

INUIT STATISTICS

An Analysis of the Categories
Used in Government Data Collections

By
Eugene Swimmer
David Hennes

For the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

April 5, 1993

SUMMARY

In this paper we analyze the categories, definitions and concepts used by federal, provincial and territorial governments, particularly statistics agencies, in collecting statistical data on the Inuit in the North. The concern addressed here is that the data gathered in the largest collections, such as the Census and the Post Censal Survey on Aboriginal People (APS), may not provide as accurate or complete a representation of the Inuit, their activity and conditions as could ideally be achieved. We explore the extent to which the categories of information gathered and the questions contained in the surveys limit the quality of the data received, and consequently, its usefulness for policy development.

By request this study was directed at the Inuit only. This direction consequently allowed us to make a far more concentrated analysis that was relatively uncomplicated by the wide ranges of geographical, socio-economic and cultural variety in the circumstances of Aboriginal people in Canada. The degree to which our findings also describe the relevance of statistical categories to the lives of other Aboriginal people is not explored or addressed in this study.

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS

The last fifty years have seen dramatic changes in the lives of the Inuit. Policy-makers, Inuit leaders and service organizations need an accurate statistical representation of Inuit life if they

are to help at all. Unfortunately, the costs of producing statistical data are prohibitive. Most government agencies and Inuit organizations do not produce primary socio-economic and demographic data on the Inuit. Most government agencies with responsibilities in the North produce administrative data.

The Census is the principal source of primary data on the Inuit, and this in 1991 was bolstered by the post-censal Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS). In 1991, Statistics Canada used a new form (the 2D form) for enumerating Indian Reserves and the North. This form contains the same content as the regular 2B long form used in the South. The changes were intended to make the census more responsive to conditions in these areas.

Our analysis focuses on the categories of education, work, unemployment, housing, family and agriculture. Our principal findings are that the overall approach of the census is nationally oriented, while the needs of the data users are most frequently community based. This gap is the source of many problems, particularly in light of Statistics Canada's obligations under the Statistics Act to protect the confidentiality of the respondents. Much of the community level data is systematically suppressed.

The greatest problems are found in the work/unemployment categories where non-market activities, such as subsistence hunting and fishing and related home activities are poorly accounted for. Efforts to value this activity as income is also poor and may lead to an inaccurate representation of Inuit economic life.

Additional problems associated with alternative means of completing formal education and achieving alternative employment skills, recording housing conditions and perceptions, portraying relationships within households, and measuring agricultural/harvesting activities are discussed.

The U.S. census process and questionnaire were examined and found to offer little guidance at this stage of Canada's development of its statistical measures of Inuit life and conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to developing and maintaining a database of meaningful data on the Inuit, that is meaningful for program planning, substantiating need in the view of funding agencies, and improving the conditions and lives of the Inuit, has been the lack of coordination among users and producers of data. Behind this obstacle are the dual interests of the federal statistics producers and the northern statistics users. It must be determined whether meeting the data needs of Inuit organizations by producing data within categories and at a scale that are meaningful to them precludes fulfilling Statistics Canada's national obligations.

1) Data Availability - Useful administrative data is being poorly utilized by the Inuit research and policy planning community. The major problems are a poor awareness of what data federal, provincial and territorial governments have and the availability of this data. The Commission should query government sources of administrative data to discuss and arrange for improved exploitation of this resource.

2) Data Comparability - Federal, provincial and territorial databases should be based on comparable definitions. Greater coordination is needed to review existing definitions.

3) Income Data - Statistics Canada should provide census data revealing median income and the proportion of the population in a community with incomes below an agreed upon amount for communities over 100 population.

Although Statistics Canada officials are equally concerned about revealing the identity of any individual regardless of income, the nature of economic life and the distributions of income in most of the northern communities means their concerns about confidentiality primarily fall on individuals with high incomes.

Statistics Canada officials want to ensure the universality of their procedures and data, thus allowing for historical and geographical comparisons. However, given that Statistics Canada has already changed the process and questionnaire for Native people, it is not unreasonable to make additional minor adjustments to capture relevant and desired information in the North. The following are our recommendations for changes to the census.

4) Education - The ambiguity on the 2D form concerning adult upgrading and equivalency should be eliminated. Either the existing question on the 2D form should specifically instruct respondents to factor in adult upgrading and equivalency into their response, or a separate question should be added as a follow on.

5) Work - Statistics Canada must make the existing questions regarding work on the 2D form more specific of their intent. If they want only information on work to generate money income, this should be clearly explained in the questionnaire.

6) Work - Two questions should be added to the 2D form addressing hours and weeks of work done to support themselves and their family that is not for money (e.g. subsistence hunting and

fishing, food and fuel gathering, food preserving, clothing production, or trade or barter of the same).

7) Income - To improve the accounting of alternative forms of income, a series of questions should be added (to the 2D census form or APS if continued) asking what percentage of individual or family consumption came from the subsistence activities of the respondent. For example, the percentage of food the respondent or his/her family consumed in a given period that came from hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering or barter and trade.

8) Unemployment - A question should be added to the 2D form asking why the respondent did not look for work in the reference period. Without prompting, those that respond that they did not look because there were no jobs to look for should then be counted as unemployed, rather than not in the labour force.

9) Housing - The census should include a question concerning the respondents perception of the adequacy of their residence for their needs.

10) Family - The census question identifying the links between household members and "person 1", should be expanded or clarified to encompass the significant relationships between children and adults other than "person 1".

In many respects the Aboriginal Peoples Survey promises to cover many of the most blatant gaps in the data. It is, unfortunately, at this time a one-time effort that may not be repeated. According to what we heard through the course of our interviews, the APS is expected to be more reflective of the needs of Inuit organizations than the Census.

11) APS - The APS survey should be continued.

12) APS - The consultation process established for the APS should be continued in an effort to improve the coherence of data collection in the face of Inuit organizations' needs and Statistics Canada's requirements.

13) Agriculture - To capture more of the non-traditional

agricultural/harvesting activities in the North, the Agriculture Division of Statistics Canada should consult other appropriate governmental agencies and Inuit organizations to add additional questions to the APS in lieu of the form 6 approach; or to create a new form for the North that replaces form 6 - similar to the way the 2D form replaces the 2B population census form.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS | 3 |
| INUIT CIRCUMSTANCES | 3 |
| DATA TYPES AND SOURCES | 5 |
| Administrative Data | 5 |
| The Census and Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) .. | 8 |
| Provincial and Territorial Data | 13 |
| Inuit Organizations | 15 |
| IDENTIFYING WEAKNESSES | 15 |
| General Observations | 15 |
| Categories and Concepts | 19 |
| Education | 19 |
| Work | 20 |
| Unemployment | 28 |
| Housing | 31 |
| Family | 31 |
| Agriculture | 34 |
| U.S. COMPARISON | 37 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | 43 |
| REFERENCES | 50 |
| CONTACTS | 53 |
| | |
| APPENDIX A. 2B Census Form | |
| APPENDIX B. 2D Census Form | |
| APPENDIX C. Form 6, Agriculture Census Form | |
| APPENDIX D. Aboriginal Peoples Survey | |
| APPENDIX E. Renewable Resource Harvester Survey, NWT | |
| APPENDIX F. Labour Force Survey, NWT | |
| APPENDIX G. U.S. 1980 Census Form | |
| APPENDIX H. U.S. 1980 Supplementary Form for American Indians | |
| APPENDIX I. U.S. 1990 Census Form | |

INTRODUCTION

The events and circumstances of these times, especially the steady transition toward Inuit self-government, are placing statistical measures and indicators of Inuit activity and conditions at a premium. Inuit, government and non-government agencies and organizations involved in the design, funding, delivery, or monitoring of Inuit assistance programs would certainly appreciate more and better data. Although a common assertion among those who work with the Inuit is that they are the most studied people on Earth, there, ironically, does not seem to be sufficient amounts of reliable, meaningful, and appropriate data available to those who would use it.

The exact nature of the inadequacies of data on the Inuit varies from simply insufficient quantity to complex questions of quality.

In this paper we focus on the issue of quality for the most part as we analyze the categories, definitions and concepts used by federal, provincial and territorial governments, particularly statistics agencies, in collecting statistical data on the Inuit in the North.

The concern addressed here is that the data gathered in the largest collections, such as the Census and the Post Censal Survey on Aboriginal People (APS), may not provide as accurate or complete a representation of the Inuit, their activity and conditions as could ideally be achieved. We explore the extent to which the categories of information gathered and the questions contained in the surveys limit the quality of the data received, and consequently, its

usefulness for policy development.

