



**THE 1991 POST-CENSAL ABORIGINAL PEOPLES SURVEY:
AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SURVEY,
IT'S CONTENT AND PLANNED OUTPUTS**

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1. WHAT IS A POST-CENSAL SURVEY ?

A post-censal survey has three major characteristics. It uses the current Census data to identify the sample population. It uses the Census staff and field infrastructure to select the sample and to collect the data, and finally, it uses the Census data to augment the data collected in the survey questionnaire.

Statistics Canada conducted the first post-censal survey that met all of the above mentioned criteria, in 1986. This was the **Health and Activity Limitation Survey**, also known as **HALS**. In 1991, there were two post-censal surveys, a repeat of HALS and the very first post-censal **Aboriginal Peoples Survey**, also known as APS.

Today I would like to present a brief overview of the development of the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, the methodology, the geography, the content, and the planned output products.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES SURVEY

The idea of a post-censal survey of Aboriginal persons dates back to 1988 when officials from Statistics Canada met with representatives from the provincial and territorial governments to discuss potential topics for post-censal surveys following the 1991 Census. The first choice was a survey of Aboriginal persons. Further consultation with federal departments reinforced the need for additional data on Aboriginal people, which could be used to quantify issues, and which would go beyond the socio-demographic data available from the Census. Due to this overwhelming need for data on Aboriginal people, it was determined that Statistics Canada should pursue the development of a proposal for a survey on Aboriginal persons.

However, before proceeding with the development of the survey Statistics Canada had to determine if this survey would be acceptable to the Aboriginal population. This turned out to be a very major undertaking involving several rounds of consultation with national and provincial Aboriginal organizations.

Stage one was to approach the national Aboriginal organizations. Fortunately, in February 1990, Statistics Canada was able to add the post-censal survey to the agenda of a joint Statistics Canada and Assembly of First Nations workshop that was being planned to discuss the creation of the First Nations Database. Following this workshop Statistics Canada staff were able to put together a framework for the development of the survey questionnaire.



Throughout 1990, consultations were held across the country with about 500 representatives from national and provincial Aboriginal organizations, in addition to discussions with numerous federal, provincial and territorial government officials. From these consultations and discussions Statistics Canada prepared a list of topics which had to be translated into a questionnaire.

With the help of individuals who had been involved in surveys of Aboriginal persons, the survey team developed a draft of the questionnaire that was sent out to all those who had participated in the consultation and discussion phase. Comments were received back from about 200 individuals, some very detailed and others very short. Clearly there were some changes to be made, but in general, it appeared that we had a workable questionnaire, and not one of those who gave comments said that we were off track.

Revisions were made and the questionnaire was field tested in April 1991. The test was conducted in three communities - the Kamloops Indian Reserve in British Columbia, Waboden - a predominately Métis community in Manitoba, and Hopedale - an Inuit community in Labrador. In addition to these three sites - focus groups were held in Vancouver, Sault Ste. Marie and Quebec city.

Final revisions were made to the questionnaire based on the comments from the field test and focus groups, including comments from the interviewing staff. Although, overall these changes were minor, we did incorporate an important finding from the test phase. Some of the questions asked were found to be sensitive, and could potentially cause problems. To resolve this situation we added a statement which precedes certain questions (or block of questions) to advise the respondents that these questions may be found to be sensitive, and that they can be skipped if requested by the respondent.

By the summer of 1991, we had a final questionnaire sent to print. After preparation of the different training manuals, conducting the necessary training sessions, distributing the questionnaires, and completing other survey operation procedures, we conducted the interviews from coast - to coast - to coast, in the fall of 1991, except in the Northern Quebec communities which, for operational reasons, were covered in January of 1992.

3. **Post-Censal Survey Methodology: The Sampling Plan**

A post-censal survey is essentially a two-stage survey. The first stage is the Census of population where responses to a few questions related to the topic of the survey are collected through Census field operations. The second stage is the post-censal survey itself. A sample of the respondents to the Census questionnaire is selected according to a predetermined sampling plan. The



sampling plan consists of two main components. First, we define estimation domains for which data are required by users. These domains may be regions (provinces, urban areas, Indian reserves) or demographic groups (for example, age groups). Second, we prepare a sample design adapted for each area.

