



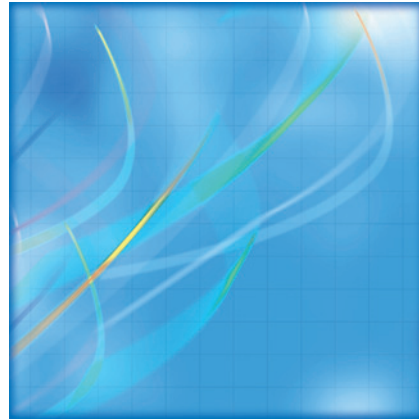
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2001 Census: analysis series

Aboriginal peoples of Canada: A demographic profile

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Statistics Canada
Census Operations Division

2001 Census: analysis series

Aboriginal peoples of Canada: A demographic profile

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Note of appreciation

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Aboriginal peoples of Canada: A demographic profile

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Aboriginal peoples of Canada: A demographic profile

Aboriginal share of total population on the rise

New data from the 2001 Census shows that the Aboriginal people's share of Canada's total population is on the rise.

Just over 1.3 million people reported having at least some Aboriginal ancestry in 2001, representing 4.4 % of the total population. In 1996, people with Aboriginal ancestry represented 3.8 % of the total population.

One hundred years of growth

From 1901 to 2001, the Aboriginal ancestry population increased tenfold, while the total population of Canada rose by a factor of only six. However, the rate of growth was very different in the first half of the 20th Century compared with the second half.

During the first 50 years, the Aboriginal population grew only 29%, whereas the total population far more than doubled (161%). This relatively slow rate of growth among the Aboriginal population occurred because high mortality rates more than offset high birth rates.

On the other hand, between 1951 and 2001, the Aboriginal ancestry population grew sevenfold, while the Canadian population as a whole only doubled.

The Aboriginal population had low growth until the 1960s. Starting in the 1960s, the infant death rate began to decline rapidly, mainly as a result of improved access to health services. The fertility rate continued to be high throughout the 1960s. This Aboriginal baby boom peaked in 1967, about 10 years later than the Canadian post-war baby boom.

Aboriginal fertility has remained above the overall Canadian birth rate, although the birth rate has declined from four times the Canadian rate in the 1960s to one-and-a-half times today. However, the surge in the Aboriginal population during the last half of the century was only partly due to demographic change.

The remaining increase is accounted for by various other factors, such as fewer incompletely enumerated reserves and an increased tendency of people to identify as Aboriginal. The trend to increased reporting of Aboriginal origins or identity has been evident since the 1986 Census and is thought to have resulted from an increased awareness of Aboriginal issues. This could have occurred as a result of numerous events, such as the Oka crisis, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, recent court decisions on Aboriginal rights and the creation of the territory of Nunavut. A similar trend in increased reporting has also been observed in the census counts of the indigenous population in Australia, the United States and New Zealand.

Undercoverage of the Aboriginal population

The objective of every Census is to provide detailed information at a single point in time on the demographic, social and economic conditions of the population. One of its goals is to enumerate the entire population on Census Day. Inevitably, however, some people are not counted, for example, if their household did not receive a Census questionnaire. Some individuals may be missed because they have no usual residence, or because they did not spend census night in any dwelling. This is termed undercoverage.

Undercoverage in the 2001 Census was considerably higher among Aboriginal people than among other segments of the population due to the fact that enumeration was not permitted, or was interrupted before it could be completed, on 30 Indian reserves and settlements. These geographic areas are called incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and settlements.

Data are not available for incompletely enumerated reserves and settlements, and these reserves and settlements are not included in tabulations. While the impact of the missing data tends to be small for national-level and most provincial-level statistics, it can be significant for some smaller areas.

In 2001, a preliminary estimate of 30,000 to 35,000 people were living on reserves and settlements that were incompletely enumerated. Most of these people were registered Indians. Consequently, the impact of incomplete enumeration will be greatest on data for North American Indians and for persons registered under the Indian Act.

Incomplete enumeration and undercoverage account for most of the difference between the 2001 Census count of persons registered under the Indian Act (about 558,000) and that produced by the Indian Register maintained by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (about 681,000). Methodological differences, as well as differences in concepts and definitions between the two sources, also account for a smaller part of the difference. The two sources have very different purposes and, given the coverage and other differences, are not directly comparable.

Nearly one million people identified themselves as Aboriginal

Not everyone who reported having an Aboriginal ancestor identified himself or herself as an Aboriginal person, that is, as a North American Indian, Métis or Inuit. For the purposes of this report, the analysis will concentrate on people who have identified themselves as a member of one or more of these Aboriginal groups.

In 2001, a total of 976,305 persons identified themselves with one (or more) of these groups. This count was 22.2% higher than the 1996 figure of 799,010. In contrast, the non-Aboriginal population grew only 3.4% between 1996 and 2001.

In 2001, people who identified themselves as Aboriginal accounted for 3.3% of the nation's total population, compared with 2.8% five years earlier.

About half the increase in the Aboriginal population can be attributed to demographic factors, such as their high birth rate. Increased awareness of one's Aboriginal roots likely accounted for another half, as more people identified themselves as Aboriginal and fewer reserves were incompletely enumerated.

Largest gains in Métis population

Of the three Aboriginal groups, the largest gain in population between 1996 and 2001 occurred among the Métis, whose numbers increased 43%.

This five-year growth was almost three times as fast as the 15% increase in the North American Indian population, and almost four times the 12% increase among the Inuit.

