City’s 2006 Aboriginal Mother Tongue (MT) Population (Excluding Reserves within CMA / CA Boundaries), Showing: Total MT Populationⁱ within City Boundaries (On and Off-Reserve), 1996 and 2006. Source: 1996 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data).



% of Aboriginal Identity Population reporting an Aboriginal Mother Tongue

Figure 2. “Top 20” Cities Ranked by Size of City’s 2006 Aboriginal Mother Tongue (MT) Population (Excluding Reserves within CMA / CA Boundaries), Showing: Percentage of City’s Aboriginal Population with MT, 1996 and 2006. Source: 1996 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data).

Older Populations of First and Second language Speakers in Cities By End of Decade

In 1996, the average age of the overall population reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue in Canada was 31 years; ten years later, it had risen to 34 years. Aboriginal mother tongue populations were even older in cities, as noted earlier, and this is especially so in larger cities (urban CMAs), where the average age overall in 2006 was 42 years (Norris 2011a, Figure 9, 47). For some cities, especially in British Columbia, home to many endangered languages, populations tended to be even older (Figure 3). In the case of Vancouver, the average age of the Aboriginal mother tongue population was 51 years old in 2006, up from 45 years old a decade earlier. In Prairie cities, in regions where some of the larger and more viable languages like Cree are spoken, average ages were younger (ranging from 34-40 years), but still older than a decade ago when the average age ranged from 30-35 years. In contrast, Aboriginal mother tongue populations were younger than for Canada overall for a few cities with reserves nearby or within their CMA/CA boundaries, such as Sept-Îles, with an average age of 27. However, regardless of the initial average age of speaker populations—whether “young” or “old” language—most cities saw their mother tongue populations age significantly over the decade, with many cities witnessing an extent much greater than that observed nationally. One exception to this trend was Ottawa-Gatineau, which actually saw a slight decrease in average age, from 37 to 35 years (Figure 3); this probably reflects the increase over the decade in the number of Inuktitut speakers as a result of speaker in-migration, and, possibly to some extent, births. The growth was such that, by 2006, Inuktitut accounted for 40 percent of the Aboriginal mother tongue population in Ottawa-Gatineau.

Cities Differ in Their Prospects of Intergenerational Transmission of an Aboriginal Mother Tongue, and in Impacts on the Ages of Speakers

As noted earlier, a number of demographic factors can affect the situations of Aboriginal languages across different cities, as well as the critical effects of language behaviour. For example, the migration patterns of Aboriginal populations, such as Registered Indians, can have significant compositional effects on the characteristics Aboriginal language speakers in urban areas, such as average age (Norris 2011a, 22). Frequent home use of an Aboriginal language and intergenerational transmission, combined with fertility, is certainly a major contributor to maintaining a young population of speakers, or at least in slowing the aging of an overall population. The less the language is spoken at home, the lower the prospects of its intergenerational transmission; that is, the less it is likely to be transmitted as the mother tongue of the next generation (Norris 1998; 2003; 2008). City-level data on average age of speakers and home-language use reflect the inverse association between continuity and aging mother tongue populations. In Vancouver, for example, where the average age of the mother tongue population is high, at 51 years by 2006 (up from 45 in 1996) (Figure 3), continuity is extremely low, with an index of only 7 in 2006 and 10 in 1996 (Table 2), indicating that Aboriginal languages are rarely spoken as the major language of the home in Vancouver. By contrast, Aboriginal people speak their traditional languages as major home languages to a much greater extent in Prince Albert, as indicated by a continuity index of 41 (Table 2), although this is down from the 1996 index of 50. The average age of

Prince Albert's Aboriginal mother tongue population, at 38 years old, is also much younger than that of Vancouver, although that age is up from 30 in 1996 (Figure 3).

Again, while the urban environment poses challenges to Aboriginal languages in general, it should be remembered that some of the inter-city differences seen here also reflect differences in diversity and viability among the individual languages themselves, as well as the compositional effects of demographic factors, language use, and learning. In Prince Albert, which has a relatively high degree of language continuity, the traditional language of close to 90 percent of residents who report an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue is Cree, which is one of the largest and most viable indigenous language groups in Canada. By contrast, Vancouver has a much more diverse language composition (Figure 6), and many of the traditional languages of the city's residents who have an Aboriginal mother tongue, apart from Cree and Ojibway, are some of British Columbia's smaller and endangered languages.

