Canada's Aboriginal Population, 1981-1991: A Summary Report

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Historical Comparability of Aboriginal Terms in the 1981 Census and 1991 APS
 - 2.1 Using the Inter-censal Cohort Survival Method
- 3. Summary of the Major Findings on the Historical Comparabilty of 1981 Census and 1991 Aps Concepts
- 4. Socio-Economic Characteristics: A Ten Year Comparison
 - 4.1 Unemployment
 - 4.2 Labour Force Participation
 - 4.3 Individual Income
 - 4.4 Occupation and Industry
 - 4.5 Highest Level of Schooling Achieved

List of References

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Executive Summary

With the availability of the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), the present report attempted to demarcate subsamples of the 1991 population that were roughly comparable with those reporting Aboriginal origins in 1981. As the APS made available for the first time a question on Aboriginal self-identification -- it was the contention of the present report that this item allowed for the establishment of subsamples of the 1991 APS-based population roughly comparable with the 1981 Census numbers.

The first part of this report introduced definitions of ethnicity as relied upon in the 1981 and 1991 Censuses -- along with the self-identity concept in the 1991 APS. It also introduced several problems pertaining to data quality, including census undercoverage, non-response in the APS, incompletely enumerated Indian reserves, and the impact of Bill C-31 on the Aboriginal population. Bill C-31, a 1985 revision to the Indian Act, allowed for the reinstatement of persons who had previously lost their status -- typically involving women (and their offspring) who loss status through marriage to males without Indian status. Fortunately, the APS included an item which specifically allowed for the identification of Bill C-31 reinstatements.

The second section moved on to systematically consider whether reasonable time series are identifiable, with the Inuit, Métis, and North American Indian populations separately. With the latter, North American Indians were further subdivided according to whether they were status or non-status. In comparing the status and non-status populations over time, the present study attempted to establish time series independent of the impact of Bill C-31. In obtaining empirical evidence in this context, a limited number of demographic techniques were available. With information available on the mortality of Aboriginal peoples (by age), the current report relied upon one of the more common techniques employed in the evaluation of census data, i.e., intercensal cohort analysis.

Overall, the time series associated with the Inuit looked to be of highest quality, followed by the Métis and status Indian groups. After surviving the 1981 Inuit numbers through to 1991 (with the available survival rates), the estimated counts (by age cohort) were surprisingly close to the 1991 APS counts. The associated discrepancy was considered very low, particularly in light of the many potential sources of error known to be existent in the two data sources. With the Métis, this discrepancy was slightly larger, although still considered very small. In recognizing an even greater discrepancy with the status Indian group (about 12%), the effectiveness of our initial hypothesis began to be questioned somewhat, but given the variety of errors that could be affecting this population, the results looked fairly reasonable.

With the final Aboriginal group, i.e., North American Indian (non-status), our initial hypothesis most clearly fell apart. Data for the non-status Indian group suggests that a substantial number of persons in 1981 may not have identified as Aboriginal. With the advent of Bill C-31 (and other consciousness raising events, e.g. the Oka crisis, attempted constitutional reform and referendum), it appears that previously non-identifying Aboriginal people were far more likely to report that they were non-registered North American Indian in 1991 than 10 years earlier. This leaves the two data sets not strictly comparable over time.

The last section moves on to examine a series of selected census variables, including labour force participation, unemployment, individual income, occupation/industry, and highest level of schooling. Firstly, the unemployment rate appeared to have risen substantially for all Aboriginal groups. Secondly, the participation rate had concurrently risen, particularly for Aboriginal women.

Thirdly, average income appeared to have either declined or witnessed negligible gains. Fourthly, the proportional representation of Aboriginal persons in white collar occupation and industry fields (which may prove important in the establishment of Aboriginal self-government) has increased, albeit marginally. Fifthly, the education of Aboriginal persons had improved over this decade, although continuing to lag far behind that of Canada's non-Aboriginal population.

Systematic differences are documented across groups, as the status Indian group appeared to have fared particularly poorly. Similarly, the Inuit appear to experience considerable economic marginalization, with relatively high unemployment and a lower than typical participation rate.

direct record linkage across the two census dates -- an option which is impossible in the present context.

Accordingly, the technique of intercensal cohort analysis was used, where the counts of one census are, in effect, employed to evaluate the counts at a later point in time as obtained in this case by the 1991 APS. In other words, with relatively reliable information as to how these numbers might have changed over time, the actual 1991 APS counts are compared to expected counts as estimated on the basis of survival rates applied to the 1981 Census population. For present purposes, the Aboriginal population in Canada is treated as a closed population (with no immigration or emigration). Since this assumption appears to match reality reasonably well in the Canadian context, mortality can be thought of as the only factor which impinges upon the size of a cohort enumerated as of 1981.

Specifically, this study considered whether reasonable time series could be developed for the Inuit, Métis, and North American Indian populations separately. With the latter, North American Indians are further subdivided according to whether they are status or non-status Indian according to the Indian Act of Canada. In comparing the status and non-status populations over time, the study attempted to establish time series independent of the impact of Bill C-31. In obtaining empirical evidence in this context, a limited number of demographic techniques are available. With information available on the mortality of Aboriginal peoples (by age), this study relied upon one of the more common techniques employed in the evaluation of census data, i.e., intercensal cohort analysis.

2. HISTORICAL COMPARABILITY OF ABORIGINAL TERMS IN THE 1981 CENSUS AND 1991 APS

Overall, the establishment of a time series based upon ethnicity is very difficult, given what is often considered the "fluid or situational nature" of this concept. Some individuals might deny their ethnicity, others might have a passionate commitment to their ethnicity, while others still, might be somewhat passive or indifferent. In addition, it is suspected that factors other than demographic ones may be at work which explain the fluidity of the population counts over time, for example, changes in the wording or instructions to respondents in the census ethnic question.

More specifically, the **ethnicity item** in the Canadian Census has not remained constant over time — as the exact wording has been repeatedly revised over recent censuses. Nor has the manner in which persons respond to this item, as for example, attitudinal and legislative changes appear to have had their impact especially upon the response pattern of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Goldmann, 1993). Recent research in the U.S. has demonstrated that the propensity of Native peoples to report Aboriginal origins has shifted considerably over time, with the emergence of a new expression of Aboriginal identity (Eschbach,1993; Snipp,1986; Passel,1976). Accordingly, recent growth in the number of persons reporting Aboriginal origins has been much higher than expected on the basis of previous Canadian census counts and estimated rates of population growth.

In evaluating the historical comparability of data collected through the Canadian Census, it is recognized from the outset that the number of persons reporting Aboriginal origins was dramatically higher in 1991 than expected purely on the basis of previous census counts. More specifically, 1,002,675 persons reported Aboriginal origins, up from about 491,500 persons ten years earlier. Change in reporting ethnic classification in the Census and change in the propensity of Aboriginal peoples to report Aboriginal origins appear to explain a substantial portion of this growth. While the birth rate among Aboriginal Canadians has long been significantly higher than among Canadians in general, this alone is not nearly enough in explaining this substantial growth in numbers.

The APS is a post-censal survey which was conducted a few months following the 1991 National Census. In taking a sample of all those reporting Aboriginal origin(s) in the 1991 Census, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey makes available for the first time of an item on Aboriginal self-identification. This latter concept differs from the origin question in the 1991 Census. For example, an estimated 62% (or 625,720) of the 1,002,675 persons reporting at least some Aboriginal origins in the 1991 Census stated that they identified with their reported origins in the APS.

It is noteworthy that in the past, the 1981 population reporting Aboriginal origins has been referred to as almost a "core population", somewhat smaller than what might be theoretically possible by biological descent (Pyror,1984). This "core population", who without intensive prompting reported Aboriginal origins, was assumed to be more likely than others to identify with their Aboriginality. Similarly, the logic followed in the 1991 APS was that those reporting Aboriginal self-identification were in an analogous fashion, a subsample of this broader ancestry based group. Consequently, the present report continues to focus upon this narrower group.

