

# **Native Women and Work: Summary Report of a Winnipeg Survey**

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**by Jeremy Hull  
1983**

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**The Institute of Urban Studies**





THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINNIPEG

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**NATIVE WOMEN AND WORK: SUMMARY REPORT OF A WINNIPEG SURVEY**

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NATIVE WOMEN AND WORK

SUMMARY REPORT OF A  
WINNIPEG SURVEY

Jeremy Hull  
March, 1983  
Institute of Urban Studies

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- J. Hull -



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## Introduction

Over the past several years the Institute of Urban Studies has been conducting research related to the conditions experienced by native people living in urban areas in western Canada. Much of this effort has been spent in establishing an urban native data base for the cities of Winnipeg, Regina, and Saskatoon. This data base is capable of providing detailed population estimates and various social and economic characteristics describing the urban native population. A number of our previous reports have focused on labour market issues: unemployment, occupations, and related information. One of the key concerns which has emerged from these studies has been the severe employment and income deprivation experienced by native women, and especially by native single parent families.

The results of this previous work may be read in several published reports. One of these in particular summarizes what our research found to be the major issues concerning native women in the urban labour market. (Clatworthy, May 1981) This report documented the poor jobs, high unemployment rates, lack of appropriate education and training, and lack of work experience among native women, all of which contributed to low income and insecurity. Out of this data, three important issues were identified:

- i) The need for more substantial and longer term occupational training programs for native women;
- ii) the need to reduce the extreme levels of crowding of native

women into certain low-paid and insecure occupations, particularly in the service, sales and clerical sectors;

iii) the need to deal with the barrier (to employment), which family responsibilities create, particularly for single parents.

While the urban native data base provided the objective data concerning native women's circumstances, it did not deal with the preferences, attitudes or motivations of native women with regard to employment and their family situations. Do native women want to work outside the home? What do they perceive as the major barriers to getting a job? How do they feel about child care and other family issues? What are their career aspirations?

Because of the lack of information on these subjects, a special survey was conducted in Winnipeg with the support of Canada Employment and Immigration, and the advice of a number of individuals who participated on an advisory committee. The survey of 182 women was conducted during March, 1982, by eight interviewers, themselves native women, and a report was prepared detailing the methodology and results of that survey. This report is a summary of the major findings and issues which were identified in the complete report. (More complete information concerning the methodology, survey instrument, data file, etc. is available from the Institute of Urban Studies on request.)

The following sections of this report will outline the key issues

which were examined in the survey, and the conclusions which have been arrived at. The concluding section will briefly summarize these findings and put them into a more general framework.



1. Goals and Aspirations

As was noted above it has been found that native women have had little success in gaining secure employment, and in fact many native women (about 40 percent) had not had any paid employment experience when the native data base was compiled. Further, the labour force participation rate among native women was found by Clatworthy to be approximately 30 percent, which was some 15 percent lower than that of other women in Winnipeg. This type of data suggests two alternative types of explanations. On the one hand it might be suggested that for reasons relating to cultural values or some other aspect of their background and experiences, native women prefer not to work. On the other hand, native women might be seen as wanting to work, but because of one or more barriers are unable or unlikely to gain access to jobs.

The Native Women's Survey (NWS) asked a number of questions which dealt with career goals and feelings about work. Most native women indicated that they wanted to work in full-time, permanent employment, with less than 4 percent preferring not to have a job at all. Table 1 summarizes this information.

The NWS also asked native women to identify their job preferences from a given set of categories. This resulted in the pattern of responses shown in Table 2. Here, it was seen that, in comparison with the occupations in which native women are currently employed, they hoped to move into more highly skilled employment. It is

Table 1

Work Preferences

A. Hours Preferred

Full Time (30 hours or more)	77 %
Part Time	20 %
No Job	3 %

N = 175 (7 not responding)

B. Term of Employment Preferred

Short Term (Less than 6 months)	13 %
Longer Term	83 %
No Job	4 %

N = 173 (9 not responding)



Table 2

Job Preferences

Para-professional	25.4 %
Trades	17.4 %
Clerical	17.4 %
Professional	11.4 %
Executive	8.7 %
Technical	7.2 %
Business	5.7 %
Manager	4.2 %
Labourer	2.7 %

N = 210 responses

noteworthy that occupations which have traditionally been dominated by men, such as trades and professional occupations, were preferred by relatively large proportions of the sample. Further, when these preferences were cross-tabulated with the native women's present or most recent occupation, no significant relationship was found between what native women would like to do, and the jobs they actually have. In short, their aspirations are, on the whole, much higher than what they have achieved so far. For example, while 53 percent of the sample were in sales, service or clerical occupations, only 17 percent preferred these occupations. (See Figure 1.)

The finding that aspirations are higher than occupational attainment is also consistent with our sample's responses to questions concerning why they took their job in comparison to their evaluation of the best thing about the job. (See Figure 2.) While career advancement was an important reason for taking a job in about 15 percent of the responses, it was not among the factors identified as the "best thing about the job." Similarly, earning money was the motivation for 38 percent of those taking jobs, but was overshadowed by the value of inter-personal relationships as a positive attribute of the job obtained. This suggests that the native women's career ambitions could not be fulfilled through the actual jobs they were able to obtain, and that other social values of the work place were substituted for career goals.

Further evidence in support of the view that native women want to work is provided in Figure 3. Here the responses to an open ended