The Aboriginal Peoples Survey covers the North American Indian, Métis and Inuit populations of Canada, and requires specific sampling estimates for the population living in Indian reserves and settlements, and other specific sampling estimates for the Aboriginal population living off-reserve. For the first component estimates are required for each reserve. For the off-reserve component estimates are needed for selected Census metropolitan areas, other urban areas, and rural areas in each province.

The APS on-reserve sample is about 140,000 persons, and the off-reserve sample is about 55,000. The sample design for the off-reserve component is a two-stage stratified sample using Census enumeration areas (EA's) as the primary sampling units. There are about 45,000 EA's in Canada and each includes, on average, 300 households. EA's are stratified according to their size. We also stratify persons, the secondary units, according to their responses to the Census questionnaire. For the on-reserve component, a systematic sample of persons is drawn in each reserve.

The response rate varied from province to province to territory. Overall, the response rate was 77% on-reserve and 80% for the off-reserve component.

4. **Geographic Areas Covered by the Aboriginal Peoples Survey**

The following are the minimum geographic areas for which data can be retrieved from APS, subject to response rates.

- Indian reserves and settlements with a minimum total population of approximately 100 persons;
- selected Aboriginal communities, for example Métis settlements, Inuit communities with a minimum total population of approximately 100 persons;
- twelve metropolitan areas: St. John's, Halifax, Saint John, Montréal, Ottawa-Hull, Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Victoria;
- all other urban areas combined at the province or territorial level; and
- all other rural areas combined at the province or territorial level.



A number of Indian reserves and settlements, for any number of reasons, did not participate in the 1991 Census of population. Because a sample of Aboriginal people is selected for APS from the Census questionnaires, non-participating reserves in the 1991 Census were not included in the Aboriginal Peoples Survey. In addition, a number of reserves and settlements who participated in the 1991 Census chose not to participate in APS. Consequently, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey will not have data for any of these specific reserves.

5. **Defining the 1991 Aboriginal Population in Canada**

The definition of the Aboriginal population is different in the 1991 Census of population and the post-censal Aboriginal Peoples Survey.

In the 1991 Census of population the total Aboriginal population refers to those persons who reported on the Census questionnaire at least one Aboriginal origin (for example, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit ancestry) and/or reported being registered under the Indian Act of Canada.

The Aboriginal Peoples Survey counts the population with Aboriginal identity. This refers to those persons who indicated on the Census at least one Aboriginal origin and/or reported being registered under the Indian Act of Canada, and subsequently reported in the Aboriginal Peoples Survey as identifying with at least one Aboriginal group (for example, North American Indian, Métis, Inuit or another Aboriginal group such as "Cree" or "Inuvialuit") and/or reported being registered Indian under the Indian Act of Canada.

The difference between the Census and Aboriginal Peoples Survey definitions is that the **Census is measuring Aboriginal ancestry**, while the **Aboriginal Peoples Survey measures who among those with Aboriginal ancestry also consider themselves to be Aboriginal**. For example, some individuals may report in the Census that they have a North American Indian origin from an ancestor, such as a great-grandmother, but on APS indicate that they do not identify with an Aboriginal group. Consequently, such persons would be counted in the Census as part of the total Aboriginal population, but not in the APS count by Aboriginal identity.

6. **Topics Covered by the Aboriginal Peoples Survey**

The Aboriginal Peoples Survey is an omnibus survey that covers a great variety of socio-economic issues.

For those individuals who were selected from the 1991 Census to participate in the Aboriginal Peoples Survey their Census information is transferred to their APS record. Consequently, the APS files will also include the Census socio-demographic characteristics for the respondents, and all information items in APS



can be cross-classified with Census information items.

The following is a description of the different topics covered in the APS adult questionnaire. The children's questionnaire is a sub-set of the adult questionnaire.