The 1981 Census (see Figure 1) allowed for four broad categories of Aboriginal persons: (I) Inuit, (ii) Status or registered Indians, (iii) Non-status Indian, and (iv) Métis. Accordingly, ethnicity was actually combined with a legal classification - status / non-status - as defined by the Indian Act of Canada. Write-in responses from persons who did not specify one of these broad categories were also accepted (e.g., Cree, Micmac) and coded appropriately. Furthermore, rules of descent were not specified - as to whether origin be traced through the respondent's paternal or maternal ancestry, nor were multiple responses actively encouraged nor discouraged. Yet, while there was no specific statement encouraging multiple responses, this possibility was accepted as valid for the first time. More specifically, if a person indicated that he/she had more than one origin, both were captured in coding the information collected through the census.

The APS followed extensive consultations, held jointly with Statistics Canada and representatives from Aboriginal organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations, the Council of Aboriginal Peoples (formally the Native Council of Canada), the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, as well as representatives from numerous research and service organizations and the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

Figure 1: 1981 Census Ethnic Origin Question

26. To which ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestors belong on first coming to this continent? Native Peoples French English • Irish Inuit Status or registered Indian Scottish Non-Status Indian German Italian Ukrainian Dutch (Netherlands) Polish Jewish Chinese Other (specify):

By contrast, the ethnic question changed in 1986 and continued in 1991 to actively encourage respondents to report as many ethnic origins as applied, making historical comparisons with the ethnic question in 1981 problematic. Also, the 1981 question referred to the ethnic or cultural origins of "you and your ancestors", while the 1991 Census referred to those of "this person's ancestors" only.

From the 1991 Census a very large sample of individuals (approximately 180,000) was chosen to participate in the APS based on the criteria of having reported **Aboriginal origin**(s) and/or being registered under the Indian Act on their 1991 Census form. All sampled persons were subsequently asked in the APS questionnaire:



IDENTITY - Your Census Questionnaire indicated that you have some Aboriginal ancestors or that you are a registered Indian, as defined by the Indian Act of Canada. By Aboriginal, I mean North American Indian, Inuit or Métis.

A1. With which Aboriginal group do you identify?

- 1. North American Indian
- 2. Inuit
- 3. Métis
- 4. Another Aboriginal group specify ____
- 5. Don't identify with an Aboriginal group

1a. Are you a registered Indian, as defined by the Indian Act of Canada?

In moving from the 1991 Census to the APS, the manner in which Canada's Aboriginal population was distinguished changed from **origin** to **identity**. This combination of origin in the census and identity in APS was deemed similar enough in concept to the wording of the 1981 ethnic question referring to "you and your ancestors" to be worth testing for historical comparability. Furthermore, we had the empirical evidence that a significant proportion of those who reported Aboriginal origins in 1991 answered that they did not identify with an Aboriginal group in APS.

In comparing 1981 Census with 1991 APS data, North American Indians were further distinguished according to a statutory criterion -- that being -- their legal status as defined by the Indian Act of Canada.³ While at first glance, this might appear to be relatively straight forward, comparisons are complicated by the fact that the Indian Act was modified in 1985 with revisions introduced through Bill C-31. As a by-product, many persons who had lost their Indian status prior to Bill C-31 were subsequently permitted to reinstate -- typically involving women (and their offspring) who had lost Indian status through marriage with males who did not have Indian status (most of whom were non-Aboriginal). As a direct by-product of a legal intervention, the registered Indian population in 1991 was not formally equivalent to the status Indian population 10 years earlier, due to the substantial number of persons who regained Indian status since Bill C-31's introduction in 1985.

Fortunately, it was possible to identify those persons that had been reinstated via Bill C-31 (approximately 90,500), as the APS directly asked respondents whether they had been registered as status Indians under Bill C-31. Consequently, it is possible to identify that segment of Canada's registered Indian population in 1991 which would have been theoretically equivalent to the

For purposes of this study North American Indians who have status exclude those other Aboriginal peoples such as Metis who may ha

reg stere population in 1 n epen ent o t e mpact of Bill C-31). There ore, persons w o were registered Indians in 1981 can be compared with persons registered in 1991 (excluding all Bill C-31 reinstatements). In a parallel fashion, all non-status Indians in 1981 will be compared with all non-status in 1991 (including those who had previously been non-registered yet gained status through Bill C-31).

2.1 <u>Using the Inter-censal Cohort Survival Method</u>⁴

Theoretically, in a closed population (i.e. a population into and out of which there is no migration), the only manner in which the size might change is through either mortality or fertility. For specific age cohorts, the only manner in which the number of cohort members might change is introduced through mortality with reliable information on the risk of death permitting rather precise estimates as to a population's age profile at a later point in time. In examining the national numbers, the concept of a "closed population" appears to apply quite well to Aboriginal peoples (as levels of immigration and emigration are deemed quite low in this population). It directly follows from our initial hypothesis that the 1981 numbers with the origin item be in line with the 1991 numbers on identity, i.e. after accounting for the survivorship of the 1981 population. With estimates available on the mortality of Aboriginal peoples, this hypothesis is tested separately for the Inuit, Métis, status and non-status populations. 5

By applyling a set of survival ratios calculated for five year age groups for each of the Aboriginal groups to their respective 1981 population, the latter is survived to 1991 and then compared to the actual counts found for each group in the 1991 APS. If the survived population counts diverge substantially from the actual survey counts, the initial hypothesis which links 1981 origin and 1991 identity data should be immediately questioned. On the other hand, if the numbers are in line with expectations, the likelihood of misrepresentation is expected to be substantially lower. As will be demonstrated, the latter appears to be more so the case with selected Aboriginal groups (the Inuit and Métis) than among the other two (the status Indians and non-status Indians).

A more detailed discussion of the methodology appears in the full technical report of this study available from CMHC.

These mortality schedules were derived from research on the status Indian population of Canada. For practical purposes, it was estimated that the Inuit have a similar mortality schedule to the status population, while the Métis and non-registered populations are estimated as at about halfway between the mortality experience of registered Indians and that of the Canadian population in general. For further details, see: The Social Trends Analysis Directorate, Department of the Secretary of State, and Demography Division, Statistics Canada. **Projections of Canada's Aboriginal Population, 1986-2011.** Supply and Services. Cat. No.S2 232/2011E.

The numbers in this report will no necessarrily correspond to the published figures released by Statistics Canada. For example, it will be recalled that the communities that failed to participate in the 1991 Census or APS were excluded from the 1981 census counts in this study. Furthermore, all persons who reported more than one Aboriginal identity group (about 1%) for present purposes were re-allocated randomly back into one and only one

The number of non-reporting reserves in 1991 was up from the handful of reserves that were incompletely enumerated in 1981. Furthermore, an additional 181 Indian reserves and settlements were incompletely enumerated in the APS. In order to establish what are hypothetically comparable subsamples in 1981 and 1991, these reserves had to be identified and excluded from the comparisons to follow.

3. SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS ON THE HISTORICAL COMPARABILTY OF 1981 CENSUS AND 1991 APS CONCEPTS

After applying the survival rates by age and gender to each of the Aboriginal groups, overall, the time series associated with the Inuit appears to be of highest quality, followed by the Métis and status Indian groups.

a) The Inuit

Chart 3.1 compares 1981 and 1991 numbers with the Inuit, after surviving the 1981 counts to 1991 (on the assumption of constant mortality levels over this interval). Briefly, the number of Inuit males enumerated in 1981 that survived to 1991 was 12,090, only slightly higher than the 11,830 males aged 10 years or older according to the 1991 APS. This discrepancy between the expected and documented counts (the error of closure) is even smaller when considering Inuit females, at 11,790 and 11,980 respectively. This discrepancy is considered very low, particularly in light of the many potential sources of error known to be existent in the two data sources.

By Gender for Canada, 1991 14,000 12,090 11,980 11,830 11,790 12,000 10,000 8,000 6.000 4,000 2.000 Male **Female** 1981 Census (Survived to 1991) 1991 APS (Age 10+ years)

Chart 1: 1981 Inuit Population Survived to 1991 Compared to the 1991 APS Counts

b) <u>The Metis</u>

Chart 3.2 compares the 1981 and 1991 counts for the Métis, after surviving the 1981 data to 1991. Briefly, the error of closure appears slightly larger, for both the male and female populations. For example, 47,050 females and 45,115 males survived from the 1981 Census, relative to 45,515 females and 43,430 males in the 1991 APS (aged 10 years or older). For both sexes, the number estimated on the basis of the 1981 Census was slightly higher than the 1991 APS count -- suggesting that a greater number of Métis may have been missed in the 1991 post-censal survey relative to the 1981 Census. It is also possible that some persons who in 1981 reported themselves as Métis could have become eligible to gain Indian status based with Bill C-31 and thus began identifying as North American Indians in 1991. In general, the difference between the Metis estimate of the survived population is quite small (1.03%).