Figure 1

Job Preferences Compared  
to Present or Most Recent Jobs

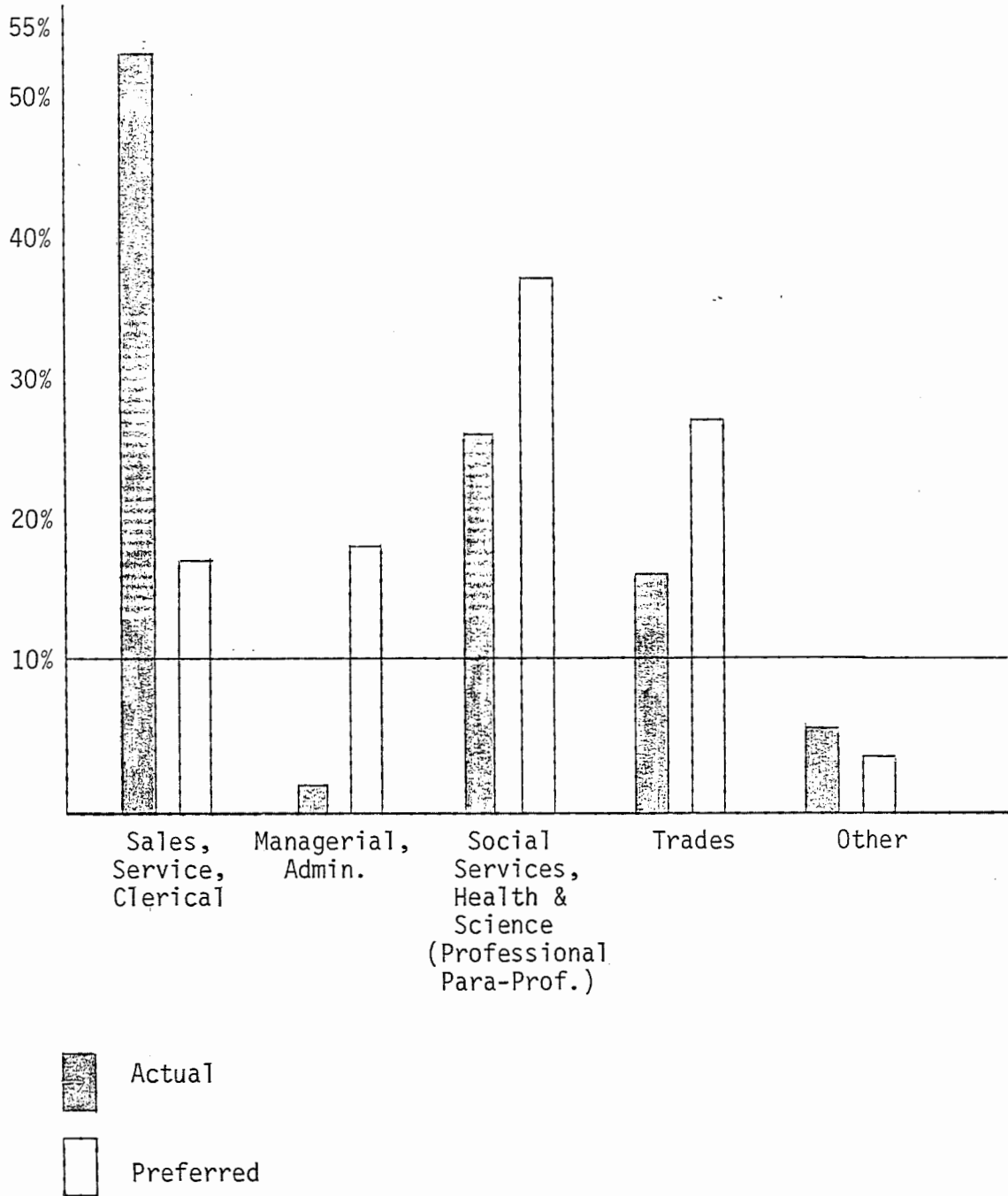
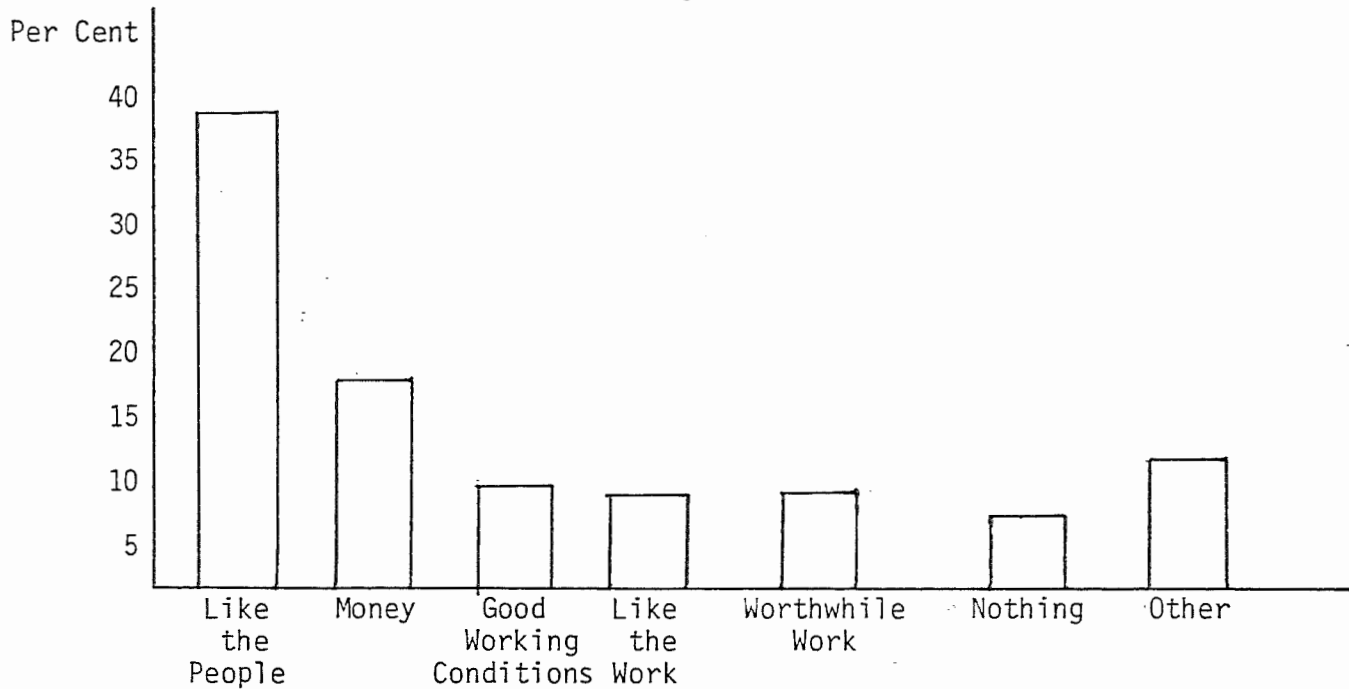
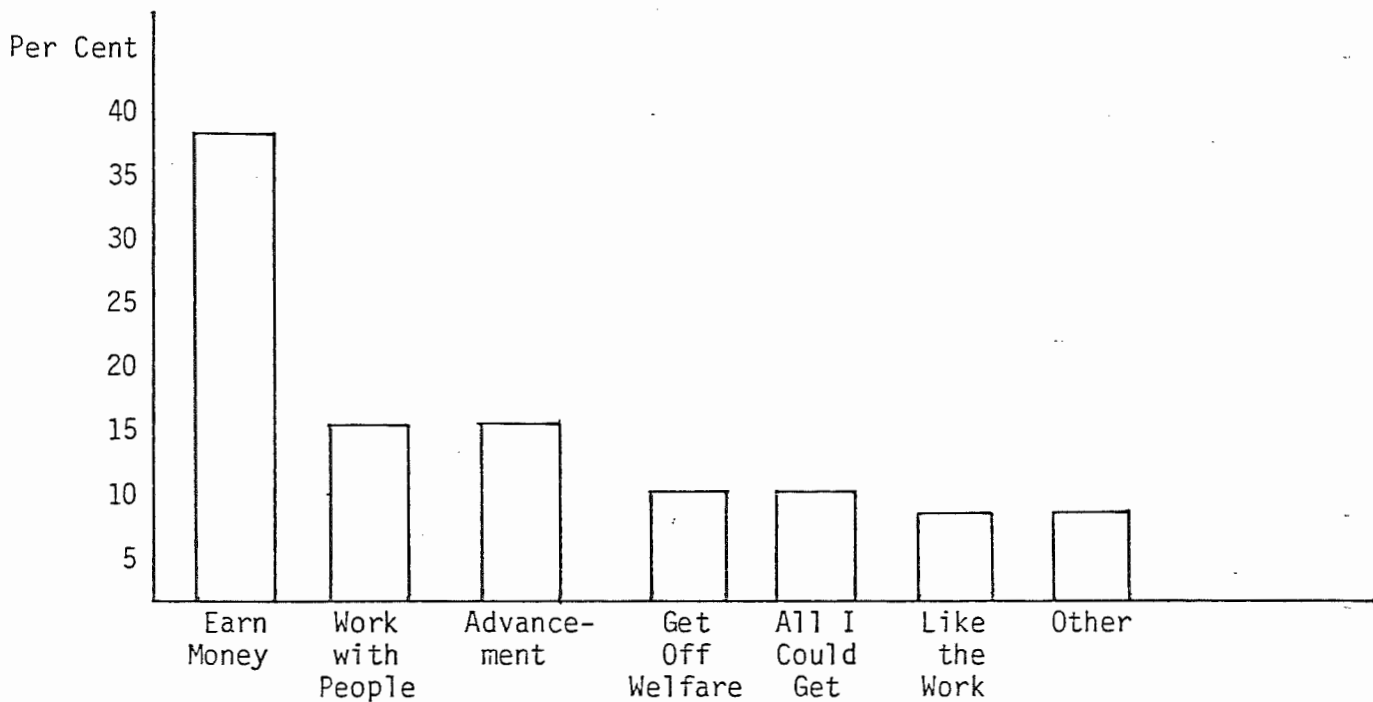


Figure 2  
Best Thing About the Job



Why Took Present Job



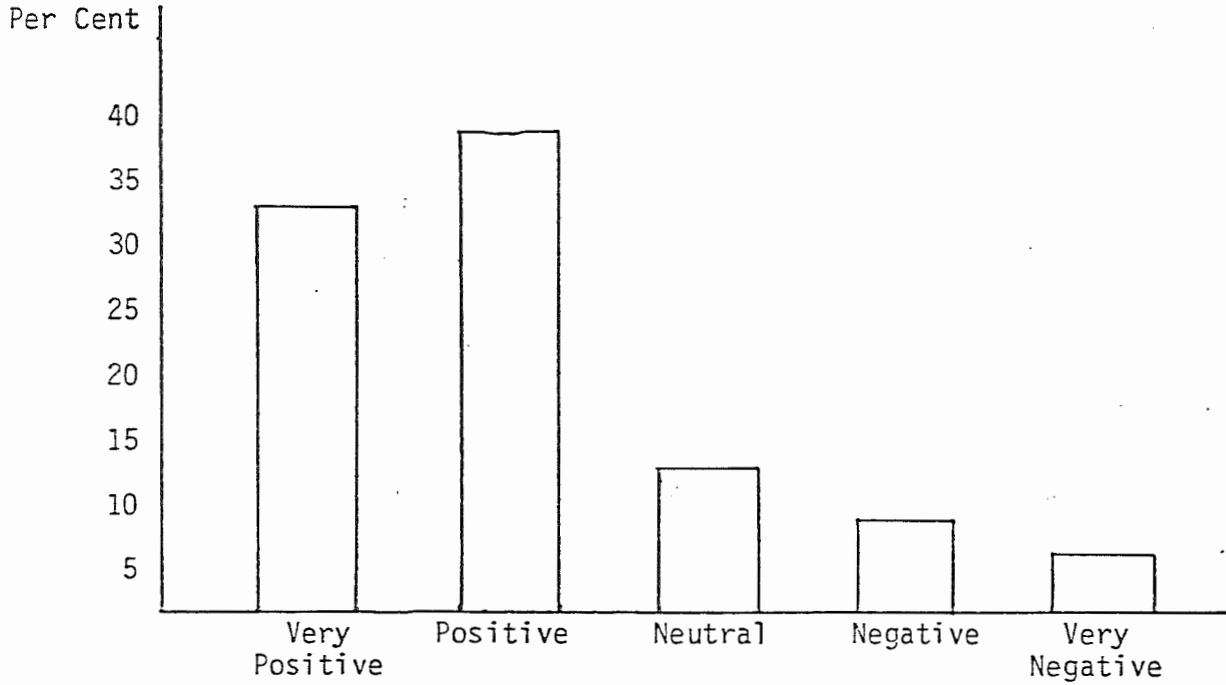
question concerning feelings about the present or most recent job have been categorized from very positive to very negative. More than two thirds of the sample responded positively to this question. While this high level of job satisfaction may be surprising in view of the predominantly lower paid occupations involved, it can be said at least that native women overwhelmingly prefer having a job to the alternative of being unemployed.

Our survey also examined why native women left their jobs (see Figure 3). It is clear that our respondents left their jobs largely for reasons beyond their control. Further, it will be seen that very few left their jobs in order to further their careers.

