

LIBRARIES AS URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

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14 May 2019



Urban Politics and Governance research group

Regional and
local economic
development

The local politics
of global
sustainability

The impact of
globalization on
housing markets

Urban governance beyond the city



**Urban
Politics and
Governance
research
group**

UPGo team

Charlotte Belot

Amy Bolt

Danielle Girard

Agenda

- 1. Urban demographics**
- 2. Governance and investment trends**
- 3. Libraries as urban infrastructure**

Urban demographics

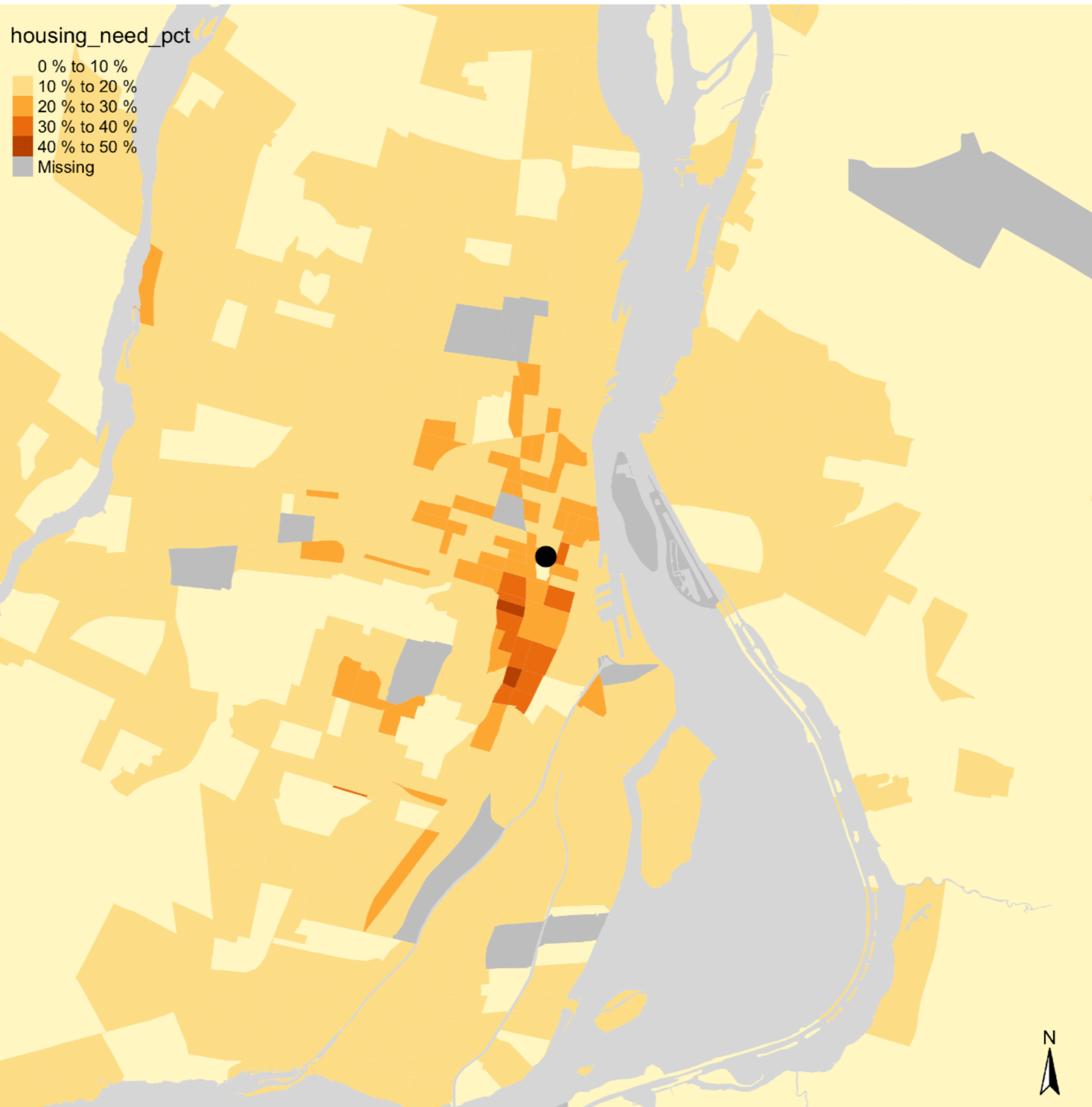
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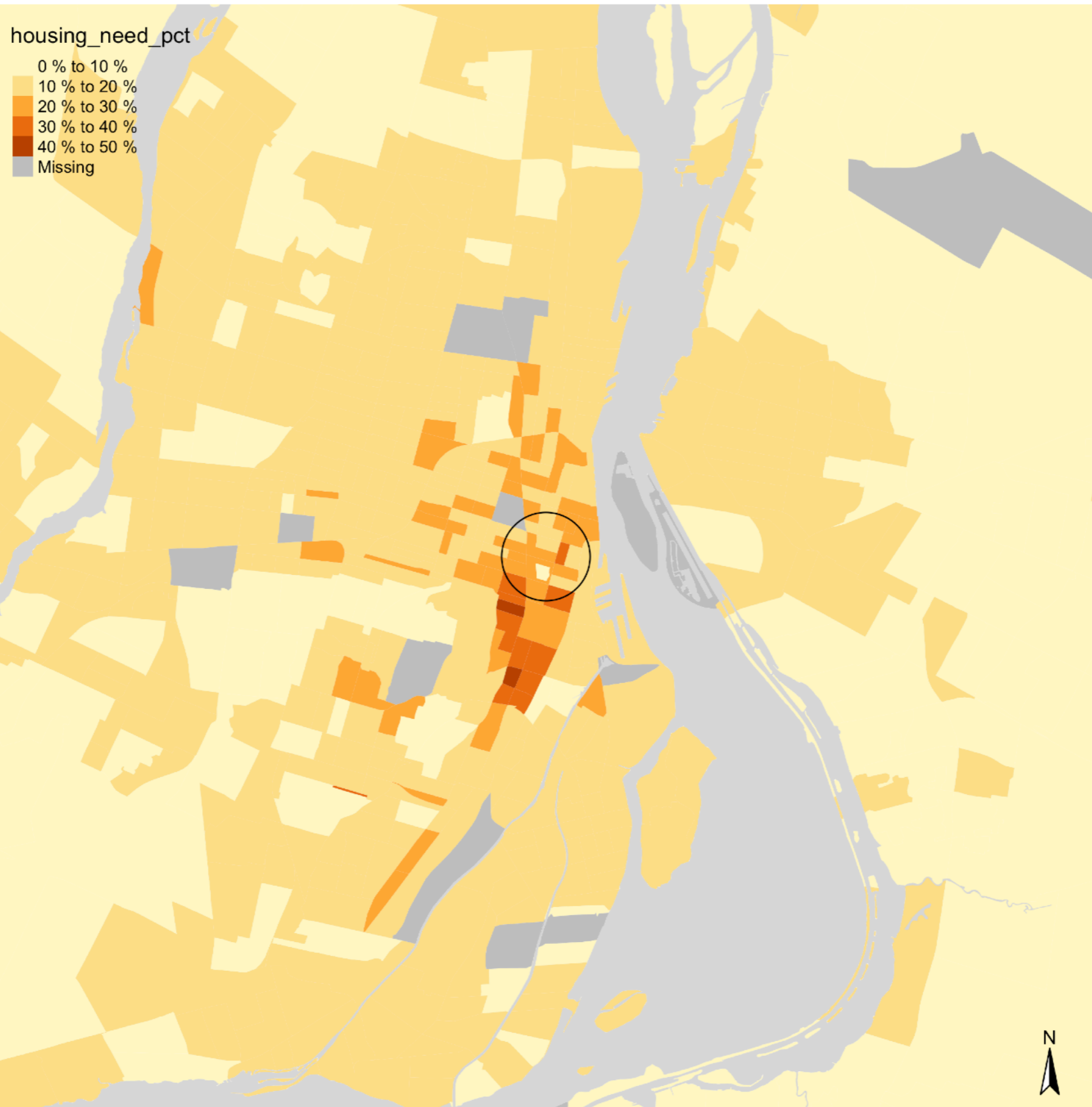
Urban demographics

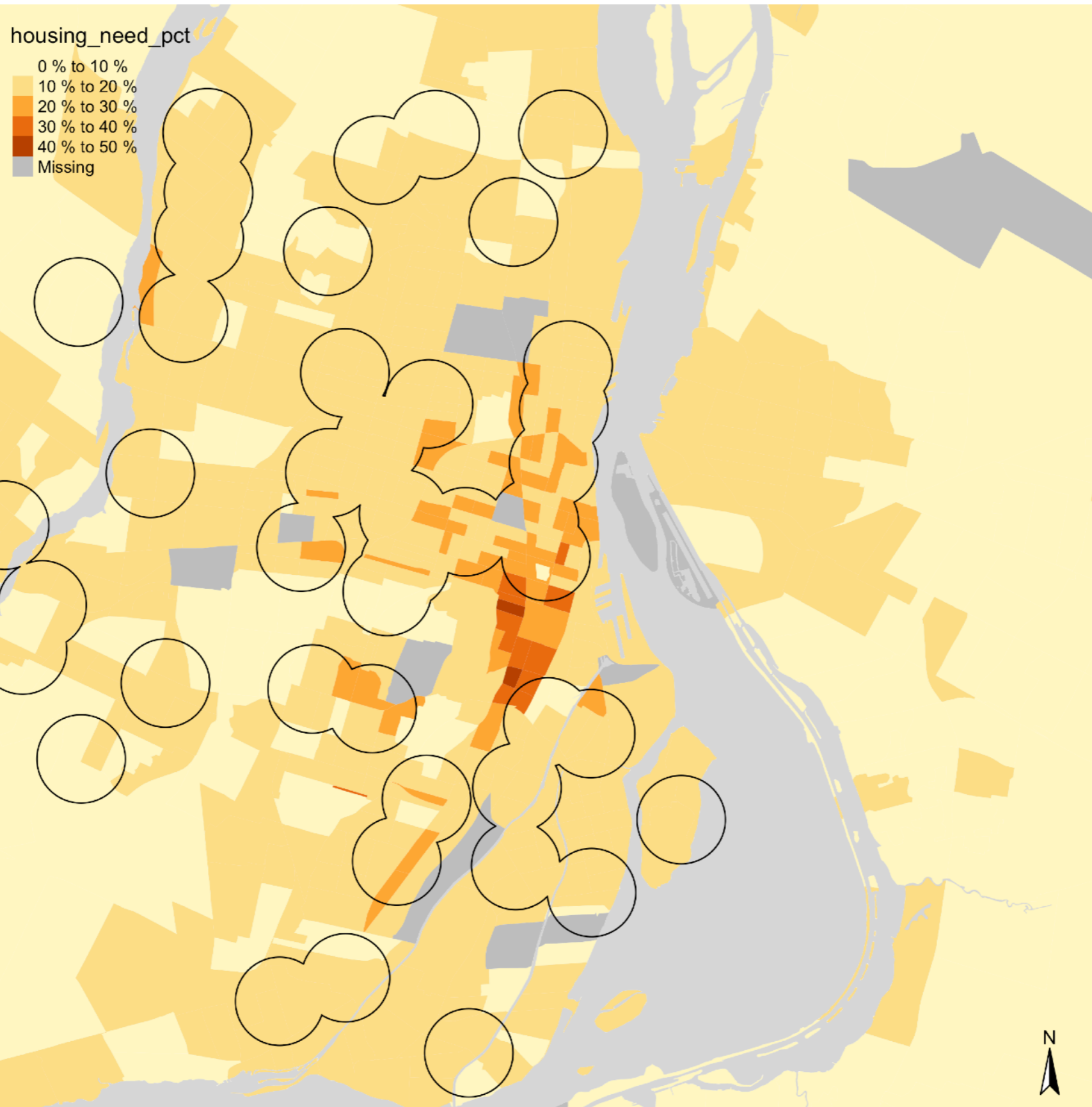
**Libraries are in and of the city.
Who uses them depends a lot on
who is around.**

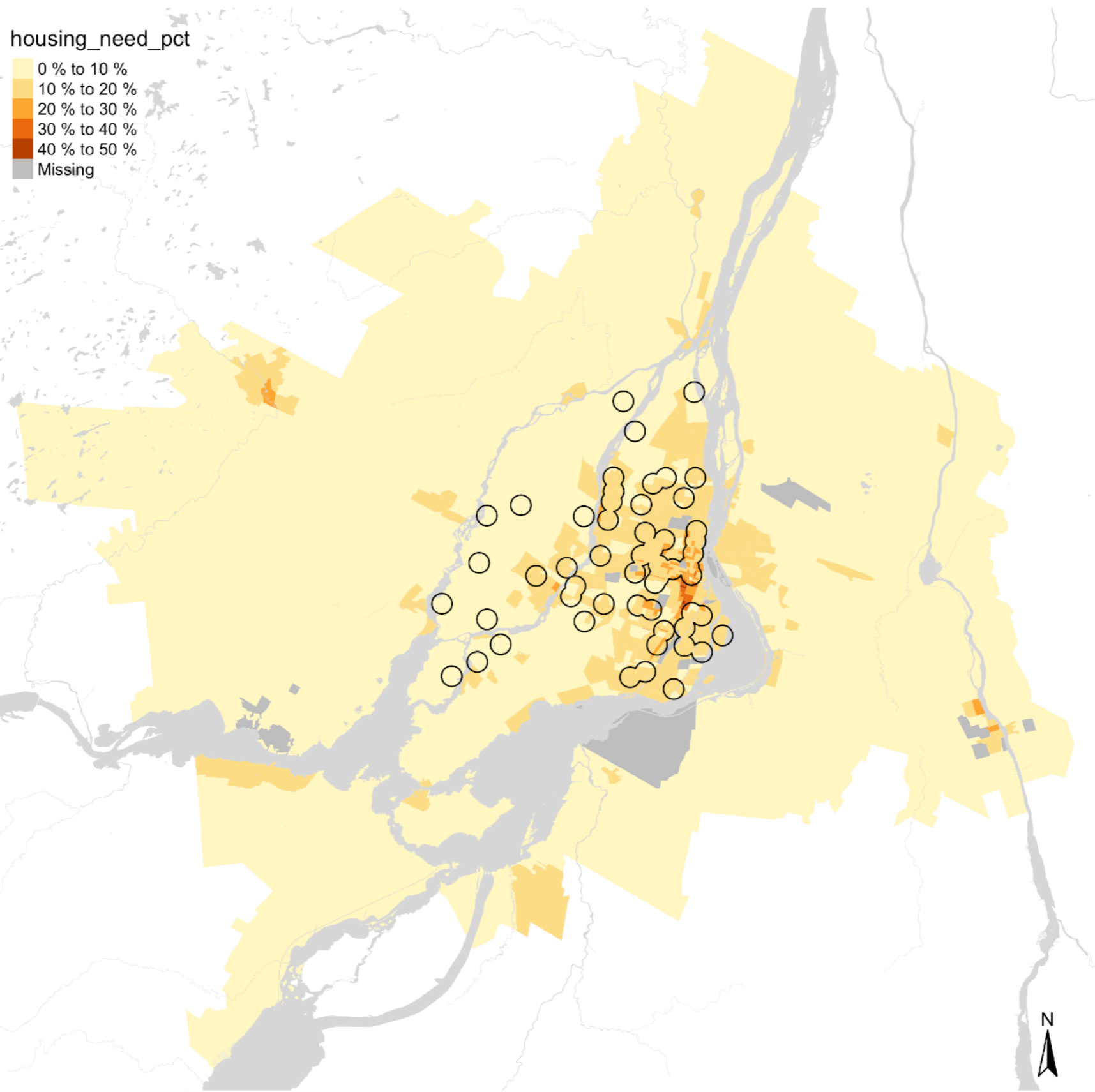
“[Libraries are] a neighbourhood service, and you can't centralise them. You can't expect people to bus into them or drive into them; **they need to be on the street corner** if they're going to have a social glue effect.”

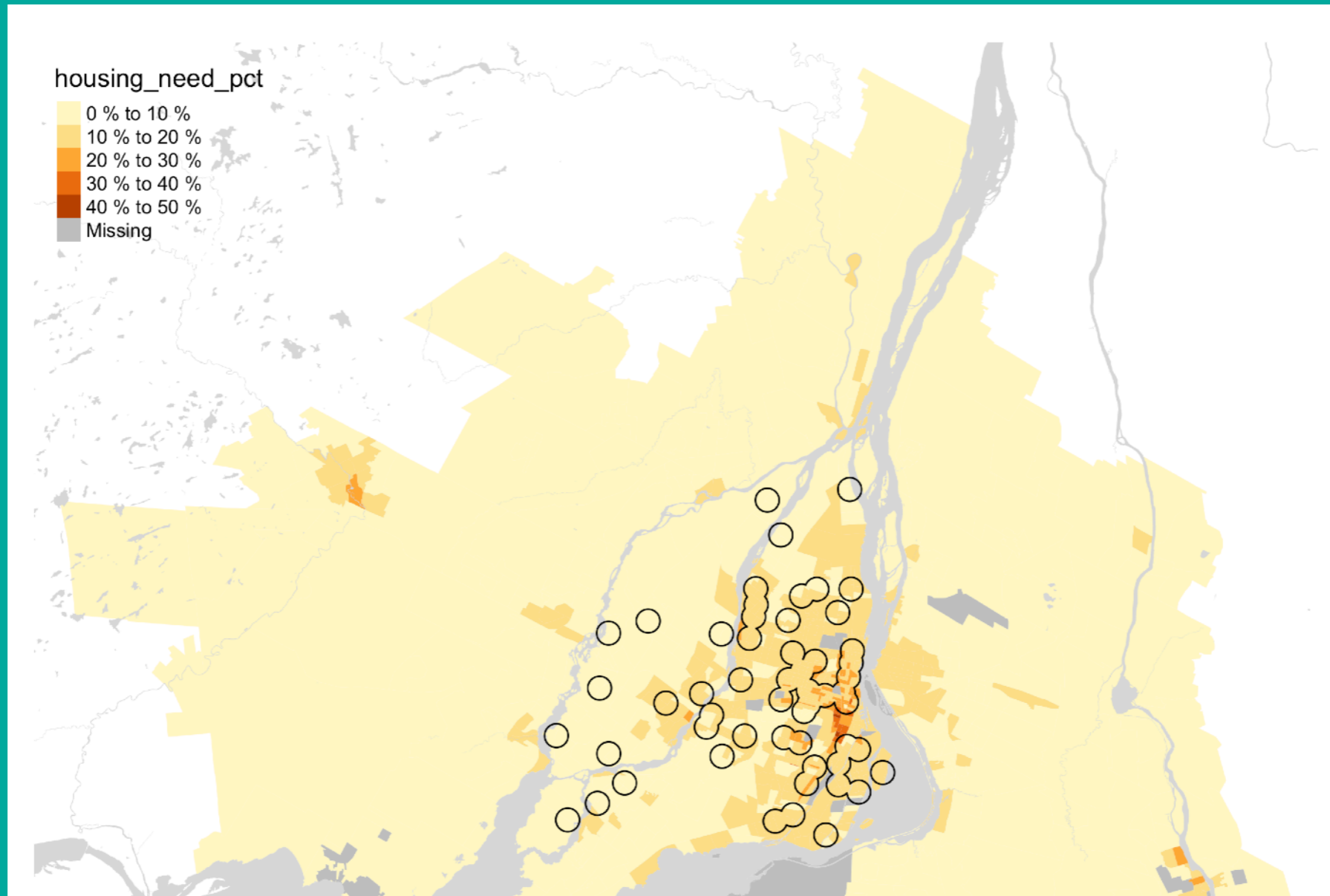
(John Pateman)









