FORUM SECTION

The Future of Demography in Canada and the Role of the Canadian Population Society: The Perspective of an Academic

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Abstract

Originally an after-banquet presentation at the Canadian Population Society's 1992 annual meeting, this paper discusses dimensions of the recent financial pressures on Canadian academic research, and factors that make demographic research particularly vulnerable to these pressures. Tactics/strategies that can be attempted—by individuals and by the Canadian Population Society both in the short and in the long-term—to counteract and/or to cope with the problems facing academic demography at present and to build a stronger niche in academe are suggested.

Résumé

En substance, voici le discours de fin de banquet qui fut prononcé en 1992, lors de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société canadienne de la population. Il discute de l'ampleur des pressions budgétaires que subit la recherche universitaire canadienne et des facteurs qui rendent la recherche démographique particulièrement vulnérable à cette situation. Il suggère des tactiques et des stratégies qui pourraient être adoptées individuellement ou collectivement Ä par les chercheurs ou la Société canadienne de la population, à court et à long terme, dans le but de s'opposer ou de s'adapter aux problèmes que doit actuellement surmonter notre discipline et pour se tailler une place plus solide.

Key Words:

academic demography, Canadian Population Society,

financial pressures

I wish to begin by emphasizing that my comments are those of one demographer employed in academia in English-speaking Canada; I am not

suggesting that my perspective is representative of all academic demographers in Canada. My starting point is that academic work in all disciplines in Canada—including demography but not limited to it—is in a state of "crisis." The dimensions of the crisis facing academic endeavours are three-fold.

Firstly, the reductions in federal transfer payments for post-secondary education, through the EPF programme, have negative consequences for academic work. The cumulative loss to post-secondary education from 1986, when the cuts were first launched, to fiscal year 1992-93 totals 4.8 billion dollars. These reductions affect both teaching and research. They result in increased teaching loads which, apart from important pedagogical and quality of education issues, translate into less time for research. The EPF cuts affect research in another way as well-by reducing universities' ability to cover infrastructural costs associated with research, e.g., library resources, technical support staff.

Secondly, as part of the 1992 Federal budget, direct funding for research supported by the three granting councils will increase 4 percent per year for the next four years (i.e., 1992-96). At first glance, this appears reasonable; at least there are no cuts on the horizon. But, it is important to keep in mind that:

- (a) inflation is an unknown, and we have witnessed a doubling or even tripling of inflation rates over short time periods;
- (b) these increases do not offset the reductions in indirect research funding resulting from the EPF programme; and
- (c) a more equitable distribution of direct research funding is blocked; NSERC and MRC will continue to receive considerably more than (what was) SSHRCC.

The apparent bright light is not so bright. It got even dimmer in December 1992, when the Minister of Finance announced that the budgets for the research councils would not be increased after all; they would be frozen at 1992-93 levels particularly for the social sciences and humanities.

Thirdly, other changes include: the merger of SSHRCC and the Canada Council (the consequences of which remain unclear); the dissolution of a number of independent research institutes, many with important linkages via contract research with the universities; and, particularly close to home, the

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termination of the Review of Demography and its Social and Economic Implications.

Not coincidentally, the Smith Commission released its report earlier this year (i.e., in 1992). It legitimates the ongoing attack on academic research through its message that we do should be doing less of it—it takes away from good teaching—and that the private sector is the preferred venue for research. The important reciprocal relationship between teaching and research, a relationship that is hard to explain to "outsiders" under the best of circumstances, is getting further buried.

These forces influence all academic research in Canada. Is demography particularly vulnerable? I answer in the affirmative, because academicallybased demography in Canada as a whole has never really "made its mark." The statement is much less true in the case of Quebec. There, issues of nationhood have centred around a number of variables/topics that demographers study, e.g., fertility, migration, population composition. Thus, demography has had, and continues to have, a much higher profile in Quebec than in other parts of Canada. It is perhaps ironic that the path of Canadian demography has, in a sense, mirrored a number of demographic patterns and trends in the wider society. One is a small numerical base. We do not have a critical mass of persons working in the field, particularly not in academic settings. While it is difficult to pinpoint what exact, or even approximate number would make for a critical mass, it is easy to see we do not have it. A second factor is earlier out-migration. It is fun, although not very useful, to speculate on what academic Canadian demography would look like now if key figures such as Nathan Keyfitz and Norman Ryder had not migrated to the U.S. in the 1940s. This is not to discount the significant contributions to Canadian academic demography made, in later years, by the in-migration of U.S. born and trained demographers such as Warren Kalbach, Tom Burch and Monica Boyd, among others. An important third factor is ethnic-linguistic duality. There are two demographies in Canada, with very little exchange between them. Also, with two exceptions (the Universities of Alberta and Western Ontario), demographers in Englishspeaking Canada are geographically dispersed—one here and one there—which lessens our collective clout.

