

# Native Households in Winnipeg: Strategies of Co-Residence and Financial Support

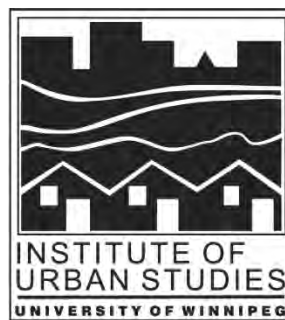
Research and Working Paper No. 5

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by Evelyn J. Peters  
1984

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The Institute of Urban Studies





THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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**NATIVE HOUSEHOLDS IN WINNIPEG: STRATEGIES OF CO-RESIDENCE AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Studies of native Indians in Canadian cities have identified patterns of household composition and economic support which differ from the nuclear family, conjugal pair and single person types that predominate in the white urban population. Native households frequently contain members other than the nuclear family, expanding and contracting as individuals in the extended family require shelter. (Ablon, 1964; Atwell, 1969; Davis, 1965; Denton, 1970; Jorgensen, 1971; Robbins, 1968; Sorkin, 1978). Edgar Dosman (1972:87), studying urban natives in Saskatoon described one such household.

Members of the extended family were not inhibited about crashing, unconcerned about the enormous pressure on the home economy. At all times, the home was full of numerous relatives who came to live with the already hard-pressed family. It was not possible to turn them out, given their certain resentment of such unilateral action.

A large proportion of native families have single female parents as head and rates of welfare dependency are high (Clatworthy, 1980; Stanbury, 1975).

With respect to the stability of household composition, Dosman (1972:73) wrote: "large numbers of transient relatives and kin roam about at the expense of stability and discipline of any kind whatsoever." Larry Krotz (1980:25) similarly described the fluid living arrangements of a native family in Winnipeg who had relatives still



on the reserve.

No one, at any given time, could ascribe a number to those staying at the house on the reserve or at the house in the city without stopping first to count them off, one by one.

Researchers found that financial resources were shared among extended family members. Mark Nagler (1970:21), in a study of native migrants to Toronto, wrote that

if an Indian requires help which he knows can be given by another Indian in his immediate or extended family, he asks for this aid and expects to obtain it as a matter of right.

Heads of families could not refuse the demands of extended family members without creating hostility, a risk many families could not afford given their uncertain position in the city and the chance that they might have to return to the reserve. Dosman (1972:185) wrote that native families had to "battle their extended families" in order to protect the home economy. Others cited similar situations (Ablon, 1964; Nagler, 1970).

These patterns of co-residence and economic support have had two main interpretations. The first is that they reflect disorientation and family disorganization accompanying migration from a rural native community and exposure to an unfamiliar cultural milieu. Dosman (1972:73-74) for example wrote about the "complete breakdown of family life" among what he called welfare Indians.

It is not that the extended family concept is preferred to the nuclear family. Neither social formation serves any function other than immediate gratification at this level of disintegration; in fact neither truly exist.

A second interpretation ascribed urban natives' household organization to traditional rural lifestyles and emphasized its incompatibility with the urban environment. Nagler (1970:20) wrote, "the obligation system that is necessary and almost obligatory in reserve-type environments is for the most part not adaptable to urban centres." Others supported this interpretation (for example Grace, 1977).

The assumptions underlying these explanations have not been adequately explored. In the first place, there is little evidence that urban natives' household organization represents the attempt to reproduce rural patterns. Secondly, even if natives do attempt to reproduce rural patterns in the city, the specific ways in which these patterns are incompatible with urban life are not clearly shown. The descriptive terms "mutual aid," "exchange relationship," and "sharing" imply that individuals giving assistance also receive assistance. If aid is reciprocated, it is not clear why the sharing of housing and financial resources causes difficulty.

Researchers appear to have adopted a Parsonian model of the "normal" nuclear urban family in their research work on the lives of urban natives. Talcott Parsons (1955) described the typical modern family as consisting of a male with a female spouse and dependent offspring,

living in a dwelling unit separate from kin, dependent on the wages of the male head. He indicated that this was the smallest unit capable of fulfilling essential family functions -- the socialization of children and tension management for adults. Small, independent family units were able to respond to the demands of the industrial economy for a mobile labour force, and nuclear families could take advantage of opportunities for social advancement because they were unhampered by the demands of their extended families. Applying this nuclear family model uncritically to urban natives, researchers interpreted the patterns of support and residence in native households as evidence of their failure to adjust to life in an urban industrial setting.

Parsons' approach did not account for the variation in needs associated with economic status and recent migration. The economic rationale Parsons cites as a motivating force for adaptation in family and household organization has limited application to the domestic arrangements of individuals with little opportunity for economic advancement and a tenuous attachment to the labour force.

In opposition to the disorganization or disorientation thesis, several researchers have looked to natives' economic position for an explanation. Jorgensen (1971) argued that in response to economic insecurity, many Indians maintain strong collective ties, realized in their household composition and inter-household networks. Indian composite households do not represent the retention of aboriginal

customs but are products of poverty and undependable income sources. In this respect the strategies urban natives use are similar to those found among other families living in poverty in the Western world. Robbins (1968) and Guillemin (1975) make a similar argument.

