

**MIGRATION AND MOBILITY BETWEEN RESERVE AND
CITY: A SURVEY OF WHITECAP DAKOTA/SIOUX
FIRST NATION RESIDENTS IN SASKATOON**

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Introduction

Whitecap Dakota/Sioux First Nation Reserve, located 26 kilometers south of the City of Saskatoon, was first settled and selected as a reserve in 1879. Chief Whitecap (Wapahaska) and Chief Standing Buffalo (Tatankanaje) had fled to Canada following the Minnesota Massacre in 1862. For years the chiefs and their bands led a nomadic existence throughout the southern portion of what would become Saskatchewan. The chiefs frequently traveled to Fort Garry (later Winnipeg) in order to secure from government officials protection for their people. In 1866, most of Chief Standing Buffalo's family died in a smallpox epidemic, and the chief himself died that summer fighting the Crow. Both bands were settled on a reserve in the Qu'appelle Valley by 1878; but Chief Whitecap led his band to Moose Woods the following year, where a reserve was eventually surveyed in 1881 (originally just two sections of land but expanded in 1893, 1898, 1921, 1926, 1928, 1933, 1941). Band members moved seasonally to Prince Albert as a casual labor force, as well as to meet with other Dakota bands, such as Wahpeton. As the frontier grew, band members found more employment opportunities nearer to Saskatoon and closer to home. In recent years Whitecap Reserve has gained a reputation as a progressive reserve. The construction of housing, a new school, a water treatment plant, a fire station, sports facilities, a state-of-the-art golf course, and a planned casino exemplify reserve development. Under the present leadership of an active chief, Darcy Bear and Band Council, advised by professional managers, Whitecap Reserve continues to grow.

Chief Bear, the Band Manager and Council were first approached by Dr. Alan Anderson (Dept. of Sociology, University of Saskatchewan), Research Director and Jacinthe Taylor, Coordinator of the Bridges and Foundations Project on Urban Aboriginal

Housing during the summer of 2003 to learn more about band members living in Saskatoon. As a significant number of Whitecap band members were living in the city, the Bridges and Foundations Project was interested in determining the causes and dynamics of migration and mobility between the reserve and city. Only very limited generalized information on Aboriginal migration and urbanization was available from government sources such as Statistics Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; so it was anticipated that this detailed study of Whitecap band members could help to fill this void. Relevant information and data would be obtained through personal interviews with Whitecap First Nation urban band members. The survey questions focused not only on migration, but also sought to identify the housing needs of urban band members.

The Bridges and Foundations Project employed Heather Buffalo, a Whitecap band member, to conduct the interviews, under the supervision of Dr. Anderson, who constructed the questionnaire in consultation with the Band Manager and Council members. A contract was signed between the Whitecap Dakota/Sioux First Nation and the Bridges and Foundations Project on September 2, 2003. The target date for completion of interviews was to be December 15, 2003. Subsequent data analysis was done by research assistant Rebecca Hatten, a sociology student at the University of Saskatchewan; data analysis was completed in March 2004.

The completed sample consisted of 30 households representing 105 people (all of the band members living in Saskatoon who could be located and who agreed to be interviewed). Household heads were interviewed; however certain types of data were gathered on all household members.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Basic Data on Respondents

We found that the average number of people living in a home is 3.5, yet there was considerable variation in the number of occupants per household, ranging from one (4 cases), to two (8), three (5), four (4), five (2), six (6), and eight (1). As four might be the norm (in general society) for a household consisting of a nuclear family, overcrowding did not seem to be much of a problem for most respondents, although it should be noted that 30% of household heads interviewed were living in larger households than that level.

The respondents tended to be quite young. Almost half - 14 (46.7%) of the respondents were in their twenties, another 8 (26.7%) in their thirties, 4 (13.3%) in their forties, 3 (10%) in their fifties, and a single respondent aged over sixty.

Other household members typically included spouses and partners as well as sons and daughters, yet also included grandparents, brothers and sisters, and friends of the family. Correspondingly, the ages of other household members were highly varied.

