

AN INVESTIGATION OF OFFICIAL ETHNIC STATISTICS

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**PREFACE**

In 1981 I initiated an investigation of all official ethnic statistics in response to mounting concern about their relevancy and reliability. The taking of the 1981 Census of Population and Dwellings in March of that year had revived a long standing public debate on this matter. However, the issues raised had implications beyond the census and it was decided to mount a wide ranging investigation of all official ethnic statistics.

This occasional paper is a report of that investigation. It presents the main findings of the investigation and the technical evidence upon which some of those findings were based. On the basis of the results of this investigation an official review of ethnic statistics has been initiated under the Statistics Act 1975. This paper should, therefore, provide useful background information for that review.

The investigation and the preparation of this paper was undertaken by Paul Brown with the assistance of a number of other departmental officers. In particular, the efforts of Whetu Wereta, Abdur Khan, Nick Campion, Esther-Mary Penhale and Jenny Sanders of Social Statistics Development; Max Wiqbout, Frank Nolan and Mike Ryan of Statistical Methods B; Paul Maxwell of Sample Design and Mansoor Khawaja of Demographic Specialist Studies are acknowledged. However, the opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the other officers who assisted, nor do they represent an official view of the Department of Statistics.

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**SUMMARY**

This investigation was principally concerned with identifying the range, nature and use of current official ethnic statistics, ascertaining their relevancy and reliability and proposing changes which might improve their quality. For the purposes of the investigation 'ethnic statistics' were defined as statistics pertaining to persons classified on the basis of a common ancestry and shared cultural beliefs. An investigation of current official statistics revealed a wide range of statistics fitting this description in a number of subject-matter areas. Collections containing an ethnic item included in the Census of Population and Dwellings conducted by the Department of Statistics, the Vitals (births and deaths) Registration Systems under the control of the Registrar-General, the Migration Arrival and Departure System operated by the Department of Labour, the Police Offender Report System, the Department of Health Hospital Admission/discharge System, the Department of Education Statistical Returns from Educational Institutions and the Department of Social Welfare Juvenile Offenders, Adoption and State Ward Collections.

An important feature of these collections is the diversity of the definitions of ethnicity employed between the collections and the variation of methods and procedures practised within collections. Both these factors have important implications for the relevancy and reliability of the statistics produced. Officially, all of the ethnic statistics in the above collections are supposed to be comparable with those obtained in the Census of Population and Dwellings. This reflects the fact that most are used in conjunction with census data in the construction of various rates which requires that numerator and denominator be uniformly defined. In reality it appears that self identification and observer estimation methods are used, to a greater or lesser extent, to obtain ethnic data in all these collections, including the Population Census. Neither of these methods is appropriate for obtaining data pertaining to ethnic origin, particularly when a 'half or more descent' criterion is required to allocate respondents to a particular category.

In order to better understand the nature of ethnic classifications currently in use it is necessary to understand something of their historical development. The classification used in the Census of Population and Dwellings provides an interesting case in point, reflecting two principal historical social concerns. On one hand the European colonial administrators who undertook the first censuses in the 1850's were concerned that the Maori population should be integrated into the emergent 'New Zealand' society. One important implication of integration would be progressive miscegenation which was expected to result in the eventual absorption of the Maori race. This concern and the need for a convenient method of

enumerating the Maori population in a situation of social transition was probably the basis of the 'proportion of descent' criterion used in the allocation of persons of mixed origin to a particular ethnic group.

On the other hand the European colonisers were concerned to limit the migration of Asians into New Zealand, particularly Chinese gold miners in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This concern was expressed in restrictive immigration legislation and reflected in the development of the 'race alien' classification and report in the Population Census which has evolved into the 'ethnic origin' classification and volume of today.

The collection of ethnic statistics in general is now justified on the grounds that considerable social inequalities exist between various ethnic groups. In what is now considered to be a relatively advanced society, ethnic statistics show that Maoris and Pacific Islanders are socially and economically disadvantaged relative to the dominant European group. Maoris and Pacific Islanders are disproportionately represented in the unskilled and manual occupations, among the unemployed and among criminal offenders and prisoners. They receive lower incomes, less education and suffer poorer health than the European group. In total, they do not appear to enjoy the same life style and life chances as the European group. To some extent these differences may be more apparent than real, reflecting the relatively low socio-economic status of Maoris and Pacific Islanders and the differential treatment they may receive from the institutions which produce the statistics. However, the available evidence suggests that ethnicity as such still has a considerable influence on the configuration of social inequality in New Zealand. While the underlying reasons for the persistence of these inequalities is debatable, there is general agreement on the desirability of their removal, which provides justification for the continued collection and use of ethnic statistics.

Accordingly, a number of government departments administer policies and programmes which are relevant to these differentials. The Department of Maori Affairs is the only Government department which has policies and programmes relating specifically to an ethnic group. In this case the statistics used by the department are instrumental to its functioning. Statistics on the size and location of the Maori population are also instrumental in the estimation of electoral populations by the Department of Statistics for the purposes of the review and determination of electoral boundaries by the Representation Commission.

However, the instrumental use of ethnic statistics is limited and, like social statistics in general, they are used mainly in an informative role. Departments whose clientele comprise a

disproportionate number of Maoris and Pacific Islanders (e.g. Social Welfare and Justice) or which have responsibilities in areas where Maoris and Pacific Islanders are or may be disadvantaged (e.g. Health, Ministry of Works and Development, Internal Affairs, Education and Labour) have various policies and programmes relevant to these groups. While these policies and programmes may not be directed or concerned specifically with these ethnic groups, they nevertheless attempt to take the ethnic groups into account, either in the monitoring of the problems they are attempting to resolve or in the administration of the policies and programmes.

In order to ascertain the relevancy of current measures of ethnicity it is also necessary to understand something of the philosophy behind the various policy responses to social problems involving ethnic minorities and the changing nature of race relations in New Zealand. More recently an ideology of 'multiculturalism' has begun to displace the traditional ideology of 'integration' which has informed Government policy toward Maoris for the greater part of this century. The rural to urban migration of Maoris, their demographic transition and their level of participation in the economy and polity are all indicative of the success of integration. However, Maoris and the more recently arrived Pacific Islanders have remained socially disadvantaged in a number of respects and are themselves showing an increasing preference for a multicultural approach to solving these problems. Multiculturalism holds that social justice and development are better served by encouraging rather than discouraging cultural (ethnic) diversity. This implies that Maoris and Pacific Islanders will be better able to overcome their disadvantages if they are encouraged to maintain and develop their unique cultural identities, and to function in society as 'Maoris', 'Samoans', 'Tokelauans', etc.

Multiculturalism has important implications for the relevancy and usefulness of ethnic statistics, particularly as they relate to Maoris. Within the context of multiculturalism the overt cultural behavioural aspects of ethnicity are more important in defining ethnicity than the inherent biological dimension alone and ethnicity takes on a political dimension. Thus, while Maori descent is a necessary condition for being a Maori, the importance of descent is subservient to identification with Maori cultural beliefs and behaviour. Ethnicity should be therefore more appropriately measured in terms of cultural affiliation by means of self identification. This was the overwhelming view of those organisations and individuals which made submissions to the investigation on the matter of defining and measuring ethnicity and it reflects the spirit (although not the letter) of the definitions of 'Maori' contained in the Maori Affairs and Electoral Acts.



The diversity of methods and procedures which are currently employed in the measurement of ethnicity within official statistical collections may be attributed to a number of factors including the inadequacy of question design and administrative instructions and procedures and the failure of persons responsible for collecting the data to follow prescribed instructions and procedures. When these factors are considered together with possible respondent resistance resulting from reluctance to or difficulties with providing the required information, then there is potential for considerable misclassification error in the resultant data.

Several studies of misclassification error were undertaken in connection with this investigation covering births, deaths, migration arrivals and departures, intercensal estimates of the Maori population and Department of Education school attendance statistics. The results of these studies revealed the probability of considerable misclassification error in the various data. The number of Maori births and deaths recorded in the vitals registration systems could be understated in the order of 17 and 28 percent respectively and the number of Maori migration arrivals and departures could be overstated in the order of 16 and 18 percent respectively. Data from each of these collections are used in the production of quarterly estimates of the Maori population and the net effect of these misclassification errors is a general understatement of the size of the estimated Maori population. In general the effect does not appear to be serious since the current estimates give a reasonable indication of both the size and changes in the size of the Maori population. However, the effect of possible misclassification error in the births, deaths and migration arrivals and departures collections is more serious and ameliorative action is required. In the case of the migration collection a change has already been made with the introduction of a cultural affiliation based ethnic question in April 1982. Subsequently, there has been a considerable improvement in the level of response to the question, implying an associated improvement in the quality of the data.

A study of the Department of Education school attendance statistics showed that the Department of Education age and sex-specific totals of Maori pupils aged 6 to 14 years were closer to the Census totals based on persons who reported any Maori descent than to those based on persons of half or more Maori descent. This illustrates the effect of the self identification and observer estimation methods employed by teachers when classifying pupils.

Given the constraints of resources and data availability it was not possible to mount detailed studies of the accuracy of all official ethnic statistics. However, it is probable that misclassification error is present to a greater or lesser extent

in all official collections. It would appear that Police Officers classifying the ethnicity of apprehended persons may sometimes employ the observer estimation method in preference to the prescribed self identification method and that social workers employ a variety of methods, including transcription of Police data, when completing their statistical forms.

A general conclusion of this investigation is that both the relevancy and reliability of ethnic statistics would be improved by the standardisation of all official ethnic statistics to a cultural affiliation concept using the self identification method of measurement and by an associated improvement in question design and procedures. Standardisation is important not only because it ensures the best quality of measurement across all statistics but also because it enables comparability between statistics and provides an essential basis for the construction of rates. Standardisation to a cultural affiliation concept has the advantage that it is more relevant to the current notion of ethnicity and in most cases is easier to administer. However, the administration of a cultural affiliation question does pose difficulties in collections such as births and deaths and in situations where the respondents are children, so a flexible and practical approach is needed.

In summary, some of the main advantages and disadvantages of the biological concept measured by ethnic origin are:

#### Advantages

1. A tradition of use in official statistics means that the concept is well established in the public mind and the measure is tried and tested.
2. As an objective measure it is theoretically independent of personal whim and should therefore result in accurate statistics.

#### Disadvantages

1. The accuracy of the statistics has become doubtful as many respondents are unable to respond accurately since racial divisions have become increasingly blurred with the cumulative impact of miscegenation and other respondents are unwilling to respond accurately since they find the concept irrelevant and/or offensive
2. Responses are difficult and time-consuming to code, particularly where several origins are involved.

Some of the main advantages and disadvantages of the cultural affiliation concept measured by self identification are:

#### Advantages

1. The concept is more relevant to the current notion of ethnicity in a multicultural society and is consistent with several key legislative definitions.
2. The measure is simple and easy to administer and code.

#### Disadvantages

1. A cultural affiliation concept may detract from the policy relevance of ethnic statistics because it may not be entirely independent of what it measures insofar as social and political circumstances may influence affiliation.
2. The subjective basis of the concept could result in inaccurate statistics due to individual response inconsistency over time and in different contexts.
3. A self identification measure may be difficult to administer to respondents who have not formed a stable ethnic identity or who have more than one affiliation.

#### INTRODUCTION

This investigation was initiated in 1981 by the Government Statistician in response to mounting concern about the relevancy and reliability of ethnic statistics. The taking of the 1981 Census of Population and Dwellings in March of that year had revived a long standing public debate on this matter. However, the issues raised had implications beyond the Census, involving all official ethnic statistics collected by Government agencies, and it was therefore decided to mount a wide ranging investigation of ethnic statistics.

The terms of reference were as follows:-

1. Ascertain the extent, and describe and contrast the use of ethnic differentials by New Zealand's legal and administrative system and various interest groups within the community. Identify and discuss factors which may influence the nature and use of these differentials now, and in the next ten to twenty years.
2. Ascertain the current range of ethnic statistics, contrasting sources, concepts, definitions, methods of collection, manners of presentation and original and current uses (if they differ).
3. Investigate the adequacy of current ethnic statistics (in terms of validity, reliability, accuracy, presentation and availability) with respect to the current and future uses identified in (1) and (2).
4. Investigate the appropriateness of the uses of current ethnic statistics identified in (2).
5. Recommended changes required to concepts, definitions, methods of collection and presentation of ethnic statistics in order to resolve problems and needs identified in (3) and (4).

It was not possible in the course of the investigation to deal with all aspects of the terms of reference in the detail which would have been desired because of resource limitations. Consequently, priority was given to investigating the relevancy of current official ethnic statistics and the degree of possible misclassification error in these statistics. These aspects represent two principal issues in the debate surrounding the use and usefulness of ethnic statistics and are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

The terms of reference defined 'ethnic statistics' as statistics pertaining to persons classified on the basis of a common ancestry and shared cultural beliefs. The intention of



this definition was to lay down some general guidelines for the investigation rather than to prescribe or otherwise confine the scope of the investigation. While this definition allowed the consideration of different concepts of ethnicity, the investigation focussed on the Maori and Pacific Island groups. This reflects the greater importance of these groups in the context of this investigation. At the 1981 Census of Population and Dwellings the 'ethnic origin' composition of the population was:

	Number	Percent
European	2,696,568	86
New Zealand Maori	279,081	9
Pacific Island Polynesian	89,827	3
All Others	42,219	1
Not Specified	36,612	1
	3,143,307	100

This classification illustrates the numerical predominance of Europeans in the population and shows that New Zealand Maoris and Pacific Island Polynesians are the only other numerically significant groups. These two latter groups also constitute the main focus of concern of Government and the public in issues of race relations and social equality.

The measurement of ethnicity for general statistical purposes is fraught with difficulties which are in a large part due to the ambiguities surrounding the various concepts and definitions associated with this term. These difficulties will be discussed in more detail in chapters 2 and 3. However, it would be useful at this point to give a brief description of the concepts and measures commonly used. When considering any statistical classification it is useful to distinguish two aspects - the basis on which the categories comprising the classification are defined and the basis on which observations are allocated to their respective categories. Ethnic classifications generally purport to classify population groups on the basis of common ancestry and shared cultural beliefs. There are two basic types of ethnic classification. The traditional type, commonly referred to as 'race' or 'ethnic origin', allocates individuals to their respective categories on the basis of their racial origin or descent. The concept of race originated in Europe in the nineteenth century and was purported to provide a scientific basis for distinguishing population groups with distinctive physical characteristics. The concept was subsequently expanded to include cultural and psychological characteristics. Thus ethnic (cultural) groups were defined in terms of racial types, generally distinguished in terms of physical characteristics such as colour of skin, or facial characteristics. Individuals might

be allocated to their respective race categories in terms of their stated descent or their apparent descent (as perceived by an observer). However, the notion of race as a scientific concept has been largely debunked, and in 1975 a group of UNESCO experts concluded that there is no scientific basis for distinguishing racial types. It is now recognised that the categories used in the ethnic classifications are socially defined. They reflect specific social, political and historical circumstances. In particular, ethnic categories in official statistics generally reflect the dominant (power) ethnic group's conception of 'problem' ethnic groups. Thus, when official ethnic statistics were first collected in New Zealand at the turn of the century the main categories employed were European, Maori and Race Alien, the latter including Chinese and other Asians. These categories reflected the concern of the European colonial administration with the problems of integrating Maoris into the emergent New Zealand society and restricting the entry of Asians. The passing of the gold rushes and the implementation of restrictive immigration legislation effectively resolved the race alien problem and heralded the departure of this category from official ethnic classifications (although Chinese and other Asian groups have tended to remain as separate insignificant categories). However, the Maori 'problem' has remained and Pacific Islanders now constitute a new focus of concern and consequently a significant category.