The first sections of the paper are offered as background. We begin with a brief description of the Inuit and the evolution of social and economic conditions in the North. This is not intended to be exhaustive in any way, but rather to provide a context for the discussion and analysis that follows. Next is a description of federal and provincial statistical data collection efforts, including the census and the APS. This description provides a historical overview of changes made in data collection programs and some of the consequences this has had on the availability and quality of data on the Inuit.

In the second segment of the paper, beginning with some general observations, we characterize the weaknesses in the existing data collection programs. This section is mainly made up of representative views from Inuit organizations, provincial and territorial government officials, federal government officials, and academic and other non-government producers and users of statistical data.

These general observations precede a finer analysis of the categories and concepts that form the basis of data collection through the census and the Aboriginal Peoples Survey. This analysis is divided into the main categories examined in our research: Education, Work, Unemployment, Housing, Family, and Agriculture. The paper concludes with our recommendations for adjusting and improving data collection efforts and, in turn, we hope the quality and usefulness of the data itself.

By request this study was directed at the Inuit only. This direction allowed us to make a far more concentrated analysis that was relatively uncomplicated by the wide ranges of geographical, socio-economic and cultural variety in the circumstances of Aboriginal people in Canada. The degree to which our findings also describe the relevance of statistical categories to the lives of other Aboriginal people is not explored or addressed in this study. Finally, for this study we have adopted a "definition" of the North which encompasses the Inuit territories stretching across the Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec and Newfoundland. We recognize, and our use of "the North" and "northern" occasionally includes, the broader social and economic interaction between Inuit and non-Inuit people. This will be apparent in phrases such as the "northern economy", which ostensibly implies a broader economic context than a purely Inuit economy.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

INUIT CIRCUMSTANCES

The last fifty years have seen dramatic changes in the lives of the Inuit. They have undergone a transition from their traditional, subsistence economy featuring a life on the land primarily hunting, fishing and trapping, to one that increasingly relies on wage labour in mines, construction, government jobs, or other positions. Adult and older generations have witnessed and experienced Inuit resettlement into permanent village communities,

the rise of the cash economy, formal european-Canadian education, and increasing exposure to the technological society to the South through television and personal contact with non-Inuit people.

The Inuit have also been subject to and grown more dependent on government intervention for their basic needs, as federal, provincial and territorial administrations developed programs for health, housing, municipal services, education, training, welfare, and economic development.¹ Traditional forms of self-government have changed as the Inuit have moved into larger, more permanent communities, often with non-Inuit residents present as well. Additionally, with the advent of Comprehensive Land Claims Agreements large-scale governance changes will continue as the details are worked out and new systems and processes are established.

These historical changes continue, dynamically altering the economic, social and cultural frame of reference of the Inuit. It is already postulated that the majority of young Inuit associate their identity with their community, rather than with their dialect group as their elders do.² Moreover, the realities and recollections of a life on the land have also diminished for the village and town-based Inuit. While hunting and fishing are still important sources of food

¹ Usher, Peter J. The North: One Land, Two Ways of Life, in Heartland and Hinterland: A Geography of Canada. L.D. McCann (ed.). Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc. p. 489.

² Irwin, Colin. Lords of the Arctic: Wards of the State. Summary report submitted to the Dept. of National Health and Welfare. 1989. p.36.

and other social goods, wage labour is now a permanent reality in Inuit life. The youngest move still further from traditional activities and lifestyle as their exposure to and preferences for southern food and ways frequently supersedes the offerings of their own heritage. As their lives and the generations change, some maintain that the Inuit are losing their traditional land skills, their language and culture.³

The Inuit and those charged with designing and providing services to these communities are in a position of trying to understand the course, causality, magnitude and likely consequences of these changes. Moreover, they must also act to solve immediate problems. Policy-makers, Inuit leaders and service organizations need an accurate statistical representation of Inuit life if they are to help at all. Unfortunately, the costs of producing statistical data are prohibitive. Academic and other consulting researchers often engage in studies that produce a statistical profile of some segment of the Inuit population; but as one-time efforts these are not useful for establishing trends and often focus only on one or two geographic locations and perhaps a single factor, such as health, in Inuit life. These profiles, while helpful for what they do, leave uncovered other important characteristics and conditions for the remainder of Canada's Inuit population.

³ Ibid, p. 44.

DATA TYPES AND SOURCES

Administrative Data

Governments, at all levels, are certainly the largest sources of data on the Inuit, though the stream of data on the Inuit is meager at best. Most government agencies do not produce primary socio-economic and demographic data on the Inuit. Most produce administrative data, if they produce any at all, which is the product of the normal administration of government services and programs. Examples of this would be records of welfare or unemployment insurance payments, personal income tax returns, or health service records.

At the federal level, such departments and agencies as Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), Health and Welfare, and Solicitor General among others generate administrative data on the Inuit. DIAND's own programs of service or transfer payments to the provincial or territorial governments, or its coordination role in the Annual Northern Expenditure Plan are the main source of its administrative data. DIAND produces an annual volume called Basic Departmental Data, which contains data on the demographic, social and economic conditions of registered Indians in Canada and the total population, including Inuit, in the Northwest Territories. The statistics in this report come mainly from departmental administrative data, Health and Welfare administrative data or Statistics Canada.

DIAND also conducts or sponsors specific surveys or research projects dealing with the Inuit, but these, like academic research,

tend to be one time efforts focused on a specific subject. One exception to this is DIAND's effort to gather data on food availability and consumption habits in remote northern areas. This effort is motivated by DIAND's need to monitor the effects of its "Food Mail" Program.⁴ DIAND's involvement in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the Northeastern Quebec Agreement, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement and the other comprehensive claims agreements of the recent past, is also leading to the production of data on funding levels and service provision.

The Department of Health and Welfare's Medical Services Branch retains some responsibility for health care services to the Inuit, particularly in the remote areas of the North and maintains some administrative records of this service. The department is also involved in the maintenance and collection of vital statistics in conjunction with the provincial and territorial governments.

One other significant source of administrative data is the criminal justice system. The Justice Department maintains a homicide survey dating back to 1961. The data from this survey is publically available only in aggregates in a native/non-native format. Special requests for Inuit specific information would be handled on a case by case basis. There is also a data base containing information on

⁴ DIAND's Northern Air Stage (Food Mail) Program subsidizes the shipment of necessary food items to isolated communities through Canada Post's Air Stage Network. The program has resulted in reduced food costs and potentially improved diets and health in these communities.

the corrections system.

Many of the other 25 to 30 federal departments and agencies, such as Forestry, Energy, Mines and Resources, or Transport, with responsibilities in the North conduct programs that affect the Inuit, but are not necessarily or specifically for the Inuit. These agencies do not have extensive Inuit specific data available. Their data, however, could be useful for many purposes, including, for example, measurements of basic infrastructure or resource availability.

The Census and Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS)

Within the federal government the best source of regular statistical data on the Inuit is the census.⁵ Other regular surveys like the Labour Force and Consumer Spending Surveys are not carried on in the North. Other than Statistics Canada and the census, however, no other federal agency collects a regular series of primary socio-economic and demographic data on the Inuit. The census has evolved over the years and it has only been in the last decade that specific questions and efforts geared toward improving the quality of data on Canada's Native population have emerged.

The 1991 census form (2B long form) was completely redesigned and Statistics Canada also added the 2D census form in 1991 for enumerating those residing on reserves or in remote northern areas.

⁵ The 1991 Post-Censal Survey on Aboriginal People will clearly provide more information than the census on the Inuit, but it may not be continued on a regular basis.

Perhaps the most important feature of the 2D form is that it is available in several Aboriginal languages and dialects. Other changes or improvements between the 2B and 2D questionnaires take the form of rearranging questions and answers, giving greater prominence to the most likely responses of Native people. Although the 2B and 2D forms ask for the same information, in several cases officials have sought to simplify the wording, presumably in an effort to eliminate interpretation problems. Other attempted improvements consist of providing better examples or explanations of the kind of responses that are intended or suitable for a given question. For example, questions regarding work on the 2D form are preceded by a short section giving examples of what Statistics Canada means by work. These examples are not part of the text in the mainstream 2B form, though they can be found in the accompanying guide.

Enumeration in the South involves delivering either an abbreviated short form or the 2B long form to each household. Statistics Canada delivers the 2B form to only 20 percent of households in the South; the remainder receive the short form. In the North and on Indian Reserves, 100 percent of the households receive the 2D long form equivalent. Enumeration in these areas and with the 2D form was done in person, often with an interpreter, rather than through the drop-off/mail back methods used in the South.

