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A profile of Canada's Inuit population

Statistics Canada
November 2004

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Aboriginal Concepts

Aboriginal Identity

- ◆ This concept refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, i.e. North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, regardless of their ancestry.

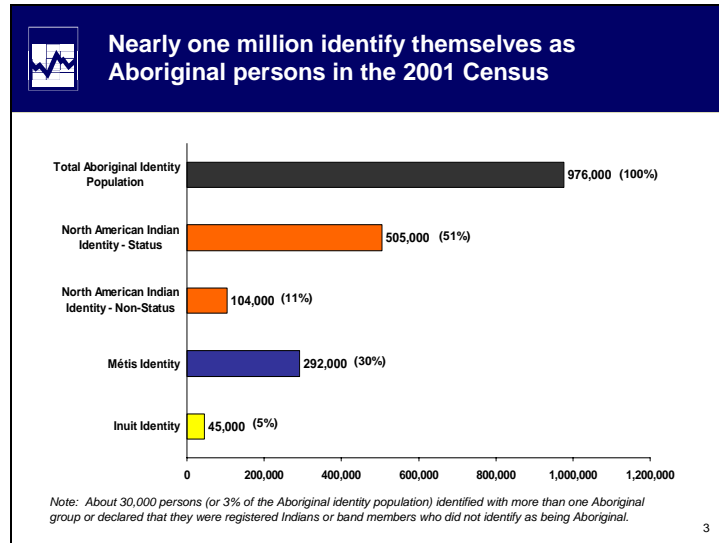
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Various definitions of the Aboriginal population exist. The one used in this profile is the identity concept that is based on a direct census question which asks each person if they are an Aboriginal person – see Appendix a and B.

Focusing on the Aboriginal identity population allows for historical comparability with the concept used in the 1981 Census, so we can measure change over time, and it covers all three Aboriginal groups mentioned in the Constitution. Many government programs tend to target all Aboriginal groups.

This profile focuses on those people reporting Inuit identity on their census forms.

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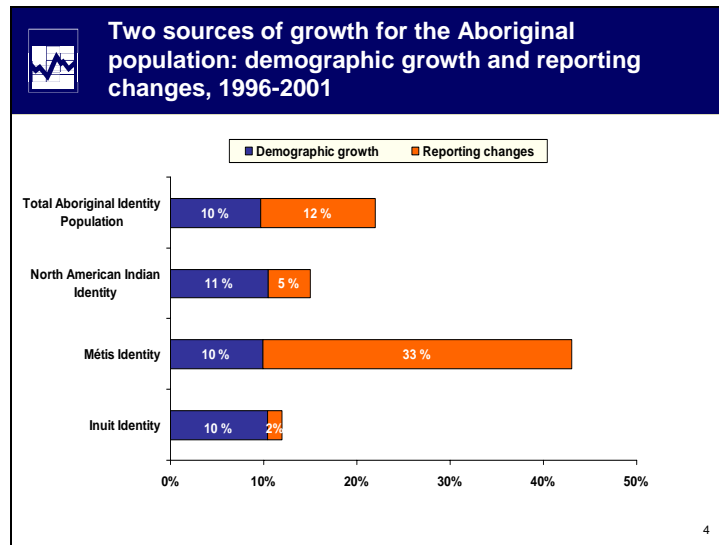
In 2001, people who self-identified as Aboriginal accounted for just under 1 million, or 3.3% of the nation's total population, compared with 2.8% five years earlier.

Of the total Aboriginal population, 5%, or **45,070**, reported that they were **Inuit**.

The majority of Aboriginal people, 608,850 or 62%, were North American Indian, 505,000 were registered Indians (or status) and 104,000 were without legal Indian status.

292,310 were Métis, who represented about 30% of the total Aboriginal population.

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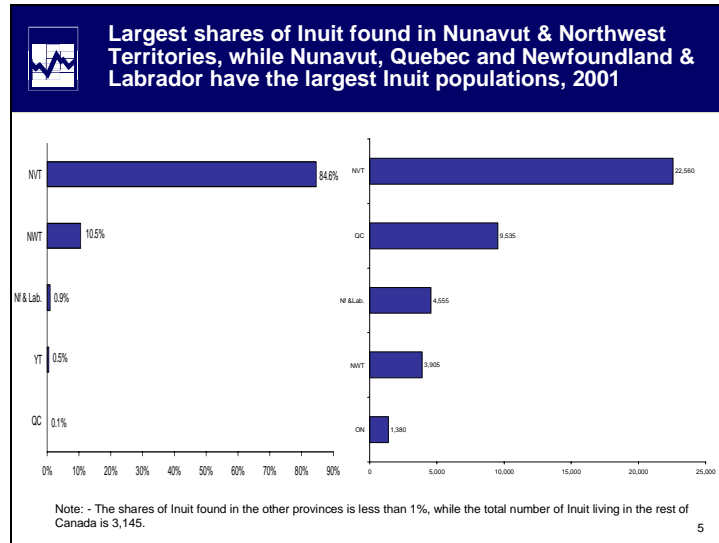
Overall the Aboriginal identity population grew about 22% over the five year period, 1996 to 2001.

Of the total Aboriginal growth an estimated 10% is due to natural demographic growth (i.e., the difference of births & deaths). The other 12% is due to non-demographic factors such as the way in which people report their Aboriginal identity from one census to the next.

Inuit population growth, however, is the least likely to be affected by non-demographic factors, where only 2% out of its 12% growth is estimated to be non-demographic.