The second and more recent type of ethnic classification employed in official ethnic statistics, generally referred to as 'ethnic group', allocates individuals to their respective categories on the basis of their preferred cultural affiliation (i.e. by self-classification). This type of classification is formulated on the basis that ethnic categories are socially defined and that individuals in a population will tend to affiliate with a particular category according to their background and current cultural and social circumstances. Accordingly, the underlying concept of this classification is cultural affiliation.

The social problems which determine the categories employed in ethnic classifications also provide the justification for producing the statistics. In what is now a relatively advanced society, ethnic statistics show that Maoris and Pacific Islanders are socially and economically disadvantaged relative to the European group. Maoris and Pacific Islanders are disproportionately represented in the unskilled and manual occupations, among the unemployed and among criminal offenders and prisoners. They receive lower incomes, are less educated and suffer poorer health than the European group. In total, they do not appear to enjoy the same life style and life chances as the European group. Consequently, the collection of official ethnic statistics is generally justified in terms of the need to monitor the situation of these disadvantaged groups and to evaluate mitigatory policies and programmes.

This report is divided into three chapters. The first comprises a description of the current range of official ethnic statistics and provides a basis for specific discussion in the subsequent chapters. The second chapter deals with matters of relevancy and reliability, addressing such issues as the justification for measuring ethnicity, the use of ethnic statistics, the relevance of concepts and the accuracy of the statistics. In this regard the views of a wide range of users of ethnic statistics were canvassed and several studies of the accuracy of specific statistics were initiated. The final chapter proposes a number of changes which could be made to existing collections and systems which may resolve some of the problems outlined in Chapter 2.

## CHAPTER 1

### DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT OFFICIAL ETHNIC STATISTICS

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a description of current official data collections which are used for statistical purposes and which contain an ethnic item. The collections have been grouped under the subject-matter headings of population, vital and migration; crime and justice; labour force and employment; health; education and social welfare. These groupings tend to coincide with divisions of administrative responsibility vested with government departments. By virtue of their official status, most of the collections described serve primarily administrative purposes within the respective departments which range from policy planning to the monitoring and management of activities, programmes, operations and resources.

The chapter is organised as follows. Within each area a general description of the nature, source and method of collection and processing of each collection is given. This is followed by a specific description of the ethnic item in each collection. The section is completed with a description of the form and availability of the ethnic-specific statistics produced.

#### POPULATION, VITAL AND EXTERNAL MIGRATION

##### Population

The census is conducted by the Department of Statistics every second and seventh year of each decade. The object of the census is to ascertain the size and location of the population and dwellings of New Zealand and to provide information on selected characteristics of these dwellings and their population. Census information is used for a variety of purposes including the setting of electoral boundaries by the Representation Commission; social and economic planning by government, regional and local authorities; and various types of research and planning by the business and education sectors and the community in general.

All dwellings in New Zealand are enumerated and all persons in occupied dwellings at the time of the census are required to complete, or have completed on their behalf, a return. The data so obtained are processed by the Department of Statistics and made available in a variety of forms ranging from news releases, published volumes of tables, unpublished tables on request and computer generated tables on request.



The question in the 1981 Census, which was labelled 'ethnic origin' required the respondent to indicate, by ticking the appropriate box, whether he or she was of full 'European or Caucasian', 'New Zealand Maori', 'Samoan', 'Cook Island Maori', 'Chinese', 'Indian', 'Niuean', 'Tongan' or 'Other (specify)', origin. If the respondent was not of full origin he or she was required to specify the degree (proportions) of the respective origins.

As the label suggests, this item is based on a biological concept of ethnicity and thus attempts to measure the biological (racial) composition of the individual. This response was classified into one of 296 categories which reflected various combinations and degrees of origins. The categories distinguished one, two and three or more origins; and 'full', 'predominant' (less than full but greater than half), 'equal degree' (half) and 'less than half' degrees of the specific origins.

Traditionally, ethnic statistics have been presented in the two subject-matter volumes 'Birthplaces and Ethnic Origins' and 'Maori Population and Dwellings'. An additional volume, 'Pacific Island Polynesians' is to be produced from the 1981 Census.

These volumes contain a selection of tables which classify the different ethnic populations by a wide range of demographic and socio-economic variables. For all individuals these include age, sex, religious affiliation, duration of residence in New Zealand, location of current residence, and location of residence one and five years ago. For individuals 15 years of age and over additional variables include marital status, number of children born to ever married women, employment status, occupation, industry, income, education and social security benefits. The Maori volume contains additional tables relating to dwellings and households and their characteristics (e.g. dwelling type and construction, amenities, number of rooms, household type and composition, etc.).

In addition to these published tables, a large number of unpublished tables are available on request to users. The Department also offers a user request service which provides computer generated tables from a sample of unit records taken from the census. Users are charged to defray costs.

#### Vital and External Migration

Vital statistics refer to births, deaths and marriages; and external migration statistics to the gross and net flows of population into and out of New Zealand. All vital events in New Zealand are required to be registered under legislation which is administered by the Department of Justice. Births and deaths

statistics are compiled by the Department of Statistics from data received from the Registrar of Births and Deaths nearest the place where the event occurred, and marriage statistics are compiled from the records of the Registrar-General. External migration statistics are also compiled by the Department of Statistics from data collected by the Department of Labour from all passengers entering or leaving New Zealand via air or sea ports.

In addition to their prime administrative uses, vital and external migration data provide a rich source of demographic and social statistics which are used in government and business planning. Together with external migration data, births and deaths data are used by the Department of Statistics to calculate quarterly intercensal estimates of the Total and Maori populations.

Vital data are obtained from the Birth Registration Form and the Death Guide Form and external migration data are obtained from sea and air Arrival and Departure Cards. A birth registration form is mailed to the parents of all new born babies and is required to be completed by either parent and returned to the Registrar within two months of the date of birth. The funeral director is responsible for completing the Death Guide Form and arriving and departing passengers are required to complete the Arrival and Departure Cards. Migration arrival and departure statistics are compiled from a one-in-four sample of short-term migrants and all returns of long-term and permanent migrants.

The ethnic item on the Birth and Death forms comprises two questions. One asks the 'degree of Maori blood and tribe and/or degree of Pacific Island blood and Island (if any) of the baby's/decendent's father'. The other question refers to the baby's/decendent's mother. Thus, information is required only if one or both parents are of Maori or Pacific Island descent. The underlying concept is biological, the same as that of the Census of Population and Dwellings. The ethnicity of the baby/decendent is determined by calculating the average of the combined ethnicity of the parents.

The ethnic item on the Migration Cards asks New Zealand citizens and permanent residents only to indicate, by ticking the appropriate box, whether they are 'A Maori', 'A Part-Maori' or 'Other'. This question recently replaced one which asked all persons who had been or intended to stay in New Zealand for more than 30 days, to indicate, in the same manner, whether they were 'half or more New Zealand Maori', 'Cook Island Maori', 'Other Polynesian (specify)' or 'Not Maori or Polynesian'. The new question reflects a cultural affiliation concept in contrast to the biological concept (for the 'New Zealand Maori' category, anyway) of the previous question.

Vital and external migration statistics and quarterly estimates of the New Zealand Maori population are published by the Department of Statistics in news releases and the 'Monthly Abstract of Statistics' as they become available, and on an annual basis in 'Vital Statistics' and 'New Zealand Population and Migration: Part B External Migration.' Additional selected unpublished tables are available on request and further tables may be generated from computer files on request from and at the expense of the user.

Birth statistics are classified according to live births, still births (late foetal death), neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths, infant mortality, nuptial and ex-nuptial births and first and subsequent confinement. Tabulations of these statistics are available by a wide range of variables including ethnic group, sex of child, location of registration and usual residence of parents, ethnic group of mother and father, previous issue of mother, occupation of father and duration of marriage.

Death statistics are available similarly in tabular form, classified by location of registration office and usual residence of decedent; sex, age, ethnic group, marital status, birthplace, duration of New Zealand residence and occupation of decedent; and ethnic group of each parent of the decedent. Ethnicity data are not collected on the marriage registration form, consequently ethnic-specific marriage statistics are not available.

Arrival and departure migration statistics are classified according to temporary or short-term visitors (staying less than 12 months); long-term migrants (more than 12 months, but not permanent); and permanent migrants. Tabulations are available by age, sex, marital status, occupation, ethnic group, country of birth, nationality, purpose of travel and intended length of stay/absence.

#### CRIME AND JUSTICE

Discussion in this section will be confined to the criminal area because ethnic-specific statistics are currently confined to arrest cases and prison inmates. Offences prosecuted by Traffic Authorities are excluded because they do not collect ethnic data.

Data relating to criminal proceedings are collected by the Police and Department of Justice. When a person is apprehended by the Police, relevant information, including selected socio-demographic characteristics, are recorded on an Offender Report form. Together with data from other forms these are input to the Wanganui Computer. These data, and derived statistics, are used by the Police to assist in their day-to-day operations and to monitor and assess performance.

If and when a case proceeds to court the selected socio-demographic data, together with other data, are copied from the Police to Department of Justice files on the Wanganui Computer. As a case proceeds through the courts more data are added. The Department of Justice uses these data and derived statistics to assist in monitoring workloads and performance and in the allocation and management of resources.

The Department of Justice supplies the Department of Statistics with a file of completed cases on a monthly basis. These data are processed by the Department of Statistics and made available to the public in a variety of forms ranging from news releases to published volumes of tables.

In addition to data supplied directly from the Wanganui computer, the Department of Statistics also receives court returns specifically referring to District Court Jury Trials and High Court cases, Returns from prisons administered by the Department of Justice and from police gaols. However, much of the data on these returns originates from Wanganui files.

The Police collect 'race' information on the Offender Report form. The attending officer is instructed to ask the apprehended person his or her race and the categories provided on the form are 'Caucasian', 'Pacific Islander', 'Indian', 'Maori', 'Asian', 'Negro', 'Other' and 'Unknown'. The underlying concept of this measure is one of cultural affiliation.

While 'race' or 'ethnic origin' data are recorded on a number of other Department of Justice forms, the source is usually data originally collected by the Police on the Offender Report form. An exception is the Prisoner Reception form completed by prison officers on the reception of a prisoner. The prison officers, who attend an annual training session on the completion of statistical forms, are instructed to complete the ethnic item in the same manner as the Police, using the same categories.

The Police Department does not publish currently statistics about offences and offenders, although the Annual Report to Parliament contains an appended table showing type of offences reported by means of clearance. Tabulations of incidents and offences by location, race, age and sex of offender are available on request from the Police Department.

The Department of Statistics publishes specific summary annual returns such as 'District Courts' in news release form as soon as they become available. Additional unpublished tables are available on request. Larger collections such as Prisons and Prisoners and High Court (Criminal) are published in statistical bulletins when they become available. All are brought together in the annual 'Justice Statistics' volume which covers the courts of general jurisdiction (Appeal, High, District, Children and



Young Persons and Family) and penal institutions. The format of the published statistics reflects the institutional structure of the justice system, with tables referring to persons or cases proceeding through various courts or institutions. Tables referring specifically to Maori offenders are available showing offences and punishments of persons sentenced by type of punishment, length of sentence and sex, for cases proceeding through the High Court and District Court Jury Trials; and arrest cases resulting in conviction by offence type, age and sex, for cases proceeding through the District Court and Children and Young Persons Court. Ethnic-specific statistics for groups other than Maoris are not published currently. However, various tables based on the eight-category Police classification are available on request.

#### LABOUR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

Data relating to the composition and activities of the labour force are collected by the Departments of Labour and Statistics. The Department of Labour conducts a quarterly employment survey of business establishments which covers a selection of industries. In addition, statistics on the registered unemployed and apprentices are compiled from administrative records. The quarterly employment survey obtains summary returns from business establishments, and apart from sex, provides no other socio-demographic details about employees. An ethnic item was included in the registered unemployed and apprenticeship collections up until the mid 1970s, when it was withdrawn. The Department of Statistics collects ethnic-specific labour force and employment data in the five-yearly Census of Population and Dwellings. This collection has been described in the section dealing with population statistics and will not be elaborated further in this section.

#### HEALTH

Statistics on various aspects of the health of the population are compiled by the National Health Statistics Centre (NHSC) of the Department of Health from data supplied by hospitals, the medical profession and the Registrar of Births and Deaths. Mortality statistics are produced from the latter source and have been described in the section dealing with vital statistics.

Statistics on morbidity, mental health and the flow of patients through hospitals are produced from statistical forms supplied by hospitals. Additional statistics on the prevalence of specific diseases, such as cancer, are produced from special registers.

Socio-demographic data about hospital patients are recorded on the Hospital Admission Form by the Hospital Admission Clerk. The necessary information is usually obtained by questioning the patient either during or after admission and if the patient is unable to provide details a relation or accompanying person may be asked. When the admission has been booked in advance forms may be sent to the patient to complete before admission.

Statistics on a variety of other health related matters are produced by other departments. The Department of Statistics has from time to time included health related items in the Census of Population and Dwellings, covering subjects such as smoking behaviour and the prevalence of sugar diabetes. The Department of Labour and Ministry of Transport produce statistics on industrial accidents, health hazards and motor accidents. However, none of the latter collections include an ethnic item.

Apart from the Census of Population and Dwellings and the vital collections which have been described in a previous section, the only other collections containing an ethnic item are those based on the Hospital Admission form.

The ethnic item on the Hospital Admission form comprises a box with the words 'Maori', 'Pacific Islander', and 'Other' listed, although there is provision for those hospitals using the computerised admission/discharge system to expand this into a 12-category classification which distinguishes 'NZ Maori', 'Cook Island Maori', 'Niuean', 'Samoan', 'Tongan', 'Tokelauan', 'Fijian', 'Other Pacific Islanders', 'Chinese', 'Indian', 'European' and 'Other'. While there is no written instruction on how to collect and record the information either accompanying or on the form, hospital clerical/administrative staff receive instructions as part of their internal training. The form of the question suggests an underlying cultural affiliation concept.

Statistics which distinguish the Maori and Pacific Island populations are contained in the NHSC regular publications 'Hospital and Selected Morbidity Data', 'Trends in Health and Health Services' and 'Foetal and Infant Deaths'. The first features one table showing the number of patients in public hospitals by disease group, length of stay and bed usage. The second includes a number of tables dealing with births and deaths as well as specific diseases such as tuberculosis. It should be noted that any tables dealing with mortality as opposed to morbidity are based on data from the Registrar of Births and Deaths and therefore reflect the Population Census biological concept of ethnicity. Statistics relating specifically to Maoris are found in the above publications and NHSC publications 'Mental Health Data', 'Mortality and Demographic Data' and 'Cancer Data'. The last two publications use data obtained from the Registrar of Births and Deaths, and the first uses the Population Census definition of Maori.

