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Robert M. Bone

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Inuit Research Comes to the Fore

Robert M. Bone

Introduction

In the post-Inuit-land-claim world, four political regions emerged. These are Nunavik (1975), the Inuvialuit Settlement Area (1984), Nunavut (1999), and Nunatsiavut (2005). In April 2005, the federal government formed the Inuit Relations Secretariat (IRS) to provide Inuit organizations with a “window” into Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). In turn, IRS, as a unit with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, was responsible for providing information on the Inuit population to senior officials in INAC. Such information was normally organized by the four land claim regions because each region had its own particular circumstances. For example, IRS prepared its education, health, and housing decks for the First Ministers Meeting in Kelowna (November 2005) by the four land claim regions. While utilizing a wide range of information, IRS relied heavily on the 2001 census. Unfortunately, the geographic organization of the 2001 census does not match the boundaries of three of the four land claim regions. Nunavut, being a territory, forms one of the Census regions, but, even in this case, Statistics Canada does not present the data by Inuit identity population. Instead, the census data by subject matter, such as education or housing, is organized by total population, and by Aboriginal identity population.

Purpose of this Paper

IRS recognized that the misalignment of the 2001 census for three of the four land claim regions needed to be correct in order for IRS to provide more precise and geographically correct census data in its briefing reports for INAC policy-makers. Custom tabulations from Statistics Canada were designed to provide census data by (1) Inuit Identity Population, (2) Canada and the four land claim regions, and (3) those residing outside of the four land claim regions. These three elements comprise the core of the Inuit Database which is being created from these custom tabulations of the 2001 Census. Census subject matter for the Inuit Database was selected on the basis of the mandate of IRS. Subject matter includes population counts, age and sex, language, education, income, labour force, occupation, industry, housing and dwelling conditions by total population, Aboriginal population, Inuit population by ancestry, and Inuit population by identity.

In this paper, the power of the Inuit Database is demonstrated by 12 tables. Ten tables present Inuit Identity population by population size, age, and sex for

Table 10.1: Inuit Identity Population by Regions

Region	Population	Percent
Nunatsiavut	2,345	5.2
Inuvialuit Settlement Area	2,975	6.6
Nunavik	8,705	19.3
Nunavut	22,560	50.1
Total in land claim regions	36,585	81.2
Total outside of land claim regions	8,485	18.8
Canada	45,070	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS.

Table 10.2: Inuit Identity Population Outside of Land Claim Regions

Urban Population	Population	Percent
Census Metropolitan Areas	3,300	38.9
Other urban centres	5,185	61.1
Total outside of land claim regions	8,485	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS.

the five Inuit regions, while two tables focus on urban Inuit population. A 1996 custom tabulation permits a comparison between selected urban centres from 1996 to 2001.

Initial Results by Inuit Identity Population

1. Population Size

Population counts by Inuit identity were completed by November 2005. **Table 10.1** represents a basic summary of population by regions. The total number of Inuit recorded in the 2001 Census was 45,070. Regional variations existed with Nunatsiavut having the smallest number of Inuit at 2,345 (5.2%) and Nunavut having the largest number at 22,560 (50.1%). The total number of Inuit residing within the four land claim regions was 36,585 or 81.2%. The Inuit population residing outside of the four land claim regions totaled 8,485 or 18.8%. In examining those living outside of the land claim regions, just over 60% (5,185) resided in smaller urban centres such as Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Yellowknife while the remaining 39% (3,300) lived in large cities known as Census Metropolitan Areas (**Table 10.2**).

