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# **Harvesting and community well-being among Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: Preliminary findings from the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey - Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic**



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# Harvesting and community well-being among Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: Preliminary findings from the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey - Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic 2001

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- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0<sup>s</sup> value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- P preliminary
- r revised
- x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published

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# Introduction

Inuit, the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, have for thousands of years lived in a vast area across the far north. One of the founding peoples of what is now Canada, they make up the majority of the population in an area that accounts for approximately 40% of the total Canadian landmass (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2004). In the Canadian Arctic, there are 53 communities that are home to the majority of Canadian Inuit. A list of the communities upon which the findings in this report are based is provided in Data quality, concepts and methodology — List of communities with large Inuit populations participating in the 2001 APS section.

In 2001, there were approximately 46,000<sup>1</sup> Inuit in Canada, with the majority living in one of four self-governing Inuit regions in the north<sup>2</sup>(see map 1). While there are some cultural and historical similarities between these regions, each is distinct from the next and some of this regional diversity will be dealt with in this report. These regions are:

- Nunatsiavut, the region along the northern coast of Labrador, home to 5% of all Inuit
- Nunavik, which lies primarily north of the 55th parallel in Quebec, where 19% of the Inuit population lives
- The territory of Nunavut, home to about one-half of Inuit and
- The Inuvialuit region in the northwestern part of the Northwest Territories, where about 7% of the Inuit population resides<sup>3</sup>

In 2001, about one-fifth of Inuit lived outside of these regions. Most of those living outside of the Arctic lived in urban areas in southern Canada.

1. Data in the Introduction are from the 2001 Census of Canada.

2. As of 2001, there were only 3 self-governing regions as the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement was not ratified until 2005.

3. Inuit of the Western Arctic are known as "Inuvialuit". For the purposes of this report, the term Inuit includes these people. In 2001, several residents of the Northwest Territories were not counted by the Census. Net undercoverage for Canada as a whole was 2.99%, compared to 8.11% for the territory. This was the highest rate of net undercoverage among all provinces and territories in the country (Statistics Canada, 2001).

Figure 1

The four Inuit regions in Canada (source: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2005)



The Inuit population is young and growing. Between 1996 and 2001, high fertility rates and increasing life expectancy were the major factors contributing to a 12% increase in the Inuit population<sup>4</sup>. In 2001, about one-half (49%) of Inuit were under the age of 20, making the Inuit the youngest population of the three main Aboriginal groups in Canada<sup>5</sup>. Approximately 45% of the North American Indian population was less than 20 years of age, compared to 39% of Métis.

Inuit are distinct from other Aboriginal peoples in Canada — distinct geographically, culturally, historically and linguistically. Most live in coastal communities in the north, and rely on marine life and land animals for a significant portion of their diet. The majority of Inuit in the Arctic speak Inuktitut, a language that is part of the Eskimo-Aleut language family. In 2001, 84% of Inuit adults and 80% of their children could converse in Inuktitut. This language family, along with a common technology and culture, extends from Siberia to Greenland.

4. High fertility rates and increased life expectancy accounted for 10% of this increase. The remaining 2% was a result of an increase in the percentage of Inuit declaring Inuit identity on the census.

5. There are three main Aboriginal groups in Canada, as recognized in the Constitution. They are Inuit, North American Indian peoples and the Métis.



## *Focus of the report*

In this report, some initial findings from the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) concerning Inuit living in the Canadian Arctic are presented. For the purposes of this article, the Inuit population consists of those who identified as Inuit on the APS. 'Arctic' refers to the aggregate of the 53 communities identified in "Data quality, concepts and methodology — List of communities with large Inuit populations participating in the 2001 APS" section. Most of the information presented here is on adults, that is, those aged 15 and over. Brief mention is also made of some information related to Inuit children less than 15 years of age.

Special attention will be paid to data from an Arctic supplemental questionnaire to the 2001 APS administered to northern Aboriginal peoples (for more information on this supplement, please see the section entitled '**The Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic – some background information**'). Many questions from this supplement were asked of Indigenous peoples across the circumpolar north. This report will concentrate on information from two of the main sections of this supplement - harvesting country food and community wellness. An examination of these two topics can contribute to a better understanding of Inuit culture, traditions and community life.

# Section 1

## Harvesting country food and its contribution to Inuit well-being

by Heather Tait

"Traditional foods and traditional means of obtaining and preparing them are part of a cultural heritage. Thus, food is holistically entwined with culture and personal identity, as well as with physical health".— The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996a. Vol 3: 194.

### 1.1 Harvesting country food: Some background information

Inuit have always depended on the land and sea for food and in their communities, these ties remain strong today. Many Inuit, "consider their relationship to the land to be essential to their culture and to their survival as distinct people" (Pauktuutit 1991: 5). Inuit benefit in many ways from the harvesting of country food, which includes things such as caribou, seals, ducks, arctic char, shellfish and berries, among others.

Harvesting country food contributes much to Inuit culture. As stated by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "the social relations underlying the production of food in the traditional economy are critical to the functioning of that economy, and the sharing of food within the household and through the extended family and community are the primary means of reinforcing those social relations" (1996b. V.4:472). In the past and today, Inuit have joined together to harvest food that is later shared with others in the community, reinforcing the importance of community, family and individual well-being.

Country food harvesting can often have economic benefits. The north is marked by the presence of a "mixed" economy. Here, a traditional economy, made up largely of harvesting activities, and a wage economy exist side-by-side. The economic contribution of the traditional economy is often poorly captured by formal, standard means of collecting statistics. However, harvesting plays a key role in the northern economy. For example, it has been estimated that Inuit harvesters in Nunavut produce roughly \$40 million of country food annually (Canadian Arctic Resources Committee 2004).