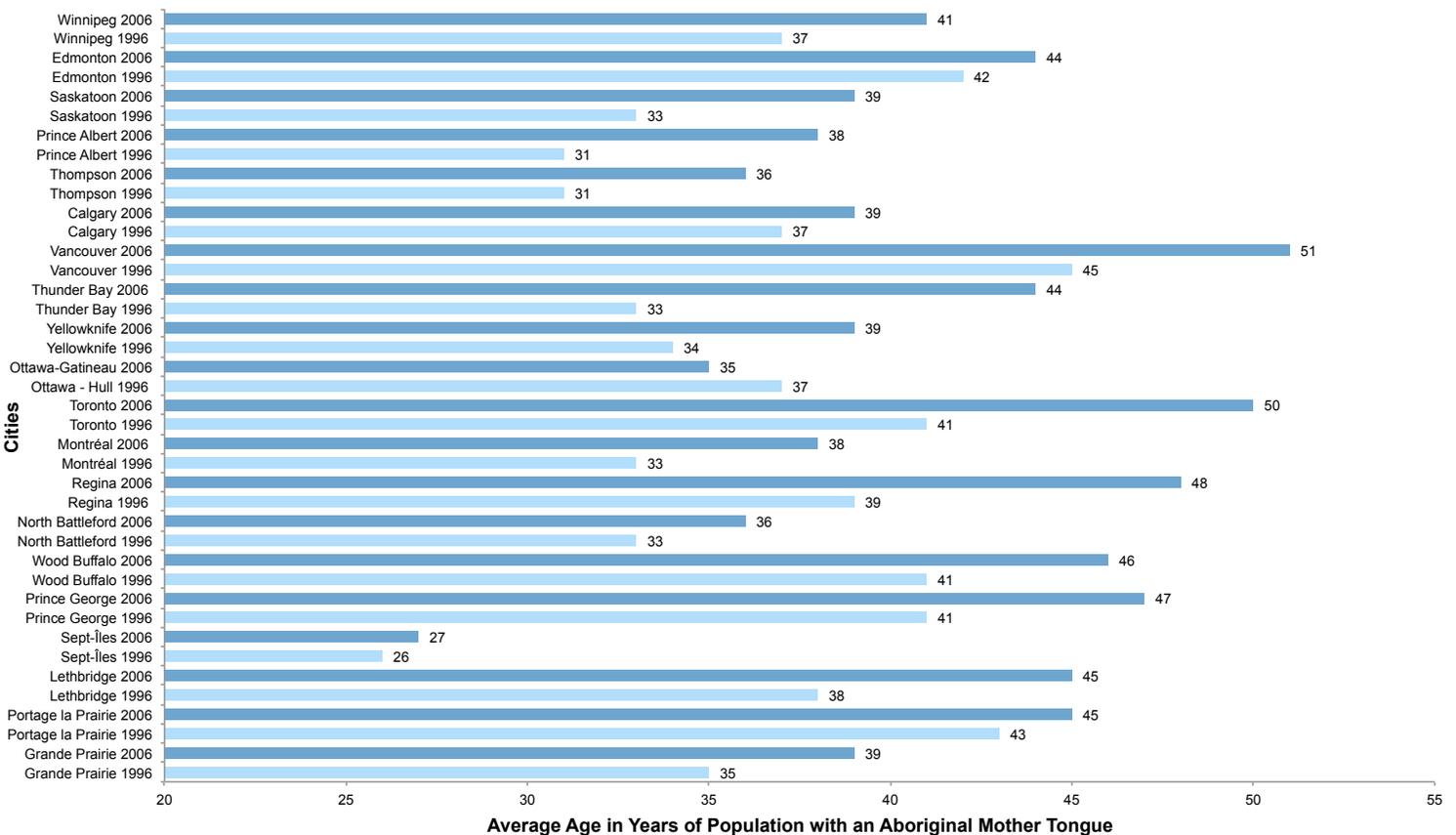


Figure 3. "Top 20" Cities Ranked by Size of City's 2006 Aboriginal Mother Tongue (MT) Population (Excluding Reserves within CMA / CA Boundaries), Showing: Average Age of City's Population with an Aboriginal MT, 1996 and 2006. Source: 1996 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data).

SELECTED* CITIES (CMAs and CAs) *with largest mother tongue populations Excludes any reserves within boundaries	Population with an Aboriginal Home Language		% Distribution of Home Language Speakers by Degree of Use			Continuity Index (# with HL Most Often)/(100 with MT)
	Most Often	Regular	Most Often	Regular	Total Use	CI # HL most / 100 MT
SELECTED CMAs and CAs	No.	No.	%	%	%	
Winnipeg	1,150	1,890	38	62	100.0	25.1
Edmonton	380	1,190	24	76	100.0	12.8
Saskatoon	575	1,010	36	64	100.0	26.3
Prince Albert	630	845	43	57	100.0	40.8
Thompson	340	530	39	61	100.0	32.9
Calgary	165	500	25	75	100.0	16.9
Vancouver	65	355	15	85	100.0	7.1
Thunder Bay	310	370	46	54	100.0	33.9
Yellowknife	185	340	35	65	100.0	23.4
Ottawa–Gatineau	270	170	61	39	100.0	41.5
Toronto	145	175	45	55	100.0	24.4
Montréal	95	160	37	63	100.0	16.4
Regina	75	290	21	79	100.0	13.3
North Battleford	200	260	43	57	100.0	35.7
Wood Buffalo	85	160	35	65	100.0	17.0
Prince George	35	200	15	85	100.0	8.5
Sept-Îles	305	75	80	20	100.0	80.3
Lethbridge	50	220	19	81	100.0	15.9
Portage la Prairie	70	115	38	62	100.0	24.1
Grande Prairie	65	65	50	50	100.0	22.4
Cities—All CMAs and CAs (excludes reserves within boundaries)	6,805	11,495	37	63	100.0	24.4

Table 2. Aboriginal Home Language (HL) in Cities: Distribution of Speakers by Use on a “Most Often” or “Regular” Basis in Home; and, Index of Language Continuity, by Selected CMAs and CAs, Canada, 2006. Source: 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data).

Cities Reflect Differences in Urbanization and Home Use of Aboriginal Languages

Aboriginal languages differ not only in their degree of urbanization, but also in their degree of home use, mother tongue transmission, and second language learning. The more “urbanized” languages—i.e., those that have higher proportions of their first language (mother tongue) speakers residing in cities—also tend to be characterized overall by home use that is more on a “regular,” rather than “most often,” basis. For example, about 15 percent of the population with a Cree mother tongue in 2006 resided in cities (CMAs and CAs—excluding reserves). Of the total population speaking Cree at home, about 70 percent spoke it “most often” as a major language, whereas the other 30 percent spoke Cree at home—not as their major language, but at least on a “regular” basis. In contrast, among the smaller and more urbanized endangered languages of the Wakashan family—which, at 28 percent, has almost twice the Cree proportion of first language speakers residing in cities—home language use tends to much more on a “regular” basis, that is less frequent, than on a “most often” or “major” basis. Thus, the Wakashan patterns of home use are practically the reverse of those of Cree, with only 29 percent of home users speaking Wakashan on a “most often” basis, whereas the clear majority—the other 71 percent—speaks Wakashan on a “regular,” but not “most often” basis in the home (Table 1).