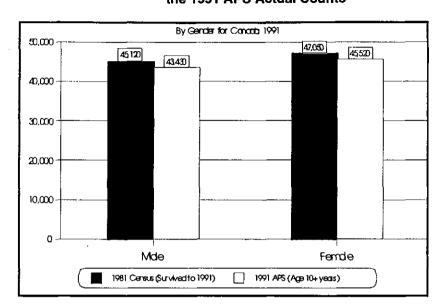


Chart 3.2: Metis Population Survived from 1981 to 1991 Compared to the 1991 APS Actual Counts

c) North American Indians (status)

Chart 3.3 moves on to compare 1981 and 1991 data on the registered Indian population in Canada. Again, 1981 numbers were survived through to 1991, assuming constant mortality over this 10 year period. As earlier indicated, it was necessary to control for the impact of Bill C-31 in this context, as a failure to do so would lead to a comparison of two populations which are not formally equivalent. Fortunately, it is possible to isolate those that had gained status through Bill C-31, as an item is specifically included in the APS which directly addresses this very issue.⁷

For both the male and female status populations, the discrepancy between the expected and actual counts is even larger than among the Métis. For example, 111,080 males are expected on the basis of the 1981 Census count, while the APS reported solely 97,800 (aged 10 years or older). Among females, 117,840 were expected on the basis of the 1981 Census, while only 104,335 were documented in the APS.

As Bill C-31 reinstatements are excluded, the numbers reported in the current study differ substantially from other Statistics Canada publications. For example, all 1991 Census releases on status Indians include these reinstatements, as there is no logical reason to exclude them. Furthermore, a limited number of respondents to the APS failed to report whether or not they were registered and/or were reinstated via Bill C-31. While the overall impact of these non-responses was rather small, the current study imputed these responses, a further difference from the figures reported in other publications.

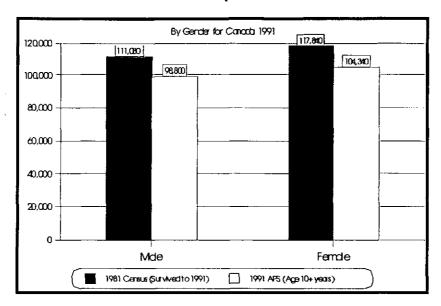


Chart 3.3: North American Indian Population (Status) Survived from 1981 to 1991 Compared to 1991 APS Counts

Thus, the estimated survived status Indian population was higher than the actual 1991 APS count by about 12 per cent.

It is highly unlikely that the 1981 counts overstated the true number of status Indians in Canada, as comparisons with INAC records have long suggested a consistent under enumeration. Alternatively, the mortality estimates relied upon in the present study might have understated the actual level experienced by this population, although this in itself can not explain all of the error. Other explanations include the possibility that the post-censal survey may have missed a substantial number of status Indians. On the other hand, it may also be possible that an unknown number of North American Indian respondents decided not to report their legal status when asked in the survey. Of crucial importance is whether or not those missed differed in a systematic manner from those who successfully responded, and if so, how might this influence the comparisons of their socio-economic conditions over time. Without evidence as to whether or not this was the case (i.e., as to the possible existence of selectivity bias), more caution than in the Métis case is advisable whenever attempting inferences as to the status Indian population in 1981 and 1991. Nevertheless, given the fluidity of the "status or registered Indian" concept over the 10 years, the collection problems, etc., a difference in the survived population count and the APS count of about 12% is not unreasonable.

d) North American Indians (non-status)

It is only with the final group, i.e., North American Indian (non-status), that formidable obstacles surface as to the establishment of a reasonable time series. In comparing persons of North American Indian origin (non-status) in 1981 with those of North American Indian identity (non-status) in 1991, our initial hypothesis most clearly falls apart. For example, Chart 3.4

suggests that there has been more than a doubling in the size of this non-status group when we compare the survived population of 70,455 in 1991 to the actual population in APS of 144,140.

It will be recalled that the Bill C-31 reinstatements have been reallocated back into this non-status group in order to examine the population change independent of this legislative action. In so doing, the underlying assumption was that prior to Bill C-31, those that had lost Indian status would have reported themselves as non-status Indian. The fact that no empirical evidence existed one way or another supportive of this premise possibly enters into the explanation as to why such a large error of closure was observed.

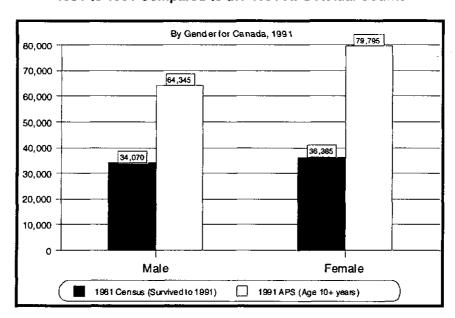


Chart 3.4: North American Indian (Non-Status) Population Survived from 1981 to 1991 Compared to the 1991 APS Actual Counts

While Bill C-31 reinstatements were included in the 1991 actual count of non-status Indians for the purposes of this study, it was not possible to determine how these same persons would have reported their origins/legal status in 1981. One explanation may be that many such persons did not report Aboriginal ethnicity in 1981, as they were denied legal status through the Indian Act. However, after 1985, Bill C-31, in and of itself, may have provided an incentive to report not only Aboriginal ancestry in subsequent censuses (i.e. in 1986 and 1991), but also to report Aboriginal identity in the 1991 APS. While it is not possible to determine whether or not this was the case, it is noteworthy that by 1991 over 85,000 persons aged 10 and over had regained Indian status through Bill C-31 over this period. Furthermore, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs had received 160,000 applications for re-instatement. Thus, if Bill C-31 has had an impact on the propensity to report one's Aboriginal identity, this moves a long way in explaining the discrepancies as observed in Chart 3.4.

Irrespective of this or any other explanation, the study rejects the initial hypothesis with respect to the non-status Indian group, i.e., the two data sources are not strictly comparable. Any comparisons involving this non-status category involve essentially two different subpopulations, with the data suggesting that many people likely did not identify as Aboriginal in 1981. Furthermore, other societal changes and events beyond those associated with the impact of

Bill C-31 may have contributed to the increased numbers reported in 1991, in encouraging identification with Aboriginal culture. For example, the so-called "Oka crisis" at the Mohawk communities of Kanestake and Kanawake in the summer of 1990, and the constitutional reform and referendum process in 1991 and 1992 may also have contributed to a raising of Aboriginal consciousness in a population which heretofore did not identify as Aboriginal.

In summary, while our 1981-91 comparisons with the Inuit, Métis and status groups appear reasonable, data corresponding to the non-status North American Indian group suggests a serious undercount in 1981. With a wide discrepancy between the actual and expected counts in this context, a time series cannot be established easily and some explanation is required. It appears from the data that non-status Indians were far more likely to report themselves as North American Indian without Indian status in 1991 than 10 years earlier, the two data sets for this group are not strictly comparable over time.

4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS: A TEN YEAR COMPARISON

As we have seen, the concepts of Aboriginality are deemed close enough for historical comparison with the exception of the non-status North American Indian population. Nevertheless, the following analysis does compare the four Aboriginal groups over the 1981- 1991 period. The reader will recall that the North American Indian status population in this study excludes the reinstated C-31 population who are included in the non-status population group. However, because it would appear that this latter group's actual population count in APS is double what was expected by surviving the 1981 non-status Indian population to 1991, we will also present some selected socio-economic characteristics for the the C-31 status population separately from the non-C-31 non-status population. Characteristics such as the unemplyment rate, labour force participation rate, income, occupation and industry distributions and highest level of education are presented. Comparisons to the non-Aboriginal population will also be made.