In contrast, the Métis, whose overall growth was 43% over five years, has an estimate three quarters of its growth coming from non-demographic factors.

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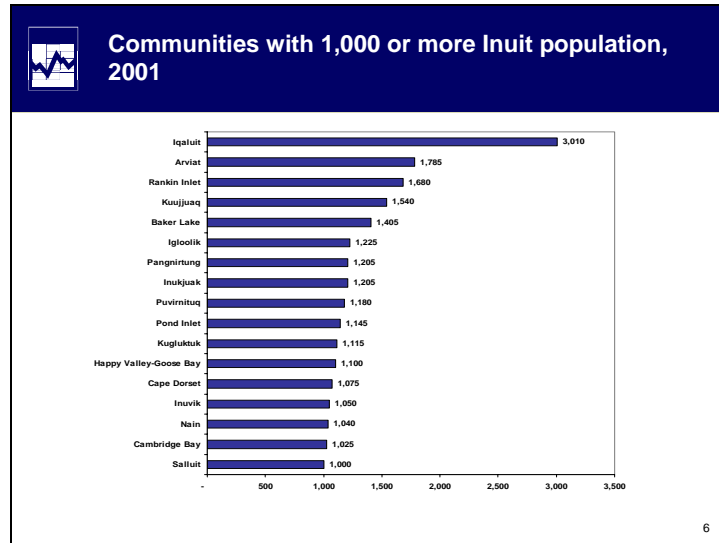


On a regional basis in 2001, Nunavut has the largest Inuit population 22,560 representing 85% of the territory's total population, the highest concentration in the country.

The Inuit in Quebec have the second largest population among the regions with 9,535. They mostly reside in northern Quebec in the region of Nunavik.

Inuit in Labrador at 4,555 rank third and those in NWT rank fourth.

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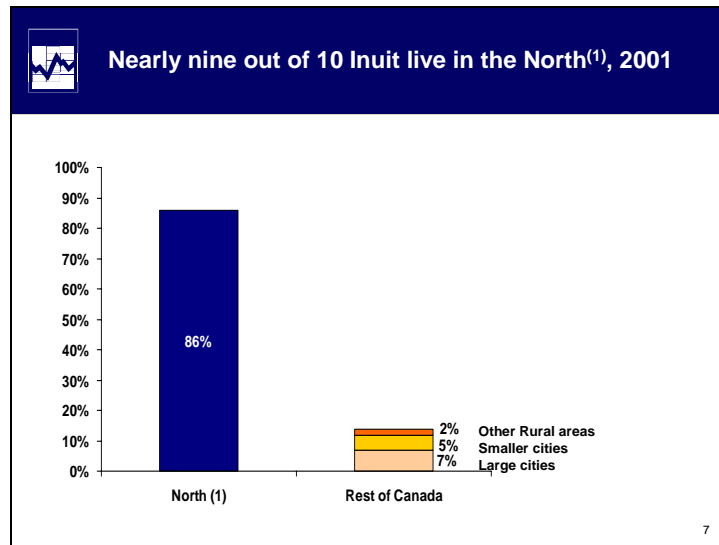


As of 2001, of the 27 communities in the four major Inuit regions, 17 have Inuit populations of 1,000 or more.

Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut, has the largest concentration with just over 3,000 Inuit.

Arviat and Rankin Inlet, also in Nunavut, have a little more than half the number of Inuit as Iqaluit at 1,785 and 1,680 respectively.

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Almost all Inuit (**86%**), live in the **North** ⁽¹⁾

A total of nearly 14% of Inuit live in the rest of Canada:

About 5% live in smaller urban communities of between 1,000 and 100,000 population, outside the North.

Another 7% live in large cities, i.e., metropolitan areas of 100,000+ population.

All Canadians: 80% live in urban areas.

(1) The **North** includes those Inuit in all areas of Labrador, Nunavik (in northern Quebec), Nunavut & Northwest Territories.

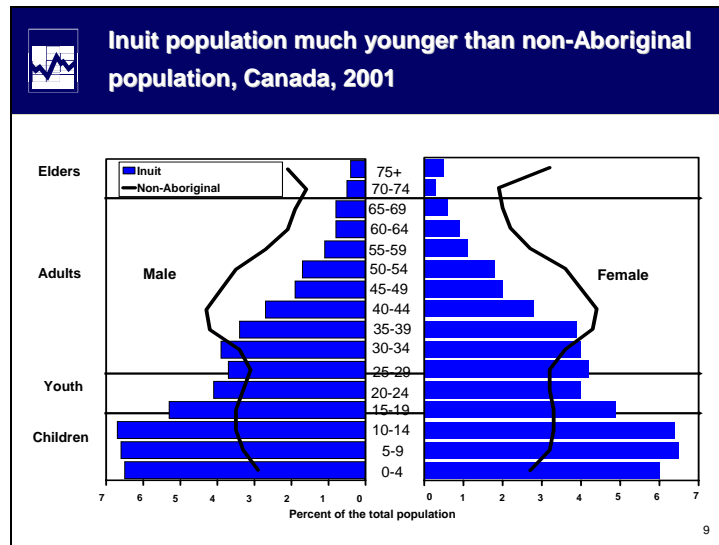
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Nearly one in five Inuit pulled-up stakes between 2000-2001

- ◆ Inuit are more mobile than non-Aboriginal people – 19% of Inuit moved between 2000 & 2001, compared to 14% of the non-Aboriginal population.
- ◆ Among Inuit movers:
 - Two-thirds moved within the same community versus 61% non-Aboriginal
 - One-third moved between communities versus 39% non-Aboriginal
- ◆ Inuit in rural areas are the least mobile (14%) and Inuit in large cities are the most mobile (37%) moved between 2000-2001.