The interplay of economic forces and different aspects of household organization is, however, geographically specific. Households and families respond to local markets, employment conditions and institutional regulations (Morris, 1978). Studies of urban natives have not made the attempt to identify these particular contextual connections. In addition, while several studies have shown that newcomers to the city frequently depend on friends and kin already residing there for aid and shelter (McCaskill, 1970; Stanbury, 1975), the relationship between the migration process and native household composition has not been the focus of study.

This study looks for an interpretation of natives' household arrangements which is not based on models of family organization among middle income urban families, but which explores the logic of natives' responses to their particular circumstances in a Western Canadian city. It argues that to understand natives' household organization, researchers should take into account native needs, economic resources, and the alternatives and opportunities available to them in an urban setting.

## 2.0 DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The data employed in this study came primarily from two sources. In the summer of 1979 the Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg, collected information about the demographic composition and economic characteristics of a sample of native households in central Winnipeg. The survey design provided uniform spatial coverage of 25½ census tracts in the inner city. Interviewers contacted every fifth address recorded on postal carrier lists and interview schedules were completed for households with one or more members with native ancestry. As several researchers have noted, much of the work on urban natives has used case study or linked respondent techniques, which severely limit the representativeness of results (Baril, 1979, White, 1980). The Institute data set is one of the few studies based on random sampling methods. One hundred and seventy-six of the households interviewed contained parents and their dependent children (Table 1). These households were the focus of the present study.

The Institute survey did not ask about the stability of employment for members of the household or the longevity of different patterns of co-residence. Total household income was noted but not the way in which income was distributed among members of the household, or extended to individuals in other households. No account was taken of visitors to the household.

Table 1

Composition of Native Households Containing  
Parents and Children, Inner City Winnipeg.

Household Category	number	per cent of category
<b>I. Households with a Single Parent</b>		
1. With Dependent Offspring Only	65	66.4%
2. With Dependent Offspring and Extensions	10	10.2
3. With Dependent and Adult Offspring	13	13.3
4. With Dependent and Adult Offspring and Extensions	6	6.1
5. With Adult Offspring Only	4	4.1
6. With Adult Offspring and Extensions	0	0
Total Households with a Single Parent	98	
<b>II. Households with Two Parents</b>		
1. With Dependent Offspring Only	53	67.9
2. With Dependent Offspring and Extensions	6	7.7
3. With Dependent and Adult Offspring	11	14.1
4. With Dependent and Adult Offspring and Extensions	2	2.6
5. With Adult Offspring Only	4	5.1
6. With Adult Offspring and Extensions	2	2.6
Total Households with Two Parents	78	
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	176	

Source: Institute of Urban Studies, Urban Native Housing  
Data Base, 1979.

To gain this additional information the author contacted a number of family households a second time, approximately three months after the initial survey. Fifty-eight households surveyed a second time provided detailed information about their domestic arrangements and changes in those arrangements over the previous three months, about visitors, and about patterns of aid to individuals outside the household.

Tables 2, 3, and 4 compare the household and dwelling unit characteristics of households for which a second questionnaire was completed, with households not re-surveyed.

Households contacted a second time had more extensions and higher incomes, and fewer were living in apartments. Higher incomes for the re-surveyed single parent households probably reflected their slightly larger size. Most received transfer payments which are adjusted to family size. The greater number of extensions in both types of households also contributed to higher average incomes, as most extensions were wage earners. Fewer re-surveyed households lived in apartments, resulting in slightly less crowding and slightly higher rents. Finally, the average length of residency in Winnipeg was similar for respondents in both surveys. Respondents in households not contacted in the author's survey had lived in Winnipeg, continuously, for an average of 11.2 years, compared to an average of 9.9 years for respondents in the author's survey. Differences between households re-surveyed and not re-surveyed,

Table 2

Household Composition of Native Households,  
Re-surveyed and Not Re-surveyed.

Household Category	Average Household Size	Average Resident Children	Offspring Age Five Or Less	With Extensions
I. Single Parent				
1. Not Re-surveyed (N=62)	3.8	2.6	46%	13%
2. Re-surveyed (N=32)	4.0	2.5	47	24
II. Two Parent				
1. Not Re-surveyed (N=46)	4.7	2.6	53	11
2. Re-surveyed (N=26)	5.0	2.7	48	24

Sources: Institute of Urban Studies, Urban Native Housing  
Data Base- 1979.  
Author's Survey, 1980.



Table 3

Household Income of Native Households,  
Re-surveyed and Not Re-surveyed.

Household Category	Average Household Income	Average Per Capita Income	Receive Welfare	Heads Work Fulltime *
I. Single Parent				
1. Not Re-surveyed (N=62)	\$ 5,654	\$ 1,488	87%	14%
2. Re-surveyed (N=32)	6,860	1,275	88	16
II. Two Parent				
1. Not Re-surveyed (N=46)	10,772	2,292	18	67
2. Re-surveyed (N=26)	13,120	2,624	16	72

\* includes only male head in households with two parent families

Sources: Institute of Urban Studies, Urban Native Housing  
Data Base, 1979.  
Author's Survey, 1980.