There are, of course, non-demographic factors related to our vulnerability; we, better than many, know the pitfalls of demographic determinism! First, most Canadian academic demographers "live" in sociology departments. Canadian sociology has always been qualitatively oriented, and is becoming increasingly so. Fighting for our legitimacy on the home front is not the best use of our energy. Second, we have an image problem within academia—we

are viewed as unimaginative "number crunchers." To illustrate with a personal example, I had a sociology colleague say to me, and not jokingly, "It's easy for you to get published. All you have to do is get some numbers together and describe them. It's thinking that takes time." Third, we have not been good marketers; on the whole, we have not shown people, both inside and outside of academic circles, that we do something valuable.

We will probably have to live with some of these factors. We certainly cannot change our history, and probably will not be able to fundamentally alter the dualism that exists within demography in the Canadian context. Likely, we will not have much influence over the path that sociology as a discipline takes.

But there are a number of things that we can do. First, there are things we can do as individuals. We can take the time to be interviewed by the media—this of course serves only a PR function, but is not trivial. In this regard, it is worth noting that the Population Association of America has recently established a Public Affairs Office. Second, we can spend more time nurturing students who appear to have potential. We are not likely to draw mid-career scholars into our fold; recruiting undergraduates and MA students is crucial. Most Deans of Graduate Studies have a special "pot of money" for recruitment purposes; we should not hesitate to make requests. Third, we can make efforts to team up with persons from other disciplines in research grant applications. This has a two-fold benefit: it opens the door to non-traditional funding sources; and joint work helps others understand what we do. Fourth, we can do more policy-relevant writing and publish in visible places. This is not a matter of changing our research in fundamental ways; rather, it involves recasting, to a degree, the manner in which it is presented. (If you play your cards correctly, this can mean two publications—of differing natures, of course—instead of one.)

What role can the Canadian Population Society (CPS) play in the future of Canadian demography? In the short-run (say, within the next year or so), the CPS can and should be involved in the collective lobby against the undermining of academic research in Canada. Also, we can take advantage of the dissolution of SSHRCC (assuming we cannot re-establish SSHRCC) and push to get demography out of Assessment Committee 8. Committee 8 now consists of general sociology, criminology, communications, social work and demography. Our grant applications are not properly adjudicated because only one member of the committee will have any knowledge of demography. Removal from Committee 8 will not guarantee a larger amount/percentage of SSHRCC dollars to demographic research, but it will

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facilitate a more knowledgeable adjudication—which can only benefit us in the long-run.

In addition, the CPS can formulate a plan for the future to further our research strength. Elements of that plan could include the following kinds of activities:

- (1) Fund-raising, both within and outside the membership, for graduate student fellowships and bursaries. If the drop-out rate among demography graduate students is around the average for social science graduate students, then it is approximately 50%. A recent Ontario Council of Graduate Studies report attributes this high drop-out rate, in comparison with figures of around 30% for the "hard" sciences, to the solitary nature of our work that causes students to lose motivation. While our students do not have the camaraderie of the lab, they also are much less likely to have adequate financial support—a fact of life directly related to the overall research funding situation. So, one avenue for the CPS in the future lies in graduate student support.
- (2) A second set of activities, related to the first, is the symbolic support of graduate students, probably most easily undertaken at the time of the CPS annual meeting. Activities such as a student paper competition, a "meet the profs" social, a student session, etc. would convey the message that we care about graduate students. Whether the Canadian response to the projected faculty shortage in the mid and late-90s will be to expand graduate student spaces or to try to speed up completion times, Canadian demography will lose out unless we undertake supportive action vis-a-vis graduate students.
- (3) The CPS could foster interdisciplinary research by functioning as a clearing house, helping members to find researchers from varying disciplines with complementary research interests. This function would not only be sound from an academic point of view, but would also serve to mitigate, to some degree, our image problem.
- (4) There are many contract research opportunities for demographers. This is especially so given charter challenges and the desire of the courts for "hard data." This type of research can closely mesh with one's own research agenda. As it now stands, contact between contractor and contractee is on an ad hoc, word-of-mouth basis. The CPS could again function as a clearing house, matching prospective researchers with contracting parties. It is tempting to think that the CPS could extract a

fee for this service, which could be used to augment the student support "pot".