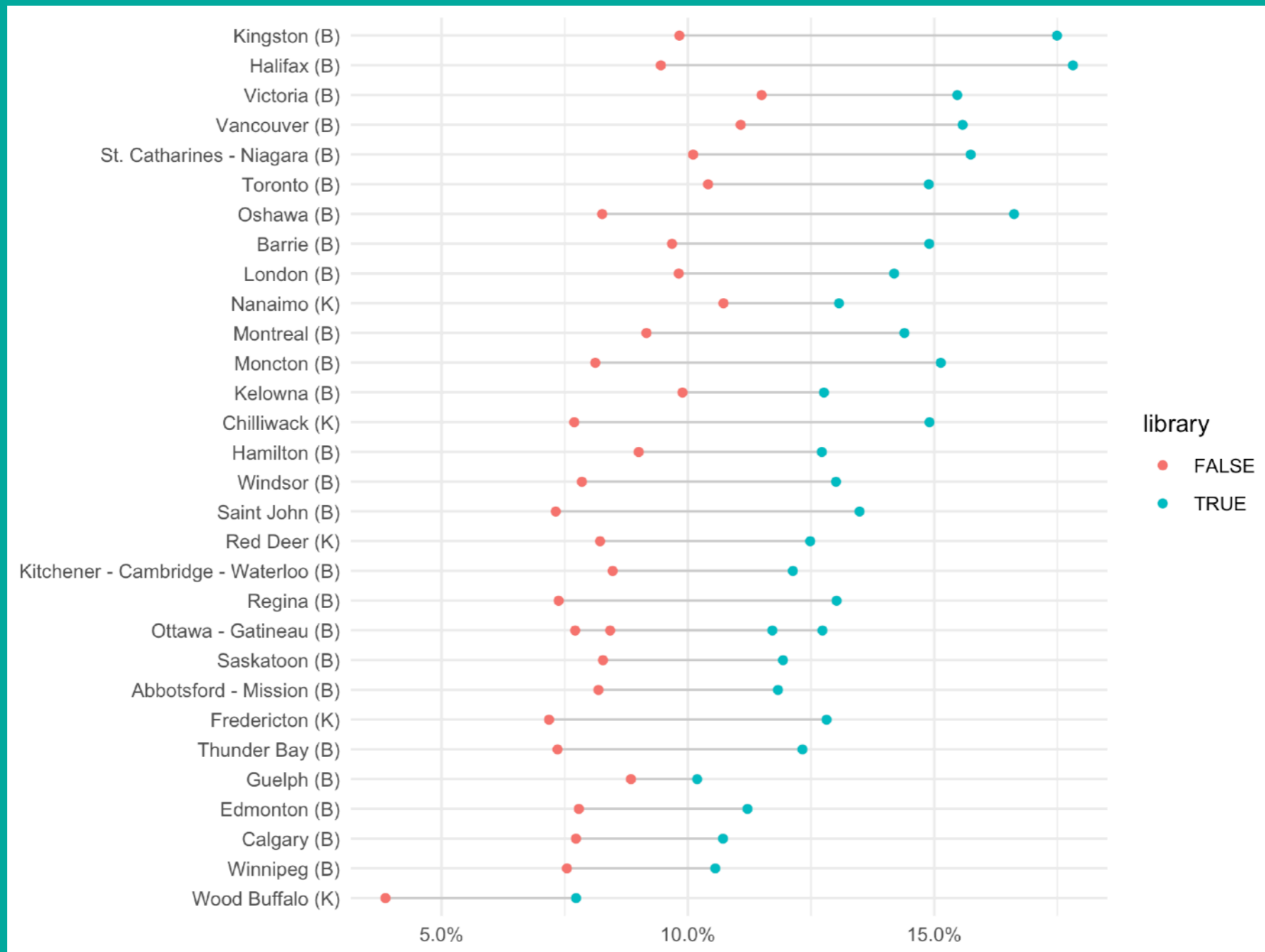


Core housing need 57% higher
14.4% in library walk-sheds
9.2% outside walk-sheds

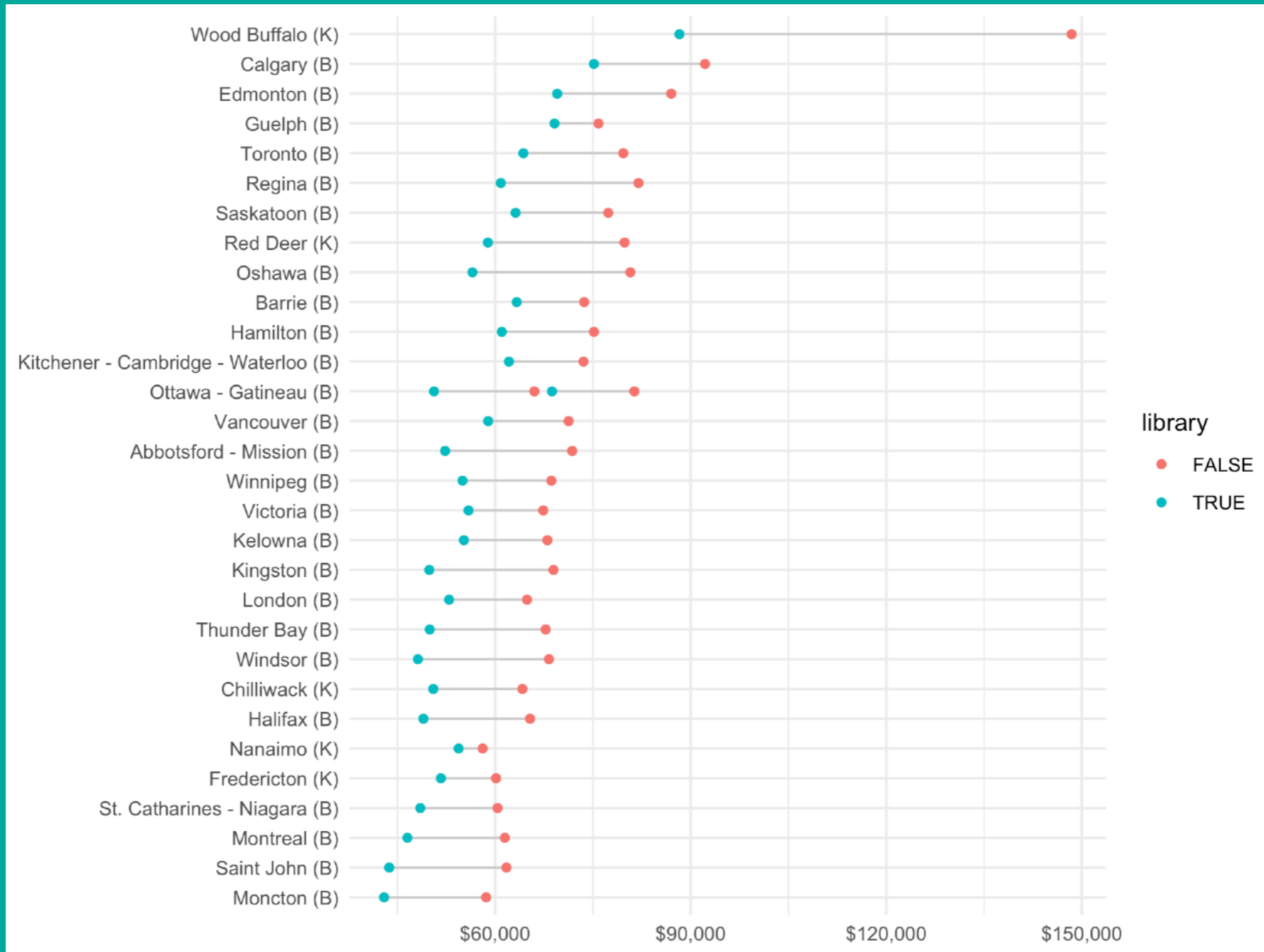
**Let's look at this
systematically....**

**Across the 562 member
library branches located
within an urban region
(CMA: census metropolitan
area)**

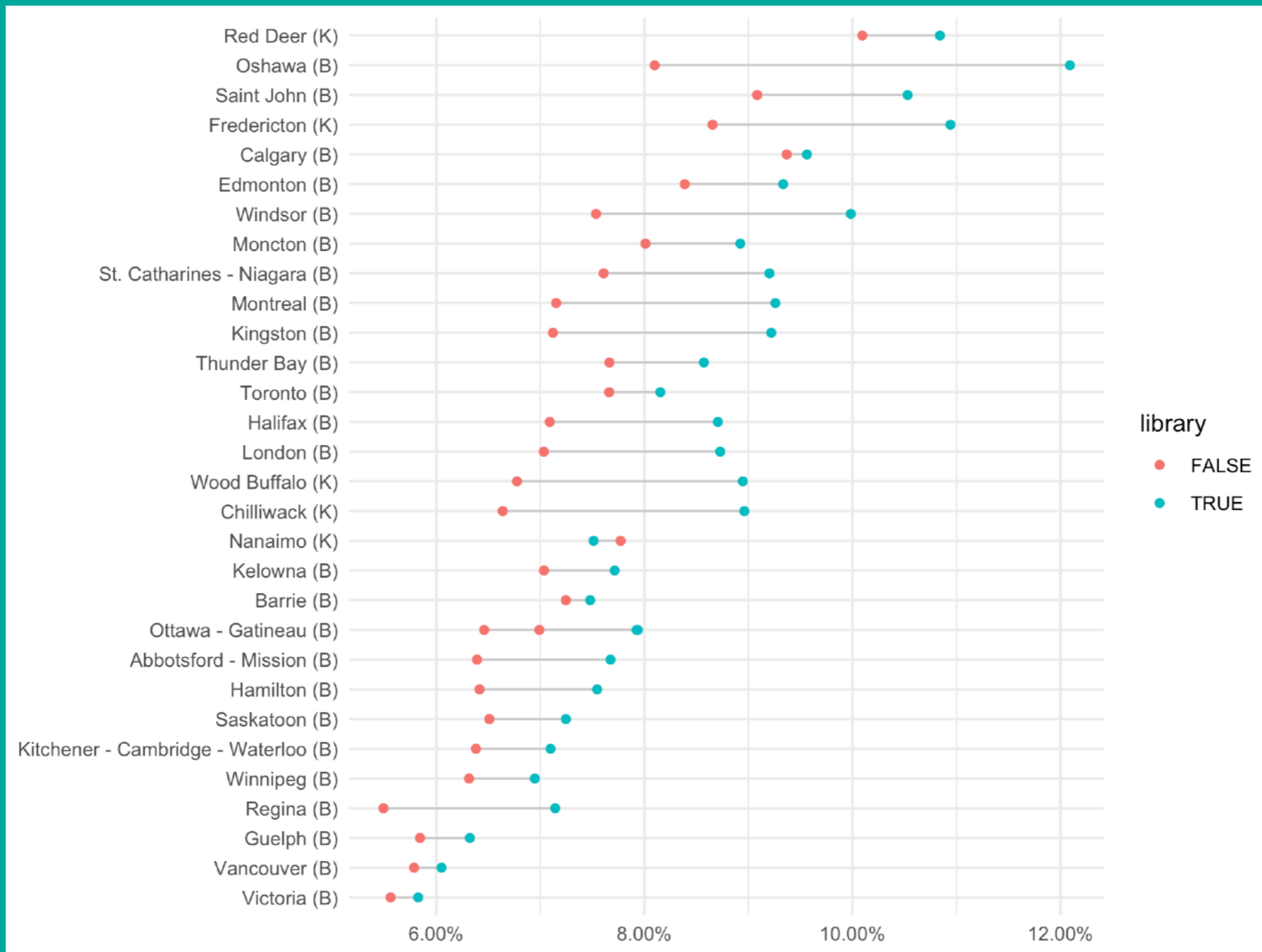
Housing need is higher in library walk-sheds in every single city in the country.



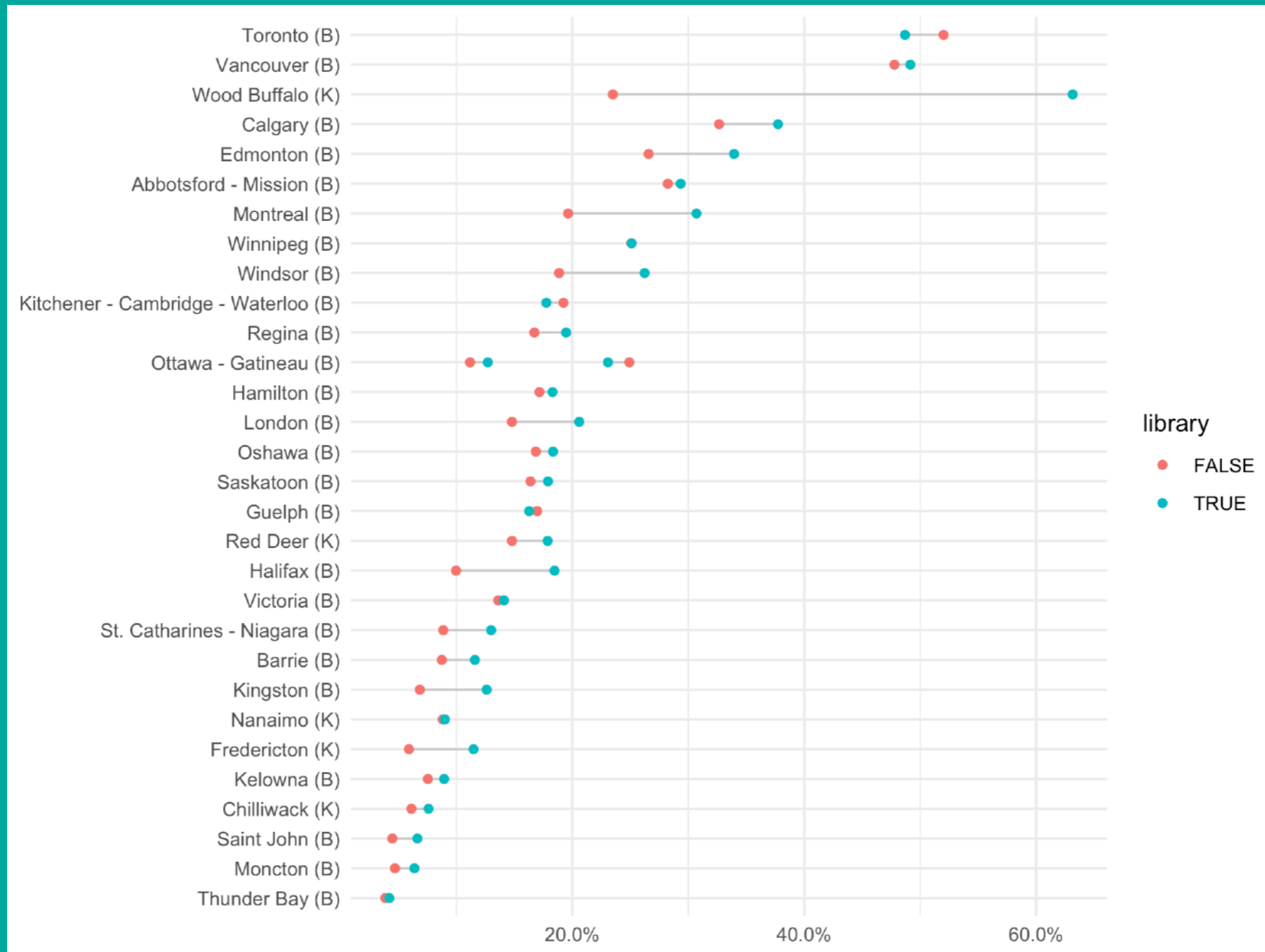
Household income is lower.



Unemployment is higher.