Table 4

Housing in Native Households  
Re-surveyed and Not Re-surveyed.

Household Category	Renting	Living in Apartments	Average Person/Room Ratio	Average Monthly Rent
<hr/>				
I. Single Parent				
1. Not Re-surveyed (N=62)	94%	40%	.80	\$214
2. Re-surveyed (N=32)	100	27	.74	217
II. Two Parent				
1. Not Re-surveyed (N=46)	86	32	.95	209
2. Re-surveyed (N=26)	76	16	.89	239

Sources: Institute of Urban Studies, Urban Native Housing  
Data Base, 1979.  
Author's Survey, 1980.

however, are not large, and the following Chapter treats data from both surveys as describing the same native population.

Students of family organizations have emphasized the importance of considering the different needs and resources of individuals within the family (for example, Eichler, 1983). Kin relationships affect patterns of financial support and dependency, shaping aid networks and economic responsibilities. Eligibility for social assistance is an important resource for people in this socio-economic strata. These two characteristics formed the basis for differentiating between household members.

Household arrangements were organized by examining first the characteristics of the household head; secondly, the adult children of the head; thirdly, the extensions; and finally, visitors. The household head was the oldest parent with children living in the household. Adult children were those identified, by the welfare system, as being financially responsible for supporting themselves. In Manitoba, the welfare bureaucracy defines dependent children as children sixteen and under, or seventeen and attending school. Parents earning employment income are not required by law to support older children, and parents supported by social assistance receive no allowance for these children. The change in dependency status as children grow older is crucial for families supported by welfare. However, children in all families are able to leave school and enter the labour-

force at the age of sixteen, potentially taking the burden of their support from their parents.

Some of the adult children of the head had their own children living in the household. Because of their different needs and alternatives for economic support, they were studied separately. Extensions were individuals who were not offspring of the head. Respondents identified all visitors to the household.

### 3.0 NATIVE HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT

#### 3.1 Patterns and Stability of Household Composition

The proportion of families with a single parent as head of the family was considerably higher in native households than in all inner city households. Fifty-six per cent of native family households in the Institute survey (58% of the households in the second survey) had single parents as head, compared to approximately one quarter of inner city families (Clatworthy, 1980). Native households with single parents as head composed approximately 22% of all households headed by single parents in the inner city, while natives made up less than 5% of inner city households.

Table 5 compares the number of resident children of the head in native and all inner city households. Of particular interest is the difference in the average number of offspring that were seventeen or older, living at home. For all inner city households, the number of offspring living in the household decreases where the oldest child is seventeen or older. The most plausible explanation for this change is that older offspring are leaving the household. In native households, the number of resident offspring increases for older families. Where the oldest child in the household is less than sixteen, the number of offspring living at home in native households is only slightly higher than the number in all inner city households. In households where oldest offspring are seventeen or older, this difference is substantial. It appears then that young native adults are tending to stay home longer in native households.

Twenty-six (14.8%) of the native households interviewed by the Institute were extended families. The 1971 Census indicated that 9.9% of all inner city households were extended families -- fewer than among native households. Extended households among natives, however, usually contained only one person who was not a member of the nuclear family.

Table 6 summarizes the changes in household composition for the households contacted twice. Forty-two people moved into or out of

Table 5

Average Number of Resident Offspring of the Head  
In Native and All Inner City Households.

Household Category	Average Number of Resident Offspring	
	Native Households	Inner City Households
<b>I. Single Parent</b>		
1. Oldest Offspring Four or Younger	1.43	1.26
2. Oldest Offspring Five to Sixteen	2.70	2.36
3. Oldest Offspring Seventeen or Older	3.29	1.38
Total	2.57	1.98
<b>II. Two Parent</b>		
1. Oldest Offspring Four or Younger	1.27	1.22
2. Oldest Offspring Five to Sixteen	3.16	2.69
3. Oldest Offspring Seventeen or Older	3.16	1.40
Total	2.63	2.11
All Family Households	2.60	2.08

Sources: Institute of Urban Studies, Urban Native Housing Data Base, 1979.  
Clatworthy, S., statistics compiled from Social Planning Council Data, Winnipeg, 1979, (mimeograph).

twenty-three households. Forty per cent of households contacted three months after the initial interview experienced changes in composition. Only four of these changes, where adult offspring left their parents' household, were, what are usually considered, typical life-cycle changes. Extensions of the household were the most likely to move. Next were adult children of the head, who were not parents. Adult children with children were relatively stable.

In addition to the movement of members into and out of the household, more than two-thirds of the fifty-eight households interviewed in the winter had overnight visitors in the three months before the survey (Table 7). The average number of "visitor days" (the number of visitors multiplied by the number of days they stayed), for all fifty-eight households in the second survey, was approximately five per month. Respondents indicated that the household received approximately the same number of visitors during the rest of the year. This means that on average, household budgets must accommodate one additional individual every sixth day. No comparable data are available for non-native households, but it is likely that native households receive more visitors than most non-native households.

There are a number of co-residence patterns characteristic of the native households in this sample. There are more single parents

Table 6

Natives Moving Into or Out Of Native  
Households Within a Three Month Period.