In addition to the regular annual statistical volumes, the Department of Health publishes a Special Report series dealing with specific subject-matter areas and health related topics. Over one-third of the sixty reports published since 1960 have included tables with a race or ethnic classification. Six of these reports have dealt specifically with the Maori population: '1. Maori-European Standards of Health 1960', '2. Maori Patients in Mental Hospitals', '24. Diseases of the Ear, Nose and Throat in Maori Children', '25. Maori Patients in Public Hospitals', '26. The Health of Two Groups of Cook Island Maoris', and '37. Maori-European Comparisons in Mortality'.

### EDUCATION

Statistics about persons currently attending educational institutions are produced by the Department of Education from various returns supplied by these institutions. The statistics are used by both the Department of Education and the originating institutions for planning and evaluation purposes.

Almost all data from educational institutions are obtained in summary form. For example, teachers in schools are asked to supply total numbers of students in various categories in their classes. These classroom returns are consolidated at each school and forwarded to the Department of Education. Annual returns of children/students attending playcentres, kindergartens and other preschool groups; primary, intermediate and secondary schools; and teachers colleges, technical institutes and universities are all taken at 1 July. In addition, returns of returning secondary school students are taken at 1 March; attainments and probable destinations of secondary school leavers are taken through out the year and forwarded to the Department of Education by the end of March; and schedules of School Certificate applicants are forwarded to the Department of Education by the end of September.

The only unit return is that supplied by technical institutes, where each student is required to complete an individual questionnaire. School Certificate applicants also complete individual applications. However, statistical data on ethnicity are extracted at the respective schools and recorded on a summary return.

The only other major source of regular education statistics is the Census of Population and Dwellings, which provides statistics on levels of attendance and achievement of the population. This source has been discussed in a previous section and will not be elaborated further here.

All Department of Education summary returns of children or students attending preschool, primary, intermediate, secondary,

tertiary (technical institutes and teacher training colleges) institutions make some provision for recording Maori, and in some cases Maori and/or Pacific Island or Polynesian populations.

'Maoris' and 'Polynesians' are recorded separately in sub-totals of tables on the three preschool returns (i.e. free kindergartens, playcentres and other preschool groups). There are no accompanying definitions or instructions on any of these returns.

The Annual Return of Primary and Intermediate Pupils at 1 July has duplicate tables for recording 'total' and 'Maori' populations. An accompanying definition states that a 'Maori' is '.... a person of any degree of Maori descent who culturally identifies himself as Maori'. This definition indicates that the intent of the question is to measure ethnicity according to a cultural affiliation concept.

The manner in which the ethnic populations are measured and recorded in secondary schools varies from return to return. The Annual Return of Secondary Students at 1 July is the same as the primary pupils return. The Return of Secondary Students at 1 March form includes a combined 'Maori and Pacific Island' total, and a footnote explains that the data are '..... required for grant purposes. Other nationalities are to be included if English is their second language'. These comments suggest that the real purpose of this question is to identify all non-english speaking ethnic groups.

Principals are instructed to indicate which School Certificate examination candidates are Maori by entering an 'M' beside their name on the Schedule of Applicants. An accompanying definition defines Maori as 'any descendent of a Maori' which suggests a biological concept. The Return of Attainments and Probable Destinations of Secondary School Leavers form has duplicate tables for the total and Maori populations, but has no accompanying definitions.

The Technical and Continuing Education form is the only unit return and includes an item labelled 'student group'. The respondent is required to ring one of five categories labelled 'Maori', 'Pacific Islander' (specify) 'European/Pakeha', 'Asian' 'Other' (specify). The six teacher training college returns provide for separate recording of 'Maori' and 'Pacific Island' sub-totals on tables. There are no accompanying definitions. The 1 July returns supplied to the Department of Education by the University Grants Committee make no provision for the recording of ethnicity.

The Department of Education publishes an annual volume of statistics entitled Education Statistics of New Zealand. Tables are presented according to the International Standard



Classification of Education which distinguishes 'level' and 'field' of education. A selection of tables are cross-classified by age and/or sex of students and some include 'Maori' or 'Maori and Pacific Island or Polynesian' sub-totals. Additional tables produced from the returns described above are available on request from the department.

#### SOCIAL WELFARE

In this final section we consider those statistics produced by the Department of Social Welfare. The two main operational areas of the department are (a) Benefits and Pensions, and (b) Social Work. Ethnic group data are collected in the latter area only and relate to Juvenile Offending, Adoptions and State Wards.

Statistics on Juvenile Offending are produced from data on persons under the age of 17 years passing through the Children's Board, Youth Aid Consultations and Children and Young Persons Courts. Statistics on Adoptions are produced from data supplied by the Registrar-General of Births and Deaths with whom all adoptions in New Zealand are required to be registered. Statistics on State Wards<sup>1</sup> are produced from returns supplied by Department of Social Welfare district offices. While basic demographic data are captured for all wards under the department's care, ethnic group data is captured for only those in Department of Social Welfare institutions which, in 1980, comprised about 5 percent.

In each of the three collections (Juvenile Offending, Adoptions, and State Wards) the ethnic item is referred to as 'race' and is based on the same concept used in the Census of Population and Dwellings (i.e. biological).

Information on the race of juvenile offenders is taken from the Juvenile Offenders Case Record, which has a section where the social workers who fill in the forms are required to record information about race. The coding instructions for the form state that race should be coded as two digits, coding the appropriate digit twice if the person is of one race only; and coding the lower digit first if of two races, regardless of the proportions. If the person is of more than two races the coder is instructed to code the two which 'seems to be the most important'.

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<sup>1</sup> A State Ward is a child who, for various reasons relating to individual or family circumstances, has been placed under the guardianship of the Director-General of Social Welfare.

The same method of recording and coding is used for children who are adopted and State Wards.

The coding categories (single digit) include 'European', 'Maori', 'Samoan', 'Cook Islander (incl. Rarotongan)', 'Niuean', 'Other Pacific Islander (incl. Fijian, Tongan, Tokelauan, etc.)', 'Pacific Islander (specified as such)', 'Chinese or Indian (incl. Fijian Indian)', 'Other races', and 'Unknown, not stated'.

A selection of tables derived from these three are included in the statistical appendix of the Department of Social Welfare's Annual Report to Parliament, but no ethnic group breakdowns are included. However tables based on ethnic group sub-populations, or containing ethnic group breakdowns are available on request from the department.

Extensive use of ethnic group breakdowns of information collected by the department has been made by the Joint Committee On Young Offenders in its investigations of the effect of socio-economic status and ethnic affiliation on offending statistics. The Department of Social Welfare is shortly to produce the first of an annually updated series of summaries of information on Juvenile offending and disaggregations of offending information by ethnic group will be included in these summaries.

## CHAPTER 2

RELEVANCY AND RELIABILITYINTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the issues of relevancy and reliability - what need is there for ethnic statistics, how useful are they and how are they used, do they measure the right thing and how well do they measure it? In seeking to throw some light on these issues, facts and opinions were sought from a wide range of organisations and individuals who it was thought might have an interest in this area. Where possible, appropriate data were gathered and analysed in order to obtain some information on the reliability of selected statistics.

A circular letter outlining the objectives of the investigation was sent during September 1981 to 103 organisations and individuals and eventually submissions were received from 58. A list of individuals and organisations which made submissions is given in Appendix A. In addition to those organisations and individuals who made submissions, information was obtained from departmental files and various published sources which are referenced where appropriate.

The reliability of ethnic statistics, by which is meant their general accuracy, may be affected by a variety of factors operating at any or all levels of their production, including reporting and processing. In the case of ethnic statistics it was considered that misclassification of ethnicity occurring at the reporting stage was likely to comprise the main source of error. Consequently, the investigation has concentrated on exploring this facet of accuracy.

Several studies were undertaken to ascertain the degree of inconsistency with corresponding responses in the Population Census. The collections covered included birth and death registrations and external migration records, as well as school attendance statistics. A comparison was also made between ethnic responses to the Social Indicators Survey and Population Census in order to examine the relationship of the respective biological and cultural affiliation concepts and census data were analysed in order to ascertain the degree of inconsistency of ethnic responses within families. Reference to the findings of these studies will be made in this chapter and substantive reports are contained in the appendices.

The choice of the subject-matter areas which these studies covered and the manner in which they were investigated was determined partly by the accessibility of the data and partly by



the availability of resources. Practical considerations and limitations of time and resources precluded a broader and more detailed examination of the reliability of ethnic statistics. However, those statistics examined constitute a central core of the current statistics.

#### WHY MEASURE ETHNICITY?

##### The Development of an Ethnic Origin Classification in the Census

The questions of why ethnicity is measured in official statistics and if it should be at all are complex ones and difficult to deal with adequately in the confines of this investigation. However, it is possible to throw some light on these questions by exploring the development of ethnic statistics in a particular collection - the Population Census - and by examining the current debate surrounding the publication and use of ethnic statistics. The Population Census provides a convenient case to study because of its importance as a source of social statistics and because of its role in the derivation of many other important ethnic statistics.

The development of ethnic statistics in the Census must be understood within the particular configuration of race relations in New Zealand - between the European colonisers and indigenous Maoris on the one hand and immigrant Chinese gold-miners on the other hand.

The first general census in New Zealand was undertaken in 1851 under the provisions of the Census Ordinance of the same year. The Maori population was not covered in this census. It was not until 1857-58 that they were enumerated in a separate 'Maori Census' and it was not until 1874 that these censuses became regular, subsequent to the 1867 Franchise Act which gave Maoris separate representation. In the intervening period the onset and aftermath of the Land Wars precluded census taking of the Maoris. The 'European' and 'Maori' populations continued to be enumerated in separate censuses until 1951 when the two were combined.

The separate enumeration of Maoris was based mainly on practical reasons - they were more difficult to enumerate than the 'European' population partly because of their dispersed location and different lifestyle, and partly because of their often unco-operative and hostile attitude toward European census-takers. The Maoris were engaged in a series of Land Wars with the Europeans from the 1840s into the 1880s and in the wake of these wars minimised contact with Europeans. Less information was collected from Maoris than Europeans and their census was administered by a census sub-enumerator, in contrast to the European schedule which was self-administered (by the head of household).

Half-caste Maori-Europeans were allocated to the European or Maori population according to their 'mode of living', whereas persons greater than half-Maori blood were allocated to the Maori population, regardless of their mode of living. This method of allocation continued up to the 1926 Census, when all persons of half or more Maori blood were classified as Maori, regardless of their mode of living, in accordance with the definition contained in the Census and Statistics Act 1910. This definition has remained operative since, regardless of the fact that there have been legislative changes in the definition of Maori in several key Acts. Before examining these later developments in more detail it will be useful to first discuss the possible origin of the 'degree of blood' classification.

The early census reports give no clear and unequivocal indication of the source and rationale of the 'degree of blood' or 'biological' concept used to classify the Maori population. They do, however, contain considerable discussion of the Maori population and its circumstances as revealed by the statistics, and together with other historical commentaries it is possible to gain some understanding of the basis of the classification.

The first point of interest is the allocation up to the 1926 Census of half-caste Maori-Europeans to the Maori or European population according to their mode of living. One of the possible reasons for initially distinguishing half-castes and allocating them in this manner was as a measure of the absorption of the Maori race. Governors Grey and Gore-Brown had pursued policies of amalgamation of the two races and as noted by the Under-Secretary of Native Affairs in 1911,

'It is an idea of many people that the ultimate fate of the Maori race is to become absorbed in the European. Whether any tendency is shown in this direction must be gathered from the increase or decrease in the number of half-castes.'

The manner of allocation of half-castes up to 1926 was also a matter of convenience for the census takers. Maoris and Europeans were enumerated in separate censuses, the former being enumerated in hapus and tribes and the latter in households. Thus half-castes living as Maoris needed to be counted in that enumeration because in general they did not form households in the European sense of the word. Similarly, it would have been difficult to allocate half-castes living as Europeans into hapus or tribes.

In these early censuses it was relatively easy to distinguish the two populations in terms of geographical location, life-style and racial composition. After the Land Wars the decimated Maoris had withdrawn from contact with the European society and these dimensions were reinforced. However, by the turn of the century these dimensions began to blur as Maoris progressively broke out

of their isolation and came back into contact with Europeans and their society. Furthermore, this re-emergence was attended by a 'renaissance' of Maori culture and values, with the emergence of young Maori leaders such as Maui Pomare, Aripana Ngata and Te Ranqi Hiroa (Oliver, 1960; Pool 1977). Thus the cumulative effect of miscegenation on the racial composition of the Maori population, the marked changes in their location and lifestyle as they progressively participated in the European society, and their desire to enhance their politico-cultural identity, meant that it was not only increasingly difficult to apply the classification, but also that the results were of decreasing relevance.

The 1910 Census and Statistics Act altered the definition of Maori to include all persons of half or more Maori blood, regardless of their mode of living. Thus persons of half blood who might previously have been allocated to the European population by virtue of their mode of living were now defined as Maori. However, this new definition did not become operative until the 1926 Census when it had become virtually impossible to apply the mode of living criterion because so few Maoris were 'living as Maoris' and when the organisation and administration of the Maori Census was harmonised with the European one.

Given the high levels of Maori-European miscegenation by the 1920s and the historical trend, it was expected that the population of Maori descent would exhibit a broader range of blood mixes than previously measured. Accordingly, respondents in the 1926 Census were asked to report their degree of ancestry in terms of 'full', 'three-quarter', 'half' or 'quarter'. However, it was noted in the 'Race Alien' volume that the distinction was more apparent than real since the majority of respondents had reported themselves 'full' or 'half'.

Further evidence of heaping was provided in two studies undertaken by Te Ranqi Hiroa (1924) in 1918 on a group of Maori servicemen and in 1922 on a group of Maori school children. The surveys of 814 servicemen and 4,000 Maori children showed that 52 and 50 percent respectively claimed to be full Maori. In contrast the 1916, 1921 and 1926 Censuses showed that of all persons claiming Maori descent, 87, 87 and 71 percent respectively claimed to be full Maori. These results should be treated with caution since it is not known to what extent Te Ranqi Hiroa's groups represented the population and the census figures of full Maoris include children of half-caste and full Maoris. However, the magnitude of the differences does lend support to the notion that persons of Maori ancestry were overstating their degree of Maori blood and that heaping was occurring in the 'full' and 'half' categories. One plausible explanation of this phenomenon is that some Maoris have tended to respond to the census question in terms of self-identification rather than their actual degree of Maori blood. This view is

supported by a number of anthropologists and others including Metge, 1964; Penfold, 1973; Pool, 1963, 1977; Firth, 1959; Hohepa, 1961; and Harre, 1965 (cited in Pool, 1977). The possible impact and effects of such misclassification will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The point to be made here is that there is evidence to suggest that since at least the turn of the century the biological definition of Maori (i.e. half or more Maori blood) has not been accepted by a considerable proportion of the Maori population as a valid measure of their ethnicity.

In 1974 and 1975 there were important changes to the definition of Maori contained in the Maori Affairs and Electoral Acts respectively. Both Acts which had previously defined Maoris as persons who had half or more Maori blood were amended to allow persons of any degree of Maori descent to be defined as Maori. The specific wording of the new definition in the Maori Affairs Act was:

'Maori means a person of the Maori race of New Zealand; and includes any descendant of such a person.'

The wording of the new definition in the Electoral Act was the same, with the addition of the words 'who elects to be considered as a Maori for the purposes of this Act'. However, this addition was deleted in 1980 in a further amendment and the two definitions are now identical.