Section A - Identity

Section B - Language and Tradition

Section C - Disability

Section D - Health, Lifestyles and Social Issues

Section E - Mobility

Section F - Schooling

Section G - Work and Related Activities

Section H - Expenditures and Sources of Income

Section I - Housing

Section A - Identity

The identity section asks with which Aboriginal group do the respondents identify. If the respondents identify with an Aboriginal group they are further asked whether they are registered Indians, as defined by the Indian Act of Canada; if they have applied to be registered as status Indians under Bill C-31; and if they have been registered as status Indians under Bill C-31. These respondents also go on to answer the remainder of the questionnaire.

Those who say that they do not identify with an Aboriginal group are asked only two more questions before the interview is terminated: 1) are they registered Indians under the Indian Act of Canada; and 2) who in their family background is an Aboriginal person.

Section B - Language and Tradition

The language and tradition section includes questions about the respondents ability to understand, speak, read, and write one or more Aboriginal languages. Those who speak an Aboriginal language well enough to carry on a conversation are further asked the types of language(s) spoken, read, and written; the frequency of use of Aboriginal languages in the home, at school, at work, and in other places; who taught them the Aboriginal language(s); barriers encountered when using an Aboriginal language; and their use of Aboriginal media.

Those who currently can not speak an Aboriginal language well enough to carry on a conversation are asked about their past knowledge of an Aboriginal



language; the reasons why they don't speak an Aboriginal language; if they are interested in learning an Aboriginal language; if they can read and/or write an Aboriginal language; who taught them; and their use of Aboriginal media.

The final set of questions in this section are about participation in traditional activities. Those who participate in traditional activities are asked if they face any problems when they participate in traditional Aboriginal activities; and the extent of these problems. Those who do not participate are asked if they would like to; and the reasons why they do not participate in traditional Aboriginal activities.

Section C - Disability

The disability questions asked in APS are part of the Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS), the other post-censal survey. In order not to burden the Aboriginal population with two major surveys, it was decided to include part of the Health and Activity Limitation Survey questions in APS.

These are questions about the type of disability the respondents may have (for example, hearing, seeing, speaking, walking, etc.); the severity of the disability; and the limitation on daily activities (at home, work or school) caused by long-term physical health problems, or long-term mental health problems.

Those with a disability are asked additional questions about the extent and use of special technical aids or services; the extent to which they require help with the management of daily activities (for example, help with meal preparation, etc.); availability of enough help in carrying out daily activities; who is providing the help; extent and use of specialized features to move about the home; type of specialized features; extent of those who have difficulty leaving home to travel short distances; extent of those who are "housebound"; extent of those needing someone to accompany them on short trips; and the extent of those prevented from taking long trips because of health problems.

Section D - Health, Lifestyle and Social Issues

This section covers a variety of issues. It asks questions about the respondents' current health status; major health problems in the community; health services, facilities and supports used by the respondents; their nutritional, alcohol, and tobacco consumption; their participation in sports and other recreational activities; the availability of recreational facilities in their community; the frequency of use of safety equipment; and finally a series of questions on social problems in their community.



Section E - Mobility

The mobility section identifies both non-movers and movers. For the movers there are additional questions about the date of the move; the reasons for the move; the location of the previous residence, and the total number of moves in the past 12 month period. The previous information about the moves is asked for a maximum of three moves in the previous 12 months.

Movers and non-movers alike were asked what they like and do not like about their current community; the amount of time they've spent on the land during the previous twelve months; and finally, if they have residences in more than one communities, and the location of these communities.

Section F - Schooling

The schooling section is divided into two distinct sub-sections, one for those 15 to 49 years of age and the other for those 50 to 64 years of age.

The first group is asked the age at which they started school; for each of the levels of school attended (elementary and secondary) the respondents were asked if they attended one or more schools; the number of schools attended; the location of the school(s) attended (inside or outside the community); the type of living accommodations they had while going to school (with own family, residential school, etc.); what they liked and disliked about school; the availability of Aboriginal teachers; the language used by teachers in the classroom; the availability of Aboriginal history in school; the adequacy about what was taught about Aboriginal people; reasons why they did not like what was taught about Aboriginal people.