The census enumerated 292,310 Métis, who represented about 30% of the total Aboriginal population. This was up from 204,115 in 1996.

The majority of Aboriginal people, 608,850 or 62%, were North American Indian, and 5%, or 45,070, were Inuit. The remaining 3% were either persons who identified with more than one Aboriginal group or registered Indians or band members who did not identify as Aboriginal.

Canada's proportion of Aboriginal population second behind New Zealand

On the international level among selected countries, the Aboriginal peoples' share of Canada's total population, 3.3 %, ranked second behind New Zealand, whose Maori population accounts for 14% of its total population.

Aboriginal peoples accounted for 2.2% of Australia's population, and 1.5% of the population of the United States.

Aboriginal population much younger than the non-Aboriginal population, but is aging

The Aboriginal population in 2001 was much younger than the non-Aboriginal population, but has still been aging. The median age of Canada's Aboriginal population was 13 years younger than that of the non-Aboriginal population, a result of the higher birth rate among Aboriginal people.

The median age for the Aboriginal population was 24.7 years, while that of the non-Aboriginal population was at an all-time high of 37.7 years. Median age is the point where exactly one-half of the population is older, and the other half is younger.

The territory of Nunavut and two provinces had the youngest Aboriginal populations. Aboriginal people in Nunavut had a median age of only 19.1. The median age in Saskatchewan was slightly higher at 20.1; in Manitoba, it was 22.8. In these regions, Aboriginal birth rates continue to be very high.

There is a trend toward aging in the Aboriginal population, albeit slower than in the total Canadian population. This aging is in large part due to a gradually improving life expectancy and to the declining birth rate among Aboriginal peoples.

Still, the Aboriginal birth rate is about 1.5 times that of the non-Aboriginal birth rate.

One-third of the Aboriginal population aged 14 and under

Children aged 14 and under represented one-third of the Aboriginal population in 2001, far higher than the corresponding share of 19% in the non-Aboriginal population.

Although the Aboriginal population accounted for only 3.3 % of Canada's total population, Aboriginal children represented 5.6 % of all children in Canada.

As these children move through the education system and into the labour market in coming years, they will account for an increasing part of the growth of the working-age population. This will be the case particularly in provinces with higher concentrations of Aboriginal people.

Although the share of the total Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan and Manitoba was relatively large — 14% in each of these provinces — the proportion of children at about 25% and 23% respectively, was much larger.

Aboriginal seniors: A small but growing population

The number of Aboriginal seniors, while relatively small, soared 40% between 1996 and 2001 to 39,700. This was by far the biggest increase of all broad age groups. At the same time, the number of seniors in the non-Aboriginal population increased only 10%.

Improvements in Aboriginal life expectancy over the last 25 years have begun to affect the growth in the Aboriginal population aged 65 and over. Life expectancy at birth among the status Indian population, for example, has gone up for males from 59.2 years in 1975 to 68.9 years in 2000, and for females from 65.9 years to 76.3.

Life expectancy is still lower in the Aboriginal population than in the non-Aboriginal population. However, the gap is narrowing over time. In 1975, the life expectancy for Canadian males was 11.1 years higher than that for the status Indian male population. By 2000, this gap had narrowed to only 7.4 years. Similarly, the gap for life expectancy at birth closed between status Indian and Canadian women from 11.7 years to 5.2 during this period.

Nevertheless, the percentage of Aboriginal seniors in this population remained low because of the overall youthfulness of the Aboriginal population. The share of seniors only accounted for about 4% of the Aboriginal population, up slightly from five years earlier. In contrast, seniors represented 13% of the non-Aboriginal population.

One-quarter of Aboriginal people could conduct a conversation in an Aboriginal language

A total of 235,075 individuals, or about one-quarter (24%) of the 976,305 people who identified themselves as North American Indian, Métis or Inuit in 2001, reported that they had enough knowledge of an Aboriginal language to carry on a conversation. This was down from 29% in 1996.

However, not all Aboriginal languages showed a decline in the number of people with knowledge. Eight of the 14 languages with at least 2000 speakers in 2001 had increased since 1996, while six languages showed declines.

A total of 31,945 people reported they could carry on a conversation in Inuktitut, the second most common Aboriginal language, up 8.7% from 29,400 in 1996.

The number who could conduct a conversation in Dene increased from 9,525 to 10,500, while those who could speak Montagnais-Naskapi went from 9,335 to 10,285. Both had increases of 10.2%. The number of people who could speak Attikamekw rose 21.1% from 4,075 to 4,935.

Regular use of a language is key to maintaining its vitality. About nine out of every 10 people with knowledge of these four languages reported that they spoke the language at home, indicating that they used it at least regularly.

Also posting gains in knowledge between 1996 and 2001 were Micmac, up 8.2% from 7,975 to 8,625; Dakota/Sioux, up 3.5% from 4,710 to 4,875 and Oji-Cree from 5,480 to 5,610, up 2.4%.

However, these languages were used less at home. Eight out of 10 people who knew Micmac or Oji-Cree spoke it at least regularly at home, as did seven out of 10 for Dakota/Sioux.

Both Cree and Ojibway, the first and third best known languages, showed declines in knowledge (-3.1% and -6.0% respectively) as did Blackfoot (-20.2%). About three out of four of those with knowledge of Cree spoke it at least regularly at home and less than two out of three of those knowing Ojibway or Blackfoot did so. Further analysis is needed to understand the many factors affecting the evolution of the knowledge and use of Aboriginal languages.