The objective of these amendments was to extend the racial composition criterion from half or more Maori blood to Maori descent, thus allowing a person of Maori descent to be recognised legally as a Maori if he or she so wished. The spirit of this change was summarised by the Minister of Maori Affairs who, in speaking to the second reading of the Maori Affairs Amendment Bill 1974 said,

'The proposals confirm what has been the practice for some years, and merely gives effect to social identity as a net result of intermarriage in New Zealand.'

Thus, the amendments had the intention of changing the definition of Maori from one based on racial composition alone to one based on self-identification, conditional on descent. However, while this may have been the intention, it was not the effect when it came to the precise legal definition of Maori. A statistical definition is required in the Electoral Act in order to determine the General Electoral Population which excludes the Maori Electoral Population. Prior to the 1976 Census, the Department of Statistics sought from the Crown Law Office an opinion regarding the interpretation of the definition of Maori contained in the 1974 amendment to the Electoral Act. The reply stated that for the purposes of this Act Maoris were:

- (a) all Maoris of pure blood; and
- (b) all persons of less than pure blood who elected to be



considered as Maoris for the purpose of the Act.

Without going into the implications of this for the calculation of the Maori Electoral Population, it can be seen that the way in which the definition was framed meant that full Maoris were 'Maori' by definition whereas persons of less than full descent had, in addition, to self-identify (i.e., elect) in order to be Maori. When the 'electing' criterion is absent, as in the Maori Affairs Act and the subsequent amended Electoral Act definitions, then descent is sufficient to be a Maori. Thus, in legal terms, persons of any Maori descent are Maori, regardless of how they identify. This was clearly not the intention of the amendments, which held descent to be a necessary, but not sufficient condition to be Maori.

In addition to the traditional 'degree of blood' question, the 1976 Census included a question which asked all respondents whether or not they were descended from a Maori. It is not clear why the question was asked in this form, since it did not reflect the spirit of the Maori Affairs or Electoral Act definitions and it was designed and administered before the Crown Law Office opinion was received. In the event, the response to these questions in the 1976 Census was highly unreliable. It appeared that many respondents confused the two questions, some giving inconsistent responses, and others responding to one, but not the other. The effect of this was that the number of persons of half-blood and between full and half-blood was grossly under-reported. It was decided to supplement this category with the category containing all persons who had claimed Maori descent but not reported their degree of blood which, it would appear, has had the opposite effect and resulted in an overstatement of the number of persons of half or more Maori blood.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent to the 1976 Census no attempt was made to redevelop the ethnic questions and in the 1981 Census the degree of blood question was retained and the Maori descent question dropped.

The foregoing discussion has attempted to throw some light on the rationale of the classification of Maoris as it has developed in the census. However, Maoris are by no means the only ethnic group which has been classified in the census, nor the only group which has influenced the way in which ethnic groups are classified. Since 1916 the census has included a question which asks respondents to record their race. More recently the term 'race' has been dropped in favour of 'ethnic origin'. However, the essential form of the question has remained unchanged. In the 1916 Census non-European respondents were asked to report if they were 'Maori', 'Chinese', 'Japanese', 'Hindu', 'Javanese', 'Negro', 'Polynesian', etc., or 'Maori half-caste', 'Chinese

<sup>2</sup> Further details may be found in the introduction to 'Census of Population and Dwellings 1976 Volume 3, Maori Population and Dwellings.'

half-caste', etc. The question had been included in the 1916 Census pursuant to the Census and Statistics Act 1910 which stated, among other things, that the information collected on individuals should include their extraction and place of birth. One of the purposes of this question was to identify Maoris who might be living in European households but who, nevertheless, were to be allocated to the Maori population. The other purpose, as the categories above testify, was to classify 'coloured' or 'asiatic' groups and, in particular, the Chinese. Chinese miners began to drift from the Australian goldfields in the 1850s and by the mid-1860s began to arrive in larger numbers. The 1867 Census identified 1,279 Chinese (by country of birth) and they reached a maximum of 5,033 at the 1881 Census (1.02 percent of the total 'European' population).

The immigration of Chinese met with considerable resistance from the European community because of the competition they represented to established European gold-miners and later to traders and gardeners; and also for reasons which today would be considered clearly racist. The following passage from the 1926 Census 'Volume 6: Race Aliens' illustrates this latter point:

'The importance of racial purity has long been a consideration of immigration legislation. The view has been taken that the coalescence of the white and so-called coloured races is not conducive to improvement in racial types. The presence in a population of considerable groups of individuals of alien races who cannot be readily assimilated into that population, or whose assimilation, for reasons dependent upon the physical and other characteristics of the respective races, is not attended with advantage, presents administrative difficulties of no mean degree.'

The feeling against the Chinese was so strong that between 1881 and 1926 specific measures were enacted which were designed to limit and eventually stop the immigration of Chinese. In 1881 a poll tax and shipping limitation was introduced, in 1889 a language test was introduced and in 1926 legislation which denied Chinese permanent residence was enacted. While this early immigration legislation was not directed solely at the Chinese, they were clearly a group of particular concern.

The introduction of the race question to the 1916 Census was accompanied by a new Census Report entitled 'Race Aliens' which, for the first time, gave a detailed socio-demographic description of the race categories in question, with tables on location, age, sex, religious profession, conjugal condition, educational achievement and occupation. In the census reports covering the first two decades of the century considerable attention was focussed on the 'conjugal condition' of the Chinese and the subsequent impact of miscegenation, reflecting the concerns articulated in the above quote. By 1926 the 'problem' was

effectively resolved by the operation of restrictive immigration policy. Subsequently, the word 'alien' was dropped from the title of the 'Race Alien' volume of the 1926 Census, at which time the Chinese population had fallen to 2,943, about the same as the 1871 level.

The rationale of the race classification introduced at the 1916 Census was discussed in the 'Race Alien' report of that census and was reiterated in subsequent censuses. The stated objective was to distinguish the 'European', 'Maori' and 'Race Alien' categories, the selection of which was based on 'popular conceptions' of race rather than 'scientific definitions'. This confirms that the categories were essentially socially defined and more particularly that they represented groups (i.e., Maoris and Race Aliens) perceived by the dominant 'European' group to pose problems. In the case of the Maoris the problem was how to facilitate their integration into New Zealand (i.e. European) society. In the case of Race Aliens the problem was reversed - how to restrict their entry. One aspect of the integration of Maoris was the granting of franchise in 1867 which took the form of separate representation. Statistics on the size and location of the Maori population were required to assist in the review and determination of the respective electoral boundaries.

From the 1916 Census all Maoris living in the South Island were, for reasons of convenience, enumerated in the European Census. At the 1951 Census, the Maori Census was completely incorporated into the European Census since the original reasons for administering separate censuses (i.e., linguistic, locational and mode of living differences) had all but disappeared. So too had the original reasons justifying the classification of race aliens. A commentary in the General Report of the 1951 Census noted that 'race' as used in the census had little in common with anthropological conceptions, but rather divided the population 'roughly on the basis of colour and geographic location' (i.e., origin). However, the classification continued to reflect the original rationale as evidenced by apparent inconsistencies such as the classification of persons of Russian or Turkish origin as 'European' while persons of Lebanese and Syrian origin were classified as 'Other'.

The essential form of the race, or 'ethnic origin' question as it now tends to be called, has changed little since it was first introduced in 1916. Persons of more than one origin are now asked to record the relative proportions of each origin and they are classified on the basis of the predominant origin (i.e., greater than or equal to one-half). Furthermore, the classification continues to be used to identify and describe those groups which constitute a 'problem' by virtue of their disadvantaged social and economic position relative to the total population. Thus, in addition to the usual volumes dealing with Maoris and ethnic groups in general, it is planned to publish a

1981 Census Volume which deals specifically with the Pacific Island Polynesian group.

In the preceding discussion an attempt has been made to locate the development of the ethnic classification in the census within the context of some of the broader social issues which it reflected. Thus, it has been argued that this classification primarily reflected the configuration of race relations in New Zealand - in particular the concern of the dominant European group to facilitate the integration of Maoris into the European society on the one hand, and to restrict the entry of Asians on the other hand. However, these concerns are no longer salient. The Asian problem was resolved with the passing of the gold rushes and restrictive immigration legislation. The ideology of integration is being progressively displaced by a rival ideology of multiculturalism which holds that cultural and ethnic diversity within a society should be nurtured rather than starved. This ideological shift and the underlying social situation it reflects means that the traditional basis of ethnic measurement in the census is no longer relevant and that new initiatives are required. This matter will be addressed later in this report.

#### Ethnicity and Social Inequality

In the previous discussion dealing with the development of the ethnic classification in the Population Census two principal reasons were advanced for the classification of ethnic groups in official statistics. One related to the need for precise information on the size and location of the Maori and non-Maori population for the purposes of determining electoral boundaries. The other reason was that certain minority ethnic groups, Maoris and Pacific Island Polynesians in particular, appear to suffer a disproportionate share of social and economic disadvantages. Insofar as the promotion of equal opportunity constitutes a major social goal in New Zealand, these groups have been and continue to be the object of social concern. Statistics appear to show that Maoris and Pacific Islanders are disproportionately represented in the unskilled and manual occupations, among the unemployed and among criminal offenders and prisoners; that they receive lower incomes, are less educated and suffer poorer health than the European population. It is not the intention in this investigation to become involved in a detailed discussion of the relationship between ethnicity and social inequality. However, social statistics which reveal apparent inequalities evoke a variety of responses, some of which have a bearing on the actual statistics and which therefore warrant mention in this investigation.

One response is to argue that the ethnic dimension of social inequality is spurious because those ethnic groups which are



disadvantaged are also concentrated in the lower socio-economic or social class strata. In its crudest form this view holds that social inequality of ethnic minorities may be adequately explained in terms of underlying socio-economic differences. However, the statistical evidence is contrary in at least two areas of study in New Zealand. A study of the relationship between race, socio-economic status and offending conducted by the Joint Committee on Young Offenders (Fergusson et al, 1975) showed that only between 16 and 33 percent of the difference in offending rates between Maori and non-Maori boys could be attributed to differences in the socio-economic distribution of the two populations. While this finding certainly lends support to the argument that policies directed towards improving the socio-economic position of Maori boys might lower their offending rates, it also shows that a large portion of the difference is not directly explained by socio-economic status. When the offending rates for Maori boys were standardised for the confounding effects of socio-economic status they were found to be still twice that of non-Maori boys. This particular study did not explore other reasons for the higher offending rates of Maori boys. However, several possible explanations relating to their ethnicity were advanced, namely that the higher rates reflected: problems of adjustment arising from the rural to urban migration of Maoris; differences in behaviour and attitudes arising from cultural values and attitudes different and at odds with those of the dominant European Society; and 'labelling effects', whereby deviant behaviour is mutually reinforced by attitudes of those who label the deviant and the deviant's response to being labelled.

A recent study of patterns of ill-health in New Zealand (Davis, 1982) presented similar findings which showed that while socio-economic class explained a significant proportion of the difference between age-standardised Maori and non-Maori mortality rates, considerable differences remained when the effect of socio-economic status was controlled.

Some more recent sociological explanations have attempted to account for the ethnicity dimension by incorporating it within a theory of social class or stratification rather than denying its relevance, with notions such as "eth-class" and "underclass". However, regardless of which stance is taken on this issue the very fact of their existence and the need to be able to monitor any improvement or deterioration in their state, is reason enough to measure ethnic differentials in official statistics.

Another response to such differentials, particularly those relating to social control (e.g. criminal offending), is to argue that these measures are unreliable because they reflect to a greater or lesser extent the behaviour of the sanctioning institution more than that of the 'clients'. Thus, the 'labelling' explanation mentioned previously holds that the whole

process by which unsocial behaviour is defined and sanctioned is weighted against certain categories of persons (e.g. ethnic minorities) for various reasons, and that these persons consequently become the victims of the institution. Under such circumstances official statistics are held not only to be unreliable, but also to contribute to the labelling process by reinforcing the negative public and self-images of the victims.

The latter charge relates to the use (or abuse) of statistics rather than their publication as such. However, stigmatisation may occur in spite of, as well as because of statistical evidence. Much of the immigration legislation introduced in New Zealand between the 1880s and 1920s was justified on the basis of the supposed threat posed by an uncontrolled and increasing influx of Chinese immigrants, in spite of the fact that the official statistics showed that the Chinese population was relatively small and declining. Thus, the cessation of such official statistics would not necessarily help resolve this problem, and may even help perpetuate it. The mere existence of relevant statistics does not guarantee an informed debate, but their absence makes the possibility of such debate all the more difficult.

The former charge is more difficult to answer because there has been little research done on this subject in New Zealand. On the basis of the findings of a study of labelling (Hampton, 1974), Fergusson et al in their previously mentioned study estimated that the chance of a young Maori offender being prosecuted was between 1.1 and 1.3 times greater than a non-Maori offender. The magnitude of these factors was not large enough to account for the fact that the Maori rate was several times greater than the non-Maori rate. In a follow-up study to the Fergusson et al study (Fifield and Donnell, 1980) it was estimated that in order to explain ethnic differentials in offending rates in terms of 'under-reporting' of non-Maori offences, 5 out of every 6 apprehended non-Maori males offenders and 8 out of every 9 apprehended non-Maori female offenders would have had to escape formal proceedings, a situation which was considered to be extremely unlikely. Thus, the little evidence available in New Zealand tends to support the view that there is some bias in the non-European offending rates arising from differentials in the operation of the justice process, but that such a bias can explain only a small fraction of the observed differences in the official statistics.

Yet another response to ethnic differentials is to argue that they give an unbalanced view by emphasising a negative aspect of the social behaviour and circumstances of the groups in question. This point was made in the course of this investigation by members of the New Zealand Maori Council and officers of the Department of Maori Affairs. It is an important criticism not only because it points to possible deficiencies in what is

measured and the way it is presented, but also because it is indicative of a growing concern by Maoris that official ethnic statistics should be more relevant to their purposes. It was argued previously that the development of ethnic statistics in the Population Census primarily reflected the purposes of the dominant European group. This was seen in the way ethnic categories were defined, the criteria for allocation to categories and the way in which the statistics were presented and discussed in the Census publications.

Current official ethnic statistics are biased in so far as they reflect a view that the 'problem' is that ethnic minorities, such as Maoris, do not conform sufficiently to supposed universal (European) values and standards of social wellbeing. This is not to argue that social goals such as lower unemployment rates, lower offending rates, improved health status and improved educational achievement are not relevant to Maoris, but rather that the problem may be two-sided and that the statistics do not adequately incorporate Maori concerns. The demand for statistics which reflect the specific concerns, aspirations and needs of specific ethnic groups such as Maoris is a natural consequence of a multicultural society. However, in order for this demand to be met adequately the ethnic groups must take a more active role in articulating their statistical needs. If it is left to the collectors of statistics the traditional bias will tend to continue to influence development and the status quo prevail.

An attempt has been made in this section to give a brief outline of why official ethnic statistics are collected and to describe and discuss some of the broader issues surrounding the use and relevancy of these statistics. One aspect of these broader issues which is worth noting is that the concern with the relevancy and quality of the statistics is made more acute by the contentiousness of the debate surrounding their interpretation and use. Consequently, some of the criticism of the statistics really relates more to the subject - the political significance of ethnicity and its relationship with social inequality - than to the statistics themselves. In such circumstances it is therefore all the more important that the statistics are of a sufficient quality to be generally acceptable.

