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Catalogue 98-122

## CANADA'S NORTH A PROFILE

Canada



## CANADA'S NORTH, A PROFILE



by Allan M. Maslove and David C. Hawkes

Published under the authority of the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology.

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March 1990

Price: Canada, \$10.00  
Other Countries, \$11.00

Catalogue 98-122

ISBN 0-660-54014-2

Ottawa

1010035834



Statistisches Canada Library  
Bibliothèque Statistique Canada

CS OOS

## CANADIAN CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

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Maslove, Allan M., 1946-  
Canada's north, a profile

(1986 Census of Canada) (Focus on Canada)  
Title on added t.p.: Nord du Canada, un profil.  
Text in English and French with French text on inverted pages.  
ISBN 0-660-54014-2  
CS98-122

1. Canada, Northern -- Population -- Statistics. 2. Canada, Northern -- Economic conditions. 3. Canada, Northern -- Social conditions. 4. Canada -- Census, 1986. I. Hawkes, David C. (David Craig), 1947- . II. Statistics Canada. III. Title. IV. Title: Nord du Canada, un profil. V. Series: Census Canada, 1986. VI. Series: Focus on Canada (Ottawa, Ont.).

HB3529.M37 1990

304.6'09719

C90-098015-XE

## PREFACE

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**T**he 1986 Census of Canada provided, as did all the previous censuses, a rich source of information on individual, family and household characteristics of Canadians. The census data allow individual researchers as well as academic, business, cultural, social and governmental organizations to undertake in-depth enquiries and analyses on those social issues which interest and concern them.

This study is part of the 1986 Focus on Canada Series. The series is a modest effort by Statistics Canada to provide overviews of a wide variety of subjects on which the 1986 Census collected information. The studies have been written by experts, both inside and outside Statistics Canada, in non-technical language supported by simple tables and attractive charts. The topics include demographic characteristics (population, families, farmers, youth, seniors, the disabled), socio-cultural characteristics (ethnicity, language, education), and economic characteristics (women in the labour force, affordability of housing, occupational trends, employment income, family income).

The present study on "Canada's North, A Profile" was authored by Professors Allan M. Maslove and David C. Hawkes of Carleton University.

I would like to express my appreciation to the authors, to the reviewers and to the staff of the Bureau involved in managing and producing this series.

We hope that the studies in the Focus on Canada Series will not only provide Canadians with very useful information on various facets of Canadian society, but will also be an inducement for them to undertake further research on the topics.

Ivan P. Fellegi  
Chief Statistician of Canada



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## HIGHLIGHTS

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- Although the total number of persons living in Canada's North has been relatively stable between 1981 and 1986, aboriginal peoples form an increasingly large proportion of this population. This is partly due to their high birth rates and to the out-migration of non-aboriginal persons during the 1976 to 1986 period.
- Although the population of the North is much younger than that of Canada as a whole, it is aging somewhat, among both the aboriginal and non-aboriginal populations.
- The age structure of the entire northern Canadian population, as well as the size of northern Canada's aboriginal population, are similar to those of other circumpolar regions, such as Greenland and Alaska.
- Although aboriginal peoples form 40% of the northern Canadian population, their numbers range from a high of almost 90% in the extreme North to 37% in the Fort Smith district of the Northwest Territories (which includes Yellowknife and Hay River).
- The retention of aboriginal languages is higher in the North than in all of Canada, but is low in the Yukon.
- Aboriginal language retention rates are low for northern Canadians with mixed aboriginal/non-aboriginal backgrounds, most of whom lack an aboriginal mother tongue to retain.
- In terms of level of schooling, the disparity among aboriginal and non-aboriginal persons is greater in the North than in Canada as a whole. This is because aboriginal Northerners have less schooling than their southern counterparts, while non-aboriginal Northerners are more highly educated than their southern counterparts.
- Aboriginal peoples in the North appear to have made few gains in educational achievement during the 1981 to 1986 period.
- The Inuit have the least formal education, and the Métis the most, among northern aboriginal peoples.
- Northern Canadians, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal, are similar to Canadians as a whole in the fields of study they pursue in postsecondary education.
- Non-aboriginal persons in Canada's North tend to participate in a high-wage economy, to be strongly attached to the work force, and to be concentrated in professional and administrative activities.

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- Aboriginal persons in Canada's North tend to have much lower incomes, be more dependent on government transfers as their principal source of income, have less attachment to the mainstream labour market, and have higher rates of unemployment for those in the labour force.
  - Northern Canadian families are more likely to be husband-wife families than their southern counterparts.
  - Aboriginal families tend to be larger than non-aboriginal families, but no differences between Canada's North and South are apparent.
  - Aboriginal families are less likely to have both spouses present than non-aboriginal families although the percentage of aboriginal lone-parent families in the North is lower compared to their counterparts in the South.
  - Housing quality (whether measured by persons per room or by the presence of central heating facilities) in Canada's North is on average lower than in the rest of Canada.
  - As in all of Canada, aboriginal housing is of lower quality in the North than non-aboriginal housing (although the disparity is greater across northern regions).
  - The choice of heating fuels varies across the North in patterns that reflect the availability and relative cost of alternative fuels. However, some differences between aboriginal and non-aboriginal dwellings may also reflect housing quality differences.

## INTRODUCTION

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**T**he Canadian North has undergone important changes in recent years, especially in demographic, economic and social areas. It has experienced significant economic activity in oil, gas and mineral exploration and development throughout the 1980s, although much of this has been sporadic due to swings in world commodity prices for these resources. Projects such as the Beaufort Sea oil and gas explorations, the expansion of the Norman Wells oil fields, and the building of an 800 km oil pipeline through the Mackenzie River valley to northern Alberta have stimulated the northern economy. Significant slumps in the mining industry have had the opposite effect. At the same time, northern Canadians, and in particular aboriginal peoples, have been strengthening their role in political and economic development, conducting negotiations in such areas as land claims and self-government, and renewing their efforts to preserve traditional cultures.

This study examines some of these changes, based on data from the 1986 Census of Canada. It examines who lives in the North (age, sex, ethnicity, language), as well as migration in and out of the North, education, income, the structure of the labour force, family and household structure, and housing conditions.

Throughout the analysis, the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the North are compared with those of Canada as a whole. These characteristics of Northern aboriginal peoples are contrasted to those of their non-aboriginal counterparts, and, finally, regions within the North are compared to each other. In order to measure change over time, data from the 1986 Census are contrasted to those obtained from the 1981 Census. In some cases, differences among northern Aboriginal peoples (Inuit, Indian and Métis) are examined, and where information is available, the similarities are highlighted between Northern Canadians and Northern people in circumpolar regions in other countries such as Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Soviet Union, and U.S.A. (Alaska).



**DEFINITIONS**





## DEFINITIONS

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### Definition of the North

**T**here is no absolute geographical definition as to what constitutes Canada's North. Some people use a highly restrictive definition (the extreme North); others speak of the Far North, while still others focus on the mid-North. It is useful to think of the North in terms of tiers: the "extreme North" (above the tree line), the "Far North" (the Yukon and Northwest Territories), and the "mid-North" (Labrador and the northern parts of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia). In addition to geographic location, measures such as population density, economic structure, and proportion of aboriginal population are key determinants in arriving at a definition.

For this study, the North is defined to include the Far North, namely the Yukon and Northwest Territories, as well as Labrador and northern Quebec or "Nouveau-Québec" (around the Ungava Bay and the Hudson Bay). The latter two areas are included because of their sizeable aboriginal (especially Inuit) populations. The accompanying map provides some geographic detail to this definition, and identifies each of the census divisions located in this definition of the North.

Based on this geographic definition, 141,195 people lived in the Canadian North in 1986, approximately the same number of persons who lived in Kitchener, Ontario (population of 149,145 in 1986). Northerners form 0.6% of the total population of Canada — a tiny portion of the country's population living in a vast area. The number of people living in the Canadian North in 1986 was almost identical to that gathered in the 1981 Census, with a 0.1% growth, compared with the overall growth rate of 3.9% for Canada as a whole during that period. The populations in neighbouring circumpolar jurisdictions were as follows: Alaska, with 539,600 in 1985, up from 401,851 in 1980 (a healthy growth rate of 34%)<sup>1</sup>; and Greenland, with 53,405 persons in 1986.<sup>2</sup>

### Definition of Aboriginal Peoples

This study uses census data to provide a description of the socio-economic characteristics of the population in Canada's North, to indicate changes over time, and to compare the North with the South. It became apparent immediately that it would be necessary to deal with the northern population in terms of two distinct subgroups, aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples. In virtually all dimensions there are important socio-economic differences between these two groups. Making the distinction between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples operational, however, presents one with a problem of definition.

In the 1986 Census, for the first time in the ethnic origin question, respondents were encouraged to indicate as many ancestral origins as might apply. In comparison, the previous census (1981) tended to limit responses and thus effectively included only origins that the individual regarded as primary. As a result, compared with 1981, the 1986 Census identified many more people having mixed aboriginal (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit) and non-aboriginal ancestry.

This difference in definition creates problems both for comparisons over time and between the North and South. If we include as aboriginal anyone who identifies himself or herself as having any aboriginal ancestry, approximately 710,000 people in Canada would be so classified in 1986 compared with about 490,000 in 1981. This increase is much larger than would be expected from normal population growth, and reflects the impact of encouraging in the 1986 Census the identification of aboriginal origins from people with mixed ancestry. Moreover, this definition difference is a significant factor only in the South. In the North, there are relatively fewer people with mixed aboriginal and non-aboriginal ancestry, and thus changes in enumeration practice between 1981 and 1986 have a much smaller impact.

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<sup>1</sup> Alaska Blue Book 1987, Eighth Edition, Department of Education, Division of State Libraries, State of Alaska, page 262.

<sup>2</sup> Gronland 1987 Kalaallit Nunaat, Arbog, Stats Ministeriet, Gronlands Departementet, 1988, Table 3, page 318.



