A Bleak Look at the Incidence of Low Income Among the Population Living in Private Households

The incidence of low income among the population living in private households varies as one moves through some of the main cities found across Canada. Ranging from high values in Vancouver to relatively minute levels of low income in Victoria, disparities are evident in areas within close promximity to one another. Low income households, for reference, are defined as those whose inhabitnats spend more than (approximately) 55 percent of their family income on "food, shelter and clothing" (Stats Can, 1992). This value of 55 percent has changed over time, as the average portion of income spent on these necessities has also fluctuated. This map depicts a (seemingly) trendless pattern of poverty and wealth; however, it is understood that there are many factors that contribute to the proportion of a population living in low-income conditions. For example, lone-parent families are especially suseceptible to low-income conditions since there is, typically, only one income provider (i.e. assuming that there is no supplementary child-support payments, etc.) (Stats Can, 2002). As well, unemployment plays an obvious role in determining the realtive affluence of a population (Human Resources Development Canada, 2003). Figure 1 and figure 2 depict housing conditions and family structure (respectively) commonly associated with low income conditions. While these conditions do not prevail in every low income situation, the probability of their occurrence is far greater than for a relatively wealthy household. Clearly, the effects of living in low income circumstances have detrimental impacts on the well-being of a population.

Figure 1 - A typical low-income house.
Source: http://www.uuahc.org/Allendale.html

Figure 2 - Lone-parent families are significant contributors to the proportion of a popuation living in low-income conditions.
Source: http://www.horizonmag.com/7/dc-homes.asp