These individual language variations, combined with the impacts and linguistic diversity of the different city environments themselves, shape the city patterns of Aboriginal language home use. For example, among Aboriginal home language users in Prince Albert (which is linguistically homogenous, with mainly Cree speakers), about 43 percent speak their traditional language on a “most often” or major basis, while the other 57 percent speak it on a “regular” basis. In contrast, in linguistically diverse Vancouver, which is comprised of many different and mostly endangered Aboriginal languages (like Wakashan), only 15 percent of Aboriginal home language users report speaking their traditional language as a major language, with the vast majority—85 percent—using it on a “regular” basis at home instead. Conversely, in the Ottawa–Gatineau area—where Inuktitut and Cree speakers account for 40 percent and 24 percent respectively of the Aboriginal mother tongue population—the majority, 61 percent, of home language speakers use their Aboriginal language as a major language at home (Table 2).

However, most cities generally do see greater use of Aboriginal home languages on a “regular” rather than a “major” basis. In 2006, a total of 192,400 persons reported speaking an Aboriginal language at home in Canada. In Canadian cities overall, of the 18,300 persons speaking an Aboriginal language at home, 11,500 or close to two out of three (63%) used it on a “regular” basis, whereas the other 174,100 home language speakers residing outside of cities were much more likely to speak an Aboriginal language as the major language of the home. Only one in four speakers then reported “regular” instead of “most frequent” use (Norris 2011a, Figure 6b, 40).

Cities Differ in the Extent of Second Language Learning and Average Age of Speakers

In cities where language continuity and frequent home use generally tend to be low, second language learning and regular home use of Aboriginal languages become increasingly important components of language survival, maintenance and revitalization, a situation

similar to the observations made in this series for urban areas overall. This is especially the case for younger generations of urban Aboriginal residents, who stand relatively little chance of acquiring an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue. Furthermore, second language learning among children and youth can yield a population of speakers, first and second language combined, who overall are younger on average than the older generations of first language speakers who had learned their traditional language as a mother tongue.

However, like home language use, prospects of first and second language learning vary across cities, as do the ages of these speakers. In Vancouver, the 2006 population able to speak an Aboriginal language (first and second language speakers combined) was younger, on average, at 47 years (Figure 4), than its population with an Aboriginal mother tongue, at 51 years (Figure 3)—implying a younger population of second language learners. Similar comparisons hold for Toronto, with corresponding average ages of 46 and 50 respectively. In other cities, where major home use and intergenerational transmission tend to be relatively high and second language learning less pronounced, age contrasts between speaker and mother tongue populations can be smaller. For example, Ottawa-Gatineau, with one of the highest city continuity indexes (Table 2), posted very little difference in average age between its mother tongue and total speaker population; in fact the mother tongue population is slightly younger in 2006, with an average age of 35 in comparison to 36 years for all speakers (Figures 3 and 4), perhaps as a result of an influx of Inuit speakers, most of whom are still likely to have acquired their traditional language as a mother tongue. For other cities, links between continuity and speaker age differentials are less obvious, perhaps due to the demographic effects noted earlier (e.g., despite high language continuity, Prince Albert posted a wide four-year differential, while Saskatoon displayed low continuity, but a relatively small two-year gap).

Older Speakers, Lowered Indexes of Second Language Acquisition in Most Cities By End of Decade

Although cities vary in the extent to which their Aboriginal languages are learned as second languages, many cities shared a similar trend over the decade in question of lowered indexes of second language acquisition: that is, a lowered ratio of the total number of speakers (including both first and second language) to the population with an Aboriginal mother tongue (first language). Caution is necessary in interpreting this trend based on the index of second language acquisition. To some degree, apart from intercensal differentials in coverage and enumeration, the compositional effects of demographic factors, such as the migration of first-language speakers as well as increased intergenerational transmission, could also contribute to a lowered ratio as opposed to actual declines in the numbers of second language speakers. Most cities have also seen an increase in the average ages of both mother tongue and all Aboriginal language speakers, some to a much greater degree than others. Given the range of potential factors affecting these trends, it is beyond the scope of this paper, apart from speculation, to determine the underlying contributors of these trends. Some examples of other possible considerations are that second language learning, particularly among younger generations, may have either leveled off or decreased, or possibly that older generations are learning an Aboriginal language as a second language. Some examples of cities that saw a drop in their index of second language acquisition between 1996 and 2006 include Edmonton, from just over 150 to 133, and Vancouver—down from 140 to 120—with relatively smaller declines for Winnipeg, which had a shift

from about 135 to 130. Other cities where the extent of second language learning appeared practically unchanged over the decade (with very slight increases in their index of second language acquisition), include the cities of Saskatoon (from 130 to 132); Prince Albert (130 to 133); and Thompson (132 to 135) (see Figure 5). However, regardless of the changes in second language acquisition, practically all of these cities also saw older populations of all speakers (first and second language combined) by the end of the decade, but (again) in varying degrees. Increases in average ages of Aboriginal residents able to speak an Aboriginal language, for example, were observed even for those cities where second language ratios remained relatively unchanged, such as Saskatoon (from 32 to 37 years of age), Prince Albert and Thompson (29 to 34 years), and Winnipeg (from 36 to 39 years), along with other cities, such as Vancouver (43 to 47 years) (Figure 4). Unlike most other cities, Edmonton experienced relatively smaller increases in average ages over the decade, from 39 to 40 years for all speakers, and similarly from 43 to 44 years for its mother tongue population, which might be a reflection of the effects of migration and fertility, as well as language transmission.

