

The Canadian Century Research Infrastructure



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L'infrastructure de recherche sur le Canada au 20^e siècle



Census Training at Dominion
Bureau of Statistics

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Un dépliant en français est également disponible.



Taking the Census in the North

Related Projects

The CCRI is linked to two other important census projects, namely:

1881 Canadian Census Project

(<http://www.prdh.umontreal.ca/1881/en/1881projects.html>)

Canadian Families Project

(<http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/cfp/>)

The CCRI is also collaborating with colleagues and institutions in Europe and in the United States, including:

North Atlantic Population Project

(<http://www.nappdata.org/napp/>);

International Microdata Access Group

(<http://www.prdh.umontreal.ca/IMAG/index.html>)

CCRI Partners

- Statistics Canada
- Library and Archives Canada
- IBM Canada
- The Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency
- The International Microdata Access Group (IMAG)
- L'Institut de la statistique du Québec

The Project

The Canadian Century Research Infrastructure (CCRI) is a pan-Canadian, multidisciplinary and multi-institutional effort to develop a set of interrelated databases centered on data from the 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941 and 1951 Canadian censuses. These databases will then be joined to others (completed or in progress) that cover the periods from 1871 to 1901, and from 1961 to 2001. The result will be a new foundation for the study of social, economic, demographic, cultural and political change in Canada. The data base will enable researchers to reconsider virtually all of the accepted interpretations of the making of modern Canada and to ask previously unimagined questions about the characteristics, processes and circumstances that explain our common heritage.

Funding

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The Infrastructure

The objective of the CCRI is to construct an evidentiary foundation for research on the transformation of Canadian society from the late 19th century to the later 20th century. To do so, the CCRI will have two components: primary sources and secondary sources. Census microdata from the 1911 –1951 enumerations form the first and the core of the four primary data sources. Other primary data sources include Statistics Canada documentary sources concerning the enumeration process; newspaper evidence about the enumerations at the time of each enumeration; and House of Commons and Senate debates related to the enumerations. The goal of this component of the CCRI is to provide researchers with the contextual evidence necessary to undertake appropriate analysis of the census microdata.

The secondary sources are intended to facilitate research on the primary sources and are equally varied in nature. They range from introductory descriptive statements about the census enumeration process, to highly technical discussions of data entry and coding issues, and bibliographies of census-research publications.

Integral to the entire project is the construction of a geographic framework for the historical census data, using a Geographic Information System (GIS). GIS map layers are being created to enable geographic location, selection, aggregation and analysis of sample data, as well as some mapping of generalized census data. This will allow researchers to ask questions of the database which are much more geographically specific than in the past. Interface tools to make these geographic queries and analysis as user-friendly as possible are also being developed.

Data Availability

The CCRI database will be made available through *Research Data Centres* across Canada; versions will also be available through the *Data Liberation Initiative* at Canadian universities.

The Research

The point of departure for the planned research is the overarching theme that has emerged during recent decades in research on historic and contemporary Canadian society, a theme best captured in the words *complexity* and *diversity*.

In contrast to previous simple images of Canada, scholars have been developing new images of the collective experience of large-scale social change, and the diversity and distinctiveness of those in different times and places. This reinterpretation of Canada requires investigation not only of the 'famous and infamous', but also, and perhaps most importantly, the 'anonymous'. In this view, an understanding of the thoughts and actions of those in positions of official and unofficial power is considered to be a necessary but not sufficient condition of historical explanation. Rather than being characterized as the passive beneficiaries or victims of those in leadership positions, every person is considered to have contributed in diverse and uneven ways to the making of history. In recent decades, scholars have been revealing the 'hidden history' of Canada in which large-scale individual decisions and actions multiplied over and over across a population. Many scholars now agree that systematic analysis of microdata is essential for probing the ways in which large-scale historical change is articulated at the level of individual experience. Moreover, it is only by using individual-level data from different decades that we can control for variables which are extraneous to our theoretical model, and can separate out the relative effects of different independent variables.