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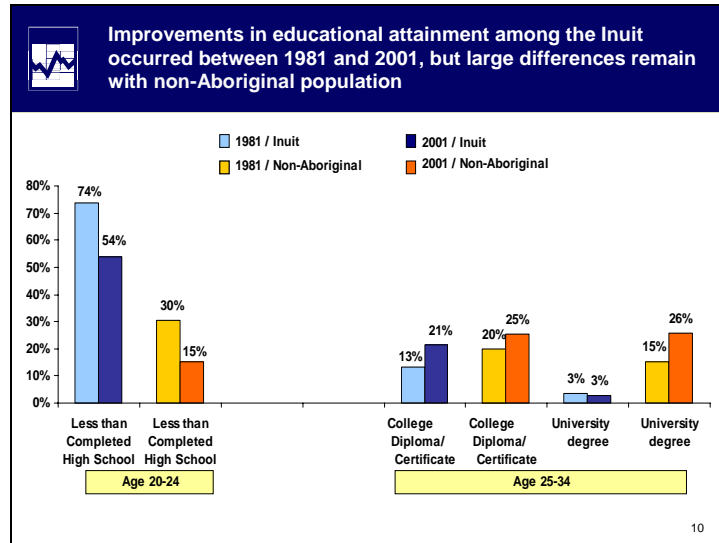
The Inuit population in 2001 is much younger than the non-Aboriginal population, a result of their higher birth rates and improving life expectancy. Median age for the Inuit is 20.6 years, while for the non-Aboriginal population it is 17 years older at 38 years.

The Inuit are even younger than the North American Indian population (median age 23.5) and the Métis (median age 27).

Children under 15 years of age represented 4 in 10 of the Inuit population, while non-Aboriginal children represented one-fifth of their population.

With such a young age structure among Inuit, as these children age over the next 15 years especially those in the North, they will be putting major pressure on the skill sets required for the labour force, on the need for jobs to meet the growing supply of labour, on the housing stock as new families form, and on the health system in relation to health behaviors and conditions associated with this population age group.

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This graph shows the changes, between 1981 and 2001, in educational attainment of the Inuit and non-Aboriginal populations in selected age groups.

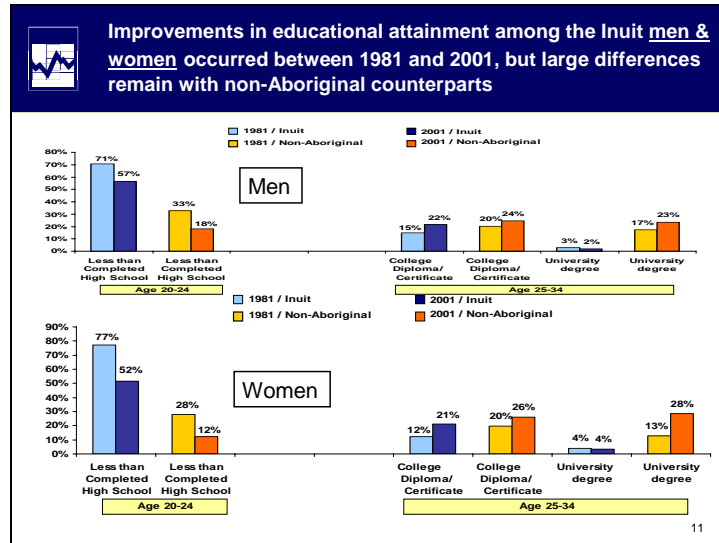
Among Inuit aged 20-24, the proportion who had less than completed high school declined substantially between 1981 and 2001 from 74% to 54%.

The gap, however, did not close with their non-Aboriginal counterparts with less than completed high school. The Inuit percentage was still 2.5 times greater in 2001, as it was in 1981.

However, the percentage of Inuit with college level diplomas or certificates did improve over the 1981 to 2001 period.

No significant change occurred among those with a university degree, which stayed at about 3%.

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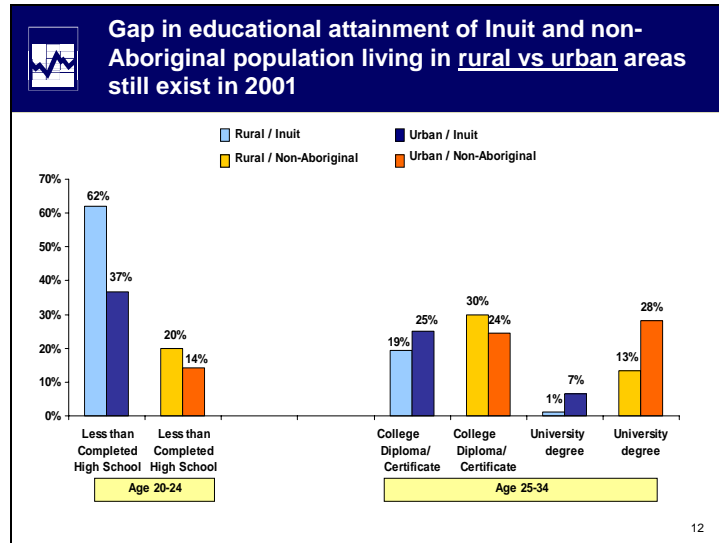
In 1981 young Inuit men had a lower percentage (71%) with less than high school completion than their female counterparts (77%).