Other changes to the questionnaires indicate the historical evolution of the census. Although the census has contained a question on ethnic origin since 1871, the 1981 census was the first to include

a specific native ethnicity question and a specific response category for status Indians.⁶ In the 1986 and 1991 Censuses, all Canadians were asked to indicate whether they are of native ethnicity by encouraging multiple responses on the ethnicity question. The wording was modified slightly between 1986 and 1991, but the changes should not affect the comparability of the data between these years.

In the 1986 census a question was presented to determine respondents self-perception of their aboriginal status. This question was not continued for the 1991 census, but a similar question was used on the post-censal Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS). The purpose of the question was to determine which respondents who claimed aboriginal ancestry on the census also identified (self-perception) with an Aboriginal group.

The 1991 census also contained for the very first time questions on the respondents knowledge of other languages (other than English or French) and their registered Indian status. There were other first-time questions that might provide interesting data on the Inuit, indicating mobility (place of residence 1 year ago) and common-law status. Other questions were reinstated from the 1981 or previous censuses concerning fertility, religion, school attendance, condition of dwelling and number of bedrooms; all of which could be revealing

⁶ Larocque, Gilles Y. "Progress Towards Rationalizing and Improving the Availability of Data on Canada's Indian and Inuit Populations," in Proceedings International Workshop on Population Issues in Arctic Societies. Committee on Northern Population Research. March 1985. p. 61.

of various aspects of Inuit life.

Few of these questions were included on the census specifically to improve the data available on the Inuit. Most questions on the 1991 census, including the 2D form, were carry-overs from previous years that dealt with schooling, labour force characteristics, income, the family and household, and housing. And often there were no changes in the wording between the 2B and 2D forms.

1991 also marks the first serious attempt by Statistics Canada's Agriculture Division to capture Native agricultural activity. The Agricultural Census accompanies the general Population Census. When enumerators are distributing the general census forms (short form, 2B, or 2D forms) they ask if anyone in the household operates "a farm, ranch or other agricultural holding." If so, they also leave the Agricultural Census (form 6). This has always been done in the North as well as the South.

In the past, however, few households in the North fit the definition of operating an agricultural holding. For the 1991 census, Statistics Canada in cooperation with the Territorial governments broadened the definition of an agricultural holding to include:

- herding wild animals (such as caribou, muskox, etc.)
- breeding sled dogs
- horse outfitting and rigging
- harvesting indigenous plants and berries.⁷

⁷ Agricultural Profile of Canada, Part 1. Statistics Canada. Agriculture Division. Catalogue No. 93-350. June 1992. p. 105.

Form 6 was not substantially changed, however, as the definition was changed only for the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

The 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey is a first-time, potentially one-time, effort conducted by Statistics Canada to collect data on people with Aboriginal identity. The APS was not a 100 percent survey as was the census, but a sample of the population. A stratified sample of participants were chosen from the pool of people who indicated Aboriginal ancestry or status as being registered under the Indian Act on the 1991 Census of Population. In response to requests from Aboriginal organizations and in an effort to improve the data that would be returned from the APS survey, Statistics Canada did a 100 percent survey of appropriate communities with populations of less than 300; in communities with populations greater than 300 it began sampling. Statistics Canada interviewed approximately 110,000 persons living on reserves and in settlements and 50,000 persons living off reserve. The interviews were conducted with interpreters, but the questionnaire was not translated into Native languages.

Many Aboriginal organizations and federal departments and agencies supported the process of creating and conducting the survey with political, financial, and substantive support. Statistics Canada consulted an unprecedented number of organizations throughout government and the Aboriginal community to prepare a survey that met the needs of potential users of the resultant data. The overall purpose was to provide a better basic level of data on Aboriginal

life and conditions, particularly for policy planning purposes.

Several of the questions on the APS survey were aimed at gathering finer and broader data on issues only touched on generally in the census. For example, questions pertaining to language use in the census extend only as far as identifying other languages used (besides English and French). The APS questions the source of a respondents ability, the depth of their ability (reading, writing, speaking), and the prevalence of use in their world of their language (is it heard on radio, television; are services available from a native speaker, etc.)

With regard to data products derived from the Census and the APS, Statistics Canada has since 1986 produced at least one general volume of statistical data on Aboriginal People, in which the basic demographic data on the Inuit appears. Statistics Canada is planning a series of products, one specifically on the Inuit scheduled for release in the Fall of 1994, from the 1991 Census and the APS data.

Many people interviewed are taking a wait and see position on the quality and usefulness of these products. One positive side to the APS is that data will be available for communities of more than 100 people, because Statistics Canada conducted a census of communities of up to 300 people.

Provincial and Territorial Data

Provincial and Territorial offices involved in service delivery to the Inuit also produce administrative data. The steady devolution

of responsibilities for program administration and service delivery, as well as data collection responsibilities, from the federal government to provincial and territorial governments has meant that increasing amounts of administrative data are produced at the sub-federal level. In some cases there are programs involving cost-sharing for the processing of data between provincial governments and Statistics Canada, so certain data are available from both levels of government.

All of the relevant provincial and territorial statistics agencies (Quebec, Newfoundland, and the Northwest Territories) produce regular and semi-regular products of various depth and breadth on socio-economic conditions within their jurisdictions. Much of the data, however, is derived from outside sources and predominantly Statistics Canada and the census. The GNWT products tend to be the exception to this.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) through its Bureau of Statistics also produces primary socio-economic and demographic data, though it also uses census or other Statistics Canada data when necessary or appropriate. The GNWT produces the Labour Force Survey and a variety of other statistical analyses, such as the intermittent Harvest Survey and a business survey, which detail in varying degrees of precision the conditions of the Inuit, as well as other citizens of the NWT.

The Newfoundland provincial government does not produce primary data on the Labrador Inuit, relying instead on data from Statistics

Canada. The Quebec Government's statistics bureau collects vital statistics (births, deaths, marriages, still births, etc.) for the province as a whole, which includes statistics on the Inuit. It does not conduct special surveys of the Inuit for additional primary demographic data or vital statistics. Other ministries may conduct special surveys as needed, like the GNWT, but they also rely on the census data for their primary demographic data.

Inuit Organizations

Most of the Inuit organizations do not produce regular or updated primary statistical data. Most conduct periodic surveys to meet specific needs. For example, the Makivik Corporation's research wing carries out studies on subjects such as harvesting, or land use, as well as biological and environmental studies. The Labrador Inuit Association, however, maintains its own population registry which contains information on births, deaths, basic health, and movement of people to receive health care.⁸

IDENTIFYING WEAKNESSES

General Observations

Many of the people that we interviewed seemed to feel that the Census data was appreciated for what it offered, but that it

⁸ Workshop Proceedings: Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC)/Statistics Canada Workshop on the 1991 Census and Aboriginal Peoples Survey. March 17-19, 1992. Ottawa. p. 8.

nevertheless failed to meet many, if not most, of their immediate data needs. Researchers and Inuit organizations could describe at some length the kinds of data that they require, but cannot get unless they conduct the surveys themselves. Their needs highlighted the numerous constraints that an organization such as Statistics Canada works under.

Data production is above all else expensive. Adding questions increases the cost, lengthens the survey and the burden on the respondent. The census is considered long enough, so that any question added requires that another be removed. Additionally, the census must aim at consistency and commonality across the country for the data to be of the most value. Procedures and questions cannot vary from group to group, region to region, or time to time, lest the data be rendered incomparable across and among these various factors.

Finally, there is the issue of trust and confidentiality. Statistics Canada officials are required by the Statistics Act to keep confidential any information that may serve to identify an individual. They use random rounding of figures to multiples of either 5 or 10 as one means of protecting against direct, residual or negative disclosure. The other main method of protection is suppression of data for geographic areas with populations below a specified size. Statistics Canada uses differing population sizes depending on the type of data. For example, income data is suppressed in those areas with populations below 250; other types of data are

only suppressed in areas with populations below 40. Special small area data products are subject to special review and the application of other methods to ensure confidentiality.⁹

In spite of these constraints, some of the general criticisms we heard were that Statistics Canada should produce community level data to the degree that it can. The confidentiality provisions applying to Statistics Canada are preventing Inuit organizations from getting the data they need to substantiate their positions to government funding agencies.¹⁰ We also heard that very few of the researchers or organizations conducting statistical surveys or other studies on the Inuit ever return their results to the Inuit. In short all the information flows one way and the Inuit never benefit from their participation in the survey.