I hope that some of these suggestions are meritorious enough to be given serious consideration by the CPS executive and membership—or, that they act as a catalyst for other suggestions. The discipline's traditional penchant for insularity will not serve it or us well in the future; the CPS can play a leading role in furthering our best interests.

Acknowledgement

Revised version of a presentation given at the after-banquet panel on the Future of Demography and the Role of the CPS, annual meeting of the Canadian Population Society, Charlottetown, P.E.I., 3 June, 1992. Thanks to Tom Burch for inviting me to speak on this topic, to Rod Beaujot for his helpful suggestions after the verbal presentation, and to the three anonymous journal referees.

Received, November, 1992; revised, March, 1993.

The Role of the Canadian Population Society

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Abstract

The paper examines the changes announced by the 1992 Federal Budget to institutions that either conducted or supported demographic research in Canada, the climate in which the changes have occurred, and the impact that they may have on Demography and demographers. It then considers what the Canadian Population Society (CPS) might do to ensure that its objectives continue to be met despite the cutbacks

Résumé

Le présent article examine les changements annoncés par le budget fédéral de 1992 aux établissements qui effectuaient ou soutenaient la recherche démographique au Canada, le climat où ces changements sont survenus, et leur incidence sur la démographie et les démographes. Il considère ensuite les mesures que pourrait prendre la Société canadienne de la population (SCP) pour poursuivre ses objectifs en dépit des compressions budgétaires.

Key Words: demography, funding, role

The recent changes in the institutional landscape of demography provide us with a wonderful opportunity to reflect upon our future role and future direction. Before considering that future direction, let me briefly review the changes which have occurred, the climate in which they have occurred, and the impact that they may have on demography and demographers.

As most of you know, the 1992 Federal Budget announced that a number of institutions that either conducted or supported demographic research in Canada would either be wound up, downscaled, or merged with other institutions. These institutions include the Demographic Review Secretariat, the Economic Council of Canada, the International Development Research Centre, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

These changes in the institutional landscape have occurred at a time when some very important demographic transformations are taking place in Canadian society. They are happening when immigration levels are higher than they have been for a very long time and they are occurring at a time when we are experiencing an interesting fertility phenomenon—the baby boom echo. The changes have happened at a time when demographers can make important contributions to the understanding of these patterns. The changes have also come at a time when the importance of demographic patterns for social policy and planning and marketing is beginning to be recognized by provincial and sub-provincial governments and the private sector.

These changes have been motivated by the desire to achieve savings and efficiency. What they suggest, however, is that demographic research is not a priority in Canada. The changes have some very concrete and very specific implications for demography and demographers. They imply that the opportunity to do demographic research may be constrained in the future. They represent a potential loss of jobs for demographers. They impede the potential for doing research in truly interdisciplinary environments. More broadly, they mean a reduced profile for demographic research. Studies conducted by the Economic Council of Canada had wide distribution, and the Demographic Review was highly publicized. The changes could well have a ripple effect that impacts on the priority given to demography by other public and private sector bodies.

So, what do these changes mean for the future role of the Canadian Population Society (CPS)? In order to answer this question, I think we need to examine the objectives of the CPS and to consider what we as a professional association might do to ensure that these objectives continue to be met in the future. According to its Constitution, the objectives of the CPS are:

"to work toward the improvement of knowledge and understanding about the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of human population; to promote the study and development of the science of demography in both its empirical and theoretical aspects; and to foster interest in, and the interchange of ideas on population, among professional and other interested persons working in the field of population studies" (Constitution of the Canadian Population Society, Article 2).

The first objective primarily relates to research. In the past, we have done well in meeting this objective. Indeed, much of the funding for demographic

research was provided by SSHRC and the Demographic Review. In order to continue to meet this objective, the Canadian Population Society might follow two paths. First, we might explore the possibilities for setting up our own research fund. We could start by approaching individuals, universities, and public and private sector organizations to make donations to the fund. Money from the fund could be used to support research of junior faculty, graduate students and others. And why not? Other professional associations appear to be following similar routes. Second, we as an organization might explore alternative sources of funding for research for our members. Are some of the smaller trust funds willing to fund demographic research, and what about government departments, do they have money available for demographic work? Is our membership aware of these organizations?