By 2001, for the same educational level, the percentage of young Inuit men (57%) was higher than that of Inuit women (52%).

On a percentage basis Inuit women aged 25-34 improved on their share with college diploma or certificate rising from 12% to 21%, while the shares for their male counterparts rose from 15% to 22% over the 1981 to 2001 period.

Inuit men lost ground in their share with university degrees, while Inuit women stayed constant at 4% over the same 20 years.

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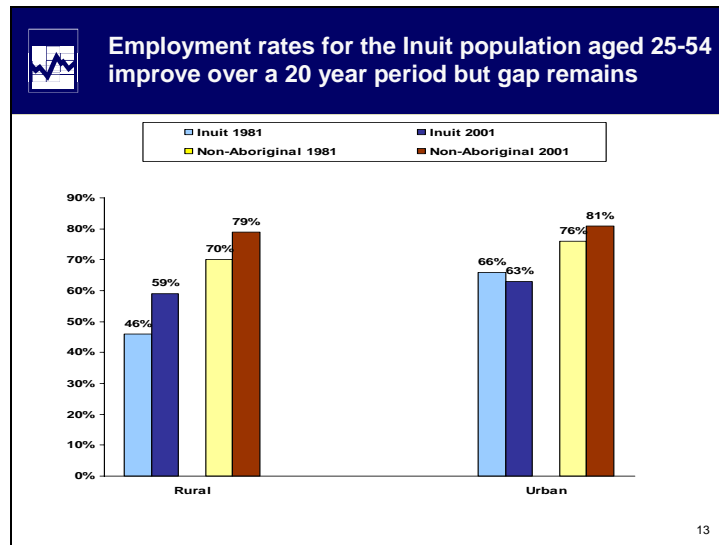
In 2001, while way fewer Inuit living in rural areas (i.e., in the North) have university degrees, in percentage terms (1%), a much higher share (7%) do so in urban areas.

This same patterns is observed for Inuit with college diplomas or certificates.

However, much higher shares in rural areas have not finished high school (62%) versus (37%) in urban areas.

Only urban Inuit college diploma holders are on par with their non-aboriginal counterparts in urban areas (25% vs 24%), in 2001. Wide gaps remain between the two groups in rural areas.

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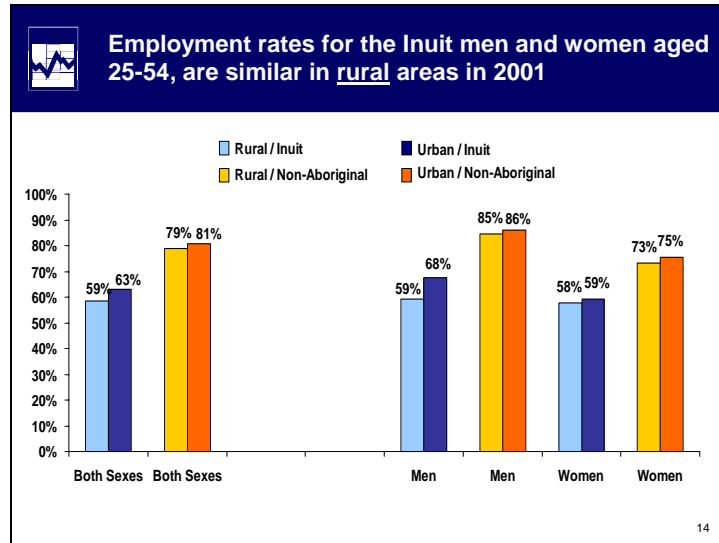
In rural areas, the Inuit population saw an improvement in their employment levels over the 1981-2001 period, although they still lagged behind their non-Aboriginal counterparts in 2001.

In urban areas, the Inuit employment rate declined somewhat over the twenty years (66% to 63%), likely driven by the fact that there are proportionately more Inuit women than men in urban areas in 2001 than in 1981, and Inuit women have lower employment rates than Inuit men.

In 2001, nearly six in ten (59%) Inuit of working age living in rural areas were employed compared to 46%, in 1981.

The employment gap between Inuit and non-Aboriginal persons in urban areas grew from 10% to 18%, in the 20 year period.

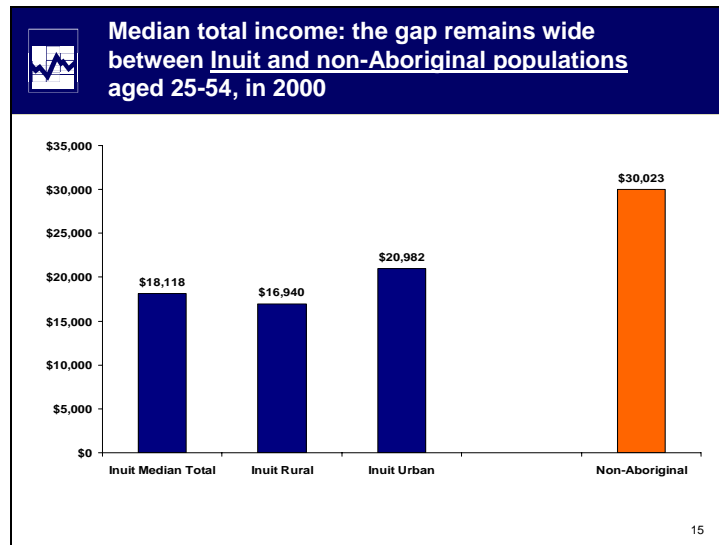
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Inuit men living in urban areas had better employment rates than Inuit women, but in rural areas Inuit men and women had similar employment rates (59% vs 58% respectively).