Decline in Aboriginal languages as a mother tongue

Overall, the census showed a decrease in Aboriginal languages as a mother tongue, that is, the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood.

In 2001, a total of 198,595 Aboriginal people reported having an Aboriginal mother tongue, down 3.5% from 205,800 in 1996. As was the case for knowledge, there were declines in the number of persons with Cree, Ojibway and Blackfoot as mother tongues.

However, as also was the case for knowledge, not all Aboriginal languages saw a decline in mother tongue. The same languages which posted increases in knowledge, as well as higher rates of use at home, also showed increases in mother tongue.

These languages were: Inuktitut, Montagnais-Naskapi, Dene, Micmac, Oji-Cree, Attikamekw and Dakota/Sioux. Their gains ranged from 0.2% for Dakota/Sioux to 18.6% for Attikamekw between 1996 and 2001.

Aboriginal children less likely to live with both parents

Proportionally, far fewer Aboriginal children aged 14 and under lived with two parents in 2001 than did non-Aboriginal children.

In large urban areas Aboriginal children were almost as likely to live with a single parent as they were with both parents.

About 65% of Aboriginal children living on reserves lived with two parents. This compares with only 50% in census metropolitan areas. In contrast, almost 83% of non-Aboriginal children lived with two parents.

Conversely, twice the proportion of Aboriginal children lived with a lone parent in 2001 as did non-Aboriginal children. On reserves, 32% of Aboriginal children lived with a lone parent. This percentage jumped to 46% for those in the census metropolitan areas. Only 17% of non-Aboriginal children lived with a lone parent.

Not all Aboriginal children lived with their immediate families. Just under 5% of those living in large urban areas lived with either a relative other than their parent(s), or lived with a non-relative. This compares with only about 0.6% among non-Aboriginal children.

Highest concentrations of Aboriginal population in the North and on the Prairies

Canada's most populous province, Ontario, had 188,315 Aboriginal people in 2001, the highest absolute number. However, they accounted for less than 2% of its total population. Second was British Columbia with 170,025, or 4.4% of its population.

As in previous censuses, the highest concentrations of Aboriginal population in 2001 were in the North and on the Prairies.

The 22,720 Aboriginal people in Nunavut represented 85% of the territory's total population, the highest concentration in the country. Aboriginal people represented more than one-half (51%) of the population of the Northwest Territories, and almost one-quarter (23%) of the population of the Yukon.

The census enumerated 150,040 Aboriginal people in Manitoba and 130,190 in Saskatchewan, in each case about 14% of the province's population. The 156,220 Aboriginal people in Alberta accounted for only 5% of its population.

About one-half of Aboriginal people lived in urban areas

Census data show slow, but steady, growth among Aboriginal people residing in the nation's cities. In 2001, almost one-half (49%) of the population who identified themselves as Aboriginal lived in urban areas, up from 47% in 1996.

At the same time, the proportion of Aboriginal people who lived on Indian reserves and settlements declined from 33% to 31%.

The overall proportion of the population that lived in rural non-reserve areas declined slightly from 20.4% to 19.5%.

One-quarter of the Aboriginal population lived in 10 metropolitan areas

A total of 245,000 Aboriginal people, or 25% of all Aboriginal people, lived in 10 of the nation's 27 census metropolitan areas in 2001. Winnipeg had the greatest number, followed by Edmonton, Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Saskatoon, Regina, Ottawa-Hull (now known as Ottawa-Gatineau), Montréal and Victoria.

The 55,755 Aboriginal people who lived in Winnipeg represented 8% of its total population. Five years earlier, Winnipeg had 45,750 Aboriginal people who accounted for 7% of its population. The highest concentration in 2001 was in the census metropolitan area of Saskatoon, whose 20,275 Aboriginal people accounted for 9% of its population. Aboriginal people accounted for less than 1% of the population in Canada's two largest census metropolitan areas: Toronto (0.4%) and Montréal (0.3%).

Among municipalities, the concentration of Aboriginal people was by far the greatest in the Saskatchewan city of Prince Albert, where the census enumerated 11,640 Aboriginal people. They accounted for 29% of Prince Albert's total population.

Prince George, B.C., was a distant second, with 9% of its population identifying itself as Aboriginal.

One in five Aboriginal people moved in the past year

Aboriginal people are more mobile than other Canadians. Their high level of mobility creates challenges for planning and implementing programs in education, social services, housing and health care, especially in urban areas.

Overall, in the 12 months before the May 15, 2001 Census, 22% of Aboriginal people moved, compared with only 14% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. About two thirds of those who moved, did so within the same community, while about one third of movers changed communities.

Net migration among Aboriginal people was greatest for the rural non-reserve parts of the nation as compared with net movements for Indian reserves or urban areas. (Note that the figures below have been adjusted for incompletely enumerated Indian reserves.)

During this period, the rural (non-reserve) areas of Canada incurred a net loss due to migration of 4,300 Aboriginal people, that is, the difference between the 18,850 people who moved out and the 14,550 who moved in. This net loss represented 2.2% of the total Aboriginal population of 192,830 who lived in these areas.

On the other hand, there was a net gain of almost 4,000 Aboriginal people to the reserves, with 11,210 moving on to reserves and 7,230 leaving. These 4,000 people represented 1.5% of the total on-reserve population.

There was also a slight net gain of about 1,265 Aboriginal people to census metropolitan areas. A total of 24,065 Aboriginal people moved into one of the 27 census metropolitan areas, while 22,800 moved out. This net gain represented only 0.5% of the 274,365 Aboriginal people who lived in these large urban areas.