Those who went to secondary school were also asked about whether or not they completed secondary school; for those still attending, what they would like to do when they complete secondary school; reasons why they want to do this; for those not expecting to complete secondary school, the reasons why; for those who have not completed secondary school, the reasons why; the extent of those who have dropped out who then have gone back to complete secondary school; their highest grade completed; the intention of those who have not returned to go back to complete secondary school; extent of those who have taken adult upgrading toward high school equivalency; and the highest upgrade level achieved.

Those who continued to post-secondary schooling were further asked their major field of study; if they are currently attending; if they have completed their course of studies; reasons for not completing course of studies; extent of those still attending post-secondary school who applied for financial assistance; type of financial assistance; and full or part time student status.



Those aged 50 to 64 years were asked three questions about their schooling -- if they attended a residential school; what they liked and disliked about their school years.

All respondents were asked a series of questions about training courses (to a maximum of three) they may have taken since January 1990. The type of training taken; the length of the course(s); the training allowance received; the course completion status; reasons for not completing the course(s).

Section G - Work and Related Activities

This section asked questions about the respondents employment status; their employment for income patterns since January 1990; their engagement in other work related activities; barriers encountered when searching for a job; and self-employment and business related questions.

The initial questions in the section ask if the respondents have worked for income since January 1990; if they are currently employed.

For the employment for income patterns, since January 1990, the respondents were asked information to allow for the 4 digit coding of industry and occupation; the duration of the job(s); the location of the work; how they found the job. This information was asked of those reporting holding one job at the time, and those reporting holding more than one job at a time.

Those engaged in other work related activities were asked about the type of activities they engaged in for money, and the type of activities they engaged in (not for money) to support themselves and their families.

In terms of barriers to employment the respondents were asked the reasons why they had not looked for work in the previous 4 weeks; reasons for not looking for work in the 1990-1991 period; and the types of problems encountered in not finding a job.

The final set of questions in this section relate to self-employment and business ownership. The respondents were asked if they presently won or ever owned a business in the past; how many employees they employed on a full-time, part-time and seasonal basis; type of business; length of operation of the business; location of the clientele; start-up capital provided by different types of financial institutions; other start-up assistance received.

All respondents are asked about their interest in getting into business in the future; the type of business; and barriers to starting up own business.



Section H - Expenditures and Sources of Income

This section asks the respondents if in the previous four weeks they've purchased any of the following items, or paid for any of the following services:

- food
- shelter repairs
- clothing
- travel
- gasoline
- entertainment/leisure
- equipment for hunting,etc.
- daycare

The respondents were also asked about the proportion of these purchases that were made inside the community, and the amount of total purchases made inside their community, in the previous four weeks.

Due to the fact that the Census of population does not cover in detail all sources of income in 1990, we asked a few additional questions about the following sources of income, and for each source we asked for how many months the respondents received such income, during 1990.

- full-time post-secondary education allowance
- full-time training allowance
- social assistance
- worker's compensation

Section I - Housing

The housing section asks questions about services to the home such as water, electricity and heating; housing conditions such as whether or not respondents consider their homes to be adequate to meet their needs; safety devices such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers, and their working order; household insurance coverage; barriers to obtaining household insurance; whether or not the respondents are on a waiting list for housing; and the location of the expected housing unit.

Unlike the other sections that were asked of every respondent that said that they identify with an Aboriginal group, the housing section was only asked of one knowledgeable adult in the household. In households where more than one respondent was selected for the survey, the housing questions were asked of only one adult.



7. Proposed Output Products from the Aboriginal Peoples Survey

Statistics Canada has recently completed another round of consultations to establish a data product line on the Aboriginal Peoples Survey. Input was sought from Aboriginal organizations, federal departments, provincial and territorial governments in order to assist Statistics Canada in developing a range of data products.

Among other products, the final product line will include community profiles for each completely enumerated Indian reserve or settlement with a minimum total population of about 100 persons. The list of products may also include statistical profiles at various levels of geography, theme reports, custom tabulations, and microdata files depending on the suggestions made during the consultation phase.

The Aboriginal Peoples Survey promises to be a very rich source of data on Canada's Aboriginal population. It is presently expected that the initial release of the data from section A will be the first quarter of 1993, and the other sections will be part of a phased release.

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