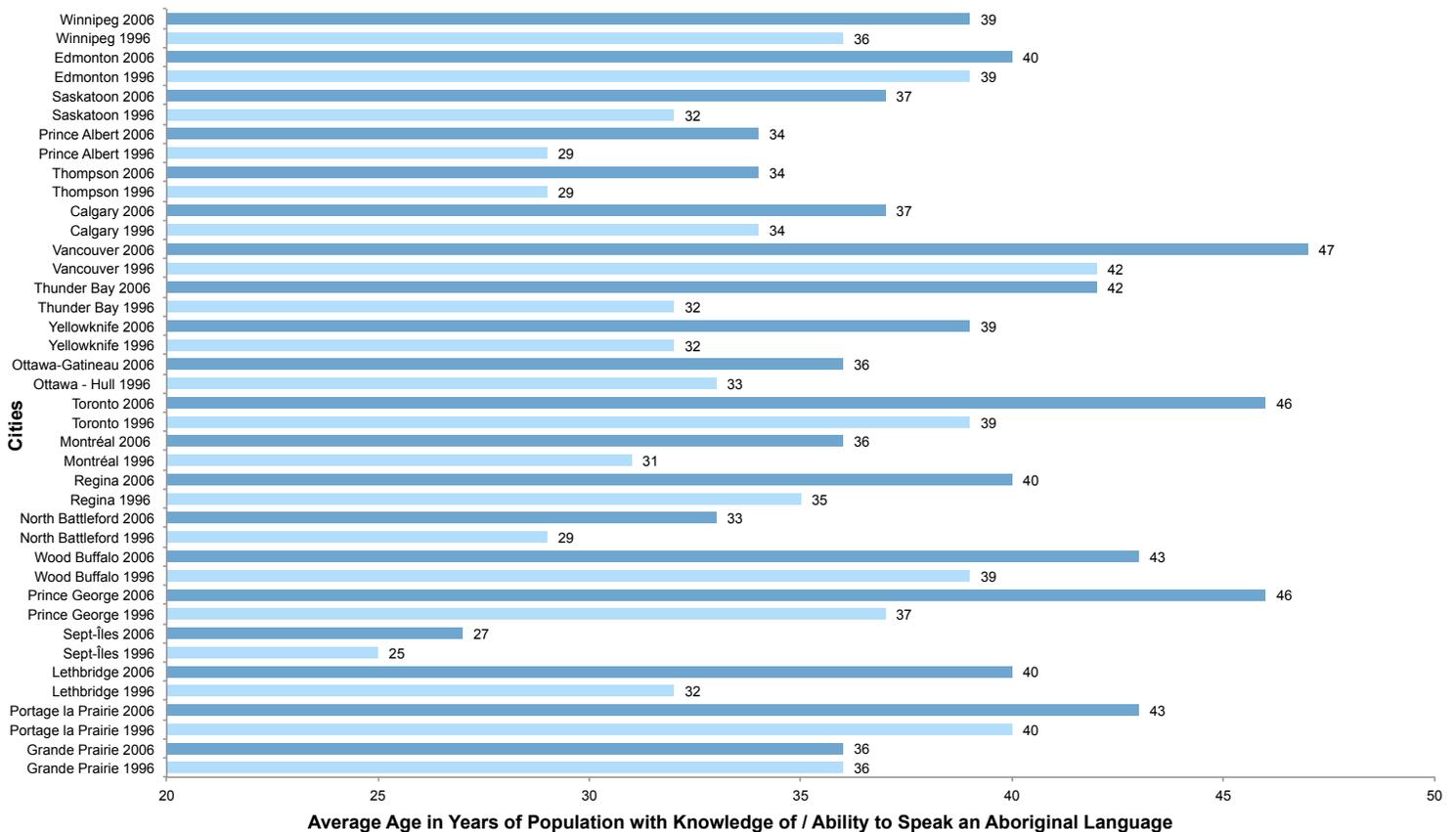


Figure 4. “Top 20” Cities Ranked by Size of City’s 2006 Aboriginal Mother Tongue (MT) Population (Excluding Reserves within CMA / CA Boundaries), Showing: Average Age of City’s Population with Knowledge of or Ability to Speak an Aboriginal Language, 1996 and 2006. Source: 1996 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data).