#### USES AND USEFULNESS

##### Introduction

We will now turn our attention back to the subject-matter areas outlined in Chapter 1 and examine in more detail the uses to which the statistics are put, the relevancy of the current concepts and the accuracy of the data.

#### Population, Vital and External Migration

Statistics on the size of various ethnic groups are obtained from the five-yearly Census of Population and Dwellings. In addition, intercensal quarterly estimates of the Maori population are obtained by adjusting the sex and age-specific Maori census population by successive quarterly natural increase and net migration totals obtained from vital registrations and migration arrival and departure cards.

Census-based ethnic statistics were the most commonly mentioned statistics in the investigation of users, reflecting the fact that the census is not only the sole source of ethnic population statistics, but is also the only data source providing a comprehensive range of socio-demographic characteristics of the various ethnic populations. The use of ethnic statistics in general by Government departments is characterised by the fact that very few departments have policies or programmes which deal specifically with ethnic groups or ethnic problems. In the main, ethnic statistics are used to inform the planning and administration of policies and programmes which may have an ethnic dimension.

The Department of Maori Affairs is responsible, under the provisions of the Maori Affairs Act 1953, for the promotion of the health, education and general social wellbeing of all members of the Maori race. The census is the only data source which provides a comprehensive range of socio-economic and demographic data about the Maori population as a whole and therefore constitutes a baseline against which departmental policies may be formulated and programmes monitored.

The Department of Education, together with Maori Affairs and the National Advisory Council on Maori Education shares a concern with the under-achievement of Maori pupils. Census data and data collected in educational institutions are used to monitor the performance of Maori pupils. Census and vital data are used to identify and forecast the size and location of Maori and Pacific Island school-aged populations and to indicate areas of special need. This information is used by the Department of Education in the allocation of staff and other resources and in the formulation of policies. Examples include additional staffing in schools with large numbers of Maoris and Pacific Islanders, provision of Maori language teachers and provision of advisors on Maori and Pacific Island Education.

The Department of Statistics uses Census data to determine the General and Maori Electoral populations pursuant to the Electoral Act 1956. This information is used by the Representation Commission to review and establish electoral boundaries.



The Justice Department uses census data and intercensal estimates of the Maori population in the calculation of various crime and offending rates, the census-based data providing the denominators for such rates. Further details of uses will be given in the crime and justice section. The Health Department makes similar use of census-based data in the calculation of various mortality and morbidity indices.

The Ministry of Works and Development is specifically required under the Town and Country Planning Act 1979 (Section 3) and the National Development Act to take into account the needs and interests of the present and future inhabitants of a district, including minority groups, when planning. The statutory requirements imply a need for information on the distribution and characteristics of the Maori population and other ethnic groups. To this end the Ministry of Works and Development and local and regional authorities which are also bound by these Acts make extensive use of census-based ethnic statistics in their planning. The Auckland, Manukau and Gisborne City Councils, each of which has high concentrations of Maori and/or Pacific Island populations, made submissions along these lines. Other non-government organisations which made submissions concerning the use of census-based ethnic data in planning for the needs and interest of ethnic groups included various Hospital Boards and the main Churches in New Zealand.

The Departments of Internal Affairs, Social Welfare and Labour and the New Zealand Planning Council make use of census-based statistics as background to more generally based policies and programmes. Thus the ethnic dimension is one among a number of others which may warrant consideration. It was apparent from the tenor of the submissions received that the predominant use of ethnic data is to provide such 'background' information. In her book on the use of social statistics in policy formulation in the United States, De Neufville (1975) refers to this as the 'pre-policy' area where statistics are used to assist in the definition of problems prior to or in lieu of the formulation of actual policy. This informative, as opposed to instrumental use, of data in policy planning accounts for the main use of social statistics in general.

In addition to the previously mentioned organisations, other organisations which made submissions regarding the use of census-based ethnic statistics included the Wellington Multicultural Education Resource Centre, the Pacific Island Educational Resource Centre, The New Zealand Geography Association and various university academics involved in teaching, research and consultancy for organisations such as ESCAP. In addition to the Pacific Island organisations previously mentioned, various Pacific Island church groups were also canvassed, but the response was not very good and the tenor of the submissions that were received suggested that little use

is made of ethnic statistics by these communities. However, this may reflect a failure to establish adequate contact with these communities. A better response may have been achieved if different people had been canvassed and a more personal approach used in preference to the impersonal official circular letter which was sent to prospective users.

When making submissions to the investigation respondents were asked to comment on the adequacy of the definitions of ethnicity in the statistics they used. Only a third of those responding addressed this question but, their overwhelming opinion was in favour of a cultural affiliation measure in preference to the biological measure. This might suggest overwhelming support for a cultural affiliation concept, however many of the two thirds who did not state a preference may have been content with the existing definitions (which are in the main based on the biological concept). Alternatively, many in this latter group may not have appreciated fully the issues involved. It was clear from the response however, that there is a significant group of users who have a strong preference for a cultural affiliation based measure. Furthermore, it was obvious from the composition of this group that they tended to be expert and frequent rather than lay and occasional users of ethnic statistics (e.g. Government departments and University researchers.)

The preference for a cultural affiliation concept was supported by two principal arguments. Firstly, it was argued that a biological concept is no longer relevant because it does not reflect the social reality of ethnicity today, particularly in the case of Maoris. The cumulative effect of 150 years of miscegenation has blurred the racial (biological) division, between 'Maori' and 'European' to the extent that any attempt to distinguish the groups on this dimension alone (such as 'half or more Maori descent') is purely arbitrary.

Thus Maoris today would argue that if a person identifies as a Maori then the fact of Maori descent is sufficient for that person to be considered a Maori, the actual degree of descent being irrelevant. This leads to a second argument which holds that it is no longer feasible to use the ethnic origin definition because an increasing number of respondents (particularly Maoris) are unwilling to answer a question which they consider irrelevant or offensive and even if they are willing, find difficult to provide an accurate answer. The quality of response in the 1976 Census gives some support to this contention.

Evidence of considerable inconsistency in ethnic origin reporting was found in several studies conducted in connection with this investigation. One set of studies was conducted to ascertain the effect of the possible misclassification of Maoris in Vital (births and deaths) and external migration statistics on intercensal quarterly estimates of the Maori population. The

Maori population in any intercensal period is estimated by adjusting the base age and sex-specific Maori census population by subsequent net natural and migration increases, which are obtained from vital and migration statistics. In order to ascertain the possible magnitudes of misclassification error in the vital and external migration statistics samples of records of births and migration arrivals occurring the first quarter of 1981 and deaths and migration departures occurring in the second quarter of 1981 were matched with 1981 Population Census records in order to compare responses to the respective ethnic origin questions (see appendices B and C). Such studies provide a basis to estimate the degree of inconsistency between the census and the respective vital and migration ethnic statistics rather than ethnic misclassification per se. The results suggest that, relative to the census classification, Maori births and deaths were understated by about 17 and 28 percent respectively and Maori migration arrivals and departures were overstated by 16 and 18 percent respectively. If we assume this level of misclassification to be constant over time and we apply it to the 1976-81 intercensal period, then the cumulative effect in the final quarter of this period (i.e. March 1981) was to underestimate the change in size of the Maori population since the 1976 Census by about 5,300 (27 percent). This was the 'worst' case and the error was progressively smaller in previous quarters. However, while there is apparently considerable misclassification error present at the end of an intercensal period, the current quarterly Maori population estimates nevertheless give a reasonable indication of the size and general trends in changes in the size of the Maori population.

Further evidence of response unreliability in the census is shown in the degree of inter-ethnic mobility or 'category jumping' between censuses. Unfortunately, there is no conclusive evidence available on the actual extent of category-jumping in the census. However, an analysis of inter-ethnic mobility based on a crude residual estimation technique (see appendix D) suggests that since the Second World War there has been an increasing tendency for Maoris to move from the 'half or more' to the 'less than half' category between censuses. Such inter-ethnic migration, in particular the movement from a disadvantaged minority population, may be explained in terms of 'passing'. This phenomenon refers to changes in ethnic affiliation by individuals which reflect and reinforce upward social mobility in accordance with the general notions of 'absorption' and 'integration' discussed earlier in this chapter.

An analysis of the ethnicity of children in families enumerated in the 1981 Census showed that there was considerable inconsistency between the 'declared' response of children to the ethnic origin question and their 'expected' response based on the declared responses of their parents. (See Appendix E) The study showed that of children who were expected to be in the 'less than

full but greater than or equal to half Maori descent' category, 12 percent declared 'full Maori' and 11 percent declared 'less than half Maori' or 'nil Maori' descent. Furthermore, of those children expected to be in the 'less than half Maori' category, 9 percent declared 'half or more Maori' and 19 percent declared 'nil Maori' descent. Although it was not possible to quantify the effect, these apparent inconsistencies may be partially explained by the presence of adopted children or step parents in families. However, it is unlikely that this would explain all the variation. Other factors which are likely to have some bearing include the degree of difficulty in responding accurately to the census question (since respondents are required to report origins and respective proportions) and the impact of intra-generational ethnic migration. In regard to this latter factor it is interesting to note that the results of the study suggest that there may be movement in both directions (i.e., into and out of the 'Maori' population), with the result that the counter movement effects cancel each other for the 'half or more descent' Maori child population. This is in direct contrast to the results of the pretesting of an ethnicity question by the OPCS for the 1981 United Kingdom Census, which showed that there was a marked tendency for West Indian parents to report their children as 'European', in preference to 'West Indian'. (Sillitoe, 1978)

In addition to problems of misclassification resulting from the form and operation of the census ethnic question, further inaccuracies may be introduced to the total population count of specific ethnic groups as a result of differentials in undercounting. This can occur for a variety of reasons, from the high geographical mobility of particular groups to a fear that enumeration could be disadvantageous - as in the case of alien 'overstayers'. An indication of the possible effect of this is given in the 'error of closure'<sup>3</sup> of the 1981 Census. The 1981 error of closure was in the order of 12,000, compared with -19,000 at the previous census. A negative error is considered to reflect a general tendency for babies to be undercounted in the census. The abnormal positive error in 1981 possibly reflects an undercount of Pacific Islanders in the 1976 Census, swamping the negative effect of a possible baby undercount in the 1981 Census. The 1976 Census was taken at a time when the issue of Pacific Island overstayers was a matter of particular concern. It is interesting to note that in the United States it has been estimated that the 1980 Census undercounted the black male population by 7.5 percent compared to 0.5 percent for other males, and black males aged 28 years were estimated to have been undercounted by 22 percent (Hauser, 1981). However, apart from

<sup>3</sup> The error of closure is the difference between the census total and the estimate based on the previous census total which has been adjusted for subsequent net natural and migration increases.



the possible undercount of Pacific Islanders at the 1976 Census there is no evidence to suggest systematic undercount of similar proportions in New Zealand.

Vital data, and in particular Maori births and deaths data, provide a rich source of information on the current and likely future state of social development of the Maori population. Fertility trends derived from births data indicate the likely future size and composition of the Maori population and together with mortality trends derived from deaths data give some indication of the state of demographic and social transition of the Maori population. Various types of infant mortality rates constitute key indicators of levels of living and social wellbeing as well as general health status. These statistics are therefore of particular interest to the Department of Maori Affairs, the Department of Health and various Hospital Boards as well as demographers and other researchers and educationalists.

The quality of ethnic-specific vital data, and in particular Maori infant mortality data has been suspect for some time (e.g. see Pool, 1977). Inaccuracies in vital data have been attributed to under-registration, misregistration and misclassification of Maoris. While the first two problems have been progressively resolved as the registration system has been improved, the problem of ethnic misclassification has persisted. Since 1975 an attempt has been made to 'validate' the ethnic data on infant death guide forms by routinely matching them with birth forms. An analysis of the results of this matching exercise for 1981 and 1982 (see Appendix F) showed that Maori and Pacific Islander infant deaths were understated in the order of 60 and 175 percent respectively. However, it cannot be assumed that the ethnic classification on birth forms is accurate and the results of the previously mentioned studies in which birth and death forms were matched with Census Schedules (see Appendix B) showed that in relation to the Census classification, Maori and Pacific Islander births in the first quarter of 1981 were understated in the order of 17 and 12 percent respectively and Maori and Pacific Islander deaths (all ages) in the second quarter of 1981 were understated in the order of 28 and 57 percent respectively. The results of these studies suggest that while the accuracy of Maori infant mortality data are improved immensely by the validation of the ethnic response on the death forms by routine matching with birth forms, considerable ethnic misclassification error remains in general ethnic-specific births and deaths data. Furthermore, given the nature of the differentials between Maoris and non-Maoris, Pacific Islanders and Europeans, it would appear that differences in fertility and mortality are probably greater than the statistics suggest.

Apart from the census there is currently no source of information on ethnic-specific marriage and divorce and the census data are limited by the fact that they provide information

on stocks only. Information on annual flows and cohorts could be obtained from the registration system if it contained an ethnic item. Whilst there was little demand for such data expressed in this investigation, the availability of ethnic-specific marriage and divorce data would assist greatly in studies of family formation and fertility and in the forecasting of ethnic population growth. Miscegenation, together with births, deaths and migration, constitutes an important factor of ethnic-population growth. The existence of ethnic differentials in marriage patterns, family formation and fertility mean that ethnic-specific data are necessary for the study of both the respective ethnic populations and the total population.

The main use of ethnic-specific external migration data has been in the intercensal estimation of the Maori population by the Department of Statistics. The Department of Labour, which is responsible for the administration of immigration policy, has expressed opposition to the inclusion of an ethnic question on the migration cards on the grounds that the information is not required for administrative purposes and that its collection may imply otherwise. In the user investigation, the Wellington Multicultural Educational Resource Centre and various demographers and university researchers made specific mention of these data. However, the use of ethnic-specific migration data has probably been limited in the past by their doubtful quality which is reflected in the relatively high non-response rate to the ethnicity question, which ranged between 15 and 22 percent for all arrivals, and 16 and 27 for all departures over the 20 month period prior to April 1982. (See Appendix G)

From 1 April 1982 the ethnic origin question on the migration arrival and departure cards was replaced by an ethnic group question which requires respondents to indicate whether or not they are 'a Maori' or 'a part-Maori'. This question applies to New Zealand citizens and permanent residents only. Since this revised question was introduced there has been a marked improvement in the level of response indicating, among other things, a greater level of acceptance of the question by the travelling public and, by implication, a better quality of response.

#### Crime and Justice

The classification of ethnicity in crime and justice statistics originates in the Police Department. The Police record the ethnicity of persons apprehended, together with other characteristics such as height and colour of eyes and hair, for purposes of individual identification. Thus, the classification of ethnicity is primarily for administrative purposes. The Police also produce statistics from their administrative records which they use in planning, resource allocation and the

monitoring of performance and the ethnic classification is included in these statistics.