4.1 Unemployment Rates

There are many conceptual problems that surface in applying standard definitions developed by Statistics Canada to the study of Aboriginal peoples. For example, definitions of labour force activity and unemployment have been initially developed in a context of a well-developed labour market, and are often difficult to apply in some of the more remote areas of the country. For example, many Aboriginal peoples directly consume what they produce (in hunting, trapping and fishing activities) independent of the formal economy -- a fact not easily captured in the interpretation of official statistics.⁸

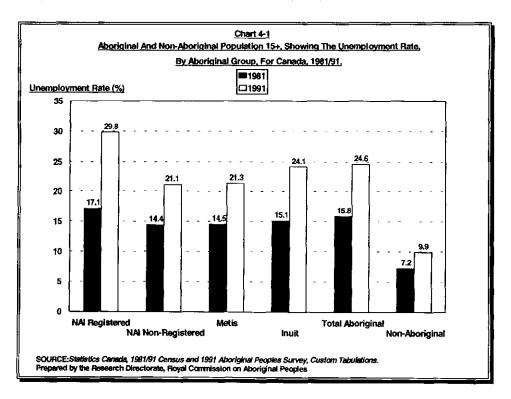
The isolation of many Aboriginal communities often makes the application of Statistics Canada concepts difficult, both technically and substantively. For example, life within an isolated community

It should be noted that the 1991 APS questionnaire did attempt to capture the more traditional Aboriginal work activity. However, since the present analysis is using 1981 Census data in its comparison, the 1991 Census variable on labour force activity is used. This variable is resident on the 1991 APS data base.

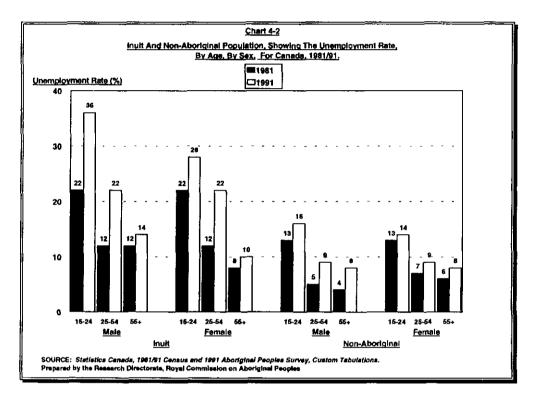
mg t d scourage t e active job search, a fact t at ea s many Aboriginal persons to be c ass fied as not in the labour force (as defined by Statistics Canada). If hypothetically, a person was not presently seeking paid employment but subsidizing the family's material well-being through trapping or hunting activities (for personal consumption), this economic activity might be completely missed (classified as neither employed, in the labour force, or for that matter, unemployed). With this in mind, the present study makes some rather cautious inferences as to change in the employment and labour force patterns of Aboriginal peoples, in appreciating the fact that not all economic activities are captured via the statistics available.

The 1991 unemployment rate among the total Aboriginal identity population 15 years of age or greater has increased by 56% since 1981 (from 15.8% to 24.6%), whereas the increase among the non-Aboriginal population during the same time period was 36% (from 7.2% to 9.9%) (Chart 4-1). During those ten years, therefore, the Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal gap in unemployment rate grew from 8.6 to 14.7 percentage points - an increase of 71% in the gap.

As indicated previously, the data on the Inuit appears to lend itself reasonably well to comparisons over the 1981-1991 period. With the availability of what appears to be a reliable time series, the question is asked, as to how the Inuit have fared over time in terms of their unemployment rate. Chart 4-2 attempts to do just that, in not only documenting the unemployment rate of the Inuit over time, but also relative to Canada's population as a whole (or more specifically, Canada's non-Aboriginal population). For comparative purposes, the relative well-being of Canada's non-Aboriginal population will be included in all of the charts to follow. It might be noted that none of the census or APS figures presented in the current report have been seasonally adjusted.



Consistent with what is well known about the Canadian population as a whole, unemployment was higher in 1991 than in 1981. Yet with the Inuit, the available statistics suggest that this was even more so the case than with the non-Aboriginal population. For example, the unemployment rate among Inuit males aged 15-24 increased from about 22% in 1981 to fully 36% by 1991, while with the non-Aboriginal population, this rate increased from about 13% to 16%. Among females aged 15-24, the unemployment rate rose from about 22% to 28%, while among the non-Aboriginal female population, this rate increased only slightly from 13% to 14%.



Among the Inuit aged 25-54, the unemployment rate also rose substantially equally among men and women — from about 12% in 1981 to about 22% in 1991. This was considerably greater than for the non-Aboriginal population as a whole, which increased from 5% to 9% among males and 7% to 9% among females. It was with the 55+ age group that the unemployment rate rose at a rate comparable with the non-Aboriginal population, from 11% to 14% among Inuit men and 8% to 10% among Inuit women.

Chart 4-3 presents unemployment figures pertaining to the Métis over this same period. The unemployment rate appears to have risen across all age/gender groups. For example, among young Métis males aged 15-24, the unemployment rate was about 14% in 1981 and 31% in 1991. Among females of the same age category, the unemployment rate rose substantially, from about 15% to 25%. Overall, this rise in unemployment as witnessed by the Métis and Inuit outpace the climb in unemployment as associated with the non-Aboriginal population. One figure which is particularly discerning is the dramatic climb in the unemployment rate among Métis males aged 55+ (from only about 7% in 1981 to an estimated 25% by 1991).

Briefly, this climb in unemployment among the Métis appears to have proceeded at an even more rapid pace than among the Inuit. While overall the Inuit appear to experience higher levels of unemployment, the Métis seem to be rapidly catching up to them in this regard.

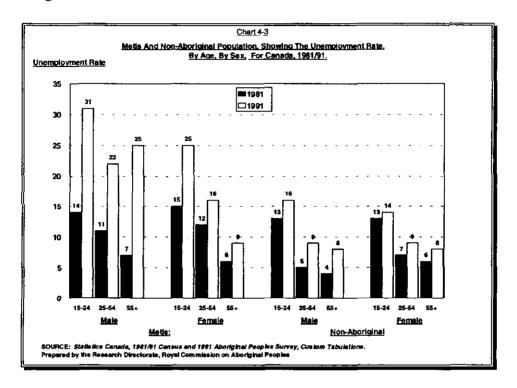
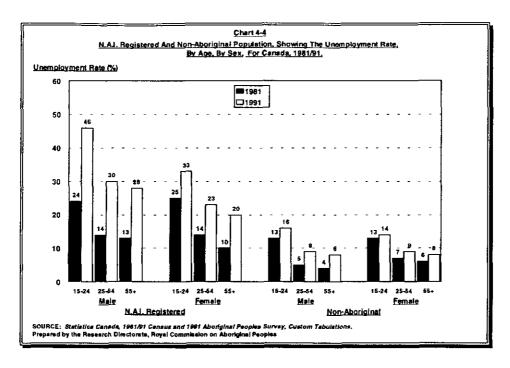
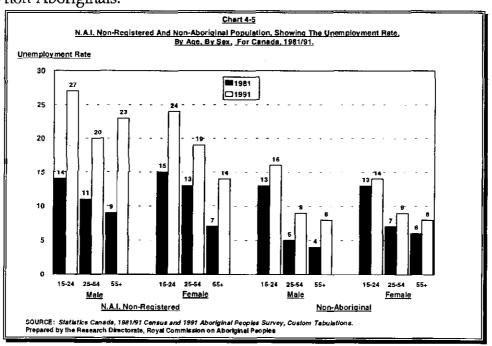


Chart 4-4 moves on to examine the extent of unemployment as documented with the third major Aboriginal group, i.e., North American Indian (status). If for present purposes, we accept our initial hypothesis as to the comparability of 1981 and 1991 data for this group, then the status Indian group has also experienced a substantial climb in unemployment, rising to a level that was higher than among either the Inuit or Métis.

For example, young status males aged 15-24 years witnessed an increase of unemployment from 23% in 1981 to fully 46% in 1991, while their female counterparts experienced an increase from about 25% to 33%. By all accounts, this data suggests an unemployment rate rising to a high level. Without exception, the level of unemployment appears to be substantially higher in 1991 than 10 years earlier. For the status group, as was the case for the Inuit and Métis, the level of economic marginalization appears to have risen substantially over this interval, especially in the oldest and youngest age groups.