2. Age and Sex: Basic Comments

Age and sex are the most basic characteristics of a population. Every population has a different age and sex composition—the number or proportion of males and females in each age group. The age/sex structure of a population has implications for its economy and society. Such implications are revealed by examining three

Table 10.3: Inuit Identity Population by Age and Sex

Age Cohorts	Population	Percent	Male %	Female %
0-14	17,460	38.8	51.0	49.0
15-64	26,200	58.1	49.2	50.8
65 & over	1,410	3.1	54.6	45.4
Canada	45,070	100.0	50.1	49.9

Source: Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS

Table 10.4: Comparison of Inuit and Canada's Population by Age

Age Cohorts	Inuit Percent	Canada Percent
0-14	38.8	19.4
15-64	58.1	68.4
65 & over	3.1	12.2
Canada	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS

classic age groups (cohorts). The three cohorts contain the age groups 0 to 14; 15 to 64; and 65 and over. This traditional arrangement of age cohorts means that those between the ages of 15 and 64 represents the potential labour force, which is sometimes referred to as the productive age group. The other two age cohorts (those under 15 years of age and over 65 years of age) are considered “dependent” or non-productive members of society because they are either in the education system or retired.

The number of males and females is normally balanced. At birth, the ratio of males to females is higher because more males than females are born. After birth, the proportion of males to females varies because of different patterns of mortality (young males tend to die more often than young females, and the life span of females is longer than males) and migration (females tend to move more readily than males).

3. Age and Sex of the Inuit Population

The age and sex composition for the Inuit population in Canada is shown in **Table 10.3**. The first observation is that the percentage of Inuit under the age of 15 is extremely high at 38.8%. For comparison purposes, the total population of Canada illustrates strikingly different percentages (**Table 10.4**). For example, the national population under the age of 15 is 19.1%. On the basis of this information, demographers would classify the Inuit population as “young” and the Canadian population as “old.” A young population is associated with a high fertility rate while an old population has a low fertility rate. Demographers would also note that such a large proportion of the population in one sector leaves fewer for the other two age categories. Not surprisingly then, the second observation is that a

Table 10.5: Nunatsiavut: Inuit by Age and Sex

Age Cohorts	Population	Percentage	Male %	Female %
0 -14	800	34.1	48.8	51.2
15-64	1,430	61.0	52.8	47.2
65 & over	115	4.9	56.5	43.5
Nunatsiavut	2,345	100.0	51.4	48.6

Source: Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS

Table 10.6: Inuvialuit Settlement Area: Inuit by Age and Sex

Age Cohorts	Population	Percentage	Male %	Female %
0 -14	1,010	34.0	50.5	49.5
15-64	1,820	61.2	49.7	50.3
65 & over	145	4.8	55.2	44.8
Inuvialuit	2,975	100.0	50.3	49.7

Source: Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS

Table 10.7: Nunavik: Inuit by Age and Sex

Age Cohorts	Population	Percentage	Male %	Female %
0 -14	3,645	41.9	51.3	48.7
15-64	4,790	55.0	50.5	49.5
65 & over	270	3.1	53.7	46.3
Nunavik	8,705	100.0	51.0	49.0

Source: Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS

relatively small proportion of Inuit fall within the so-called productive age group of 15 to 64 years of age. As **Table 10.4** indicates, 58.1% of the Inuit population falls within this category compared to 60% for all Canadians. Similarly, only 3.1% of the Inuit population is in the 65 years of age and older category compared to 12.9% for Canada.

4. Age and Sex by Regions

Overall, the five Inuit regions exhibit youthful populations. Yet there are regional differences. Two Inuit regions, Nunavik and Nunavut, have similar age characteristics compared to those for Nunatsiavut, Inuvialuit, and those living outside of the four land claim regions. For example both Nunavik and Nunavut have very high percentages of their population under the age of 15. As shown in **Table 10.5** and **10.6**, these figures are 41.9% and 41.4% respectively. In comparison, the figures for Nunatsiavut, Inuvialuit, and those living outside of the four land claim regions are much lower at 34.1%, 34%, and 31.5% respectively. Some Inuit residing outside of the four land claim regions are in large cities (Census Metropolitan Areas). These southern urban Inuit have the lowest proportion of their population under 15 years of age at 31.4% (**Table 10.10**).