It is necessary to keep in mind that this study focusses on socio-economic characteristics, not on culture. We clearly did not wish to second guess individuals' identification of themselves as aboriginal; yet it was necessary to decide which comparisons would be reasonable to make over time and between North and South, and which comparisons would be misleading. Because of the relatively small number of people in the North with both aboriginal and non-aboriginal origins, comparisons within the North between 1981 and 1986 were not problematic. Comparisons over time in the South, however, are seriously affected. For this reason, only 1986 Census data are included in the "Canada" lines in the tables and charts. Since the focus of this monograph is on "Canada's North", we believe that this adjustment does not present serious problems.

It is still desirable to compare aboriginal persons in the North with those in the rest of Canada in 1986. For this purpose it was decided that the most appropri-

ate comparison would be between northern aboriginal peoples and a group in the rest of Canada that most closely matched the ancestral characteristics of these people. Therefore, for purposes of the comparisons in this publication, the aboriginal peoples in the "Canada" portions of the figures include those people who indicated aboriginal origins only (i.e. those with mixed aboriginal and non-aboriginal origins are excluded).

For purposes of household comparisons, we selected as an aboriginal household those units in which at least one of the first two persons in the household was aboriginal as defined above. In husband-wife households, this would mean that either (or both) spouse(s) is(are) aboriginal. In lone-parent households this effectively means that the parent is aboriginal.

Finally, it should be noted that in the 1986 Census, 136 Indian reserves representing about 45,000 people were incompletely enumerated. These people are not included in the "Canada" data. However, there were no unenumerated Indian reserves or settlements in the North; therefore, these data are complete.



## DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION AND CHANGE

Stability in the total number of persons living in Canada's North in recent years masks some important internal changes that have occurred. Table 1 displays the distribution of population in Canadian northern regions in 1986, and the percentage change from 1981. Only the Yukon Territory has remained relatively stable. The population of the Northwest Territories grew by over 12.4% during this period, while the population of Labrador and Nouveau-Québec shrank by 9.1% and 10.7%, respectively.

Other important changes are masked by this apparent northern population stability. Aboriginal peoples make up an increasing proportion of the northern population. Chart 1 shows the aboriginal population as a percentage of the total northern population for each of the northern regions between

1981 and 1986. In 1986, aboriginal peoples formed almost 40% of the northern Canadian population, an increase of over 8 percentage points in five years. Among the Canadian provinces and territories, the Northwest Territories continued to be the only area with a majority aboriginal population, at 59%. The proportion of aboriginal peoples living in Nouveau-Québec and Labrador increased by 1.0 and 11.4 percentage points respectively, but as will be discussed later, this is due partly to the out-migration of non-aboriginal peoples.

Directly comparable data from other circumpolar jurisdictions are not available. In Alaska in 1980, aboriginal peoples composed 16% of the total population, and were a relatively stable proportion of a rapidly growing U.S. state.<sup>3</sup>

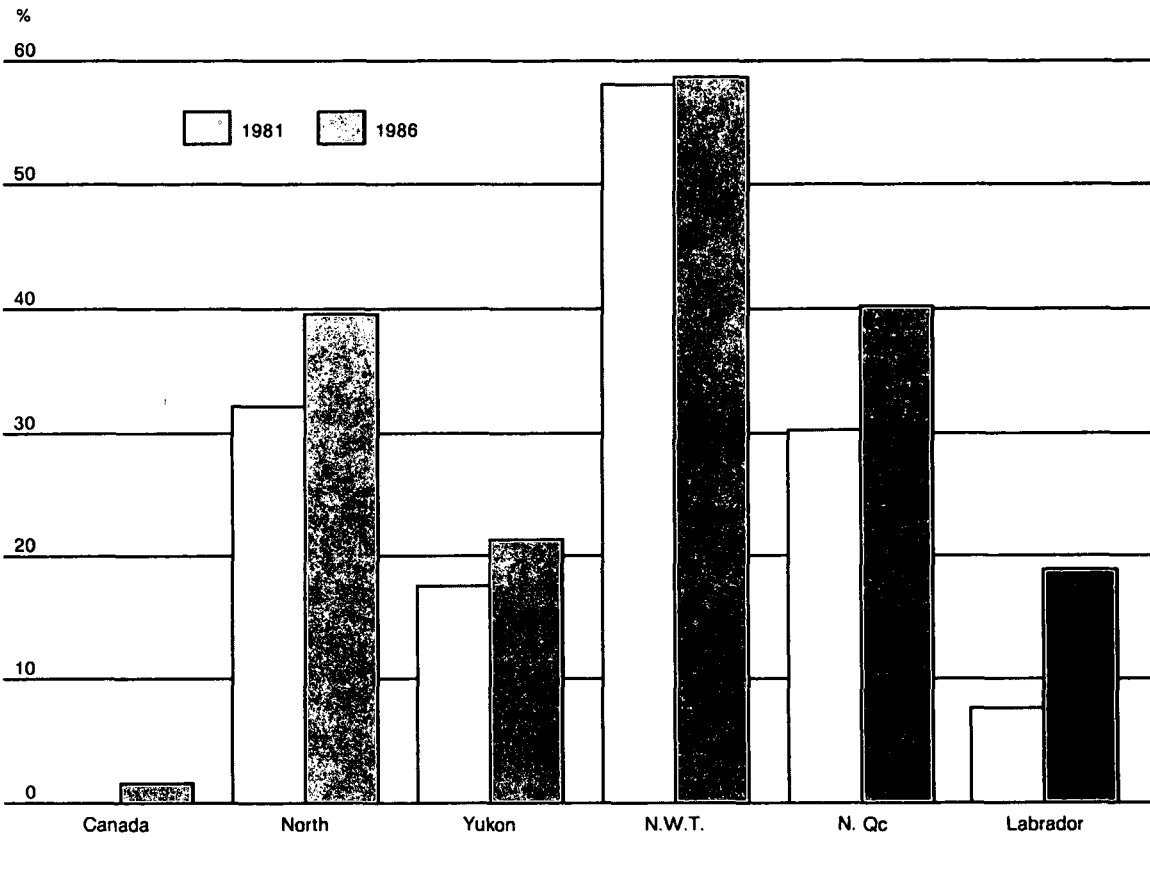
**Table 1. Distribution of Population in Canada's North, 1986**

	Population <sup>1</sup>	Percentage change from 1981
<b>Canada</b>	<b>25,022,005</b>	<b>3.8</b>
North	141,195	0.1
Yukon	23,360	1.2
N.W.T.	52,020	12.4
Nouveau-Québec	37,145	-10.7
Labrador	28,665	-9.1

<sup>1</sup> Based on non-institutional population.

<sup>3</sup> Alaska, *op. cit.*, page 263.

**Chart 1. Aboriginal Population as a Percentage of Total Population, Canada and Northern Regions, 1981 and 1986**



Historically, aboriginal peoples moved seasonally within the North, in keeping with their traditional economy (e.g., hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering), and stayed within well defined geographic areas. Lately, non-aboriginal peoples have been moving in a north-south direction, often coming to the North for a few years of high-wage employment (usually associated with the mineral, oil and gas industries) before returning south. For example, a recent study of migration between 1976 and 1981 estimated that the rate of population turnover for aboriginal peoples in the Far North (the Yukon and Northwest Territories) was relatively low (at 15%), while the turnover rate for non-aboriginal persons was very high (at 69%).<sup>4</sup>

Table 2 presents information on net migration to or from the northern regions in the five-year periods 1976-1981 and 1981-1986, for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal persons. In the 1981-1986 period, the North had a net out-migration rate of 6.6%, or a net loss of migrants. This was also true of the earlier five-year period, in which the North experienced a

net out-migration of 5.2%. In the period ending in 1986, as in the earlier period, the net out-migration rates were highest among non-aboriginal persons. This is most dramatically displayed in Labrador and Yukon, and partly reflects the decline of mining activity in response to falling world prices.

Data are also presented for the census divisions within the Northwest Territories (N.W.T.). Net migration throughout the N.W.T. regions between 1981 and 1986 was relatively low and stable. The Keewatin and Kitikmeot census divisions did show relatively high net in-migration rates among non-aboriginal persons. However, this has had little impact on the overall net migration rate (i.e. of aboriginal and non-aboriginal persons) since the number of non-aboriginal persons in these two areas is markedly smaller (see Chart 4 in the next chapter).

Historically, Canada's North has had a relatively young population. Charts 2 and 3 provide age-gender profiles for Canada and the North, for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples.

**Table 2. Net Migration Rates for Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal Populations Aged 5 and Over for Northern Regions, 1976-1981 and 1981-1986**

	Net migration rates <sup>1</sup>					
	1976-1981			1981-1986		
	Total	Aboriginal	Non-aboriginal	Total	Aboriginal	Non-aboriginal
		%			%	
North	-5.2	-0.8	-6.9	-6.6	-1.0	-9.4
Yukon	-2.3	-4.1	-1.9	-12.5	-3.1	-15.0
N.W.T.	-2.9	-0.3	-6.3	0.1	-0.5	0.9
Baffin	-4.1	-2.8	-10.9	0.3	-0.5	3.3
Keewatin	6.0	3.5	23.8	1.5	-0.9	21.0
Inuvik	-3.2	0.5	-9.8	-1.4	0.0	-3.9
Fort Smith	-4.3	-0.3	-6.4	0.0	-1.1	0.6
Kitikmeot	-0.2	-0.6	0.0	1.9	0.9	9.2
Nouveau-Québec	4.1	0.0	4.1	3.1	0.0	3.1
Labrador	-14.9	-0.2	-16.1	-18.5	-1.7	-22.3