Five respondents were engaged in sales and service occupations, five in trades, transport, and equipment operator occupations, and five were currently students; four were in social science/education/government/service/religion, two were in business/finance/administration, two in health, while three described themselves as homemakers, three were currently unemployed, and three would not provide this information. Inclusion of other household members revealed that an additional 35 occupants were students, four were in social science/education/government/religion, four in sales/service, three in the trade/transportation/equipment operator category, and one each in business/finance/administration and health, while three were homemakers and at least seven were unemployed (although information on occupation was not obtained from

between a quarter and a third of all other household members, many of whom were dependents without occupations).

Four respondents had completed grade school, compared to four who had completed some high school, seven who had completed grade 12, six technical/business/vocational school, five at least some university (of whom two had completed their degrees and three were still in progress), and one other post-secondary education. However, data collected on other household members added another 31 who had a grade school education, 12 some high school, 5 grade 12, 2 technical/business/vocational school, 8 at least some university, and 1 other post-secondary education. Thus a substantial proportion of respondents and other household members were quite well-educated, or were furthering their education.

Migration and Mobility

Asked when they had first moved to Saskatoon, three respondents indicated that they had arrived before 1980, eight during the eighties, sixteen during the nineties. This would seem to suggest that movement into the city has been increasing. While some respondents were long-term residents, approximately a third had moved to Saskatoon during the past ten years. Yet we were particularly interested in learning whether this movement tended to be uni-directional, or whether people also moved back to the reserve, or perhaps back and forth between reserve and city. Of those who answered how many times they have moved between reserve and city (80.0%), half (12) had moved only once, four had moved twice, two had moved three times, three had moved four to five times, and one had moved more than five times. Of twenty-four people who responded to this question, only two reported that they had never moved; they were born in the city.

Employment opportunities were most frequently stated for moving from reserve to city (43.3%). Moving for education reasons and for better accommodations were both chosen 33.3% of the time. Personal reasons for moving occurred 23.3%, moving for family

reasons 20.0%, while 10.0% of households moved because of an expressed general dislike of living on the reserve. Only a single respondent emphasized improved access to health care.

Asked why the respondent chose to remain in the city, reasons of employment were given by more than half (53.3%) of the respondents. 33.3% of people remain in the city for education reasons, 23.3% to benefit from improved accommodations, and 20.0% for family reasons or to be close to friends.

Most respondents (60.0%) had no intentions of moving back to the reserve. 13.3% indicated that they do intend to move back, and 26.7% of respondents were unsure, stating that it depends on future happenings. Of those (relatively few) who intend to move back, 16.7% say it will be in the next 5-10 years, 25.0% do not know when they will move, and 58.3% did not answer the question. The reasons given by four respondents for definitely planning to move back to the reserve were improving accommodation at Whitecap, improved highway conditions, and possible employment opportunities. However, most of the respondents were not sure whether they would actually ever move back. One person remarked that a move back could happen if future development occurs on the reserve. But fully a third of respondents did not give a specific answer about the possible conditions for returning. Of the respondents who provided specific answers why they are not planning to move back to the reserve (16.7%), one third still believed that the reserve had limited opportunities, and two-thirds expressed their opinion that they are comfortable in the city.

When asked the question of how many times the respondent had moved their residence during the past five years, the most frequent answer (40.0%) was twice. Quite a few people (30.0%) had not moved at all, 3.3% moved once, and 26.7% had moved three or more times. Thus there has been a considerable degree of mobility among Whitecap First Nation residents in the city.

Neighborhoods

Respondents were most likely to live in the far west side of the city - nine of the thirty households (in Mayfair, Westview, Massey Place, Confederation Park, Meadowgreen, Fairhaven) and nine in inner west side neighborhoods (Caswell Hill, Riversdale, Pleasant Hill), plus four more in other scattered west side neighborhoods (McNab Park, Parkridge, City Park, Lawson Heights); eight households were located east of the river (all but one of them in neighborhoods closest to the road out of town to Whitecap: Nutana, Buena Vista, Exhibition, Nutana, while one household was located in Avalon). In these neighborhoods seven (23.3%) of the thirty households surveyed had lived in this same neighborhood for less than one year, three (10%) for about one year, four (13.3%) for two years, six (20%) for three years, three (10%) for five years, four (13.3%) between six to nine years, and three (10%) more than ten years.

When respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the neighborhood, access to schools was satisfying to 53.3% of them, access to shopping or other services to half of them, access to public transportation in their neighborhoods to 76.7%. Whereas 30.0% of respondents believed that their neighborhood was unsafe. In total, 70.0% of respondents were very satisfied with their neighborhoods and expressed virtually no complaints about the area where they were living. Just over a quarter of those surveyed (26.7%) had mixed feelings, both complaints and satisfactions about their neighborhoods; in fact, only 3.3% expressed only dissatisfaction with their particular neighborhood.

In ranking factors which determine where they wished to live in the city, respondents tended to emphasize living in a safe neighborhood (66.7% of respondents ranked this first), proximity to schools (30% ranked this second) and to shops and services (40% ranked this third). Respondents seemed less concerned about proximity to family or friends, to public transportation, or to institutions of higher education; nor were they particularly concerned about the need for cultural diversity as a factor in selecting location

Housing

Detailed information was gathered on types of housing. Most respondents (60%) were living in a single house. Apartment living was next most common (20%), followed by living in a duplex (16.7%) or basement suite (3.3%). We found that respondents who lived in a single house have changed their address as frequently as those living in a duplex, apartment, or basement suite.

The most prevalent reason for renting a home apparently was the inability to buy the type of home desired (50.0%). Wanting the flexibility of being able to move whenever desired was second at 40.0%, followed by the inability to obtain a mortgage at 30.0%.

The band members' two main complaints on the condition of their present accommodations were that the home is too small for their families (43.3%) and the home is in a poor location (43.3%), although as we have seen the latter opinion did not necessarily translate into dissatisfaction with the neighborhood. 26.7% of homes were in poor condition or not maintained well (in the respondents' own opinion). The respondents also expressed their dissatisfaction over inadequate green/recreation space (16.7%), high rent or mortgage payments (13.3%), and high utility costs (6.7%).

If the respondents were buying a home, a large majority (86.7%) preferred a single house. The second choice (46.7%) was a townhouse-style condominium, and the third (33.3%) a duplex. None of the households surveyed required a wheelchair-accessible home. One-third of all respondents required a home with more than three bedrooms, one-third required at least three bedrooms, and 30.0% required a two-bedroom home. Only one respondent needed a single-bedroom home. A large majority (83.3%) of respondents required the same number of bedrooms as, or less than the number of people in their home. 16.7% believed they need one more bedroom than the number of people in the household.

Reserve and City Living Compared

There were numerous factors mentioned when respondents were asked to compare living in the city with living on the reserve. Responses favoring urban living included: better transportation (11), better services (8), more opportunities in general/the reserve has “nothing to offer” (5), better employment opportunities/little employment on reserve (4), proximity to family/friends (2), more individualism (2), a sense of community (1), a poor highway between city and reserve (1), the expense of travel between reserve and city (1), better health care (1), limited accommodation on reserve (1), and disagreement with reserve politics (1). The far fewer responses favoring living on reserve included: peace and quiet (5), more of a sense of community (3), more of a chance to maintain traditional culture (1), proximity of family/friends (1), and less crime (1).

When asked if the respondent would move back to the reserve if housing was available, 43.3% (13) stated that no, they still would not move, 26.7% (8) supposed that they would, and 30.0% (9) responded that “it would depend...”. The availability of entertainment facilities, transportation, shops and services seemed to have little influence on whether or not the respondent will move to the reserve if housing were available. Of the thirteen respondents who said they will not move, six did not give a reason why, three were simply content to remain in the city, one believed there are no opportunities on the reserve, one will not move because of family reasons, and one claimed that it would be unreasonable for them given their present obligations. Of the other seventeen respondents who suggested that they would definitely move or that it might depend on certain factors, six said that it would depend on where the houses are situated, two would move because they preferred to live in “their own community”, one would move if a suitable mortgage could be secured, one depending on whether or not transportation is available, and one if future development occurs.