Conversely, more Aboriginal people moved out of the smaller, non-metropolitan urban areas than moved in. A total of 24,155 Aboriginal people moved into these areas in the year prior to the census, while 25,100 moved out. This net loss of 945 also represented 0.5% of the total Aboriginal population of 209,905 who lived in these smaller urban centres.

The pattern in 2001 of small net increases in the movement to reserves and larger urban centres is a continuation of a trend that has been observed since 1981.

Aboriginal groups

North American Indians

One-fifth lived in Ontario

Of the 976,305 people who identified themselves as Aboriginal in the 2001 Census, 62%, or 608,850, reported they were North American Indian. (See notes of definition of terms used in this document.) This was up from 529,035 five years earlier.

This growth can be attributed primarily to natural increase and increased participation in the Census. Fertility rates for this population are still high, although they have declined in recent years.

The census enumerated 131,560 North American Indians in Ontario. They accounted for more than one-fifth (22%) of the total North American Indian population, the highest proportion of any province or territory.

Ontario was followed by British Columbia, a close second with 118,295, or 19% of the total, and the three Prairie provinces: Manitoba (15%), and Alberta and Saskatchewan, both 14%.

North American Indians accounted for almost 29% of the population of the Northwest Territories and 20% of the Yukon's, the highest concentrations among the provinces and territories. In addition, they represented 9% of the total population of Saskatchewan and 8% in Manitoba.

Less than half lived on an Indian reserve

Less than one-half (47%) of the North American Indian population lived on an Indian reserve in 2001. The majority lived in either urban centres or in rural off-reserve locations.

A total of 151,770 North American Indians, or 24% of the total, lived in one of 27 census metropolitan areas (CMAs).

The CMA of Winnipeg had the largest North American Indian population, 22,955, followed by Vancouver (22,700), Edmonton (18,260), Toronto (13,785) and Saskatoon (11,290).

More people move to Indian reserves than leave

Data on migration show that about 4,000 more North American Indians moved onto Indian reserves in the year prior to the census than moved off, for a net gain of almost two per cent. Most of this net inflow came from rural non-reserve areas.

There was also a slight net inflow of North American Indians into CMAs (a net gain of 0.6%). While net flows into both small and large urban areas were rather low, the percentages of those moving into and out of these urban areas were large. For small urban areas 13% moved in or moved out and for CMAs, 10% moved in and 9% moved out.

In addition to the 8% of the North American Indian population who moved to a different community in the 12 months before the census, another 14% moved within their community. This high turnover of population in one year creates challenges on the health care, housing and social services, and the local school systems.

Median age well below non-Aboriginal population

The census showed that the North American Indian population is quite young. Its median age in 2001 was 23.5 years, compared with 37.7 in the non-Aboriginal population. This means that 50% of the North American Indian population in 2001 was less than 23.5 years old.

In Saskatchewan, the median age of 18.4 years for North American Indians was a full 20 years lower than that for the province's non-Aboriginal population. Saskatchewan's median age for this group was lower than even the median of 19.1 years for Inuit in Nunavut.

The median age for North American Indians was 20.4 in Manitoba and 21.2 in Alberta.

More than one-third of North American Indian population aged 14 and under

The census enumerated 213,530 North American Indian children aged 14 and under in 2001. They represented 35% of the total North American Indian population, down slightly from 36% five years earlier.

In contrast, this age group represented 19% of the total non-Aboriginal population in 2001.

Census data showed that there are far more young people ready to enter the working-age population than there are older people preparing to leave over the next ten years. The group of youngsters aged five to 14 was more than four times larger than the pre-retirement group aged 55 to 64 in 2001.

North American Indian seniors: Small, but growing population

While the North American Indian population is relatively young, it is still aging. The census enumerated 24,170 North American Indians aged 65 and over. Although this age group is small in numbers, it has grown from 18,415 in 1996, an increase of 31%. Over half these seniors (53%) lived on Indian reserves in 2001, a five-year increase of 34%. As this aging trend continues into the future, it will have growing implications for housing, social services and health care.

North American Indian children less likely to be in two-parent families in urban areas

The proportion of North American Indian children aged 14 and under who were living in two-parent families was much higher (65%) on Indian reserves and in rural non-reserve areas in 2001 than it was in urban areas. A total of 65,210 children residing on reserves lived with two parents. In contrast, 46% of North American Indian children living in census metropolitan areas, were with a two-parent family.

Conversely, the proportion of children living with a lone parent was much lower on reserves. A total of 31,880 children, or 32% of those living on a reserve, lived with a lone parent. At the same time, 48% of children in census metropolitan areas lived with a lone parent. Rates of lone parenthood were particularly high in Prairie CMAs, where more than 50% of Aboriginal children were living in a lone parent family.

Métis

Largest increase in population

Of the 976,305 people who identified themselves as Aboriginal in the 2001 Census, about 30%, or 292,310, reported that they were Métis.

This was a 43% increase from 204,120 five years earlier, the largest population gain of the three Aboriginal groups. While the fertility rate for the Métis population has declined in recent years, it is still higher than the fertility rate for the non-Aboriginal population, but lower than rates among North American Indians and Inuit.

Not all of the growth can be attributed to demographic factors. Increased awareness of Métis issues coming from court cases related to Métis rights, and constitutional discussions, as well as better enumeration of Métis communities have contributed to the increase in the population identifying as Métis.