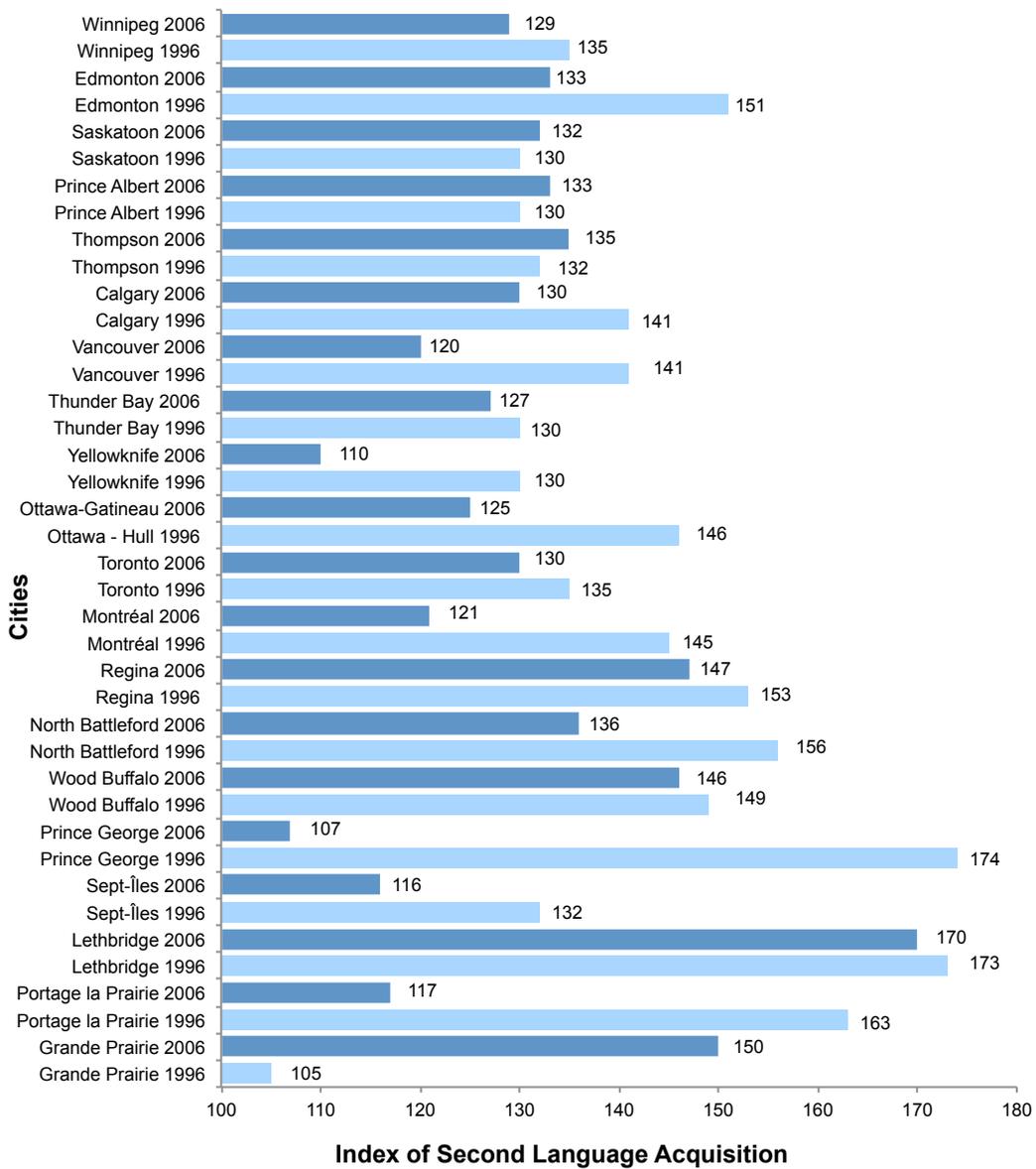


Figure 5. “Top 20” Cities Ranked by Size of City’s 2006 Aboriginal Mother Tongue (MT) Population (Excluding Reserves within CMA / CA Boundaries), Showing: Index of Aboriginal Second Language Acquisition of City’s Aboriginal Language Speakers, 1996 and 2006. Source: 1996 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data).

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES	% Distribution of Total Mother Tongue Population by Aboriginal Languages		% Distribution of Total CMA/CA Mother Tongue Population by Aboriginal Languages ¹		% Distribution of Non-reserve CMA/CA Mother Tongue Population by Aboriginal Languages	
	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006
Identity Population with an Aboriginal Mother Tongue	207,050	219,155	39,545	42,060	31,545	27,920
Total Aboriginal Languages	%	%	%	%	%	%
Algonquian Family	70.4	69.1	77.6	78.7	76.9	76.0
Cree	42.0	38.3	38.7	31.6	46.6	43.4
Ojibway	12.4	11.6	18.2	14.6	21.0	19.9
Montagnais-Naskapi	4.4	4.9	5.6	6.7	1.7	2.8
Micmac	3.5	3.5	9.4	10.2	1.5	1.3
Oji-Cree	2.6	5.3	0.9	1.8	1.1	2.7
Atikamekw	1.9	2.4	0.7	7.7 ¹	0.9	1.9
Blackfoot	2.0	1.5	2.5	1.3	3.1	2.1
Algonquin ¹	1.1	0.9	0.6	3.2 ¹	0.7	0.7
Malecite	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.2
Algonquian, n.i.e.	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.1
Inuktitut Family	13.3	14.8	1.9	2.9	2.3	4.3
Athapaskan Family	9.6	9.2	7.7	6.7	8.3	8.1
Dene	4.3	4.6	1.4	2.1	1.8	2.6
South Slave	1.2	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.8
Dogrib	1.0	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.9
Carrier	1.1	0.8	1.4	1.0	1.5	1.1
Chipewyan	0.7	0.2	2.4	0.5	1.9	0.6
Athapaskan, n.i.e.	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.7
Chilcotin	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.8	0.9
Kutchin-Gwich'in (Loucheux)	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
North Slave	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.5
Dakota (Siouan Family)	2.1	2.6	1.8	2.1	1.6	1.4
Salish Family	1.5	1.6	3.8	3.8	1.8	1.3
Salish, n.i.e.	0.9	0.9	2.7	2.2	1.2	0.9
Shuswap	0.4	0.5	1.0	1.2	0.4	0.3
Thompson	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1
Tsimishian Family	1.2	1.1	2.1	1.5	2.5	2.2
Gitksan	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.9
Nishga	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.6	1.0	0.6
Tsimishian	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7
Wakashan Family	0.8	0.5	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.2
Wakashan n.i.e.	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.7
Nootka	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.3	0.8	0.3
Iroquoian Family	0.3	0.2	1.3	1.1	1.6	1.6
Mohawk	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.7	0.9	1.1
Iroquoian N.I.E.	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.5
Haida Isolate	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1
Tlingit Isolate	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Kutenai Isolate	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
Aboriginal n.i.e.	0.6	0.6	2.2	2.2	2.8	3.2