Another criticism of the data on the Inuit is that too much of the data produced is not comparable over time or across geographical boundaries, thus limiting its potential for analysis. This criticism is directed in particular at the myriad smaller surveys made. These surveys come one after another but are sufficiently different from one another, either in the time frame, the geographic region, or the subject matter, to render them less than useful for establishing reliable historical trends that are comparable.

There has been a recent effort within the Royal Commission to

⁹ 1991 Census Handbook: Reference. Statistics Canada. Catalogue 92-305E. p. 27-28.

¹⁰ Op.Cit., ITC Workshop Proceedings, p. 10.

evaluate the comparability of operational or definitional concepts of the 1981 Census and the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey to permit trend-analysis. The evaluation was made not on northern data but on Aboriginal data in general. The initial results indicate that it is feasible to do some historical analysis between the 1981 Census and the 1991 APS, but it would require specifying some conditions or caveats about the concepts and definitions within the questions and also about geographical comparability.

For the Inuit in particular, historical comparability of data is probably fairly safe between the 1986 and 1991 Censuses. This is due to good historical comparability between questions in these two censuses pertaining to ethnicity. This is in turn due to the high coincidence of responses among the Inuit between self-identification and ethnic origin questions.

In other areas, most of those interviewed did not know the extent to which data is available from the various levels of government. Some were well aware of what should be available but was not. There is no single source for finding out what statistical data is available from the federal or sub-federal levels of government.

Many felt that the APS was too long and placed too great a burden on the respondent. Often people were not sure of the benefit to themselves or their communities from assenting to the survey. In part this problem was due to the extensive consultation Statistics Canada undertook with Aboriginal organizations and other government agencies. The number of questions increased as more needs were met.

Some of those we interviewed felt there was a moderate degree of misunderstanding about what was meant in some questions on the survey, although they could not provide specifics on what the respondents did not understand. Finally, some felt that a few questions were insensitive to elder respondents. For example, asking an elder about their education may show disrespect for their position in the community or family. Misunderstandings, non-responses, or false responses to save face or for other reasons distort the final statistical representation of the Inuit. The difficulty faced in producing and conducting a survey is controlling detrimental cultural perceptions inherent in language.

Categories and Concepts

The general problems and criticisms described above are not new to those at Statistics Canada and elsewhere, who have dealt with this subject in the past. Of greater importance for this paper are the deficiencies imbedded in the categories and concepts of the census, the APS, and other statistical surveys.

Education

The census questions on education are aimed at determining levels of schooling achieved, additional schooling sought, certificates and diplomas received, and major field of study. According to those we interviewed, there are no major inadequacies in the census or APS surveys on education. However, some observed that there is a much

higher incidence of adult education in the North than the South, and many take equivalency exams instead of attending school. It is possible that the census data underestimates the education level of the Inuit.

Question 24 in the 2D form asks, "What is the highest grade of elementary or high school that this person ever went to?" For some Inuit they stopped attending school before completing grade 12 or 13, but have since taken equivalency exams. There is no instruction in the form directing the respondent to consider their equivalency exams or other upgrading when responding to question 24. Question 27 asks,

In the past nine months (that is, since last September), was this person attending a school, college or university?

Include attendance at elementary or secondary schools, business or trade schools, community colleges, institutes of technology, CEGEPs, etc., for courses which can be used as credits towards a certificate, diploma or degree.

It is unclear whether these questions draw in the full extent of Inuit adult education work or equivalency processes, or could be used to adjust a low education response.

There is no mention of other training or traditional forms of education an Inuk might receive: land skills training, arts and crafts training, or language training. In fairness, similar training for other Canadians is not recorded either by the census, such as agricultural training received by farm children, or fishing skills.

The APS section on schooling asks additional questions on the

respondents school experiences, achievements and training courses.

It asks specifically about equivalency and upgrading in question

F9:

Have you taken adult upgrading toward high school equivalency?
What was the highest grade you completed?

Work

This category is perhaps the most controversial category. Many of the problems stem from the different economies in which the people of the North and South work. The concepts and forms developed to measure activity in the southern economy are only partly successful at capturing the extent and quality of activity in the Inuit and northern economy. The difficulties extend to two basic areas: first, is measuring the sectors of work that make up the Inuit economy, which includes wage labour, but also subsistence and commodity work activity;¹¹ second, is measuring and placing reasonable values on income into the Inuit household.

Non-Wage Work Activity

As mentioned previously, the Inuit now depend on wage labour for their well-being. Nevertheless, today a large percentage of Inuit

¹¹ These categories of the Inuit economy were presented to us by Peter Usher of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada during an interview on 3 March, 1993. Not included in our discussion are transfer payments, which make up the fourth category in the Inuit economy described by Mr. Usher.

still depend on subsistence and harvesting activities: hunting, fishing, berry picking, and others.¹² Any effort to measure and understand the active work life or trend of changes in Inuit life are woefully incomplete without better data on these latter activities.

Statistics Canada officials, have made adjustments to try and capture these traditional activities. They have prefaced the work section of the 2D census form with the following:
In the next few questions, when talking about work, we mean:

- working for pay, tips or commission;
- making, selling or trading arts and crafts;
- running a business or working in a family business;
- trapping, hunting and fishing (except as a sport);
- fixing nets, guns and other gear used to hunt, fish or trap;
- working as a guide.

Don't include volunteer work, unpaid housework or maintenance on your own home.

And they do probe for a description of the respondents work.

Question 37 asks,

"What kind of business, industry or service was this?"

Question 39,

"What kind of work was this person doing?"

Question 40,

¹² The Government of the Northwest Territories' Labour Force Survey (Winter 1989) indicates that 56 percent of Inuit and 50 percent of Inuvialuit reported hunting or fishing during 1988.

"What were this person's most important duties or activities?"

Question 41,

"In this job, was this person mainly working for pay, working for himself/herself or working without pay for a relative in a family farm or business?"

And question 43,

"In how many weeks did this person work in 1990?"

There are several problems, however, with measuring Inuit economic activity through these and other questions on the Census.

The notion of a holistic, seasonal work life, including wage, subsistence, commodity and home activity, is largely irrelevant to southern populations and the form reflects this. The 2D census form bases its measurement of a person's work activities on the designation of a reference week. The first question on work, question 30 asks, "Last week, how many hours did this person work? Questions 36-42 (some listed above) asking about the nature and location of the respondents work, are accompanied by the following instructions,

If this person held no job last week, answer for the job of longest duration since January 1, 1990. If this person held more than one job last week, answer for the job at which he/she worked the most hours.

This approach does not necessarily fit with the seasonal approach to work (especially hunting, fishing and trapping) that affects the Inuit economy. Moreover, its emphasis on the job of longest duration or most hours ignores the multi-dimensional work life of an Inuk. The emphasis on a primary job largely crowds out the remainder of the Inuit's work activities and limits data user's ability to

accurately assess the full extent of Inuit economic life.

The census form in general imposes the southern concept of work onto the northern economy and its participants. From Statistics Canada's viewpoint, data on work done for barter or subsistence would form a minuscule portion of the national economy. It could perhaps achieve national importance as part of a measurement of the informal sector in the Canadian economy, but the cost of trying to change the census to capture Inuit non-market work activity in a manner that is comparable for the nation is great.

The APS adjusts to some degree for many of the shortcomings of the census (Section G of the APS in Appendix C), though it does not attempt to measure the hours spent working at various activities or the value of these activities in terms of income. This quantification is left to the census, which as we have discussed is somewhat inadequate.

Section G begins with the same description of what work means as is contained in the 2D census form (see above). Although the respondent is instructed to consider "trapping, hunting or fishing", or "making, selling or trading arts and crafts" as work, the APS remains dominated by the notion of work for money. Question G1 asks,

Did you have any jobs during 1990 or 1991 that you worked at for income?

If the response is yes, the respondent is taken through a labyrinthine flow chart of questions that ask about the work. If the response

is no, however, the respondent is sent to question 13 regarding unemployment.

Many Inuit will answer in the affirmative and will then be given the opportunity to account for and describe any money work they have done and also subsistence or commodity work, if they consider it appropriate, or are encouraged or reminded to count such activity.

Questions G6h and G7i, identical mid-points on two paths of questioning about jobs, reinforce the intention of the survey to gather information about work for money:

Some people work at more than one job at the same time. Did you have any other jobs that you were working at for money while you were working at this job?