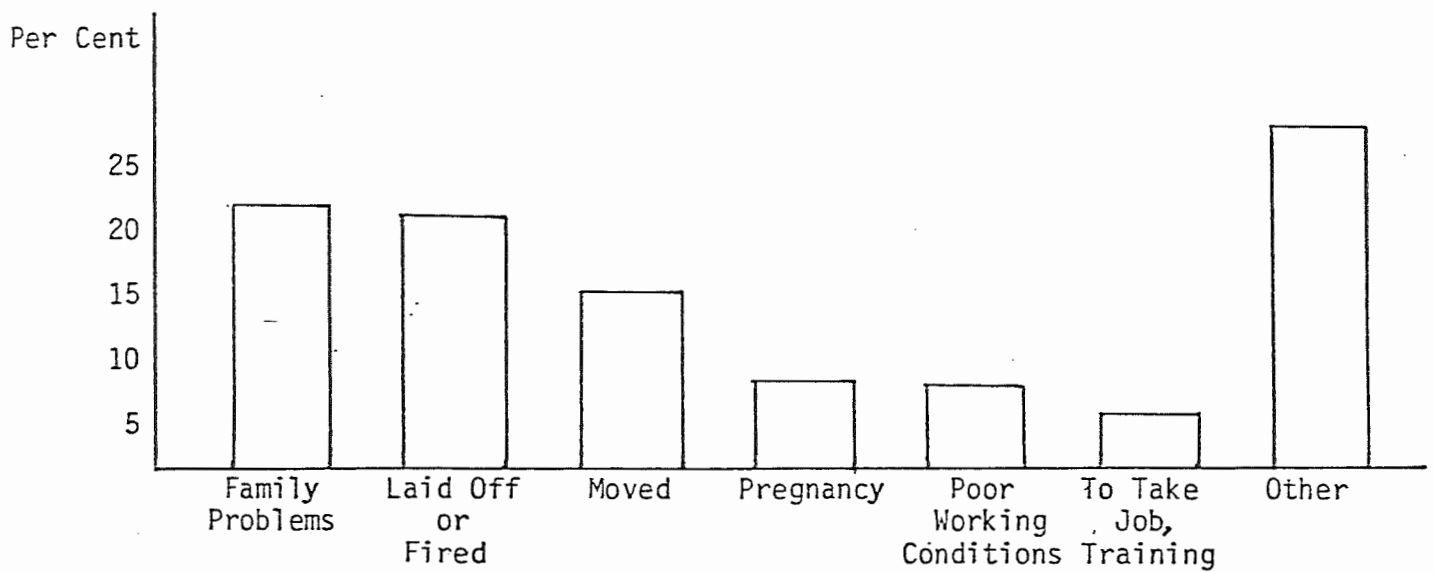
These results show that the majority of native women want to work but are experiencing difficulties in obtaining jobs and advancing their careers. While the sources of these difficulties will be identified in later sections of the report, they are not primarily to be found in a lack of desire or willingness to be employed.

Figure 3

Feelings About Most Recent Job



Why Native Women Left Most Recent Job



## 2. The Primary Barrier: Getting Trained and Educated

A number of questions on the NWS asked women to identify the barriers they felt would prevent them from obtaining a job. Of these the most frequently mentioned was the lack of training or education. (See Table 3) Considering native women's educational levels in comparison to those of other women in Winnipeg, it can be seen that a large gap in educational attainment exists. (See Figure 4) This data confirms the results of many studies of native student achievement in the schools which consistently show native students to be lagging behind their fellow students or dropping out. (See Stevens, 1982 for a recent summary of data for Manitoba.)

It has been widely assumed that educational attainment has a positive effect on employment success. Clatworthy, (May, 1982) examined this relationship and confirmed that low educational attainment is closely correlated with high unemployment rates and lower occupational levels. His analysis considered sex, age, length of residence in the city, and native group along with education as possible influences on employment level, but none of the other variables had a major impact on employment.

This cannot be taken as conclusive proof of a cause and effect relationship, however, since higher educational attainment has been shown to be strongly affected by such factors as parents' occupations. A number of such studies have confirmed this in the Canadian context (See National Council of Welfare, 1975) and it is likely that

Table 3

Most Important Barriers to Employment

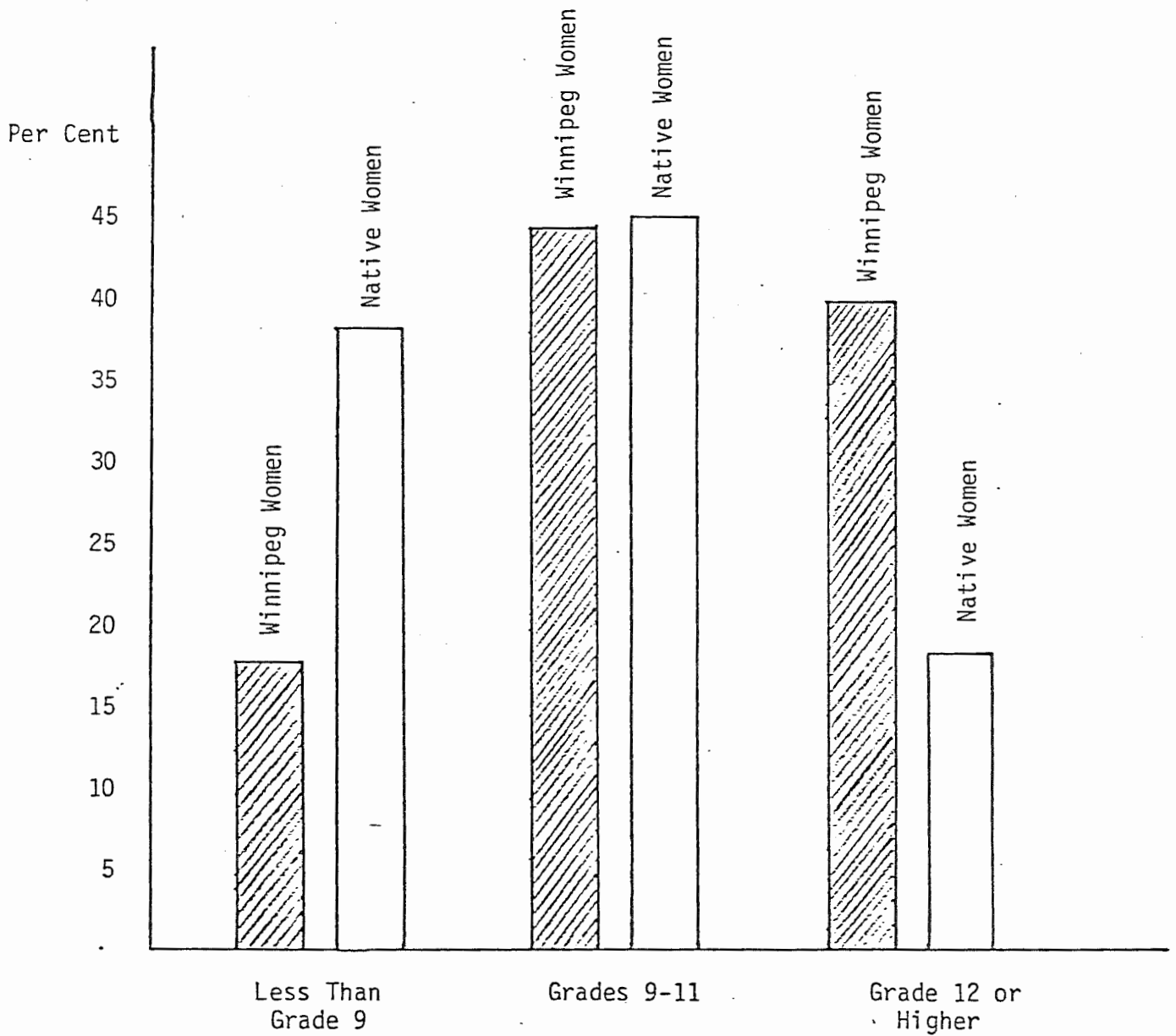
Lack of Education or Training	25.2%
Lack of Work Experience	17.0%
Lack of Access to Child Care	13.4%
Discrimination Towards Natives	9.5%
Lack of Access to Transportation	5.6%
Discrimination Towards Women	3.9%
Being on Welfare	2.9%
Family Responsibilities	2.6%
Other	19.9%

N = 306 responses



Figure 4

Comparison of Educational Attainment -  
Winnipeg Native Women (1980) and Winnipeg Women (1971)



socio-economic background is a major factor in the poor achievement of native students.

An attempt to assess the relationship between education and jobs was made using data from the native data base and comparative data for the city of Winnipeg. Figure 5 provides a breakdown of native women employed in major occupational groups with different levels of education. It can be seen that while there is a relationship between level of education and occupation in social services and manufacturing, this is not true for the largest group, sales, services, and clerical.

Figures 6 and 7 compare the likelihood of native women being employed in particular occupational groups to that of native men, and to non-native men and women in Winnipeg. This again shows that while there is some relationship between jobs and education, the relationship is not as great as or consistent as expected. Native women are less likely to work in professional or administrative positions than non-native men or women, even at comparable educational levels. Sex and race are also important in determining occupational group status.

What we have seen, then, is that while native women seem to believe in the importance of education to employment, there is reason to question a simple cause and effect relationship between the two. It is, of course, possible that native women are simply reflecting a popular belief in the power of education to improve one's circumstances,

Figure 5  
Distribution of Native Women By Occupational Groups  
and Educational Attainment