The largest Métis population, 66,055, lived in Alberta where they accounted for almost 23% of Canada's total Métis population. Alberta was followed by Manitoba, with 56,795, or 19% of the total Métis population, and Ontario, with 48,345, or almost 17% of the total.

The Métis population increased in all 10 provinces, more than doubling in Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

More than two-thirds of Métis lived in urban areas

In 2001, 68% of the Métis population lived in Canada's urban areas, while 29% lived in rural areas. These shares are similar to those in 1996. Only 7,315 Métis lived on reserves, but this was more than double the level five years earlier.

The five census metropolitan areas with the largest Métis populations in 2001 were Winnipeg (31,395), Edmonton (21,065), Vancouver (12,505), Calgary (10,575) and Saskatoon (8,305). These five metropolitan areas combined were home to 29% of the total Métis population.

More than one-fifth of Métis population pulled up stakes

Overall, 23% of the population that identified themselves as Métis changed residences in the year prior to the census, compared with only 14% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Among the Métis who were living in all urban areas, 27% moved. In contrast, only 15% of the non-Aboriginal population who were living in urban areas at the time of the census had moved. Nearly 14% of the Métis who were living in rural non-reserve areas reported that they had moved in the year before the census, compared with only 9% of the non-Aboriginal population in these areas.

Three of 10 Métis were children aged 14 and under

The median age of Canada's Métis population was 27 years in 2001, nearly 11 years younger than that of the non-Aboriginal population. However, it was older than median age of 23.5 years of the North American Indian population, and the median of 20.6 for Inuit.

The 84,695 Métis children aged 14 and under represented 29% of the Métis population, down from about 31% in 1996. In contrast, children in this age group represented 19% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Young people aged 15 to 24 represented 18% of the total Métis population, unchanged from 1996.

Close to one-half (49%) of the Métis population was in the age group 25 to 64, up from 46% in 1996.

The census enumerated 12,520 Métis seniors aged 65 and over, who represented 4% of their population, virtually unchanged from 1996. Seniors accounted for almost 13% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Métis children less likely to live in a two-parent family in urban areas

A total of 54,735 Métis children, or 65% of the total, lived in a two-parent family, while 27,955 youngsters, or 33%, lived with a lone parent. However, there is quite a difference by area of residence. The percentage of Métis children living with a lone parent in urban CMAs is 42%, almost double the proportion of 22% in rural areas.

In contrast, 83% of non-Aboriginal children lived in families with two parents, while only 17% lived in a lone-parent family.

Inuit

One-half lived in Nunavut

Of the 976,305 people who identified themselves as Aboriginal in the 2001 Census, about 5%, or 45,070, reported that they were Inuit.

This was a 12% increase from 40,220 five years earlier. In contrast, the total non-Aboriginal population grew only 3.4% between 1996 and 2001.

Most of this growth is due to demographic factors — higher fertility rates and increasing life expectancy. Although the Inuit birth rate has declined in recent years, it is still twice as high as the overall non-Aboriginal birth rate.

Fully one-half of the Inuit population, about 22,560, lived in the new territory of Nunavut. Quebec was a distant second with 9,535, or 21% of the total Inuit population.

They were followed by Newfoundland and Labrador with 10% of the Inuit population, and the Northwest Territories, with about 9%.

Inuit accounted for 85% of Nunavut's population, and less than 1% of Quebec's. They represented about 11% of the population of the Northwest Territories.

Four of the five communities with the largest Inuit populations are all north of the 60th parallel and in Nunavut. The four above the 60th parallel are Iqaluit (3,010), Arviat (1,785), Rankin Inlet (1,680), and Baker Lake (1,405), while Kuujuaq (1,540) in Quebec, lies just below the 60th parallel.

Nearly one in five Inuit people pulled up stakes in the year before the 2001 Census

Overall, 19% of Inuit people moved in the year prior to the census, compared with only 14% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Among Inuit movers, two-thirds moved with the same community, while one-third moved between communities.

Inuit population is among the youngest compared to other Aboriginal groups

Inuit had the youngest population among Aboriginal groups, except for the North American Indian population in Saskatchewan.

The median age of Canada's Inuit population was only 20.6 years in 2001. This was 17 years below the median of 37.7 years for the non-Aboriginal population. (The median age is the point where exactly one-half of the population is older, and the other half is younger.)

Quebec and Nunavut had the youngest Inuit populations, with median ages of 19.0 and 19.1 years respectively.

Four in 10 Inuit were children aged 14 and under

The census enumerated 17,460 Inuit children aged 14 and under in 2001, representing 39% of the total Inuit population. This was down from 41% five years earlier.

In the non-Aboriginal population this age group accounted for only 19% of the total in 2001.

Inuit in the working-age population barely outnumbered the children. The census counted 17,950 individuals aged 25 to 64, about 40% of the Inuit population, up from 37% in 1996.

Individuals in this working-age group accounted for 55% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Inuit population is aging

There is a trend, albeit slower, toward aging in the Inuit population, compared with that in the non-Aboriginal population. This aging process is in large part due to a high, but declining fertility rate among the Inuit.

Although the 1,405 Inuit seniors aged 65 and older accounted for just over 3% of the Inuit population, up slightly from five years earlier, their numbers grew by 38% between 1996 and 2001. This was by far the biggest increase of all broad age groups. At the same time, the number of seniors in the non-Aboriginal population increased only 10%.

Almost three-quarters of Inuit children lived with two parents

Almost three-quarters (73%) of all Inuit children aged 14 and under lived with two parents in 2001, the highest proportion of all three Aboriginal groups. This was still below the proportion of 83% for non-Aboriginal children.