Household Member	Number Moving In	Number Moving Out	Number Staying	Per cent Staying
Female Head	0	1	33	97%
Male Head	1	2	22	88
Dependent Child of Head	3	8	121	91
Adult Child with no own children present	4	4	4	33
Adult Child with own children present	1	0	5	83
Extension	12	6	3	14

Sources: Author's Survey, 1980.  
Institute of Urban Studies, Urban Native Housing  
Data Base, 1979.



Table 7

Visitors in Native Households

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Number of visitors	93
Households with visitors	41 (70.7%)
Average 'visitor days' * per household visited per month	5.4
Average number of visitors per household visited	2.3
Range of 'visitor days' per household	1 day to 98 days

\* the number of visitors multiplied by the number of days they stayed.

Source: Author's Survey, 1980.

in native than non-native households, adult children stay home longer in native households, there are more extensions and visitors in the households, and native household composition appears to be less stable.

### 3.2 Patterns of Economic Support

The idea that the extended family ties threaten the urban native family economy is generally accepted in the literature, almost without question. Economic arrangements for the support of household members and the impact on the family economy of adult offspring, extensions, visitors, and individuals outside the household, are examined in this section.

Table 8 shows that adult children who are not parents, make relatively little contribution to the household budget. Income for these households is low--most receive welfare or mother's allowance--so the continued residence of adult children must strain the household economy. Adult offspring are also the second most unstable residents of the household (Table 6), and it may be that when the household runs into difficulty supporting them, they feel pressure to move out.

In contrast, it appears that adult children of the head who were

Table 8

Contributions to the Household Budget by  
Resident Adult Offspring Without Children

Household	Age and Source of Income for Adult Offspring	Source of Income for Other Household Members	Contributions by Adult Offspring
1	female, 19 unemployed, works occasionally	welfare pays rent, head receives mother's allowance	buys groceries when working
2	female, 19 unemployed, no income	welfare pays rent, head receives mother's allowance	no monetary contribution
3	male, 20 unemployed, earned \$90 in previous three months	parents receive pension and municipal assistance	no monetary contribution
4	female, 20 unemployed, no income	parents seasonally employed, unemployed in winter	no monetary contribution, lives with boyfriend periodically
5	male, 19 unemployed, casual work, earns about \$50 per month	welfare pays rent, head receives mother's allowance	no monetary contribution
6	male, 20 no income, at University	father unemployed, mother works full time	no monetary contribution
	male, 21 employed, full-time		helps support household
7	female, 24 employed, full-time	father works full-time, mother works part-time	pays \$40 per month, saving to buy a car

Source: Author's Survey, 1980

also parents, were able to contribute to the household budget (Table 9). Four received mother's allowance which helped to financially support them and their children, the other two worked while their own mother took care of their children. In most cases, all income was pooled to meet household expenses. These adult children were more stable household members.

Extensions also appeared to support themselves most of the time. Only two extensions in the households surveyed by the author were dependent on other household members for support (Table 10). In the first case (Household 2), the extension had only been in the household for one month. In the second case (Household 4), it is likely that economic support was reciprocated, with household members currently employed and receiving an income supporting unemployed members of the household. All other extensions were self-supporting or at least contributing to the household budget. Data from the larger Institute survey corroborates this pattern. Sixteen of twenty-eight extensions received an income. Four of those extensions without an income played a baby-sitting role--taking care of young children while other adult members worked. Four extensions without an income were young children, possibly visiting for the summer holidays.

Turning to visitors identified in the author's survey, respondents in only three of the forty-one households receiving visitors indicated

Table 9

Contributions to the Household Budget by  
Resident Adult Offspring With Children

Household	Age and Source of Income for Adult Offspring	Source of Income for Other Household Members	Contributions by Adult Offspring
1	female, 18 receives mother's allowance	welfare pays rent, head receives mother's allowance	each uses half of allowance to buy groceries
2	female, 19 works part-time	welfare pays rent, head receives mother's allowance	pool everything, "just make it from month to month"
3	female, 19 receives mother's allowance	welfare pays rent, head receives mother's allowance	split grocery bill
4	female, 23 receives mother's allowance	welfare pays rent, head receives mother's allowance	split grocery bill
5	female, 27 receives mother's allowance	welfare pays rent, head receives mother's allowance	split grocery bill
6	male, 32 works part-time	single female head receives payment for foster children	male and son live upstairs, male pays half the rent

Source: Author's Survey, 1980.