Irrespective of where they lived, Inuit men & women lagged behind on employment rates when compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

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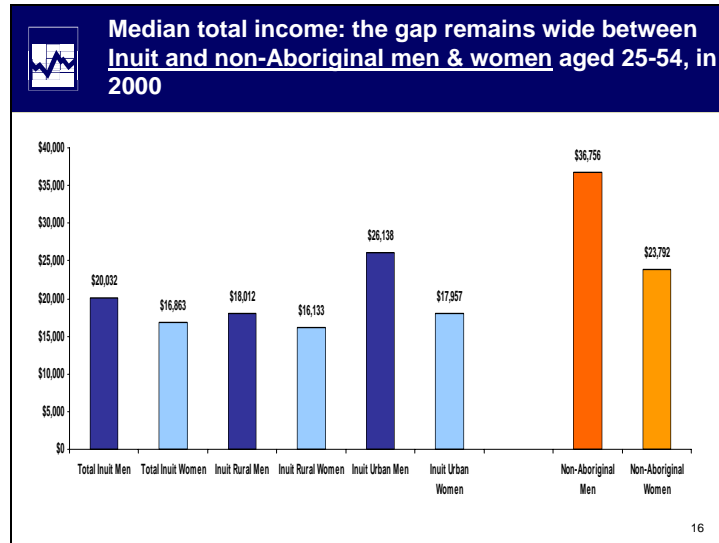


In 2000, the median income of Inuit individuals remained below that of the total non-Aboriginal population.

Inuit income is \$4,000 less in rural areas compared to those in urban areas.

In 2000, the Inuit median income (\$18,118) lagged the non-Aboriginal income (\$30,023) by \$12,000.

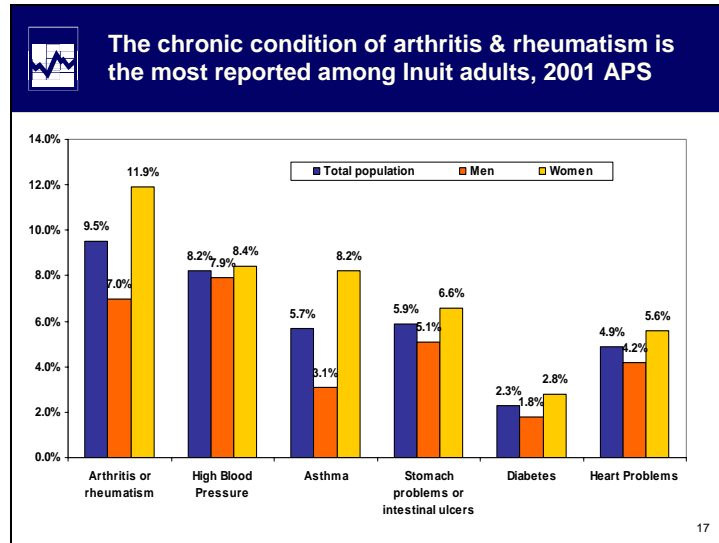
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In 2000, Inuit men have median incomes which are \$3,000 higher than those of Inuit women.

However, in rural areas, the gap is not as wide, but in urban areas Inuit women have much lower incomes than Inuit men (\$17,957 vs \$26,138).

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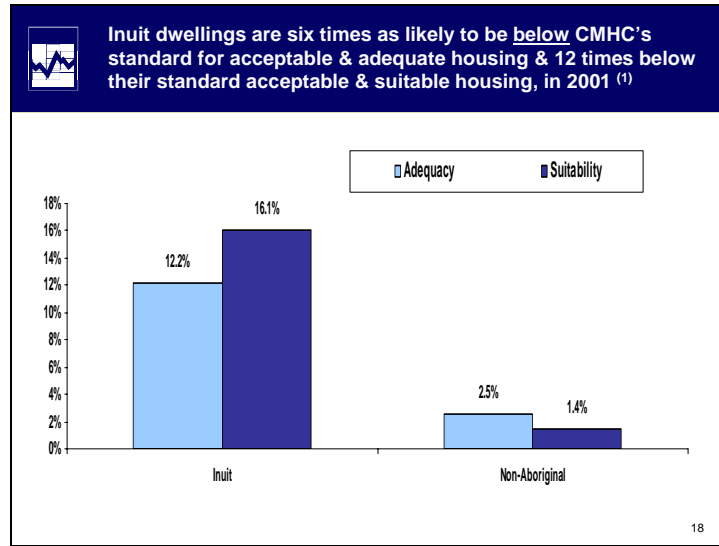
Inuit, unlike their other Aboriginal group counterparts, are reporting arthritis and rheumatism on par with all Canadians at about 10%.

Inuit women's rates of arthritis and rheumatism are even higher than the men's (12% vs.7%).

High blood pressure is the next highest reported disease for Inuit, while asthma among Inuit women is nearly as high for those with blood pressure problems, all around 8%.

Unlike their North American Indian counterparts, diabetes was reported for only about 2% of Inuit, although the percentage for Inuit women was slightly higher (3%). This is about on par with the general population.

About one in 20 Inuit adults reported heart problems.



The 12% of Inuit households are living in housing below the adequacy standard (measured by houses in need of major repair) and are unable to afford acceptable housing. This is about five times higher than for non-Aboriginal housing in 2001.