About 4,280 Inuit children, or 25% of the total, lived with a lone parent in 2001, compared with 17% of non-Aboriginal children aged 14 and under.

Not all Inuit children lived with their own families. About 2% of Inuit children lived with either a relative other than their parent or parents, or lived with someone who was not their relative.

Inuktitut language is still strong

Relative to other Aboriginal languages, Inuktitut remains strong. The majority of Inuit, about 70%, reported an ability to carry on a conversation in Inuktitut and almost as many (65%) reported speaking it at least regularly in their home.

Furthermore, a large percentage of children (almost 70%) reported an ability to carry on a conversation in Inuktitut as well. In all broad age groups, except one, there was only a slight decline in the percentage of those Inuit who could carry on a conversation in Inuktitut. In the oldest age group (65 and over) the share declined from 85% to 79% over the 1996-2001 period. This was likely due to mortality in this age group.

Definitions

Aboriginal population

There are many ways of defining the Aboriginal population, which can result in different estimates of its size. There is no single or “correct” definition of the Aboriginal population and the choice of a definition depends on the purpose for which it is to be used. Different definitions/counts are used depending on the focus and requirements of the user.

The 2001 Census provides data that are based on the definitions of ethnic origin (ancestry), Aboriginal Identity, Registered Indian, and Band membership. The January 21, 2003 release uses mostly the Aboriginal Identity concept to provide a demographic profile of the Aboriginal population. Subsequent releases will provide additional data on the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and their socio-economic characteristics.

Aboriginal Ancestry/Origin refers to those persons who reported at least one Aboriginal origin (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit) on the ethnic origin question in the Census. The question asks about the ethnic or cultural group(s) to which the respondent’s ancestors belong.

Aboriginal Identity refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, i.e. North American Indian, Métis or Inuit. Also included are individuals who did not report an Aboriginal identity, but did report themselves as a Registered or Treaty Indian, and/or Band or First Nation membership.

Registered, status or treaty Indian refers to those who reported they were registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada. Treaty Indians are persons who are registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada and can prove descent from a Band that signed a treaty. The term “treaty Indian” is more widely used in the Prairie provinces.

Member of an Indian Band or First Nation refers to those persons who reported being a member of an Indian band or a First Nation of Canada.

The counts from the 2001 Census using the different definitions:

Canada	
Aboriginal Origin	1,319,890
Aboriginal Identity	976,305
Registered Indian	558,175
Band Membership	554,860

Language

Mother Tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the census.

Knowledge of Non-official Languages refers to languages, other than English or French, in which the respondent can conduct a conversation. The non-official language data are based on the respondent’s assessment of his or her ability to speak non-official languages, such as Aboriginal languages.

Home Language refers to the language spoken most often or on a regular basis at home by the individual at the time of the census.

Area of Residence

Four geographic areas have been derived for use in the analysis document to classify areas of residence. They are derived by classifying census subdivisions (the equivalent of communities) into the following areas of residence to show where the Aboriginal population is residing:

On reserve includes the following types of census subdivisions (CSDs) or communities affiliated with First Nations or Indian Bands: Indian Reserve (R), Indian Settlement (S-E), Indian Government District (IGD), Terres réservées (TR), Nisga'a Village (NVL), Nisga'a Land (NL) and Teslin Land (TL), as well as additional CSDs of various other types that are generally northern communities in Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory, which have large concentrations of Registered Indians.

Urban census metropolitan area (CMA) is a large urban area and has a population of at least 100,000.

Urban non-census metropolitan areas (non-CMA) are smaller urban areas with a population of less than 100,000.

Rural non-reserve areas include remote and wilderness areas and agricultural lands, as well as small towns, villages and other populated places with a population of less than 1,000 and a density of less than 400 population per square kilometre, but excludes reserves as defined above.

Additional information and definitions on the geographic units can be obtained from the *2001 Census Dictionary*.

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 divides the populations into "movers" and "non-movers". Information is provided for three different types of "movers": people who moved within the same city or town (non-migrants), people who moved from a different city or town in the same province or territory, and people who came from another province or territory or another country.

In-migration is defined as a movement of persons into a community or census subdivision (CSD) from elsewhere in Canada, within the 12 months prior to Census Day. Persons who made such a move are called in-migrants. For this analysis CSDs have been classified into different areas of residence, i.e. Reserves, Rural non-reserve, Urban non-CMA and Urban CMA – see Area of Residence definitions.

Out-migration is defined as a movement of persons out of a CSD to elsewhere in Canada, within the 12 months prior to Census Day. Persons who made such a move are called out-migrants.

Net-migration refers to the number of in-migrants into a CSD minus the number of out-migrants from the same CSD, within the 12 months prior to Census Day.

Size and growth of the population reporting Aboriginal ancestry and Aboriginal identity, Canada, 1996-2001

	2001	1996	Percentage growth 1996-2001
Total: Aboriginal ancestry¹	1,319,890	1,101,960	19.8
Total: Aboriginal identity	976,305	799,010	22.2
North American Indian ²	608,850	529,040	15.1
Métis ²	292,310	204,115	43.2
Inuit ²	45,070	40,220	12.1
Multiple and other Aboriginal responses ³	30,080	25,640	17.3

1 Also known as Aboriginal origin.

2 Includes persons who reported a North American Indian, Métis or Inuit identity only.

3 Includes persons who reported more than one Aboriginal identity group (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit) and those who reported being a Registered Indian and/or Band member without reporting an Aboriginal identity.