Text table 1.1

Cost of staple food items in selected Inuit and non-Inuit communities

	5lb bag of potatoes	1 litre 2% milk	1lb ground beef	2.5 kg white flour	Total cost of 4 items
	\$				
<b>Inuit Communities</b>					
Clyde River, Nunavut	7.49	3.15	9.99	10.59	<b>31.22</b>
Nain, Nunatsiavut	3.15	5.99	3.27	4.99	<b>17.40</b>
Holman, Inuvialuit Region	9.56	3.99	4.99	5.99	<b>24.53</b>
Kuujuuaq, Nunavik	4.09	2.67	5.58	10.99	<b>23.33</b>
<b>Southern Communities</b>					
Montreal	2.29	1.39	3.00	2.69	<b>9.37</b>
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador	2.49	2.15	2.79	3.69 (7 lb)	<b>11.12</b>
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories	3.29	1.29	1.98	4.39	<b>10.95</b>
Ottawa, Ontario	2.49	2.49	2.30	2.19	<b>9.47</b>

**Note:** Costs for Clyde River collected by Qikiqtani Inuit Association on December 1st and 8th, 2004

**Note:** Costs for remaining communities collected by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami on February 17, 2005

Storage and transportation costs are higher in the north, resulting in higher prices for store-bought food than in the south. Country food can provide an alternative to these more expensive and often less nutritious foods.

The difference in the cost of staples in selected Inuit communities and urban centres in southern Canada is illustrated in text table 1.1.

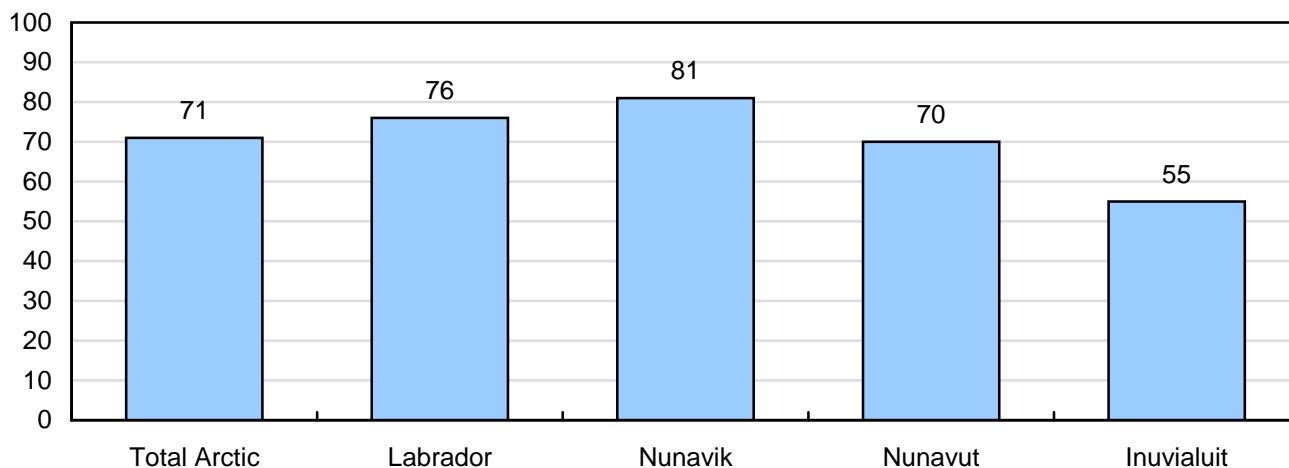
In some Inuit regions in the north, special programs have been set up to ensure the continuation of harvesting. For example, in the Nunavik region in northern Quebec, there exists the Support Program for Inuit beneficiaries for their hunting, fishing and trapping activities. The purpose of this program is to “encourage and perpetuate the hunting, fishing and trapping activities of the Inuit as a way of life, and to guarantee the Inuit communities a supply of produce from such activities” (Kativik Regional Government 2003: 43). Monies are provided for activities such as purchasing and repairing community

1. In this paper, “Labrador” consists of a slightly different set of communities than those that comprise the Nunatsiavut region. While Nunatsiavut includes Hopedale and excludes Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the reverse is true for the Labrador region as defined in this report.

Chart 1.1

**Inuit adults harvesting country food by region, 2001**

Percentage harvesting



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Arctic Supplement, 2001

While information on individuals harvesting is informative, it is also important to look at harvesting at the household level as the household "operates as

equipment needed for harvesting, marketing harvested products and income for Inuit fishermen and hunters who harvest goods for use by the community. Similar programs exist in the Inuvialuit region and in the territory of Nunavut.

**1.2 Who is harvesting?**

**1.2.1 Those in the Inuvialuit region least likely to harvest**

Data from the 2001 APS show that harvesting country food is an activity that is very much alive in Inuit communities. The majority, or seven in ten, Inuit adults in the Canadian Arctic had harvested country food in the year prior to the survey. However, there were some differences from one region to the next, as can be seen in chart 1.1.

Approximately eight in 10 Inuit adults in both Labrador<sup>1</sup> and Nunavik had harvested while just fewer than six in 10 of those in the Inuvialuit region had done so.

a micro-enterprise that is the basic unit of production as well as consumption" (Usher et al 2003: 175).

While at least 80% of Inuit households<sup>2</sup> in Nunavut, Nunavik and Labrador had at least one member that was involved in harvesting activities, the percentage was slightly lower in the Inuvialuit region (66%).