Table 10

Contributions to the Household Budget  
by Extensions

Household	Age and Relation to Head, Source of Income	Source of Income for Other Household Members	Contribution to Household Budget by Extensions	
1	sister, 17	municipal assistance	welfare pays rent, single female head receives mother's allowance	\$250 per month
2	sister, 18	unemployed, no income	two parent family, male head works full-time	no monetary contribution
3	grand- child, 19	works full- time	single female head, receives mother's allowance	\$120 per month
4	sister, 21 sister, 24 brother- in-law, 23 brother, 25 sister, 26 father, 69	UIC benefits unemployed, no income works full- time works full- time municipal assistance pension	single female head, receives mother's allowance	"Doesn't matter who pays for food and rent."
5	mother, 60 and god-son, 3	mother gets disability pension and mother's allowance	single male head, works full-time, pays alimony	mother buys groceries, head pays rent and utilities
6	four grand- children, 2,5,8,10	mother of these children is absent, single female head receives mother's allowance for these and her own two children		

Source: Author's Survey, 1980.

that their guests had been unwelcome because of the strain put on the household economy. In two of these households, respondents said that visitors had been invited and welcome, but that the household could not really afford them. Respondents in the remaining thirty-six households with visitors indicated they would welcome the same number each season.

Financial resources flowing into and out of the household, and to or from individuals not living in the household were examined, as were overnight visits which involved an exchange of services or assistance (compared to social visits). Tables 11 and 12 list all financial gifts and loans, and all non-social visits by the type of household giving or receiving assistance, and by the community of origin of visitors and aid-givers.

The exchange network of urban households embraces the rural as well as the urban native community. Most assistance took the form of shelter rather than direct financial exchange. Most exchanges were among immediate family members. Households with two parents received relatively little assistance, possibly because they were in a position of less need.

Researchers have suggested that culturally sanctioned patterns of mutual aid meant that the demands of the extended family could not be refused, and that these demands threatened the viability of the home economy. This study found that visiting and aid-giving were

Table 11

Aid Given To and Received From Rural Residents

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Households With Single Parents

---

I. Aid Received

1. Brother came for 3 days while the head was ill.
2. Mother came for 1 week to help out.
3. Father and brother came for 2 weeks to help out;  
they gave the head \$10.
4. Father and brother give the head \$50 per month.

II. Aid Given

1. Father stayed 2 days to go to the doctor.
  2. Sister and baby stayed 2 weeks, looking for an apartment.
  3. Uncle and aunt stayed 1 week to visit their children  
in the hospital.
  4. Son stayed 1 night to take a course in the city.
  5. Mother and sister stayed 1 night to do some shopping;  
they gave the head \$10.
- 

Households With Two Parents

---

I. Aid Received

none listed

II. Aid Given

1. Brother stayed 1 month looking for an apartment, and was  
given \$10.
2. Sister stayed 1 day to shop, and was given \$50.
3. Brother was given \$50.
4. Grandfather stayed 4 days to see a doctor.
5. Daughter stayed 1 night to see a doctor.
6. Mother stayed 1 week to see a doctor.

Source: Author's Survey, 1980.



Table 12

Aid Given To and Received From Urban Residents

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Households With Single Parent

---

I. Aid Received

1. Father gives the head \$20 per month.
2. Sister loaned the head \$20.
3. Head's boyfriend gave her \$50 for winter clothes.

II. Aid Given

1. Sister and her two sons stayed 5 days, looking for an apartment.
2. Mother stayed 1 month because her apartment was torn down; she paid the head \$140.
3. Head loaned \$10 to her boyfriend's brother.
4. Head loaned \$10 to her neighbour to buy diapers and milk.

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Households With Two Parents

---

I. Aid Received

none listed

II. Aid Given

1. Mother stayed 3 weeks while her apartment was repaired; she paid the rent--\$200.
2. Daughter stayed 1 month because of trouble with her husband.
3. Brother was loaned \$80 to pay rent.
4. Son was loaned \$50 when he lost his job.
5. Friend was loaned \$60 to pay train fare.
6. Son was loaned \$20.

Source: Author's Survey, 1980.

not as onerous as expected. Extensions stayed in households for relatively shorter periods of time, and for the most part, they were not economically dependent on other members of the household. It appeared that aid was probably exchanged, whereas Dosman and Nagler had presented it as primarily one-sided. Households received aid from, as well as gave aid to, visitors and relatives.

#### 4.0 THE CONTEXT OF NATIVE HOUSEHOLD ORGANIZATION

##### 4.1 Patterns of Migration

A number of researchers have identified as a feature of the native migration process, the tendency to move frequently back and forth from the urban community to the community of origin (Boek, 1959, Johnston, 1979, Lurie, 1959, Siggner, 1979). There is evidence that natives may move to the city on a short-term basis, or make extended visits in order to "try out" city life before making a decision about moving permanently. Another sub-group of the native population merely uses the facilities and services available in the city, intending at the outset to return to their community of origin. Finally, some natives migrate seasonally, to take advantage of employment opportunities elsewhere (Nagler, 1970, Schaeffer, 1979, White, 1980).

But, not all urban natives move frequently. The heads of households interviewed in the Institute survey were relatively stable urban residents. The majority (56%) had lived in Winnipeg continuously for five or more years since their last move to the city, and the average length of residency was over ten years. Almost 90% indicated that they intended to stay in the city.

Relatively few ethnic or other institutions have emerged to facilitate native migration to the city or to accomodate movement back and forth (Price, 1975). In addition, many urban natives do not use or are not aware of existing organizations (Frideres, 1974: 96-97; Vincent, 1971). Natives' poverty severely limits alternatives for short-term shelter in the city. Information from the author's survey indicates that those natives living in Winnipeg provide accomodation for kin and family requiring access to urban facilities--such as shopping, hospital and medical services--as well as providing a base from which to look for employment and housing, or a place of residence while attending school. Visits also familiarize rural natives with city life. In this way, individuals and families residing in the city provide the structural links for native movements between the city and rural communities of origin.