In my opinion, we have not done well in promoting demography to policy makers and the private sector. Perhaps if we had done so, the cuts we have just witnessed might have been less likely. There is, I believe, a lot of scope for the CPS to promote demography to outsiders.

If we can get organizations to recognize the importance of demographic research, we might be able to get them to contribute to a CPS research fund, we may open the door further for individual demographers to do contractual work for these organizations and we may be able to get them to contribute financially to our meetings.

How can we promote ourselves? One option we might consider is to expand into the applied demography area, just as the Population Association of America has done. We could hold applied demography sessions at our annual meeting on a regular basis -- we could publish a newsletter in applied demography. We could provide consultative advice and assistance to people who need practical advice to solve the problems they face in their day to day activities. In short, we can expand into areas that assist non-academic demographers to do their day to day work. Other ways to promote ourselves might include free introductory mail-outs of our journal and newsletter to government departments and the private sector so that they become aware of our existence and the types of work we do.

I think that we have been meeting our third objective, that of fostering interest in and the interchange of ideas on population, through holding an annual meeting, through our journal and our newsletter. These activities too are jeopardized by the changes announced in the 1992 Federal Budget and we may want to consider other funding sources to support these activities. But, our chances of getting that support are improved if we make ourselves known to the organizations.

Kausar Thomas

Another possibility to ensure support for activities that support our third objective is, and I'm sure which is very controversial, for CPS members to increase their own financial support for these activities. If we value the journal, if we value our annual meetings, then perhaps it is up to us to ensure their continuation by increasing our financial contribution to them.

As probably you have gathered by now, I think that yes, there is scope for an expanded role for the CPS. I see that role as being one of getting outsiders to recognize the importance of demography. We can do this through self-promotion as well as through expanding more into applied demography so that others actually see that we do have something to offer.

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this paper are strictly those of the author and not those of the Ontario Ministry of Finance with which the author is affiliated.

Revised version of a presentation given at the after-banquet panel on "The Future of Demography: The Role of the CPS" at the annual meeting of the Canadian Population Society, June 3, 1992, Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Received, November, 1992; revised, June, 1993.

BOOK REVIEWS

Ethnic Demography: Canadian Immigrant, Racial and Cultural Variations edited by Shiva S. Halli, Frank Trovato and Leo Driedger.

Ottawa, ON: Carleton University Press, 1990. 497 pp. \$15.95.

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The editors are correct in claiming that, while there is an extensive literature on immigrant, racial and ethnic studies in Canada, this is the first Canadian volume specifically on ethnic demography. As such, a volume combining the fields of demography and ethnic studies is welcome. This particular collection of papers consists of almost all of the presentations at a conference held at the University of Manitoba in August 1988, so it is essentially the proceedings of that conference.

An initial question must be, then, how comprehensive is this collection? In other words, does it represent the full range of topics covered in the intersection of demographic and ethnic studies? These contributions, written by quite an impressive array of familiar Canadian demographers and sociologists, are all clearly of competent quality and cover a wide range of topics. Certain areas, though, seem to have been given preference (not an uncommon probblem in conference proceedings).

Appropriately, the volume both begins and ends by addressing changing ethnic population composition. The first substantive paper is John Kralt's analysis of ethnic origins in the Canadian Census (1871-1986); while the final contribution is a description of the emergence of multi-ethnicities in the 1980s, by K.J. Krótki and D. Odynak. A couple of chapters earlier, T. John Samuel describes how immigrants from third world countries to Canada have affected Canadian multiculturalism.

The three basic demographic variables (fertility, mortality, and migration) are analyzed throughout the volume, but particularly in the first section. However, discussion of fertility is limited to a single contribution, S.S. Halli's paper on the fertility of ethnic groups, while mortality is limited to Frank Trovato's paper on immigrant mortality trends and differentials. Both are excellent papers, yet hardly provide full coverage of the complex interplay between ethnicity and, respectively, fertility and mortality.

More attention has been given to migration in this volume. Papers focusing on immigration include R. Beaujot and J.P. Rappak's description of the evolution of immigrant cohorts, Alan B. Simmons' commentary on the origins and characteristics of "new wave" immigrants, the aforementioned analysis of third world immigrants by T.J. Samuel, as well as several papers concerned with immigrant women.