Some, however, will answer no to that first question or no to the mid-point questions. These people will not be given an opportunity to describe any work they do until questions G16 and G17 and only one of these does not involve work for money. Question G16 asks,

Since January, 1990, were there any other activities that you did for money, such as carving, guiding, baby sitting, hairdressing, etc.? What were they?

Question G17 provides an opportunity to describe work done for other reasons,

Since January, 1990, were there any other activities that you did to support yourself and your family for which you did not get money, such as fish for food, cut wood, trade for food or other services?

There is no attempt to measure how much time is spent on this activity

or to assess its value to the respondent. These last two questions are also attempts to measure informal sector and barter activity. The informal economy is very difficult to gather accurate information on, regardless of the questions asked. People are naturally chary of revealing untaxed and perhaps illegal activity.

This activity is nevertheless important as it affects our ability to interpret data on economic activity and assess the standard of living in these regions. If the informal sector is a significant part of the northern economy, measurement of changes over time in overall levels of economic activity will be misleading, as they only include formal sector activity. This is not only the case for measuring economic activity, but also for measuring unemployment trends. Informal sector activity may be less, or more, subject to various economic forces (e.g. unemployment cycles) than the formal sector. Statistical surveys must control or adjust for these factors if an accurate representation and interpretation of the local or regional economy is desired.

With regard to accurate measurement and representation of the different work roles and activities of men and women, the completeness of the data is limited by the inadequacies listed above regarding effective means to capture non-wage subsistence and commodity work activities, and potentially by inaccurate or incomplete responses from the respondents to the Census, APS, or NWT Labour Force Survey.

The questionnaires are designed to capture the activities of all people in a household. If they are properly and thoroughly completed,

without misrepresentation by the respondent, the quality of data on men and women should be the same. The extent to which any misrepresentations of women's work roles and contributions are present is a larger issue than this paper can address.

Income

The census works as well as can be expected at capturing monetary forms of income. For the Inuit, these are the same as for others in the Canadian economy, wages and transfer payments from government.

Efforts to measure and value subsistence or commodity-related activities as forms of income have only recently, albeit incompletely, been made on the census. Without a measurement of all the various forms of activity/work and its product that ultimately form the income of an Inuit family, there can be no truly accurate assessments of wealth and poverty, assistance requirements, or education and training needs.

Question 45 on the 2D form captures monetary forms of income.

In addition to "wages or salaries", it asks about "non-farm self-employment activities in 1990, such as trapping, making handicrafts or running a business?" It also asks about four kinds of government transfers as well as personal retirement pensions, dividends or interest income, or other monies from tribal payments, alimony or scholarships. There are no other questions which attempt to value other forms of income on the census form. Question H3 on the APS asks,

During the year 1990 did you receive any of the types of income listed below:

- Full-time post-secondary education allowance?
- Full-time training allowance?
- Social assistance or welfare payments? Do not include Family Allowance and Child Tax Credits.
- Workers' Compensation?

In many respects Statistics Canada cannot be blamed for failing to include a question that attempts to measure the value of non-monetary income. Placing a value on the other forms of income is extremely difficult. It is far easier to measure the amount of time spent on harvesting activities or the quantity harvested in a given period. In many respects the value of food harvested for personal consumption or trade in the North is worth a great deal in monetary terms since the alternative is extremely high priced imported goods.

An alternative measurement may take the form of assessing its value for the respondents quality of life. For example, the importance of subsistence activity and product can be the difference between a life of sufficiency and food security and continual want.

Some Inuit households may be considered as poor as urban households in terms of cash income, but they may achieve a higher level of food security than their urban counterparts.

Unemployment

According to census data, many Inuit are not unemployed because they are not, by definition, in the labour force. Failure to look for work in the previous four weeks moves them out of the ranks of the unemployed and into the ranks of those not in the labour force.

The problem with this categorization of the Inuit worker is that in many cases there is no need to look for work because available opportunities in their communities are so few and far between that everyone knows if and when there are jobs available. Looking for work takes on a different importance in such an environment. The idea of responding to help wanted ads or visiting the Employment and Immigration Canada office may be appropriate in the South, but as a representation of life in Inuit communities it is inaccurate.

The definitions of employed, unemployed, and labour force used in the census follow those in the Labour Force Survey. Relatively stable, these definitions have, nevertheless, been adjusted, most notably in the 1976 census. Prior to the 1976 census anyone who did not look for work, because he/she believed none was available, was considered unemployed. In the 1976 census a two question approach was used to determine unemployed people: first was whether the person had looked for work in a reference period (last week, or in the last four weeks); second, and this only applied to those who could answer yes to the first question, was this person available to start work during the reference period. If the respondent met both qualifications then they were unemployed. If not, then they were not in the labour force.

These basic components remain applicable in the 1991 census.

Questions 31 to 34 from the 2D form illustrate the continuity:

31. Last week, was this person on temporary lay-off or absent from his/her job or business?
32. Last week, did this person have definite arrangements to start a new job within the next four weeks?
33. Did this person look for work during the past four weeks?
34. Could this person have started work last week had a job been available?

The distinction that Statistics Canada officials fail to seek with their questions and which the data consequently fails to reveal is when the individual is voluntarily out of the work force (i.e. choosing not to look for work that may be available) and involuntarily out of the work force. The APS offers question G15

Since January, 1990, did you have problems finding a job because...

1. there were few jobs or no jobs in the area where you live?
2. your education or your work experience did not match the jobs that were available?
3. you could not find anyone to look after your children?
4. you did not have enough information about available jobs?
5. you are an Aboriginal person?
6. of other reasons?

as a way for the respondent to register the fact that there is little or no work available in their community.

The Government of the Northwest Territories in its 1989 Labour

Force Survey attempted to probe deeper into a respondent's reasons for not working and not looking for work. In question 14 the survey presents a two part question seeking a reason for a respondent's failure to look for work in the last four weeks.

Have you looked for work over the past four weeks? For example, contacted employers, answered job ads, etc. (yes/no)

If no, why have you not looked for work?

- Housework/working at home.
- Out on the land.
- No jobs available in area or suited to skills.
- Other. Specify.

Two questions later, question 16 queries

Do you want a job?

Question 17 asks,

If there were work for you in another community, would you move there?

The latter questions all offer a yes-no choice. All things being equal, people might respond yes, even if they didn't really mean it.

This might be particularly true if the respondent felt that additional assistance depended on it; or if they were not sure of the purpose of the question.

Housing

The census presents a series of questions on housing (section

H of the 2D form, p. 26-27). Several of the questions request information on payments for utilities and other expenses, several others are aimed at determining the basic condition and characteristics of the property. There were only a few comments on the housing section of the census. Some felt that a question regarding principal heating equipment used in the home, which was previously part of the census, should be reinstated. There is still considerable variation in northern communities as to the principal heating equipment available in homes. An additional, albeit a less important point, is that much of the housing in the northern Inuit communities is public housing so questions relating to ownership are less relevant than elsewhere.

The census form, again reflecting the different quality of life between North and South, does not enquire into whether the home has running water, electricity, a bathroom or other amenities. These questions are asked on the APS (section I, pp. 55-58). Additionally the APS asks for the respondents opinion on how well the home meets the needs of its occupants (question I11, p. 57). This raises the possibility that southern standards in housing are not appropriate for northerners. Clearly, sufficient heat, clean water and other basic needs must be met, but requirements on other characteristics may be different.

Family

The APS is designed to gather information about individuals,

so there is no section on the family. Because of its orientation, little of the resultant data, even with manipulation, would provide reliable insight into the nature of the respondent's family life. Most available information on Inuit families, therefore, will come from the census.

The census generates family data by asking for information about each member of a household. Subsequently, the ability to produce family data as opposed to economic family or household data is dependent on establishing each member of the household's relationship to the principal occupant (designated on the census form as "person 1"). The census begins by requesting the names of the people living at the particular residence,

Could you start by giving me the names of a couple, that is the husband and wife, or common-law partners, who live here

OR

a lone parent living here with his/her never-married children

OR

any other adult.

One member of this couple, the lone parent, or the other adult then becomes the principal occupant and reference point for the remainder of the people living in the household. After this is established the remainder of the names of the household's inhabitants are taken down.

These names are transcribed into spaces running horizontally across the top of the form. Each name forms the top of a column of

spaces designated for that persons responses to the questions, which are listed down the farthest left column of the form. The lead adult's name is placed at the top of the first column and is designated "person 1". The remainder of the questionnaire is completed by marking the response to each question for the person in question in the appropriate space in the column below their name at the top of the form.