<sup>1</sup> In-migrants minus out-migrants, divided by regional population, multiplied by 100.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas A. Norris and Edward T. Pryor, "Demographic Change in Canada's North", Proceedings of the International Workshop on Population Issues in Arctic Societies, Copenhagen, May 1984, page 121. The turnover (or gross migration) rate is defined as:

$$\frac{\text{in-migration} + \text{out-migration}}{1981 \text{ population}}$$

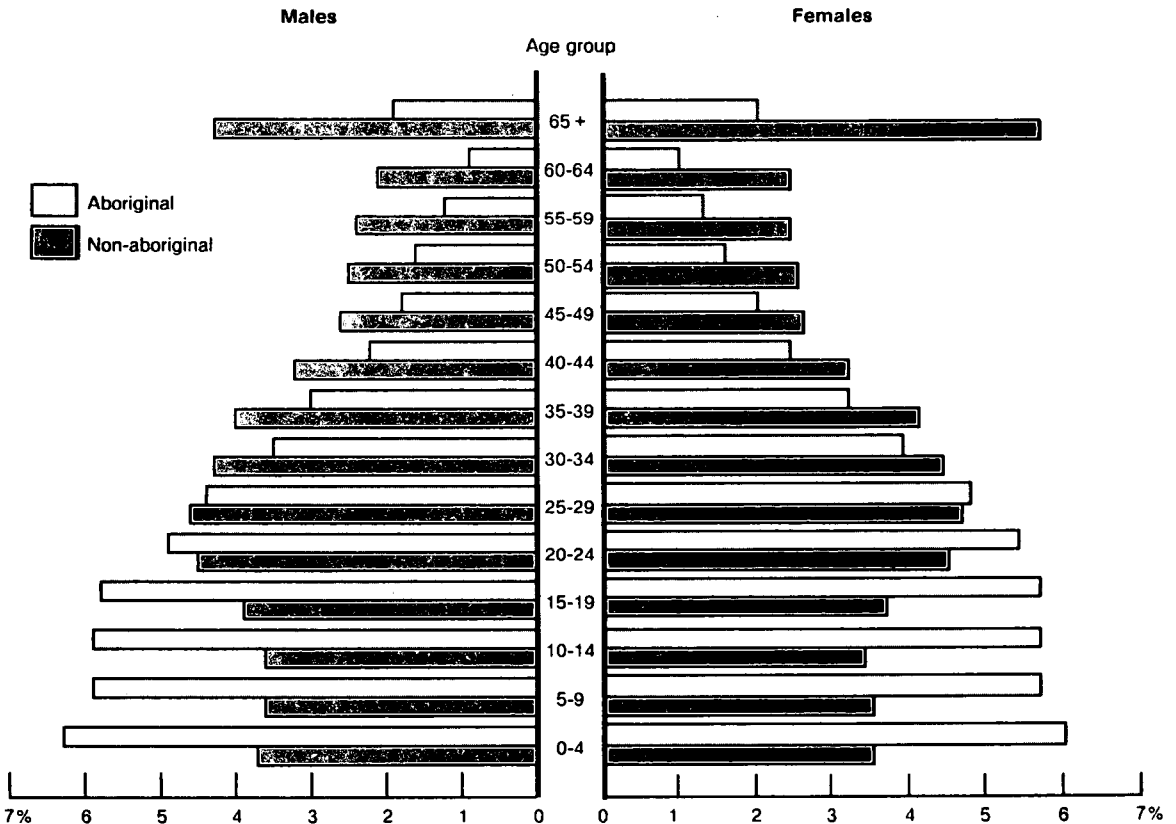
As Chart 2 displays, the age structure of Canada's aboriginal population is dramatically younger than that of the non-aboriginal population. The same is true for the North, as the data in Chart 3 demonstrate.

While the population of the North remains young in relative terms, it is aging somewhat, both among aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples. For example, in the North in 1981, 42% of aboriginal and 29% of non-aboriginal persons were under age 15. In 1986, the respective proportions decreased to

39% and 27%. The change is even more dramatic if we examine those Northerners under 25 years of age. In 1981, 64% of aboriginal and 50% of non-aboriginal persons were in this age group. But in 1986, the percentages had fallen to 62% and 44% respectively.

In comparison, in Alaska 44% of the total population in 1985 was under age 25.<sup>5</sup> In 1986, 47% of the total population of Greenland was under 25 years of age.<sup>6</sup> Data are not broken down by aboriginal status in these cases.

**Chart 2. Age-gender Profile of Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal Populations, Canada, 1986<sup>1</sup>**

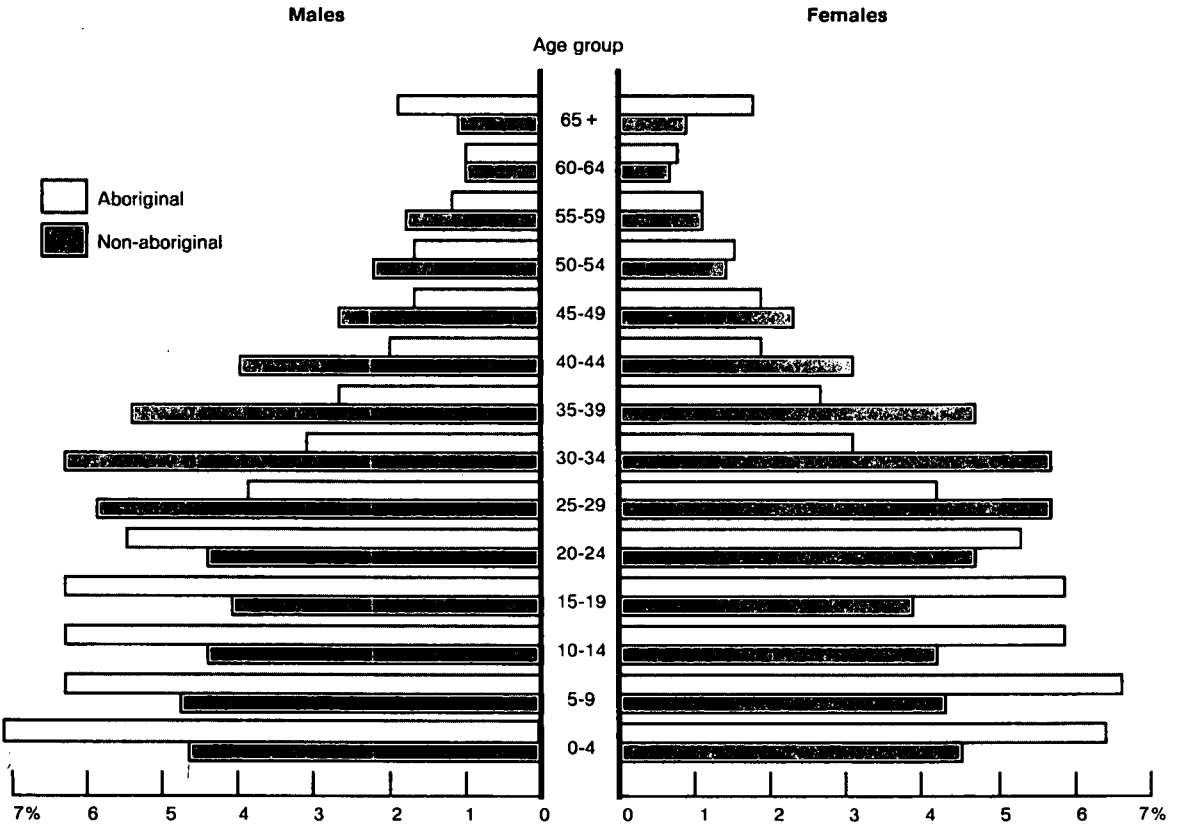


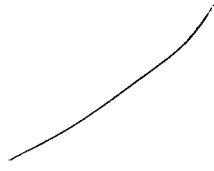
<sup>1</sup> Aboriginal defined as aboriginal only.

<sup>5</sup> Alaska, *op. cit.*, page 263.

<sup>6</sup> Greenland, *op. cit.*

**Chart 3. Age-gender Profile of Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal Populations, Canada's North, 1986**





## CULTURAL COMPOSITION

One of the most significant cultural differences between the population in Canada's North and the population in the rest of the country is the high proportion of aboriginal peoples in the North. As Chart 1 illustrates, aboriginal peoples form only 1.5% of the total Canadian population, but 40% of the northern Canadian population. This varies from a low of 19% in Labrador to a high of 59% in the Northwest Territories (N.W.T.).

There is significant variation, as well, within regions of the N.W.T. As Chart 4 shows, in both the Keewatin and Kitikmeot census divisions, 89% of people are aboriginal (and of those, 85% and 86% respectively are Inuit). In contrast, the population of the Fort Smith census division, which contains the territorial capital of Yellowknife, is only 37% aboriginal.

There were 55,905 aboriginal peoples living in the Canada's North in 1986. In comparison, Alaska was home to 64,103 aboriginal persons in 1980 (53% Eskimo, 34% Indians and 13% Aleuts).<sup>7</sup> Greenland's population in 1986 was 53,405 persons, of whom 44,053 were born in Greenland, the vast majority being Inuit.<sup>8</sup> Scandinavian census data for 1984 show that at that time Norway had between 27,646 and 40,000 persons who have some Sami (Lapp) aboriginal ancestry. Finland had 4,500 such persons, and Sweden had approximately 17,000 Sami or Lapplanders, including those who lived in the southern parts of the country.<sup>9</sup> Based on data from its 1979 Census (the most recent Soviet census), the Soviet Union had 158,000 aboriginal peoples, of whom 131,300 lived in the Far North.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 3. Distribution of Aboriginal Population by Home Language, Canada's North, 1986**

	Aboriginal peoples	Aboriginal home language <sup>1</sup>	% of aboriginal peoples with aboriginal home language
<b>North</b>	<b>55,905</b>	<b>34,295</b>	<b>61.3</b>
Yukon	4,995	280	5.6
N.W.T.	30,525	18,345	60.0
T.N.-Q.	14,925	14,165	94.9
Labrador	5,460	1,500	27.4

<sup>1</sup> Includes multiple languages spoken at home, where at least one is an aboriginal language.