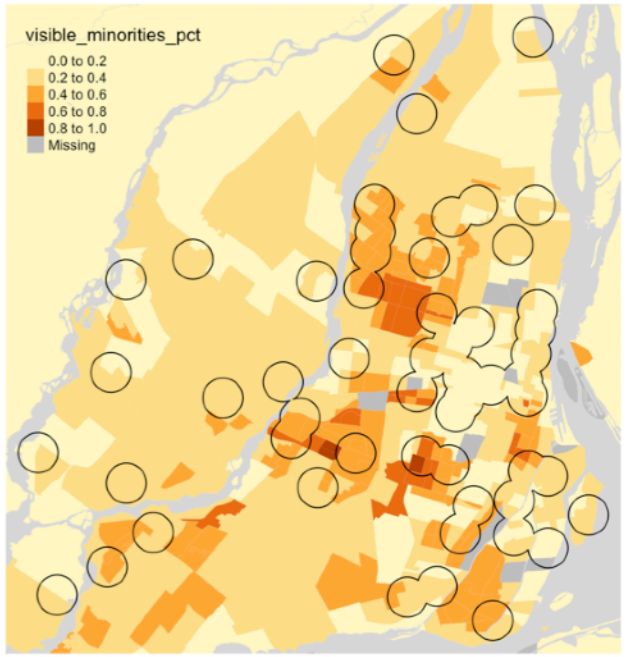
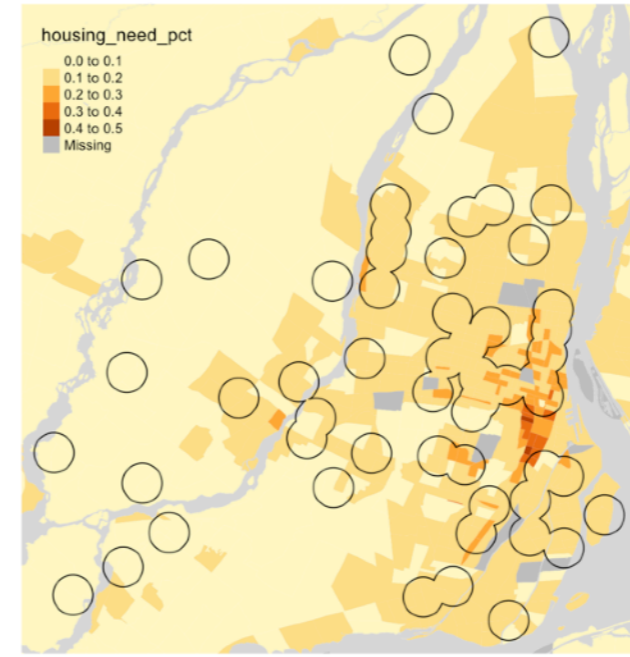
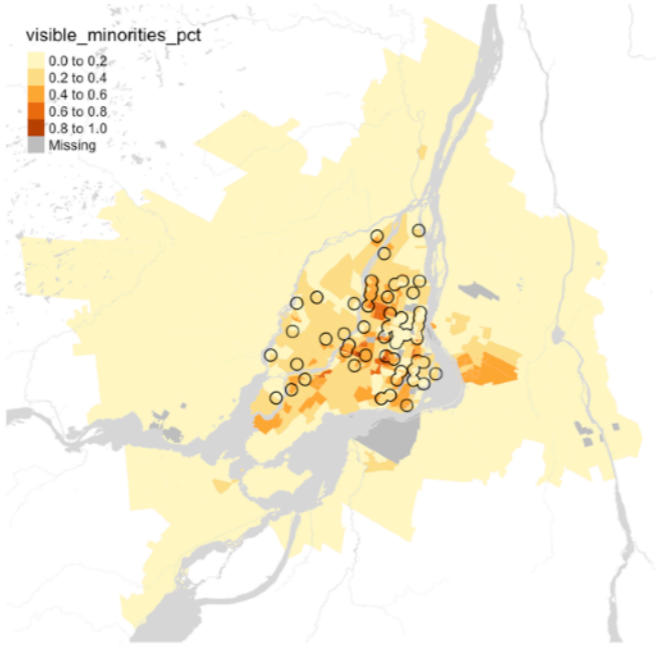
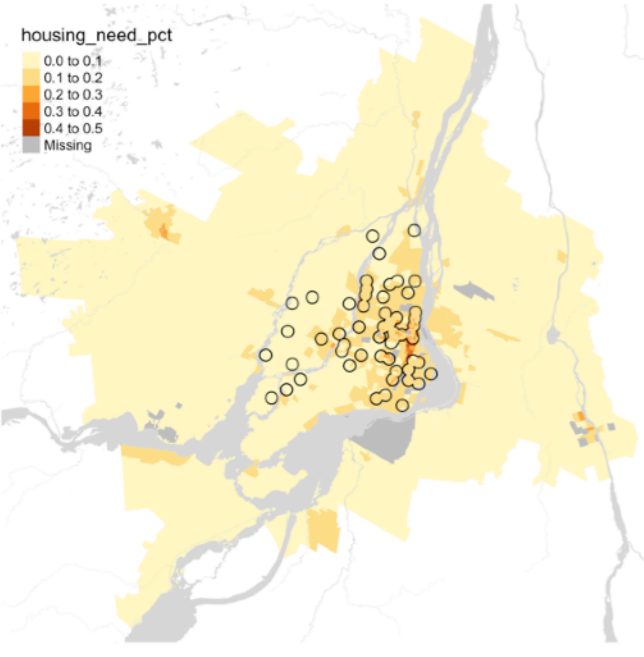
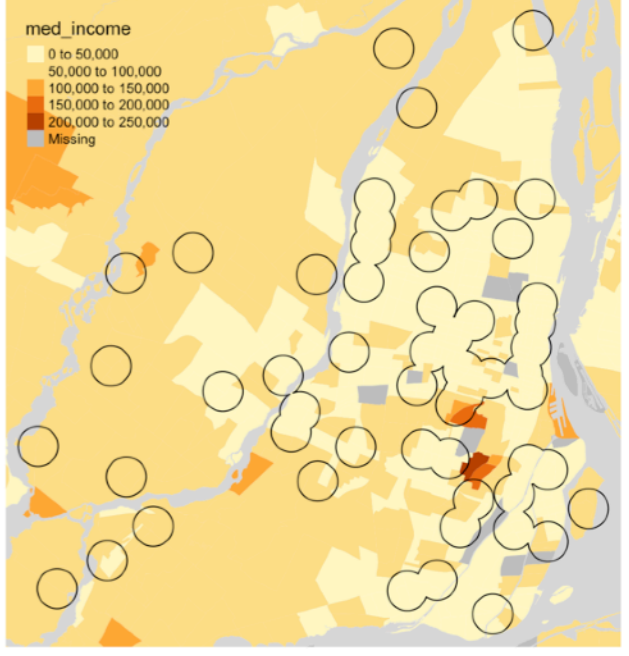
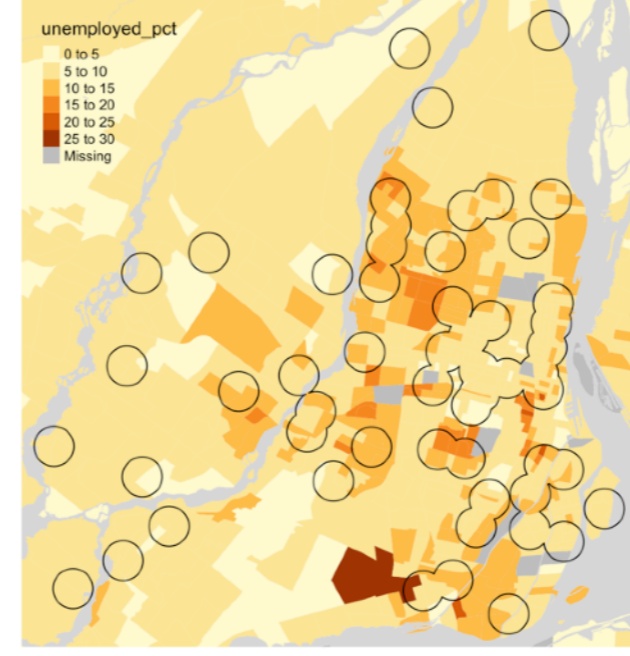
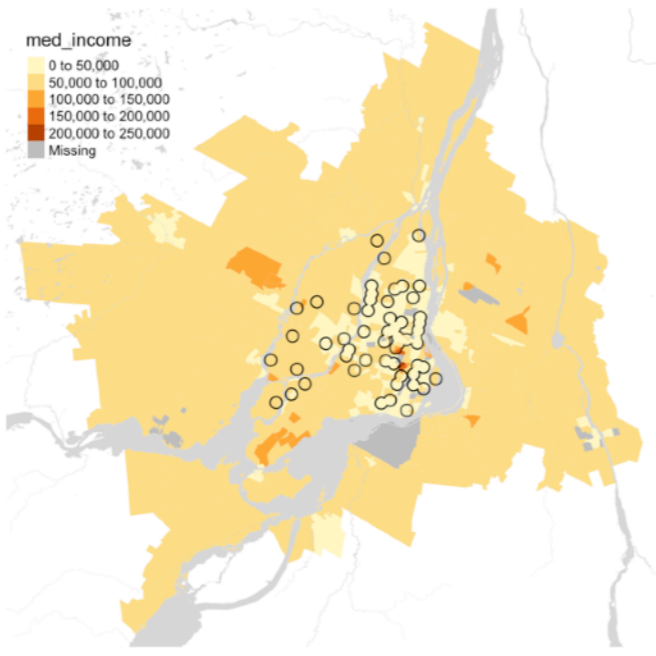
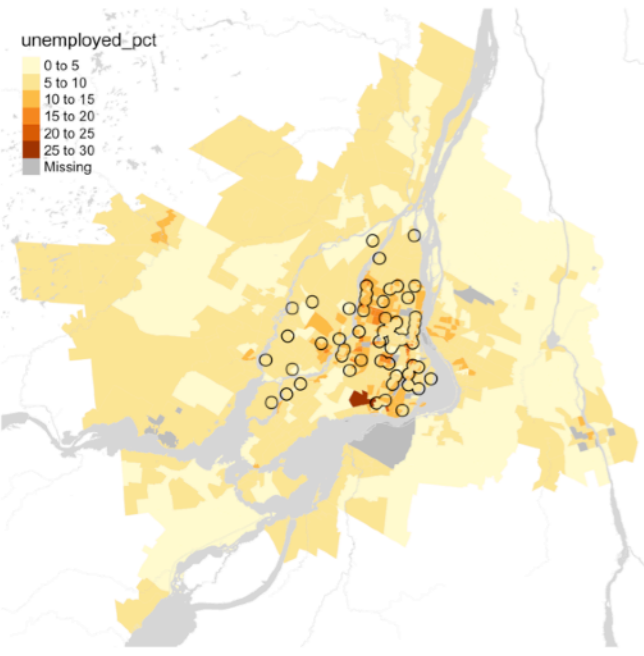
There are more visible minorities and immigrants.



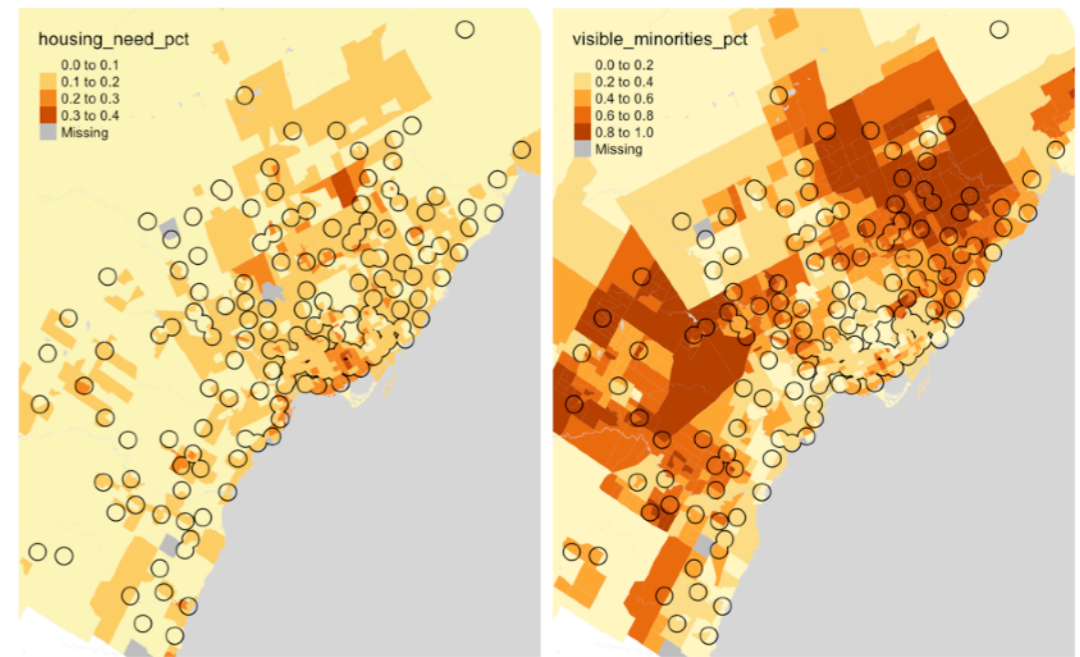
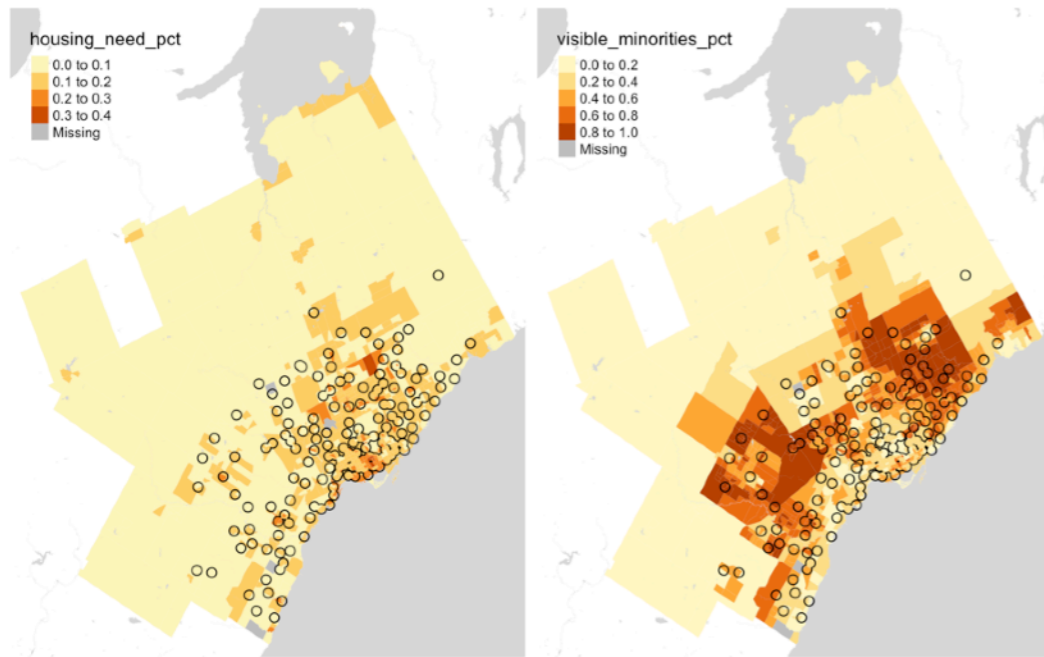
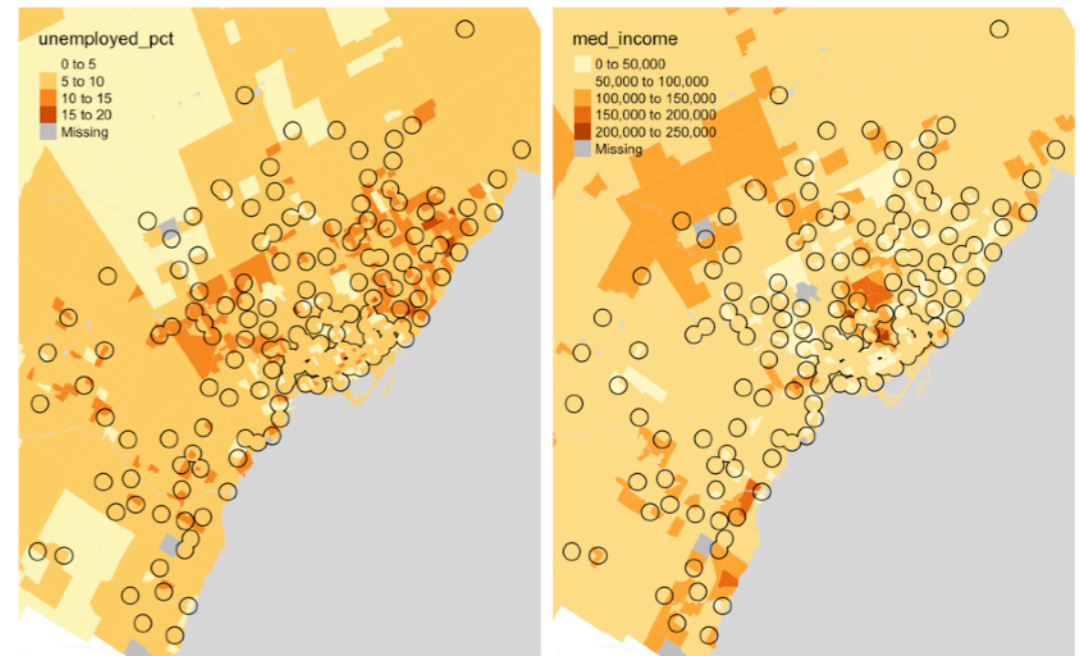
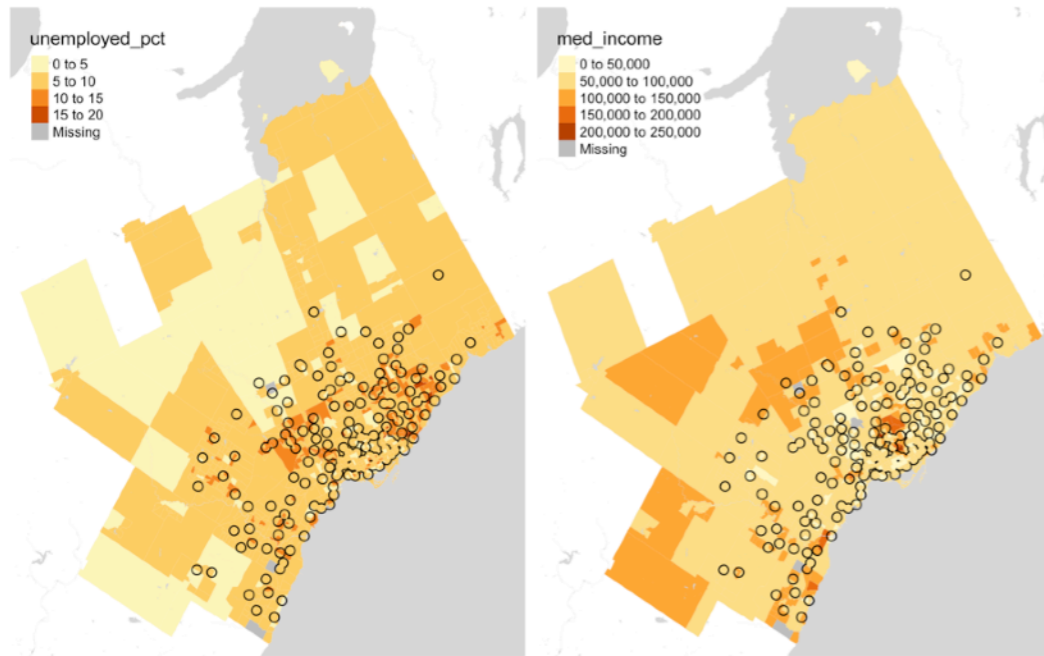
In short...

Library walk-sheds have systematically higher levels of social need than surrounding urban areas.