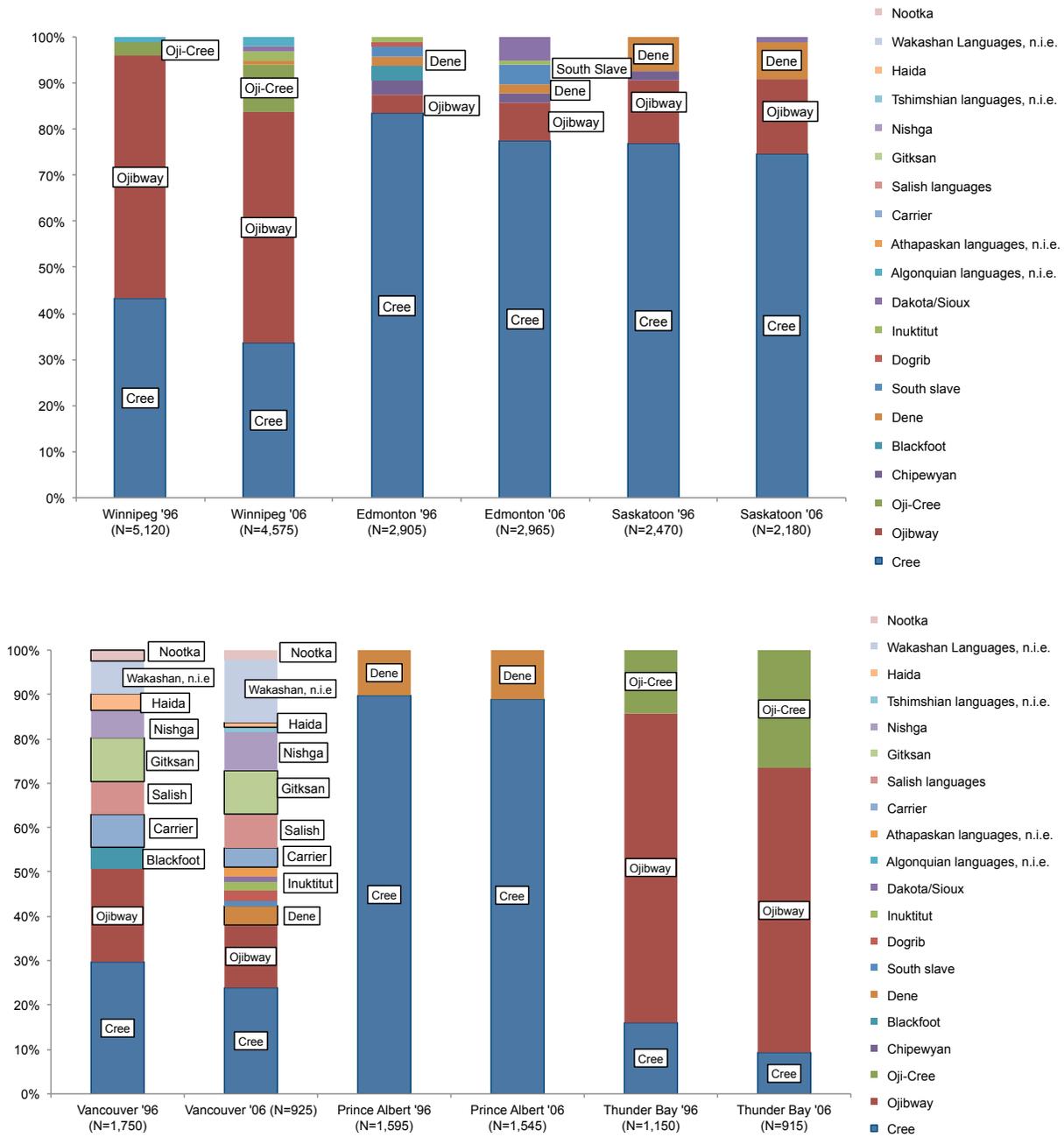
Table 3. Diversity of Aboriginal Languages in Cities: Distribution of Aboriginal Population in CMAs/CAs Reporting an Aboriginal Mother Tongue, by Aboriginal Languages, Canada, 1996 and 2006. Source: 1996 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data).

Language Diversity of Specific Cities, 1996 and 2006

As noted earlier, the linguistic makeup of Aboriginal languages in cities is not representative of the overall composition at the national level, owing to differing degrees of urbanization among individual languages. Ojibway accounts for a higher proportion, 20 percent, of the urban population reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue as compared to 12 percent for Canada as a whole, whereas Inuktitut represents a smaller proportion, just 4 percent, of the Aboriginal mother tongue population in cities as compared to its national share of 15 percent (Table 3). Furthermore, cities also vary significantly in the composition and diversity of their languages: in some cities, only one or two major Aboriginal languages are spoken, such as Prince Albert (with mainly Cree speakers and some Dene). Others have three major languages, such as Winnipeg and Thunder Bay (Ojibway, Cree, and Oji-Cree). Still other cities have even more languages spoken there, with a few of those languages accounting for most of the speakers, such as Inuktitut, Cree, Ojibway, Algonquin, and Mi'kmaq in Ottawa and Cree, Ojibway, Oji-Cree, and Dene in Edmonton.