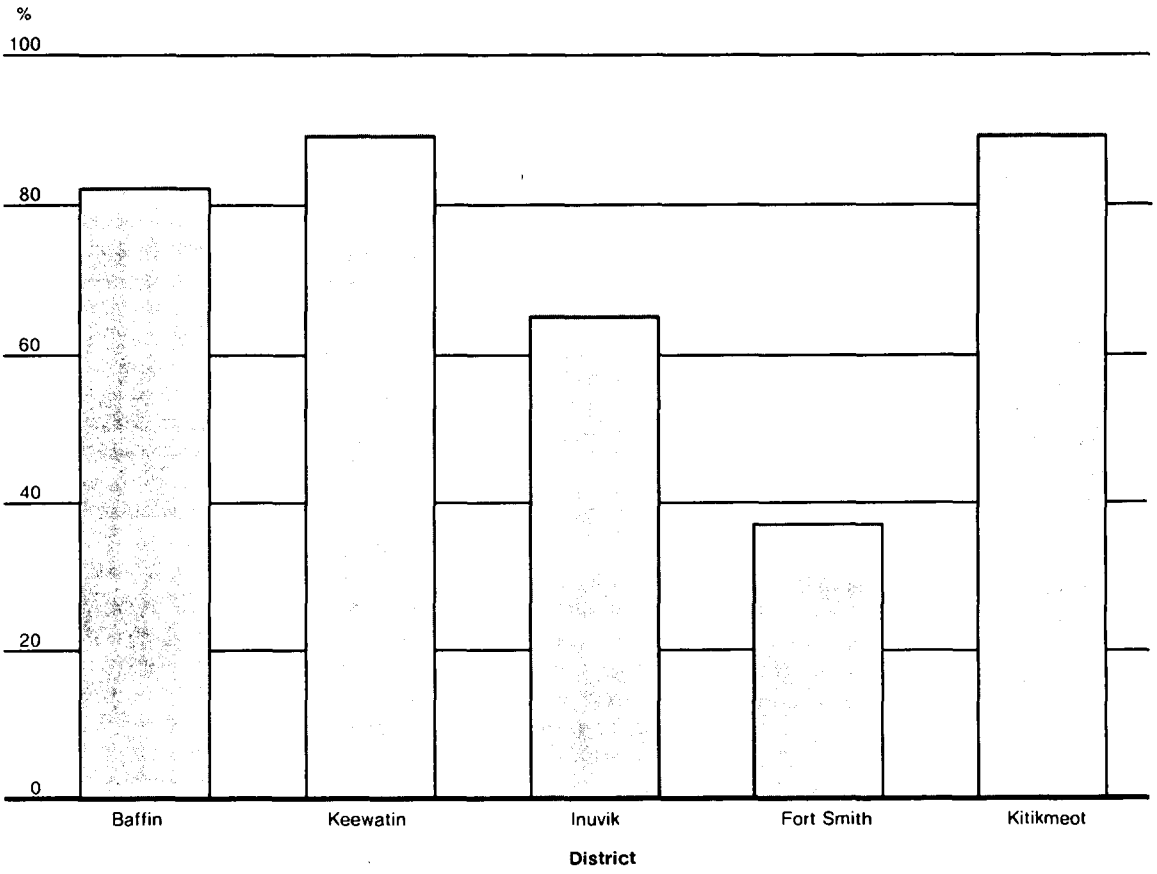
<sup>7</sup> Alaska, *op. cit.*, page 264.

<sup>8</sup> Greenland, *op. cit.*, Table 3, page 318.

<sup>9</sup> Om Samenes Nettsstilling, NOU, 1984: 18.

<sup>10</sup> The Soviet North, *Inuktitut*, fall/winter 1988, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1988, page 33.

**Chart 4. Aboriginal Population as a Percentage of Total Population, Census Divisions, Northwest Territories, 1986**





A major concern of aboriginal peoples in Canada, and particularly in the North, is the preservation of their culture through maintaining aboriginal language use. There is fear that some aboriginal languages may become dead languages, and that no one will know how to speak them. Table 3 provides data on the number of aboriginal peoples in each of the Northern regions, the number who now speak an aboriginal language as a home language (the language most commonly used in the home), and the percentage of aboriginal peoples with an aboriginal home language in 1986. Again, the variation is striking. While 61.3% of aboriginal peoples in the Canadian North use an aboriginal language at home, this figure is as low as 5.6% in the Yukon and as high as 94.9% in Nouveau-Québec. The concern for the loss of aboriginal languages in the Yukon is palpable.

It is interesting to note that about 62% of the aboriginal population in the Soviet North still consider their aboriginal language to be their mother tongue (first language learned). This is also true for 61% of Soviet Inuit.<sup>11</sup>

Table 4 presents somewhat different information on language retention. It shows for both 1981 and 1986, the number of aboriginal peoples with an aboriginal mother tongue, the number with an aboriginal home language, and the retention rate of mother tongue to home language. Although the data between 1981 and 1986 are not directly comparable due to changes in categories, the distributions are quite similar. Among those persons who have an aboriginal mother tongue, how many still use an aboriginal language most frequently in the home? Of these persons, the retention rate of an aboriginal home language is quite high, although it is slightly higher in the North (at 90.3%) than in Canada as a whole (at 77.9%). This is to be expected, given the more remote location of many northern aboriginal communities, where contact with European languages is less frequent. In the Northwest Territories in particular, many persons now over 35 years of age did not have an opportunity to learn English until they were adults. It is only since about 1965 that most aboriginal children in the N.W.T. have attended school.

**Table 4. Distribution of Population Showing Aboriginal Mother Tongue by Aboriginal Home Language, Canada and Northern Regions, 1981 and 1986**

	1981			1986		
	Aboriginal mother tongue	Aboriginal home language	Retention rate (%)	Aboriginal mother tongue	Aboriginal home language	Retention rate (%)
Canada				172,295	134,250	77.9
North	31,995	27,690	86.5	37,525	33,900	90.3
Yukon	835	220	26.3	690	245	35.5
N.W.T.	18,035	15,130	83.9	20,810	18,085	86.9
T.N.-Q.	11,740	11,320	96.4	14,270	14,095	98.8
Labrador	1,345	1,020	75.8	1,750	1,475	84.2

<sup>11</sup> The Soviet North, *op. cit.*, pages 47 and 49. It should be noted that the terms "home language" and "mother tongue" are not directly comparable, since mother tongue is defined as the first language learned, while home language is defined as the language most often used at home.

Again, there is significant variance of language retention rates among northern regions. Rates for persons with an aboriginal home language are quite high in every region except the Yukon, where only about one-third of those with an aboriginal mother tongue still use it as a home language.

This variance can be partly explained by examining differences among aboriginal peoples in their language retention, and by looking at the impact of intermarriage among aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples. Table 5 displays the language retention rates among northern Inuit, Indian and Métis persons, and among persons of mixed Inuit, Indian, and Métis origins and non-aboriginal origins for 1986. Northerners reporting an aboriginal mother tongue, who also report

having Inuit or Indian origins only, display high language retention rates (90% or over). On the other hand, Métis persons with an aboriginal mother tongue have a retention rate of less than 50%. The impact on language retention of persons with mixed origins (aboriginal/non-aboriginal) is considerable, with aboriginal language retention rates falling for aboriginal/non-aboriginal persons with an aboriginal mother tongue. What is more startling, however, is that persons with aboriginal/non-aboriginal ancestry are unlikely to have an aboriginal mother tongue in the first place. Among Inuit/non-aboriginal persons, only 24% have an aboriginal mother tongue. For persons of Indian/non-aboriginal origins, this percentage falls to 6%, and to 2% for Métis/non-aboriginal persons.

**Table 5. Aboriginal Origin, Aboriginal Mother Tongue and Aboriginal Home Language, Canada's North, 1986**

Aboriginal origin	Total number	With aboriginal mother tongue	With aboriginal home language	Retention rate (% mother tongue with home language)
Inuit	<b>24,665</b>	20,965	19,405	92.6
Inuit/non-aboriginal	<b>2,155</b>	510	370	72.5
Indian	<b>20,535</b>	15,075	13,565	90.0
Indian/non-aboriginal	<b>2,875</b>	180	135	75.0
Métis	<b>2,610</b>	330	155	47.0
Métis/non-aboriginal	<b>1,430</b>	25	10	40.0

## EDUCATION

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**F**or the Canadian North to participate in the rapidly changing economy, greater educational skills are increasingly required. This is true in the energy and mineral sectors, as well as in the administrative/government and renewable resource sectors of the northern economy. As many aboriginal peoples continue to leave their traditional economy, they face considerable challenges of adaptation. In this section, the educational achievement of aboriginal and non-aboriginal northern Canadians in 1981 and 1986 are examined by looking at their levels of schooling, and the major fields of study among those with postsecondary qualifications.

Table 6 presents information on the highest level of schooling for aboriginal and non-aboriginal persons based on data from the 1981 and 1986 Censuses. Note the tremendous difference between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians. In 1986, over 72.5% of aboriginal Canadians 15 years and over had not completed high school, compared to 44.5% of non-aboriginal Canadians in the same age group. In 1981, over 59.4% of northern aboriginal persons 15 years and over had less than a Grade 9 education. The proportion in 1986 was 53.9%. This compares with 37.8% for aboriginal Canadians as a whole.

The discrepancy in formal educational achievement between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples is even greater in the North than in the country as a whole; not only are northern aboriginal persons more disadvantaged in terms of education than their southern counterparts, but non-aboriginal Northerners are more highly educated than their southern counterparts.

Note as well the variation in level of schooling by region. Only the Yukon, which has a relatively high proportion of non-aboriginal persons, is near

the Canadian average, while all other regions, particularly Nouveau-Québec and the Northwest Territories, fare quite poorly.

The variation in formal educational achievement among aboriginal peoples is illustrated in Table 7. Inuit are the least likely to be highly educated, with 64.4% of northern Inuit 15 years and over having less than a Grade 9 education (compared with 55.1% for Indians and 29.7% for Métis). Métis in Canada's North are also more likely to have pursued postsecondary education (26% of all northern Métis compared to 15% of all northern Indians and 12% of all northern Inuit). Interestingly, among those Indians with a postsecondary education in the North, the vast majority live in the Northwest Territories.