If and when a case proceeds to the courts the ethnic data together with certain other socio-demographic data are copied to Justice Department files, where they are supplemented with other data as the case proceeds through the system. The Justice Department uses these data for similar administrative and statistical purposes to the Police. In addition, the Justice Department uses ethnic statistics in the formulation and implementation of specific policies and programmes directed toward particular disadvantaged ethnic groups. Examples of programmes currently in operation include procedures to assure that ethnic minorities are not disadvantaged in the granting of bail, the provision of court interpreters, prevention programmes aimed at Young Maoris and special legal service programmes for Maori and Pacific Islander offenders. A number of additional programmes directed towards Maoris and Pacific Islanders were proposed in the recently completed Penal Policy Review. The Department of Maori Affairs also uses these statistics and the Auckland City Council and the Pacific Islander Education Resource Centre made specific mention of them. The Auckland City Council referred to the use of such statistics in helping determine the need for and to justify the establishment of Neighbourhood Law Offices and Citizens Advice Bureaus.

Crime and Justice statistics are among the most strongly criticised of ethnic statistics for reasons mentioned in the previous section. To reiterate, it is argued that apparent ethnic differences are more adequately explained by socio-economic differences and that the apparent over-representation of Maoris and Pacific Islanders is largely due to 'labelling' effects. Evidence was presented to counter these claims. However, it would appear that the latter claim may have some validity insofar as some officers may use the observer estimation method instead of the standard self identification method when classifying unco-operative respondents. It is not clear how widespread this practice is, if at all, and therefore it is not possible to come to a strong conclusion about the probable accuracy of these statistics. However, to the extent that the observer estimation method is used, the likely effect would be to over-represent the number of Maoris and Pacific Islander offenders in accordance with the labelling theory.

Ethnic-specific rates formed by dividing offender totals by 'at risk' population totals derived from census statistics are likely to result in higher Maori crime rates than would be obtained if the definitions of ethnicity in the numerator and denominator were the same. This is because the cultural affiliation concept of the numerator circumscribes a larger population than the biological concept of the denominator. Evidence of this was shown in two studies undertaken in

connection with this investigation - a comparison of Education Department and Census totals of Maori pupils (see Appendix H) and a comparison of Maori populations as measured by the Social Indicators Survey (using a cultural affiliation concept) and the Census (see Appendix I). The first study showed that the Education Department totals of Maori pupils 6 to 14 years of age were closer to the corresponding census 'any Maori descent' totals than the 'half or more Maori' descent totals. Both self identification and observer estimation methods are employed by teachers when classifying their pupils. The second study showed that the Social Indicators Survey Maori population exceeded the Census Maori population in the order of 3 percent. Thus any rate which employs a self-identification and/or observer estimation definition in the numerator and a census ethnic origin definition in the denominator is likely to overstate the real situation.

### Labour Force and Employment

The Census of Population and Dwellings is the only source of ethnic-specific labour force and employment statistics. Consequently, these statistics are crucially important to the Department of Maori Affairs in the formulation and implementation of employment related policies and programmes and to the Labour Department for the monitoring of participation rates and immigration policy. Labour force participation and occupational status constitute key indicators of socio-economic status and social wellbeing and are therefore among the most important and most used of social statistics in research into and public debate about social progress and development. The comments made regarding the relevancy of the census definition in the section dealing with Population statistics also apply here and will not be elaborated further. The usefulness of census-based labour force and employment statistics are constrained not only by the lack of relevancy of the current definition of ethnicity, but also more generally by the periodicity of the census (only once every five years) and the limited labour force and employment related data in the census. In the absence of a labour force survey the only existing potential sources of reliable ethnic-specific data are the Quarterly Employment Survey, the Unemployment Registration System and other employment or vocational related administrative systems operated by the Labour Department.

### Health

Although in the past 80 years there has been considerable improvement in the health status of Maoris, as measured in terms of mortality and morbidity rates, significant differentials remain between Maoris (and Pacific Islanders) and the European populations. Consequently, ethnic-specific health statistics are



used by the Health Department and Department of Maori Affairs and other agencies operating or with responsibilities in the health field, such as the Department of Social Welfare and Hospital Boards.

The statistics are used not only in the planning and monitoring of primary health care services as they affect Maoris and Pacific Islanders, but also in the wider area of health education and prevention which holds the greatest potential for health status improvement. It is a matter of some concern, for example, that the cigarette smoking levels of young Maori Women are considerably higher than other groups in the population and the Health Promotion Division of the Health Department is formulating programmes in this area.

One problem with the relevancy of ethnic-specific health statistics is the lack of uniformity in the concepts of ethnicity. Data gathered in the Hospital admission/discharge system appear to be based on a cultural affiliation concept whereas mortality and mental health data are based on the census biological concept. The preferences of users in the health area reflect those of users in all other areas - general support for a cultural affiliation concept of ethnicity.

Problems of accuracy of mortality data have been discussed in the section dealing with population, vital and migration statistics. There is little information available on the accuracy of morbidity statistics obtained from the Hospital admission/discharge system although a survey conducted by a group of students at the Wellington Clinical School of Medicine in 1980 (Pasupati et al, 1980) on a sample of 235 patients at Wellington Hospital showed that there was a relatively high degree of inconsistency between ethnic responses recorded on the admission/discharge form and those obtained when the students repeated the question. The findings showed that on the day the survey was taken the number of Maoris recorded on the admission/discharge forms was understated by 30 percent. Furthermore, no ethnic response had been recorded on some 10 percent of the forms. Since this study was so limited in time and location, any generalisations should be treated with caution. However, they are consistent with other studies (e.g. those undertaken in connection with this investigation) and therefore cast some doubt on the accuracy of ethnic-specific statistics produced from admission/discharge system data. Moreover, this study provides further evidence of the importance of undercoverage (i.e. non-response) as a source of error.

### Education

The description of users and uses of education statistics given in the section dealing with population statistics also applies to those statistics produced by the Department of Education from data supplied by educational institutions.

In common with health statistics, lack of uniformity of ethnic concepts poses one of the main relevancy problems of ethnic-specific education statistics. The census data are based on a biological concept and the Education Department data appear to be based on a cultural affiliation concept, although in practice both self identification and observer estimation methods are used. This variation in method occurs mainly as a result of the general method of data collection which is summary as opposed to unit record. Teachers are generally required to provide a summary return for their classes and these returns are then consolidated for the whole school. Although a number of the different summary forms provide a description of the ethnic concept, none specify how the data should be obtained. Thus, it would appear that it is left to the individual teacher to decide how to obtain the necessary information. An informal survey of a selection of schools in the Wellington area conducted earlier this year by an Education Department officer showed that a number of methods were being used to obtain ethnic information. The two most common were for the teacher to ask students who considered themselves Maoris to raise their hands in order to be counted or for the teacher to allocate students on the basis of his or her own estimation.

The use of different methods of classification by different teachers poses a problem of accuracy which is further compounded by the reluctance of several schools to provide any ethnic information. The reasons given for not providing the information are varied, ranging from technical (i.e. difficulties in identifying who is Maori or Pacific Islander) to political (i.e., ethnic statistics are irrelevant and/or discriminatory). The latter objection was discussed in some detail earlier in this chapter. While it is obvious that the actions of these few schools will result in an under-enumeration of Maoris and Pacific Islanders (albeit small) it is by no means clear what effect the use of the observer estimation method will have on the cultural affiliation based figures. It might be argued that unlike the Police, the teacher's estimation of ethnicity will be better informed because the teacher enjoys a longer term and more familiar relationship with his or her students, in which case the teacher is more likely to know how the student 'identifies'.

The difference between the concepts used in Census and Education ethnic data gives rise to another accuracy problem when both data sources are used in the calculation of various rates. This problem is common to a number of other areas, particularly

where the denominator ('base' or 'at risk' population) is given by census data. In order to ascertain something of the nature of the difference between Census and Education Department ethnic statistics a comparison was made between the number of Maoris attending school in the respective collections for the years 1971, 1976 and 1981 (see Appendix H for a full report). The study, which was confined to the 6 to 14 year old age range, showed that the Education count lay between the census counts of 'half or more Maori blood' and 'Maori descent' (i.e. any Maori blood), and closer to the latter. The difference between the Education and Census 'half or more' Maori totals as a percentage of the Education total for the years 1971, 1976 and 1981 was 12, 8 and 22 percent respectively. The 1976 figure is uncharacteristically low because of an over-statement of 'half or more' Maoris at that Census'. These estimates of the difference between a biological and cultural affiliation based measure are rather high when compared to the results of another study which compared Census and Social Indicators Survey responses to the respective ethnic questions (see Appendix I for a full report). This study showed that the Social Indicators survey, which covered the period September 1980 to October 1981 and used a self identification definition, overstated the Census total 'half or more' Maori population by about 3 percent. A large part of this difference between the results of these two studies may be attributed to differences in the populations covered, the collections themselves, and the methods used in comparing the data. However, they do suggest that the Education statistics may overstate the number of 'self-identifying' Maoris.

Age-sex-location specific comparisons were also made in the study of Education Department and Census Statistics. The results (for 1971) showed a slightly higher difference for boys than girls (13 compared to 11 percent) and a higher difference in the South Island than the North Island (approximately 15 compared to 12 percent). There was also some variation by age, but no pattern was evident. These results suggest that girls may be harder to classify as Maoris than boys and that the classification of Maoris is generally more difficult in areas where there are traditionally fewer Maoris.

### Social Welfare

The Department of Social Welfare produces ethnic-specific statistics on Juvenile Offending, Adoptions and State Wards. While the Department does not make specific provision for particular ethnic groups in its programmes, it does make provision for such groups when producing information about its programmes and administering them. Since the statistics show that Maoris and Pacific Islanders are disproportionately represented among its clients the Department also makes a deliberate effort to recruit suitably qualified people of Maori

and Pacific Islander origin to assist in the administration of its programmes. The Department of Maori Affairs also makes use of Social Welfare statistics in the formulation and implementation of its programmes and policies.

When completing the respective statistical forms social workers are instructed to record ethnicity according to the biological (Census) concept. However, there is some doubt about the extent to which these instructions are followed and it appears in the case of Juvenile Offenders, the ethnic information is usually transcribed directly from the Police records by the social workers. It would appear that social workers are reluctant to question clients directly about their ethnicity and prefer the indirect estimation method. They also have some doubts about the relevancy and feasibility of applying a cultural affiliation concept to young children who may not have had the time, maturity, or a sufficiently stable background to form a stable opinion of their ethnic identity.

It would therefore appear that contrary to field instructions, ethnicity is defined primarily in terms of observer estimation and/or self identification either through the direct action of social workers or by default when police information is transcribed. However, even if the field instructions were followed the subsequent coding procedures are not consistent with the Census definition because no provision is made for the identification of a predominant origin if more than one origin is recorded.

Thus, the same comments made regarding the accuracy of crime statistics apply here. Given the methods used by social workers in classifying Maoris and Pacific Islanders, it is likely that these groups are overstated in the statistics.

### CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to describe in some detail the use and users of official ethnic statistics and to comment on their relevancy and accuracy.

Official ethnic statistics are justified in general by the persistence of considerable ethnic differentials in important aspects of social wellbeing. While the underlying reasons for the persistence of such differentials is debatable, there is general agreement on the desirability of their removal. Accordingly a number of Government departments have policies and programmes which are relevant to these differentials. The Department of Maori Affairs is the only department which has policies and programmes directed specifically toward the improvement of the position of an ethnic group. Other



departments whose clientele comprise a disproportionate number of Maoris and/or Pacific Islanders (e.g., Social Welfare and Justice) or which have responsibility in areas where Maoris and Pacific Islanders are disadvantaged (e.g. Health, Ministry of Works and Development, Internal Affairs, Education and Labour) have various policies and programmes relevant to these groups. While these policies and programmes are not usually directed specifically to these ethnic groups, they nevertheless attempt to take the ethnic groups into account either in the administration of the policies or programmes and in the monitoring of the problems which they seek to resolve. Thus, the predominant use of ethnic statistics is in an informative role which is characteristic of the use of social statistics in general. This should not be taken to indicate a relative lack of usefulness of these statistics. Given the complexity and intractability of the social problems they reflect, social statistics tend to be more useful in the definition of the problems than the identification of causes and solutions.

For the greater part of this century Government policy toward Maoris was informed by an ideology of integration which held that Maoris should be integrated into the mainstream New Zealand (European) Society. One implication would be the gradual absorption of the Maori race through the cumulative effects of miscegenation. The rural to urban migration of Maoris and the level of their participation in the economy and polity are indicative of the success of integration, although Maoris remain socially and economically disadvantaged in a number of respects. More recently 'multi-culturalism' has begun to displace integration as the favoured ideology. Multiculturalism holds that social justice and development are better served by encouraging rather than discouraging cultural (ethnic) diversity. This implies that Maoris and Pacific Islanders will be better able to overcome their disadvantages if they are able to maintain and develop their cultural identities and function in society as 'Maoris', 'Samoans', etc.

Multiculturalism has important implications for the relevancy and usefulness of ethnic statistics. Under multiculturalism the notion of ethnicity takes on a politico-cultural dimension in addition to the biological or racial origin aspect. Ethnicity in this sense is dynamic, reflecting the subjective outcomes of political consciousness and choice, as well as the objective reality of biological and cultural origin. Thus, a biological concept (e.g. ethnic origin) defined in terms of 'degree of blood' with an arbitrary classification criterion (e.g. 'half or more blood') is of little relevance. Ethnicity should be more appropriately measured in terms of self-identification which reflects a cultural affiliation concept. This was the overwhelming view of those submissions to this investigation which addressed the question of relevancy and it reflects the spirit embodied in definitions of 'Maori' contained in the Maori Affairs and Electoral Acts.

Problems relating to the accuracy of statistics may severely impair their usefulness, particularly when their use is contentious as is the case with ethnic statistics. Although there are a number of potential sources of inaccuracy in statistics this investigation focussed on the problem of misclassification of ethnicity resulting from mis-reporting because this was considered to be potentially the major source of error.

Unfortunately there was very little readily available information on this aspect of error in ethnic statistics and it was therefore necessary to conduct several special investigations into some selected areas. The results of these investigations and the little evidence that was available suggest there is considerable misclassification error present in ethnic statistics, which varies considerably with the source of the data. It was not possible in the course of the investigation to determine the effects of such inaccuracies on the use and usefulness of the respective statistics. To some extent this is a matter for users to decide, and many who made submissions were aware of the probability of such error. Users were generally aware, for example, that Maori deaths were probably understated and that the statistics therefore understate rather than overstate mortality differentials. Furthermore, evidence obtained in these investigations suggested that the accuracy of the classification of ethnicity might be improved with a more relevant concept of ethnicity, better question and design and better reporting and collection procedures.

## CHAPTER 3

FEASIBILITYINTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with how the relevancy and accuracy of ethnic statistics might be improved by implementing a standard self-identification definition of ethnicity in all official collections which currently or might contain an ethnic question; and by improving the design and operation of collection instruments and procedures in order to reduce misclassification error.

In considering the best options regarding the form of a standard ethnic question for New Zealand official collections it is useful to first consider the practices in other statistical bureaus and agencies. To this end a brief review of Population Census practices in selected bureaus will be made. Some possible options for New Zealand will then be outlined and this will be followed by a discussion of the feasibility of applying the classification and improving the reliability of the statistics in each of the subject-matter areas described in chapters 1 and 2.

PRACTICES IN OTHER CENSUS BUREAUS

This review is restricted to the practices followed in the Population Census Bureaus of the United States of America, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. These countries have been selected because of New Zealand's social, economic and cultural similarities with them and because of the influence they have had and continue to have in shaping our statistical systems.