Question 2 establishes the relationships in the household by asking,

"How is this person related to [person 1]?"

Selected relationships are presented:

husband/wife,
common-law partner,
son/daughter,
son-in-law/daughter-in-law,
grandchild,
father/mother,
father-in-law/mother-in-law,
brother/sister,
brother-in-law/sister-in-law,
lodger/boarder,
room-mate,
and a space for writing in other relationships is provided.

This structure does not handle the situation in many Inuit households well. The Inuit family structure is different than existing tendencies in the South for reasons of culture and necessity.

In addition to concepts of extended family that generally no longer apply in the South, there are rather unique situations that are not easily handled on the census form. One example is the case of custom adoptions, in which the children of another related or unrelated family are cared for by the respondent.

These situations are often complicated by housing shortages in some areas, so that there are often more than six people - the number of spaces available on the census form - sharing the same household.

In some cases there may be two families as defined by the census living in the same household.

These are not insurmountable problems, as the interviewer is instructed in the form to begin a second questionnaire if there are more than six members of the household. And there are spaces for written responses to explain relationships. Our purpose is simply to point out that the results in some cases may be less than accurate due to the often complicated relationships present in the Inuit household. Of particular importance is that it may be impossible from the recorded information to determine the relationship, if any, between children and some adults (other than person 1) living at the same residence.

The instruction guide to the 2B long form contains the examples, "nephew/niece of person 1", and "lodger's husband/wife and son/daughter" as "other related/unrelated" people in the household.

It is not clear whether those working from the 2D form are given the same instructions.

Agriculture

As mentioned above, agricultural activity is recorded on the separate Agricultural Census (form 6, Appendix D). The greatest problem in this category might be the definition of what constitutes

agricultural activity. Virtually none of the harvesting activities in the North fit the traditional definition of agriculture, which is roughly stated as the production of at least one of the following products intended for sale: field crops, tree fruits, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed, cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, other livestock, hens, chickens, turkeys, other poultry, milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, greenhouse or nursery products, mushrooms, sod, honey, or maplesyrup products. This definition would include fur farms, but not fur trapping for example. It would include the cultivation of berries, but not the gathering of wild berries. Fishing and fish farms are not part of the agricultural census.

Form 6 was based on this traditional definition. There is some difficulty in perceiving the relevance of form 6 to northern activity.

There are few spaces where this activity can be recorded. Questions 60-65 asks the respondent to "Report the area to the nearest tenth," of strawberries, raspberries, grapes, blueberries (cultivated high and low bush, and low bush grown on managed land), cranberries, and other cultivated berries (e.g. saskatoons, loganberries, currants, etc.). Question 159 deals with other livestock. The instructions call on the respondent to

- Include all animals on this holding, regardless of ownership.
- Include any animals owned but pastured on a community pasture, grazing co-op or public land.
- Do not include animals owned but kept on a farm, ranch or feedlot operated by someone else.

Notice how these instructions eliminate most possibilities for Inuit herding or hunting activity, since they generally do not "own" a holding, or "own" the animals.

Neither the definition nor the census form provide for recording the extent and value of subsistence activity. Neither does it measure informal commercial activities, such as road side sales, or barter for any Canadians.

Additionally, one of the principal aims of the Agricultural Census is to measure how much land is employed in agricultural activity. Many of the questions, such as the berry example above, are aimed at recording not monetary value but acreage utilized. This concept is for the most part inappropriate for Inuit harvesting/agriculture which is dependent on undomesticated land.

There is also the issue of land ownership and management relationships in the Inuit community. Question 14 on Form 6 seeks to capture the variations that may exist in Canadian society. It requests that the respondent,

Indicate if this is some other type of holding such as:

- an institution (e.g. research station, university farm, prison farm, etc.)
- a community pasture, co-operative grazing association or grazing reserve
- other (e.g. Hutterite colony, trust or estate, etc.)
Specify [blank space]

If Step 2 does not completely describe the operating arrangements of this holding, please explain in the comments section below.

Statistics Canada's Agricultural Division has acknowledged these

problems and has made efforts, as described previously, to broaden the definition of agricultural activity. In doing so for the 1991 census the data for the Yukon and Northwest Territories are no longer historically comparable. Moreover, their efforts did not result in the quality of results that they had hoped for. For example the census did not identify any farms harvesting indigenous plants and berries.¹³

The Agricultural Division is contemplating developing a separate form for the Yukon and Northwest Territories for the 1996 census year. This strategy would not capture non-traditional agricultural activity by Inuit in northern regions of other provinces - specifically Quebec and Labrador.

U.S. COMPARISON

The 1890 census in the United States was the first to make a complete census of all American Indians. Subsequently the census has used the regular census questions on race, in addition to periodic supplementary forms for reservations and trust lands, to count and gather information about the United States' Indian population.

The 1980 census included a separate, supplementary questionnaire for American Indians. The census identified 278 reservations, in addition to other Indian areas (e.g. trust lands and historic areas) and Alaska native villages and corporations. The 1970 census identified 115 reservations and the 1990 census identified 314.

¹³ Agricultural Profile of Canada, Part 1. Statistics Canada. Agricultural Division. Catalogue No. 93-350. June 1992. p. 105.

Census enumerators gave the supplementary questionnaire to those who identified themselves as American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut on the 1980 census short form. 1980 was the first time the census relied on self-identification of racial identity, rather than the observation of the enumerator.

The 1980 census also marks the Census Bureau's first extensive effort to work with tribal governments to improve the enumeration process. Census officials consulted tribal leaders on content, procedures and outreach efforts. The Bureau tried to hire and use native speaking enumerators whenever possible. The initial contact between the Census Bureau and the tribal governments begun in 1980 continued and grew for the 1990 census. Census officials met with tribal leaders early in 1985 and 1986 to discuss basic issues. For the first time, the Bureau tested the questionnaire on an Indian reservation in 1986 and again on two reservations in 1987. In both years there was a debriefing session to allow for comment and suggestions from the participants.

Additional follow-up visits occurred in 1989 with more specific plans for the census, which included two formal liaison programs: the Alaska native village program and the tribal liaison program for the lower 48 states. These programs called on tribal governments and the native villages to designate one representative with responsibility for communication with the Census Bureau during the census. The Bureau would work with and through this person for outreach and advertising about census procedures and participation.

Census Bureau officials indicated that these liaison programs were very helpful in improving the census of American Indians.

The 1980 supplementary questionnaire was used on only one reservation in Alaska; it was not used in the villages where Alaska's Eskimo populations live. Officials indicated that they were concerned about the cost of administering the supplementary questionnaire, but also potentially damaging the census results, which were viewed as more important. Thus, the results published about the Eskimo in Alaska are from the regular census form. The Census Bureau does not use a different form, such as the Canadian 2D form, for reservations and other Indian areas.

The U.S. census form contains 59 questions, the Canadian form 53. However, the U.S. form only asks 33 population questions to Canada's 45. The housing sections of the forms contain 26 and 8 questions respectively. The census forms share the same approach to identifying a main person/adult in the household, then relating the other members of the household to that main person. The relationships presented on the U.S. form are similar to the 2D form, but include under non-related responses, foster child. The responses on the U.S. form seem as limited as those on the 2D form for handling diverse, extended living situations.

The U.S. form asks two questions concerning race and ancestry: "What is's race?" and "What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?" The first is a self-identifying approach, with instructions to the enumerator to put down what the respondent considers him/herself

to be; it is not a biological approach. The second is more biological in nature, attempting to remove preference from the response. The Canadian approach, which contains a single question asking, "To which cultural group(s) did this person's ancestors belong?" avoids the possibility of self-identification. The post-censal survey (APS) and the 1986 census contained questions allowing for the respondents racial or ethnic self-identification.

Unlike the Canadian form, which asks directly (question 16), "Is this person a registered Indian as defined by the Indian Act of Canada?" and "Is this person a member of an Indian Band?", the U.S. form only asks a similar question from within the question on race.

If the respondent identifies him/herself with American Indian, then he/she is to print the name of the enrolled or principal tribe.

The Canadian census form asks four questions about languages used by the respondent as compared with one, three part question on the U.S. form. The Canadian form contains the following questions:

- 7) Can this person speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation?
- 8) What language(s), other than English or French, can this person speak well enough to conduct a conversation?
- 9) What language does this person speak most often at home?
- 10) What is the language that this person first learned at home in childhood and still understands?