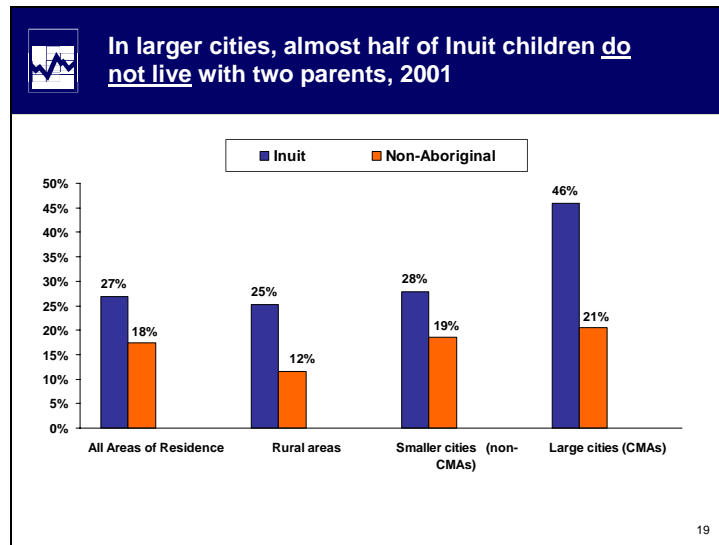
Inuit households are 12 times as likely to be below the suitability standard and are unable to afford acceptable housing, as compared to non-Aboriginal households. These households are considered crowded (as measured by the National Occupancy Standard). – see Appendix B.

*(1) **Adequacy** - Adequate dwellings are those reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs. Thus, housing that falls below this standard means they do require major repairs. Also, see Glossary in Appendix B.*

***Suitability** - Suitable dwellings are not crowded, meaning that they have enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements. Thus, housing that does not meet the NOS would mean they are crowded – see Glossary of terms in Appendix B.*

***Acceptable housing** - is housing that is both adequate in condition and suitable in size, which can be afforded by the household for less than 30% of before-tax household income - see Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation, "Research Highlight: 2001 Census Housing Series Issue 6: Aboriginal Households", Socio-Economic Series # 04-036*

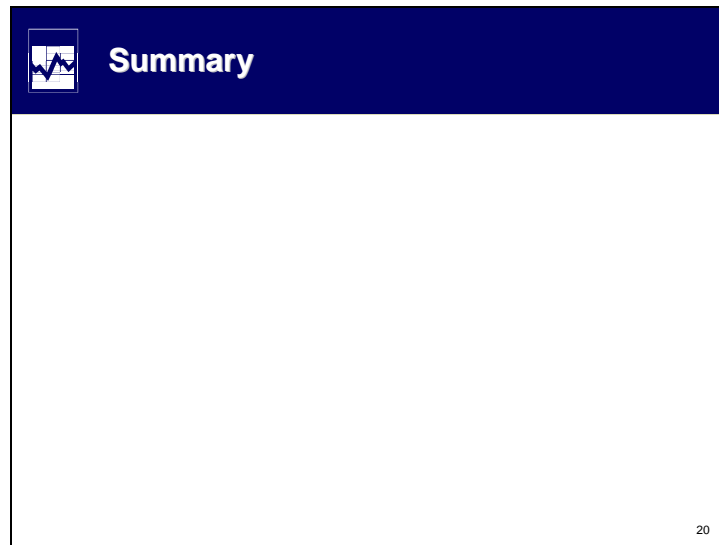
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This chart shows the percentage of children not living with both parents, that is living with one parent, other relatives or non-relatives.

The proportion of Inuit children living with a lone parent or with other relatives or non-relatives was higher than that of non-Aboriginal children, in all areas of residence, in 2001.

In rural areas, **1 in 4** Inuit children lived with a lone parent or, other relatives or non-relatives; **28%** lived in such arrangements in small cities, while in the larger cities, **46%** of Inuit children lived with lone parents or other relatives or non-relatives.



The demography of Aboriginal peoples in Canada is **complex** and basic demographic growth factors do not always apply. The growth of the Inuit population in recent years appears to be affected primarily by the fertility and mortality of the population, rather than by non-demographic factors.

Inuit are demographically the youngest Aboriginal population group in the country.

Most Inuit live in **small rural communities (66%)**, mostly in Labrador, Northern Quebec, Nunavut & Northwest Territories.

About one in five Inuit are moving in a year, but of those movers 66% tend to move within the same community rather than between them (33%).

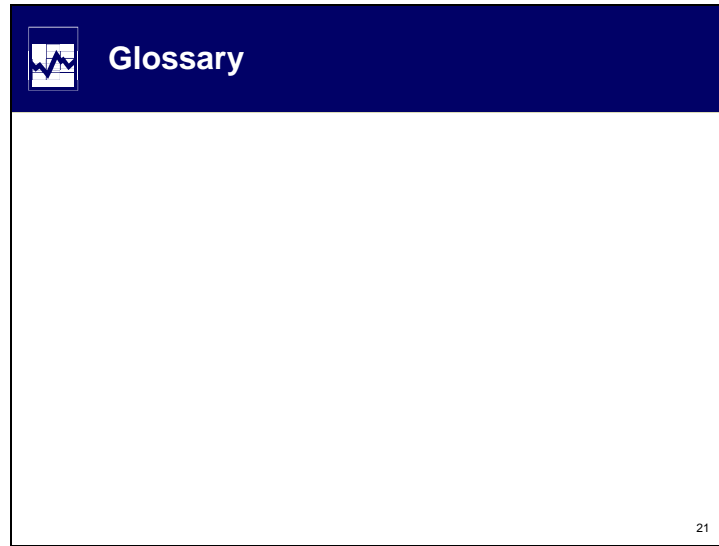
Advances in education for the young Inuit adults improved, BUT the gap with the non-Aboriginal population is not closing fast.