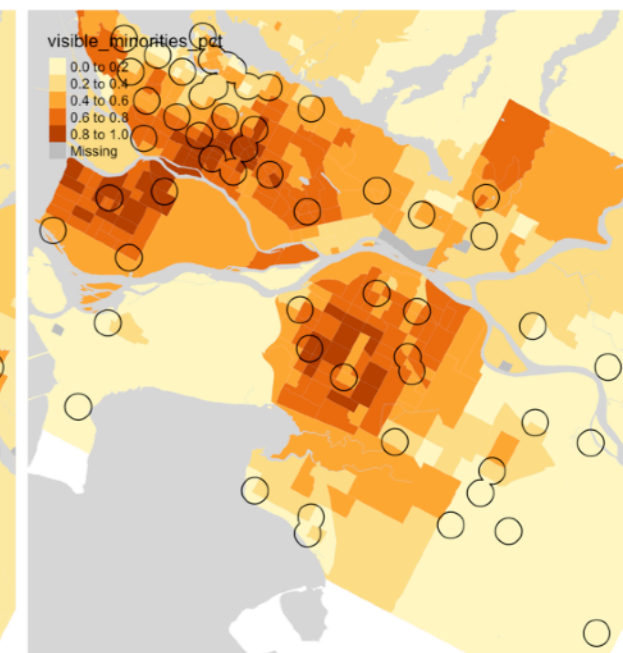
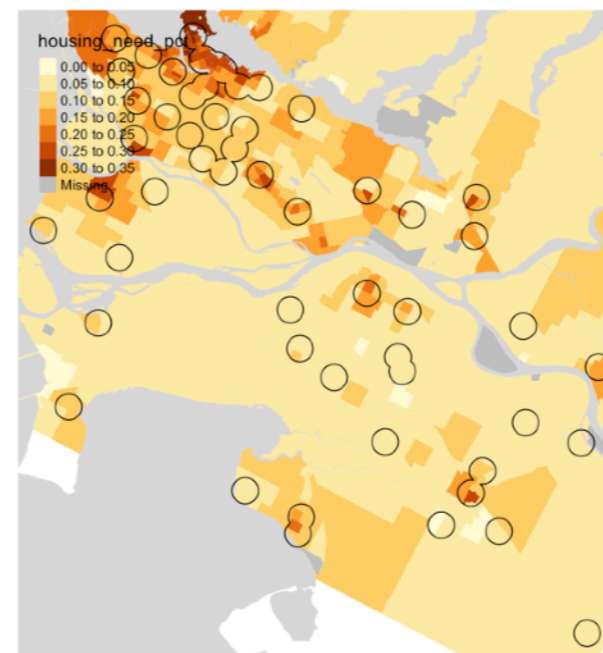
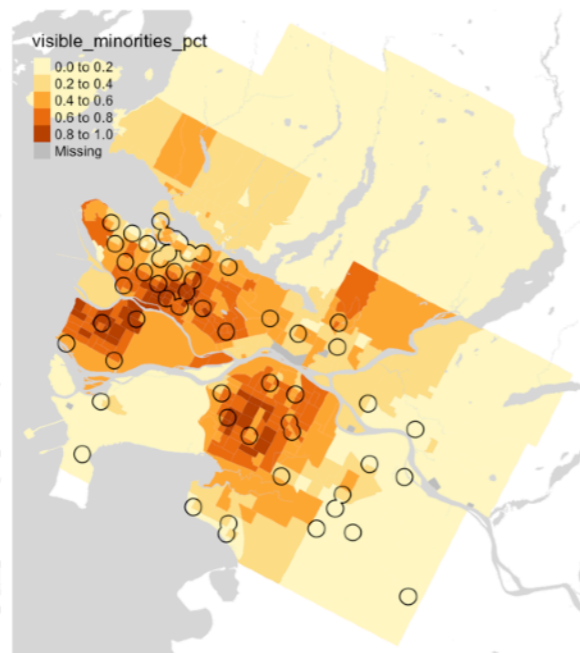
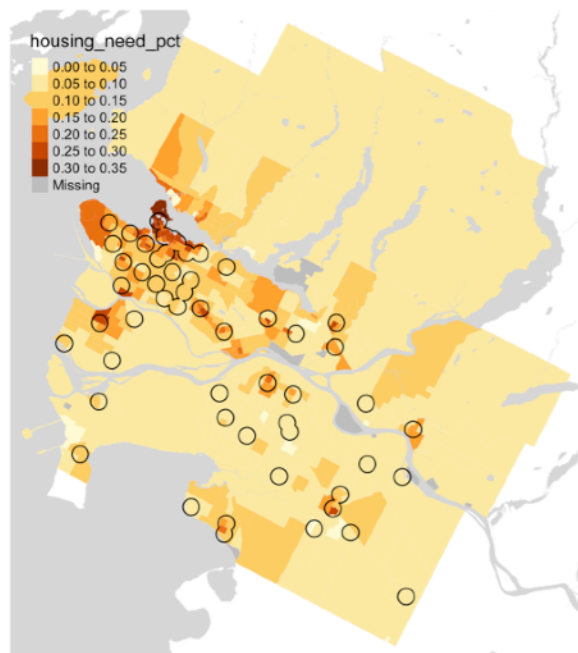
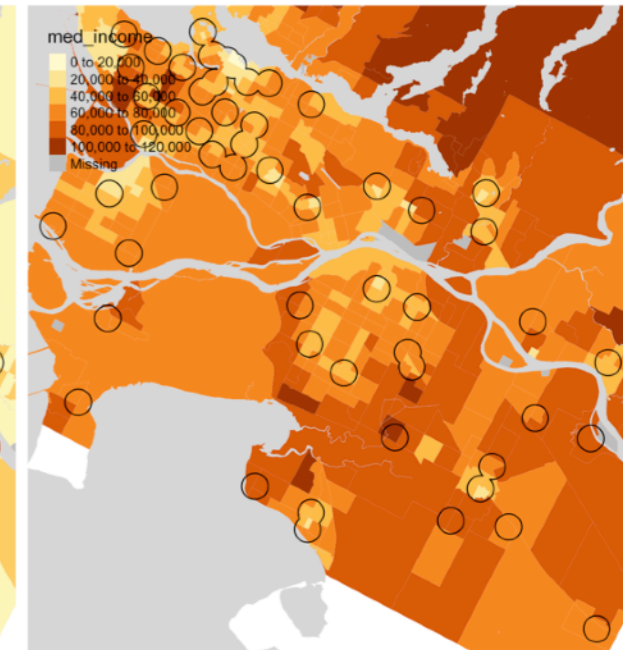
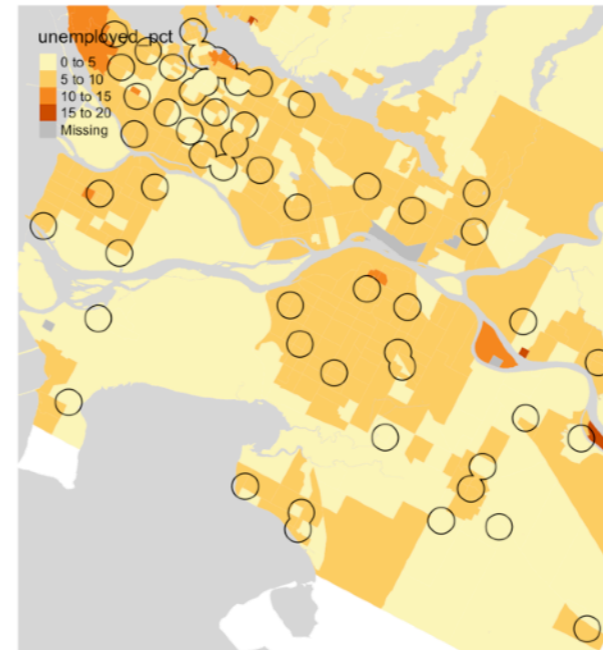
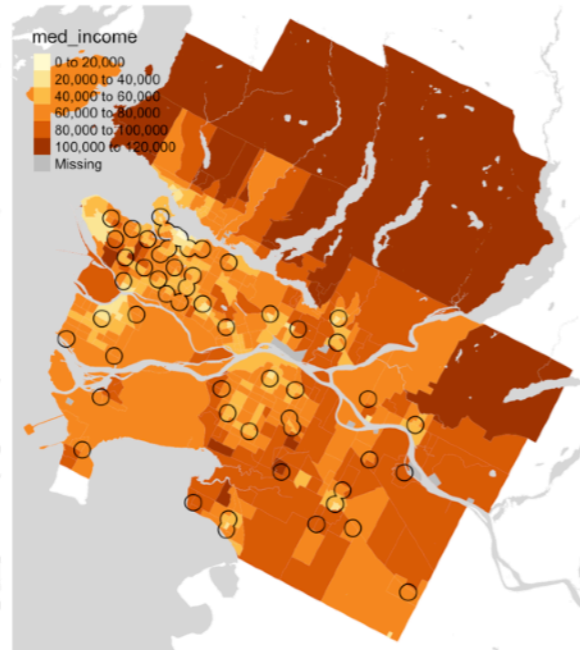
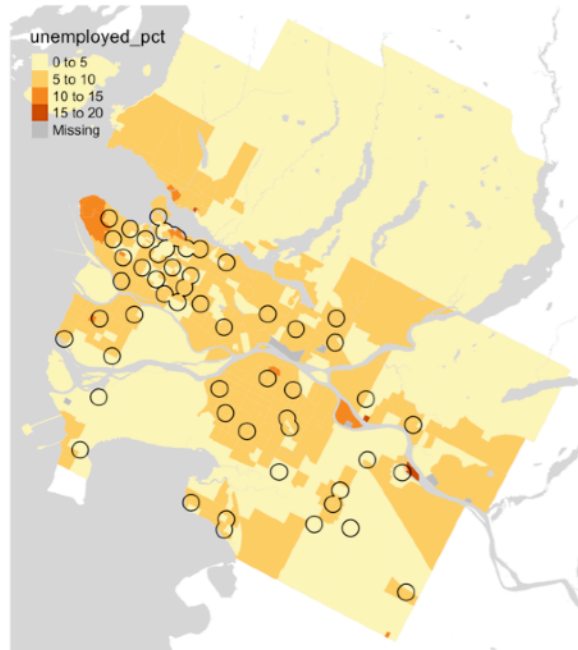
Some examples...



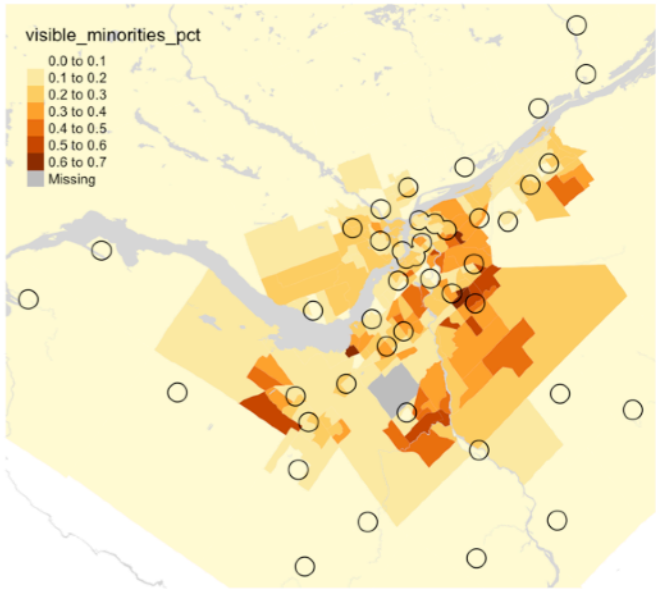
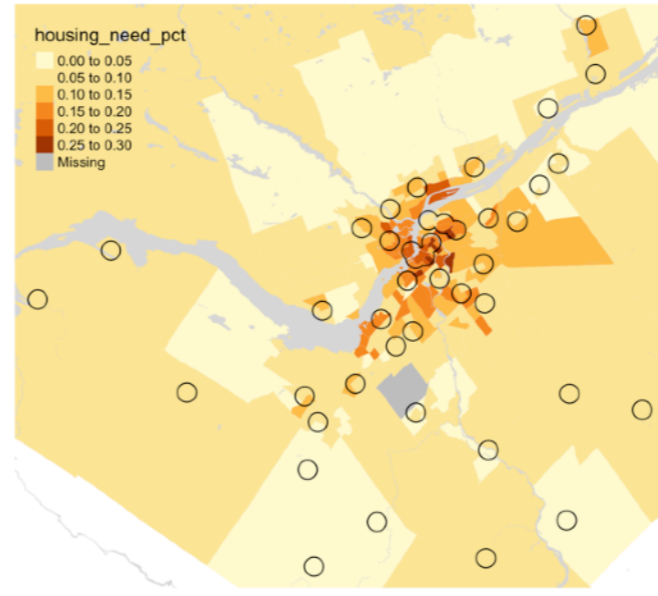
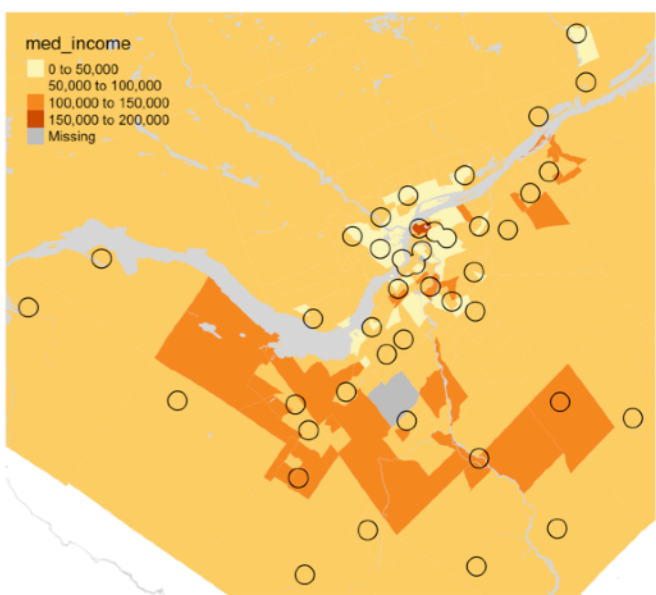
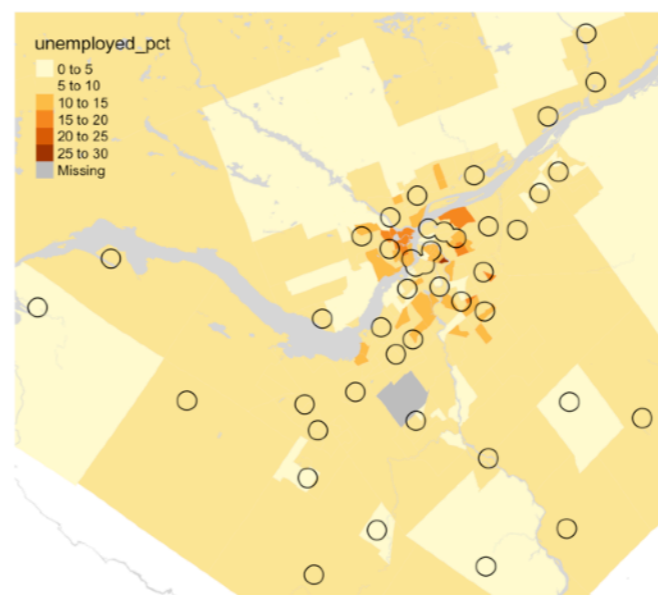
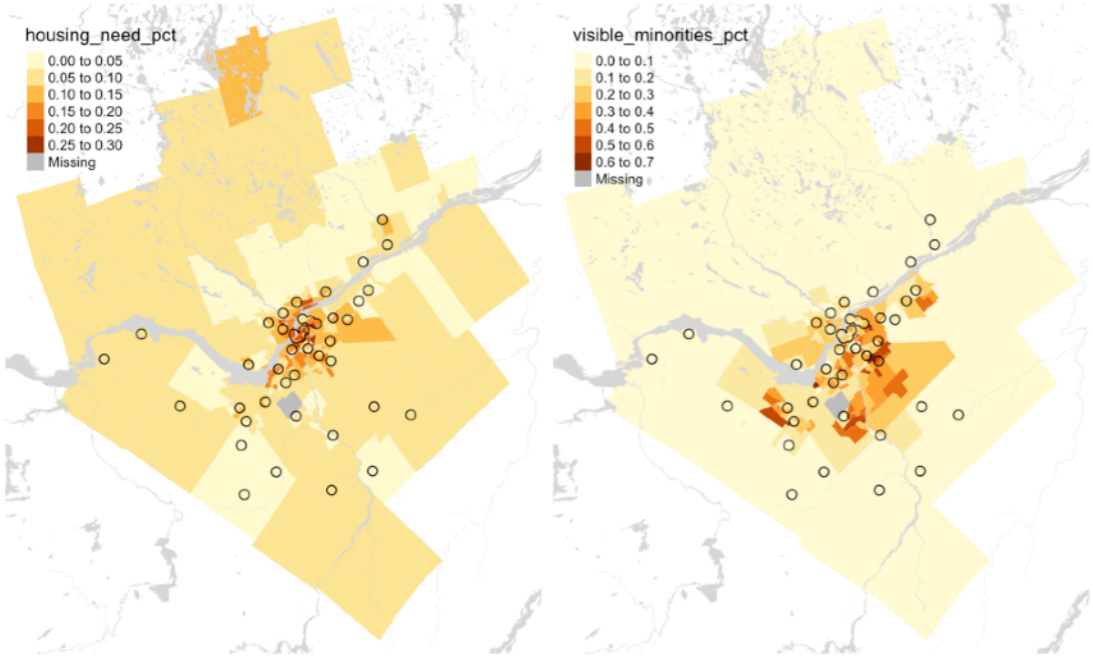
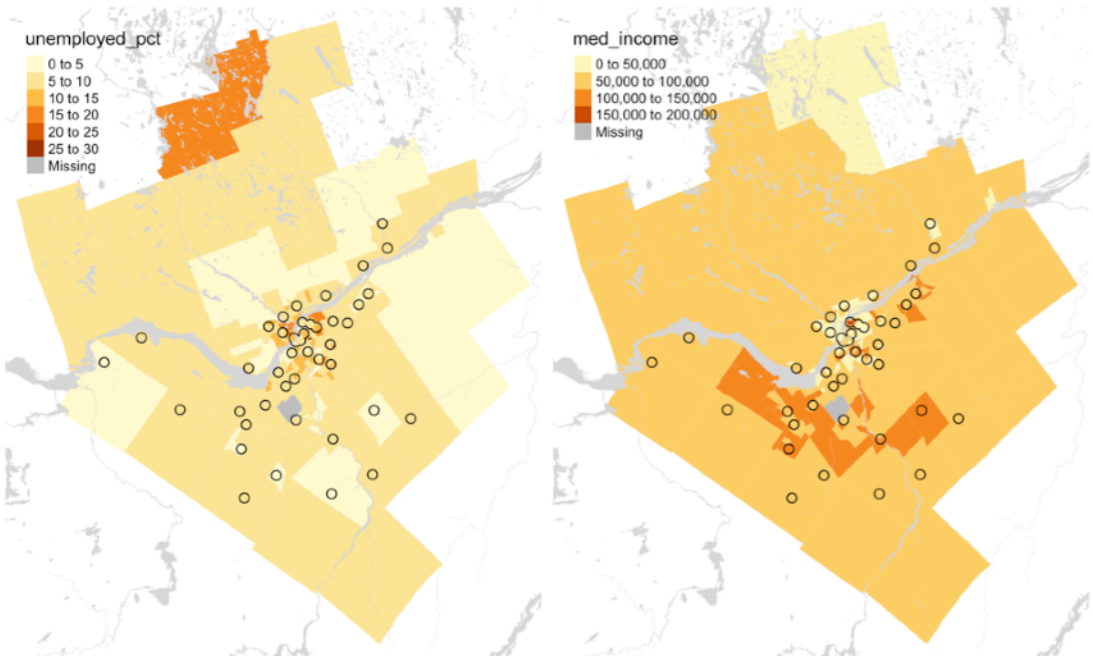
Montréal