Finally, the major fields of study among persons with postsecondary qualifications were examined, for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, in both the North and Canada as a whole. As Table 6 indicates, in the North, 19.6% of non-aboriginal Canadians had attended university, compared with just 2.7% of aboriginal Canadians. While aboriginal peoples are much less likely to have acquired postsecondary qualifications, at the national level, there is little difference between the major fields of study for aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians. The same holds true in the North. Northern Canadians, be they aboriginal or non-aboriginal, tend to pursue postsecondary education in similar proportions to other Canadians in fields such as education, commerce, management and administration, and in health care. However, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal persons in the North are considerably more concentrated in the field of engineering technology and trades. This is due, in part, to the less diversified northern economy.

**Table 6. Percentage Distribution of Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal Populations 15 Years and Over by Highest Level of Schooling, Canada and Northern Regions, 1981 and 1986**

Highest level of schooling	Canada		North		Yukon		Northwest Territories		Nouveau-Québec		Labrador	
	Aboriginal	Non-aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-aboriginal
<b>1981</b>												
Less than Grade 9	37.5	19.8	59.4	15.9	35.2	8.4	62.8	6.8	61.9	22.0	56.0	22.2
Some secondary education	33.8	27.8	21.3	26.2	34.2	26.4	20.0	24.8	18.8	26.2	23.5	27.1
Secondary certificate	6.1	13.1	3.3	14.1	5.2	12.4	2.1	11.2	5.0	17.7	3.8	13.8
Trades certificate	2.2	3.4	1.7	4.1	1.2	3.1	1.9	3.2	1.4	5.8	1.4	3.8
Non-university without certificate	5.3	6.0	4.5	5.1	6.1	6.0	4.8	6.0	3.4	5.8	3.4	2.9
Non-university certificate	8.7	13.8	6.8	17.5	14.3	20.8	6.2	20.3	5.5	12.6	5.8	18.1
University without degree	4.5	8.0	2.1	8.6	3.1	12.6	1.6	13.0	2.4	4.3	4.1	6.9
University degree	2.0	8.1	0.9	8.5	0.6	10.5	0.5	14.7	1.6	5.6	1.7	5.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>1986</b>												
Less than Grade 9	37.8	17.5	53.9	12.8	29.2	6.5	57.4	5.4	59.3	21.4	45.4	17.7
Some secondary education	34.7	27.0	26.0	26.9	37.0	24.9	23.1	23.3	26.9	28.4	28.5	30.8
Secondary certificate	5.2	12.9	3.3	12.4	6.3	11.7	2.6	10.4	2.3	15.2	6.6	12.2
Trades certificate	2.1	3.1	1.7	3.7	0.9	2.9	1.7	2.8	1.9	7.0	1.9	2.3
Non-university without certificate	6.7	6.8	4.7	5.4	8.7	6.9	4.7	5.8	3.6	5.7	4.0	3.6
Non-university certificate	8.2	14.6	7.7	19.1	13.7	22.2	8.3	23.0	3.9	12.9	8.8	18.6
University without degree	4.2	8.9	2.2	9.5	3.7	13.0	1.7	12.3	1.5	3.6	4.5	9.4
University degree	1.2	9.7	0.5	10.1	0.6	12.0	0.5	17.2	0.5	5.8	0.6	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Aboriginal defined as aboriginal origins only for Canada total only.  
Data from Table 7.1, A Data Book on Canada's Aboriginal Population for the 1986 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada, March 1989.

**Table 7. Percentage Distribution of Aboriginal Population 15 Years and Over by Aboriginal Group and Highest Level of Schooling, Canada's North, 1986**

Highest level of schooling	Aboriginal Group <sup>1</sup>		
	Inuit	Indian	Métis
Less than Grade 9	64.4	55.1	29.7
Some secondary education	22.0	26.9	37.8
Secondary certificate	1.9	2.6	6.4
Trades certificate	1.3	1.4	3.8
Non-university without certificate	3.9	5.0	4.1
Non-university certificate	5.3	7.0	14.2
University without degree	1.2	1.6	3.2
University degree	0.1	0.4	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Single responses only (e.g., not mixed Inuit and non-aboriginal).

## LABOUR FORCE ACTIVITY AND INCOME

**L**abour force participation, income levels and distributions are fundamental components of the profile of the northern population. Data on these components provide important information about the well-being of the northern residents and the character of the northern economy.

### Labour Market Activity

Table 8 shows that in the North, non-aboriginal peoples have significantly higher labour force participation rates than aboriginal peoples<sup>12</sup> and, in both groups, men are more likely to be in the labour force than women. Thus, overall, non-aboriginal men have the highest participation rate and aboriginal women the lowest.

It is also interesting to note that northern non-aboriginal participation rates are higher than in the rest of Canada. In part, this is because non-aboriginal adults who are not in the labour force (e.g., retired persons) are less likely to remain in the North, while for northern aboriginal peoples, the North is "home" whether or not they remain in the labour force. Similarly, non-aboriginal peoples moving to the North from other parts of the country are usually doing so to take a specific job. These factors tend to make the recorded labour force participation rate higher for non-aboriginal persons in the North.

Within the North, the highest participation rates are recorded in the Yukon and N.W.T. Labour force participation is significantly lower in Nouveau-Québec and Labrador for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples.

Table 8 also shows the pattern of unemployment rates at the time of the 1986 Census. For non-aboriginal men and women, the rates in the Yukon and N.W.T. are about the same or lower than for all of Canada, while the rates in Nouveau-Québec and Labrador are notably higher. In the North, aboriginal unemployment rates are much higher than those for non-aboriginal peoples. The rates for aboriginal men and women in the North are comparable with their counterparts in the rest of Canada.

Finally, with respect to labour force participation, Table 9 provides information on the distribution of the labour force across occupational groupings. The largest occupation group is the professional/administrative/clerical group (including managerial and related occupations). This concentration, particularly among non-aboriginal peoples, reflects the strong presence of the public sector in the North in the form of administrative services, health care, and other public services. Aboriginal peoples appear to be distributed in smaller proportions than non-aboriginal peoples across the first four categories in Table 9; they are more concentrated in the "Other" category, which consists of occupations such as transport equipment operating, materials handling, etc. One should also note that the relatively small percentage of the aboriginal population in "primary occupations" may be due to their not identifying traditional aboriginal activities (e.g., hunting, trapping, fishing) as "work". Thus, potentially large numbers of aboriginal peoples may not be including themselves in the occupational categories identified in the census.

<sup>12</sup> Readers should note that census labour force concepts may not be as relevant for aboriginal peoples, especially those living in remote northern communities. In some of these situations, jobs (as defined in the census) are not readily available. As a consequence, more people are likely to be categorized as "not in the labour force", and the labour force participation rate will likely be correspondingly lower.

**Table 8. Labour Force Profile of Population 15 Years and Over, Canada and Northern Regions, 1986**

		Labour force participation rate			Unemployment rate		
		Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
CANADA	- Total	<b>66.5</b>	<b>77.5</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>11.2</b>
	- Aboriginals	50.2	60.8	40.2	30.5	32.1	28.2
	- Non-aboriginals	66.7	77.7	56.1	10.1	9.4	11.1
NORTH	- Total	<b>67.6</b>	<b>77.2</b>	<b>57.0</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>17.4</b>
	- Aboriginals	52.2	59.1	45.1	28.1	31.2	24.1
	- Non-aboriginals	76.0	86.6	63.9	12.2	10.7	14.6
YUKON	- Total	<b>79.3</b>	<b>85.4</b>	<b>72.3</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>12.1</b>
	- Aboriginals	65.7	69.8	61.5	31.8	37.1	25.9
	- Non-aboriginals	82.6	88.9	75.4	9.8	10.5	8.9
N.W.T.	- Total	<b>69.8</b>	<b>77.0</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>13.2</b>
	- Aboriginals	54.6	61.3	47.6	26.5	29.2	22.7
	- Non-aboriginals	87.1	93.8	79.2	5.1	4.4	6.0
T.N.-Q.	- Total	<b>58.7</b>	<b>73.3</b>	<b>43.0</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>18.3</b>
	- Aboriginals	43.0	52.1	34.0	28.4	31.1	23.9
	- Non-aboriginals	67.5	84.3	48.3	13.2	11.7	16.2
LABRADOR	- Total	<b>64.2</b>	<b>74.9</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>31.4</b>
	- Aboriginals	49.2	54.2	43.6	33.0	35.9	29.5
	- Non-aboriginals	67.4	79.3	54.8	23.2	17.8	31.6

**Table 9. Percentage Distribution of Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal Populations in the Labour Force 15 Years and Over by Occupational Group, Canada and Northern Regions, 1986**

		Professional/ administrative		Other services		Primary industries		Construction/ manufacturing		Other	
		1986	1981	1986	1981	1986	1981	1986	1981	1986	1981
CANADA	- Total	<b>44.1</b>		<b>21.2</b>		<b>5.4</b>		<b>18.7</b>		<b>10.6</b>	
	- Aboriginals	29.6		19.0		10.0		20.0		21.4	
	- Non-aboriginals	44.2		21.3		5.4		18.7		10.5	
NORTH	- Total	<b>41.1</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>12.2</b>
	- Aboriginals	35.0	34.4	19.7	20.5	6.5	8.1	17.9	20.0	20.8	16.9
	- Non-aboriginals	43.5	41.7	18.5	17.5	8.0	9.9	19.0	20.0	11.0	11.0
YUKON	- Total	<b>44.9</b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>11.0</b>
	- Aboriginals	31.7	33.8	24.3	22.6	6.5	6.8	19.8	21.3	18.0	15.2
	- Non-aboriginals	47.5	46.6	20.4	19.2	5.1	5.7	17.4	18.1	9.6	10.5
N.W.T.	- Total	<b>46.9</b>	<b>46.0</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>13.2</b>
	- Aboriginals	35.5	33.8	19.3	21.4	7.0	6.5	16.8	20.0	21.4	18.3
	- Non-aboriginals	55.2	53.6	17.4	17.1	3.8	4.9	14.0	14.4	9.6	10.1
T.N.-Q.	- Total	<b>34.9</b>	<b>36.4</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>10.8</b>
	- Aboriginals	36.9	39.4	18.0	17.7	5.1	10.7	18.8	17.9	21.3	14.2
	- Non-aboriginals	34.2	35.9	16.3	17.0	15.9	14.6	21.6	22.3	12.0	10.2
LABRADOR	- Total	<b>32.9</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>13.4</b>
	- Aboriginals	32.7	27.1	19.9	17.1	7.3	16.5	20.5	23.5	19.9	15.9
	- Non-aboriginals	33.0	31.7	20.2	16.8	9.0	13.7	24.6	24.6	13.3	13.2

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## Income Profiles

The distribution of income recipients by total income range and average incomes in 1985 are presented in Table 10 and Chart 5.<sup>13</sup> The average income of non-aboriginal peoples in all northern regions is higher than the average for Canadians as a whole; in the case of the Northwest Territories the difference is quite large (about \$9,000 per year). This difference occurs partly because many employees in the North (especially non-aboriginal persons who have moved from the South) receive special allowances to compensate them for the higher cost of living. Both public and private sector employees are compensated. Thus, while their nominal incomes are on average higher than what they would receive in the same jobs in the rest of Canada, their real incomes (that is, their incomes after adjusting for the higher cost of living) may not be any greater.