Employment rates for the Inuit population have improved in rural areas but not in urban areas – there is still a large gap between the Inuit and non-Aboriginal populations.

In 2000, the median income of Inuit individuals remained at 60% that of the total non-Aboriginal population.

Although there may be some cultural reasons for this, twice as many Inuit children do not live with two parents in rural (primarily northern) regions (25%), while this is even more prevalent among Inuit children who are living the large cities in the south (46%).

Adequate and suitable housing is a much greater issue for Inuit households compared to non-Aboriginal households.



**APPENDIX A:
METHODOLOGICAL NOTES**

2001 Census counts

Aboriginal Ancestry --- 1,319,980 ¹

Aboriginal Identity --- 976,305

Registered Indians --- 558,000 ²

Not everyone who reports that they have an Aboriginal ancestor necessarily identifies themselves as an Aboriginal person.

To be a legally registered Indian does not necessarily require one to declare or to be a North American Indian. Metis, Inuit, and non-Aboriginal people can have legal Indian status.

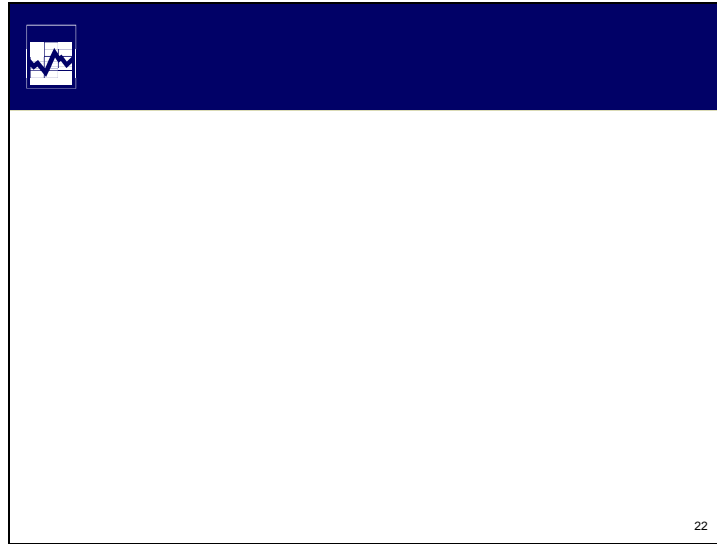
2001 INAC Indian Register count– 690,000

Indian & Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) maintains their own count of Registered Indians on the Indian Register. There are differences between the Indian Register and Census. They can be attributed to differences in definitions and collection procedures. The census count is low for registered Indians due to: a) 30 non-participating reserves (with an estimated 31,500 population); b) the population in collective dwellings (e.g. prisons) are not identified specifically as Aboriginal;

and c) a general undercount in enumerated areas. The INAC register is a population register which uses events like births and deaths reported throughout the year to obtain a population count. The register includes status Indians living out of the country (which the Census does not), and the reporting of vital events such as registering births and removing deaths may be slow, or not reported at all.

Incompletely Enumerated Indian Reserves and Indian Settlements in the 2001 Census

On some Indian reserves and Indian settlements in the 2001 Census, enumeration was not permitted or was interrupted before it was completed. These geographic areas (a total of 30) are called "incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and Indian settlements". Data for 2001 are not available for these areas, and therefore have not been included in the charts in this document, unless otherwise specified. The estimated size of the population on these 30 reserves is about 31,000. (See - <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Meta/appendix03.cfm>)



APPENDIX B:

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aboriginal Concepts:

Aboriginal Identity - Refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, i.e. North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada and/or who were members of an Indian Band or First Nation. In 1991 and previous censuses, Aboriginal persons were determined using the ethnic origin question (ancestry). The 1996 Census included a question on the individual's own perception of his/her Aboriginal identity. The 2001 Census question is the same as the one used in 1996. In 1981, the ethnic origin question was used, but the wording and format of this question allows the Aboriginal categories to be treated as an identity concept.

Aboriginal Ancestry/Origin which refers to those persons who reported at least one Aboriginal ancestor who was North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, based on the ethnic origin question

Registered (or Status) Indian - Refers to those persons who reported they were registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada. Treaty Indians are persons who are registered under the *Indian Act* and can prove descent from a Band that signed a treaty. In 1996 and in 2001, one direct question was developed to collect data on legal Indian status. The wording of the 1996 question differed slightly from the one in previous years. Prior to 1996, the term "treaty" was excluded from

the question. It was added to the registered Indian question in 1996 at the request of individuals from the Western provinces, where the term is more widely used.