United States of America

The United States has a tradition of asking race-related questions dating back to the first national Census in 1790 when slaves were required to be distinguished from other groups in the population to enable taxes and representation in Congress to be apportioned between the States. In the 1980 Census three questions were asked:

4. Is this person - white; black or negro; Japanese; Chinese; Filipino;.....?

(In all, 14 categories were listed, apart from 'other'. In the case of American Indians, the tribe was to be written in.)

7. Is this person of Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent - No;



Yes, Mexican....: Yes, Puerto Rican; Yes, Cuban; Yes, other?

14. What is this person's ancestry? (Write-in).....  
(Examples were given as Afro-American, English, French,.....).

Question 4 is based on a cultural affiliation concept and the example responses given reflect the current socially significant categories. Questions 7 and 14 are based on a biological concept although no attempt is made to allocate persons to particular categories on the basis of their degree of descent from any particular origin. Question 7 seeks to subdivide those persons of Spanish (Hispanic) origin into categories which reflect their more recent geographical (and therefore national and ethnic) origin.

#### Canada

Canadian censuses prior to Confederation in 1871 distinguished native born persons of French origin from those not of French origin. 'Race' was one of the items required to be collected after Confederation and was determined by a combination of racial, linguistic and ancestral considerations. In 1891 a question on birthplace of parents was introduced and has been repeated in several censuses since. Since 1921 an ethnic origin question has been included on a regular basis and up until 1981 this was based on paternal ancestry. However, in the 1981 Census it took the following form:

26. To which ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestors belong on first coming to this continent? - French; English; Scottish; .....

(In all, 154 categories are listed apart from 'other', including four categories for Native Peoples.)

This differs from the previous ethnic origin questions in that paternal ancestry has been extended in general, permitting respondents to report multiple origins. In common with the United States ethnic origin question and in contrast with the New Zealand question, respondents are not required to report relative fractions of each origin. The Canadian Census includes other questions relating to ethnicity such as birthplace, language and religion, and in the recent past serious consideration has been given to the elimination of the ethnic origin question because of its inadequacies and ambiguities relative to these other items. However, it has been retained because of its historical importance and the support it has received from ethnic minorities, in particular the French.

#### Australia

The Australians also have a tradition of asking a 'racial origin' question in their Census. However, in the 1981 Census the question was confined to the identification of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. A wider question in the 1976 Census had aroused considerable public reaction and the quality of data on Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders was suspect because of incredible apparent intercensal increases in population sizes (e.g., 340 percent in Tasmania, 200 percent in ACT and 130 percent in Victoria). The need for data on the size and location of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island populations was considered to be sufficiently important to outweigh problems and accuracy and the 1981 Census question took the form:

16. Is the person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?	No .....	1
* For persons of mixed origin, indicate the one which they consider themselves to belong.	Yes, Aboriginal..	2
	Yes, Torres Strait Islander ...	3

It is interesting to note that this question incorporates both biological (ethnic origin) and cultural affiliation concepts. A person of less than full Aboriginal or Torres Strait origin is given the opportunity to self identify and since it is unlikely that a person of one origin only would not identify with that origin then the question is effectively based on a cultural affiliation concept.

A broader 'ethnic origin' question containing a wider range of categories was pretested in 1979 in conjunction with the birth-place question. However, development of the ethnic origin question was not pursued for the 1981 Census because the results of the pretest suggested that the term 'ethnic origin' was not sufficiently understood by many migrants who comprised the group to which the question was primarily addressed. The 1981 Census also contained questions on birthplace of parents and language spoken at home.

#### United Kingdom

The British have never included an ethnic origin question in their Census although in the 1971 Census a question on parents' country of birth was asked in addition to the question on respondent's country of birth. The need for ethnic origin information was expressed in a White Paper '1981 Census of Population' and a series of pretests were conducted by the OPCS in order to ascertain the feasibility of introducing an

appropriate question in the 1981 Census. The results of the pretests showed considerable variability in levels and patterns of response across different ethnic groups. Immigrants from the Indian Subcontinent showed a preference for reporting religious affiliation, West Indian immigrants had a high level of non-response and showed a tendency to report their children as 'European' and there was some confusion among persons of mixed origin and persons from Asia Minor as to how to report their 'origins'. In the event the question was dropped after considerable opposition from some members of some ethnic minority groups. This occurred at a time when the Government was considering implementing further restrictions on immigration and citizenship.

### Overview

Apart from the United States and Australia which include a question based on cultural affiliation, the other countries (including New Zealand) use a question based entirely on ethnic or racial origin. Each of the countries using an 'origin' based question has experienced similar problems with the quality of response. There is much ambiguity surrounding the term 'origin' or 'ancestry' and it is interpreted variously by respondents in geographical, national, religious, racial, linguistic and cultural terms. It presents problems at both the reporting and classification (processing) stages when the respondent reports multiple origins. Furthermore, it would appear that many respondents do not make a distinction between origin and current cultural affiliation. Part of the reason for this may lie in the difficulty respondents experience in completing the question (particularly in New Zealand where they are also required to report the relative fraction of each origin). However, the evidence also suggests that respondents find the cultural affiliation concept more relevant and acceptable and respond accordingly.

Questions which use a cultural affiliation concept are not without problems as evidenced by the Australian experience with their 1976 Census. The large apparent increases of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations at the 1976 Census could be accounted for by a number of factors. One could be that previous censuses failed to count adequately the real population and a more accurate count was obtained in 1976. Another possibility, which relates more to the subjective nature of the measure, is that many respondents of mixed origin may have changed their affiliation between censuses (i.e. jumped categories). Such inter-ethnic migration is not of course limited to measures based on cultural affiliation. During the Second World War there was evidence in the Canadian Census of category-jumping from the German to Dutch origin categories (Richmond, 1980) and evidence was produced earlier in this

chapter which indicated a systematic inter-ethnic migration of Maoris in the New Zealand Census. Under a biological concept of ethnicity inter-ethnic migration is not valid, but it is valid under a cultural affiliation concept. However, large fluctuations must ultimately bring into question the coherence and therefore usefulness of such a measure.

### A STANDARD ETHNICITY CLASSIFICATION

At the conclusion of the previous chapter reservations were expressed about the relevancy of the biological concept of ethnicity and the accuracy of the associated ethnic origin measurement. It was suggested that ethnicity might be more appropriately measured in terms of a cultural affiliation concept defined by self identification. However, before accepting such a proposal a number of questions require answering. In particular, what is the relationship between the biological and cultural affiliation concepts, how comparable are statistics derived from these concepts, what impact might a change to a cultural affiliation concept have on policy and legislative uses and how feasible is it to apply this concept to the measurement of ethnicity in any and all official data collections which require such a measurement? This section of the chapter will deal with these questions and in the last section procedures will be discussed for implementing a cultural affiliation based measure in the various official collections.

In historical terms the biological or racial concept predates the cultural affiliation concept which has gained currency in recent years. The racial concept derives from the notion that cultural behaviour is determined by biological type. The concept was subsequently refined to incorporate the notion of a hierarchy of types reflecting different psychological and cultural potentials, with the European type constituting the superior category. This notion was clearly evident in the introduction of the race alien classification in the New Zealand Census which was discussed earlier in this chapter. Since the Second World War the notion of racial superiority has been largely debunked and in 1975 a meeting of UNESCO experts concluded that there was no scientific basis for distinguishing such biological types.

Nevertheless, biologically based measures of ethnicity have remained in statistical use largely because they have continued to reveal considerable socio-economic variations between the groups they distinguish. Thus, while there has continued to be a significant degree of correspondence between biological characteristics, such as ethnic origin, and socio-cultural groups which are subject to socio-economic disadvantage, the biologically based measure has provided a convenient measure.



The cultural affiliation concept of ethnicity derives from the notion that individuals consciously affiliate or identify with a particular ethnic group in a given society reflecting characteristic socio-cultural behaviour. Thus, it would be argued that there is a distinct group of people in New Zealand who call themselves 'Maori' by virtue of the fact that they are conscious of belonging to a group adhering to particular values, attitudes and behaviour which distinguishes them from other groups.

On a theoretical level the concepts of 'cultural affiliation' and 'biological origin' intersect, but neither subsumes the other. Clearly, the fact that a person is descended from some particular origin or origins does not necessarily imply that the person will affiliate with that origin or any of his constituent origins. Similarly, the professed cultural affiliation of a person is not necessarily connected to the predominance or presence of any particular origin or origins in that individual. However, generally it would be expected that a person affiliating with a particular ethnic group would be descended from that group.

The cultural affiliation concept of ethnicity focuses on the outcome of all those factors which together may combine to effect an ethnic identity in an individual. Biological origin is obviously one such factor. Other biographical factors include birthplace, nationality, language, religion and physiological factors such as skin colour are also relevant. The influence of these factors in the determination of an individual's cultural identity will be mediated by current and historical social factors. Thus, in addition to biographical and physiological factors pertaining to the individual, socio-political factors such as the Maori Land issue and the general state of race relations will affect an individual's ethnic orientation in New Zealand.

Support for some of these contentions is given in the results of two studies undertaken in connection with this investigation (see appendices I and E). A study in which the responses of individuals to the self-identification ethnic question in the Social Indicators Survey and the ethnic origin question in the 1981 Census were compared showed that 6 percent of persons who identified as 'Maori' in the Social Indicators Survey reported no Maori ancestry in the Census. Furthermore, 10 percent of those persons who reported 'half or more Maori' descent in the Census did not identify as 'Maori' in the Social Indicators Survey. A comparison of the reported responses of children to the ethnic question in the 1981 Census with their expected responses based on the ethnic origin of their parents showed that 8 percent of the children who were expected to report some Maori descent reported none.

The results of the previous study suggest that the replacement of the Census ethnic origin question with a self-identification question would have the effect of increasing the population enumerated as 'Maori' by about 3 percent. This estimate should be treated with caution because it is based on a comparison of different measures in different collections. A self-identification question in the Census would be self-administered instead of interviewer-administered as it was in the Social Indicators Survey and, depending on the coding practices adopted (e.g. the classification of persons responding 'part-Maori' as 'Maori') the difference could be in excess of 10 percent. However, whatever coding practice is adopted, the introduction of a self-identification question will probably have the effect of increasing the size of the population classified as Maori.

It is difficult to assess exactly what effects a change to a cultural affiliation concept might have on legislative and policy uses of ethnic statistics. The point has already been made that a cultural affiliation concept would be more consistent with the definitions of 'Maori' contained in two key Acts, the Maori Affairs and the Electoral Acts. Pursuant to the latter Act the Government Statistician is required periodically to determine the size of the 'Maori Electoral Population', the calculation of which is in part based on the numbers of Maoris in specific age groups at the time of the previous census. If the relationship of the cultural affiliation and biological measures is constant across age-groups then a change in concept will have no effect on the size of the electoral population so calculated.

A change to a cultural affiliation concept could pose problems in regard to the interpretation of ethnic-specific statistics relating to social inequality. The biological concept is in theory totally independent of the phenomena it may differentiate. For example, while being a Maori may have some bearing on social disadvantage, being socially disadvantaged has no bearing on being a Maori. This independence does not exist for the cultural affiliation concept since affiliation could be influenced by a variety of factors, including socio-economic conditions pertaining to the individual. How this might effect the distribution of inequality is a moot point. On the one hand socio-economic differences could be accentuated to the extent that upwardly mobile persons of half or more Maori descent pass out of and socially disadvantaged persons of less than half Maori descent pass into the Maori population. If, on the other hand, there is a large component of self identification operating in the collection of supposedly biologically based ethnic statistics, then a change to a cultural affiliation concept may make little difference. The investigation of uses of ethnic statistics indicated that apart from the policies and programmes administered by the Department of Maori Affairs, there are very few policies or programmes directed specifically to Maoris or any

other ethnic group. Instead, policies tend to address specific problems which may have an ethnic dimension, in which case the policy or the operation of the policy may attempt to take account of this dimension in order to be more effective. Accordingly, as long as an ethnic dimension exists in such problems, policies will need to continue to take account of this dimension, however it may be defined.

A change to a cultural affiliation concept may have important implications for the relevancy of those policies which are directed toward specific ethnic groups insofar as such a change may affect the composition and characteristics of the population so defined. In particular, it might be argued that a cultural affiliation concept would allow individuals to define themselves as Maoris according to self interest so that they would be eligible for some benefit, and yet be non-Maori in other contexts. This objection was raised when the definition of 'Maori' in the Maori Affairs Act was extended in 1975 to include persons of any Maori descent and it was countered with the argument that the extended definition merely gave recognition to what was already the real situation - that a Maori was a person of Maori descent who identified as a Maori. Nevertheless, it would be desirable and useful to be able to assess the impact of changes of affiliation on the composition and characteristics of ethnic populations in the course of monitoring their development and progress.

The previous arguments have been concerned mainly with the relevancy of the cultural affiliation concept. However, relevancy alone does not constitute sufficient reason to adopt this concept. It is also necessary to examine the feasibility of applying such a concept. One of the main arguments against continuing to use the biological concept is its lack of acceptance, given that respondents in particular ethnic groups, such as Maoris, find it increasingly difficult and are increasingly unwilling to provide the required information. The question therefore arises whether or not respondents would be any more willing or able to respond to a question based on a cultural affiliation concept. The successful operation of such a concept presumes that by and large respondents adhere to some form of ethnic affiliation. The extent to which: (a) they do not identify with any specific group; (b) they identify with a general group such as 'New Zealander'; (c) they identify with more than one specific group; or (d) the group with which they identify varies according to the context of the inquiry or some other exogenous factor(s); poses considerable problems for the interpretation and usefulness of the data.

The Department of Statistics has operated a cultural affiliation based question in its Household Survey for some years now and experience to date does not indicate that these possibilities pose great problems, although there is evidence

that some respondents do report more than one category (e.g. 'part-Maori'). The recent change to a cultural affiliation based question in the external migration system has indicated the presence of a significant group responding on the basis of 'part-Maori'. However, the question in this survey makes specific provision for such a response.

Such problems may be more acute in population sub-groups. For example children, who may not have attained a level of maturity sufficient to establish a stable ethnic identity. A series of studies conducted by Vaughan (1978) between 1961 and 1970 found that Maori children between the ages of four and seven tended to favour affiliation with a 'white' model, but that above seven years in-group affiliation increased progressively. However, problems of this type are likely to exist regardless of which concept is used and might be better resolved by a flexible approach to the measurement of ethnicity. For example, it might be more practical to rely on observer estimation methods where appropriate for the measurement of ethnicity of children.

The possibility of intra-ethnic group mobility over time and/or in different contexts poses a particular problem. For example, a respondent may claim to be a Maori in a particular survey and a non-Maori in another census or survey. The variation in response may reflect a real change in affiliation, possibly influenced by the changing circumstances of the individual or the context of the question. Such mobility is believed to occur also with the biological concept, the difference being that it is valid in the context of a cultural affiliation concept but not valid in the context of a biological concept. However, validity does not imply acceptability and evidence of significant mobility would cast considerable doubt on the usefulness of ethnic statistics. In the absence of authoritative evidence relating to the New Zealand situation this objection can be neither supported nor countered. However, it does indicate a need for the reliability of such data to be assessed.