### 1.2.2 Middle-aged Inuit men most likely to take part in and prepare for the harvest

While harvesting remains a popular activity among many Inuit adults, some were more likely to harvest than others (See chart 1.2 ).A larger percentage of men than women harvested country food – 80% of men compared to 63% of women.Middle aged Inuit were the most likely to harvest.Among men, 74% of those

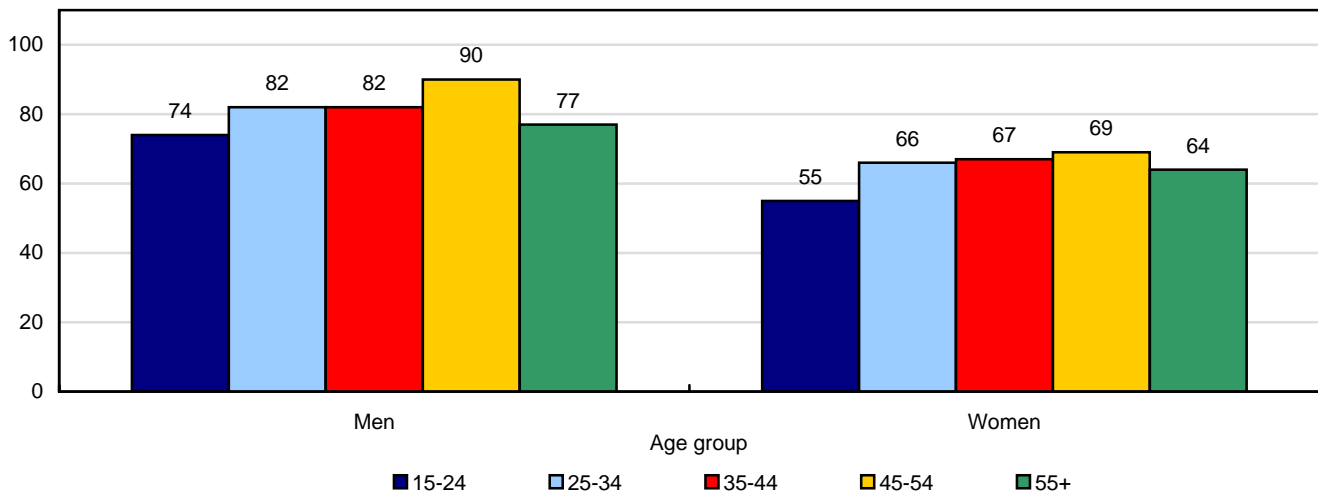
aged 15-24 had harvested country food compared to 90% of those aged 45-54.Just over half (55%) of Inuit women in the 15-24 year age group had harvested compared to nearly seven in 10 of those in the middle age groups.The high cost of equipment and supplies required to harvest (rifles, boats, snowmobiles, gas etc.) may have contributed to the lower percentage of young Inuit harvesters.As those aged 15-24 are more likely to be in school and less likely to have well-paying jobs, harvesting costs may have been too high for some younger Inuit adults.

2. For the purposes of this paper, a household includes all members of the dwelling in which the respondent lived.An Inuit household is one where the respondent selected for the survey was Inuk.Excluded are households where the respondent was Métis or First Nations while other household members were Inuit.

Chart 1.2

#### Inuit harvesting country food by age and sex, Canadian Arctic, 2001

Percentage



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Arctic supplement, 2001

There was a similar pattern for those that had prepared or packed for any hunting, fishing, trapping or camping trips. Again, men were more likely than women to have prepared for these activities (80% of Inuit men and 62% of women had done so). Middle-aged people were more likely than the oldest and youngest to have prepared for hunting or fishing trips.

## 1.3 Perceptions of harvesting

### 1.3.1 Half of Inuit adults predict levels of harvesting will stay the same in next 5 years

Inuit adults were asked their thoughts on the future of harvesting for themselves and others in their household over the next five years. About half (49%) thought that hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering activities would stay the same (See chart 1.3).While 21% felt these activities would increase, 13% predicted a decrease

and 17% said they did not know what the future held for this activity. There was no significant difference from one region to the next in the percentage of Inuit adults predicting an increase or decrease in the level of harvesting activity.

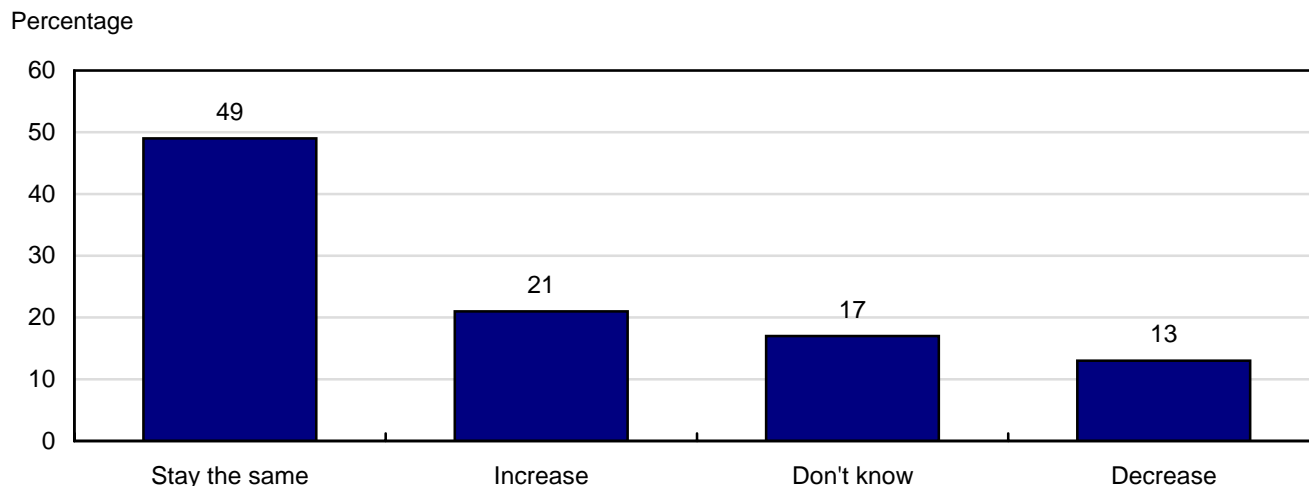
Those that stated that they believed that harvesting activities would increase five years in the future were asked why. The main reason given was that there would be more hunters, fishers, trappers and gatherers in the household. This response was provided by 31% of those predicting an increase. For those who said they felt that harvesting activities would decrease over the next five years, 34% said that they would do so because there would be fewer resources to harvest or that fish and game were becoming scarcer<sup>3, 4</sup>.

3. In addition to the response, "fewer resources to harvest/ fish and game becoming scarcer", other responses in this category include things such as climate change, global warming, development (building roads, dams, drilling etc) and pollution.

