

# POST-CENSAL SURVEYS

Three post-censal surveys have been conducted in recent years. The first was the 1986 Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS). HALS was repeated following the 1991 Census of Population. The 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey was also conducted following the 1991 Census.

## Definition of a post-censal survey<sup>(1)</sup>

A *post-censal survey* is a survey that uses a census question to identify the target population. It is usually conducted shortly after a census, with census staff and field infrastructure being used to select the sample and collect the data. Census data are used to augment the data collected on the post-censal survey questionnaire.

These characteristics translate into several advantages. A post-censal survey is an efficient means of collecting information on a segment of the Canadian population that is geographically dispersed. It reduces overall respondent burden and is a cost-effective means of collecting information.

**H** *Health and Activity Limitation Survey.*<sup>(2)</sup> In May 1980, the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped was formed to investigate the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities in Canada and to report their findings to the House of Commons. In February 1981, the Committee published its findings in the report titled *Obstacles*. This report listed 130 recommendations that the Government of Canada could undertake to help remove the barriers that persons with disabilities face.

Through Recommendation 113, the Committee directed Statistics Canada “to give a high priority to the development and implementation of the long-term strategy which will generate comprehensive data on disabled persons in Canada...”<sup>(3)</sup> In response, Statistics Canada proposed to build a national database on disability - a database that would include all types of disabilities and all geographic areas in Canada.

<sup>(1)</sup> This discussion draws from *Methodology Report, Household Component, 1991 Health and Activity Limitation Survey*. Denis, Dufour, Grondin, Lavigne, Lynch, and Morin. Social Surveys Methods Division, Statistics Canada, 1993; and *User's Guide to Aboriginal Data (Revised October, 1993)*, Statistics Canada, 1993.

<sup>(2)</sup> This discussion draws from *Health and Activity Limitation Survey - 1991 User's Guide*. Statistics Canada.

<sup>(3)</sup> *Obstacles*, Report of the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped, February, 1981, p. 131.

To determine specific data requirements, Statistics Canada contacted representatives from federal, provincial and territorial governments, agencies, crown corporations, and associations of persons with disabilities. After establishing the initial requirements, Statistics Canada conducted the following data collection activities:

- (1) the *Canadian Health and Disability Survey (CHDS)* in October 1983 and June 1984;
- (2) the addition of a question on activity limitation and long-term disability on the *1986 Census of Population* long questionnaire;
- (3) the *1986 Health and Activity Limitation Survey (1986 HALS)* post-censal survey;
- (4) the addition of a question on activity limitation and long-term disability on the *1991 Census of Population* long questionnaire;
- (5) the *1991 Health and Activity Limitation Survey (1991 HALS)* post-censal survey.

HALS collected data on:

- the nature and severity of disabilities;
- the barriers that persons with disabilities face in household tasks, employment, education, accommodation, transportation, finances, and recreation and lifestyles;
- the use of and need for assistive devices; and
- the out-of-pocket expenses related to disability.

Realizing that data needs change over time, Statistics Canada continues ongoing discussions with its data users.

A post-censal survey following the 2001 Census would be in keeping with the long-term strategy to generate comprehensive data on persons with disabilities in Canada and recently reinforced in the Report of the Federal Task Force on Disability Issues, released in 1996.

**S**urvey of Aboriginal Peoples. The development of the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) began in 1988 when Statistics Canada approached Canada's national Aboriginal organizations to ask for their participation in the survey and to help define what information should be collected in the APS. The response from the organizations was positive, and throughout 1990 extensive workshop consultations were held jointly with Statistics Canada and about 500 representatives from national and provincial Aboriginal organizations and government departments across the country.

Representatives from the Assembly of First Nations, the Native Council of Canada, and the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, as well as representatives from the federal, provincial and territorial governments, and numerous research and service organizations actively participated in the content development of the APS. From these consultations, a list of topics was prepared which provided the content structure for the APS.

These content topics were translated into a questionnaire and this draft questionnaire was distributed to those who had participated in the consultation and discussion phase for their feedback. After several revisions, the questionnaire was field tested in April 1991 in various reserve and off-reserve, and urban and rural areas.

Feedback from the field tests, including comments from the interviewing staff, were incorporated into the final questionnaire. The survey interviews were conducted in the fall of 1991, following the 1991 Census. For both the census and the APS, First Nation, Inuit, and Métis persons participated in various aspects of the data collection phase.