Less attention is paid, on the other hand, to the ethnic factor in internal migration (Trovato and Halli discuss ethnicity and geographic mobility) or to ethnicity in an urban setting (T.R. Balakrishnan and K. Selvanathan describe ethnic residential segregation in metropolitan Canada). Unfortunately, ethnicity as it relates to rural population trends is not considered.

A large portion of this volume is devoted to ethnic stratification and mobility in the third section on immigrant socio-economic status. This section does not focus as much on analyzing education and occupation in general, as in describing the changing status of immigrant women. Monica Boyd focuses on the relationship between language and the socio-economic inequality of immigrant women as these relate to policy issues; K.G. Basavarajappa and R.B.P. Verma on occupational composition of immigrant women; C.F. Grindstaff on their ethnic, marital and economic status; and S.B. Seward on immigrant women in the clothing industry. The final paper in this section is more general, while focused on a particular ethnic group: A.H. Richmond analyzes the income of Caribbean immigrants to Canada.

Among other topics, a couple of contributions to the volume focus on linguistic trends: John DeVries provides a comprehensive anlaysis of ethnic language maintenance and shift, while Monica Boyd's paper (already mentioned above) takes language problems of immigrant women into consideration. W.E. Kalbach and Madeline A. Richard provide a useful overview of ethno-religious identity and acculturation in Canada.

Some very interesting work is being done in Canadian demography and ethnic studies in the area of gerontology; a variety of books and monographs have been published in recent years. So, appropriately, this volume does include a couple of contributions in the area: Leo Driedger and Neena Chappell describe variations in aging and ethnicity while Robert Choinière and Norbert Robitaille focus on the aging of ethnic groups in Quebec.

Family and nuptiality may be approached both by demographers and sociologists. There is much of interest to study in this extensive field, but only a couple of contributions are found in the volume: T.K. Burch's

description of family structure and ethnicity, and Bali Ram's attempt to summarize trends in intermarriage among ethnic groups.

Last, but certainly not least, it should be pointed out that the volume deals almost exclusively with immigrant-origin ethnic groups. Thankfully, we find a single, important contribution on the demography of aboriginal people by Mary Jane Norris. It scarcely needs to be stressed that there is a vast amount of demographic and sociological research and analysis devoted in Canada to aboriginal population trends. Rather more attention might have been paid to this population if this particular volume were not redefined conference proceedings.

Having commented critically on coverage, let us now turn to a second important question, that of currency. The Preface claims that the purpose of this volume "is to make available to students and policy-makers the very latest data on ethnic dmeography". Has this been accomplished? The data are drawn primarily from the 1981 and 1986 census, as well as from various social surveys. Unfortunately, the authors did not yet have access to 1991 census data, as the volume was published the previous year.

Seven of the papers (by Halli, Kalbach and Richard, Ram, Driedger and Chappell, Boyd, Grindstaff, and Balakrishnan and Selvanathan) utilize data only from the 1981 census, now twelve years out of date.

Another seven contributions primarily use even earlier data to discuss various trends: Trovato and Halli compare data from 1966-1971 with data from 1976-1981, in studying geographic mobility; Trovato's discussion of mortality trends delves back into the sixties and seventies; Beaujot and Rappak, in describing the evolution of immigrant cohorts, use data from the 1961, 1971, 1981, and 1986 censuses; both DeVries, and Choinière and Robitaille use data covering the 1941-1981 period; Basavarajappa and Verma study the occupation composition of immigrant women from the presixties to 1981; and Richmond's study of the income of Caribbean immigrants draws on data from the sixties, seventies, and 1981 census.

Thus, relatively few of the contributions to this volume intended to "make available the very latest data" (to use the editors' own words) actually do so. The relatively up to date contributions include analyses by Kralt of changing ethnic origins (1871-1986); Norris' aboriginal demographics (1931-1986); Simmons' "new wave" immigrants (to 1988); Burch's family structure (to 1985); Seward's immigrant women in the clothing industry (1986); Samuel's third world immigration (to 1986); and Krótki's and Odynak's multiethnicity (1971-1986). Granted, most of the contributions do refer to recent

publications and research; but this does not entirely resolve the problem much of the data furnished in this text is not current.

The editors warn in the Preface that "pioneering attempts such as this are always fraught with risks". Moreover, that "there are many gaps where research is still needed"; nonetheless, "many issues and problems have been raised if not answered, which ... will generate more research". This reader can agree with these qualifications. To summarize, first, the coverage in this volume is quite comprehensive, yet could still be improved; second, the volume does not really go far enough in its aim of providing and analyzing "the very latest data".