#### 4.2 Patterns of Employment

Dosman suggested that the large number of native single parents was evidence of disorientation and family break-down. Patterns of native male and female employment rates suggest another interpretation. Table 13 shows that unemployment rates are much higher for native than other inner city residents. In the author's survey, it was found that in the three month period before the interview, only twelve of twenty-four male heads of families had been continually employed full-time. The rest had worked part-time or had been unemployed part of or the entire previous three months. The employment of female heads was more stable, but incomes were low, and most women, especially those with young children, did not work. A recent survey showed that native women feel that they have a responsibility to stay home to look after their children (Hull, 1983).

The uncertainty of the job situation for native males, and the security of welfare payments for mothers with young children, works against long-lasting conjugal units in native families with dependent children. It must be emphasized that the male heads interviewed in the author's survey were probably more successful in finding and keeping employment than most native males, as they had been able to fulfill the economic role demanded of them by welfare legislation long enough to form a household with a spouse

Table 13

Unemployment Rates by Age and Sex,  
Native and Total Inner City Labour Force

	Inner City Natives, 1979	Inner City Total, 1976
Males		
15 - 24	29.3	
25 - 44	12.0	not available
45 - 64	22.9	
Total		8.4
Females		
15 - 24	43.3	
25 - 44	19.0	not available
45 - 64	26.6	
Total	27.8	7.1
Grand Total	22.8	7.8

Sources: Clatworthy, S., "The Demographic Composition and Economic Circumstances of Winnipeg's Native Population," Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg, 1979.

1976 Census of Canada, Microfiche (CT-E0842).

and children. If these males were among the more successful, a large proportion of the native male population must be unable to provide greater security for mothers and their children.

Native adults between 15 and 25 have higher unemployment rates than natives in any other age category. Young native adults living at home with their parents seemed to be those who had no other source of economic support. Of the native adults contacted in the Institute survey between the ages of 15 and 25 who were not living with their parents, over 77.6% were employed, receiving unemployment insurance, or supported by a spouse. Very few employed adults lived with their parents, suggesting that as soon as they could find an alternative source of income, adult offspring moved away from home.

The inner city apartment vacancy rates at the time of the survey were very low (about .7%), which made it difficult for young adults to find housing away from home. The leaving-home patterns of young native adults who were not parents may reflect the difficulty young adults experienced in the attempt to find housing and employment, as well as the difficulty their parents experienced in financially supporting them for any length of time. Leaving home was not a single event but a process, in which children moved in and out of the household until they were able to cope on their own. In contrast, young adults who were parents and

receiving social assistance could contribute to the household economy, and moved in and out less frequently.

#### 4.3 Housing Conditions

The fluctuating native household composition can also be related to the condition of their housing. Natives lived in some of the poorest housing in the city. While less than one quarter of inner city housing was in poor condition, one half of native households lived in poor housing. A 1977 Winnipeg Social Planning Council survey found that 2% of inner city households were in very poor repair. In contrast, 27% of units occupied by natives were in very poor condition. Loss through closure, fire and demolition was high among these units. When the author attempted to contact native households a second time, about three months after the initial survey, nine of 142 units contacted were no longer habitable. Housing conditions and the instability of employment suggest that urban natives need some kind of interim shelter more frequently than other inner city residents--shelter they find among friends and kin.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

Dosman's description of the inability of urban natives to control the demands of their extended families and the enormous pressure these demands placed on household budgets were not found in this study. Even though urban natives maintained contact with their extended family, the financial solvency of nuclear families did not appear to be threatened by their demands. Most household extensions had an independent source of income, and households supporting extensions were those with greater financial resources. Almost none of the respondents in the author's survey complained about the stress visitors placed on the household budget, suggesting that visits did not threaten the household's ability to cope financially.

The method financial resources were distributed among household members suggests that there was a distinct hierarchy of responsibility: parents first supported their offspring, and aid was given to members of the extended family only when there were sufficient financial resources. This situation does not support a scenario of complete family disorganization and break-down.

Finally, although a larger proportion of native than non-native households were extended, differences were not large, and even though native households probably received more visitors



than non-native households, the numbers recorded in this survey seem considerably smaller than the constant stream of visitors to which Dosman referred in his study.

Dosman's account of the demands of extended family members and the difficulty they caused for urban natives may have been accurate: other researchers echoed his conclusions. The author's survey indicates that the situation may have changed. Dosman wrote in the early 1970s, a period during which the number of natives migrating to the city peaked. As a result, natives already in the city probably faced frequent requests for shelter and financial assistance from recently arrived kin and family. It is likely that many migrants were unfamiliar with the economic demands of urban life and may have been unaware of the burden they placed on their urban relatives.