If employment opportunities were available on the reserve, 33.3% (10) would not move, 36.7% (11) supposed that they would, and 30.0% (9) answered that it depends on certain factors. The reasons that are given for respondents not wanting to move back to the

reserve for employment opportunities are that the respondents would commute from the city to the reserve (3), the respondents are simply content in the city (2), or they are content with their current job (1). However, 30.0% of those who do not wish to move to the reserve for employment opportunities did not specify why. The factors contributing to the decisions to move to the reserve for employment opportunities had to deal with specific employment conditions (7), the characteristics of the housing (2), whether or not future development occurs (3), and for reasons of decreased commuting (2). Yet again, 30.0% did not give a specific reason. 26.7% of respondents have no intentions of moving to the reserve even if housing and employment opportunities are available. Half of those who believe that they may move back to the reserve (13.3% of all respondents) would move if housing and employment opportunities were available. Adding to the complexity of this analysis – or perhaps indicative of the indecision of respondents - 10.0% of those surveyed would possibly move back to the reserve if employment opportunities were available despite answering earlier on in the survey that they have no intentions of moving back.

Few (just six) of the respondents were currently on assistance. Three of these would move to the reserve if employment opportunities and/or if suitable housing were available; one believed that they would perhaps move; and two that they would not move even if housing was available.

Contact with the Reserve

This survey of urban band members found a lot of variety in frequency of visits to the reserve: two household heads reported that they visit daily (ie. commute, although they resided in the city), four weekly, two “a few times a month”, four monthly, five at least once a year, two “whenever possible”, two “often”, four “rarely”, and five “never”.

When asked how often the 30 household heads attend band meetings, 25 (83.3%) responded. Of these, over half (13) never attend the meetings, four attend “once in a

while”, four attend “somewhat” or “somewhat often”, two “very often” and two “whenever possible”.

Many (almost two-thirds) of the respondents claim that they are kept up to date with Whitecap activities through the newsletter (9), “word of mouth” (7), family contacts (4), and Whitecap staff (1).

A large majority (90%) of respondents would be interested if there is an active band program for housing; one household head replied only if the housing is in the city.

Summary

To summarize some main findings from this survey of urban band members:

On average, there were 3.5 people in a married or common-law household, almost half between the ages of 20-29. Most respondents were employed or were students. Only 10% were unemployed. The other members of the household were commonly dependants going to school, under the age of 19. Respondents most likely live in west side neighborhoods of Saskatoon. Most urban band members were satisfied with their living situation, moving only once between the reserve and the city. Employment, education and better accommodation opportunities were the most prevalent reasons for leaving the reserve, with 10% expressing a general dislike of the reserve. Furthermore, most have no intention of moving back to the reserve, quoting the lack of opportunities on the reserve, as well as being comfortable within the urban center. When asked about housing, the most frequent answer given for renting was the inability to buy the type of home desired. The main complaints regarding current housing conditions were that the home was too small or in a poor location. In buying a home, a large majority preferred a single house, with a second choice as a townhouse style. Most respondents would require the same number of bedrooms or less than people in their home, with a small minority believing they need one more bedroom than number of people in the household. When choosing a

location of a home, a safe neighborhood, close to schools and other services as well as proximity to entertainment and employment were the most important to respondents.

The style of this survey eliminated many problems of validity and reliability. Straightforward questions and answers allowed for consistency and dependability. There was always a problem, however, as in virtually any survey, associated with respondents electing to not answer particular questions (which was of course their privilege explained before the interview), and a possibility of respondents interpreting the question in a manner not intended. A response rate estimated to be very high was ensured by the full cooperation of the Whitecap Dakota/Sioux First Nation and especially the involvement of the Band Manager and Council in the planning of this survey. This collaboration, between the Whitecap Dakota/Sioux First Nation and the Bridges and Foundations Project has been mutually beneficial, providing both the band and the project with valuable information. The project management is most grateful to the Whitecap Dakota/Sioux First Nation for this opportunity to work together.

APPENDIX 1.0

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

WHITECAP DAKOTA FIRST NATION

and

BRIDGES AND FOUNDATIONS PROJECT
ON
URBAN ABORIGINAL HOUSING

Survey of Urban Band Members

The Whitecap Dakota First Nation Band is working with the Bridges and Foundations Project to conduct a survey with its urban band members. This survey focuses on the causes for migration and mobility between the Whitecap First Nation reserve and Saskatoon and the housing needs of its urban members.