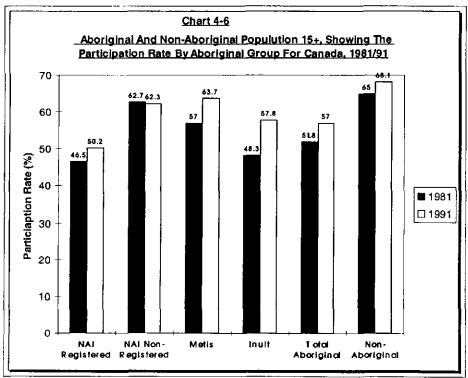
Briefly, it is worth at least considering the non-status group in the present context, irrespective of what appears to be a serious problem in establishing a reliable time series (Chart 4-5). The limited data as available also suggests a substantial climb in unemployment across age/gender groups. The fact that this trend is consistent with observations associated with more reliable time series tends to lend some credence to this inference, as to a substantial climb in the proportion of unemployed Aboriginal peoples relative to non-Aboriginals.



In data not shown here, the C-31 population (i.e., those persons who regained status since 1985 and for whom for comparison purposes we allocated back into the 1981 non-status Indian population), had an unemployment rate of 22.2%. In contrast, those non-status Indians who never applied for C-31 status had an unemployment rate of only 16.2%, which is closer to that of the non-Aboriginal rate (9.9%) than the total Aboriginal rate of 24.6%.

4.2 Labour Force Participation

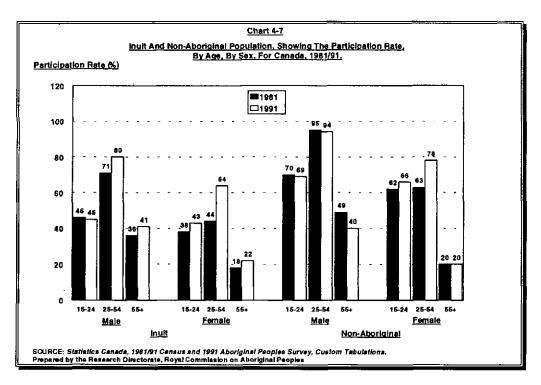
While unemployment among Aboriginal peoples has apparently risen, it is of interest as to whether the participation rate has also shifted over this same interval. If so, the question might be asked, as to how this differs by Aboriginal group, and how this might differ from Canadian society in general. The participation rate — in the broadest sense — is the total labour force expressed as a percentage of the total population. Chart 4-6 summarizes the rate of participation by total and individual Aboriginal groups compared to the non-Aboriginal population, while Charts 4-7 through 4-10 present this information by Aboriginal group specifically controlling for age and sex in the subsequent comparisons.



Source: Statistics Canada, 9181/91 Census and 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Custom Tabulations

When selected data are provided on the C-31 and non-C-31 non-status populations, hereafter, they refer to those living off Indian reserves, as 85% and 98.5% respectively, reside in this type of location.

It is important to present these rates separately by age and sex, as the level of labour force involvement has long differed substantially by gender and stage of one's life cycle. Chart 4-7 demonstrates this fact, by presenting these rates separately by age and gender for the Inuit and non-Aboriginal populations. In focusing exclusively upon the non-Aboriginal population, this data verifies what has become widely known about the Canadian labour force over recent years, i.e., the labour force involvement of Canadian women has climbed, while among Canadian men, this participation rate has remained relatively stable — if not declined. As a matter of introduction, it is noted that this generalization is true for Canadian society in general, but not necessarily true for each Aboriginal group.

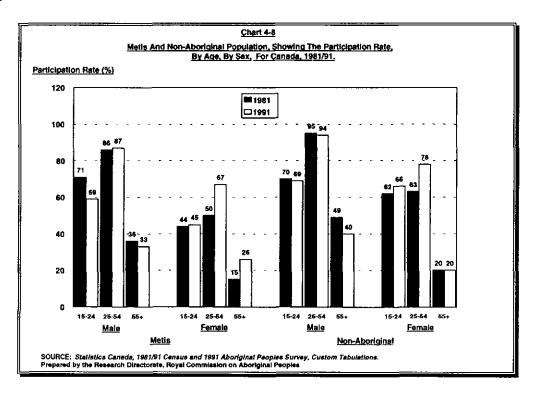


In taking a closer look at the labour force involvement of the Inuit, the extent to which their experience is distinct from other Canadians becomes obvious. Firstly, across age/gender categories, their participation rate appears to be relatively low, both in 1981 and 1991. Secondly, while the participation rate of non-Aboriginal men declined across all three age categories, the same can not be said of Inuit men. Quite to the contrary, the participation rate climbed to a significant extent among men aged 25-54 (from about 71% in 1981 to fully 80% by 1991), while also increasing somewhat for the 55+ age group (from 36% to 41%).

Among Inuit women, the participation rate also rose to a significant extent, although this development parallels somewhat what has been occurring in Canadian society in general. For example, among Inuit women aged 25-54 the participation rate increased from 44% to fully 64%, while among non-Aboriginal women, this participation rate increased from about 63% in 1981 to fully 78% in 1991. Similarly, the participation rate went up slightly for younger Inuit women aged 15-24 (from 38% to 43%), as it has among older

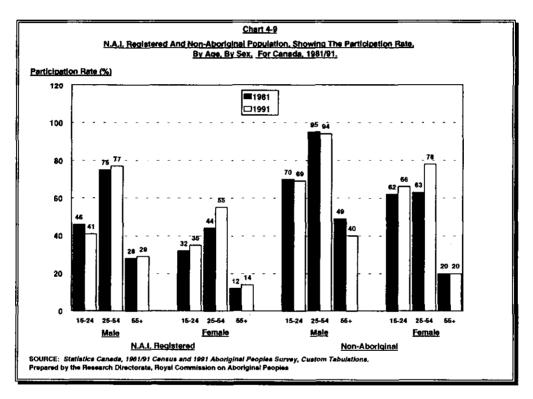
women 55+ (from 18% to 22%). This overall growth in the proportion o Inuit wit some sort of involvement in the labour force has unfortunately been complemented by the aforementioned growth in unemployment (true of both sexes). While the Inuit appear to be more likely to be classified as part of the labour force (as standardly defined), this does not necessarily mean that they have met success in establishing themselves in paid employment.

In a similar manner, the Métis have also witnessed a growth in their participation rate, while concurrently experiencing a climb in overall levels of unemployment. Yet as demonstrated in Chart 4-8, the recent experience of the Métis appears to more closely parallel that of Canadian society in general rather than that as experienced by the Inuit. More specifically, the participation rate remains significantly higher than among the Inuit, a characteristic that suggests a greater level of economic integration. For example, the participation rate of Métis men aged 25-54 was fully 87% in 1991, which falls near midway between the 94% associated with the non-Aboriginal population and the 80% as recorded among the Inuit.

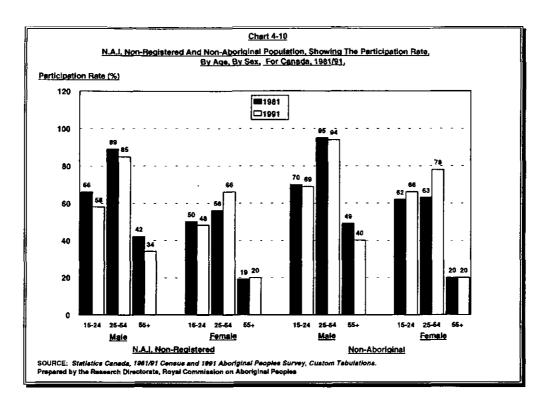


Again, Métis women experienced a significant growth in labour force participation, a fact that appears true across Aboriginal groups. Yet as with the non-Aboriginal population, the Métis population did not report a growth in their male participation rate over this interval, but alternatively experienced negligible change or a slight decline. For example, among young Métis men aged 15-24, the participation rate fell marginally from 60% in 1981 to only 58% in 1991. In comparing the 1981 and 1991 populations, this drop in labour force participation along with aforementioned climb in unemployment does not fare well for young Métis men.