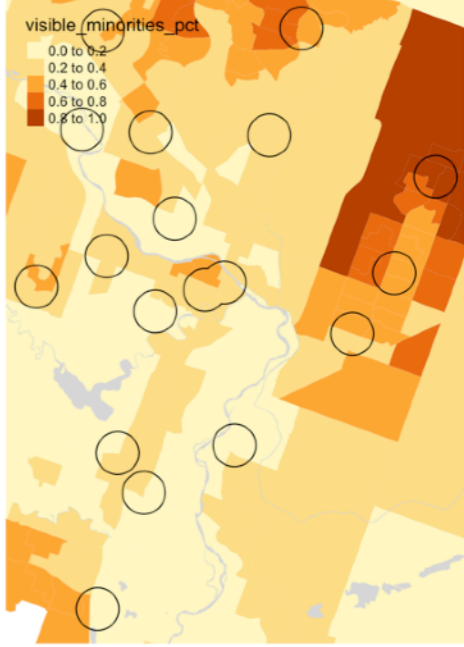
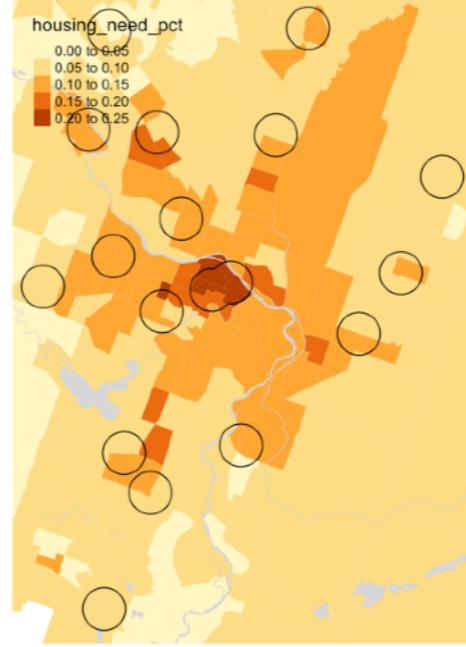
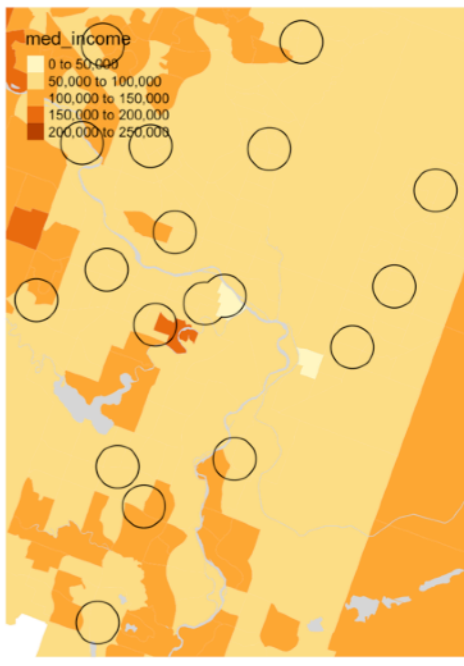
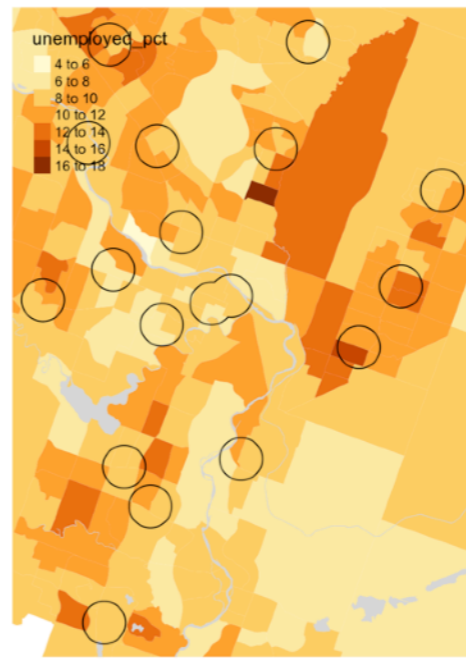
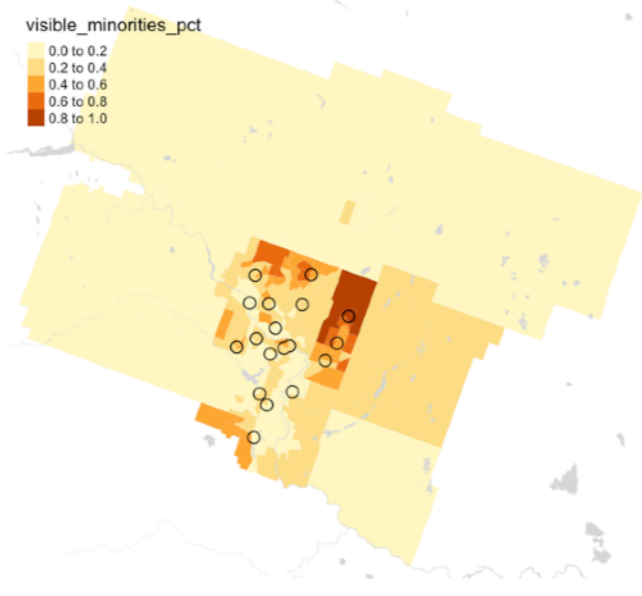
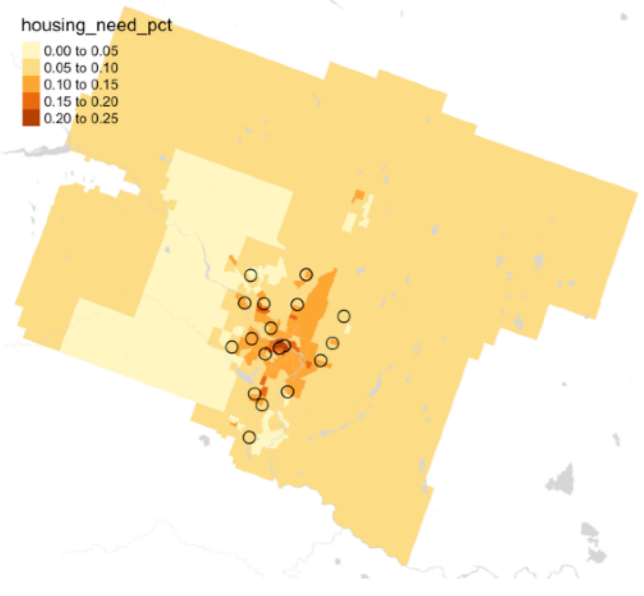
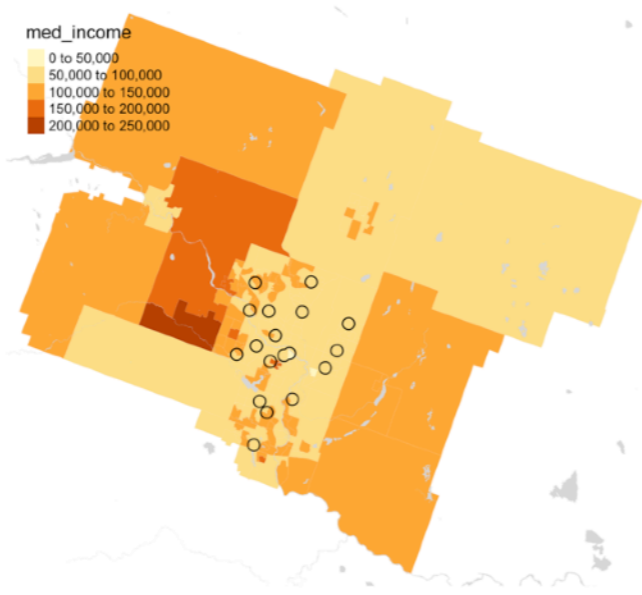
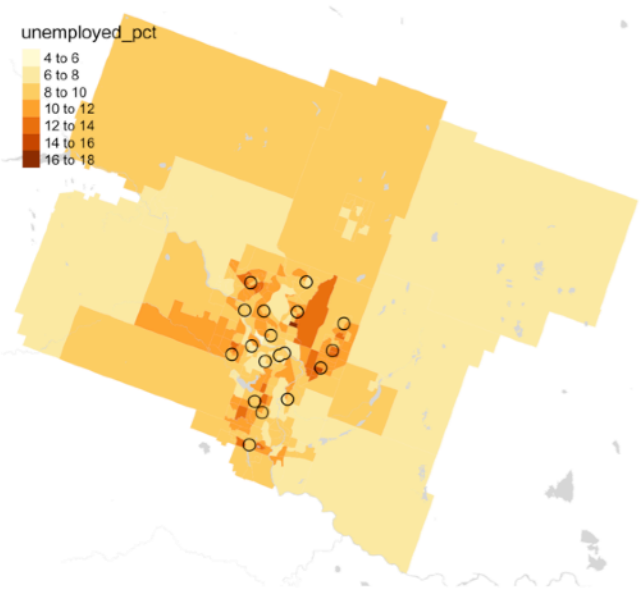
Toronto



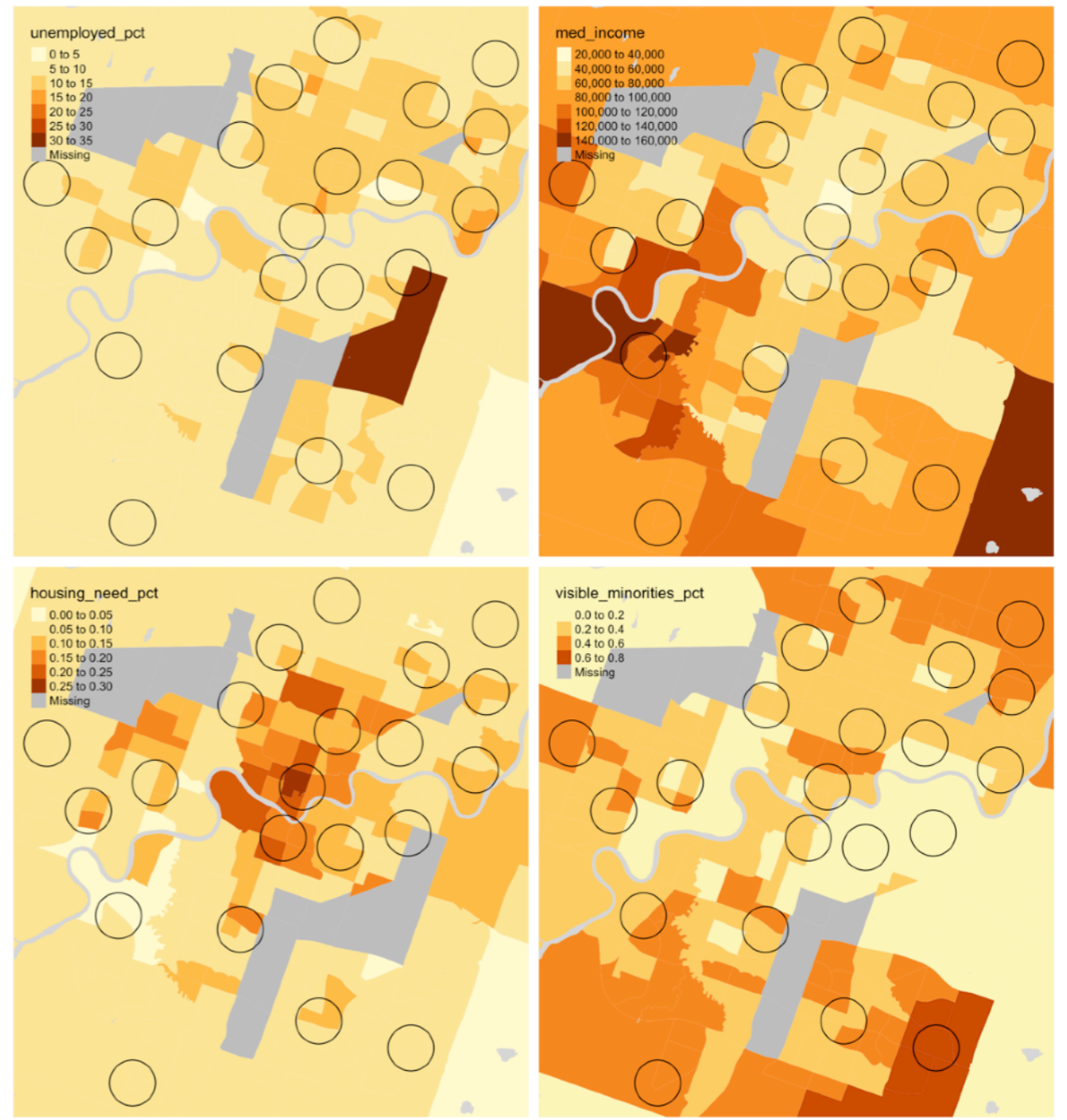
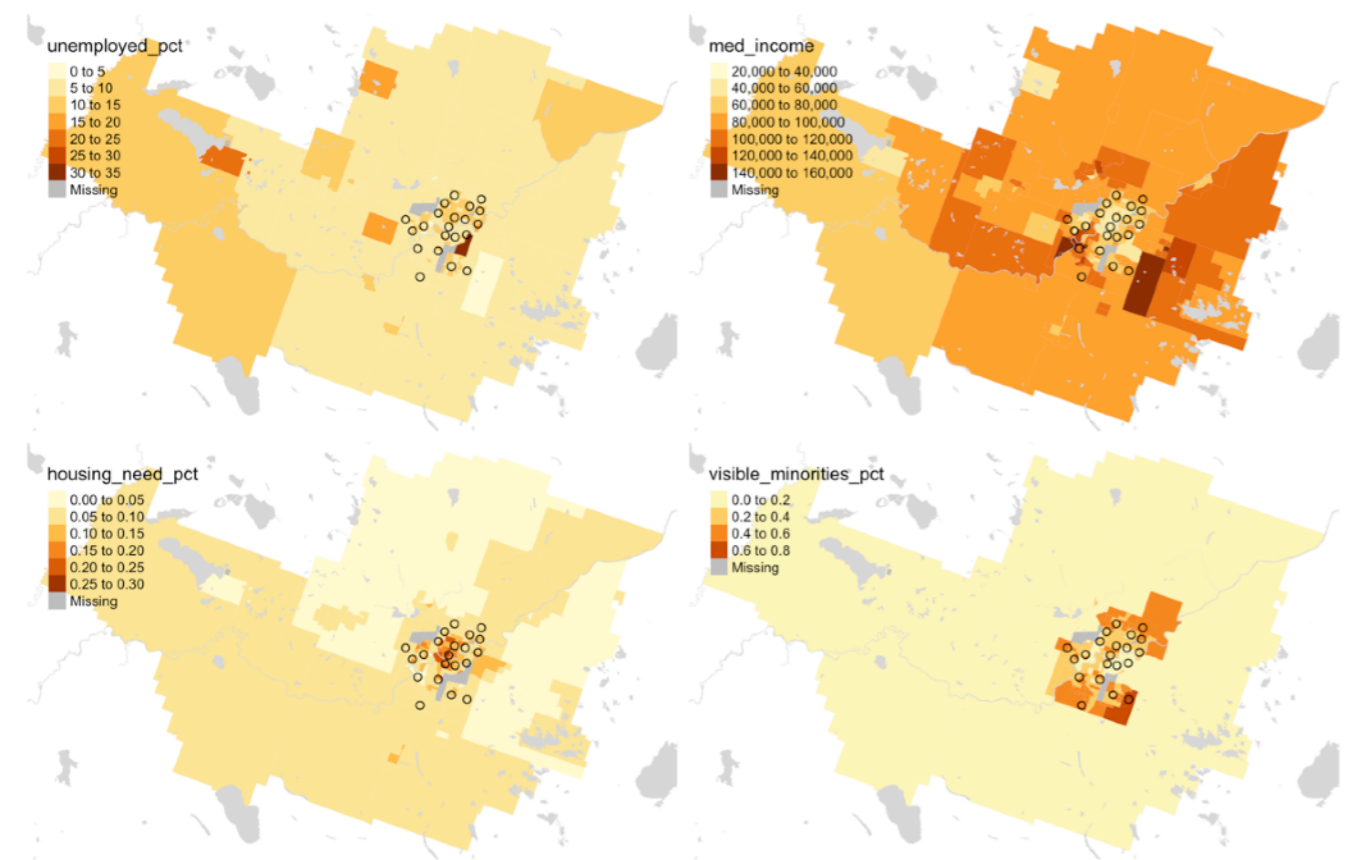
Vancouver



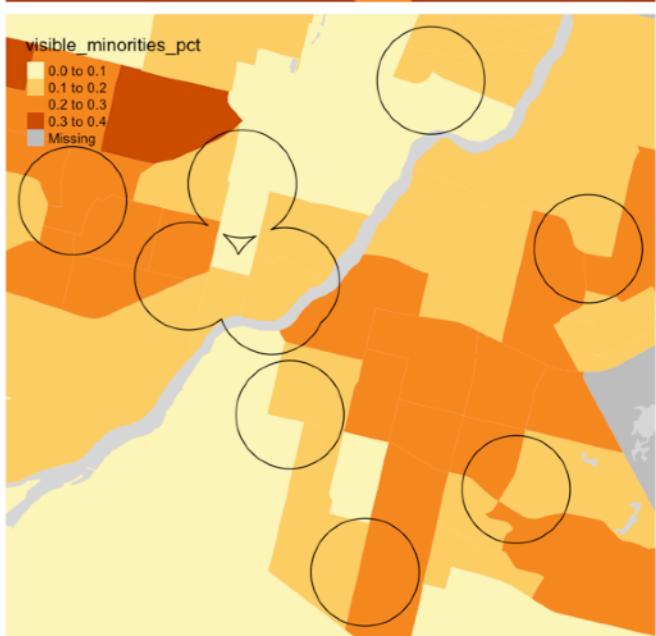
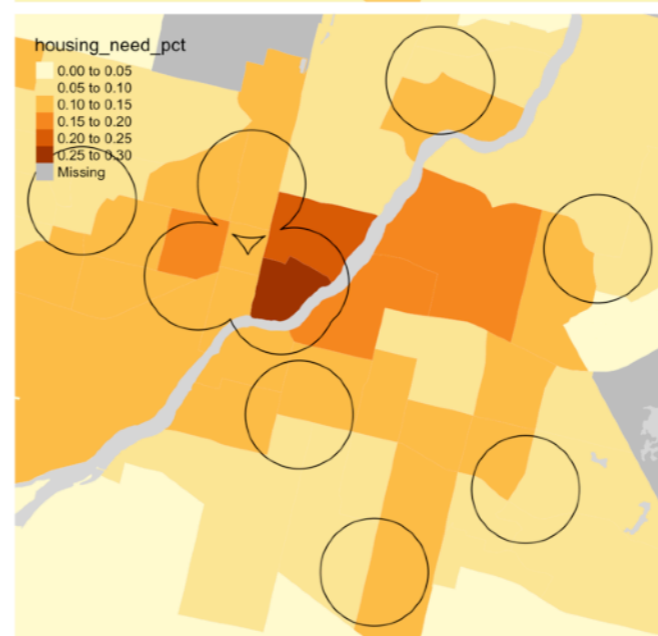
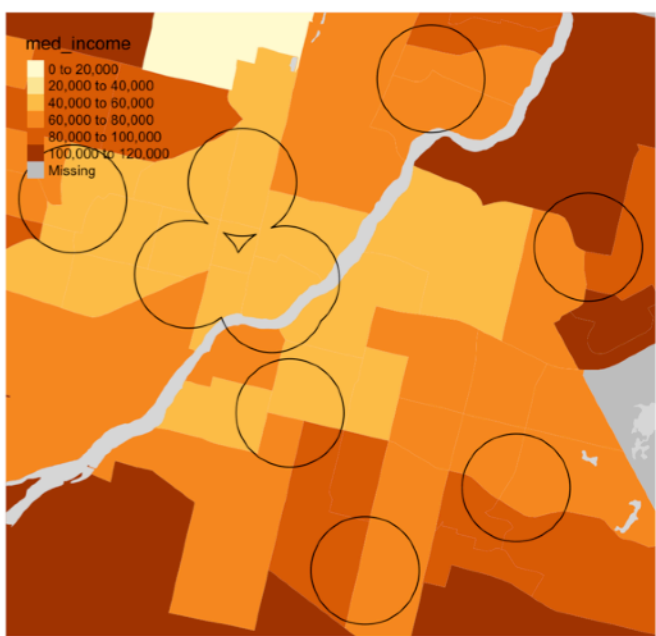
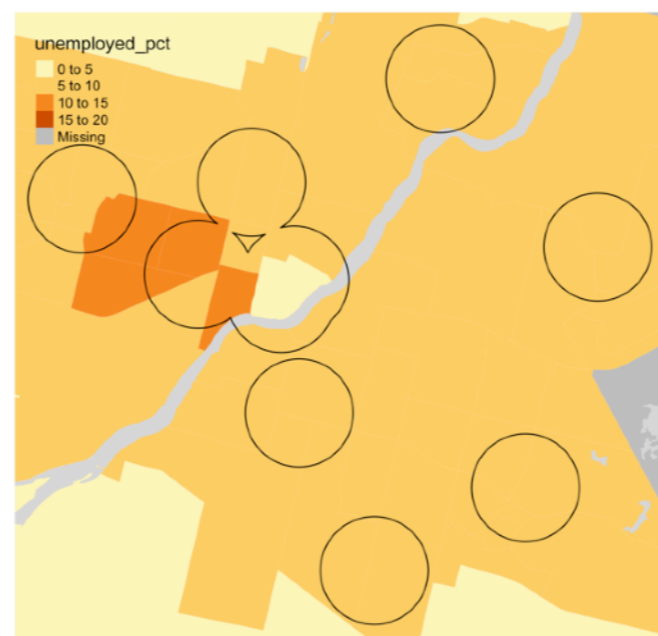
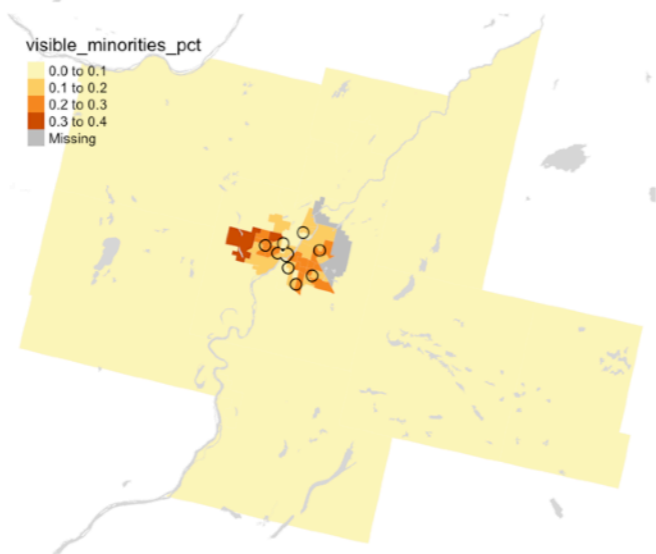
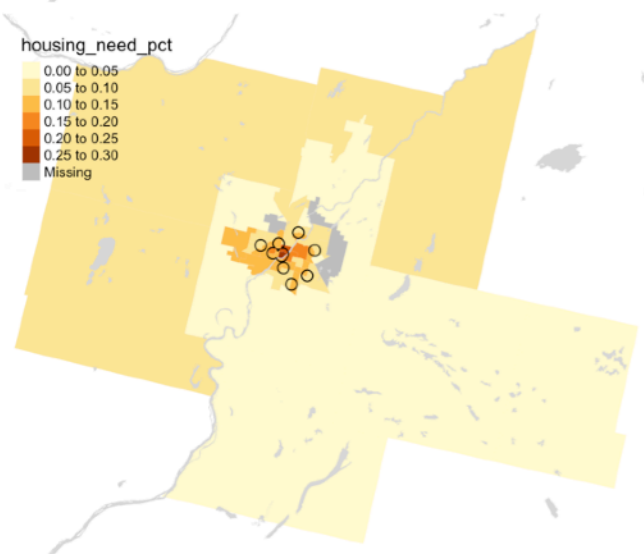
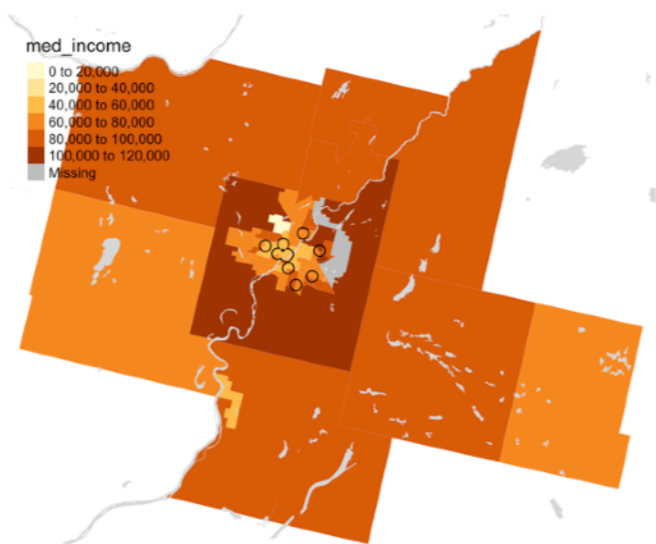
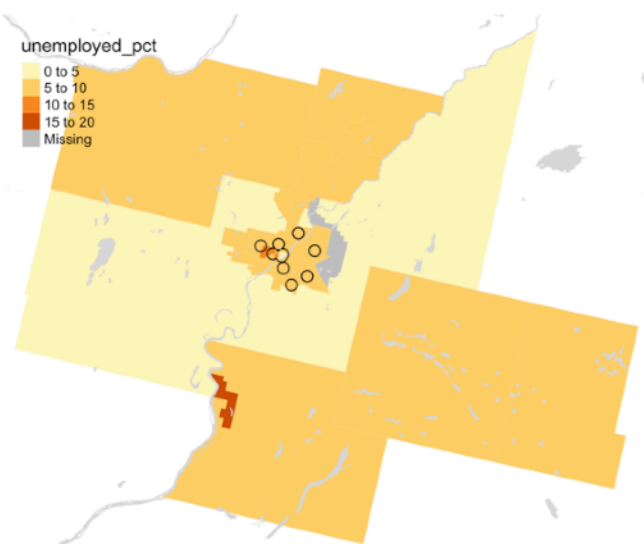
Ottawa