Northern aboriginal peoples on average receive substantially less income than do non-aboriginal persons, but slightly more than aboriginal peoples living elsewhere in Canada. However, one must note that these data do not include income in kind.

The distribution of incomes also reflects the differences in average incomes. In the North, almost 60% of the aboriginal population received less than \$10,000 in 1985, compared with 30% of the non-aboriginal population. At the other end of the scale, only about 5% of aboriginal peoples in the North had incomes over \$35,000 compared with more than 20% of non-aboriginal persons. A comparison of the northern income distribution with the rest of Canada indicates that a slightly larger proportion of the northern aboriginal population was at the upper end of the income scale than their southern counterparts. In

contrast, the proportion of non-aboriginal peoples in the North who are at the higher end of the income scale is considerably larger than that of their southern counterparts.

Table 11 shows the proportions of the population groups with employment income and government transfer payments as their major sources of income. Transfer payments are non-wage payments from governments to individuals, including unemployment insurance, family allowances, social welfare payments, and old age security (and supplements). These data thus provide an approximate measure of the proportion of the adult population whose earnings provide their main income source, compared with those primarily dependent on some type of government support. A higher percentage of the aboriginal and non-aboriginal population in the North derives income primarily from employment than is the case in the rest of Canada.

Table 11 also shows that aboriginal peoples are much more likely to derive income primarily from government transfer payments than are others; in the Northwest Territories, the proportion of aboriginal peoples dependent on government transfers as their principal income source is five times the proportion of non-aboriginal persons. These differences largely reflect the difficulties encountered by aboriginal peoples in mainstream labour markets. The difficulties may be the result of the lack of jobs in remote communities, discrimination, the lower levels of educational attainment discussed earlier, or cultural values that may be at odds with standard workplace expectations. For example, aboriginal peoples may be less willing to relocate for employment reasons, given their strong attachment to the land.

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<sup>13</sup> The 1986 Census collected information on individuals' incomes in the previous year. Total income refers to income received from all sources, including employment, government transfers, and income from other sources, such as investment income.

**Table 10. Percentage Distribution of Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal Populations 15 Years and Over by Income Size Groups, Canada and Northern Regions, 1985**

		Under \$5,000	\$5,000-\$10,000	\$10,000-\$20,000	\$20,000-\$35,000	Over \$35,000	Total average income (\$)
CANADA	- Total	19.1	20.1	25.1	23.0	12.7	18,188
	- Aboriginals	35.4	27.0	21.4	12.6	3.5	10,678
	- Non-aboriginals	18.9	20.0	25.1	23.1	12.8	18,272
NORTH	- Total	22.0	17.6	19.2	24.2	17.0	18,814
	- Aboriginals	33.7	24.7	20.5	15.6	5.5	11,899
	- Non-aboriginals	16.3	14.1	18.5	28.4	22.7	22,229
YUKON	- Total	18.8	16.4	22.7	25.0	17.2	19,414
	- Aboriginals	32.6	25.0	22.1	15.7	4.8	11,762
	- Non-aboriginals	15.8	14.6	22.7	27.1	19.8	21,079
N.W.T.	- Total	22.8	15.7	18.1	23.1	20.3	20,066
	- Aboriginals	35.0	22.9	19.1	16.3	6.8	12,377
	- Non-aboriginals	11.6	9.2	17.2	29.4	32.7	27,122
T.N.-Q.	- Total	21.8	18.5	19.1	27.5	13.1	17,828
	- Aboriginals	30.8	26.7	23.3	15.8	3.4	11,468
	- Non-aboriginals	16.7	14.0	16.8	34.0	18.4	21,332
LABRADOR	- Total	24.3	21.3	17.8	21.4	15.2	17,031
	- Aboriginals	35.0	29.7	19.0	12.3	4.2	10,639
	- Non-aboriginals	22.0	19.5	17.5	23.3	17.6	18,397

**Table 11. Percentage Distribution of Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal Populations 15 Years and Over by Major Source of Income, Canada and Northern Regions, 1980 and 1985**

		Major source of income <sup>1</sup>			
		Employment income		Government transfer payments	
		1985	1980	1985	1980
CANADA	- Total	70.8		19.6	
	- Aboriginals	54.8		42.1	
	- Non-aboriginals	71.0		19.3	
NORTH	- Total	80.6	85.6	17.0	12.3
	- Aboriginals	69.5	73.2	28.5	25.9
	- Non-aboriginals	86.0	89.9	11.3	7.7
YUKON	- Total	83.5	88.7	12.6	7.6
	- Aboriginals	72.5	79.3	25.8	19.5
	- Non-aboriginals	85.9	90.3	9.8	5.7
N.W.T.	- Total	85.4	87.1	12.9	11.5
	- Aboriginals	76.1	78.3	22.6	21.0
	- Non-aboriginals	93.8	95.0	4.0	2.9
T.N.-Q.	- Total	73.9	81.3	23.1	16.8
	- Aboriginals	57.0	58.8	39.2	39.8
	- Non-aboriginals	83.2	88.0	14.1	9.9
LABRADOR	- Total	76.5	85.7	21.8	12.8
	- Aboriginals	62.9	66.2	35.6	32.9
	- Non-aboriginals	79.4	87.2	18.8	11.3

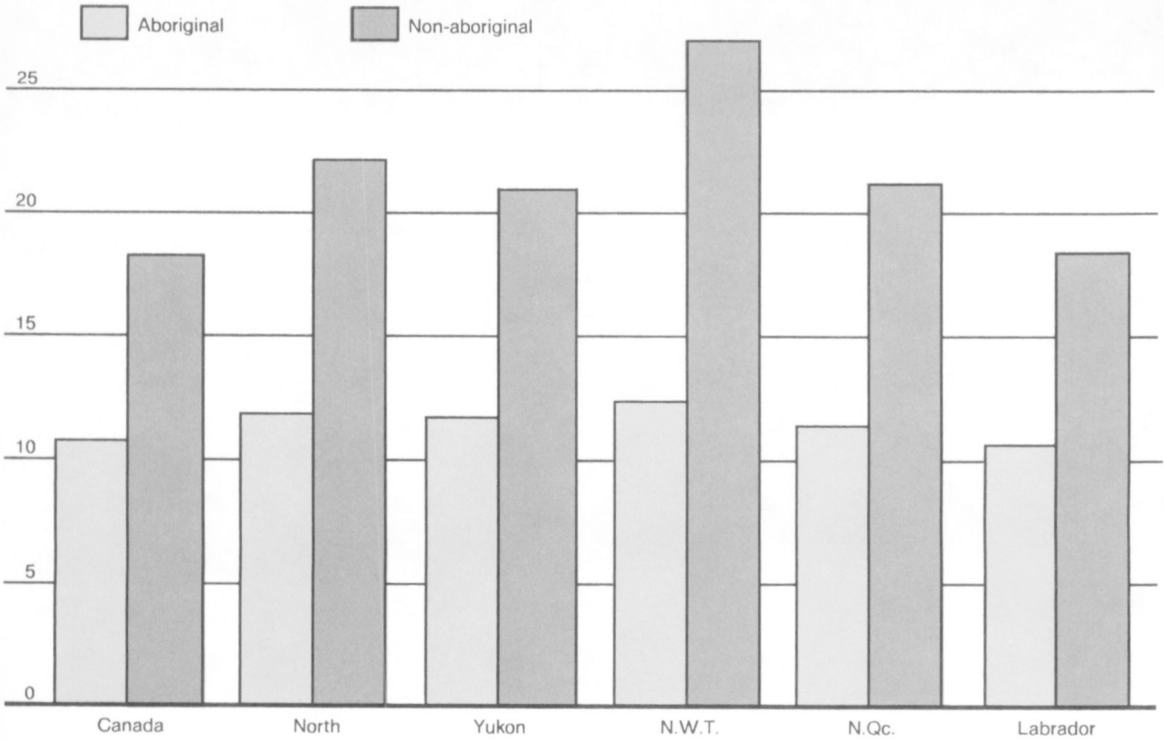
<sup>1</sup> Excludes "other" category (investment income, etc.).



Chart 5.

Average Income of Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal Populations, Canada and Northern Regions, 1985

Average Income  
'000  
30





## FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

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**A** central concern in the study of populations is the structure and size of families. This section examines the data pertaining to these concerns, and the changes in the family profiles that have occurred between 1981 and 1986.

In 1986, over 83% of families in Canada's North were husband-wife families, a proportion that was slightly higher than that for Canada as a whole (Table 12). Within the North, however, there was considerable variation, with lower than (Canada) average percentages recorded in the Yukon and N.W.T. and higher proportions in Nouveau-Québec and Labrador. In all northern regions, aboriginal families were less likely to be two-parent families than were non-aboriginal families. Both northern aboriginal and non-aboriginal families were more likely to have both spouses present in the household than their counterparts in the rest of Canada.