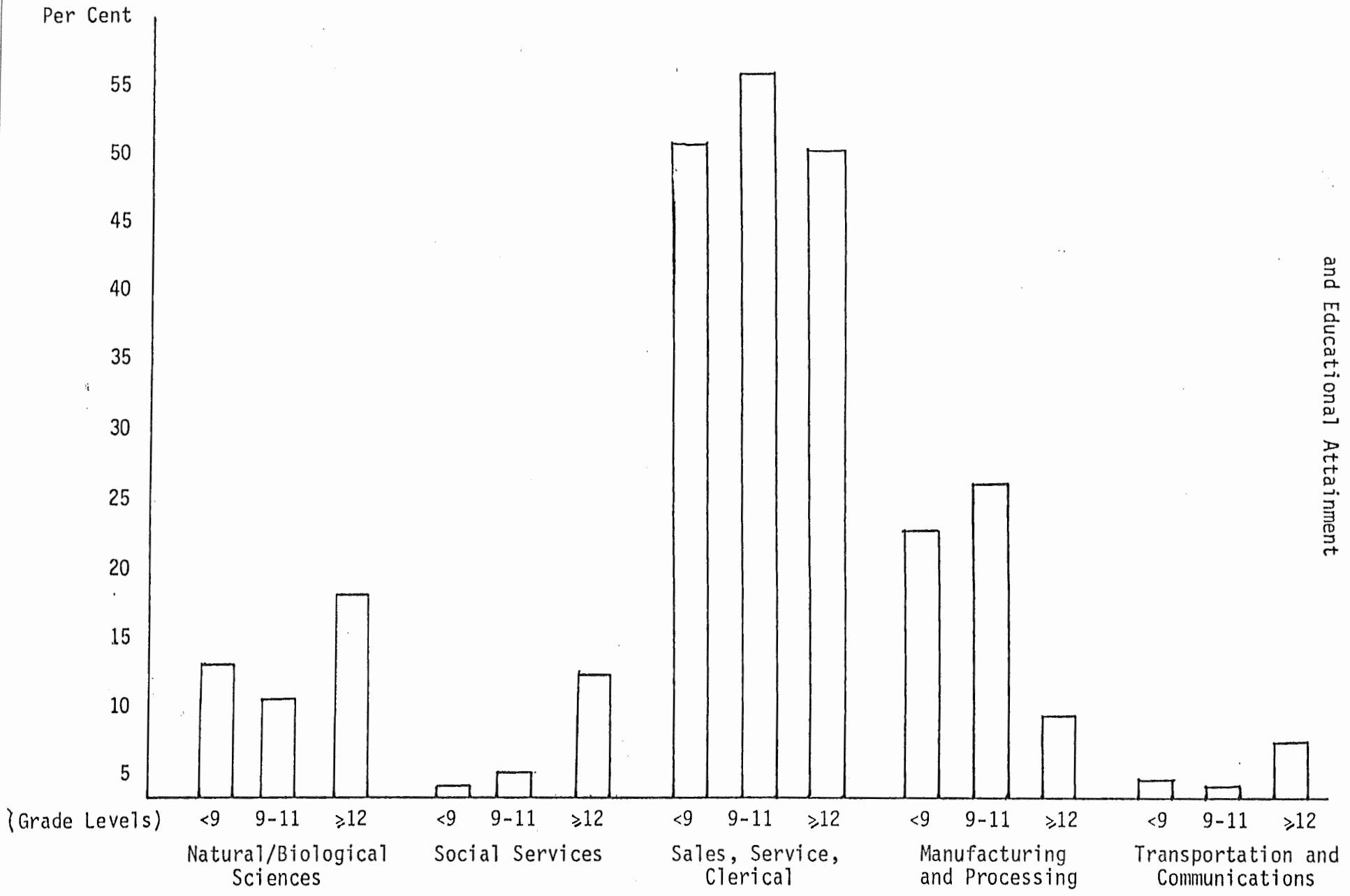
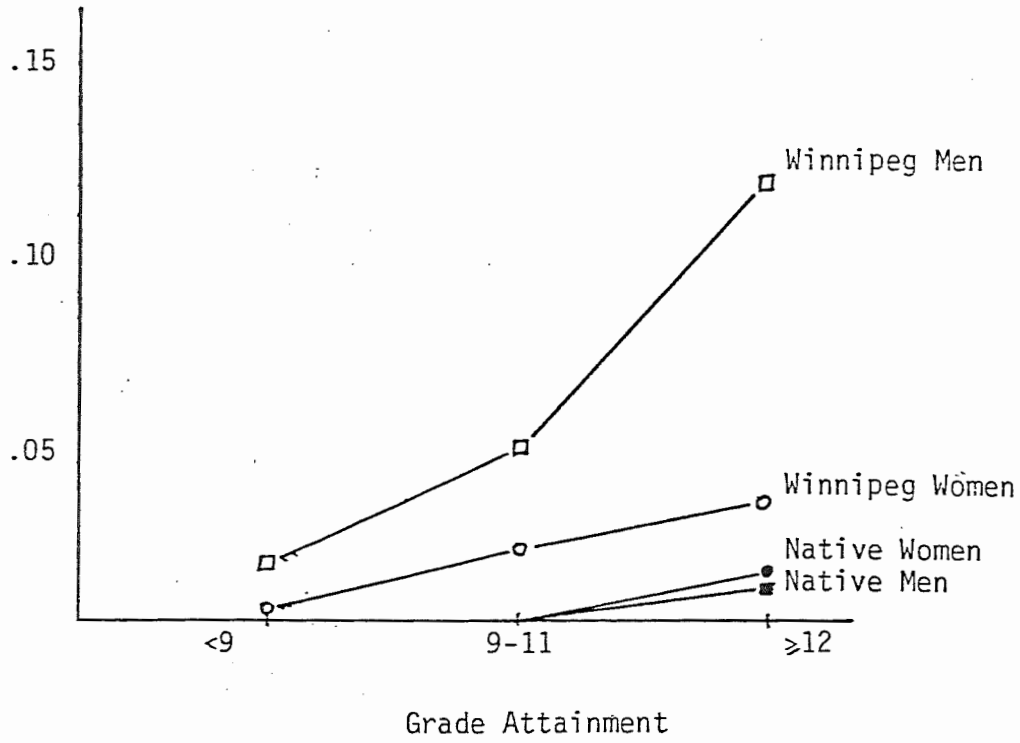


Figure 6

Probability of Being Employed as a Manager or Administrator - Winnipeg Sub-groups  
By Educational Attainment



Probability of Being Employed in Service/Clerical Occupations  
By Educational Attainment

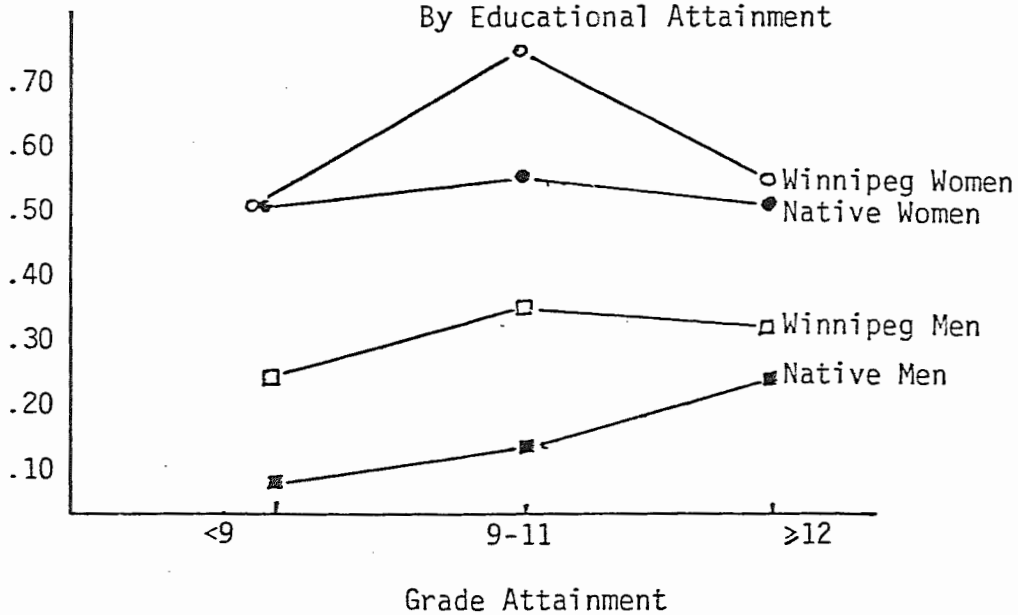
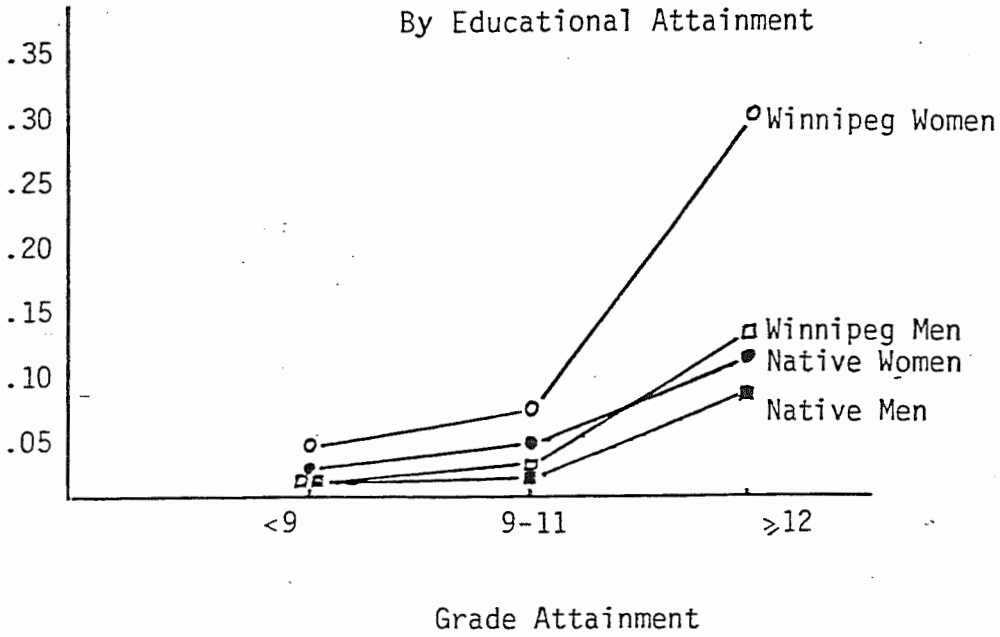
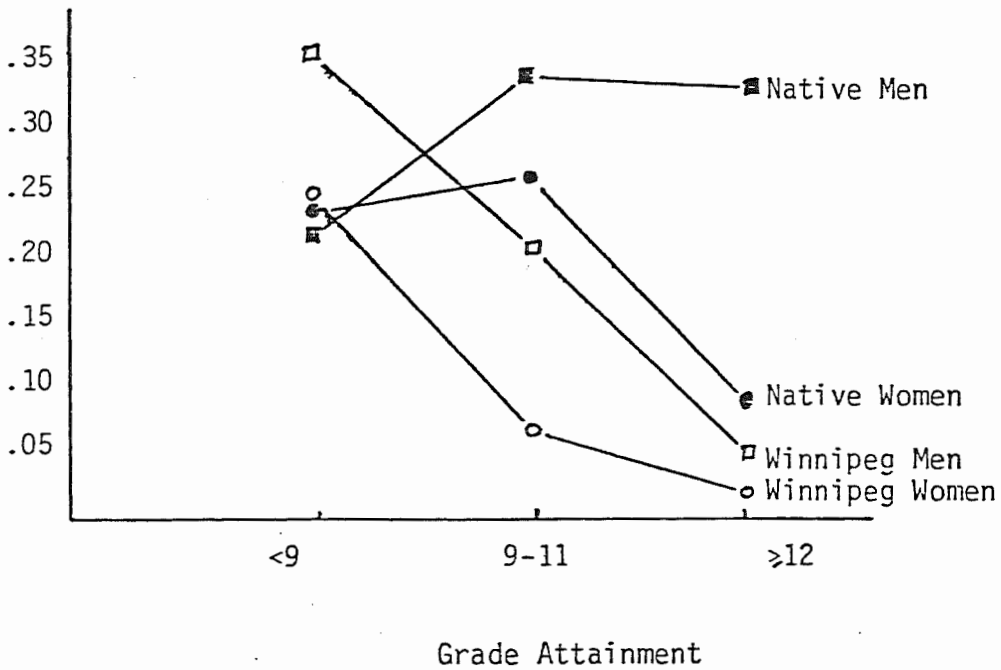


Figure 7

Probability of Being Employed in Social Service Occupations  
By Educational Attainment



Probability of Being Employed in Manufacturing and  
Processing Occupations By Educational Attainment



which is widely held in Canadian society. A comparison of the views of those presently working with the views of those who are unemployed or have never worked raises some interesting questions. (See Table 4.) Those who have never worked are twice as likely to identify lack of training or education as a barrier as are those who are working. It should be noted that there were no significant differences in educational attainment among those who were employed, unemployed, or never worked.