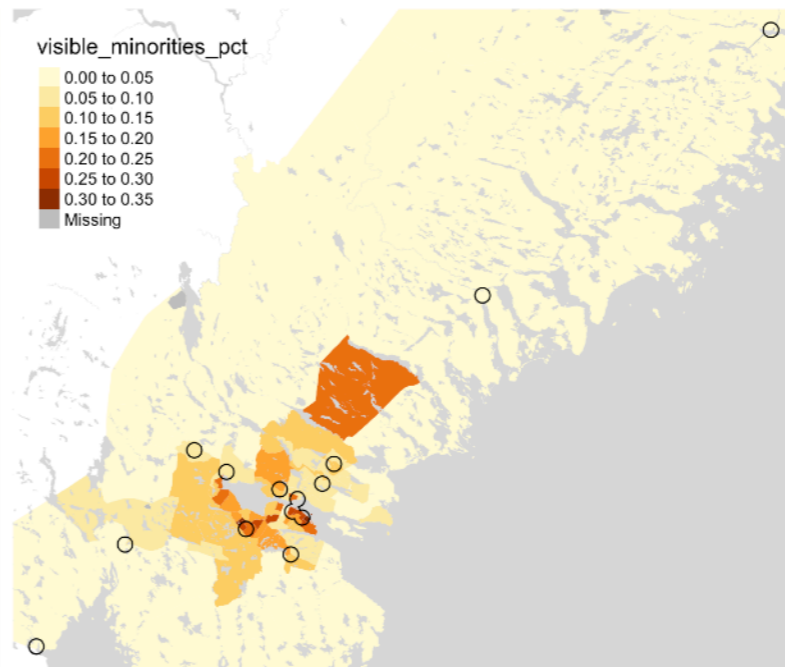
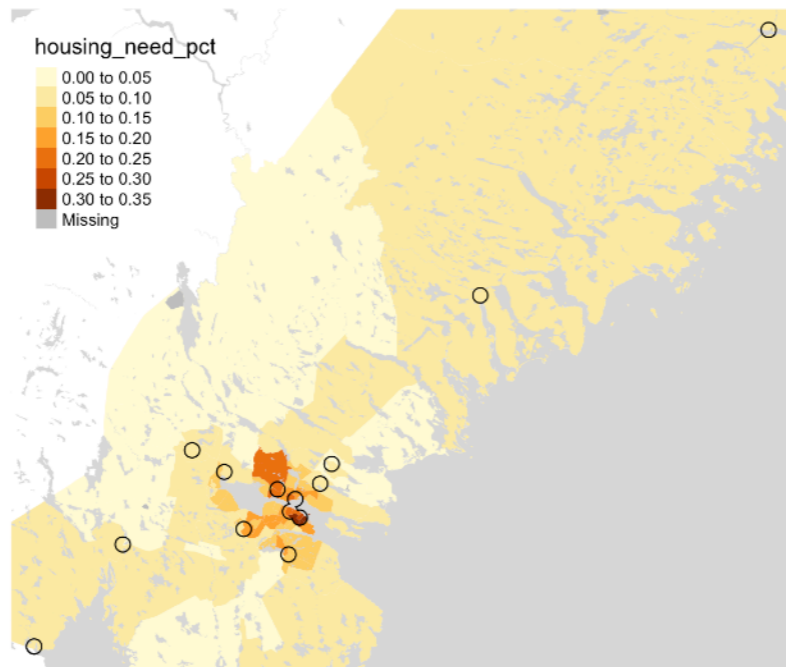
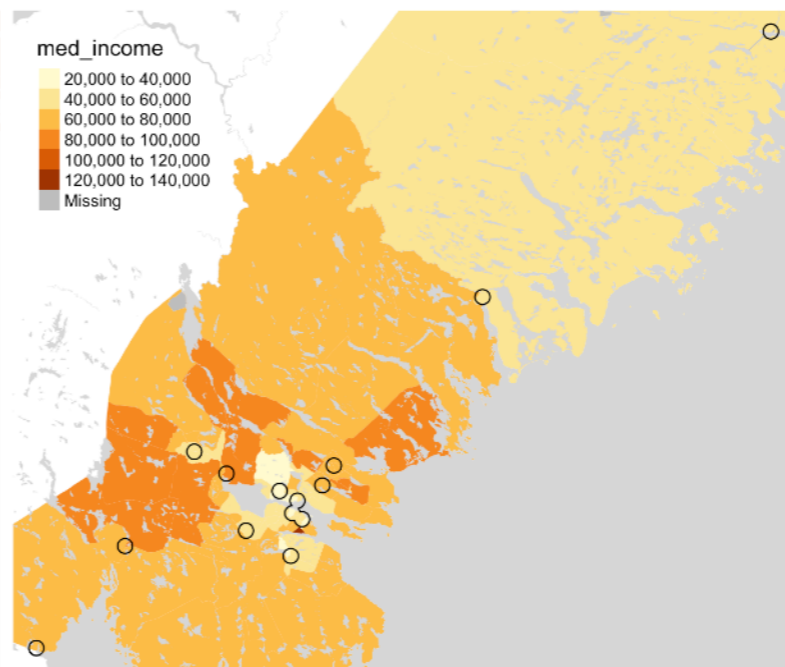
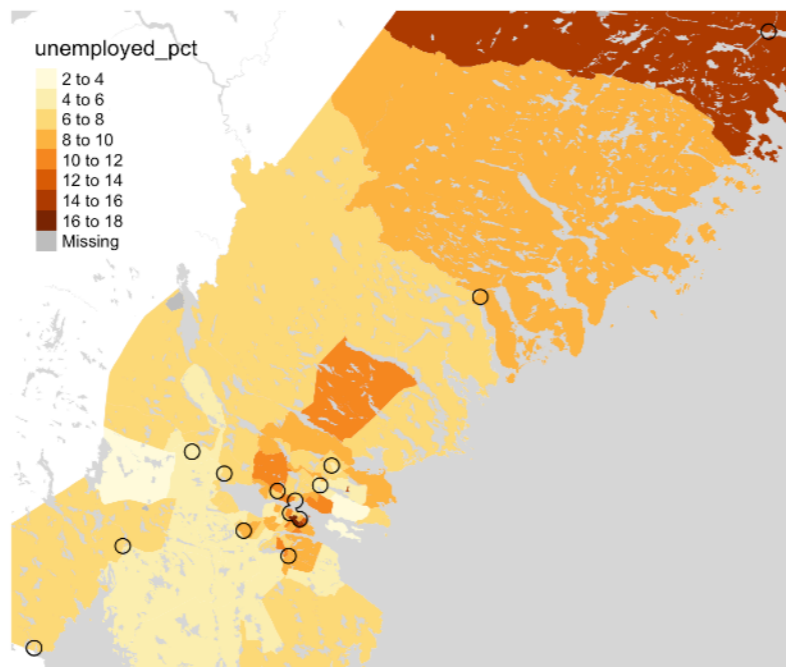
Calgary



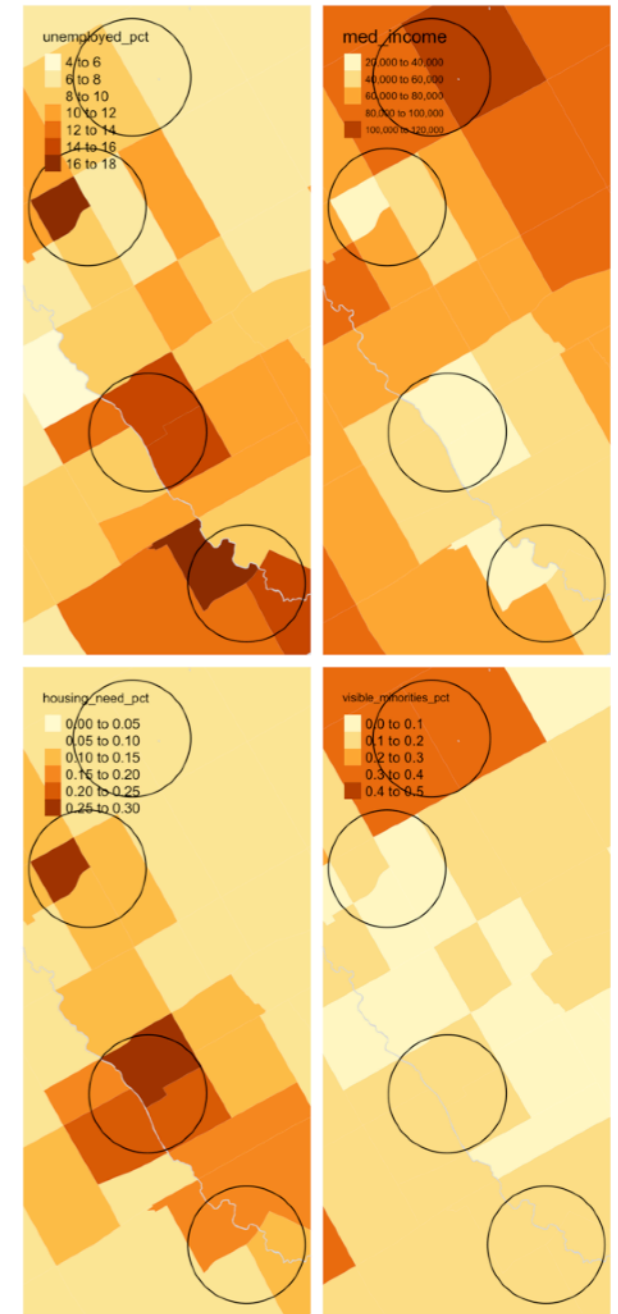
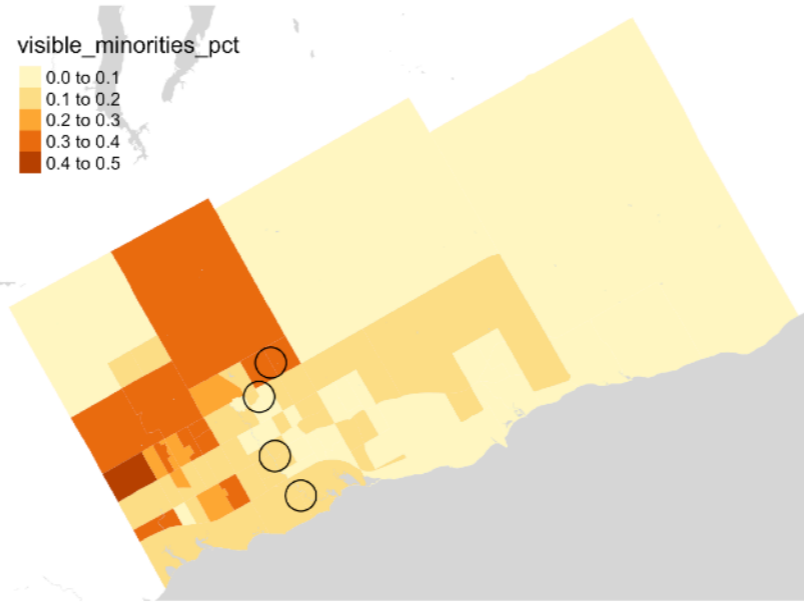
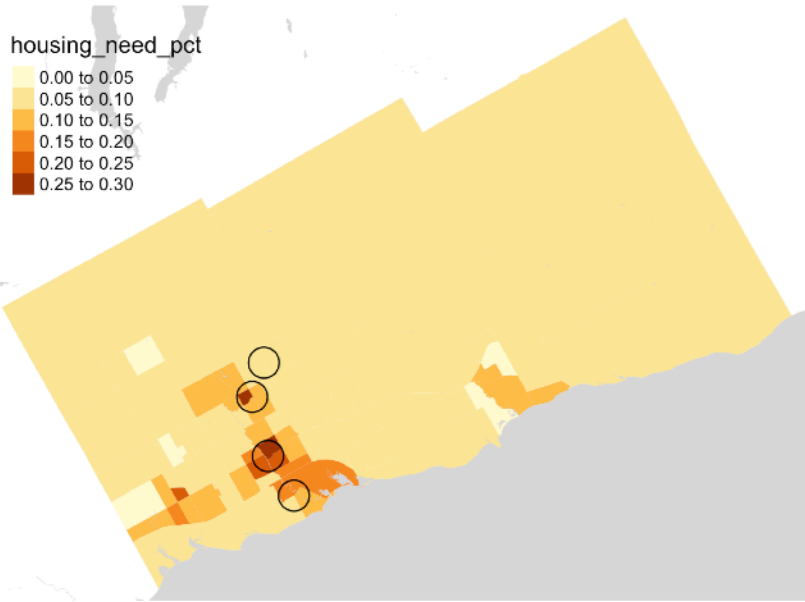
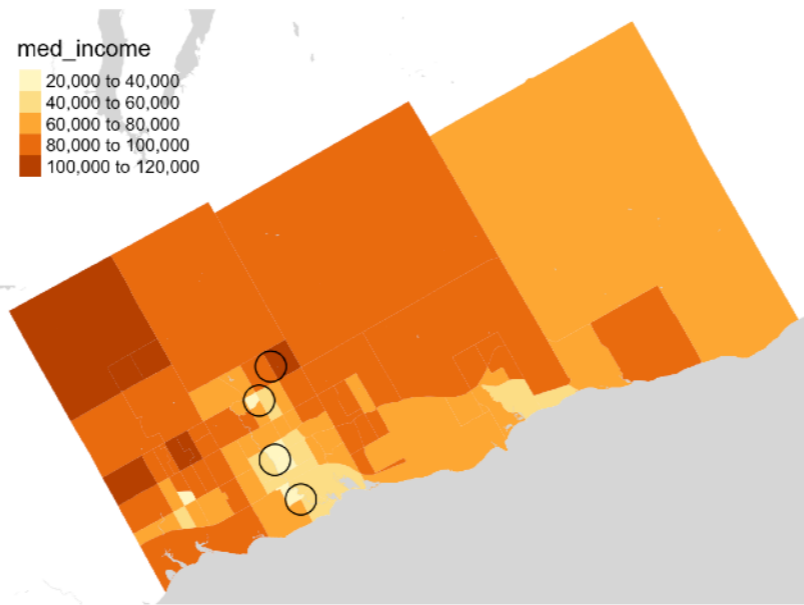
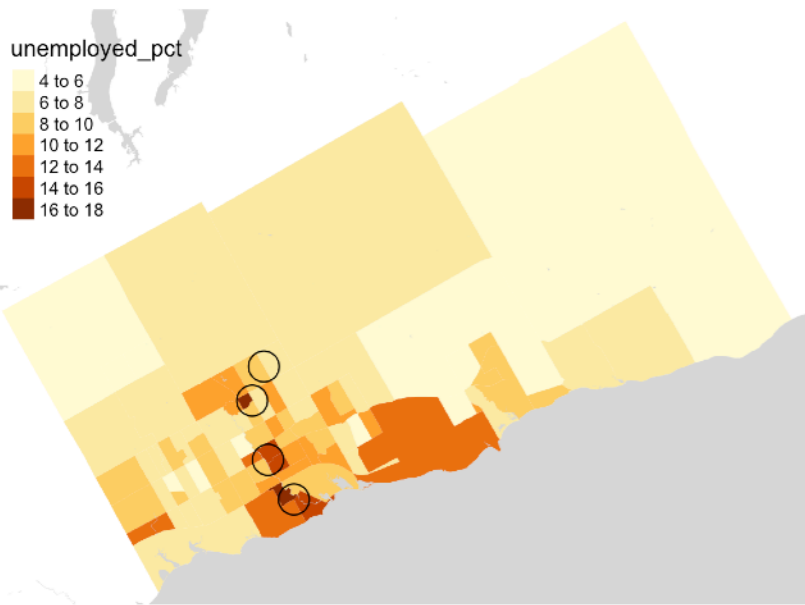
Edmonton