4. Overall, 11% of respondents answered "don't know" to this question. These people are included in the calculation of percentages.

**Chart 1.3**

**Inuit adults' perceptions of future of harvesting activities for their household in 5 years, Canadian Arctic, 2001**



**Source:** Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Arctic Supplement, 2001

Country food also contributes much to Inuit cultural well-being. "Consuming country foods is important to Inuvialuit identity, and the culmination of a series of cooperative activities – harvesting, processing,

## 1.4 Country food consumption

**"Country food is more than just a tradition for Inuit. It is the embodiment of the connection Inuit have to the land and its bounty"** (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2004)

### 1.4.1 Country food is healthy and is a key component of Inuit culture

In addition to the economic advantages mentioned earlier, the physical benefits of country food to Inuit are numerous. Generally speaking, country food is higher in protein and lower in fat than most meats from southern Canada. Country foods are often rich in iron, calcium and vitamins A and C (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996b). Seal and whale are excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids which help reduce the risk of cardiovascular illnesses (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2004, Makivik Corporation, 2000).

distributing and preparing – that require behaving in ways that emphasize... values of cooperation, sharing and generosity" (Inuvialuit Regional Corporation 2004).

### 1.4.2 Country food still an important source of food for many Inuit

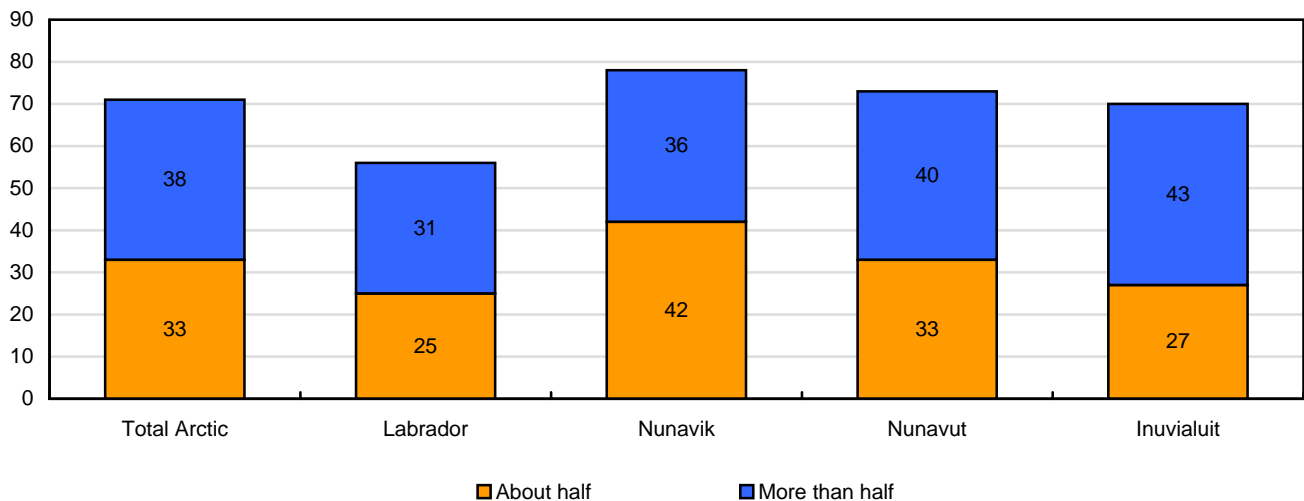
Country food is still an important part of the diet of many Inuit. In 38% of Inuit households in the Arctic, country

food made up more than half of the meat and fish that was eaten. In another 33% of households, about half of the meat and fish eaten was country food (See chart 1.4).

**Chart 1.4**

**Percent of Inuit households where "about half" or "more than half" of meat and fish eaten was country food, by region, 2001**

Percentage



*Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Arctic supplement, 2001*

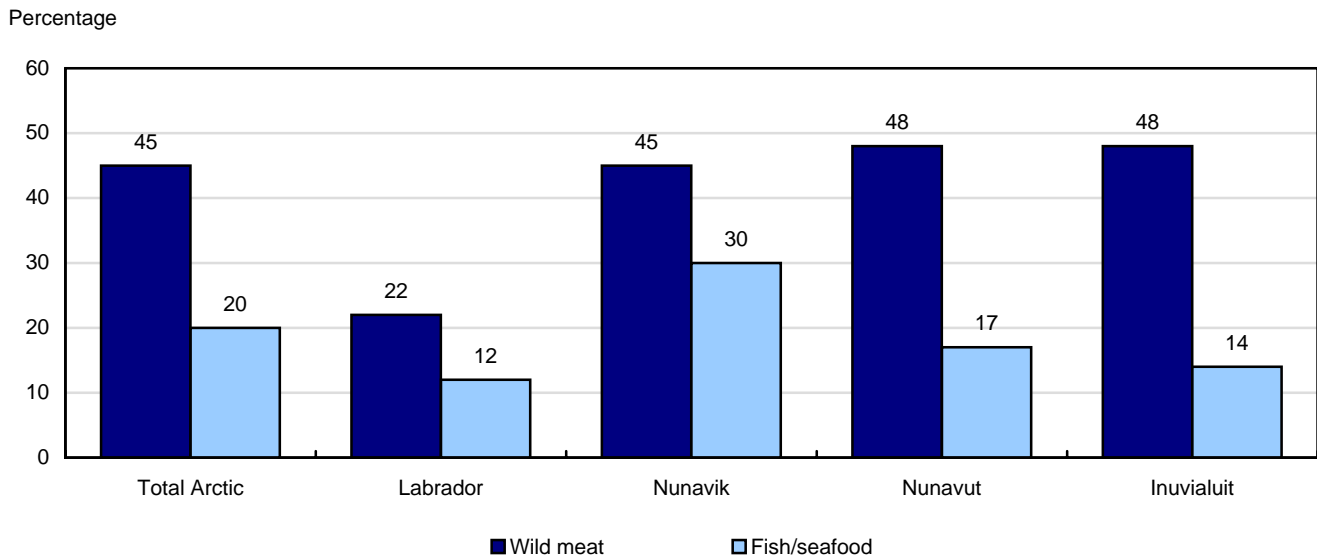
In Nunavik, 78% of Inuit households reported that at least half of the meat and fish eaten in their household was country food. At the other end of the spectrum, country food made up a smaller part of the meat and fish eaten in homes of Labrador Inuit. In this region, 56% said that at least half of the meat eaten in their homes was harvested from the land or sea.