Between 1981 and 1986 the proportion of husband-wife families in the North declined although they still constituted a large majority. The two exceptions were the aboriginal populations in the Yukon and in Labrador, where the percentage of husband-wife families rose during this time period.

A comparison of the lone-parent families in the North with those in the rest of Canada reveals an interesting difference. In the North, the proportion of lone-parent families headed by men is much larger. On average, there is one male lone-parent family for every two and a half female lone-parent families. In Canada as a whole, the average is one

male lone-parent family for every 4.7 female lone-parent families.

Table 13 presents information on family size. Average family size is larger in the North than in the rest of Canada. This size difference is primarily due to the higher proportion of aboriginal families in Canada's North, combined with the tendency for aboriginal families to be larger than non-aboriginal families. For the most part, however, families in each group are about the same size in the North as their counterparts in the rest of Canada. These relationships tend to hold true for both husband-wife families and lone-parent families.

Among husband-wife families in the North, the percentage of aboriginal families with four or more children was much higher than the percentage for non-aboriginal families. Depending on the region, between 7% and 27% of aboriginal husband-wife families had four or more children. For non-aboriginal families the percentages were usually less than 2%. The percentage of large aboriginal families in the North was also higher than in the rest of Canada. For non-aboriginal peoples there were no marked differences between the North and the rest of Canada. Overall family structures in the Yukon are most similar to those in Canada as a whole.

Finally, between 1981 and 1986, average family size decreased for all groups in all regions. Similarly, the percentage of large families in the North also declined (except for the Yukon), and in many cases the decline was dramatic.

**Table 12. Percentage Distribution of Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal Families With Children by Family Structure, Canada and Northern Regions, 1981 and 1986**

		Husband-wife families		Male lone-parent families		Female lone-parent families	
		1986	1981	1986	1981	1986	1981
CANADA	- Total	<b>81.2</b>		<b>3.3</b>		<b>15.5</b>	
	- Aboriginals	61.5		6.6		31.9	
	- Non-aboriginals	81.4		3.3		15.3	
NORTH	- Total	<b>83.1</b>	<b>86.9</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>9.3</b>
	- Aboriginals	76.5	78.3	7.0	6.4	16.5	15.0
	- Non-aboriginals	87.9	90.7	3.0	2.7	9.1	6.6
YUKON	- Total	<b>78.7</b>	<b>81.6</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>12.5</b>
	- Aboriginals	71.1	66.9	8.9	8.8	20.0	23.8
	- Non-aboriginals	81.4	85.9	5.1	5.0	13.4	9.1
N.W.T.	- Total	<b>79.9</b>	<b>83.8</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>11.5</b>
	- Aboriginals	75.7	79.7	7.2	6.0	17.1	14.3
	- Non-aboriginals	87.5	90.4	2.6	2.6	9.9	7.0
T.N.-Q.	- Total	<b>86.0</b>	<b>89.4</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>7.5</b>
	- Aboriginals	78.7	81.5	6.6	5.4	14.7	12.6
	- Non-aboriginals	90.1	92.1	2.3	2.3	7.6	5.7
LABRADOR	- Total	<b>88.1</b>	<b>90.9</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>6.7</b>
	- Aboriginals	80.2	76.8	5.8	8.4	14.4	14.7
	- Non-aboriginals	90.2	92.0	2.6	2.0	7.3	5.9

**Table 13. Average Number of Children and Percentage of Families With Four or More Children by Family Structure, Canada and Northern Regions, 1981 and 1986**

		Husband-wife families				Lone-parent families			
		Average number of children		4 or more children (%)		Average number of children		4 or more children (%)	
		1986	1981	1986	1981	1986	1981	1986	1981
CANADA	- Total	<b>2.0</b>		<b>1.4</b>		<b>1.6</b>		<b>1.0</b>	
	- Aboriginals	2.9		15.8		2.2		6.9	
	- Non-aboriginals	2.0		1.3		1.6		0.8	
NORTH	- Total	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>
	- Aboriginals	3.0	3.3	18.7	24.6	2.3	2.4	9.1	11.3
	- Non-aboriginals	2.0	2.1	1.7	3.9	1.6	1.8	1.1	4.7
YUKON	- Total	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>0.7</b>
	- Aboriginals	2.2	2.7	6.9	9.1	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.7
	- Non-aboriginals	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.2
N.W.T.	- Total	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>9.6</b>
	- Aboriginals	3.0	3.3	18.5	24.8	2.2	2.5	8.1	12.4
	- Non-aboriginals	1.9	2.0	1.1	1.7	1.5	1.6	0.0	1.8
T.N.-Q.	- Total	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>8.9</b>
	- Aboriginals	3.5	3.8	26.8	30.3	2.6	2.7	13.6	16.9
	- Non-aboriginals	2.0	2.1	0.5	3.1	1.6	1.7	2.3	2.3
LABRADOR	- Total	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>13.6</b>
	- Aboriginals	2.8	3.4	12.8	19.2	2.2	2.3	6.3	13.6
	- Non-aboriginals	2.2	2.3	2.9	6.8	1.8	2.4	2.2	12.4

## HOUSING CONDITIONS

**H**ousing is one of the major determinants of a population's level of well-being. Adequate, safe, and comfortable housing is extremely important in its own right. In addition, studies have shown that poor housing quality is often related to other problems such as poor health and family disintegration. In this section housing conditions in the North are examined, using the data available in the census.

### Persons Per Room

A measure of housing quality often used is calculating the number of persons per room. Over the

years, a social standard has emerged suggesting that dwellings with more than one person per room are crowded and represent a less than desirable level of housing quality. As Table 14 displays, the average number of persons per room in private dwellings in 1986 was notably higher in the North than in Canada as a whole. The highest averages were recorded for the Northwest Territories and Nouveau-Québec.

In the North, as in Canada as a whole, the averages are consistently higher for aboriginal households than for non-aboriginal households, but the differences in the northern regions are generally greater. That is to say, the disparity in housing quality

**Table 14. Average Number of Persons Per Room and Percentage Distribution of Aboriginal and Non-aboriginal Dwellings by Persons Per Room, Canada and Northern Regions, 1981 and 1986**

		Percentage of dwellings with							
		Average number of persons per room		1 or less person per room		1.1-2.0 persons per room		2 persons and over per room	
		1986	1981	1986	1981	1986	1981	1986	1981
CANADA	- Total	<b>0.47</b>		<b>98.2</b>		<b>1.7</b>		<b>0.1</b>	
	- Aboriginals	0.79		77.6		19.0		3.4	
	- Non-aboriginals	0.47		98.3		1.6		0.1	
NORTH	- Total	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>85.7</b>	<b>85.3</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.8</b>
	- Aboriginals	0.96	1.09	64.3	56.1	29.2	33.5	6.5	10.4
	- Non-aboriginals	0.54	0.59	96.6	95.4	3.1	4.4	0.3	0.2
YUKON	- Total	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>93.0</b>	<b>93.8</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.9</b>
	- Aboriginals	0.69	0.75	85.1	80.3	12.5	16.5	2.1	2.9
	- Non-aboriginals	0.49	0.51	95.5	96.8	3.9	2.8	0.7	0.5
N.W.T.	- Total	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>79.9</b>	<b>77.5</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.4</b>
	- Aboriginals	0.97	1.10	64.0	56.0	29.9	35.2	6.1	9.1
	- Non-aboriginals	0.52	0.53	97.1	97.9	2.8	2.0	0.2	0.0
T.N.-Q.	- Total	<b>0.72</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>83.6</b>	<b>85.3</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.9</b>
	- Aboriginals	1.21	1.36	45.5	37.8	43.7	41.7	10.8	20.8
	- Non-aboriginals	0.56	0.63	98.3	96.1	1.7	3.8	0.0	0.1
LABRADOR	- Total	<b>0.62</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>91.2</b>	<b>88.9</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.8</b>
	- Aboriginals	0.85	0.97	73.9	61.2	20.4	32.8	6.0	6.9
	- Non-aboriginals	0.58	0.64	95.2	91.1	4.3	8.5	0.3	0.3

between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples (at least according to this measure) is greater in the North. On average, among the northern regions, housing quality is highest in the Yukon for both groups. At the other extreme, aboriginal peoples in Nouveau-Québec are the only group with an average level greater than the threshold level of one. According to this measure, average housing quality improved from 1981 to 1986 in the North, for both population groups in each region.

As already indicated, an average level of one or less person per room has become the desired norm or standard level for assessing housing quality. The percentage of households in the North meeting this criterion has, with a few minor exceptions, increased between 1981 and 1986, but the percentage is still notably smaller than that for Canada as a whole. The increase in the percentage of aboriginal households in the northern regions meeting this criterion is especially noteworthy, although (except for the Yukon) they still lag behind aboriginal households in the rest of Canada, and non-aboriginal households in each region. The low proportion of aboriginal households in Nouveau-Québec that meet this standard is in marked contrast to the rest of the northern regions.

If less than one person per room is desirable, then more than two persons per room is often taken as a measure of significant crowding. As Table 14 shows, this is a problem that affects only a very small proportion of Canadian households. The proportion affected in the North is much higher. Moreover, the problem occurs primarily among aboriginal households; non-aboriginal northern households are not markedly different than their counterparts in the rest of Canada.

However, while significant crowding is primarily a problem facing aboriginal households, the situation has improved substantially between 1981 and 1986. This was true in all regions, but the percentage of aboriginal households experiencing this degree of crowding remained much higher in Nouveau-Québec than elsewhere.

### Central Heating

Another housing quality measure that can be derived from the census is the proportion of private dwellings that have a central heating system, whether it is an electric heating system, or a forced air, steam or hot water furnace. Chart 6 shows the percentage of dwellings that lacked central heating facilities in 1986; these units are heated by fireplaces, space heaters, or stoves. The percentage of dwellings in the North without central heating is greater than in the rest of Canada, often more than twice as prevalent. In the northern regions, the percentage of aboriginal dwellings without central heating declined

between 1981 and 1986, except for Labrador. However, there were significant increases in the proportion of non-aboriginal dwellings without central heating in both the Yukon and N.W.T., while Nouveau-Québec and Labrador showed declines.