However, the city with the greatest diversity is that of Vancouver, with at least ten different languages spoken within its CMA boundaries, including Cree, Ojibway, Salish, Wakashan, Gitskan, Nishga, Carrier, Dene, Blackfoot, and Inuktitut. Some cities, like Prince Albert, clearly are far more homogenous in the linguistic composition of their Aboriginal languages, especially in contrast to a city like Vancouver. The largest Aboriginal languages in an urban area will vary from city to city, and depending on a individual city's linguistic diversity, its two largest languages, for example, could account for most, or just a minority, of its residents reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue. To illustrate, with the six following cities, in 2006, the two largest Aboriginal languages reported in Prince Albert, Cree and Dene, account for 99 percent of the city's population with an Aboriginal mother tongue; the two largest in Thunder Bay, Ojibway and OjiCree, are at 89 percent; and the two largest languages, Cree and Ojibway, in all three cities of Saskatoon, Edmonton and Winnipeg, account for 90 percent, 84 percent, and 82 percent, respectively of those cities populations reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue. In sharp contrast, Vancouver's two largest Aboriginal languages of Cree (at 22%) and either Ojibway or Wakashan n.i.e. (both at 13%) account for only 35 percent of the city's mother tongue population. Figure 6 profiles the linguistic composition of these six cities, which have some of the largest populations reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue in both 1996 and 2006 (for comparison purposes, distributions shown are based only on the population within CMA/CA boundaries, and exclude any reserve populations within city boundaries). The linguistic composition within each of these cities appears to have remained relatively the same over the decade, apart from Vancouver, where the share of Ojibway has declined, while that of Wakashan has increased.

There are, indeed, various factors affecting the state of Aboriginal languages across different cities, not the least of which is linguistic diversity and its connection with other dimensions of language viability. Population size alone is not a sufficient indicator of how languages are faring. For example, although both Prince Albert and Vancouver have sizable Aboriginal populations reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue—about 1500 and 900 respectively—Aboriginal languages are clearly faring better in Prince Albert. About a third of residents in Prince Albert report an Aboriginal identity, 21 percent of whom have an Aboriginal language. Cree, mostly, is the reported mother tongue, and speakers are both relatively young and use their traditional language as a major language in the home. In



Figures 6a and 6b. Linguistic Composition of Aboriginal Mother Tongue (MT) Population, Showing:

Aboriginal Languages within Six Selected “Top 10” CMAs / CAs (Ranked by Size of City’s 2006 MT),ⁱⁱ 1996 and 2006. Source: 1996 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data).

Vancouver, just 2 percent of residents report an Aboriginal identity, while only 3 percent of Aboriginal residents report one of the city's many different Aboriginal languages as a mother tongue. In addition, speaker populations are aging and rarely use their languages as major home languages. In the face of such diversity, along with relatively small, aging, and declining populations of speakers, prospects for Aboriginal language maintenance and revitalization among Aboriginal populations within Vancouver appear to be more challenging than those in Prince Albert.

Implications and Conclusions

Findings demonstrate a significant presence and diversity of Aboriginal languages in many cities throughout Canada. Similar to that observed overall for urban areas overall in the first part of this series, the past decade has seen a continuation of some of the same patterns of similarities and differences in the language situations of Aboriginal people. In particular, as part one demonstrated, the challenges and prospects of learning, using, and speaking an Aboriginal language vary significantly depending on where one lives, whether in urban areas or in Aboriginal communities or reserves outside cities. In urban areas, Aboriginal people who can speak their traditional language appear more likely to have learned it as a second language, and there appears to be relatively low prospects of intergenerational transmission of an Aboriginal mother tongue, given the extremely low use of traditional languages as major home languages. The challenges of speaking an Aboriginal language as the major language of the home are exacerbated in an urban environment, so that city residents who speak an Aboriginal language at home are much more likely to speak their traditional language on a "regular" but not "most often" basis. Changes over the decade 1996 to 2006 also suggest that Aboriginal language speakers in urban areas in general, and in most cities, are fewer in number and older on average for both first language and all (including second language) speakers.

Yet, as this study demonstrates, in taking the analysis a step further to the level of individual cities, language situations cannot be assumed to be the same for all speakers simply by virtue of their being in an urban environment. The challenges and prospects in language maintenance and revitalization vary considerably among cities themselves. Cities can differ in relation to various factors, such as location, distance to an Aboriginal community / reserve, Aboriginal composition, and share of total city population; demographic considerations (e.g., migration, fertility); and the state and diversity of each city's different Aboriginal languages and cultures. The linguistic and cultural heterogeneity of an Aboriginal urban community is a significant consideration in understanding and addressing the unique challenges and prospects of language maintenance and revival within that city. Aboriginal residents in cities across Canada continue to display significant differences, as observed ten years earlier, in the state and diversity of their traditional languages, including the uniqueness of each city's set of Aboriginal languages.

This study suggests that, ten years after the 1996 Census, Aboriginal people continue to be confronted with significant challenges and issues in maintaining and revitalizing their traditional languages in cities across Canada. However, city-specific findings can have implications for designing strategies to address those challenges unique to each city's Aboriginal language situation.

Challenges and Strategies for Language Maintenance and Revitalization in Different Cities

The first part of this series suggested that the challenges of “being surrounded by non-Aboriginal people and cultures” and of “heterogeneity” as identified by Peters (2011, 85) in her discussion on “the emergence and maintenance of positive urban Aboriginal identities,” are also highly relevant to the situation of Aboriginal languages in urban areas. It was proposed that, given the challenges presented by living on a daily basis in a mainstream French or English urban environment, strategies for Aboriginal people speaking and learning their traditional languages could be linked to traditional languages being spoken within the home at least on a regular basis, if not as a major home language; and being learned as a second language, if not as a mother tongue.

The challenges of “heterogeneity” are distinctly evident at the city-level, given the significant linguistic diversity within and across different cities in their Aboriginal language composition, and the implications for the urban Aboriginal community. As the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1993, 4) observed, “[t]he diversity of origins and cultures of Aboriginal people living in a particular city often poses difficulty in establishing a sense of community.” This difficulty can certainly be extended to Aboriginal language survival within a city. Challenges in language maintenance and revitalization are especially pronounced in a city like Vancouver, with its considerable diversity of Aboriginal languages, many small and endangered, and with an aging and declining speaker population.