Country food also contributed to the diet of many Inuit children in the far north (See chart 1.5). Overall, 45% of these children ate wild meat such as caribou,

walrus and whale 5 days or more a week. Nearly half of all Inuit children in Nunavut, Nunavik and the Inuvialuit region were eating wild meat five to seven days weekly. The situation in Labrador was somewhat different. There, approximately two in 10 children ate wild meat this often. Across the Arctic, two in 10 Inuit children ate fish or seafood five to seven days per week. Children in Nunavik were the most likely to eat fish or seafood with three in 10 doing so at least five days per week.

**Chart 1.5**

**Inuit children eating wild meat and fish or seafood 5 to 7 days per week, by region, 2001**



**Source:** Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Arctic Supplement, 2001*

When asked about their degree of satisfaction with the availability of country food in their community, the large majority, or 85%, of Inuit adults stated being satisfied. In each of the four Inuit regions, at least 80% of adults expressed satisfaction with country food availability.

Much food sold in the north has to be shipped or flown in from areas further south. The result is often higher costs and foods that may not always be fresh. Approximately one-third of Inuit adults said that they were not satisfied with the freshness of food in stores. Those in the Inuvialuit region and Labrador were the least satisfied as 45% of Inuit adults stated being dissatisfied with the freshness of food in local stores

compared to 32% of those in Nunavut and 23% in Nunavik.

**1.4.3 Food sharing – a tradition that continues**

The sharing of food is an important Inuit tradition that serves to keep family and community ties strong. This tradition is alive and well in all regions across the north as 96% of Inuit households shared harvested food with others outside of their home. In each of the four regions approximately 9 in 10 Inuit households reported sharing country food.

## Section 2

### **Community capacity and well-being**

As previously mentioned, eight in 10 Canadian Inuit lived in Arctic communities in 2001. In many of these communities, Inuit face the realities of high unemployment, low income, lower life expectancy than other Canadians, lack of access to health services and other difficulties. For example, in 2001, life expectancy for all Canadian men was 77.0 years and 82.2 years for all Canadian women. However, the situation for Inuit was much different. For Inuit men, life expectancy was 62.6 years - more than 14 years less than that of all Canadian men. There was a gap in life expectancy of more than 10 years between Inuit and all Canadian women as the figure for Inuit women stood at 71.7 years (Statistics Canada, 2005). Data from the 2001 Census show that the unemployment rate for northern Inuit was 22% compared to 6% for non-Aboriginal northerners. Incomes for Inuit in the Canadian Arctic were much lower than for others. For example, in Nunavut in 2001, the average individual income for Inuit adults was \$19,686 compared to \$52,864 for non-Aboriginal people in the territory<sup>1</sup>(Statistics Canada, 2004).

Despite these issues, the demographic situation in most of these communities has remained stable over time, leading some to believe that there are other non-material factors at play that act to keep Inuit in their communities, rather than moving south (Duhaime et al. 2003). This next section presents information on the degree of mobility in the north, along with data that focuses on reasons why some Inuit think of leaving their communities and what makes others stay. Some information is also provided on satisfaction with various facets of life in Inuit communities.

1. The median income figures were \$13,090 and \$50,128 for Inuit and non-Inuit respectively.

### **2.1 Moving from one community to another**

#### **2.1.1 Most Inuit remain in the same community but many young Inuit move frequently**

Information from the 2001 APS shows that the majority or 64% of Inuit adults had lived in the same community all their lives. Those in Nunavut and Nunavik were the most likely to have stayed in their home community. In both of these regions, nearly seven in 10 Inuit adults had not moved. This was the case for just under six in 10 adults in Labrador and the Inuvialuit regions.

The 2001 APS asked Inuit adults how often they had moved from one community to another in the past five years. Young Inuit were more likely than older people to have moved frequently. Just over 30% of those aged 15-19 and 20-24 had moved outside of their community two or more times in the past five years. Conversely, this percentage dropped to 9% for those aged 35 and over.

Inuit adults were asked if they had considered moving out of their community in the five years prior to the survey. Nearly three in ten said yes. There was some variation from one region to the next. Inuit adults in Nunavik were the least likely to have considered leaving their community. Here, 17% had thought about leaving while figures for the remaining three regions were in the 30 to 40 percent range.

### **2.2 The pros and cons of community life**

#### **2.2.1 Prospect of a better job main reason given for thinking of leaving community**

Employment prospects were important in determining whether or not Inuit adults considered leaving their community. Both men and women said that the main reason behind their thinking about moving was related



to better job opportunities or job offers. Amongst Inuit men, 46% provided this response as did 30% of women. The second most common reason among Inuit men was because they wanted a change, wanted to travel or to see other places. Just over two in 10 men who had considered moving gave this response. This reason, along with school or education opportunities, were the second most common responses for Inuit women with approximately two in 10 stating each of these.

## 2.2.2 Most stay in community to be close to family

While lack of employment opportunities may act as a “push” factor, the presence of family acts as a strong “pull” that helps to keep many Inuit in their community. The majority, or 71% of Inuit adults, had not considered leaving their community. The main reason for staying given by 67% of all Inuit adults in the Arctic was that they wished to be close to their family members. Wanting to live in one’s hometown was the second most popular reason provided (34%) and this was followed by job-related reasons (23%).

In each region, wanting to be close to family was the top reason for staying in the community. This response was provided by 82% of those in Labrador, 56% of Inuit in Nunavik, 69% in Nunavut and 60% of those in the Inuvialuit region<sup>2</sup>. The desire to be close to one’s family is not surprising given the strength of ties between Inuit respondents and family members living elsewhere in the community. More than half - 53% - of Inuit adults said that these ties were very strong. Another 20% reported strong ties.

