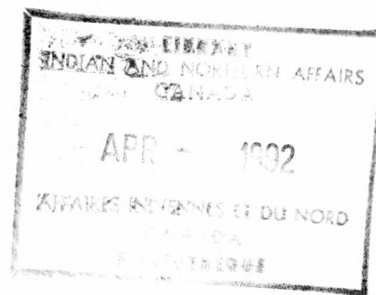


FINAL REPORT ON 1991 NCT-2 : ABORIGINAL
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Final Report on 1991 NCT-2:
Aboriginal Questions

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OBJET: Rapport sur le test du recensement national

The results of the analysis presented in this report are based on preliminary estimates from the National Census Test.

Le présent rapport contient les résultats d'une analyse fondée sur les estimations préliminaires du test du recensement national.

This analysis is presented in the format of a Statistics Canada internal working document and is prepared specifically for the use of senior Census subject matter managers as input to the content determination process for the 1991 Census of Canada.

L'analyse reprend la présentation des documents de travail internes de Statistique Canada et a été préparée spécialement pour les chefs du recensement pour les aider à déterminer le contenu du recensement de 1991.

Where applicable, estimates with high sampling variability have been suppressed or noted. If users are unsure of the reliability of an estimate, they should contact the author to determine the variance of the estimate in question.

Les estimations présentant une variabilité d'échantillonnage élevée ont été supprimées ou sont signalées par une note. Les utilisateurs qui ne sont pas sûrs de la fiabilité d'une estimation doivent communiquer avec l'auteur pour en déterminer la variance.

This analysis report is an internal working document and as such has been prepared in the working language preference/choice of the author.

Ce rapport d'analyse est un document de travail interne et de ce fait a été rédigé dans la langue de travail de l'auteur.

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Questions of NCT-2 Aboriginal Component

Background to NCT-2

The main objective of the aboriginal component of NCT-2 was to test a new question to determine who is a registered Indian. The other objectives were to evaluate the effect of using open-ended ethnic origin and identity questions on aboriginal respondents. To understand the evolution to the last national census test (NCT-2) for the 1991 Census, it is necessary to briefly look back over the period from the 1986 Census.

In 1986, a new question was attempted to identify the aboriginal status of respondents to the census. This question was intended to obtain counts of persons who identified themselves as: Inuit (or Eskimo), status or registered Indians, non-status Indians, or Metis. The question appeared on the 100% or 2A census form so that everyone was required to answer this question. There was even a mandatory follow-up for enumerators to carry out if this question was not answered by anyone in the household. As it turned out a significantly large number of non-aboriginals answered this question incorrectly, saying that they were one of the four aboriginal groups. This respondent error undermined the quality of the count such that Statistics Canada was not confident in releasing the results from this question.

The other event which occurred in the 1986 Census was that 136 Indian reserves for a variety of reasons failed to participate in the census, representing about 45,000 persons or 20% of the on-reserve population. Statistics Canada was also hearing informally that Native people wanted terms that better described their "first nationhood". Consequently, for the first national census test, it was decided not to ask a specific question on whether a person was a status/registered or non-status Indian. Rather, a new write-in category was tested within the questions on ethnic origin and identity which permitted aboriginal people to indicate their Indian band, First Nation or Tribe.

Upon consulting with federal government departments, provincial governments and aboriginal organizations regarding the results of the first national census test, it became clear that distinguishing the registered and unregistered Indian population in the census was important. This led to the development of a very simple question for testing in the last census test, NCT-2.

Results of the First Nation Census Test: NCT-1

The results of NCT-1 demonstrated that the Band/First Nation/Tribe write-in category worked well for those of North American Indian origin or identity, while those of mixed aboriginal/non-aboriginal origins and Metis tended not to use this write-in category as much as Indian people. The presence of this write-in category, (which was associated with the mark box categories, North American Indian, Metis, and Inuit) did not harm the overall count of aboriginals resulting from the ethnic origin or identity questions when compared to the 1986 Census counts. Therefore, the recommendation was to maintain the Band/First Nation/Tribe write-in category.

Result of NCT-2

The main finding of NCT-2 was that the new registered Indian question appears to have worked. The population count of registered Indians from NCT-2 which excluded Indian reserves, the Northwest Territories and Yukon, was within range of the Indian Northern Affairs off-reserve count as of December, 1988. There was negligible non-response by aboriginals to the registered Indian question. It was also found that upwards of 90% of those saying they were registered Indian also gave an Indian Band or First Nation rather than a Tribe in the Band/First Nation/Tribe write-in category, which in NCT-2 was still associated with the ethnic identity question.

The new registered Indian question did experience a high non-response rate. However, when the results were cross-classified with the race question the non-response was found to be virtually all from those who were not aboriginals. Two explanations were likely accounting for this: 1) the open-ended format of the ethnic origin (Q.15) and identity (Q.16) question created a serious response burden on the respondents, and 2) the registered Indian question was placed at the bottom of the page containing these open-ended questions.

Two major conclusions can be drawn from these results. It is essential to keep the ethnic origin and registered Indian questions together on the same form, to provide enough information to edit and impute non-response for the registered Indian question. This was not the case with the similar question (Q.7) in 1986 which led, in part, to the decision not to release the results, as no clean up was possible on four out of five questionnaires. The other conclusion is with respect to the open-ended ethnic questions; such a format puts a heavy response burden on aboriginal respondents since, according to the 1986 Census results, 48% of aboriginal gave multiple responses to the mark box categories on the ethnic question. In general, the non-

response rates to the open-ended ethnic questions tested in NCT-2 were very high. Thus, from the perspective of the impact on aboriginal responses, this format is not recommended.

Finally, there is the issue of determining a count of "non-status Indians". The new registered Indian question does not contain a specific response category for non-status Indian. However, those who indicate a North American Indian origin in the ethnic question and who also state that they are not registered Indians under the Indian Act, will result in a count of unregistered Indians. What this cross-tabulation will not do is tell us how many of these unregistered Indians would actually identify themselves as non-status Indians. It is also important to remember that with the 1985 amendment to the Indian Act, Bill C-31, upwards of 70,000 persons had regained their Indian status under the Indian Act by the end of 1989. This process of reinstatement will still be continuing in 1991.

As to how many more will be eligible for reinstatement it is not known, but estimates vary between 10,000 to 20,000. It should be noted that in the 1981 Census, where a category of "non-status Indian" was used in the ethnic origin question, a count of about 75,000 was obtained. Thus, the question remains as to how many non-status Indians will be left by June 1991 and how they would identify themselves. Will the term, "non-status Indian" still be an appropriate and/or popular term? The possibility exists to distinguish the unregistered Indian population into those who identify as non-status Indians, if a post-censual survey program on aboriginals receives approval and funding.

The recommendation from the results of NCT-2 were to:

- 1) maintain the registered Indian question for 1991,
- 2) change the open-ended format of the ethnic questions back to the mark box format,
- 3) drop the reference to "Tribe" in the Band/First Nation/Tribe write-in category,
- 4) move the Band/First Nation write-in category into the response box for the registered Indian question, since Metis and other mixed origin aboriginals were not using this write-in category to the same extent as those who are registered Indians.

Results of the Content Review Group

The CRG basically agreed with all four recommendations from NCT-2 regarding the identification of the aboriginal population.