Table 10.8: Nunavut: Inuit by Age and Sex

Age Cohorts	Population	Percentage	Male %	Female %
0 -14	9,345	41.4	51.3	48.7
15-64	12,595	55.8	49.8	50.2
65 & over	620	2.8	59.5	40.5
Nunavut	22,560	100.0	50.7	49.3

Source: Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS

Table 10.9: Inuit Residing Outside of Land Claim Regions by Age and Sex

Age Cohorts	Population	Percentage	Male %	Female %
0 -14	2,675	31.5	50.2	49.8
15-64	5,560	65.5	45.5	54.5
65 & over	250	3.0	44.0	56.0
Rest of Canada	8,485	100.0	46.9	53.1

Source: Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS

Table 10.10: Inuit Residing in Census Metropolitan Areas by Age and Sex

Age Cohorts	Population	Percentage	Male %	Female %
0 -14	1,035	31.4	53.1	46.9
15-64	2,220	67.3	42.8	57.2
65 & over	45	1.3	55.5	44.5
Census Metropolitan Areas	3,300	100.0	46.2	53.8

Source: Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS

All Inuit regions have much higher proportions of their population in this young age group compared to the national figure of 19.1%.

The four land claim regions all exhibit a higher percentage of males. In striking contrast, the Inuit population residing outside of the land claim region is predominantly female (**Table 10.9**). The likely explanation is a larger number of females than males moved from the land claim regions to towns and cities.

5. Urban Inuit Residing Outside of their Land Claim Regions

While census data on urban centres within the four land claim regions is readily available through a number of Statistics Canada products, including their website for Aboriginal Population Profiles, little is known about the size and distribution of Inuit in centres outside of the land claim regions. Yet, in 2001, almost 19% of Inuit (8,485) lived outside of the four land claim regions (**Table 10.11** – page 192). Nearly 40% (3,300) of these Inuit resided in Canada's largest cities, the Census Metropolitan Areas (Statistics Canada 2006). Even so, Dr. Michalowski and her associates (2005:23) reported that between 1996 and 2001, the Inuit migration rate was the lowest of the three Aboriginal peoples.

Table 10.11: Inuit Residing Outside of Land Claim Regions by Selected Urban Centres, 1996 and 2001

Major Inuit Urban Centres (with 100 or more Inuit in 2001)	1996	2001	% Change 1996 to 2001
Happy Valley-Goose Bay (CA)	1,225	1,100	(10.2)
Yellowknife (CA)	545	660	16.8
Edmonton (CMA)	205	465	126.8
Ottawa/Hull (CMA)	220	455	106.8
Montreal (CMA)	340	435	27.9
Toronto (CMA)	175	355	102.9
Vancouver (CMA)	110	260	136.4
St. John's (CMA)	135	210	55.5
North West River (CA)	195	195	0.0
Calgary (CMA)	185	195	5.4
Winnipeg (CMA)	120	185	54.1
Halifax (CMA)	75	165	126.7
Saskatoon (CMA)	85	120	41.2
Whitehorse (CA)	85	125	35.3
Wood Buffalo (CA) (Fort McMurray)	15	115	666.7
Hay River (CA)	65	105	61.5
Total in Major Inuit Centres	3,780	4,820	27.5
Total in Minor Centres*	3,520	3,665	4.1
Total Urban Inuit	7,300	8,485	16.2

*Defined as under 100 Inuit in 2001 Census

Sources: Statistics Canada. 2001 Aboriginal Population Profile. <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/Profil01ab/PlaceSearchForm1.cfm>; and Statistics Canada. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS

To address this issue, IRS requested custom tables on Inuit residing in Census Subdivisions (CSDs). From these custom tables, a more detailed breakdown of urban centres with larger Inuit populations (at least 100 Inuit) was produced (Table 10.12). In 2001, the largest number of Inuit outside of the four land claim regions lived in Happy Valley-Goose Bay (1,100) and Yellowknife (660) while 14 other urban centres had at least 100 Inuit recorded by Statistics Canada (Table 10.5). The 2001 Census also recorded Inuit residing in over 100 urban centres with populations under 100 Inuit. (Statistics Canada 2006). Of this group of urban centres, most had 10 or less Inuit by identity in their populations. Six cities, however, had between 40 and 60 Inuit. They are: Red Deer (60), Kitchener (55), London (55), Victoria (55), Kingston (40), and Kamloops (40) (Statistics Canada 2006).