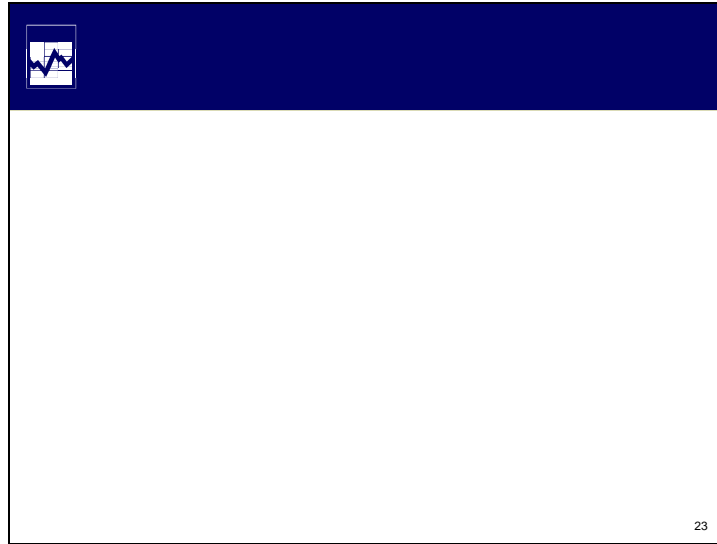
Geographic Terms:

Census Metropolitan Area - A CMA is an area consisting of one or more adjacent municipalities situated around a major urban core. To form a CMA, the urban core must have a population of at least 100,000.

Urban Area - An urban area has a minimum population concentration of 1,000 persons and a population density of at least 400 persons per square kilometre, based on the current census population count.

Rural Area - All territory outside urban areas is classified as rural. Taken together, urban and rural areas cover all of Canada.

Indian reserve – The on-reserve population is a derived census variable that is captured according to criteria established by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The on-reserve population includes all people living in any of seven community types legally affiliated with First Nations or Indian Bands (i.e., Indian Reserve, Indian Settlement, Indian Government District, Terres réservées, Nisga'a Village, Nisga'a Land and Teslin Land), as well as selected communities of various other types that are located in northern Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory.



APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS cont'd...

Other Terms:

Aboriginal household - Any single-family household where at least one spouse, common-law partner or lone parent is considered part of the Aboriginal identity population, or at least 50% of the household members are considered to be part of the Aboriginal identity population; any multiple-family household where at least one of the families in the household is an Aboriginal household (as defined above); and any non-family household where at least 50% of the household members are considered to be part of the Aboriginal identity population.

Condition of Dwelling - Refers to whether, in the judgement of the respondent, the dwelling requires any repairs (excluding desirable remodelling or additions). **Responses include:** No, only regular maintenance is needed; Yes, minor repairs are needed; Yes, major repairs are needed where:

Regular maintenance refers to painting, furnace cleaning, etc.

Minor repairs refer to the repair of missing or loose floor tiles, bricks or shingles, defective steps, railing or siding, etc.

Major repairs refer to the repair of defective plumbing or electrical wiring, structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings, etc.

Employment Rate - Refers to the number of persons employed in the week prior to Census Day (May 15, 2001), expressed as a percentage of the total population 15 years of age and over.

Highest Level of Schooling - Refers to the highest grade or year of elementary or secondary (high) school attended, or to the highest year of university or college education completed. University education is considered to be a higher level of schooling than college education. Also, the attainment of a degree, certificate or diploma is considered to be at a higher level than years completed or attended without an educational qualification.

Incidence of Low Income - The incidence of low income is defined as the proportion or percentage of economic families or unattached individuals in a given classification below the low income cut-offs. For the 2001 Census, these incidence rates are calculated from unrounded estimates of economic families and unattached individuals 15 years of age and over. The incidence of low income can also be derived for census families, non-family persons and the population in private households.

Low Income Cut-Off - Measures of low income known as low income cut-offs (LICOs) were first introduced in Canada in 1968 based on 1961 Census income data and 1959 family expenditure patterns. At that time, expenditure patterns indicated that Canadian families spent about 50% of their total income on food, shelter and clothing. It was arbitrarily estimated that families spending 70% or more of their income (20 percentage points more than the average) on these basic necessities would be "straitened" circumstances. With this assumption, low income cut-off points were set for five different sizes of families. Subsequent to these initial cut-offs, revised low income cut-offs were established based on later national family expenditure survey data. As of 1992, these data indicated that Canadian families spent, on average, 34.7% of their total income on basic necessities. Since then, data from the expenditure survey have indicated that this proportion has remained fairly stable. By adding the original difference of 20 percentage points to the basic level of expenditure on necessities, new low income cut-offs were set at income levels differentiated by family size and degree of urbanization. Since 1992, these cut-offs have been updated yearly by changes in the consumer price index.



APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS cont'd...

Median Income of Individuals – The dollar amount that marks the midpoint of a distribution of individuals, with income, ranked by size of income. The median income of a specified group of income recipients is that amount which divides their income size distribution into two halves, i.e. the incomes of the first half of individuals are below the median, while those of the second half are above the median.

Mobility Status – Place of Residence 1 Year Ago - Information indicating whether the person lived in the same residence on Census Day (May 15, 2001), as he or she did one year before (May 15, 2000). This means that we have "movers" and "non-movers". There are different types of "movers": people who moved within the same city or town (non-migrants), people who moved to a different city or town (internal migrants), and people who came from another country to live in Canada (external migrants).

National Occupancy Standard - According to the National Occupancy Standard (see *Core Housing Need in Canada*, CMHC, 1991, p. 4) enough bedrooms means one bedroom for each cohabitating adult couple; unattached household member 18 years of age and over; same-sex pair of children under age 18; and additional boy or girl in the family, unless there are two opposite sex siblings under 5 years of age, in which case they are expected to share a bedroom. A household of one individual can occupy a bachelor unit (i.e. a unit with no bedroom).