## 2.2.3 Many Inuit active in community life

Inuit adults of all ages were actively involved in their communities. Nearly four in ten had volunteered for a community organization or group in the 12 months prior to the survey and the same proportion had worked at a community event. Older Inuit were more likely than young Inuit adults to volunteer their time for community organizations and events. While 31% of those aged 15-24 had volunteered for a community group or organization, the percentage for those

2. The difference between Nunavik and the Inuvialuit region is not statistically significant.

aged 55 and over was 44%. The same percentages had worked at a community event. There were no differences in levels of participation in these two types of events between men and women.

Voting participation among Inuit adults was high. In the last municipal election prior to the survey, 71%<sup>3</sup> of Inuit in the Arctic of eligible voting age cast ballots. By comparison, 35% of all eligible voters in the Greater Toronto Area voted in the 2000 municipal election (Toronto Community Foundation). At the provincial and territorial level 70% of eligible Inuit voters in the Arctic cast ballots. This was comparable to the turn out among Quebecers in the 2003 provincial election. Quebec has traditionally been the province with the highest rate of voter turn out (Globe and Mail 2003). Six in ten Inuit in the Arctic voted in the most recent election of their land claim organization<sup>4</sup>.

## 2.2.4 Unemployment main problem facing communities

Life in Inuit communities in the north of Canada is not without its challenges and issues. When asked about what problems face Inuit in their community or neighbourhood, the top response provided was unemployment with 79% of adults reporting this problem<sup>5</sup>. This was followed by alcohol and drug abuse at approximately 65% and suicide at 59%.

In both Nunavut and Nunavik, unemployment was identified as the biggest problem facing Inuit communities. In Nunavik, 74% of Inuit adults stated this as a problem while 81% of those in Nunavut did so. The top problems facing communities in Labrador were alcohol abuse and unemployment, as reported by eight in ten Inuit adults. For those in the Inuvialuit region, alcohol abuse was identified as the top problem with eight in 10 Inuit providing this answer. This was followed by drug abuse and unemployment. Suicide was also raised as an important community issue, especially in the Nunavik and Nunavut regions.

3. Many adults responded “Don’t know” when asked about whether or not they had voted in the last election. These “don’t know” responses were included in the totals when calculating the percentages.

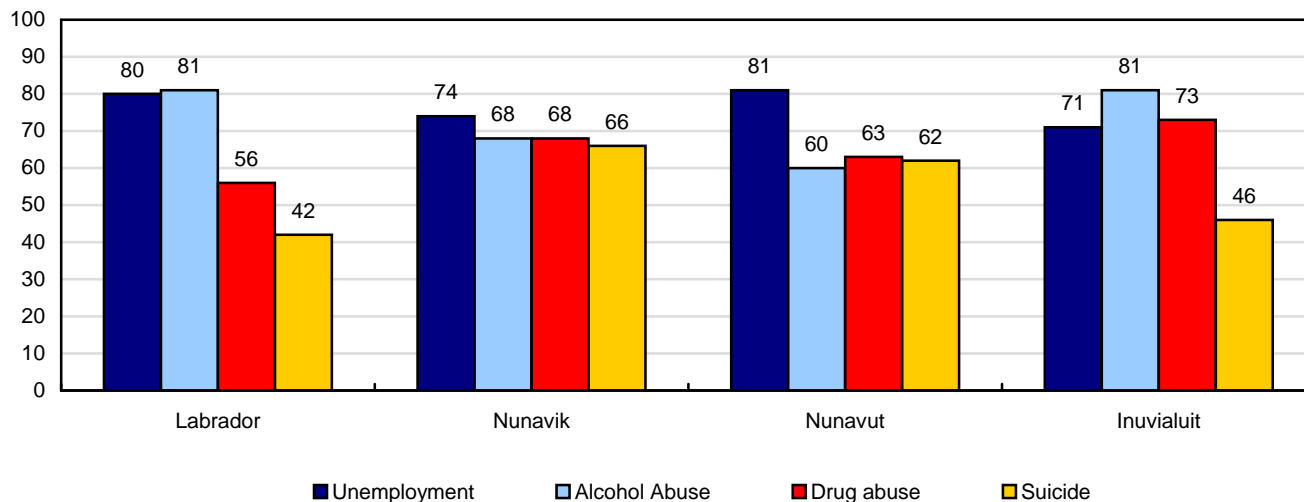
4. In some regions, Inuit do not vote directly for their land claim representative. Instead, they vote for a delegate who goes on to vote on behalf of a number of individuals.

5. Many adults responded “Don’t know” when asked about whether or not various issues were problems in their community. These “don’t know” responses were included in the totals when calculating the percentages shown in this section.

Chart 2.1

Problems facing Inuit in their neighbourhood or community, by region, 2001

Percentage



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Arctic Supplement, 2001

2.2.5 “More jobs” is top suggestion for improving community life

When asked what could be done to make life in their community better, “more jobs” topped the list. This was the response provided by 48% of Inuit adults. The need for jobs was identified as the top area for improvement in all regions. In Labrador, better job prospects were identified by 70% of all Inuit adults, compared to 36% in Nunavik and 53% in Nunavut. In the Inuvialuit region, 23% provided this response<sup>6</sup>.

6. In the Inuvialuit region, 30% of Inuit adults responded “don’t know” to this question. However, this was not significantly different from the 23% reported for “more jobs”.  
 7. Many respondents answered “Don’t know” to the series of questions on satisfaction with conditions in the community. These people were included in totals for the calculation of the percentages shown in this section of the report.  
 8. Differences in satisfaction between Labrador and Nunavik and Labrador and Nunavut were not statistically significant.