Median age¹ for population reporting Aboriginal identity and non-Aboriginal population, Canada, provinces and territories, 2001

	Median age (years)	
	Aboriginal	Non-aboriginal
Canada	24.7	37.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	27.7	38.5
Prince Edward Island	24.6	37.4
Nova Scotia	25.3	38.7
New Brunswick	28.2	38.5
Quebec	27.9	38.5
Ontario	27.9	37.1
Manitoba	22.8	38.5
Saskatchewan	20.1	38.8
Alberta	23.4	35.4
British Columbia	26.8	38.7
Yukon Territory	28.6	37.7
Northwest Territories	24.0	34.5
Nunavut	19.1	35.2

1 Median age is the point at which exactly one-half of the population is older, and the other half is younger.

Population reporting Aboriginal identity, by age groups, Canada, 1996 and 2001

	2001		1996	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	976,305	100.0	799,010	100.0
0-14 years	323,960	33.2	280,420	35.1
15-24 years	169,065	17.3	143,795	18.0
25-64 years	443,600	45.4	346,485	43.4
65 years and over	39,680	4.1	28,310	3.5

Aboriginal-identity population with knowledge of an Aboriginal language and with an Aboriginal language as mother tongue, for selected languages with 2,000 or more speakers, Canada, 1996 and 2001¹

Aboriginal languages ^{2,3}	Knowledge of an Aboriginal language			Mother tongue		
	1996	2001	Percentage change 1996-2001	1996	2001	Percentage change 1996-2001
Cree	95,555	92,630	-3.1	82,420	77,285	-6.2
Inuktitut	29,400	31,945	8.7	27,615	29,695	7.5
Ojibway	29,735	27,955	-6.0	24,455	21,980	-10.1
Dene	9,525	10,500	10.2	8,955	9,565	6.8
Montagnais-Naskapi	9,335	10,285	10.2	9,065	9,790	8.0
Micmac	7,975	8,625	8.2	7,240	7,405	2.3
Oji-Cree	5,480	5,610	2.4	4,980	5,185	4.1
Attikamekw	4,075	4,935	21.1	3,970	4,710	18.6
Dakota/Sioux	4,710	4,875	3.5	4,270	4,280	0.2
Blackfoot	5,530	4,415	-20.2	4,140	3,020	-27.1
Salish languages not included elsewhere	2,285	2,675	17.1	1,825	1,730	-5.2
Algonquin	2,555	2,340	-8.4	2,105	1,840	-12.6
Dogrib	2,430	2,265	-6.8	2,080	1,920	-7.7
Carrier	2,830	2,000	-29.3	2,185	1,425	-34.8

¹ Data adjusted for incompletely enumerated Indian reserves in 1996 and 2001.

² Four reserves in Manitoba had changes in reporting patterns for Cree, Ojibway and Oji-Cree between 1996 and 2001. Consequently, data for these reserves have been excluded.

³ Due to changes in reporting patterns and coding between 1996 and 2001, North Slave (Hare) and South Slave are not shown.

Aboriginal-identity population using an Aboriginal language at home compared with their knowledge of an Aboriginal language, for selected languages with 2,000 or more speakers, Canada, 2001¹

Aboriginal languages ^{2,3}	Know an Aboriginal language	number	Use Aboriginal languages regularly at home	Percentage of those who know an Aboriginal language who use it regularly at home
Cree	92,630		69,210	74.7
Inuktitut	31,945		29,350	91.9
Ojibway	27,955		17,140	61.3
Dene	10,500		9,275	88.3
Montagnais-Naskapi	10,285		9,765	94.9
Micmac	8,625		6,820	79.1
Oji-Cree	5,610		4,490	80.0
Attikamekw	4,935		4,620	93.6
Dakota/Sioux	4,875		3,535	72.5
Blackfoot	4,415		2,870	65.0
Salish languages not included elsewhere	2,675		1,125	42.1
Algonquin	2,340		1,490	63.7
Dogrib	2,265		1,895	83.7
Carrier	2,000		950	47.5

¹ Data adjusted for incompletely enumerated Indian reserves in 1996 and 2001.

² Four reserves in Manitoba had changes in reporting patterns for Cree, Ojibway and Oji-Cree between 1996 and 2001. Consequently, data for these reserves have been excluded.

³ Due to changes in reporting patterns and coding between 1996 and 2001, North Slave (Hare) and South Slave are not shown.

Living arrangements of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children under 15 years of age, by area of residence¹, Canada, 2001

	Aboriginal children ²	Non-Aboriginal children
	%	
All areas of residence		
Living with two parents	60.5	82.5
Living with a lone parent	35.4	16.9
Other living arrangements ³	4.0	0.6
On reserve		
Living with two parents	65.0	...
Living with a lone parent	31.9	...
Other living arrangements ³	3.2	...
Rural non-reserve		
Living with two parents	71.4	88.5
Living with a lone parent	23.3	10.9
Other living arrangements ³	5.3	0.7
Urban non-CMA		
Living with two parents	56.9	79.5
Living with a lone parent	39.6	19.9
Other living arrangements ³	3.5	0.5
Urban CMA		
Living with two parents	49.8	81.4
Living with a lone parent	45.6	18.0
Other living arrangements ³	4.6	0.6

¹ For a full description of area of residence, see Definitions of terms used in this document.

² Those children reported as having an Aboriginal identity.

³ Includes living with other relatives, e.g., an uncle or aunt, or with non-relatives.