Evidently, Ontario contains a relatively low proportion of low-income families. Conversely, Quebec appears to have an abnormally large populous afflicted by this low-income condition. Looking at Figure 3, it is clear that this result is correlated with the percentage of lone-parent families in the given region; moreover, the Ontario population was found having a lower value than the Canadian average while Quebec depicted a greater than average value. This data confirms the presence of a correlation between lone-parent families and low income conditions.
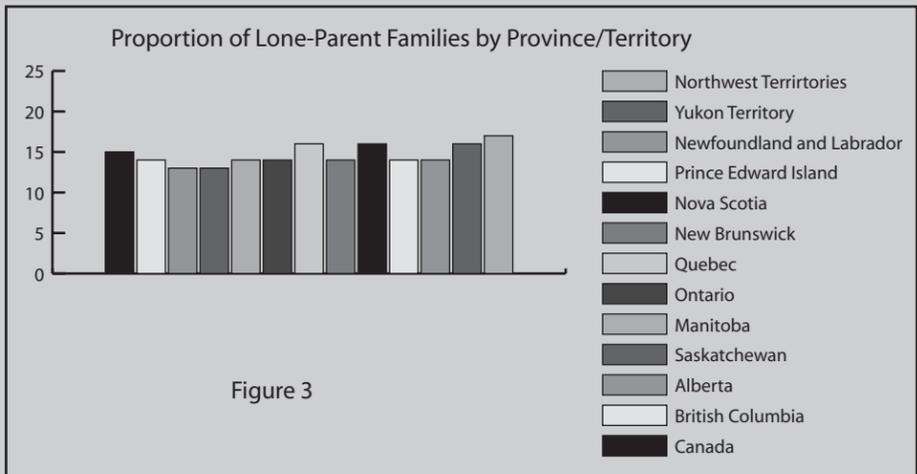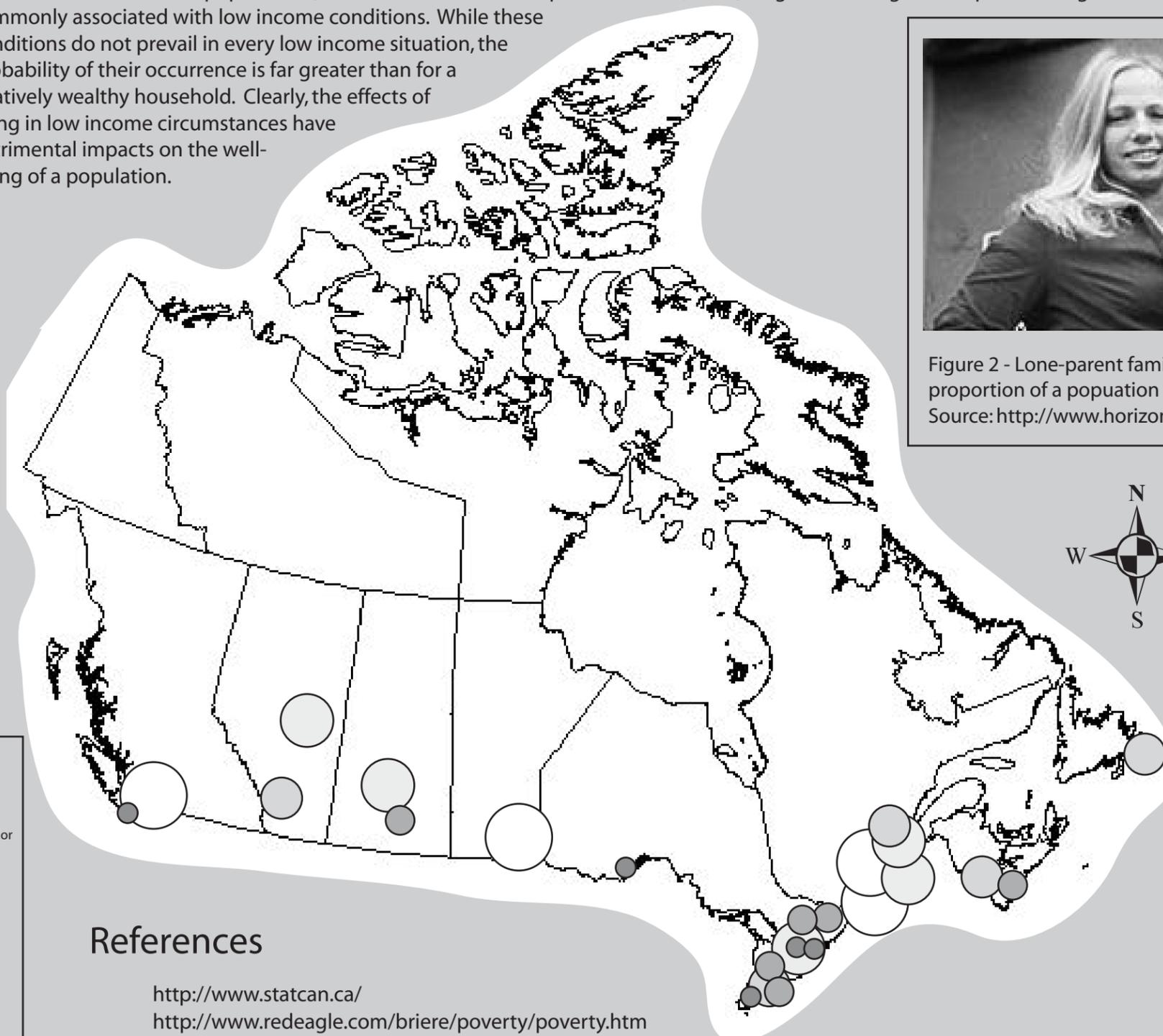

Proportion of Lone-Parent Families by Province/Territory

Legend:
- Northwest Territories
- Yukon Territory
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Prince Edward Island
- Nova Scotia
- New Brunswick
- Quebec
- Ontario
- Manitoba
- Saskatchewan
- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Canada

Figure 3

References

http://www.statcan.ca/
http://www.redeagle.com/briere/poverty/poverty.htm
http://www.nb.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/lmi/nbreview/2000-2/sectio1.shtml
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LEGEND

Percentage of Population Living in Low Income Conditions

- 12-15.9
- 16-18.9
- 19-20.9
- 21-22.9
- 23-28

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