The U.S. question reads as follows:

- 15 a) Does this person speak a language other than English at home?
 - b) What is this language?

c) How well does this person speak English?

The Canadian questions explore further than the U.S. questions. The U.S. questions fail to identify the persons native language as the Canadian question 10 does. They also fail to capture the respondents complete language abilities, other than those assumed to be the native languages used at home.

The Canadian form contains six questions regarding education compared with two questions on the U.S. form. The Canadian form probes more broadly and more specifically into the types of education received by the respondent. The U.S. form queries about the highest level of education completed, providing a list of education levels (often a range of years) from which the respondent must select one answer.

Thus the respondent can indicate only that he has completed "5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th grade" or "12th grade, no diploma" or "some college but no degree". Although the Canadian concern is with the highest level attended (not completed), the multiple questions on education levels achieved allow the respondent to answer more specifically. For example, the respondent must write in the highest grade attended (grades 1-13) on question 24, or the number of years of university completed on question 25(b).

Additional questions ask about other kinds of schooling attended, such as trade, nursing, hairdressing, or a community college; about additional certificates or diplomas received; and about the major field of study this person has undergone to receive their highest

degree. None of these subjects are covered in the U.S. form.

Questions about work activity differ only in their order and occasionally in their wording. The emphasis on the U.S. form, as it is on the Canadian form, is on work for pay. Traditional activities are not mentioned on the regular form. Similarly, income of a subsistence or in-kind nature is excluded from consideration on the U.S. form.

As mentioned previously, housing inquiries are more extensive on the U.S. form than on the Canadian form. Major differences are that the Canadian form does not contain questions on household equipment and facilities, such as heating fuel used, source of water, sewage system, presence of a telephone, existing bath and kitchen facilities, and presence of automobiles. The U.S. form also probes more broadly and specifically into questions of mortgages, insurance coverage, and taxes. The Canadian form contains the following question, which does not appear on the U.S. form:

Would you say that this dwelling is in need of major repairs, minor repairs or only regular maintenance?

As discussed above, the APS contains questions on the quality of Aboriginal peoples' housing, much like the questions contained on the U.S. form. As the U.S. form indicates, however, the tradeoff for adding housing questions on the census form is the elimination of other potentially useful questions in the population sections.

The Supplementary Questionnaire for American Indians accompanying the 1980 Census in the United States is far less extensive

than the APS questionnaire used in Canada in 1991. The U.S. supplementary form was used in conjunction with the U.S. census short form. Many of the questions on the supplementary form are the same as questions on the long form. Some changes were made and other questions were added, however, to reflect the ethnic background of the respondents.

Questions 21 and 22 of the supplementary questionnaire address work issues and employment. Question 21 asks,

a) Last year, did this person work, even for a few days, at a paid job or in a business or farm? (If no go to 21 (b))

b) In 1979, did this person raise crops and/or livestock, or spend any time making things to sell or trade such as rugs, pottery, or jewelry?

c) Did this person earn any cash income from this work in 1979?

d) How many weeks did this person work in 1979?

Although clearly aimed at recording only work done for cash income, this was the first effort to include more traditional activities.

Question 22 asks, "What was the main reason this person worked fewer than 50 weeks in 1979?" The third possible response to check is "slack work or business conditions". This response anticipates that in some areas jobs just may not exist. Depending on the definitions used in the United States at this time, a respondent checking this response may or may not be considered for unemployment benefits or other social assistance programs.

The Supplementary Questionnaire, in comparison to current Canadian efforts, provides little guidance for improving the census

or APS questionnaires. The 1990 census questionnaire in the United States does as good, or as poor, a job as the Canadian 1991 census at capturing the reality of economic and social life among the Inuit or other Aboriginal groups. With the creation of the 2D form in Canada it could be argued that the Canadian census is better in terms of its accessibility and appropriateness for Aboriginal people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to developing and maintaining a database of meaningful data on the Inuit, that is meaningful for program planning, substantiating need in the view of funding agencies, and improving the conditions and lives of the Inuit, has been the lack of coordination among users and producers of data. Behind this obstacle are the dual interests of the federal statistics producers and the northern statistics users. Statistics Canada's imperative of producing national aggregates that are comparable across time collides with northerners' imperative of understanding the problems and needs of individual communities.

The costs of collecting and processing data are too great, however, to permit multiple collection efforts. Without coordination and an efficient division of labour based on each organization's comparative advantage, the resources and energies of the system are being wasted and the quality and usefulness of the results are diminished. It must be determined whether meeting the data needs of Inuit organizations by producing data within categories and at

a scale that are meaningful to them precludes fulfilling Statistics Canada's national obligations. The obligations of Aboriginal organizations must also be clarified with respect to their role in the data production process.

The aim of the following recommendations is to adjust the process and the results along the lines of greater coordination and greater responsiveness to the needs of Inuit organizations and other service providers, including government agencies, without losing sight of the fiscal, legal and operational constraints that Statistics Canada and other statistics producing agencies must work within. The recommendations below begin with some general recommendations, then move into ones specifically addressed to weaknesses in the 2D form of the census, and finally to recommendations concerning the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS).

1) Data Availability - Useful administrative data is being poorly utilized by the Inuit research and policy planning community.

The major problems are a poor awareness of what data federal, provincial and territorial governments have and the availability of this data. The Commission should query government sources of administrative data to discuss and arrange for improved exploitation of this resource.

2) Data Comparability - Federal, provincial and territorial databases should be based on comparable definitions. Greater coordination is needed to review existing definitions.

3) Income Data - Statistics Canada should provide census data revealing median income and the proportion of the population in a community with incomes below an agreed upon amount for communities over 100 population.

Although Statistics Canada officials are equally concerned about

revealing the identity of any individual regardless of income, the nature of economic life and the distributions of income in most of the northern communities means their concerns about confidentiality primarily fall on individuals with high incomes.

Providing median income and the proportion of the population below a set income level in the community does not threaten to reveal the amount of any individuals income. As a measurement indicating the mid-point in incomes for the community, median income data, even in the smallest of communities, would reveal nothing about the specific amount of an individuals income. At most such data would only reveal that an individual's income level is higher than the median income.

Providing data on the proportion of the population with an income below a set amount, such as an agreed upon poverty line, again reveals nothing about the specific amount of any individuals income.

In reference to changes to the census, Statistics Canada officials want to ensure the universality of their procedures and data, thus allowing for historical and geographical comparisons. However, the 2D form already represents a significant change to the universality of the process, in that it, for example, relies on different phrasing within the questionnaire, is translated into different languages, involves an interview often with interpreters, is presented at a different time of the year, and so forth.

Given that Statistics Canada has already changed the process and questionnaire, it is not unreasonable to make additional minor adjustments to capture relevant and desired information in the North.

The following are our recommendations for changes to the census. Some of these may not be necessary if the APS is continued.

4) Education - The ambiguity on the 2D form concerning adult upgrading and equivalency should be eliminated. Either the existing question on the 2D form should specifically instruct respondents to factor in adult upgrading and equivalency into their response, or a separate question should be added as a follow on.

5) Work - Statistics Canada must make the existing questions regarding work on the 2D form more specific of their intent. If they want only information on work to generate money income, this should be clearly explained in the questionnaire.

6) Work - Two questions should be added to the 2D form addressing hours and weeks of work done to support themselves and their family that is not for money (e.g. subsistence hunting and fishing, food and fuel gathering, food preserving, clothing production, or trade or barter of the same).

Questions 30 and 43 on the 2D form ask respectively,

Last week, how many hours did this person work? and,

In how many weeks did this person work in 1990?

The recommended questions could take the same form. The recommended additions would provide useful information without disrupting Statistics Canada's intended purpose on questions 30, 43, and the other work related questions. By adding clarification as to what kind of work is meant throughout the section the quality of responses may improve. For clarity, it may be necessary to place the two recommended questions apart from the series of questions about working for money.

7) Income - To improve the accounting of alternative forms of income, a series of questions should be added (to the 2D census

form or APS if continued) asking what percentage of individual or family consumption came from the subsistence activities of the respondent. For example, the percentage of food the respondent or his/her family consumed in a given period that came from hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering or barter and trade.

These questions could be similar in format to questions H1 and 1a on the APS, and could possibly include such items as clothing, wood for fuel, and others. Question H1 and 1a appear as follows,

H1. Did you buy food from a restaurant or take out? Yes/No

1a. ...what proportion of what you spent for [the item from H1] was actually spent in this community (or neighborhood if you live in a city or town). Five response categories are given: All, Most, About Half, Some, None.