... Not applicable

Population reporting Aboriginal identity, Canada, provinces and territories, 2001

	Number	%
Canada	976,310	100.0
Newfoundland and Labrador	18,780	1.9
Prince Edward Island	1,345	0.1
Nova Scotia	17,015	1.7
New Brunswick	16,990	1.7
Quebec	79,400	8.1
Ontario	188,315	19.3
Manitoba	150,040	15.4
Saskatchewan	130,190	13.3
Alberta	156,220	16.0
British Columbia	170,025	17.4
Yukon Territory	6,540	0.7
Northwest Territories	18,725	1.9
Nunavut	22,720	2.3

Population reporting Aboriginal identity in selected census metropolitan areas (CMA) and census agglomerations (CA), 1996 and 2001

	2001		1996 ¹	
	Number	Percentage of total population in CMA or CA	Number	Percentage of total population in CMA or CA
Winnipeg	55,755	8.4	45,750	6.9
Edmonton	40,930	4.4	32,825	3.8
Vancouver	36,860	1.9	31,140	1.7
Calgary	21,915	2.3	15,200	1.9
Toronto	20,300	0.4	16,100	0.4
Saskatoon	20,275	9.1	16,165	7.5
Regina	15,685	8.3	13,610	7.1
Ottawa - Hull ²	13,485	1.3	11,500	1.2
Prince Albert	11,640	29.2	10,090	24.9
Montréal	11,085	0.3	9,965	0.3
Victoria	8,695	2.8	6,570	2.2
Thunder Bay	8,200	6.8	7,355	5.9
Prince George	7,980	9.4	5,810	6.7
Greater Sudbury	7,385	4.8	4,815	2.9
Hamilton	7,270	1.1	5,460	0.9
Wood Buffalo	6,220	14.6	5,460	15.1
London	5,640	1.3	4,490	1.1
Sault Ste. Marie	5,610	7.2	3,580	4.3
Kamloops	5,470	6.4	4,425	5.2

¹ In order to facilitate data comparisons, the 1996 CMA and CA data have been adjusted to reflect as closely as possible the 2001 CMA and CA boundaries.

² Now known as Ottawa - Gatineau.

Population reporting a North American Indian identity, provinces and territories, 2001

	Number	%
Canada	608,850	100.0
Newfoundland and Labrador	7,040	1.2
Prince Edward Island	1,035	0.2
Nova Scotia	12,920	2.1
New Brunswick	11,490	1.9
Quebec	51,125	8.4
Ontario	131,560	21.6
Manitoba	90,345	14.8
Saskatchewan	83,745	13.8
Alberta	84,990	14.0
British Columbia	118,295	19.4
Yukon Territory	5,600	0.9
Northwest Territories	10,615	1.7
Nunavut	95	0.0

Median age¹ of the population reporting a North American Indian identity and non-Aboriginal population, Canada, provinces and territories, 2001

	Median age (years)	
	North American Indian	Non-aboriginal
Canada	23.5	37.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	26.7	38.5
Prince Edward Island	23.8	37.4
Nova Scotia	24.0	38.7
New Brunswick	25.7	38.5
Quebec	27.4	38.5
Ontario	27.0	37.1
Manitoba	20.4	38.5
Saskatchewan	18.4	38.8
Alberta	21.2	35.4
British Columbia	25.9	38.7
Yukon Territory	27.9	37.7
Northwest Territories	24.8	34.5
Nunavut	24.9	35.2

¹ Median age is the point at which exactly half of the population is older and half is younger.

Population reporting a Métis identity, Canada, provinces and territories, 2001

	Number	%
Canada	292,305	100.0
Newfoundland and Labrador	5,480	1.9
Prince Edward Island	220	0.1
Nova Scotia	3,135	1.1
New Brunswick	4,290	1.5
Quebec	15,855	5.4
Ontario	48,345	16.5
Manitoba	56,795	19.4
Saskatchewan	43,695	14.9
Alberta	66,055	22.6
British Columbia	44,265	15.1
Yukon Territory	535	0.2
Northwest Territories	3,580	1.2
Nunavut	55	0.0

Population reporting a Métis identity, by age groups, Canada, 1996 and 2001

	2001		1996	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	292,310	100.0	204,120	100.0
0-14 years	84,695	29.0	64,190	31.4
15-24 years	52,265	17.9	37,380	18.3
25-64 years	142,830	48.9	94,790	46.4
65 years and over	12,520	4.3	7,755	3.8

Population reporting an Inuit identity, Canada and selected provinces and territories, 2001

	Number	%
Canada	45,070	100.0
Nunavut	22,560	50.0
Quebec	9,535	21.2
Newfoundland and Labrador	4,555	10.1
Northwest Territories	3,905	8.7
Ontario	1,380	3.1
Rest of Canada	3,145	7.0

Top five communities with largest population reporting an Inuit identity, 2001

	Inuit	Total population	Inuit as a percentage of total population
Iqaluit	3,010	5,195	57.9
Arviat	1,785	1,895	94.2
Rankin Inlet	1,680	2,165	77.6
Kuujuuaq	1,540	1,920	80.2
Baker Lake	1,405	1,510	93.0

Population reporting an Inuit identity, by age groups, Canada, 1996 and 2001

	2001		1996	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	45,070	100.0	40,220	100.0
0-14 years	17,460	38.7	16,510	41.0
15-24 years	8,260	18.3	7,605	18.9
25-64 years	17,950	39.8	15,095	37.5
65 years and over	1,405	3.1	1,015	2.5