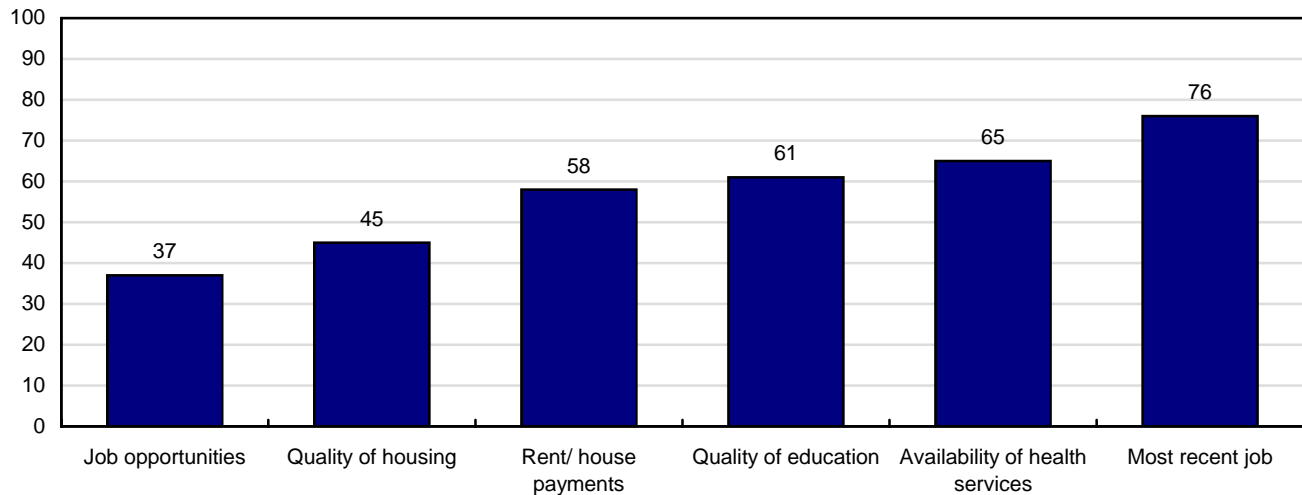
Inuit adults were asked about their level of satisfaction around other aspects of their lives in their communities and some of these questions focused on employment<sup>7</sup>. Given that unemployment was seen as the biggest issue facing Inuit in their communities, it is not surprising that when asked about their levels of satisfaction with various aspects of community life, ratings for job opportunities were lowest (as shown in chart 2.2). Among Inuit adults in the north, only 37% said they were satisfied with job opportunities in their community.

Those in the Inuvialuit region were more likely than others to say that they were satisfied with their job opportunities. Here, 54% said they were satisfied. This stands in contrast to 42% of those in Nunavik, 37% in Labrador and 32% in Nunavut<sup>8</sup>.

**Chart 2.2**

**Inuit adults satisfied with selected community conditions, Canadian Arctic, 2001**

Percentage



**Source:** Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Arctic Supplement, 2001*

While job opportunities had the lowest satisfaction rating, this was followed by the quality of housing and rent or house payments. Only 45% of Inuit adults were satisfied with the quality of the housing in their community while 58% were satisfied with their rent or housing payments. A comparable percentage of Inuit adults expressed satisfaction with the quality of education in their community.

one quarter lived in homes requiring major repairs (Statistics Canada 2003). Chart 2.3 shows that those in Nunavut were the least satisfied with the quality of housing in their community as only 40% expressed being satisfied. Inuit living in Nunavik were the least satisfied with their housing payments<sup>10</sup>. In this region, less than half or 46% reported being satisfied with the amount they were paying.

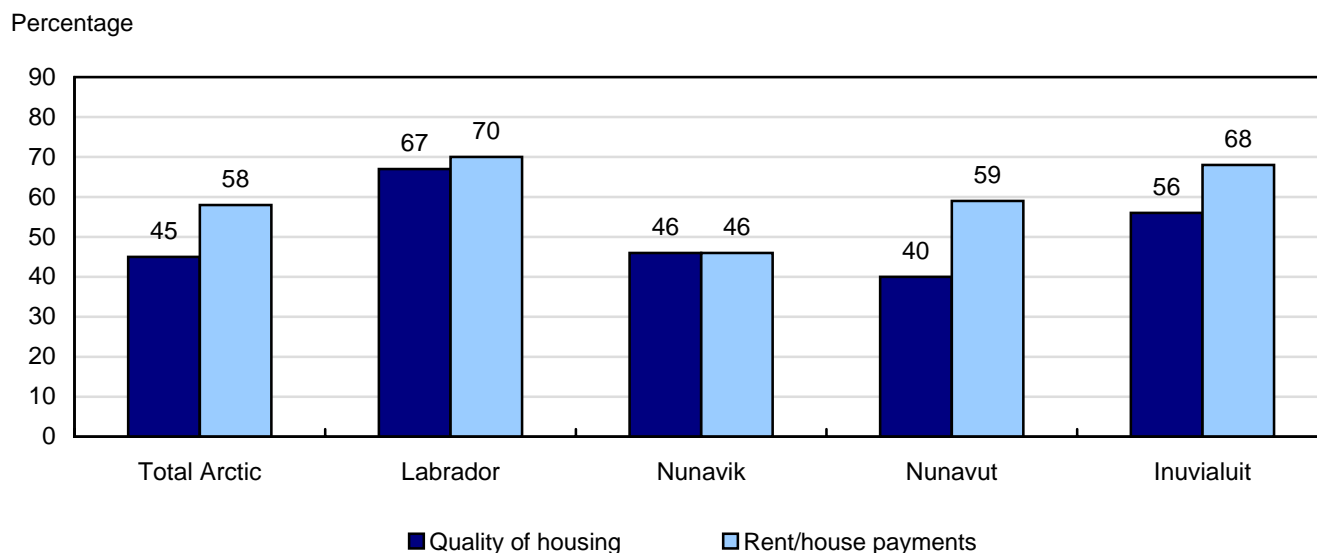
Census information points to the fact that in 2001, 53% of Inuit in the north lived in crowded<sup>9</sup> conditions and

9. For the purposes of this article, crowding is defined as one or more persons per room. Not counted are rooms such as bathrooms, hallways, vestibules and rooms used exclusively for business purposes.