Chart 4-9 presents the same data with the North American Indian status group. While recent changes experienced by the Métis appear to parallel somewhat what is going on with the non-Aboriginal population, this certainly does not appear to be the case with this status group. If anything, the data as available suggests even lower levels of economic integration, as status Indians appear to have even lower rates of labour force participation than was the case with the Inuit. Similarly, the participation rate went up across age/gender categories, with the exception of the young aged 15-24. In accepting the validity behind our initial hypothesis — as to a reasonably reliable time series — a higher level of labour force participation appears to complement the aforementioned trend toward greater unemployment. This appears to be true across age/gender categories, with the exception of young men who are only beginning to establish themselves in the labour force.



As was demonstrated previously, the data pertaining to North American Indians (non-status) does not appear to lend itself very well to comparisons over time. Briefly, Chart 4-10 presents the corresponding participation rates, while recognizing the prospective problems with this data. If anything, the data suggests a higher level of economic integration (relative to the other Aboriginal groups), and a pattern that mirrors the experience of the non-Aboriginal population. This appears to be even more true of the non-C-31 non-status Indian population, whose participation rate was almost the equivalent to that of the non-Aboriginal population (67.1% versus 68.0%). By contrast, the C-31 Indian population at 60.2%, was about halfway between that of the status Indian population (55.2%) and that of the non-status population.



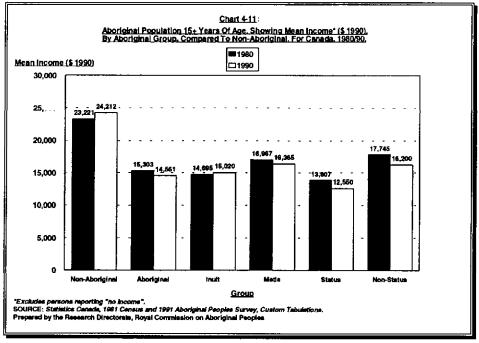
4.3 Individual Income

Briefly, Charts 4-11 through 4-16 present limited information on the income of Aboriginal peoples over the two census years. In collecting information on the total income of all Canadians (including wages and salaries, government transfer payments, income from self-employment, etc.) individuals were asked to report their income for the full calender year proceeding each census date, i.e. for 1980 and 1990 respectively. Chart 4-11 summarizes the situation via mean income (in constant 1990 dollars) for each Aboriginal population, while Charts 4-13 through 4-16 present the distribution of persons across 5 broad income classes. In all the data presented, individuals were excluded if they reported no income in the respective reference periods. Furthermore, for comparative purposes, each chart also includes data on non-Aboriginal Canadians.

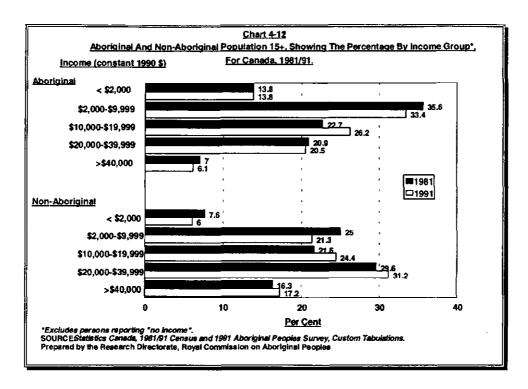
The mean income of Aboriginal peoples is substantially lower than among other Canadians (a fact that becomes obvious in inspecting Chart 4-11). Average income appears particularly low for the status and Inuit populations, while the Métis and non-status population also experience somewhat less hardship. For example, across all Aboriginal groups, mean income was at least a third below that of the non-Aboriginal population in 1990. In taking a closer look at this data, it would appear that this difference only increased in comparing 1980 with 1990.

Correspondingly, while the non-Aboriginal population experienced a modest increase in income over recent years, only the Inuit experienced some income growth (albeit slight). The observation that the Métis, status and non-status groups, all appear to have experienced a decline in average income is perhaps in line with expectations — given what has already been documented in terms of labour force involvement and

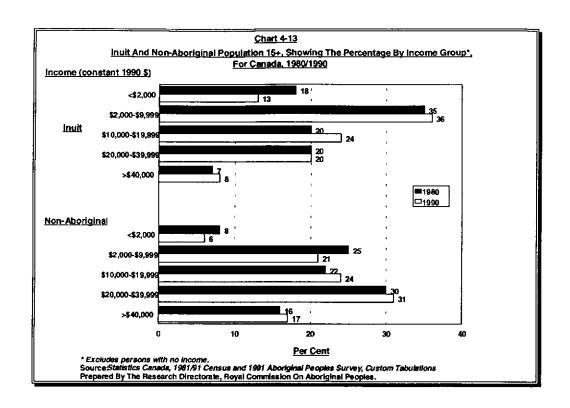
unemployment. Overall, these findings suggest that Aboriginal Canadians are experiencing a lower level of economic well-being in 1990 than was the case 10 years earlier. Although, once again, the non-C-31 non-status Indian population has a higher average total income in 1990 than their C-31 Indian counterparts (\$18,471 versus \$14,078). The latter group's average income is probably lower because three out of five are female, while the former group is only slightly female dominant.

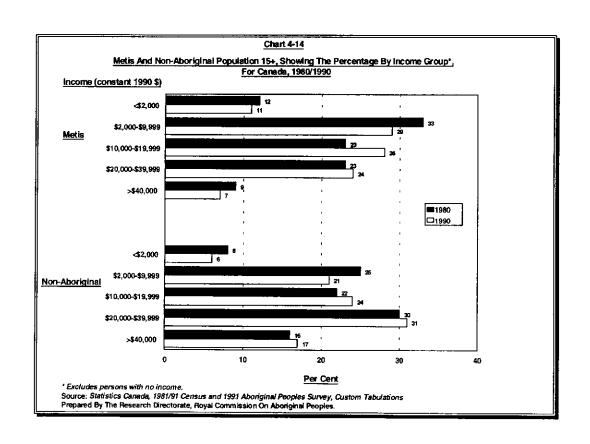


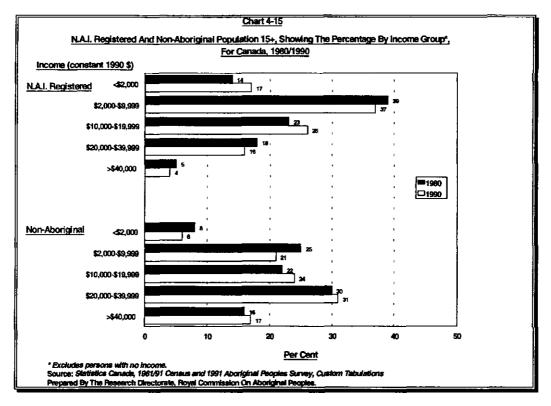
After subdividing all populations into five distinct income classes, it is noteworthy that the income distribution of each Aboriginal population is somewhat distinct, with change far from uniform across populations. More specifically, individuals were categorized according to the following five categories: (1) less than \$2,000 dollars, (2) \$2,000 to \$9,999, (3) \$10,000 to \$19,999, (4) 20,000 to \$39,999, (5) greater than \$39,999. As demonstrated with Canada's non-Aboriginal population, the relative number of non-Aboriginals falling into the two lowest income categories was lower in 1990 than in 1980, while the relative number across the three remaining categories actually rose somewhat.

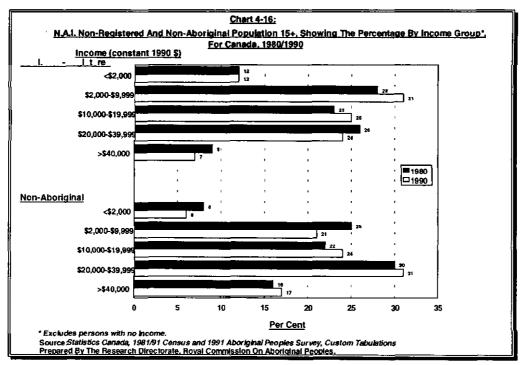


In Chart 4-12 we see that among the total Aboriginal population the proportion in the \$2,000-\$9,999 class decreased between 1981 and 1991, as it did marginally in the upper two income classes. The only income class which saw an increase in the ten years was the \$10,000-\$19,999, from 22.7% to 26.2%. While the Inuit (Chart 4-13) and Métis (Chart 4-14) experienced somewhat analogous changes, the Inuit differed in terms the second lowest category (which increased somewhat) and the Métis differed in terms of the highest income category (which was actually smaller in 1990). With the status population (Chart 4-15), the two highest income categories actually shrank in relative size while the lowest income class correspondingly grew larger. With the non-status data (Chart 4-16), again the highest income categories shrank in relative size, with little improvement witnessed at the lower end of the income spectrum.