The APS collected data on:

- identity;
- language and tradition;
- disability;
- health, lifestyle and social issues;
- mobility;
- schooling;
- work and related activities;
- expenditures and sources of income; and
- housing.

Budget restrictions prevented the repeat of the APS in 1996 Census. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recommended that this survey become a permanent feature of Statistics Canada's census data collection.

**O**ther possible content areas for a 2001 post-censal survey. Two other areas, in addition to the potential repeat of HALS and APS, to be considered for a 2001 post-censal survey include the processes of immigrant integration, and questions around place of work.

**C**ultural diversity. Current levels of immigration are higher than they have been for a number of decades. Annual immigration levels are now at about 200,000 per year.

Successful integration or adaptation of immigrants into Canadian society is a multi-dimensional process. It involves many aspects of adjusting to Canada, including the capacity to meet basic needs, the ability to communicate in at least one of Canada's official languages, participation in the labour market and economy as well as other factors. Moreover, immigrants arriving in Canada during the 1990s are entering Canada at a time of economic slowdown, high unemployment and re-structuring of the labour market.

Although Canada has always been a diverse nation, changing patterns of immigration since the 1960s have accelerated the rate of change in cultural diversity. A shift from European to non-European countries as the source of immigrants to Canada has led to increased diversity in ethnicity, religion and culture, particularly in the major urban centres. This increased diversity has an impact on virtually all sectors of community life, including for example, health care, education and the labour market.

The interest in cultural diversity is not restricted to immigrants. For example, the Canadian-born children of immigrant parents who arrived since the 1960s are now entering the labour force in increasing numbers and there is interest in the socio-economic status of these second generation Canadians.

Although the census currently provides data on the basic characteristics of immigrants and visible minorities, it does not provide in-depth information on issues related to health, education and the labour force mobility. Such information is collected for the population as a whole, from a wide variety of sample surveys, however sample sizes are generally too small to provide information for particular subpopulations such as immigrants. Furthermore, even if the objective was to survey a particular subpopulation group, there is often no efficient method for identifying an appropriate sample. A post-censal survey offers an approach for doing such a survey.

**P**lace of work. Place of work census data are a critical measurement of the evolution of the Canadian workplace. Combined with the mode of transportation question, these census data, once compiled, will produce new insight into commuting patterns and the growth of the work-at-home phenomenon. These questions are becoming an increasingly important data source to planners and policy-makers who need high quality regional and national statistics.

As corporations and governments in Canada continue to downsize, and information technology continues to redefine the concepts of work and workplace, both economic necessity and technological advances will likely contribute to an increase in the number of Canadians joining the work-at-home labour force in the coming years. If the number of people working at home continues its recent growth rate, the home will be the principal place of work for over 1.5 million Canadians by the year 2001. Whether these people are “teleworkers”, choosing to work part of their work week at home, or self-employed people working out of their home by necessity, it is important for planners to monitor and analyze this growing work-at-home phenomena to understand how it is redefining our concept of the workplace, and the economic impact it will have on urban development and transportation systems.

By using the census to identify the work-at-home population, a more detailed post-censal survey could then be used to gather the additional information which would be too complex and costly to ask in a census format, but is integral to better our understanding of this segment of the working population.

As for the commuting population -- those workers who live and work in two separate locations -- transportation planners are anxious to create a national transportation database to provide the statistics needed to make important policy decisions in the areas of energy use, environmental impacts and urban transportation sustainability. Although planners support the continued inclusion of journey-to-work questions on the census, these questions represent a significant response burden and coding responsibility to be of concern for Statistics Canada. One way of reducing this response burden, is by using a post-censal survey to collect this type of information from a sample of the population. To date, a number of questions have been identified by the planning community which could be asked in a post-censal survey, for example, number of vehicles available to a household, number of passengers in a vehicle, work trip start and end times, and age of the vehicle.

**Elderly.** During the 1991 Census consultations, the living and health conditions of the elderly, including those residing in long-term care institutions was suggested as a suitable post-censal survey topic. It may be worth reconsidering this topic for 2001.

**Regional economies.** A post-censal survey could be used to examine regional economic conditions. Such a survey might provide considerable in-depth information on population sub-groups experiencing relocation and change due to changes in regional economies, for example, the situation of fishing communities of Newfoundland.

**Other topics.** Additional topics may warrant consideration as subjects of a post-censal survey.