The variations in the findings from the early 1970s and the later years of the decade may be the result of several factors. First, the number of native migrants to the city appears to have decreased in recent years (Siggnor, 1979). Second, the number of natives living in the city has increased so that assistance to new migrants may be divided among more households. Natives in rural areas may also have become more familiar with city life as a result of repeated moves back and forth from the city to the rural community, and improved communication to rural areas. As

a result, it may be that requests for financial assistance are less frequent and, therefore, less disruptive of the household economy.

Urban natives may also have learned to refuse requests for assistance. Dosman said of the individuals he studied, many were unsure of their ability to cope in the city and could not risk antagonizing acquaintances on the reserve, lest they found it necessary to return. In contrast, respondents in this study had lived in Winnipeg continuously for an average of ten years. Their ability to cope in the city was probably less tenuous, and as a result, they could control their responses to requests for aid.

There are a number of ways in which native family households are organized differently than other family households in inner city Winnipeg. More native households have single female parents as head; more households are extended; and household composition exhibits considerable instability. This paper argues that far from reflecting lack of adjustment to the city, or cultural disorganization and a break-down of family life, arrangements in natives' households represents a resilient response to the particular circumstances in which they find themselves, given the level of economic resources they have for dealing with these circumstances.

The formation of households headed by single female parents

can be seen as an attempt to find a stable form of financial support as a result of the instability of the urban employment market for men with low levels of education and few occupational skills (Clatworthy, 1980). Other patterns of household composition and economic support, and the fluctuating co-residence arrangements are related to natives' continuing ties to their home community, the difficulty young adults have finding employment and affordable housing, and the general conditions of the housing in which many natives live. The flexibility of household boundaries may be represented as an important mechanism for coping with uncertain employment and tenure, and the sharing of accommodation provides rural natives with access to urban facilities, and facilitates the adjustment of new migrants.

The ability to take in boarders or accommodate family and kin represents an important coping mechanism for urban and rural native people. As long as the employment situation, the poverty, and the housing conditions of urban native people exist, the ability to provide short-term shelter for kin and family should be preserved in any housing policies targetted for this group. At minimum the services needed to replace those presently exchanged in native households include: short-term, affordable accomodation for individuals using urban facilities on a temporary basis; affordable housing for young single adults; low-cost domestic help for single parents; and services which introduce migrants to urban networks and facilities and provide emotional support and social outlets.

Stereotypes of visiting behaviour in native households have suggested that strict controls are necessary to avoid providing housing assistance to non-eligible individuals and to prevent complaints from neighbours. The number of visitors and extensions and the length of their residency period in the households studied, suggests that this is not a crucial issue, and that urban native families do not need outside interference to manage this aspect of their daily lives. Unless there are services to take the place of those offered in native households, the patterns of exchange and co-operation outlined in this paper should not be regulated.

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APPENDIX A

AUTHOR'S SURVEY FORM

URBAN NATIVE HOUSEHOLD  
COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT SURVEY

Before we start, let me tell you a little more about this survey. First of all, any answers you give me will be confidential; information about this household won't be given to any social agencies or anything like that. Secondly, what we want to find out in this study is how people in the city help others by offering them a place to stay if they need to, and by helping them out financially.



PART A. HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Question 1.

First of all, could you tell me which people live here.  
 (Circle person interviewed.) (Underline persons within hearing.)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
First Name								
Relation to Hshld.								
Age								
Ethnicity*								
Occupation								

Years of schooling completed:

Grades								
University								
Other (Specify)								
Record of Absence								
Where lived longest								
Years there								
Where lived next longest								
Years there								

Months in Wpg. since last move here

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

\* M=Metis, T=Treaty, N.T.=Non-Treaty, N=Non-Indian.

PART B. PREFERENCES FOR HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Now I would like to know how you feel about families and the amount of space people need in a house or apartment.

Question 2.

First of all, about this place - do you feel crowded here when you don't have any visitors?

\_\_\_ NO                      \_\_\_ YES                      Do you intend to look for another place because of this?

___ NO	___ YES	If yes, how many bedrooms will you look for?
		_____

Question 3.

If you could have more bedrooms without having to move or to pay more rent for them, would you want more?

\_\_\_ NO                      \_\_\_ YES                      How many would you want altogether?

\_\_\_\_\_

Question 4.

What do you think is the best kind of family arrangement? Some people think it's nice to have grandparents, parents and children together, others think it should be just parents and children, others would like to have several families sharing the same household. What do you think?

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PART C:

VISITORS

I would like to talk about the people who have visited here in the last three months. I don't mean just for an afternoon or an hour, but for a longer period of time, say overnight, or for a couple of days.

Question 5.

First of all, do you have visitors staying with you right now? Did you have any visitors during the rest of December?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
First Name						
Relation to Hshld Members						
Age						
Where came from?						
How long stayed?						
What was occasion for their coming?						

Question 6.

What about people who visited you in November?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
First Name						
Relation to Hshld Members						
Age						
Where came from?						
How long stayed?						
What was occasion for their coming?						

Question 7.

Did you have any visitors in October?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
First Name						
Relation to Hshld Members						
Age						
Where came from?						
How long stayed?						
What was occasion for their coming?						

PART D: PREFERENCES FOR VISITORS

Now I would like to get an idea of how you feel about having visitors.