4.4 Occupation and Industry

In Tables 4-1 and 4-2 we discuss the proportional representation of Aboriginal peoples over the 1981 to 1991 period in various occupations and industries relative to the non-Aboriginal population. We will highlight those areas which constitute loci of knowledge and experience which may become important elements in the formation of sustainable Aboriginal self-governments.

In 1981, Aboriginal persons 15 years of age and over in the experienced labour force were most represented in three occupations; 1) services, 2) clerical, and 3) construction. Ten years later, in the same order of magnitude, these same occupational groups still represented the three largest proportions of the Aboriginal labour force. This was true across Aboriginal groups with the exception of the non-registered North American Indian among which the clerical occupations went from second largest in 1981 to largest in 1991. The clerical occupations also gained importance among the Inuit becoming of equal proportional weight as that of service occupations in 1991. Among the non-Aboriginal population, clerical and service occupations also had the two largest proportions, however management/administration occupations were the third largest.

Generally, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations have the same patterns of temporal change in occupational distribution. Because shifts in the Canadian economy affect the labour force as a whole, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations have had comparable increases and decreases in representation. The only occupations in which asymetrical trends occurred were; 1) the natural sciences/engineering/math, in which the Aboriginal proportion remained the same but the non-Aboriginal one increased; 2) clerical, in which the Aboriginal proportion increased and the non-Aboriginal one decreased, and; 3) construction, in which the Aboriginal proportion remained the same but the non-Aboriginal one decreased.

Positive, although somewhat marginal, changes occurred in the occupations of interest for Aboriginal self-government. Aboriginal representation in managerial and administrative occupations had increased by two percentage points, compared to that of the non-Aboriginal population (3.3 percentage points). In teaching and social science fields the representation of the Aboriginal labour force increased proportionately more than did the non-Aboriginal one, subsequently reducing the Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal gap. In medicine and health occupations, the Aboriginal labour force representation increased but not as much as did that of the non-Aboriginal. In the clerical occupations, as indicated above, the Aboriginal proportion increased by 2.1 percentage points, while that of the non-Aboriginal decreased by 0.8 percentage points. These increases are evident for all four Aboriginal groups. On the other hand, there was no change during the reference decade for the Aboriginal labour force in the natural science, engineering, and mathematical occupations, while that of the non-Aboriginal increased.

Table 4.1: Aboriginal Identity Population 15+ in the Experienced Labour Force, Showing the Percentage by Occupation, by Aboriginal Group, Compared to the Non-Aboriginal Population 15+, For Canada, 1981 and 1991

OCCUPATION	N.A.I. <u>Registered</u>		N.A.I. <u>Non-Registered</u>		<u>Met</u>	Metis		<u>Inuit</u>		Total <u>Aboriginal</u>		Non- Aboriginal	
	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u> 1991</u>	
Mngm't/Admin.	5.6	8.1	4.5	6.8	4.8	6.5	5.8	6.8	5.2	7.2	9.0	12.3	
Nat. Sci /Eng./Math	1.5	1.2	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.0	1.4	1.0	1.7	1.7	3.4	4.1	
Social Science	4.1	6.0	1.9	3.5	2.5	3.7	1.8	2.8	3.1	4.4	1.6	2.2	
Religion	0.1		0.1		0.1		0.3		0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	
Teaching	3.8	4.3	2.8	3.0	2.5	3.0	5.5	6.0	3.3	3.7	4.2	4.4	
Medicine and Health	2.7	2.9	3.2	3.7	2.8	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.8	3.3	4.5	5.2	
Art and Literature	1.7	1.8	1.3	1.0	1.2	1.5	4.5	6.5	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.7	
Clerical	13.0	13.8	15.9	19.1	13.6	14.2	15.9	18.2	13.9	16.0	18.9	18.1	
Sales	4.2	3.3	6.3	7.2	4.9	5.6	4.2	2.6	4.8	5.2	9.0	9.3	
Service	16.4	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.6	19.2	16.8	18.2	16.9	17.9	12.0	12.7	
Farming and Related	3.6	2.6	2.5	2:5	3.1	3.3	0.7		3.1	2.6	4.1	3.4	
Fishing/Trapping	2.3	2.4	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.0	2.7	2.4	1.8	1.9	0.3	0.3	
Forestry and Logging	4.2	3.5	2.9	2.0	2.7	1.7	0.6		3.4	2.4	0.7	0.5	
Mining and Related	1.2	0.5	1.1	0.7	2.2	1.1	2.5		1.5	0.7	0.6	0.4	
Processing	5.3	3.0	5.2	2.8	4.2	3.6	3.6	1.1	4.9	3.0	4.1	2.9	
Machinery	2.3	1.2	3.0	2.1	2.7	1.6	0.8		2.5	1.5	2.7	1.9	
Production/Fabrication	5.6	3.4	7.6	5.4	6.6	3.8	5.8	3.7	6.3	4.2	8.1	6.3	
Construction	11.6	12.9	8.8	8.9	12.9	12.4	11.1	10.8	11.3	11.3	6.5	5.9	
Transportation/Equip.	4.0	4.0	5.5	3.7	5.1	3.9	6.4	8.1	4.7	4.1	4.0	3.6	
Material Handling	3.1	1.6	3.5	2.0	3.2	2.4	3.0	2.3	3.2	2.0	2.1	1.6	
Other Crafts	0.8	0.7	1.2	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.1	
Other Occupations	3.3	5.1	2.3	3.9	2.7	3.8	3.2	3.9	2.9	4.3	1.3	2.0	

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, 1981/91 Census, 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Custom Tabulations.

Table 4-2: Aboriginal Identity Population 15+ in the Experienced Labour Force, Showing the Percentage by Industry, by Aboriginal Group, Compared to the Non-Aboriginal Population 15+, For Canada, 1981 and 1991

INDUSTRY	N.A.I. Registered		N.A.I. <u>Non-Registered</u>		<u>Metis</u>		<u>Inuit</u>		Total <u>Aboriginal</u>		Non- Aboriginal	
	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>
Agricultural	3.2	1.9	2,1	1.9	2.5	2.5	0.6		2.6	2.0	4.1	3.7
Fishing/Trapping	1.9	2.1	1.0	1.3	1.4	2,2	2.6	2.5	1.6	1.9	0.3	0.3
Logging/Forestry	3.9	3.4	3.2	2.2	3.1	1,6	0.5		3.5	2.5	0.9	0.7
Mining and Related	2.6	1.3	2.8	1.4	4.7	3.4	7.0	1.7	3.4	1.8	1.8	1.3
Manufacturing	15.1	7.6	19.4	12.2	14.2	9.2	7.5	2.5	15.4	9.3	19.3	14.8
Construction	8.3	8.2	8.1	8.0	11.5	12.0	5.8	6.4	8.9	8.9	6.4	6.5
Transportation/Storage	4.3	3.8	6.0	4.3	6.6	5.1	4.2	4.3	5.2	4.3	4.8	4.4
Communications	2.0	1.7	2.2	2.7	2.7	3.2	4.2	6.0	2.4	2.6	3.3	3.4
Wholesale Trade	2.7	2.0	4.8	3.5	3.6	2.6	2.2	1.2	3.3	2.6	4.8	4.4
Retail Trade	7.3	6.6	9.7	12.1	9.1	9.3	11.8	12.1	8.5	9.5	12.1	12.9
Finance/Insurance	1.2	0.7	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.4	1.1		1.6	1.3	3.7	4.1
Real Estate	0.8	0.6	1.2	1.3	1.0	1.0	3.6	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.7	1.7
Business Services	2.1	1.8	2.7	4.2	2.8	3.5	1.9	1.5	2.6	3.0	4.2	5.7
Government Services	19.1	30.1	8.6	12.9	10.0	11.0	19.8	28.3	14.6	19.7	7.6	7.6
Educational Services	6.8	13.5	4.2	5.7	4.8	6.8	8.8	9.1	5.8	6.8	6.6	6.9
Health & Social Services	6.8	8.5	7.0	9.0	6.7	9.2	5.4	7.9	6.7	8.8	7.4	9.0
Accomodation/Food	7.1	7.0	9.5	8.4	8.8	9.9	4.8	7.0	7.9	8.1	5.7	6.3
Other Services	4.7	5.2	4.3	6.9	5.0	6.2	8.3	6.7	4.9	6.1	4.0	6.6

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, 1981/91 Census, 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Custom Tabulations.