8) Unemployment - A question should be added to the 2D form asking why the respondent did not look for work in the reference period.

Without prompting, those that respond that they did not look because there were no jobs to look for should then be counted as unemployed, rather than not in the labour force.

Such a measure would create two pools of unemployed people from the 2D respondents. The first would be a count under the current national definition, which does not include people who are not looking for work because there are no jobs - the involuntary unemployed. The second would be a northern definition that was more reflective of the nature of employment in remote northern communities.

9) Housing - The census should include a question concerning the respondents perception of the adequacy of their residence for their needs.

This question could be based on the APS question I11:

In your opinion, how well does this residence meet the needs of the people living here? Completely, Partly, Not at all, Don't

Know.

I11 is followed by,

11a. What else do the people living here need? Is it... more bedrooms, more eating space, more living space, more work space, more storage space, a larger kitchen, a new roof, better ways to keep the house warmer, something else?

10) Family - The census question identifying the links between household members and "person 1", should be expanded or clarified to encompass the significant relationships between children and adults other than "person 1".

In many respects the Aboriginal Peoples Survey promises to cover many of the most blatant gaps in the data. It was a serious attempt to meet the needs of Aboriginal groups. It is, unfortunately, at this time a one-time effort that may not be repeated. Its value is limited by the questions that were part of the survey and the products that will be derived from it. As should be expected of a specialized survey, according to what we heard through the course of our interviews, the APS is more reflective of the needs of Inuit organizations than the Census.

11) APS - The APS survey should be continued.

12) APS - The consultation process established for the APS should be continued in an effort to improve the coherence of data collection in the face of Inuit organizations' needs and Statistics Canada's requirements.

13) Agriculture - To capture more of the non-traditional agricultural/harvesting activities in the North, the Agriculture Division of Statistics Canada should consult other appropriate governmental agencies and Inuit organizations to add additional questions to the APS in lieu of the form 6 approach; or to create a new form for the North that replaces form 6 - similar to the way the 2D form replaces the 2B population census form.

There are tradeoffs and further decisions that must be considered in these alternative approaches. Piggy-backing additional questions on the APS would mean that non-Aboriginal harvesting activity would be lost. Additionally, it places a greater response burden on those completing the APS. Creating a new form requires a decision on the part of Statistics Canada whether they include Northern Quebec and Labrador in the survey. Currently the Agriculture Division only applies its new definitions in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

If Northern Quebec and Labrador were included Statistics Canada would have to deal with the division of the provincial agricultural data according to the form used.

REFERENCES

Assembly of First Nations. Report on the Joint Conference on a First Nations Database and the 1991 Census and Post-Censal Programs. Ottawa, February 20-22, 1990.

Choiniere, Robert and Norbert Robitaille. "Demographic Evolution of the Inuit of Canada", in Kenneth De La Barre (ed.), Proceedings: International Workshop on Population Issues in Arctic Societies. Montreal: Committee on Northern Population Research. 1985.

Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Annual Northern Expenditure Plan, 1989-1990. Ottawa: Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. 1991.

----- Quantitative Analysis and Socio-demographic Research, Management Information and Analysis, and Finance and Professional Services Divisions. Basic Departmental Data, 1992. Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. December 1992.

The Greenland Home Rule Authority. Greenland 1990 Statistical Yearbook. The Greenland Home Rule Authority. 1990.

Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. Workshop Proceedings, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada/Statistics Canada Workshop on the 1991 Census and Aboriginal Peoples Survey. Ottawa, March 17-19, 1992.

Irwin, Colin. Lords of the Arctic: Wards of the State. Research Report funded by Department of National Health and Welfare. 1988.

Larocque, Gilles Y. "Progress Towards Rationalizing and Improving the Availability of Data on Canada's Indian and Inuit Populations", in Kenneth De La Barre (ed.), Proceedings: International Workshop on Population Issues in Arctic Societies. Montreal: Committee on Northern Population Research. 1985

LaRusic, Ignatius E. Some Comments on Socio-Economic/Cultural Issues in the Subarctic. A Paper Prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. April 17, 1992.

Maslove, Allan M. and David C. Hawkes. Canada's North, A Profile. Department of Industry, Science and Technology, Ottawa. March 1990.

Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics. Northwest Territories Renewable Resource Harvester Survey: Winter 1990, Overall Results. Government of Northwest Territories. March 1991.

----- 1989 NWT Labour Force Survey: Winter 1989, "Wage Employment

& Traditional Activities" and "Labour Force Activity, Education & Language". Government of Northwest Territories. March 1990.

----- Northwest Territories Population Estimates, June 1990. Government of Northwest Territories. September 1991.

----- Statistics Quarterly, September 1992. Government of Northwest Territories. 1992.

Petersen, Ole Kaysen and Lene Skotte. "The Population Statistics in Greenland", in Kenneth De La Barre (ed.), Proceedings: International Workshop on Population Issues in Arctic Societies. Montreal: Committee on Northern Population Research. 1985.

Poppel, Birger. Speech to the Participants in the ITC/Statistics Canada Workshop on the 1991 Census and Aboriginal Peoples Survey. March 17, 1992.

Stabler, Jack C. "Development Planning North of 60: Requirements and Prospects", in Michael S. Whittington (Coordinator), The North. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1985.

Statistics Canada. 1991 Census Dictionary: Reference. Catalogue 92-301E. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. 1992.

----- 1991 Census Handbook: Reference. Catalogue 92-305E. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. 1992.

----- Agriculture Division. Agricultural Profile of Canada, Part 1. Catalogue 93-350. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. June, 1992.

----- Post-Censal Surveys Program. An Overview of the Post-Censal Survey of Aboriginal Peoples. Ottawa: Special Assembly of First Nations. December 11, 1990.

----- Post-Censal Surveys Program. Information Package on Aboriginal Products from the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the 1991 Census of Population. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

----- Post Censal Survey of Native Peoples: Issues and Suggested Topics for Discussion Purposes During Consultation Phase. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. 1990.

----- The Daily: 1991 Census of Canada. Catalogue 11-001E. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. March 30, 1993.

United States Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. We, The First Americans. Washington: Department of Commerce. December

1988.

----- Bureau of the Census. 200 Years of U.S. Census Taking: Population and Housing Questions, 1790-1990. Washington: Department of Commerce. November 1989.

----- Bureau of the Census. 1980 Census of Population. American Indian Areas and Alaska Native Villages: 1980. Supplementary Report, No. PC80-S1-13. Washington: Department of Commerce. August 1984.

----- Bureau of the Census. 1980 Census of the Population. American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts on Identified Reservations and in the Historic Areas of Oklahoma (Excluding Urbanized Areas), Sections 1 and 2. Subject Reports, No. PC80-2-1D Part 2. Washington: Department of Commerce. January 1986.

Usher, Peter J. "The North: One Land, Two Ways of Life", in L.D. McCann (ed.), Heartland and Hinterland: A Geography of Canada. 2nd Edition. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada. 1987.

ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED

Statistics Canada:

Andy Siggner (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples)
Dale Sewall
Adele Furrie
Mel Jones (Agricultural Census Division)
Nora Hillary (Agricultural Census Division)
Ivan DeLaurier (Montreal)
Nicole Gautier (Montreal)
Mark Annett (Edmonton)

DIAND:

Fred Hill, Northern Programs
Robin Armstrong, QASR

Health and Welfare:

Cathy McGovern, Statistics Division

Justice:

John Turner, Information and Client Services

Yukon Bureau of Statistics:

Glenn Grant
Jim Tousignant
Joe MacGillivray

Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics:

Dave Stewart

Quebec Bureau of Statistics:

Claude Dionne
Normand Thibault

Newfoundland/Labrador:

Hugh Riddler, Nfld. Statistics Agency
Albert Jones, Director of Research and Analysis, Executive Council,
Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat

Inuit Organizations:

Makivik
Bruno Pillozzi
Francis Lord
Inuit Tapirisat of Canada
Peter Usher
Jack Hicks
Pauktuutit
Linda Archibald
Tungavik Federation

Louis Okalak
Sadie Hill
Labrador Inuit Association
Judy Rowell (not available)
Labrador Inuit Health Commission, Northwest River
Iris Allen (not available)

Academic and Other:

Flo Andrews, Carleton Univ.
Adrian Tanner, Memorial Univ.
Norbert Robitaille, Univ. of Montreal

United States Bureau of the Census
Edna Paisano
Joan Greendeer-Lee