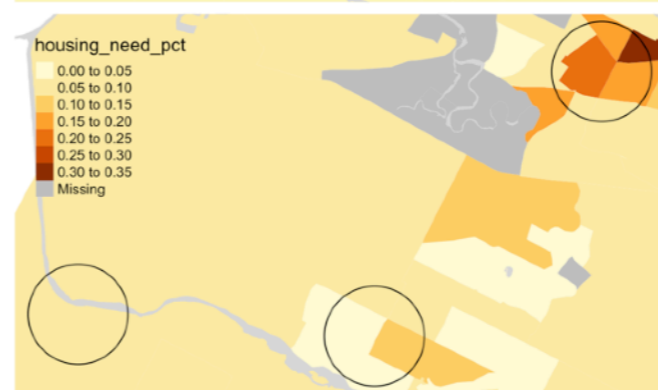
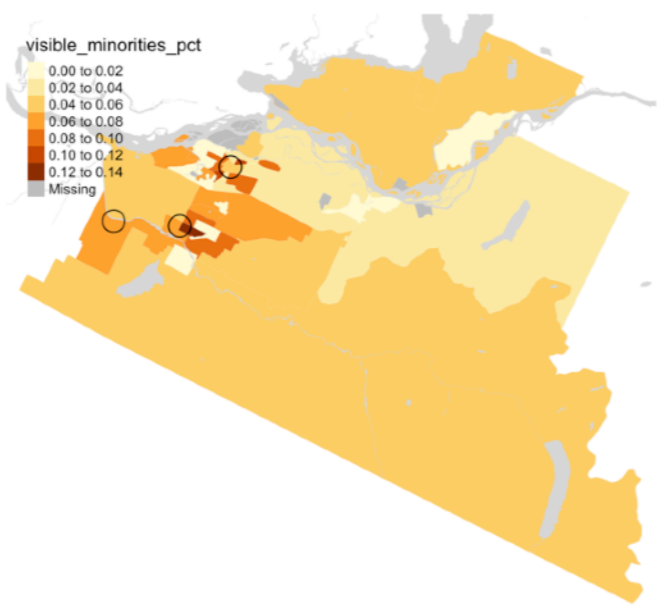
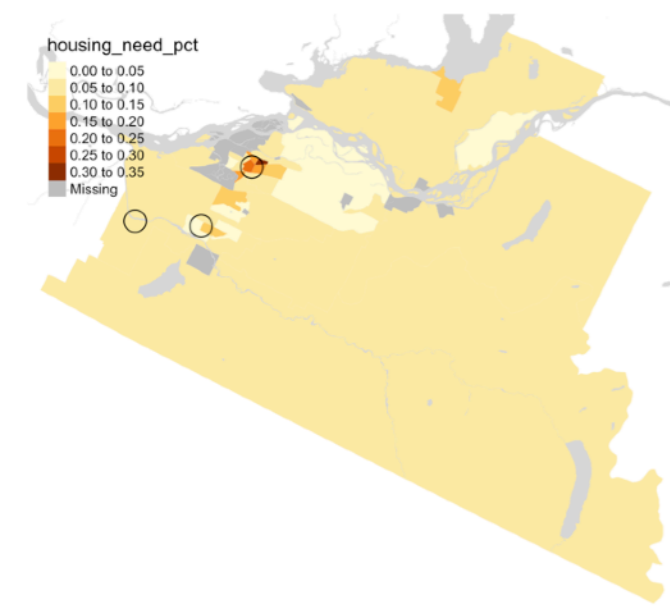
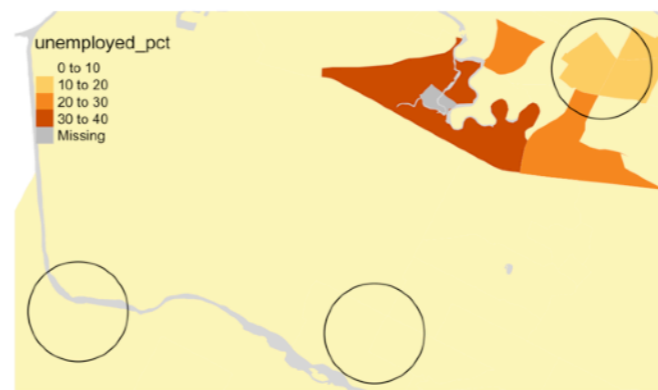
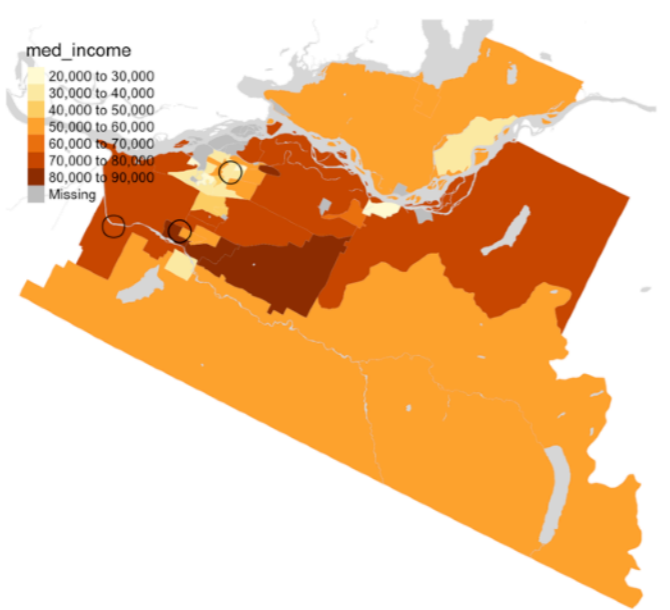
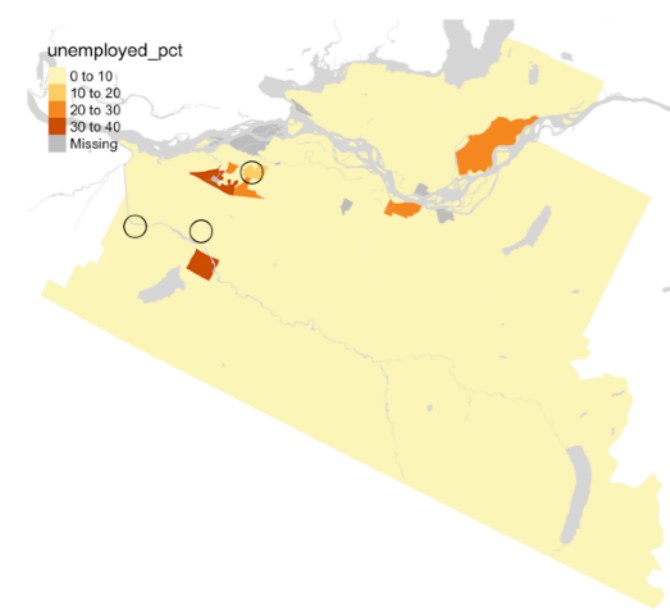
Saskatoon



Halifax



Oshawa

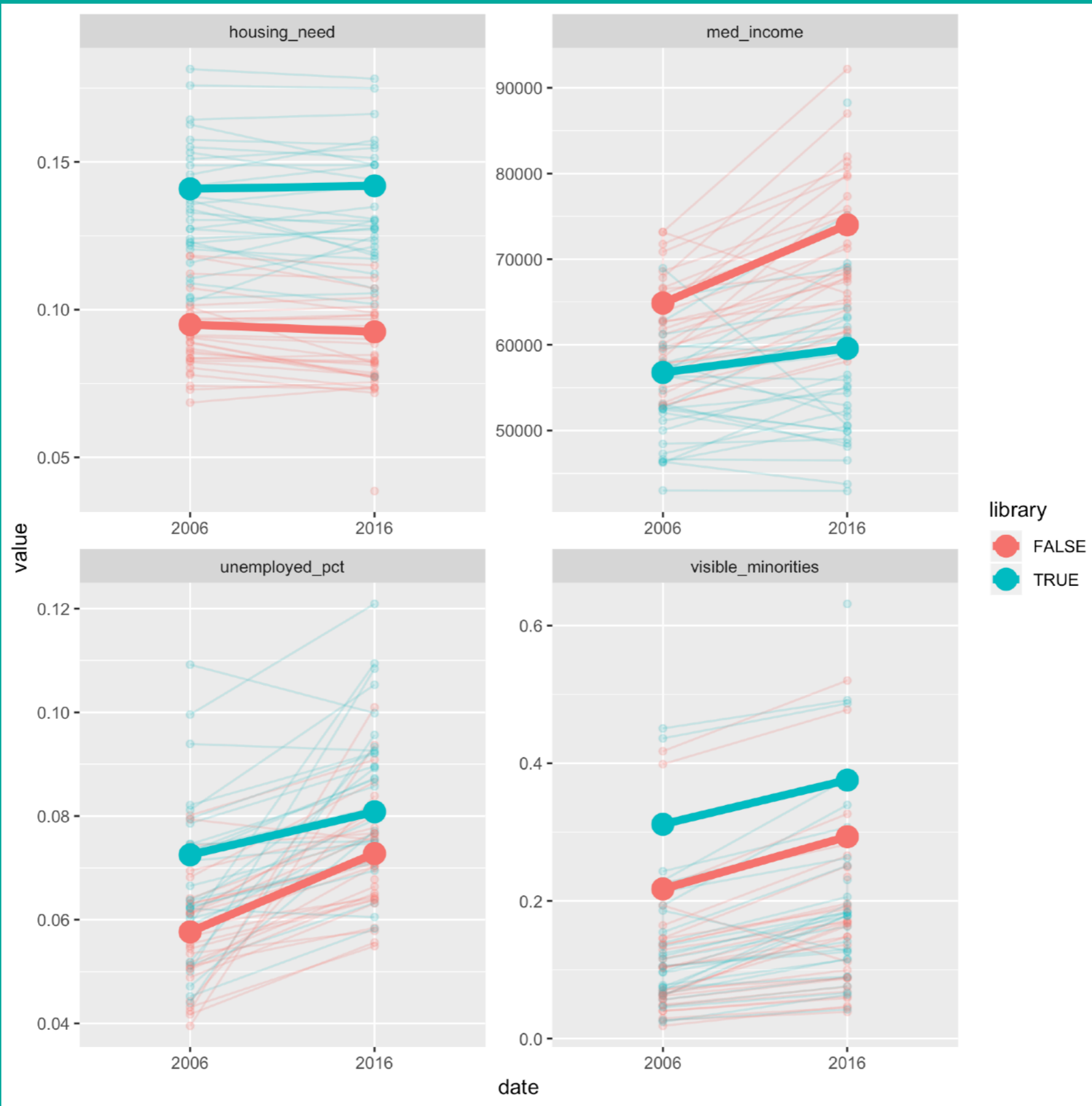


Chilliwack

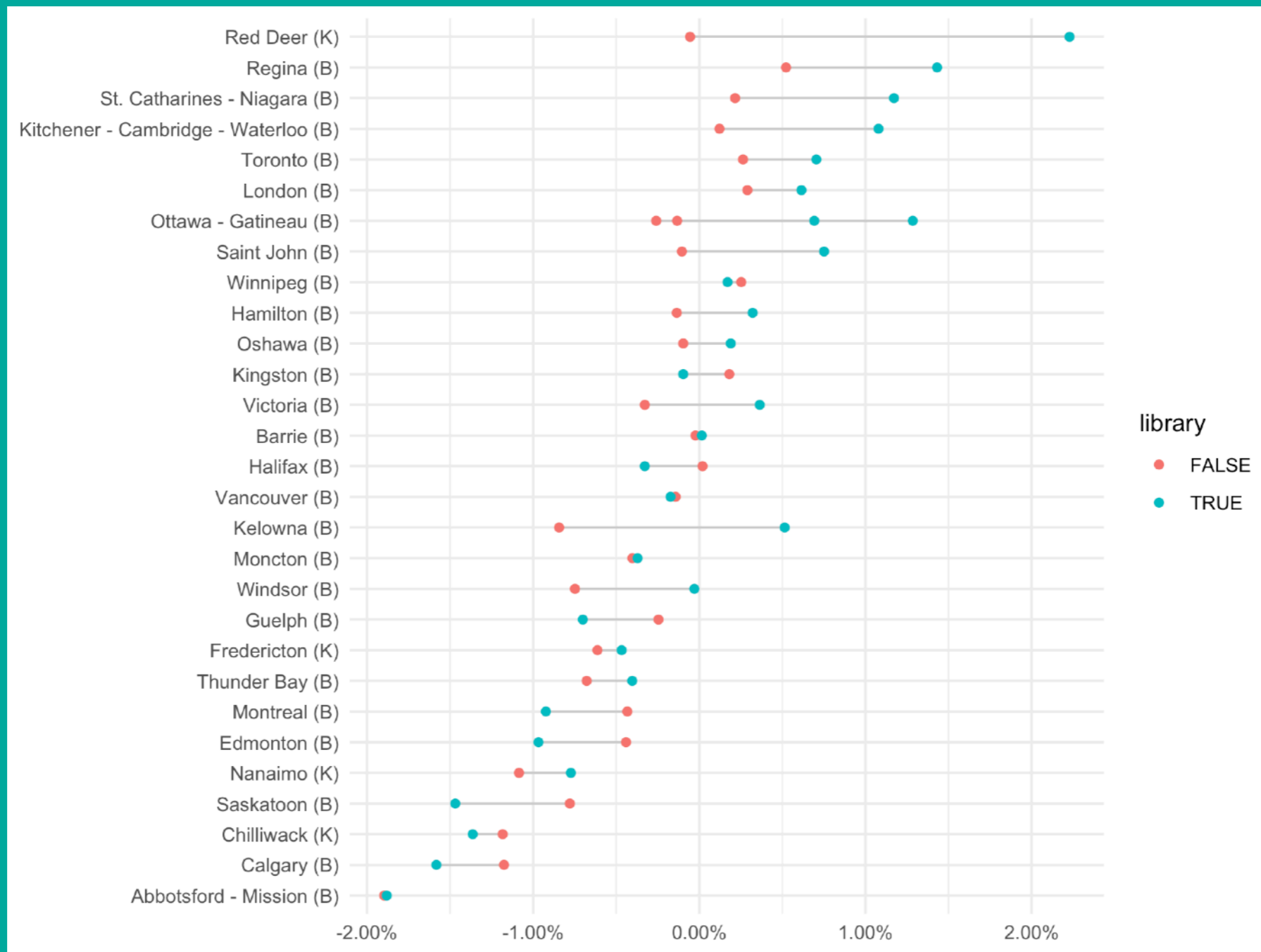
What explains these patterns?

Good question. We'll talk about
some possibilities in a minute.

Are these patterns new?



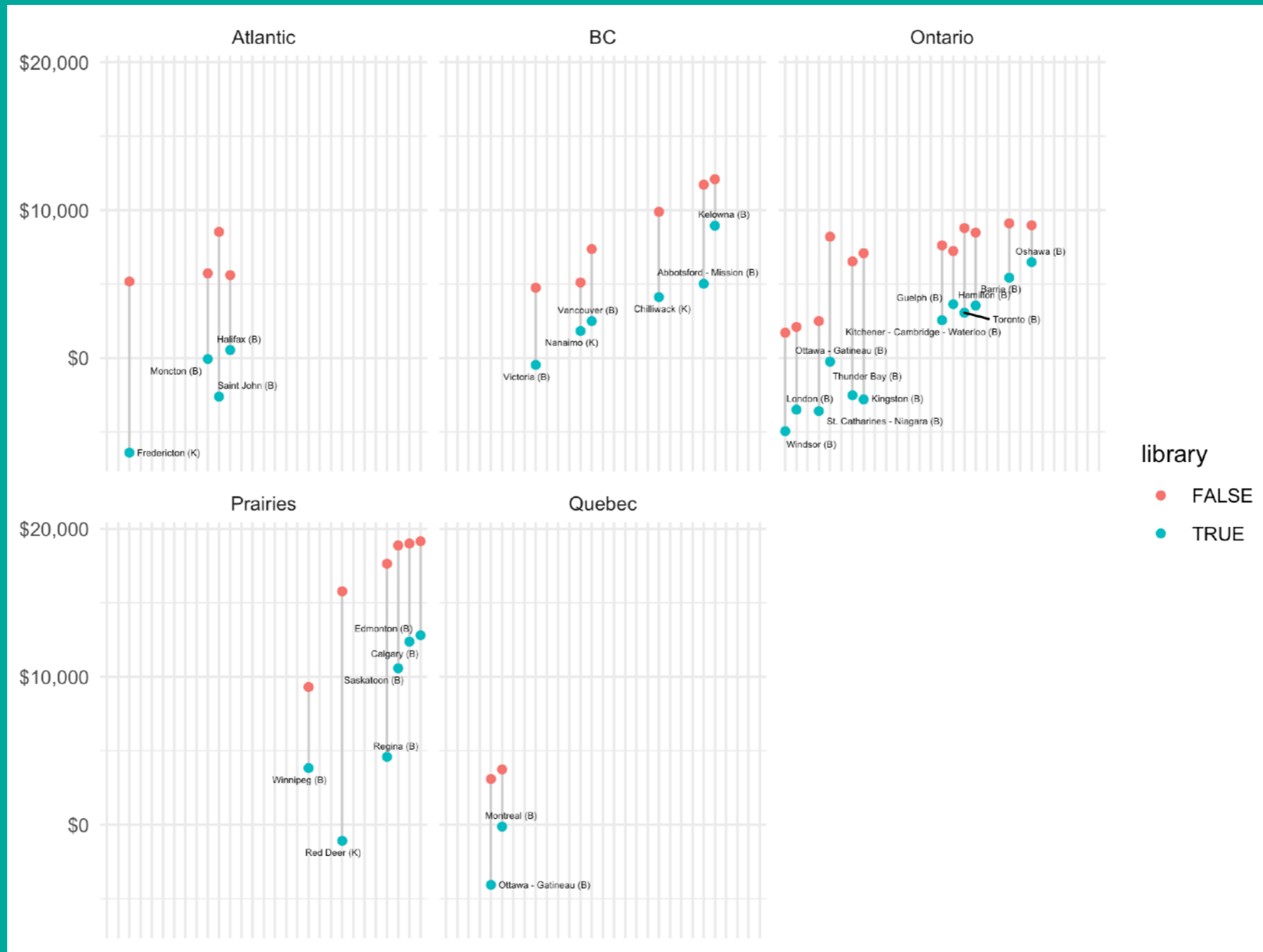
Wide variation in housing need change from 2006 to 2016