Question 8.

During the last three months do you wish you had had:

\_\_\_ more visitors  
Why, do you think, didn't you have more visitors? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ the same number of visitors?

\_\_\_ fewer visitors?  
a) Is this partly because you felt crowded?

___ NO	___ YES When did you feel crowded? (Go through Part C)
	_____
	_____

b) Do you feel this way partly because you couldn't really afford to feed and take care of visitors?

___ NO	___ YES When did you feel this way? (Go through Part C)
	_____
	_____

c) Do you have other reasons for wanting fewer visitors?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 9.

During the past year, did anyone outside your household, say a landlord, neighbors or anyone else object to any of your visitors?

<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES Who objected? _____ _____
	Who was visiting when they objected? _____
	Why did they object? _____ _____

Question 10.

Do you have about the same number of visitors each season (spring, summer, fall, winter), or does it vary?

<input type="checkbox"/> SAME	<input type="checkbox"/> VARIES When do you get the most visitors? _____
	a) During last (season with most visitors) did you feel crowded because of visitors? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES Who was visiting then? _____ _____
	b) During (season with most visitors) did you ever feel you couldn't afford to feed and take care of visitors? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES Who was visiting then and how long did they stay? _____ _____ _____

Question 11.

With reference to visitors from out of the city, if there was some place where they could stay for the night, such as a hostel at the I-MFC or other Indian or Metis organization, would it be more convenient for you to have visitors stay there, or would you want only some to stay there, or would you not want any of them to stay there?

\_\_\_ YES, all of them.

\_\_\_ YES, some of them. Which ones? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ NO, none of them. If NO, Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



PART E. HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES

I would like to know about the main expenses of this household per month.

Question 12.

Your house/apartment is probably the most important one so I'll start with that.

a) What is your rent/mortgage per month? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Do you have a lease? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ NO | \_\_\_\_ YES If yes, how long is it? \_\_\_\_\_

c) Does this include:

	YES	NO	if no, \$/month
water			
electricity			
heat			
parking			

d) How many bedrooms do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

e) Have you had anyone boarding with you, that is paying rent or paying for meals this last October, November or December?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Relation to Hshld						
Amount						
Rent &/or Board						
Time Period						

We know that sometimes people in the city help other people out by lending or giving money. Some people support their parents or other relatives on a regular basis, others help people out by occasionally giving or lending money. This could be counted as another household expense.

Question 13.

Could you tell me if you gave or loaned money to anyone not living here during this month?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Relation to Hshld						
Amount						
Comments about nature*						

\* Ask "Was this a loan or a gift, or was it payment for something you did for them?" If payment identify for what service.

Question 14.

What about in November?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Relation to Hshld						
Amount						
Comments about nature*						

\* Ask "Was this a loan or a gift, or was it payment for something you did for them?" If payment identify for what service?

Question 15.

Did you loan or give any other people money in October?

1            2            3            4            5            6

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Relation to Hshld						
Amount						
Comments about nature*						

\* Ask "Was this a loan or a gift, or was it payment for something you did for them?" If payment identify for what service.

PART F. HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Finally, I am going to ask you about the monthly income of this household.

Question 16.

I'll start by asking about the income of people living here for this month.

December

1 2 3 4 5 6

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Name						
Relation to Hshld*						
Amount						
Comments about source**						

\* Refer to people mentioned in Question 1.

\*\* Identify as wages, U.I.C., welfare, mothers or family allowance, or pension.

Question 17.

What about people not living here? Did any of your visitors or any other friends or relatives give, pay or loan you money during this last month?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Name						
Relation to Hshld*						
Amount						
Comments about nature*						

\* Ask "Was this a loan or a gift, or was it payment for something like room and board or some other service?" Identify for what service.

Question 18.

Now I want to talk about household income for November.

November

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Name						
Relation to Hshld*						
Amount						
Comments about source**						

\* Use people mentioned in Question 1.

\*\* Identify as wages, U.I.C., welfare, mothers or family allowance, or pension.

Question 19.

What about people not living here? Did any of your visitors or any other friends or relatives give, pay or loan you money during November?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Name						
Relation to Hshld*						
Amount						
Comments about nature*						

\* Ask "Was this a loan or a gift, or was it payment for something like room and board or some other service?" Identify for what service.

Question 20.

Finally I'd like to talk about household income in October.

October

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Name						
Relation to Hshld*						
Amount						
Comments about source**						

\* Use people mentioned in Question 1.

\*\* Identify as wages, U.I.C., welfare, mothers or family allowance, or pension.

Question 21.

What about people not living here? Did any of your visitors or any other friends or relatives give, pay or loan you money during October?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

Name						
Relation to Hshld*						
Amount						
Comments about nature*						

\* Ask "Was this a loan or a gift, or was it payment for something like room and board or some other service?" Identify for what service.

Question 22.

Is your monthly income fairly steady or does it vary quite a bit from month to month?

\_\_\_\_ STEADY

\_\_\_\_ VARIES

Have you ever had difficulty in making payments for rent or buying groceries because of this?

\_\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_\_ YES If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_