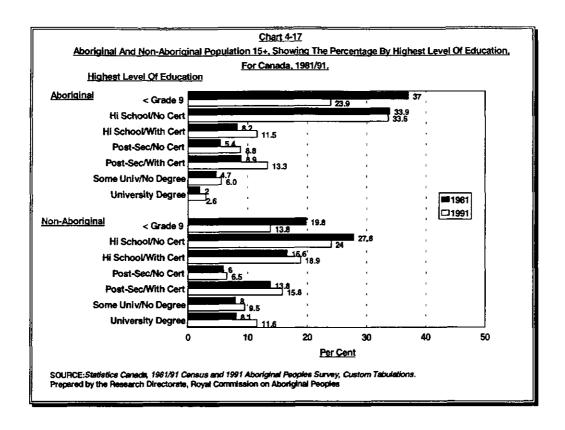
In terms of self-government-type industries, the Aboriginal labour force has done relatively well. The percentage involved in government service saw an increase from 15% to 20% over the 1981-91 period. In each of the educational, health, and social services, the Aboriginal labour force increased somewhere between one and two full percentage points. Other industries relevent to self-government, which witnessed increases in the share of the Aboriginal labour force, include communications and business services. On the economic development side, those engaged in retail trade, accommodation and food and fishing and trapping industries all increased over the decade. However, other key industry sectors indicated a decline in their share of Aboriginal labour force including those in agriculture, logging and forestry, mining and related, manufacturing, finance and insurance, and others — see Table 4.2.

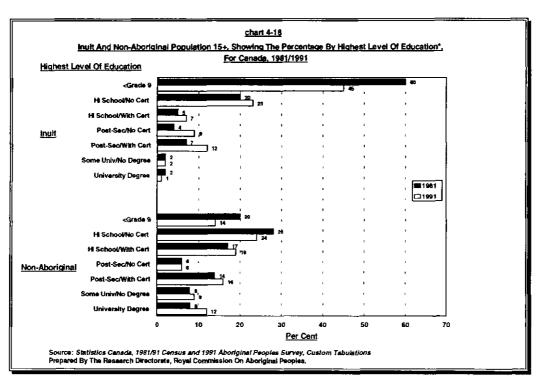
4.5 Highest Level of Schooling Attained

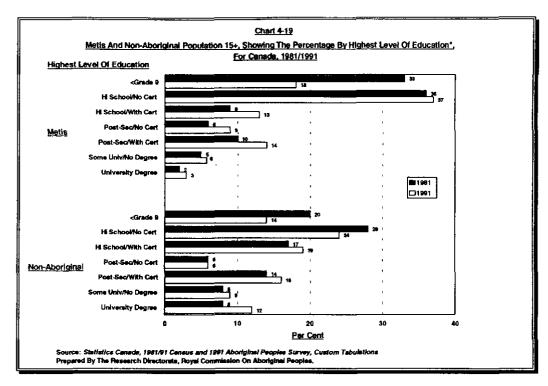
Briefly, Charts 4-17 through 4-21 present data on the highest level of schooling attained across Aboriginal groups (15+ years) — while Charts 4-22 and 4-23 present limited information for persons aged 15-24. Comparing the educational attainment of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations (Chart 4-17), we see that both have achieved larger proportions of high school completions, and post-secondary education over the ten year period, while reducing the the proportions with elementary and secondary schooling. Only among high school completions and non-university post-secondary were the Aboriginal rates of change greater than that of the non-Aboriginal population. At the university degree level, the Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal gap remained about the same, namely, there was an approximate fourfold gap at the beginning and end of the ten year period.

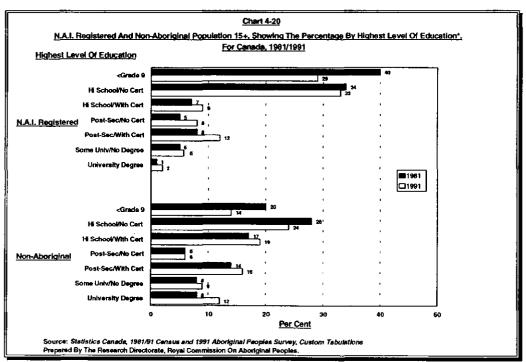
Again, the experience of each Aboriginal population was somewhat distinct in this regard, at least relative to Canada's non-Aboriginal population. Overall, across Aboriginal groups, the proportion at lower educational levels was relatively high — irrespective of the fact that this proportion had declined since 1981.

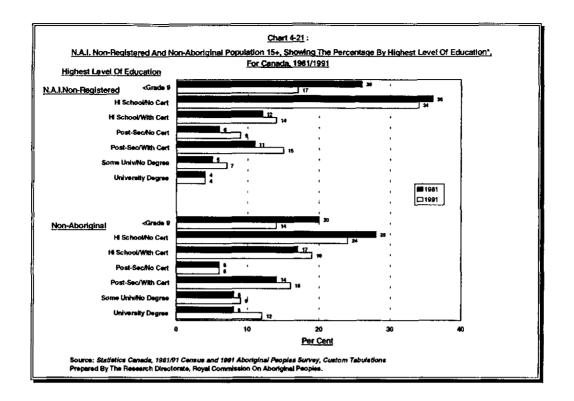
Across all four populations, it is relatively safe to infer that Aboriginal persons continue to lag behind in terms of the completion of high school and post-secondary enrolment. The relative educational levels are consistent with the data presented thus far in the report, with the Inuit and status Indian groups continuing to fare rather poorly in this regard. Chart 4-22 further demonstrates this fact by focusing upon the percentage of persons aged 15-24 years who report less than high school, while Chart 4-23 does the same for those who report at least some post-secondary involvement. In brief, there are reasons for being both optimistic and pessimistic in reading this data. In obtaining reasons for optimism, substantial gains are witnessed across all Aboriginal groups. In obtaining reasons for pessimism, there is little improvement in their relative position, as gains have been experienced by all Canadians. More specifically, Chart 4-23 suggests that Aboriginal persons are possibly even further behind, at least in terms of achieving some post-secondary enrolment. At the very least, Aboriginal groups do not appear to be catching up.

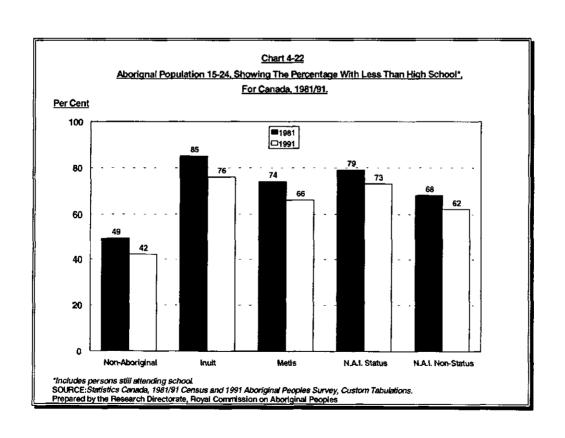


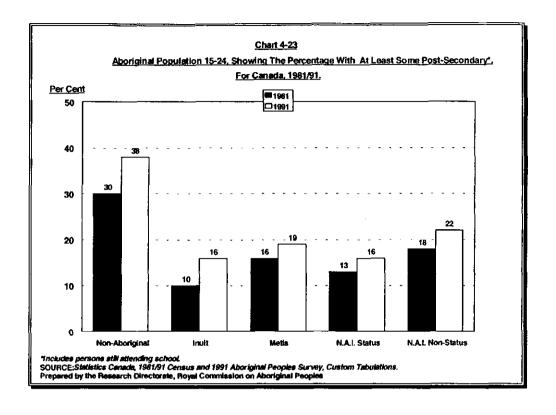












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