Why have Inuit located in these centres? Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Northwest River have long attracted Inuit from Nunatsiavut. In fact, the Nunatsiavut government has located some of its offices in these two communities, thus providing employment opportunities. Further south, Edmonton, Ottawa/Hull, and Montreal had the largest number of Inuit (Table 10.12). No doubt, the north/south transportation links from these three metropolitan centres to the four land

Table 10.12: Inuit Residing in Selected Census Metropolitan Areas, 1996 and 2001

Selected Census Metropolitan Areas*	1996	2001	% Change 1996 to 2001
Edmonton	205	465	126.8
Ottawa/Hull	220	455	106.8
Montreal	340	435	27.9
Toronto	175	355	102.9
Vancouver	110	260	136.4
St. John's	135	210	55.5
Calgary	185	195	5.4
Winnipeg	120	185	54.1
Halifax	75	165	126.7
Saskatoon	85	120	41.2
Total	1,650	2,845	72.4

*CMAs with Inuit Populations 100 or more in the 2001 Census.

Sources: Statistics Canada. 2001 Aboriginal Population Profile. <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/Profil01ab/PlaceSearchForm1.cfm>; and Statistics Canada. Custom Table Prepared for INAC. Requested by IRS.

claim regions helps to account for the relatively large number of Inuit. Edmonton provides ready access to the Inuvialuit Settlement Area while Montreal and Ottawa/Hull services Nunavik, Nunavut, and Nunatsiavut.

As **Tables 10.11** and **10.12** indicate, the number of urban Inuit is rapidly growing. From 1996 to 2001, the Inuit identity population in Canada increased from 40,220 to 45,070 or by 12%, while those residing in urban centres outside of the land claim regions grew at the higher rate of 16.2%. The highest rates of increase from 1996 to 2001 took place in Fort McMurray (667%), Vancouver (136%), Edmonton (127%), Halifax (127%), and Ottawa/Hull (107%). Equally remarkable, the Inuit population in the leading ten Census Metropolitan Areas increased by 72.4% (**Table 10.12**). The proportion of urban Inuit to those residing in the four land claim regions is shifting in favour of the urban Inuit. In 1996, 18.1% of the Inuit population resided outside of the four land claim regions. By 2001, this percentage had increased to 18.8%. Again, the growing number of urban Inuit does not mean that the populations within the four land claim regions are diminishing. Quite the contrary—the population of these four regions are increasing, but at a slower rate for the period 1996 to 2001.

Conclusion

In the preparation of documents for senior INAC officials, the 2001 Census remains the key source of data. IRS recognized that the development of an Inuit Database compiled from the 2001 Census was required for IRS to provide more precise census data in its briefing reports. Three key elements comprise the Inuit Database. They are (1) realigning existing 2001 census boundaries to fit the four land claim regions, (2) presenting census data by Inuit identity population,

and (3) establishing a fifth Inuit region comprising those Inuit residing outside of the four land claim regions.

In this paper, the 12 tables illustrate the nature of the Inuit Database, and the text provides an elementary analysis. For ten tables, the census data is arranged by the five Inuit regions which reveal strong regional differences. Nunavut has the largest population of the five regions while Nunatsiavut has the smallest. In terms of age structure, close similarities are found between Nunavut and Nunavik, and between the Inuvialuit Settlement Area and Nunatsiavut. The age and gender structure of the Inuit population residing outside of the four land claim regions is different from the four land claim regions in two ways. First, the urban region has a larger percentage of its population in the so-called productive age category. Second, the urban region has a larger percentage of females than males. The last two tables (**Tables 10.11** and **10.12**) describe the number of Inuit residing in urban centres outside of the four land claim regions. These tables provide an insight into the differing rates of urban Inuit population increase from 1996 to 2001.

The 2001 Inuit Database is composed of census data by total population, Aboriginal identity population, and Inuit ancestry population. At this point in time, the subject matter consists of age and sex, language, and Inuit residing in urban centres. Statistics Canada is expected to make the remaining custom tabulations on education, income, labour force, occupation, industry, household, and dwellings available soon. At that time, basic tables on these subject matters will be prepared.

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