

## The Métis in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conference

June 18-20, 2003

Saskatoon

Day 3 – Tape 1

**Start Clip: 00:27:33:10**

**Evelyn Peters:** I'm a geographer, so what interests me is the geographies of Aboriginal people. What I want to look at is where Métis people are, what their characteristics are in those places. Now, clearly, I can only address some of the aspects, and this is based on census data on identity that, and on similar to other countries' geographies. I know Maria Campbell, for example, has investigated Métis place names, these kinds of more culturally infused aspects of Métis geography are also interesting. But today I'm mainly looking at census-derived materials based on people who call themselves Métis in the census. This is a little bit more detailed to the table that Andy presented, it's "Métis Identity Populations in Canada and the Provinces," and I based it on '91 through 2001. And if you look at the population increase, the percentage increase to the Métis population in Canada between '91 and 2001 is 116%. It's clearly a difference, substantially among the provinces. Andy mentioned that already. What some of the implications are is that provinces that previously had only a small proportion of the Métis population in Canada are now moving up there. So you get, for example, Ontario with sixteen and a half percent of the total Métis population in Canada, and that wasn't the case ten years ago. BC, with about fifteen percent of the Métis population in Canada, and you also get this shift in relative representation of Aboriginal peoples to where the Métis used to be a minority of the Aboriginal people in most provinces. Now they're becoming a much more substantial part of the Aboriginal population. So, for example, in Alberta they made up 42% of the Aboriginal population. And you can expect that if you just look at it in brackets, it has to impact on the kind of politics of representation that will play out in the provinces.

Now, clearly, what this also indicates is that people come to Métisness from different historical backgrounds and that's a theme that occurred a number of times in the conference. People who identify as Métis, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick probably come to that identity differently than some of the Métis from Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, and this creates increasing challenges for political organizations to find some way of accommodating all of these different sources of identity. If we look at the distribution of Métis within provinces, and here, it's, these are all in the binder if you find it easier to look at tables in the binder.

I just looked at Manitoba and Saskatchewan, to look at where the Métis are within the provinces. I thought these would probably give us some sense of the, of the kinds of differences that we find. When you look at where the Métis are in provinces, what's striking is that most of the Métis are in census subdivisions where they are a minority. Census subdivisions are villages, large rural areas, towns, cities, and so on. So in these two provinces, most of the Métis are in census subdivisions where they make up less than 10%. In Manitoba, you have six census subdivisions where there's a make up of a little bit more than 50%. In Saskatchewan, you have fifteen. And in these census subdivisions where Métis are a substantial portion or the majority of the population, in Saskatchewan, as the footnote, note, that the footnote notes, they do make up a very substantial part of the population—60%, 70%, 80%, or more. And if you look at that in maps, you get a slightly different picture.

Now this is, these actually come out better in your folders. This tract and this tract come out at 30 to 39, so it means that almost 40%, between 30 and 40% of the people, I'm pointing to, almost 40% of the people in these two census tracts are Métis people. The black ones, there's 50% or more of the population that's Métis. So, some of the implications are that if, if there are areas where there are opportunities for co-management, are substantial participation in politics in resource management, then, then you're looking at these kind of areas where Métis, if politics are that way, I mean nothing is cast in stone, right? These are just numbers. But, but if

you're, if you're looking at places where Métis make up enough of the population that they could argue that they should participate in co-manage-, co-management regimes, then you're probably looking at census tracts where they make up a substantial portion of the population. If you look at Saskatchewan, there again, I suggest that you look at the map in your binder because they come out better. If you don't have this huge area where Métis people make up the majority of the population, these little, these black areas are, are small settlements, primarily in the north. But again, some of those areas, Métis make up 70, 80, almost 90% of the population. So, the Métis seem to be spread out a little bit more evenly in Saskatchewan.

If you look at it a different way, not where do Métis make up the majority of the population, but where are the majority of the Métis people found? Then you get a different kind of map, and I didn't want to put those up because you're going to get sick of maps. But most Métis people are found in cities. In Manitoba, 51% of the Métis people live in Winnipeg. In Saskatchewan, 40% of the Métis people in the province live in Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon. So, I'm going to implicate a kind of disjuncture between policies that are based on social justice, policies that want to address social marginalization, which would be in areas where most of the Métis people are, mostly cities, and with the advancement of legal theory or rights-based policies that may depend on long-term occupancy, long-stated communities, and so on. Here, I'm completely out of my discipline. I'm a geographer, not a lawyer. But it just seems to me that there might be two different trajectories that we're, when we look at these kinds of distributions, then we have to ask the different question. Are the, are the Métis that are living in urban areas, are they really rural Métis? Are they just people who circulate? And if people in urban areas continue to have links with their rural communities of origins, and a census can't answer that really, really well.

You need much more ethnographic material to look at that, but we can get at least some indication of that, and this is, these are some of the same stats that Andy used. But I just want to point out something a little bit different, or I'm not disagreeing with him, but I want to have a different

emphasis. If we look at the registered Indian population, the urban to urban migration, okay, people who were in cities five years ago and are now in different cities, is about a third. In the Métis population, it's over half, 'kay. So over half of the Métis population is migrating between cities in that five year period. They're not migrating from the city to the, to their rural area of origin, and from their rural, rural area of origin back to the city. So this is, not only are Métis substantially urban, but most of them when they move, they move to another city. At the same time, you have about a third that are moving from cities to rural areas in that five year period. So you do have clearly a, a probably more Métis people than non-Aboriginal people that has connections to rural areas of origin, but it is not the main pattern of movement among the Métis.

Now we don't know if the people that move from city to city are a different kind of population than the people who move from city to rural areas and rural areas back to the city. We don't have those kinds of data, especially for Métis people. We're starting to get some of that material for North American Indians, but there's a real absence of research for Métis people.

**End Clip: 00:36:32:08**