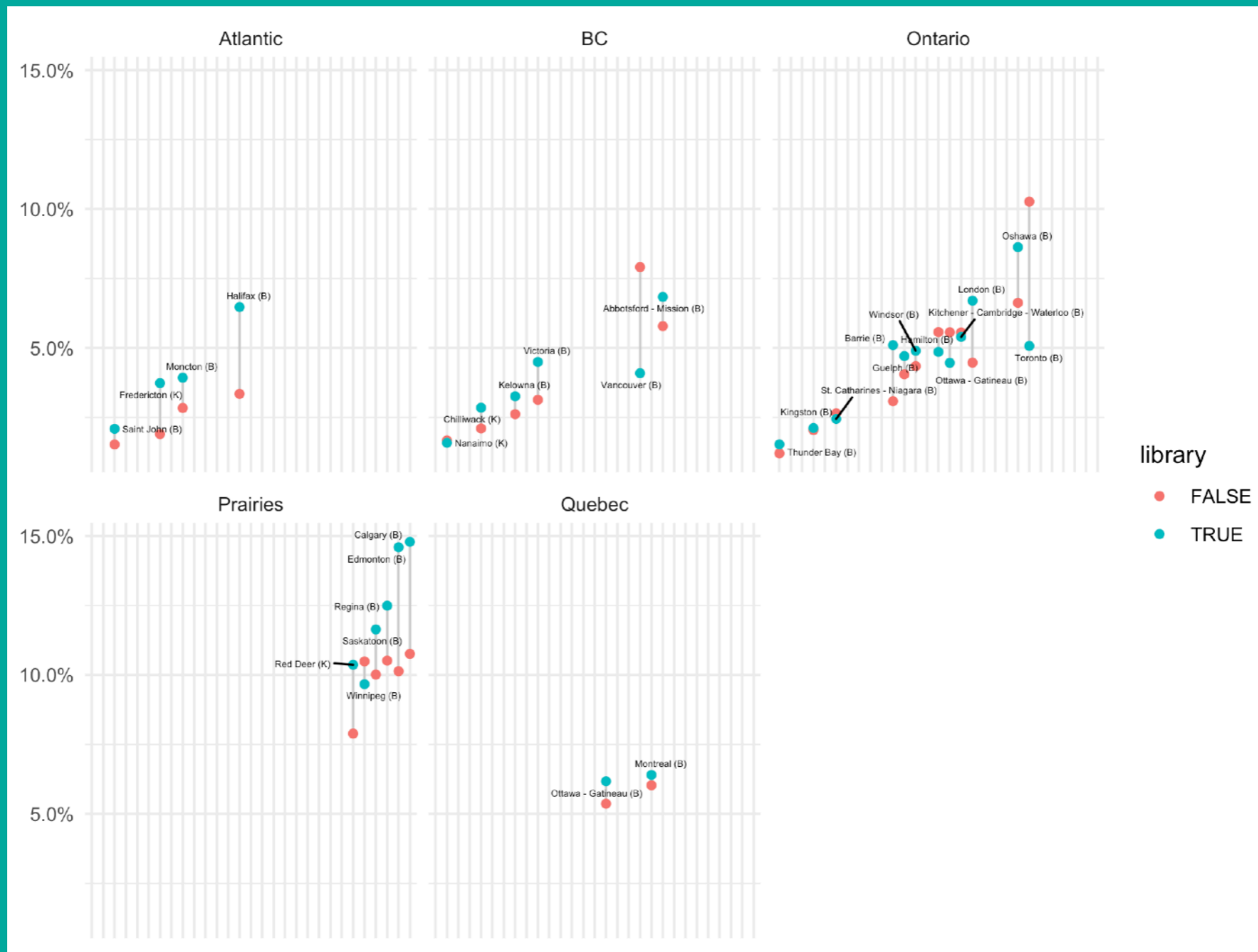
But regional patterns evident



Household income shows strong divergences.



Cities are becoming less white, at different rates.



Social disparities between library service areas and the rest of their regions are (relatively) large and (mostly) growing.

Regional variations are strong.

The patterns are similar regardless of how you define service areas.

(Housing need 15.1% at 500 m, 14.2% at 1000 m, 12.5% at 2000 m)

Governance and investment trends

2

Governance and investment trends

Three trends

New geographies of urban investment

Knowledge economy

“State rescaling”, austerity, downloading

New geographies of urban investment

Gentrification

Suburbanization of poverty

Decline in “traditional” public spaces



bar

coffee

194

2192

2192

HARLE
BURGERS

2190

MESS HALL
ADULT MESS MEAL
- CAR - BEER \$10
- SOUP - BREAD
- BUTTER
(One Drink Per Adult)
HAPPY HOUR
- DAILY 4-8

Happy Hour
- DAILY 4-8

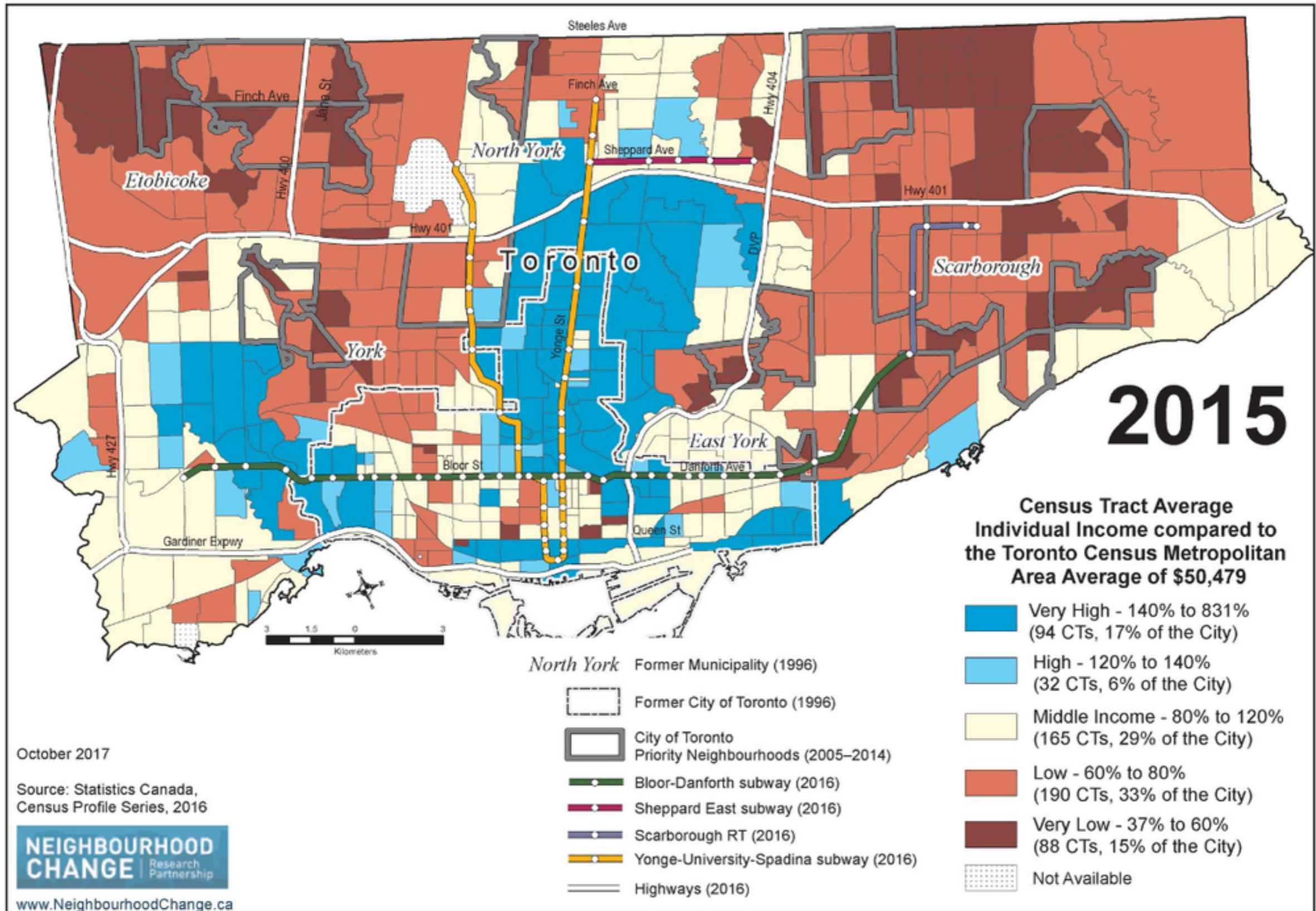


FOR LEASE
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Average Individual Income, City of Toronto, 2015





OPEN
TO PUBLIC



FRIEDRICH'S 800-394-9294

Shaping Safe Library Spaces

Everyone is welcome here,
but drugs are not

Drug use, trafficking or the sale of drugs is prohibited
Community and Library staff



Lethbridge library handing out lifetime bans to curb drug problem

The Lethbridge Public Library is teaming up with police, hoping to curb drug issues in and around the downtown branch. As Joe Scarpelli reports, lifetime bans are now being handed out.

Knowledge economy

Economic development thinkers argue that innovation is key to competitiveness.

So how can cities foster innovative and creative environments?

And what is the necessary knowledge infrastructure?

“The prototypical public library in the knowledge society has two core services: (1) to support citizens, companies and administrations in their city and region with **digital services**, namely e-resources as well as reference services, and to communicate with their customers via social media; and (2) to provide **physical spaces for meeting, learning and working**, as well as areas for children and other groups, in a building that is a landmark of the city.”

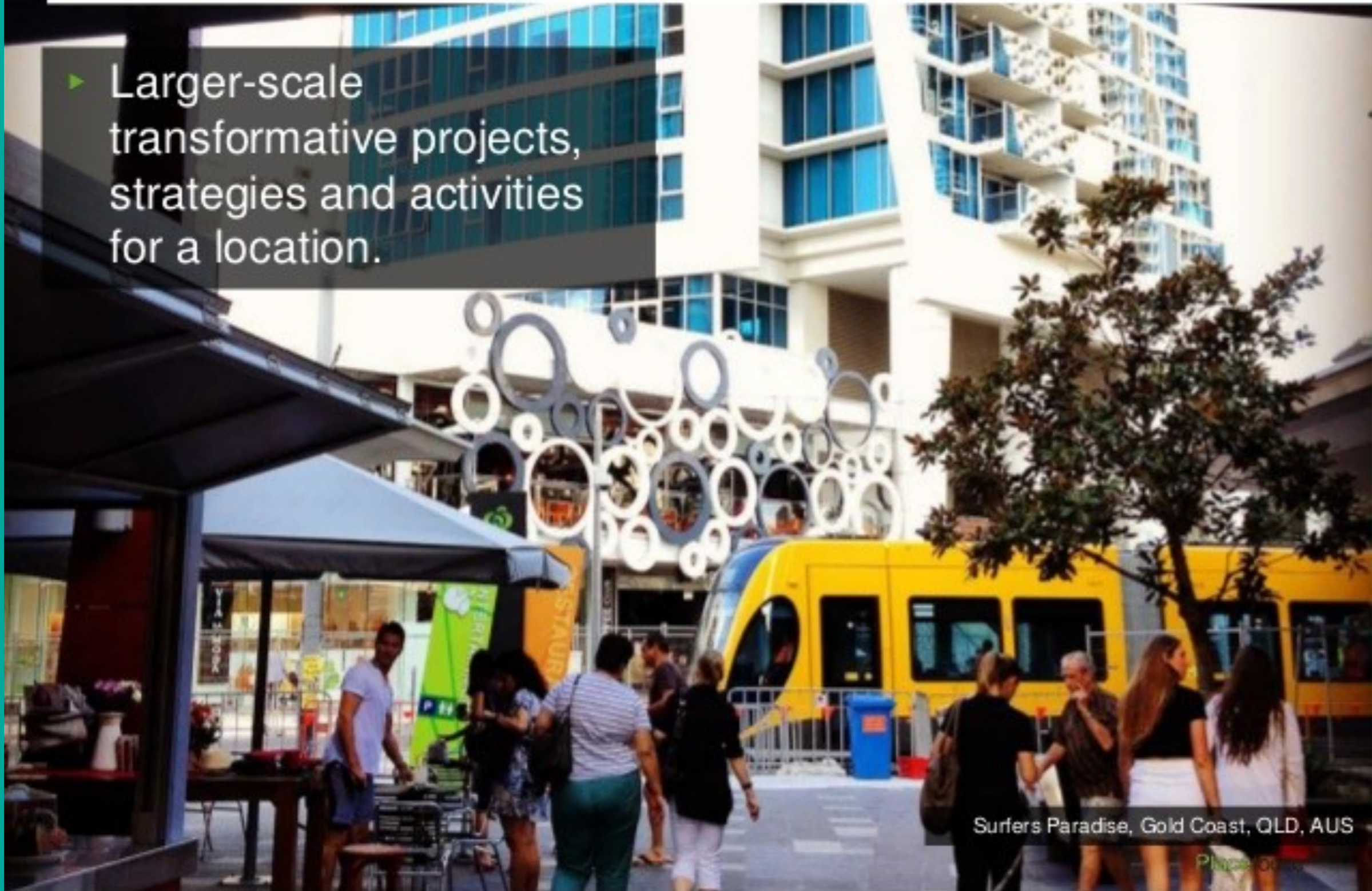
(Mainka et al. 2013)

STRATEGIC PLACEMAKING

- ▶ Larger-scale transformative projects, strategies and activities for a location.

Surfers Paradise, Gold Coast, QLD, AUS

Place







“State rescaling”, austerity, downloading

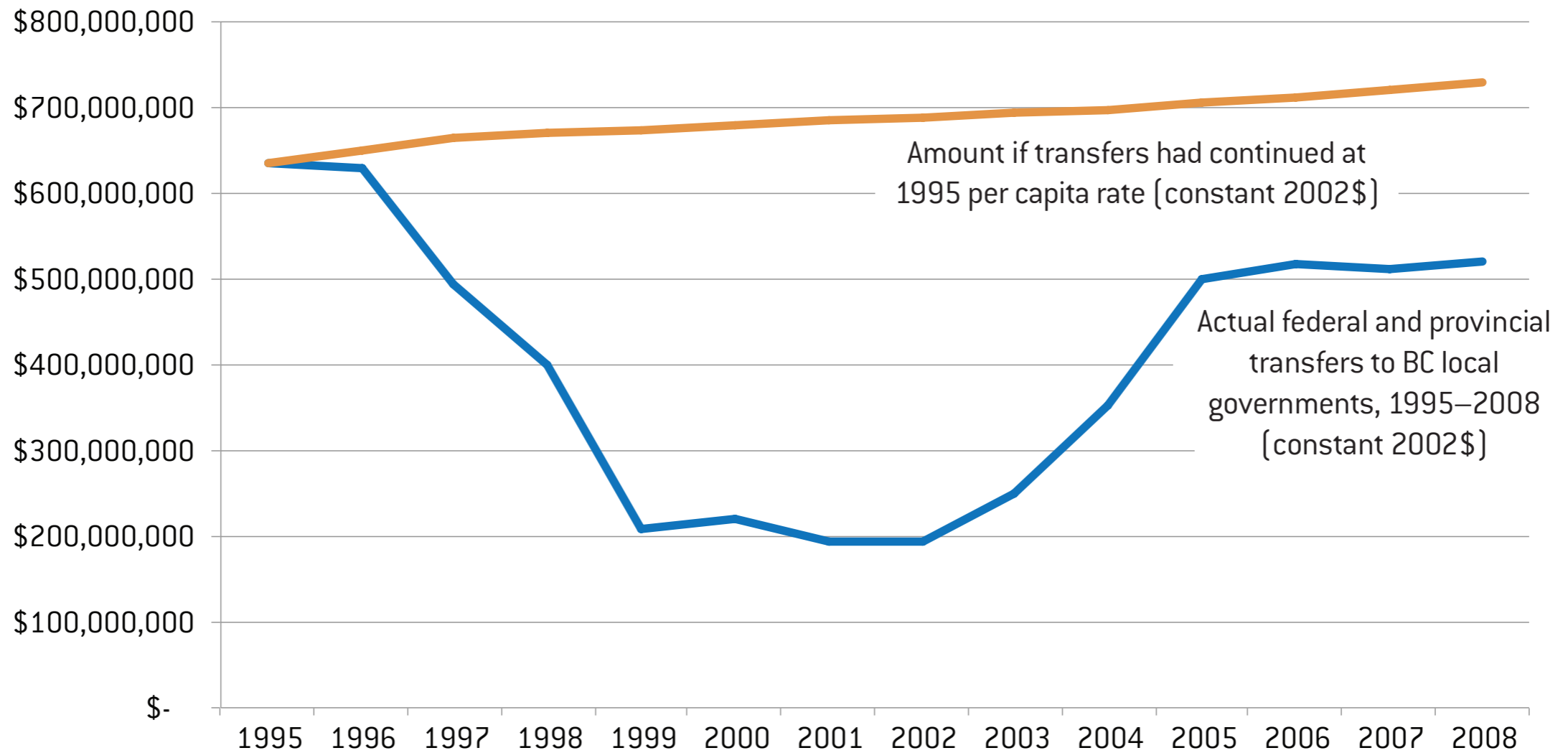
Cities have become increasingly important strategic actors in global political and economic spaces.

But they have also been saddled with increasing responsibilities despite having weak fiscal tools.

“[The public library] finds itself at a historical moment when it is both wildly popular and needed more than ever, but is nevertheless threatened by forces ideologically predisposed to erode it financially, and technologies and economic logic seemingly bent on usurping its purpose.”

(Dudley 2012)

FIGURE 7: FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL TRANSFERS TO B.C. LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, 1995–2008⁸



Duffy et al. 2014

As It Happens

Cuts to Ontario library services devastating to under-served populations, says librarian



'It's a sense of shock that such a significant cut would happen,' says Dryden's Dayna DeBenedet

CBC Radio · Posted: Apr 22, 2019 6:44 PM ET | Last Updated: April 22



The community gathers at the Dryden Public Library. (Submitted by Dayna DeBenedet)

[98 comments](#) 

Can municipalities continue to plug the gaps?

Probably not. The political economy of municipal revenue tools is a major constraint.

(Property taxes are inelastic and highly visible, and municipalities are subject to zero-sum competitive pressure.)

Evidence suggests municipal officials are supportive of libraries but don't fully understand the services they provide to communities.

“City councillors have a passive image of the library...[and] consider that the traditional mission of public libraries remains the same and ignore the impact of the information society.” (Gazo 2011)

Shifting patterns of urban development will shift libraries' local context and role.

The increasing strategic focus on IT is a major opportunity.

Stagnating or declining higher-level funding (not just for libraries!) is a major threat.

Libraries as urban infrastructure

3

“[The public library] is equally at home in central cities, suburbs, and towns of all sizes.”

(Dudley 2012)

Libraries as urban infrastructure

Libraries create the conditions for social capital.

The roles libraries are called upon to play depend on broader patterns of urban development and state investment.

**“Social infrastructure is...
the physical conditions that
determine whether social
capital develops.”**

(Klinenberg 2018)

Mental health deinstitutionalization as a parallel case study

“Funds saved by [deinstitutionalization] have not been allocated to provide necessary supports to mentally ill people in the community. Due to a deficiency in mental health resources, this population is at risk for homelessness, drug abuse, incarceration in jail, and suicide.”

(Read 2009)

Libraries as the lynchpin for urban social space

“The problem libraries face isn’t that people no longer visit them or take out books. On the contrary, so many people are using them, for such a wide variety of purposes, that library systems and their employees are overwhelmed.”

(Klinenberg 2018)

**What libraries can be depends on
what cities are.**

Thank you!