On balance there is a good case for adopting a cultural affiliation in preference to a biological concept as a basis for producing official ethnic statistics. However, such a proposal is not without reservations and if adopted it is imperative that sufficient care be taken in the design and testing of adequate survey instruments and the subsequent evaluation of the quality of the data to ensure that these reservations are satisfactorily resolved.

Before discussing in detail proposals for a standard question and coding procedure it is necessary to make quite clear that these are guidelines only and that precise instruments and procedures can only be obtained after extensive field testing. This point cannot be over-emphasised since ethnicity is a



sensitive topic and the quality of the data obtained will be affected by the manner and context in which they are obtained. This means that in order to obtain a standard outcome (i.e. classification) the means (i.e. instrument and procedures) may have to be tailored to the particular circumstances pertaining. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Whether it is self or interviewer administered, the ethnic group question should take the form:

'To which group do you belong?'

Optional wordings are:

'With which group do you identify?' or

'I am a ....?'

This question should be accompanied by a list of options from which the respondent chooses one. If the question is interviewer administered this will require showing the respondent a card which lists the various options. The minimum number of options should be four, namely: 'New Zealand Maori', 'Pacific Islander', 'European', 'Other: (Please specify)'. Other options may be added if more detailed categories are specifically required (e.g. Samoan, Cook Islander, Indian, Chinese, etc.).

With regard to the categories specifically required it should also be recognised that it may be necessary to include a wider range of options because some respondents may be offended by being lumped into general categories such as 'Pacific Islander', 'European' or 'Other'. This is likely to be particularly important in the case of Pacific Island Polynesians.

The question asked in this form should not require any additional instructions apart from the requirement that one option only is chosen. Respondents wishing to report partial or multi-group affiliation (e.g. 'part-Maori', 'Maori-European', etc.) should be directed to the 'Other' option where they can specify their answer. How such persons should be classified is debatable. However, one solution would be to classify them according to the first group reported. Thus a person reporting 'part-Maori' would be classified as 'Maori' whereas a person reporting 'European-Maori' would be classified as 'European', the assumption being that the most relevant group is reported first. Another option would be to assign a priority ordering of groups as used in the census for half-castes (i.e. Maori, Pacific Islander, Other, European). Thus a person who reported Maori-European or European-Maori would be classified as 'Maori'. These options do not preclude the classification of the original responses, but provide systematic methods of deriving an exhaustive classification comprising mutually exclusive categories.

Finally, if the question is to have a title it should be called 'Ethnic Group' not 'Race' or 'Ethnic Origin'. The use of

the term 'Ethnic Group' will probably still be a cause some confusion to some respondents who will interpret the question solely in terms of 'ethnic origin' or 'race'. However, the use of either of these latter terms is more likely to fuel such confusion.

### SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS

#### Population, Vital and External Migration

In accordance with previous discussion, the ethnic origin question in the census should be replaced by an ethnic group question based on a cultural affiliation concept measured by self identification. Furthermore, it would be useful to retain both questions in the next census. There are several reasons for including both questions. Firstly, in order to provide some continuity in historical time-series a suitable overlap period is necessary. Secondly, there is a need to examine in more detail the relationship between the two concepts in order to assess the impact of changing from one to the other as the standard basis for measuring ethnicity in official statistics. Thirdly, the census is one of the few collections which provides a basis for the study of ethnicity as such because of its extensive coverage of the population and the variety of ethnicity-relevant questions it contains (e.g. ethnic origin, country of birth, nationality, religion, etc.). The inclusion of a cultural affiliation measure would enhance the usefulness of these data for this purpose.

In the 1986 Census care would need to be taken to avoid the confusion which occurred when two similar ethnic origin questions were included in the 1976 census. The two questions would need to be clearly differentiated in terms of their meaning and their location in the Census schedule. It would also be important to ensure that various ethnic groups in the community (in particular Maoris and the constituent Pacific Islander groups) were consulted and their support for these questions obtained. In the past the quality of response to the ethnic origin question has probably been adversely affected by the extent of lack of support from these groups.

The classification of a persons ethnicity at birth or death poses a fundamentally intractable problem, regardless of the ethnic concept used. Clearly, it is not possible to obtain a direct response in either case. The current practice is to compromise by seeking ethnic origin information from an informant - in the case of a baby, from its parents and in the case of a decedent, from a relative or the funeral director (with reference to the ethnic origins of the decedent's parents). In the previously mentioned studies of ethnic misclassification error in births and deaths data (see appendix B) it was suggested that

part of the apparent ethnic misclassification error could be attributed to problems in the design of the respective ethnic questions. In particular, the questions do not contain an exhaustive range of categories, because of the exclusion of 'European' and 'Other'. Since 'European' is the largest category in the population the question is not required to be answered in most cases. There is no way of distinguishing 'non-response' from 'European' and it is therefore not surprising that the quality of response appears to be poor. Thus, the introduction of an exhaustive classification (e.g. 'New Zealand Maori', 'Pacific Islander', 'European', 'Other (specify)') would probably lead to an improvement in the quality of the response to the ethnic question. While it is neither sensible nor possible to administer an ethnic question based on a cultural affiliation concept, the best compromise is to impute the ethnicity of a baby from the cultural affiliation of its parent(s) and to obtain the ethnicity of a decedent by direct observer estimation. These methods have been used in the United States for some years, which provides a useful model for possible improvements in our system.

In the United States National Vital Registration System, newborn babies are classified according to the race of their parents. If the parents are of different races and one is white, the child is assigned to the other parent's race. If either parent is Hawaiian, the child is classified as 'Hawaiian'. In all other cases the child is assigned the father's race. A similar system could be adopted in New Zealand, with the priority being 'New Zealand Maori', 'Pacific Islander' and 'Other'. Thus any child with a Maori parent would be classified as 'Maori' and any child with a Pacific Islander parent would be classified as 'Pacific Islander' if the other parent was non-Maori. Otherwise the child would be classified according to the ethnic group of the father. This would reflect the priority which currently operates with the classification of half-castes in the Census of Population and Dwellings.

In the United States the race of a decedent is usually recorded by the funeral director who obtains it by questioning an informant (usually a relative of the decedent) or by direct observation. A similar situation pertains in New Zealand and it is considered to be unsatisfactory in both countries. A survey of funeral directors in the Wellington region conducted in 1980 (Pasupati et al, 1980) showed that of 21 funeral directors who were canvassed, one third did not bother to complete the ethnic question on the death guide form because they considered it to be irrelevant and/or potentially embarrassing. Of the two thirds who did complete the question a variety of methods were used ranging from the questioning of relatives to direct observer estimation. If the behaviour of funeral directors in this survey is characteristic of funeral directors throughout New Zealand then this is likely to constitute the main source of ethnicity misclassification error in mortality data and the improvement of

the question design alone is unlikely to lead to much improvement in the quality of the data, although the introduction of an exhaustive classification would enable the checking of non-completed forms. It is certainly questionable whether the funeral director is the most appropriate person to be made responsible for the collection of these data given his particular function and relationship with the decedent. Since the data are ultimately used in reference to the health status and general social well-being of the population it might be more fruitful to consider collection by other persons who have a responsibility or interest in this area, such as a medical doctor or coroner. A family doctor, for example, is more likely to be able to form a better opinion of a decedent's ethnicity than the funeral director.

It is the current practice in New Zealand to validate the ethnicity information given on infant death forms against the same information given on the birth registration forms. It would be worthwhile also to investigate the possibility of validating in a similar manner the ethnicity information on death forms in general against the same information given on hospital admission forms where the decedent died in a hospital (about 50 percent of all deaths). The usefulness of such an exercise would need to be evaluated in terms of the increase in accuracy relative to the cost of validation.

Further consideration of such options go beyond the scope of this investigation because they involve major changes to the registration system which have implications for other uses of registration information (e.g. legal). However, the registration system is to be investigated shortly in the context of a more general review of fertility statistics, and one option that might be worthy of consideration is the amalgamation of the legal and administrative/statistical documents (i.e. the birth certificate and birth forms and the death certificate and death guide forms) as they are in the United States, and the reallocation of responsibility for obtaining and recording certain information (e.g. ethnic data pertaining to decedents).

Although there has never been an ethnic question included in the Application for Marriage Licence form, Maori and non-Maori marriages used to be registered separately. Since separate registration ceased the only source of information has been the Population Census which does not provide data suitable for cohort analysis. This problem could be resolved with the inclusion of a cultural affiliation question in the Application for Marriage Licence form.

Given the recent change to the ethnic question contained in the migration arrival and departure cards it would be inappropriate to implement further changes until the effect of the most recent change has been adequately assessed. However,



even if the current question provides data of adequate quality for the intercensal estimation of the Maori population it will not be possible to provide similar estimates of the Pacific Islander population (unless migration was ignored or estimated by some other means). Given the existence and likely continuation of various socio-economic differentials between the 'Maori', 'Pacific Islander' and 'Other' populations, the demand for base population estimates of the Pacific Islander group is likely to grow. Accordingly, it would be useful to consider the reintroduction of a comprehensive ethnic group question which included an exhaustive classification based on a cultural affiliation concept.

### Crime and Justice

In the previous chapter some reservations were expressed about the quality of ethnic-specific crime and justice statistics which arose from the fact that most ethnic-specific statistics in this area are derived from the ethnic data collected by the Police when a person is apprehended. It would appear that some officers may use the observer estimation method, rather than the prescribed self-identification method, to obtain the necessary information in certain circumstances (e.g. when the respondent is unco-operative). The more prevalent this practice is, the more likely it is that the statistics over-represent Maoris and Pacific Islanders.

Unfortunately, it was not possible in the course of this investigation to examine the accuracy of ethnic data collected by the Police. Given the reservations surrounding the accuracy of these data and the sensitive nature of the statistics produced, it is imperative that their quality be both known and defensible. Currently, Police statistics are not published, but made available by the Police on request. However, the Police are considering publishing on a regular basis and if they proceed then these statistics will be subject to greater public scrutiny than in the past. It would therefore be desirable to conduct an investigation of the accuracy of ethnicity data collected by the Police and, as a first step, it might be useful to ascertain the extent to which the observer estimation method is used by the Police in classifying apprehended persons.

### Labour Force and Employment

The changes suggested to the ethnic question in the Census of Population and Dwellings would improve the ethnic-specific labour force and employment statistics obtained from that collection. However, improvement of census-based statistics will not resolve the other pressing problem in this area which is a lack of data between the five-yearly censuses. This problem could be largely

resolved with the implementation of a household labour force survey containing an appropriate ethnic question. However, this would appear to be unlikely in the current economic climate and it is necessary to consider other options which involve existing collections.

In the absence of a household labour force survey an improvement which could be made to the existing system would be the re-introduction of an ethnic question to the Department of Labour unemployed registration system. The collection of such data ceased in the mid-1970s apparently because of the political sensitivity surrounding the issue of the collection and use of 'race' data and because the Labour Department considered that the collection of ethnic data did not assist, and might even jeopardise the achievement of the main objective of the unemployment system, which is to match unemployed individuals with suitable vacancies. In this sense ethnicity is certainly irrelevant. However, the argument does not give due recognition to the role of the statistics derived from this data in the identification and monitoring of social factors related to unemployment. The reintroduction of an ethnic question to the unemployed registration system should not pose any unsurmountable problems and would result in a better informed debate about the nature and impact of unemployment and possible policy responses.

### Health

The most obvious improvement which could be made in the health area is the standardisation of ethnic questions in all collections to a cultural affiliation concept. The question in the Hospital admission/discharge system already has the appearance of a cultural affiliation based measure, although this is more likely to be by default than intent. Mental Hospital data are currently based on the Census biological concept and appropriate changes would be required. Mortality data derived from the Vital registration system have already been dealt with in a previous section.

The findings in the previous chapter suggest that further investigation of the quality of data obtained from the Hospital admission/discharge system is warranted since the study on which they were based was confined to the Wellington Public Hospital on one particular day (Pasupati et al, 1980). However, to the extent that these findings to reflect a more general situation, then some immediate improvements could be effected. Firstly, the confirmation of a change to a cultural affiliation concept, with appropriate collection and recording instructions for hospital admission clerks should improve the quality of that data which is recorded. Secondly, the implementation of more rigorous checking procedures to ensure the full completion of all questions should lead to a reduction in the level of non-response to the ethnic question.

Education

The quality of Department of Education ethnic-specific data might also be improved by both the standardisation of ethnic questions in all collections to a cultural affiliation concept and the promulgation of standard collection procedures. However, it should be recognised that the successful application of such a concept poses problems in situations where the data are collected in summary rather than unit-record form and where young children may not have formed a stable ethnic identity. Accordingly, it may be necessary to adopt a flexible approach and allow teachers to estimate ethnicity where self-identification is not feasible, or to make use of alternative information sources, such as school administrative records.

Before promulgating standard procedures it would be useful to obtain first more information on the current practices of teachers compiling summary returns. The limited information available suggests that the two most common methods are to ask the pupils to self-identify by raising their hands in response to a direct question (e.g. 'Raise your hand if you are a Maori?') and direct estimation by the teacher. An alternative, and perhaps less obtrusive, self-identification method would be to circulate a sheet throughout the class which allowed pupils to record a tick in a column denoting the appropriate ethnic group. Since data gathering is an increasingly important aspect of everyday life this task might be made more interesting and relevant to pupils by treating it as a learning experience, explaining to them why and how such information is collected.

It is apparent from the level of opposition of some schools to providing ethnic information that there is a need for the Department of Education to place more emphasis on the promotion of statistical collections, and in particular the collection of ethnic information. The cultivation of a mutually satisfactory working relationship between suppliers and processors of data should be seen as an integral part of the information production process and is justified in terms of greater efficiency and effectiveness in the collection of the data as well as a better quality product. Consideration should be given to promoting regular visits to schools and local education boards and committees by departmental officers to discuss mutual problems and to explain why data are collected and how the statistics are used.

Social Welfare

In common with the Education area the quality of ethnic-specific data on Juvenile Offending, Adoptions and State Wards would be improved by the standardisation of the originating ethnic question to a cultural affiliation concept and the promulgation

of standard collection procedures. Since all of these collections are concerned with children, some of whom may not have formed stable ethnic identities, a flexible approach would need to be taken in the measurement of ethnicity.

It would appear that a large proportion of the ethnic data on Juvenile Offender Case Record forms is currently transcribed directly from Police Offender reports. Since the Police data are already based on a cultural affiliation concept and the social workers appear reluctant to administer the question, it would probably be worth legitimating this practice. Social workers would then be required to collect the data themselves only in those cases where the Police had not supplied data or where the data quality was suspect. In those cases where the self-identification method was deemed inappropriate, social workers could use the observer estimation method.

For the Adoptions and State Wards collections, social worker reports are currently the only source of ethnic data. In addition to the lack of standardisation of measurement there is also a lack of coverage in these collections. Social workers can collect ethnic data only for those adoption cases which are placed by the Department of Social Welfare (about 40 percent) and only for those State Wards in departmental national institutions.

The quality and coverage of adoptions data would be improved if the ethnic data were transcribed from the original birth registration form held by the Registrar-General. The Registrar-General currently notifies the Department of Social Welfare of all adoptions and this information could be included on the notification order.

The extension of the collection of ethnic data to all State Wards might be facilitated with the implementation of a computerised administrative information system which is currently being planned by the Department of Social Welfare. Such systems remove the need to duplicate data collection and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of data capture thereby allowing the scope and quality of the data collected to be extended.

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