As well, the nature of challenges can vary from city to city, reflecting differences in the state and diversity of their Aboriginal languages and in their implications for appropriate strategies and supports. City-level language measures and indicators of Aboriginal language states can help inform appropriate strategies and supports unique to each city. It is reasonable, for example, to expect that sources of language learning for Aboriginal children could vary from city to city, depending on the state of their traditional languages. To illustrate, the study’s measures and indicators reveal that Winnipeg has the largest city population with an Aboriginal mother tongue and / or the ability to speak an Aboriginal language, possessing relatively large, young populations of first language speakers, mainly speaking one of the two viable languages of Cree and Ojibway. It is not surprising then, as noted in the first part of this series (Norris 2011a, 9-10) that, as according to the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), parents and other family members are major sources of language learning for children in Winnipeg, where practically half (49%) of adults indicate the ability to speak an Aboriginal language very well or relatively well. Conversely, demographic language indicators for Toronto reveal one of the smallest and older Aboriginal mother tongue populations, and a more linguistically diverse population of speakers compared to that of Winnipeg. According to APS data on Toronto, just 19 percent of the city’s Aboriginal residents report the ability to speak an Aboriginal language very well or relatively well. Furthermore, and consistent with these contrasts, Toronto teachers (39%) and other persons (62%) are major sources of learning an Aboriginal language for children. Conversely, in Winnipeg, where parents and other family members are the major sources of learning, teachers and other persons accounting for only 6 percent and 18 percent (Norris, 2008b).

Again, the use of city-specific indicators of language state and measures of diversity can help inform the appropriate strategies for the survival and revitalization of Aboriginal languages in cities. This is especially so when combined with other city-specific studies on learning sources and supports, such as the Belanger et al. (2003) study of twenty Winnipeg Aboriginal youth, which indicated that grandparents were important sources of Aboriginal cultural identities, along with Aboriginal programming in the city and in the media (Peters 2011, 92-93).

These city-specific illustrations serve to reinforce Peters' observation that "[a] acknowledging the diversity of urban Aboriginal communities is an important basis for public policy" (2011, 91). In the case of Aboriginal language planning strategies, such an approach can help inform the appropriateness and feasibility of various policies and programs (e.g., youth-elder activities / camps; Master-Apprentice programs; school programs) within different urban Aboriginal communities.

In terms of current research, the recently released volume of analytical research papers published by the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), entitled *Urban Aboriginal Communities in Canada: Complexities, Challenges, Opportunities*, as part of the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN), is evidence of the increased recognition of the need for informed urban policy research at a community-level:

This collection of papers brings together the broad scope and challenges of Aboriginal people all across Canada. The analysis provided here is unique. It is not based on large communities or a summary of total national statistics, but emerges through a critical examination of issues and challenges in over 304 urban communities, from smallest to largest, across Canada (Dinsdale, White, and Hanslemann 2011, vii).

One of the volume's articles exploring the state, diversity, and prospects of Aboriginal languages in the catchment areas of Friendship Centres (current and potential) across Canada also demonstrates significant variation in linguistic diversity and language states of urban Aboriginal communities (Norris 2011b, 249-91).

In relation to language policy and programs, and in the context of community identity and well-being, language indicators for urban Aboriginal communities can serve to establish benchmarks and contribute to an assessment of Aboriginal languages and trends, within individual cities as well as for urban areas overall. Furthermore, such measures of language use and learning (e.g., number of speakers) have been highlighted in some urban communities, such as Winnipeg, as an indicator of cultural identity—an important consideration within the context of community well-being (Rust 2010). Indicators can also "become tools for change and learning ... [and] ... serve to raise awareness of concerns and issues" (56).

In conclusion, this second part of the series on Aboriginal languages at the city level reinforces the first study's findings on urban areas in general. However, it also serves to illustrate the significant heterogeneity across urban Aboriginal communities—the linguistic diversity and variation in the state of the numerous Aboriginal languages spoken in cities across Canada. Findings point to significant implications for policies and programs concerning Aboriginal languages in urban areas, and the importance of developing effective language planning strategies in maintenance and revitalization based on city-specific needs and challenges.

Endnotes

This article represents an update of the chapter “Aboriginal languages in Canada’s Urban Areas: Characteristics, Considerations and Implications” (Norris and Jantzen 2003).

1. This article is based on an earlier version of a paper prepared by the author for the Department of Canadian Heritage’s Strategic Policy and Management Branch. The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Canadian Heritage. The author would like to acknowledge, with thanks, the management and support of this project provided by Lorna Jantzen and Mike Musca.

2. By maintaining a 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 all of the “UAS cities” are included in this study. The UAS was first developed in 1997:

to help respond to the needs facing Aboriginal people living in key urban centres...

The UAS operates in thirteen cities whose Aboriginal population represents more than 25 percent of Canada’s total Aboriginal population. The thirteen designated cities include: Vancouver, Prince George, Lethbridge, Calgary, Edmonton, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thompson, Toronto, Thunder Bay and Ottawa (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2010 a, 2010 b; Norris and Clatworthy 2011, 14).

3. For example, counts of the total (reserve and non-reserve) Atikamekw mother tongue population residing in CMA / CAs are not comparable between 1996 and 2006 due to boundary changes between the 2001 and 2006 Census for the CA of La Tuque, Quebec. These changes resulted in the inclusion of three Indian reserves associated with Atikamekw-speaking First Nations in 2006 (Statistics Canada 2009; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2010 c, 2010 d).

ⁱ Figure 1 provides 1996 and 2006 total counts of city populations (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue (single and multiple responses); practically most, generally 96%, if not all respondents with an Aboriginal mother tongue report an Aboriginal identity.

ⁱⁱ Reported for the population with Aboriginal Identity and excludes reserve population within CMA/CA boundaries.

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