10. Includes rent and house payments.

Chart 2.3

**Inuit adults satisfied with housing quality and payments, by region, 2001**



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Arctic Supplement, 2001

**2.2.6 Majority of Inuit adults satisfied with their lives in the community**

Although there were many issues facing Inuit in the communities in which they lived, most Inuit adults - 83% - were satisfied with life in their community. However, there was some regional variation. In Nunavik, three-quarters (74%) said they were satisfied with life in their community<sup>11</sup>. In the remaining three regions, approximately nine in 10 Inuit adults stated that they were satisfied with community life.

**2.3 Summary**

It is clear that the historical tie that Inuit have had to the land remains strong today. Although there are differences across Inuit regions, overall, seven in 10 Inuit adults (eight in 10 Inuit men and six in 10 Inuit women) were involved in harvesting and harvested meat and fish remained important food sources. While middle-aged Inuit were the most likely to harvest, young adults were the least likely to do so, perhaps because of the high costs associated with harvesting.

<sup>11</sup> In the Nunavik region, a large percentage of Inuit adults – 16% - stated that they did not know if they were satisfied or dissatisfied. For the other three regions, the percentage responding “don’t know” was less than 10%.

Nearly half of Inuit adults felt that in five years, harvesting activity would remain close to its level at the time of the 2001 survey. For the two in 10 Inuit adults who predicted an increase in harvesting levels, the main reason given was an increase in the number of hunters, fishers, trappers and gatherers. Approximately 13% felt that harvesting levels would decrease in five years, due mainly to fewer resources to harvest.

Traditionally, the sharing of resources, including food has been crucial to the survival of Inuit. Sharing country food is nearly universal across the Arctic as more than nine in 10 Inuit households shared harvested food with others outside of their homes in 2001.

Despite the fact that those living in Inuit communities must face challenges such as high unemployment and low income, most Inuit had never moved out of their community. While some considered leaving, mainly because of limited job opportunities, most were satisfied with their lives in the communities in which they lived. The main reason why Inuit stayed was because they wanted to be close to their families and indeed, the data showed that family ties were strong. However, improving job opportunities and housing quality remained serious issues as suggested by many Inuit adults when asked how life in their community could be improved.

## The Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic– some background information

The 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey was conducted across Canada and covered a wide variety of topics including education, labour, health, housing, communication technology, language and mobility. In addition, Aboriginal people living in the Arctic were asked some questions that focused primarily on harvesting activities, personal and community wellness and social participation. These questions formed the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLiCA) and were developed through a partnership between the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Nunavut Tungavik Incorporated, Makivik Corporation, the Labrador Inuit Association, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Laval University and Statistics Canada. These groups worked together to develop the questionnaire, spread awareness of the survey from community to community in the north, hire local interviewers, develop analysis plans and so on.

Some of the SLiCA questions asked of Inuit and other Aboriginal peoples<sup>12</sup> in the Canadian north have been asked of Indigenous peoples in circumpolar regions of other countries. SLiCA is an international project designed to gain information leading to a better understanding of living conditions of the Saami people in Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia, Inuit in Canada, Greenland and the United States and the Indigenous peoples of the Chukotka region in Russia.

### The 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey – technical issues

The Aboriginal Peoples Survey was conducted across Canada in the fall of 2001 through to spring of 2002. The total sample size for the survey (including Inuit, North American Indian and Métis adults and children) was approximately 117,000. Overall, the response rate was 84.1%. In the Arctic, information was collected from October to December 2001. The table below provides information on sample size and response rates for Inuit adults and children across the Canadian Arctic. (See text table 2.1)

**Text table 2.1**

#### Arctic Inuit sample sizes and response rates, 2001 APS Core and SLiCA questionnaires and Children and Youth questionnaire

	Sample size	Response rate – Core questionnaire	Response rate – SLiCA supplement
Adults (15 years of age and over)	5,950	79.4%	72.1%
Children and youth (less than 15 years of age)	4,050	87.7%	...

<sup>12</sup> The large majority of those interviewed through the SLiCA questionnaire were Inuit. However, some First Nations and Métis people were also included in the sample.

## *Related products*

### **Selected publications from Statistics Canada**

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89-589-X	Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001 - Initial findings: Well-being of the non-reserve Aboriginal Population
89-590-X	Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001 - Internet community profiles
89-591-X	Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001: concepts and methods guide
89-592-X	Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001: initial release - Supporting tables
89-595-X	Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001: initial release - Supporting tables 2
94F0041X	Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, 2001 Census

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### **Selected surveys from Statistics Canada**

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3250	Aboriginal Peoples Survey
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# *List of communities with large Inuit populations participating in the 2001 APS*

## **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Happy Valley-Goose Bay  
Makkovik  
Nain  
Postville  
Rigolet

## **Nunavik**

Akulivik  
Aupaluk  
Chisasibi  
Inukjuak  
Ivujivik  
Kangiqsualujuaq  
Kangiqsujuaq  
Kangirsuk  
Kuujuaq  
Kuujuarapik  
Puvirnituq  
Quaqtaq  
Salluit  
Tasiujaq  
Umiujaq

## **Inuvialuit**

Aklavik  
Holman  
Inuvik  
Paulatuk  
Sachs Harbour  
Tuktoyaktuk

## **Nunavut**

Arctic Bay  
Arviat  
Baker Lake  
Bathurst Inlet  
CambridgeBay  
Cape Dorset  
Chesterfield Inlet  
ClydeRiver  
Coral Harbour  
Gjoa Haven  
Grise Fiord  
Hall Beach  
Igloolik  
Iqaluit  
Kimmirut  
Kugaaruk  
Kugluktuk  
Pangnirtung  
Pond Inlet  
Qikiqtarjuaq  
Rankin Inlet  
Repulse Bay  
Resolute  
Sanikiluaq  
Umingmaktok  
Whale Cove



# Appendix A

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