This result suggests the possibility that lack of education is more a perceived barrier than a real one for some native women. In other words, it is assumed to be a barrier by those who have never had a job and who have probably not participated in the labour force to any great degree. On the one hand, lack of education does not prevent one from working in many of the occupations held by native women, but on the other hand, having a grade 12 or post secondary education does not assure access to professional and administrative jobs for example.

Adult occupational training was also examined in the NWS. As indicated above, it was considered along with education as an important factor in obtaining employment. By comparing the types of occupations native women would like to enter to their present occupations and previous training, one can see that a good deal of additional skill or technical training would be required. Professional, para-professional, skilled trades, technical, and management occupations

Table 4

Is Lack of Training or Education A Barrier to Employment  
(By Employment Characteristics)

<u>Employment Characteristic</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Partly</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Total (N)</u>
Employed	18.9%	47.2%	34.0%	53
Has Worked	13.8%	40.2%	46.0%	87
Never Worked	0.0%	31.0%	69.0%	29
Total	13.0%	40.8%	46.2%	169

$$\chi^2 = 11.41$$

$$\chi^2_{4, .025} = 11.1$$

imply various types of specific and general post-secondary training which only a small minority of native women have previously received.

Only 15 percent of the NWS sample indicated that they had taken some form of adult training course. The majority of these were upgrading courses, while only 41 percent of the total sample had taken specific job-related training. The emphasis on upgrading is presumably the result of the weak academic background of many native women. However, the fact that most native women never enrolled in vocational or apprenticeship training suggests that upgrading courses may not be an effective stepping stone to skill training courses.

We asked our sample to assess the effectiveness of their training experiences in (a) helping them gain employment or a job promotion, or (b) being of value to their personal development. Of those who had taken training, slightly less than half felt it had been of value in obtaining a job, while almost 70 percent felt it was valuable in terms of personal development. These results are roughly comparable to their motivations for taking training courses which were primarily to gain a job (33 percent) followed by self-improvement (26 percent) and to meet people (17 percent).

This question of the effectiveness of training courses was also assessed by comparing the unemployment rates and labour force participation rates of those who had taken training courses, and those who had not. (See Table 5.) No significant differences were found between these two groups. This, again, casts doubt on the value of



Table 5

Labour Force Status By Training Program Participation

	<u>Has Participated</u>	<u>Has Not Participated</u>	<u>Difference and Confidence Interval</u>
Unemployment Rate	16.7%	21.7%	5.0 ± 12.8
Labour Force Participation Rate	44.4%	38.5%	5.9 ± 10.1

$\alpha = .05$

the training programs native women have previously been involved in.

We also identified the training goals of our sample. Two thirds of the respondents indicated that they had considered taking additional adult training courses. They gave a variety of reasons for not having taken these courses, the primary ones being: child care problems (20 percent); in the process of applying to get in (17 percent); and financial reasons (14 percent). The types of training courses they wished to enroll in were dominated by vocational training (48 percent) followed by upgrading (24 percent). The high degree of interest in job related training contrasts with the apparently limited access to it by native women.

### 3. Employment And The Family

Previous research has already established the relationship between certain family attributes and income and employment. The most obvious of these is the difference between two parent families and those headed by a single parent. Closely related to this difference is the question of how child care responsibilities are dealt with by working parents, or those who would like to work. A study of urban native financial and residential strategies by Peters (1981) examined this question. She argued that, given the employment situation facing native men and women, one adult worker cannot provide financial security for a family, and often, two parents may have difficulty as well. In contrast, the single parent who receives welfare has a meagre but steady source of income. Thus the high proportion of native single parent families is seen as "an attempt to find a stable form of support in response to the instability of the inner city employment market."

This conclusion, which was based on the Winnipeg urban native data base and on more extensive interviews with a portion of that sample, may seem to contradict the point made above, that native women want to work. However, this would be a mis-reading of the argument. Native women are seen as being on welfare out of necessity rather than choice.

The NWS examined the question of family responsibilities and employment, both by asking for native women's perceptions, and by

groups was no different, the unemployment rate of those agreeing to some extent with the statement was significantly higher than for the others. This could suggest either that those with this view of mothers' responsibilities are less effective at finding work, or that they are using the view as a rationalization for not having been successful in gaining employment. Other factors such as actual parental status may also be involved, but could not be adequately analyzed from this data base.

A few conclusions concerning parental status and employment may be made from this data. Single parents have lower labour force participation rates than others and see child care problems as their major barrier. However, this is distinct from the need for assistance in taking care of their children in the home. On this question spouses are more likely to feel the need of support. Single parents and other single native women are more likely to feel the need of personal support.

Native women with children are less likely than others to see employment as a means of fulfilling personal or career goals, and are more likely to be interested in part-time rather than full-time work.

These conclusions comparing native women with different family situations are relative. Although they establish the greater need among single parents child care remains an important employment barrier to all native women with dependent children.

examining differences in responses made by women in different family situations. The native women in our survey rated child care problems as their third most important employment barrier, following lack of education and lack of employment experience. (See Table 3.) However, there were differences in the response to this question based on parental and marital status, as shown in Table 6. For single parents, child care problems are the most frequent barriers to employment which were cited. It may be seen, as well, that single parents tended to give more responses to this open ended question, identifying on average more than two major barriers per respondent (as compared with 1.4 to 1.7 responses per person for the other groups).

Child care problems may also figure into the loss of jobs. As shown in Figure 3, "family problems" were the reasons for leaving the job in 21 percent of the responses, while "pregnancy" accounted for another 5 percent. Lack of appropriate or affordable child care also acts as an indirect barrier to employment by making it difficult to obtain training. Child care was the most frequent barrier to training cited (apart from the reason, "didn't get around to it"), and was especially important for single parents. (See Table 7) Finally, it was found that child care was an important consideration in looking for a job. When asked what they would need to do before looking for work, the most common response was the need to gain further education or training (58 percent) followed by the need to arrange child care (12 percent).

Table 6

Major Barriers To Employment  
By Marital/Parental Status  
(Column Percentages in Parentheses)

<u>Barrier</u>	<u>Single No Children</u>	<u>Single Parent</u>	<u>Spouse No Children</u>	<u>Spouse With Children</u>	<u>Total</u>
Being on Welfare	0 (0.0)	7 (4.4)	2 (13.3)	0 (0.0)	9
Child Care Problems	3 (3.7)	31 (19.6)	0 (0.0)	7 (13.5)	41
Transportation	3 (3.7)	10 (6.3)	1 (6.7)	3 (5.8)	17
Lack of Education or Training	28 (34.6)	29 (18.4)	6 (40.0)	14 (26.9)	77
Being Native	12 (14.8)	9 (5.7)	1 (6.7)	7 (13.5)	29
Being Female	6 (7.4)	5 (3.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.9)	12
Lack of Work Experience	16 (19.8)	26 (16.5)	3 (20.0)	7 (13.5)	52
Family Responsibilities	3 (3.7)	3 (1.9)	1 (6.7)	1 (1.9)	8
Other	10 (12.3)	38 (24.1)	1 (6.7)	12 (23.1)	61
Total	81	158	15	52	306

Table 7

Why Training Course Has Not Been Taken  
By Marital/Parental Status

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Single No Children</u>	<u>Single Parent</u>	<u>Spouse No Children</u>	<u>Spouse With Children</u>	<u>Total</u>
Lack of Information	0 (0.0)	1 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.2)	2
Child Care Problems	0 (0.0)	14 (40.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (20.0)	19
Financial Problems	9 (20.5)	2 (5.7)	0 (0.0)	3 (12.5)	14
Planning to Enroll	10 (22.7)	1 (2.9)	1 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	12
Didn't Get Around To It	11 (25.0)	7 (20.0)	2 (50.0)	5 (20.8)	25
Long Waiting List	5 (11.4)	3 (8.6)	0 (0.0)	2 (8.3)	10
No Opportunity	3 (6.8)	1 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	5 (20.8)	9
Other	5 (11.4)	5 (14.3)	1 (25.0)	1 (4.2)	12
Have Applied, Waiting to Hear	1 (2.3)	1 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	2 (8.3)	4
Total	44	35	4	24	107

The effects of marital/parental status on attitudes and other factors were also analyzed to some extent. It was found that while 85 percent of single women without children prefer full-time work to part-time work, only 72 percent of women with children prefer full-time work. (This difference is statistically significant.) Another question in the survey concerned the reason for preferring either short term or permanent employment. Most women indicated that they preferred permanent jobs. However there were differences among those with and those without dependent children when it came to the reasons given for their preference. These are summarized in Table 8.

