

# **Poverty in Canada: An Exploratory Spatial Data Analysis**

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A spatial understanding of poverty is crucial in developing appropriate anti-poverty strategies, which should vary across space in light of Canada's diverse social geography. By employing exploratory spatial data analysis techniques, including global and local cluster analyses, and inferential spatial regression, this study examines the spatial nature and determinants of poverty across census divisions for the years 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006. Throughout the 1990s, Canadian poverty was defined by an east-west cleavage, with high poverty in the east and low poverty rates in the west. By 2006 this cleavage was replaced by an emergent urban-rural divide, indicating a new and troubling concentration of poverty in Canada's cities. Poverty rates in both urban and rural Canada are particularly driven by such variables as median household income, female-headed lone-parent families, and, in cities, large immigrant populations. These results point to the importance of defining both people- and place-based antipoverty policies, in light of an increasingly worrisome situation for Canada's urban poor.