The information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your participation will provide the foundation with important information and it will be presented in general report form that will respect confidentiality. The project seeks to develop a better understanding of how to establish and sustain culturally inclusive partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations, working to improve the quality of life through affordable quality housing options in Saskatoon.

PART I: Household Information

1. How many people (adults and children) live in your home? _____

2. Please fill out the following table (with Person #1 being yourself).
This will provide us with a profile of the people living in your home.

Person #	Relationship to You (1)	Age (2)	Occupation (3)	Education (4)
1	Me			
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

- (1) Please indicate how each household member is related to you (for example: your husband, wife, son, daughter, father, mother, uncle, aunt, cousin, etc. or not related)
- (2) Please indicate your current age and the age of other household members
- (3) Please indicate, as precisely as possible, your present or usual occupation, and whether you are currently working full-time, part-time, seasonally, or are unemployed.
- (4) Please indicate the highest level of education attained to date by yourself and other household members (for example: university, high school, elementary school, and whether you / they have graduated or are currently in progress).

PART II: Mobility

3. When (what year) did you first move into Saskatoon?

4. How many times have you moved in between reserve and city, and how often? (If possible, please specify exact years)

5. What have been your reasons for moving from the reserve to the city?

6. And for remaining in the city?

7. Are you planning to move back to the reserve? Please explain when and why.

8. In the last 5 years, how many times have you changed your address (i.e. moved to a different home)?
 - None
 - Once
 - Twice
 - Three
 - More than three

9. Where do you live in the city? (Please specify the exact neighbourhood.)

10. How long have you lived in this particular neighbourhood?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1 year
 - 2 years
 - 3 years
 - 4 years
 - 5 years
 - another length of time – please specify _____

11. How satisfied are you with this neighbourhood?

- Access to health care / home care services
- Access to shopping or other services
- Access to work
- Access to university/college, etc.
- Access to schools
- Access to public transportation
- Wanted to be closer to family/friends
- Neighbourhood(s) unsafe
- Little respect for cultural diversity
- Changes in the family
- Other _____

PART III: Housing Wants and Needs

12. What type of home are you currently living in?

- Single house
- Duplex
- Townhouse
- Apartment
- Basement suite
- Other _____

13. If you RENT, please explain why. (Select all that apply to you)

- Short-term stay (less than a year)
- Want the flexibility of being able to move when I want
- Don't want the responsibilities of home ownership
- Can't afford to buy the type of home I want
- Unable to obtain a mortgage
- Feel uncomfortable dealing with the banks
- Other _____

14. Please describe conditions leading to any dissatisfaction with your present accommodation:

Select all that apply to you

- Home too small
- Home in poor condition (not maintained)
- Rent, or mortgage payments, too high
- Poor location
- Inadequate green / recreational space
- Other _____

15. If you were buying a home, please indicate your top 3 choices of the type of home you would like. For example, put the number "1" beside your first choice, number "2" beside your second choice, and number "3" beside your third choice.

- _____ Single house
- _____ Duplex
- _____ Townhouse-style condominium
- _____ Apartment-style condominium

(a) If you require a wheelchair accessible home, please check this box

16. How many bedrooms do you need?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- more than 3

17. If you were buying a home, please indicate what is most important to you in terms of location and other factors (indicate your top 3 choices) For example, put the number "1" beside your first choice, number "2" beside your second choice, and number "3" beside your third choice.

- _____ Safe neighbourhood
- _____ Close to work
- _____ Close to university, college, etc.
- _____ Close to public transportation
- _____ Close to shopping or other services
- _____ Close to schools
- _____ Close to family/friends
- _____ Cultural diversity
- _____ Other _____

18. Please compare living in the city with living on reserve.

19. If housing opportunities were available on reserve, would you move there?

Please explain.

20. If employment opportunities were available on reserve, would you move there?

Please explain.

21. Are you currently on assistance?

22. How often do you visit Whitecap and how often do you attend band meetings?

23. Are you kept up to date with Whitecap activities, and if so how?

24. If there were an active band program to help you buy or improve a home, would you be interested in learning about it?

Yes

No