It will be seen that for both groups, avoiding the insecurity or stigma of unemployment was a primary motivation for wanting to work. However, those without dependent children were more likely to be motivated by personal or career goals than those with children. On the other hand, those with children cited family responsibilities and variety more frequently, reasons which would be associated with short term employment or the preference not to work. This would indicate that there is a greater tendency for those without children to think in terms of a career (and permanent employment) than those with children. However, these differences are relative, and are overshadowed by the general desire of both groups for secure employment.

Other questions such as unemployment rates and training preferences were examined comparing the different marital/parental groups. However, statistically significant differences were not found.



Table 8

Comparison of Reasons For Job Term Preferences  
For Those With and Without Dependents

(Percentages)

<u>Reason</u>	<u>No Dependents</u>	<u>With Dependents</u>	<u>Difference and Confidence Level</u>
Earn Money	12.1	12.5	N.S.
Security /Avoid Unemployment	60.3	51.0	N.S.
Achieve Goals / Advance Career	15.5	4.8	10.7 $\pm$ 10.2
Family Responsibilities	0.0	5.8	5.8 $\pm$ 4.5
For variety	6.9	17.3	10.4 $\pm$ 9.8
Other	5.2	8.7	N.S.
Total	100.0	100.1	
N	58	104	

\* Significant at  $\alpha = .05$

N.S. = not significant

A number of questions related to self concepts were asked in the survey. For the most part few differences were found among marital/parental groups. However, spouses were found to be significantly more likely to feel the need of child care assistance than either singles or single parents. On the other hand spouses were less likely to feel the need of personal support than the other two groups. (See Table 9) Differences also appeared between singles and others in terms of knowledge of the job market (which may affect self-confidence in participating in the labour market) and personal skills (which probably reflect the age difference between these groups).

No clear picture emerges regarding differences based on family/parental status. The expectation that single parents would have the greatest need for child care assistance is contradicted by these results. The results do suggest, however, that singles are more socially isolated or vulnerable, while at the same time being more ready to enter the labour market.

As a final way of looking at the question of parenting and employment, the survey asked whether native women agreed that "mothers should stay home with their children." Overall, 26 percent of the sample said this was "completely true," with 21 percent indicating "not true" and the remaining 53 percent saying "partly true." A comparison of the employment status of those answering either partly or completely true, with those answering not true was made. (See Table 10) This showed that while the labour force participation rates of the two

Table 9

Selected Self-Perceptions By Marital Status  
(Percentages)

<u>Perception</u>	<u>Single</u>	<u>Single Parent</u>	<u>Spouse</u>
Problem with Knowing Required Job Qualifications (Partly or Completely True)	<u>33.3</u>	53.0	53.5
Less than 4 out of 5 Indicated "Personal Skills"	<u>68.0</u>	40.5	37.8
Feel Need of Child Care Assistance (Completely true)	9.1	1.4	<u>15.6</u>
Feel Need of Personal Support	25.5	22.7	<u>11.4</u>

Note: Underlined figures are significantly different from the other two groups combined, at the 95% confidence level.

Table 10

Extent of Agreement With The Statement:  
"Mothers Should Stay Home With Their Children"  
By Employment Variables

<u>Perception of Statement</u>	<u>U.R.*</u>	<u>N *</u>	<u>L.F.P.R.*</u>	<u>N *</u>
Not True	0.0	5	41.7	12
Partly or Completely True	17.9	28	42.4	66
Difference	+17.9 ± 14.2		0.7 ± 30.3	

\* U.R. = Unemployment Rate

L.F.P.R. = Labour Force Participation Rate

N = Number in Sample

± = Significant at  $\alpha = .05$

Table 11

Unemployment and Participation Rates  
By Marital/Parental Status

	<u>U.R.*</u>	<u>N*</u>	<u>L.F.P.R.*</u>	<u>N*</u>
Single, No Children	14.8%	27	43.5%	62
Single Parent	25.0%	24	32.0%	75
Spouse, No Children	50.0%	4	44.4%	9
Spouse, With Children	17.6%	17	47.2%	36
TOTAL	20.8%	72	39.6%	182

\* U.R. = Unemployment Rate  
L.F.P.R. = Labour Force Participation Rate  
N = Number in Sample

#### 4. Labour Market Segmentation

Over the past 15 years a theory of unequal access to jobs has been developed which is known as the labour market segmentation theory. It is based on the widely recognized reality that minorities, including women are often "crowded" into certain occupational groups. These occupations are characterized by lower wages, higher turnover rates, lower educational requirements, and less opportunity for long term advancement. This "secondary labour market" is contrasted with the "primary labour market" which includes occupations with higher wages, higher educational requirements, greater job security and opportunity for promotion. While it is difficult to establish the presence of discrimination in the labour market, there is ample evidence that there are different kinds of labour markets, some of which are inaccessible to most native women.

In part this lack of access relates to a lack of training or education, but education alone does not explain the wide discrepancies in occupational structure between natives and others, or between women and men. The NWS examined a number of questions related to this issue, including our respondents perception of discrimination, occupations and education, job tenure, and job search. The highlights are outlined below.

The majority of our sample (60 percent) felt that being native was at least a partial barrier to employment and almost half (48 percent) felt that being a woman was a barrier to some extent. However, neither

of these was among the most frequently cited problems. When respondents were asked to identify major barriers, 9.5 percent of responses mentioned prejudice against natives, and 4 percent mentioned prejudice against women. Thus, there is a significant minority of native women who see discrimination as a serious job barrier.

An examination of the effects of educational attainment on the occupational distribution of native women was carried out, comparing native women to native men, and to other Winnipeg men and women. For this purpose, Clatworthy's population estimates were used for the native population, and 1976 Census occupational distributions for the general population. On the theory that the labour market is segmented by race and sex, we expected to find different occupational distributions among the different groups, with more concentration of native men and women in fewer occupational groups, and in occupations with lower pay and skill levels. By controlling for educational attainment we hoped to minimize the effect of this important variable on occupation.

Table 12 provides the percentage breakdown of native women's occupations. Native women are seen to be highly concentrated in sales, service and clerical occupations, along with manufacturing and natural or health sciences occupations. Marked differences occur between educational levels for social service and manufacturing occupations. Most of these broad categories cover a variety of job levels, but the low proportion of even the more educated native women in the managerial

Table 12  
 Occupational Distribution By Educational Attainment  
 of Winnipeg Native Women\*  
 (Column Percentages)

<u>Occupational Group</u>	<u>Educational Level</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>&lt;9</u>	<u>9-11</u>	<u>≥12</u>	
Managerial	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.3
Natural Sciences	12.9	10.6	17.9	13.3
Social Sciences	1.2	4.7	11.7	5.8
Entertainment	1.1	0.0	0.9	0.5
Sales, Services, Clerical	50.4	55.3	50.2	52.6
Primary Economic	1.7	0.3	0.7	0.8
Manufacturing	22.6	25.7	9.3	20.2
Construction	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transportation	3.6	1.1	7.2	3.5
Other	6.5	2.3	1.0	3.1
Total	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.1

\* Based on Native Data Base Population Estimates



category suggests a lack of access to these jobs. Further comparisons are provided in Figures 5, 6, and 7 in section 2.

Another aspect of the Segmented Labour Market theory proposes that in the secondary labour market there is greater job insecurity and higher turnover rates. Table 13 provides comparative job tenure figures which measure one aspect of job security. As has been noted above, native women have reported having to leave jobs for employer-generated reasons more than 25 percent of the time. The extremely short time spent in current or most recent jobs by most native women is consistent with the Segmented Labour Market theory. For example, only 8 percent of all Winnipeg women had been in their present job for less than four months, but 39 percent of native women were in this category. On the other hand, 35 percent of all Winnipeg women had been in their jobs for six or more years, but only 6 percent of native women had been in their jobs for this length of time. These high turnover rates may reflect the kinds of jobs native women are employed in, or they may be caused by other circumstances such as more frequent moves. In the latter case the frequent household movement and job changes themselves become an obstacle to gaining better employment.

Access to employment, particularly for jobs in the primary labour market, is also affected by the way in which jobs are advertised. Many jobs in large organizations are advertised internally before being thrown open to the general public. If you are not already working in such a company, it is difficult to get in, except through "entry level" jobs. Moreover, informal methods of advertising and hiring are widely

Table 13

Job Tenure Comparison

	<u>NWS</u>	<u>(March/82)* Canada (%)</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Confidence Interval**</u>
1-3 months	52 (.388)	344 (.079)	+30.9	+8.3
4-6 months	21 (.157)	288 (.066)	+ 9.1	+6.2
7-12 months	21 (.157)	580 (.134)	+ 2.3	+6.2
1-5 years	32 (.239)	1605 (.370)	-13.1	+7.2
6-10 years	5 (.037)	802 (.185)	-14.8	+3.2
11-20 years	2) (.022)	536) (.165)	-14.3	+2.5
20+ years	1)	180)		
Total	134 (1,000)	4,335 (.999)		

\* Statistics Canada, Labour Force, March, 1981 (71-001)