The First Immigrants From Asia: A Population History of the American Indians by A.J. Jaffe (with the assistance of C. Sperber). New York, NY: Plenum Publishing Corporation. 320 pp. \$39.50 U.S. cloth.

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A demography of Amerindian peoples in Canada and the U.S.A. from the time of their first arrival in the Western Hemisphere to the end of the twentieth century is a welcome addition to the current socio-political literature on Amerindian peoples. The author has written this book for interested nonprofessionals as well as for demographers, archaeologists, anthropologists and other academics. He rightly notes that many academics do not know much about demography, actuarial studies and population dynamics. The author's aim of the book is clearly stated at the outstart when he lists three goals: to trace the evolution of the Amerindian population over time, to assess the changes as converging or diverging from the dominant population of these two countries and to relate these changes to the natural and social environments in which Amerindian people operate. The presentation of the material is divided into two periods; prehistory or time until the arrival of Columbus and the modern period—1492 to 1980.

Three major issues underlie the 13 chapters which discuss both the prehistoric and historic periods. The first is the changing natural environment and its impact upon the Amerindian population. The second is the knotty question of who is an Indian. Finally, the ever present problem of inferring history from fragments of information is raised throughout the book. In addition, each of the chapters is generally divided into two political

divisions—U.S.A. and Canada. In nearly all cases, the author starts the Canadian section after the American analysis with the phrase "The story of the Native people in Canada is very similar to those living in the United States".

The author begins his work with a review of the major Paleolithic population distributions in North America, touching on issues of why they came and when they arrived. Technical topics such as estimating time are discussed in easy to understand language as are the limitations of such techniques. He then moves on to discuss the development of agriculture and the subsequent growth and dispersion of the Amerindian population throughout North America. The next three chapters focus on vital trends such as the longevity of these early peoples as well as inferences about their family life, e.g., marriages, dependency ratios, and production of food.

Part two begins with the entry of Columbus. Again the author tries to estimate the population of the Amerindian people as the settlers entered the new land. Additional material on births and deaths are presented for this time. In addition, there is an interesting but incomplete chapter on "Intermarriage". The last two chapters in this section focus on the educational and occupational statistics of Amerindian people since the turn of the century.

A.J. Jaffe has written a challenging and fascinating history of the Amerindian peoples of North America. The book draws imaginatively on diverse primary sources and a burgeoning, but still limited data set for Amerindian populations. He has written a book that should command the attention of anyone concerned with Amerindian people in North America. The breadth of the text and his ability to weave a "story" through diverse data sets is both illuminating and heuristic.

One minor disappointment is the lack of acknowledgment of the research carried out by Canadian scholars in this area which has been going on for some time. Taffe also seems unaware of the idiosyncratic issues that have beset Canadian policy makers as well as academics. The lack of discussion of some of the sections of the *Indian Act*, e.g., Section 12.1 (b), are evident in the conclusions drawn by the author. Those familiar with this rich body of literature will find the lack of discussion and references disconcerting. The lack of familiarity with Canadian statistics on Amerindian people as well as some of the more thorny policy issues is perhaps the weakest aspect of the book.

As a reference work, the book is a gold mine, with many pieces of useful information. Thirteen appendixes are presented, covering a range of statistical tables as well as excerpts from various government circulars. Information about the Amerindian population over many decades allows the reader to quickly discern population patterns where the author provides "guide" service and interpretation through the data. Although this book is very informative, it should not be considered a complete description of Amerindian people in North America. First, many aspects of the population are not included in the volume (e.g., residential patterns, marriage rates, disenfranchisement rates, wage earnings). Second, the Eskimo, Inuit, and Aleut are not mentioned. Third, the data is nearly 15 years old and does not capture the recent policy dynamics that effect the Amerindian population, e.g., in Canada, Bill C-31 was passed which allowed individuals previously defined as non-Indian to declare themselves Indian. It was unfortunate that the author was unable to defer publication until the 1990 and 1991 censuses for the two countries were available.

I would recommend this book not only to teachers in the area of Native Studies, but also to those who are interested in and teaching courses in areas such as social stratification, population and methodology. Anyone interested in Amerindians and how they have been changing and adapting to the new post industrial society will want to refer to this volume.

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