\*\* Significant at  $\alpha = .05$

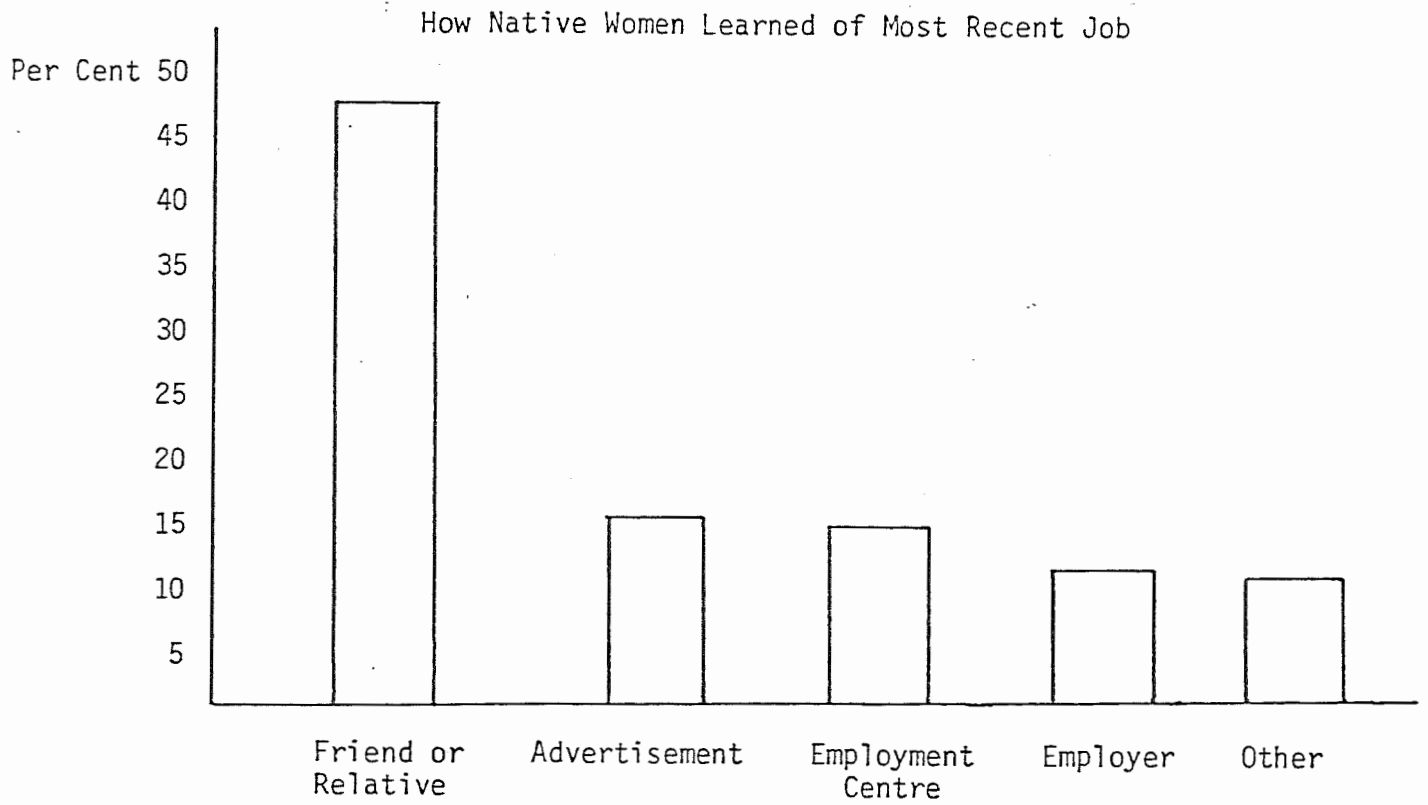
used; that is, advertising is done through word of mouth, friends and relatives. This method of hiring relies upon social and business contacts. Therefore, those who have few friends and relatives in good jobs are less likely to hear of good jobs when they become vacant.

In the NWS it was found that the largest number of women had learned of their last job through a friend or relative. While advertisements and employment centres accounted for about 30 percent of jobs, informal methods, including direct contact with employers, accounted for 58 percent of all jobs. (See Figure 8)

These results, along with those presented in section 2 concerning education and employment, support the concept of occupational crowding of native women into largely secondary occupations. Native women who have jobs are crowded into the sales, service, clerical, manufacturing and natural sciences occupations. That these occupations are at a relatively low level of pay is confirmed through an examination of the socio-economic index of the jobs reported. The average level for women in the NWS was 37.28 on the Blishen-McRoberts scale, which is at about the level of a shipping clerk, or a supervisor in the food and beverage industry. The most frequent occupations were waitresses and chambermaids.

Native women appear to be crowded into, or out of, certain occupations in spite of their educational levels. This is most clearly the case for management and administrative occupations, but can also be seen in the higher proportion of native women in sales and service jobs,

Figure 8



manufacturing jobs, and the low proportion in social service jobs. A more detailed examination of job levels would probably show greater relative crowding among native women.

The NWS has also documented high turnover rates among native women, and has confirmed the predominance of informal job finding techniques among this group. Taken together, and combined with data on unemployment rates, income and welfare dependency available elsewhere, the evidence overwhelmingly establishes lack of access by native women to secure and well-paid employment. This lack of access may be due in part to direct discrimination as suggested by some of our sample, but is also a result of the structure and operation of the labour market itself. Moreover, such factors as lack of educational attainment, housing inadequacy, or cost of child care services are an integral part of the mechanism of the labour market. They help determine native women's overall lack of opportunity, and are clearly broad social phenomena and not simply characteristics of individuals.

5. Younger Native Women

Clatworthy's work has documented the higher unemployment rates among the under 25 age group. He found unemployment rates of 30 to 60 percent among the various sub-groups in this age category, with status Indians of both sexes having the highest rates.\* The 25 and

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\* See Clatworthy, January, 1981, page 42

over category had unemployment rates which were consistently 15 percent lower than comparable younger sub-groups. The difference in labour force participation rates was not as great between age groups, however, with significant differences only appearing for men.

Figure 9 shows that age and education together have a striking effect on unemployment rates. Younger native men and women are much more likely to be unemployed if they have less education.

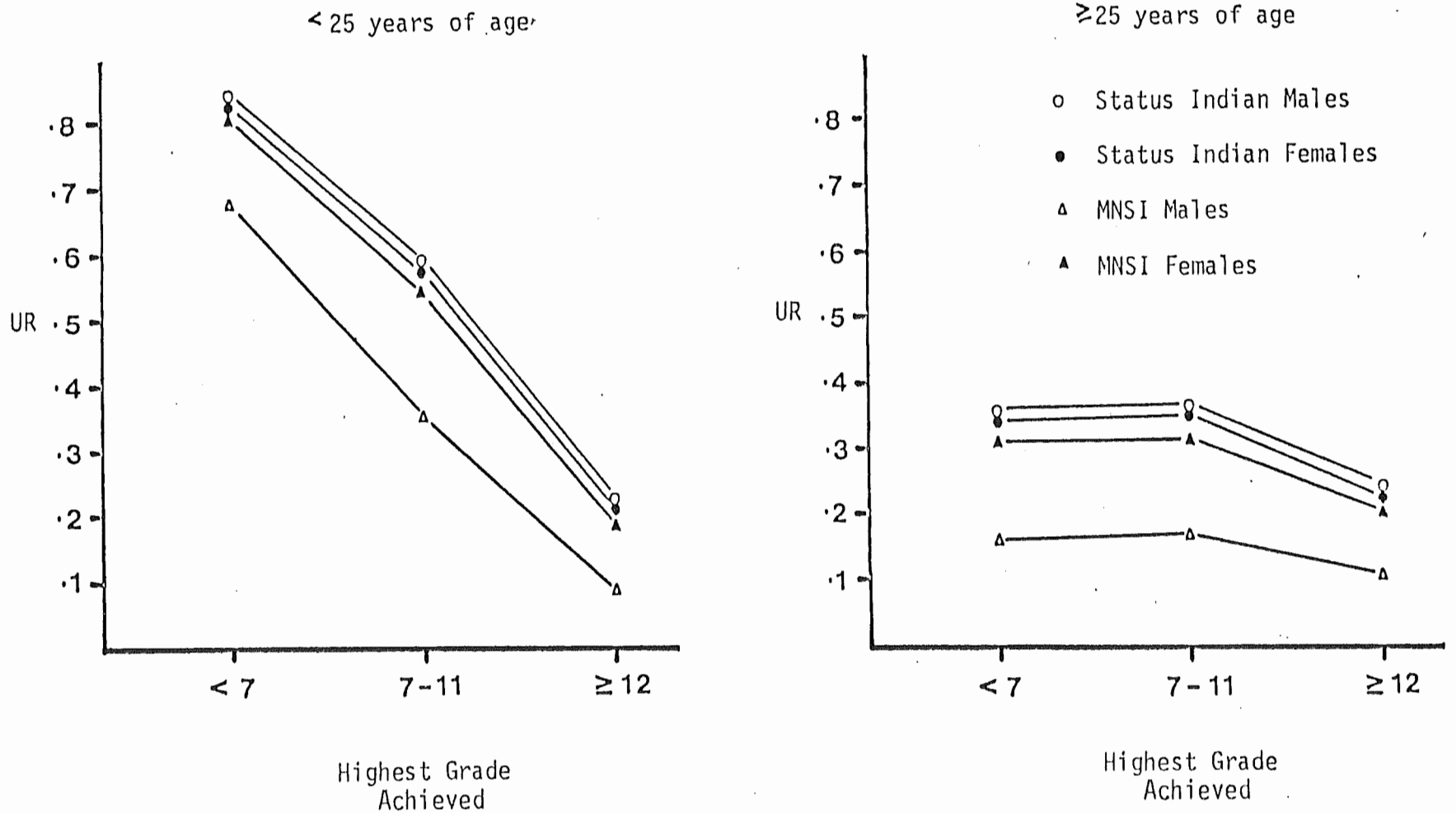
Given the apparent importance of age in relation to the labour market, the results of the present survey for the under 25 and the 25 or older groups have been compared. The following discussion will briefly summarize the significant differences which were identified.

Among our sample, no significant differences in unemployment or labour force participation rates were found between age groups. However, a few differences in employment patterns and job preferences did emerge. Table 14 shows that younger native women were more likely to work in sales and clerical occupations. Younger women were found to have different job preferences or goals as well, being more likely to prefer both clerical and professional work than were older women. (See Table 15)

The barriers to employment identified by younger and older women were similar. However, younger native women were more likely to identify problems of discrimination (19.2 percent vs. 10.6 percent) and less likely to consider transportation a major barrier (20 percent

Figure 9

Estimated Rates of Unemployment By Age, Sex\*  
Native Group and Educational Level, Winnipeg, 1980



\* Figure taken from: Stewart Clatworthy, The Effects of Education on Native Behaviour in the Urban Labour Market, Institute of Urban Studies, 1981.

Table 14

Occupational Distributions By Age  
(Percentages)

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Less than 25 Years</u>	<u>25 or Older</u>
Managerial	2.3	0.0
Natural Sciences	4.5	2.0
Social Services	18.2	25.5
Entertainment	0.0	3.1
Sales	13.6	6.1
Service	31.8	37.8
Clerical	9.1	2.0
Primary Economy	0.0	1.0
Manufacturing	11.4	11.2
Construction	2.2	0.0
Transportation	2.2	4.1
Other	4.5	8.2
Total	99.8	100.0
N =	44	98



Table 15

Selected Job Preferences By Age

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Per cent Indicating a Preference</u>		
	<u>Under 25</u>	<u>25 or Older</u>	<u>Difference *</u>
Trades	20.7	33.1	N.S
Clerical	36.2	20.2	16.1 <sup>+</sup> 14.2
Para-Professional	19.0	28.2	N.S
Professional	53.5	29.0	24.4 <sup>+</sup> 15.1
Technical	8.6	1.6	N.S

\* Significant at  $\alpha = .05$

vs. 7.2 percent). Child care problems were also a major barrier for more younger women (18.2 percent vs. 11.1 percent). This finding was consistent with the response to question 37a, in which younger women were more likely to indicate that they would need to arrange child care before looking for a job. At the same time, younger women were less likely to be single parents or spouses, and no more likely to have children under 6 years of age, than older women.

Younger women identified the lack of work experience as a barrier more often than women over 25, and were more likely to indicate that this would be a prerequisite to looking for a job. Older native women, on the other hand, were more likely to see their age as a barrier to employment, and more likely to indicate they had trouble filling out job application forms. This last point reflects to the greater proportion of older women with less than 9 years of education. (See Table 16)

Native women under 25 were found to have lived in Winnipeg for a shorter period of time on average, than native women over 25. About 38 percent of the under 25 group had lived in Winnipeg for less than four years, compared to 21 percent of the older group, a statistically significant difference.

One final difference between the two age groups that was identified, was the native group identity. While 18 percent of the 25 and older group identified themselves as non-status Indians, only 7 percent of the younger women did so. There were no significant differences in the reporting of Metis or status Indian identity.

Table 16

Level of Education By Age  
(Percentages)

<u>Educational Attainment</u>	<u>Age</u>		<u>Difference *</u>
	<u>Under 25</u>	<u>25 or Older</u>	
Less than Grade 9	26.8	57.9	31.1 $\pm$ 14.5
Grade 9 to 11	57.1	25.6	31.5 $\pm$ 14.6
Grade 12 or Higher	16.1	16.5	N.S.
Total	100.0	100.0	
N =	56	121	

\* Significant at  $\alpha = .05$

The younger native women in our sample appear to be facing special employment problems because of their age and lack of work experience. They appear to be employed in lower level occupations than older women while at the same time having higher aspirations. They are somewhat better educated than older native women, but their educational levels are still below the average of the surrounding society. Accordingly they find themselves often employed in clerical, sales, and manufacturing jobs, as well as in social services, and tend to feel more dissatisfied with their jobs than older native women. Younger women also perceive more conflict between child care and employment and more job discrimination than do older women.

It should also be pointed out that several problems associated with the older age group were also evident, such as a greater lack of education, feelings of inadequacy among some respondents because of their age, transportation problems, and lower job expectations.

In conclusion, the striking aspect of the comparison between younger and older native women, is the lack of progress which has been made in educational attainment and job advancement. Younger native women are, if anything, in a worse employment situation than their parents were, due to the general increase in educational requirements in Canadian society. At the same time their ambitions are greater. If these ambitions remain unfulfilled, it will have a negative effect on native women, their families, and Canadian society in general.

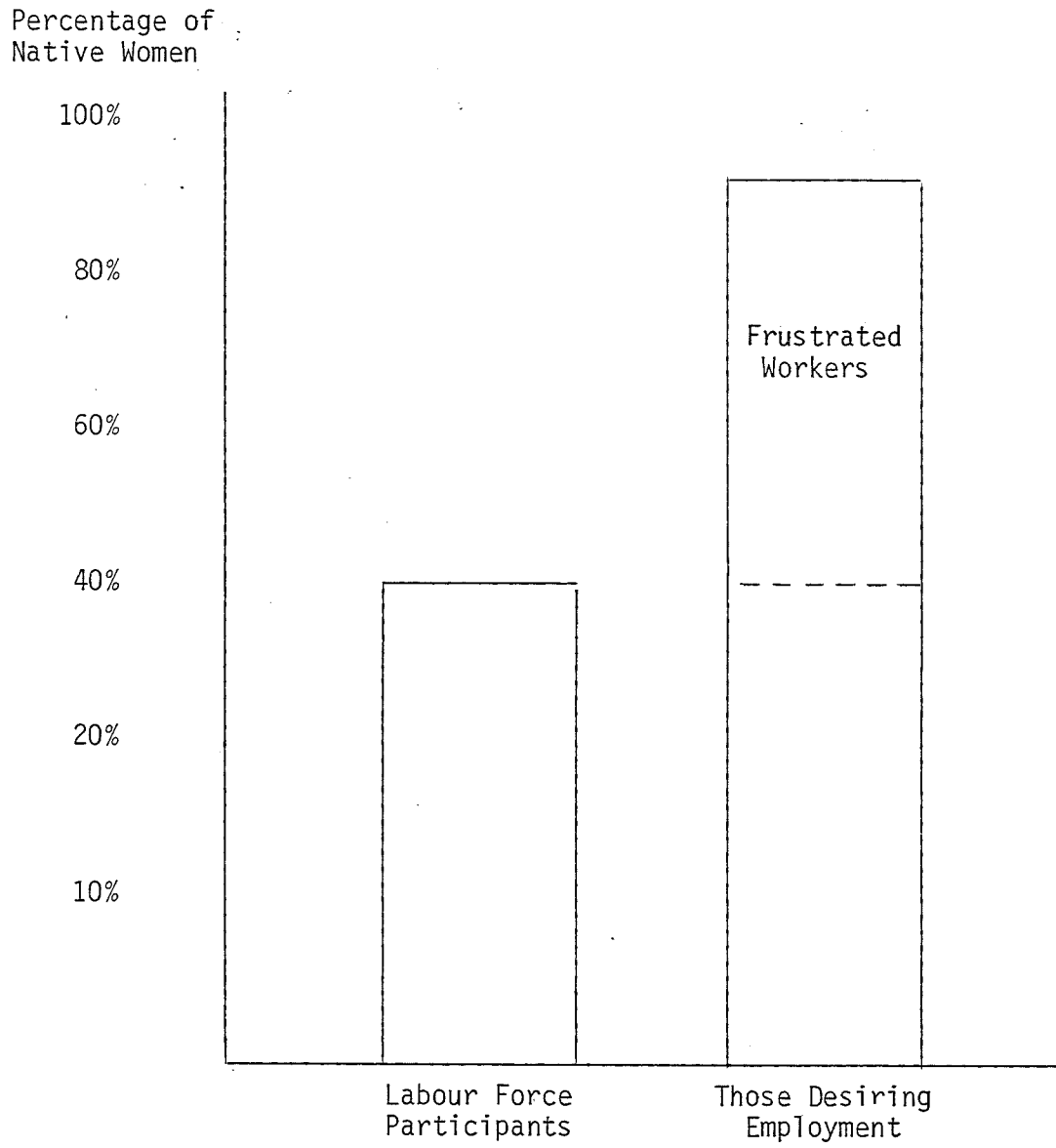
## Conclusions

In the foregoing report, some of the key dimensions of native women's relationship to paid employment have been explored, and the feelings and preferences expressed by native women have been documented. The overriding conclusion is that many more native women would like to work than can do so under the present circumstances. Figure 10 illustrates the dimensions of this problem: The number of frustrated workers who have simply quit looking for a job is greater than the number of labour force participants. Thus there is a potential labour force of thousands of native women in Winnipeg who would like to work but are not presently in the labour market.

The reasons for their lack of active job hunting have been outlined above. Lack of education, lack of skill training, lack of work experience, cost and availability of child care head the list. However these factors are best seen in relation to how the job market operates. Clearly some jobs are more accessible than others, but they are also less desirable or secure. In addition, educational attainment is used as a somewhat arbitrary screening device. The employer tends to set educational requirements according to the supply of workers with given educational levels. This indirectly discriminates against the native population since educational achievement is closely related to socio-economic backgrounds.

In effect, native women are caught in a web of circumstances related to their economic and social position. However, it has been demonstrated that these circumstances can be overcome if there is the

Figure 10  
Hidden Unemployment



desire to do so. Such training and employment programs as the New Careers program have shown that with the required services and supports, native women and others who have faced similar problems can become employed in meaningful careers.

It should be understood that such programs do not reduce the overall level of unemployment in our society. However, they do affirm our commitment as a society to wipe out inequities which are caused by nothing more than the circumstances into which people are born. To the extent that we are able to create more equitable opportunities in this generation, we will have reduced social inequities in future generations.

There are limits to the amount of effort and energy which our governments and other institutions are prepared to put into such special programs. If native women are going to make gains they will need to gain organizational and political strength. Further, this strength will have to be directed towards the problems which create the inequities in the first place: lack of income, lack of basic social services, inadequate housing and health care, and inadequate educational and training opportunities. While other social and cultural concerns relating to the unique circumstances of native women are important, I would argue that the more basic economic causes of poverty should be the focus of native women's concerns and activities.

Further, native women will need to combine their efforts with those of others facing the same problems of lack of income, lack of employment, and lack of opportunity. Without such mutual efforts,

native women will lack the power to bring about the changes they desire, and will be vulnerable to divisive struggles based on racism and sexism.

Despite the problems outlined above, native women in Winnipeg are an integral part of the city's working population. Working in the home and dealing with social workers they may feel isolated at times. However, they wish to move beyond this role into employment that is secure, that is paid, and that is socially recognized. If given the opportunity that is what they will do.



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- RECREATION AND ATHLETICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG, 1967-1983: A BRIEF HISTORY, Occasional Paper No. 5, by A. Gerald Bedford.

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