The differences between aboriginal and non-aboriginal dwellings are marked. The proportion of aboriginal houses without central heating is, in some regions, more than three times that for non-aboriginal peoples. Using this measure, the disparity between aboriginal and non-aboriginal housing conditions is much greater than the picture one gets when focusing on the persons per room measure.

### Heating Fuels

The principal energy source for heating varies across regions largely because relative fuel costs also vary. Examining these patterns is interesting from this perspective, although it is less clear that principal fuel type is related systematically to housing quality. The two exceptions are wood and coal fuels because they tend to require more labour on the part of the occupants than do the other fuel sources. Our comparison is across three broad fuel types: fossil fuels (e.g., oil, natural gas, coal), electricity, and wood.

In the North, fossil fuels were the principal energy source for heating in about half the dwellings in 1986. This percentage was somewhat lower than for all of Canada; although in both the North and South, the reliance on fossil fuels declined between 1981 and 1986. Electricity was the prime source for a little more than a quarter of northern dwellings compared with one-third for Canada as a whole. Wood, which is a relatively minor fuel source in the rest of Canada, was used by about one-fifth of northern households; moreover, its usage in the North increased dramatically between 1981 and 1986.

The average fuel source figures for the North mask significant differences across regions. These are illustrated in Chart 7. Fossil fuels were the dominant energy source in the N.W.T. (three-quarters of all dwellings) and, to a lesser extent, in the Yukon, although their relative usage decreased between 1981 and 1986. In Nouveau-Québec and Labrador, electricity is the main energy source and usage increased between 1981 and 1986. This pattern reflects the abundance and relative low cost of electricity in these regions. Wood has become an important fuel source in the Yukon, again reflecting its relative abundance in that region.

Aboriginal peoples in the North are more likely to use wood as their primary fuel source than are non-aboriginal peoples, and less likely to use electricity. This difference is particularly pronounced in Labrador.

**Chart 6. Percentage of Dwellings Without Central Heating, Canada and Northern Regions, 1986**

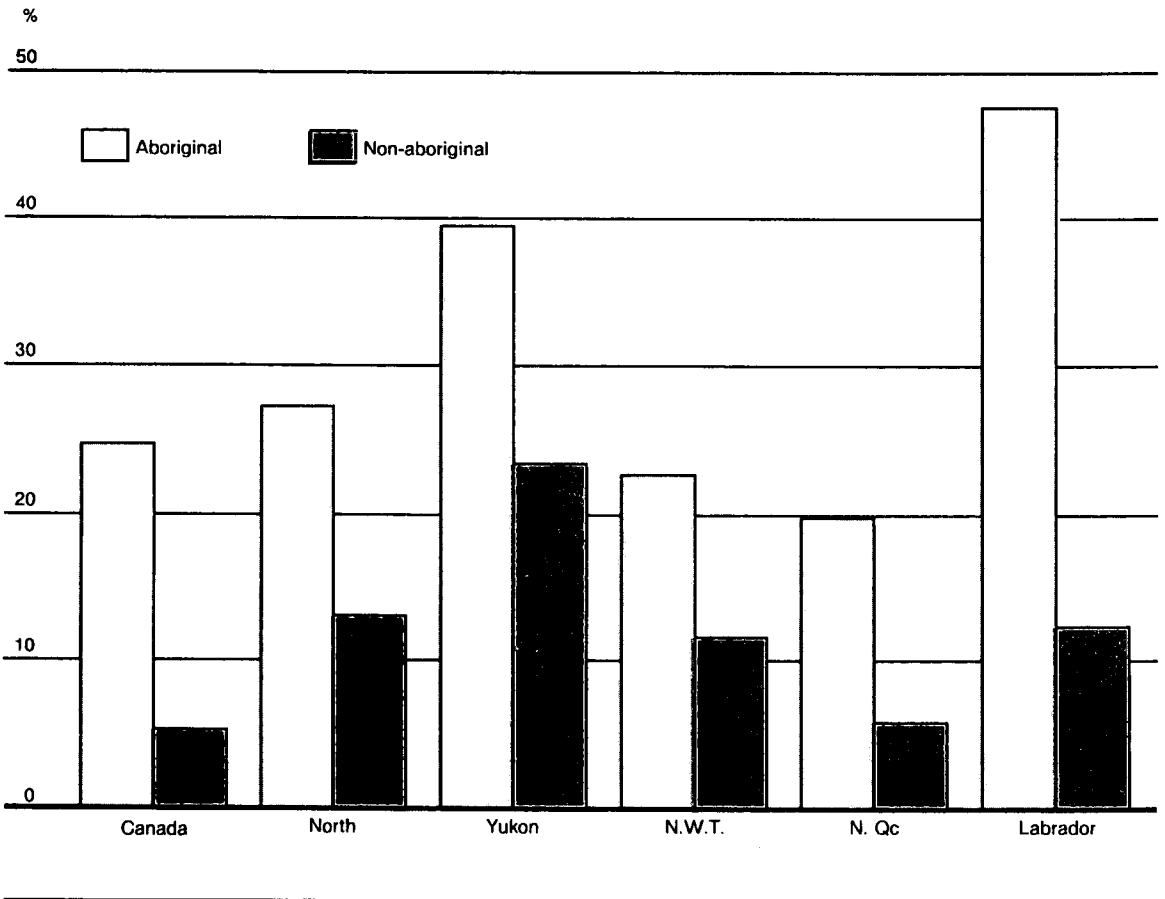
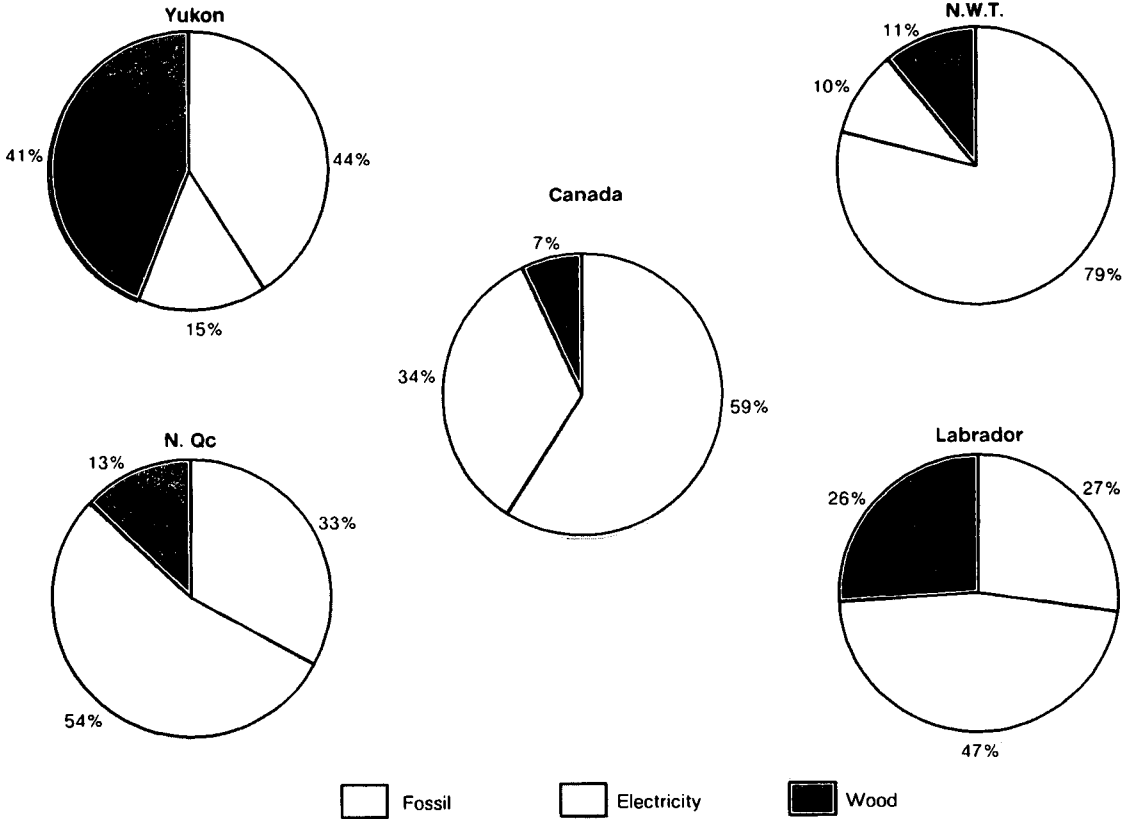


Chart 7.

Principal Home Heating Fuels, Canada and Northern Regions, 1986

1986





## CONCLUSION

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**P**erhaps the most fundamental conclusion to draw from this study is that Canada's North is not homogeneous. The northern regions examined displayed many similarities, but there were also important differences among Labrador, the Yukon, Nouveau-Québec, and the N.W.T. — as well as within the Northwest Territories. These differences related to aboriginal status, education, housing, and migration, among other factors.

Although the population of Canada's North in 1986 was numerically very similar to that in 1981, important changes occurred during this period. Aboriginal peoples formed an increasingly larger proportion of the total northern population. There was a net out-migration of persons from the North, especially evident in Labrador and the Yukon. While the population of the Northwest Territories grew, Labrador and Nouveau-Québec experienced significant declines in population, due partly to the out-migration of non-aboriginal persons from these regions. The economy of these regions, largely dependent upon such activities as mining, resource exploration, and government spending, is highly sensitive to downturns in international commodity markets and government restraint.

Compared with Canada as a whole, the age structure in the North is young, although older than it was in 1981. However, the age structure of Canadian Northerners is similar to northern residents in other circumpolar jurisdictions. The age structure for aboriginal Canadians, regardless of residence, remains very young.

Although aboriginal peoples constituted 40% of the northern Canadian population in 1986, this varied from 19% in Labrador to 59% in the N.W.T. The size of the aboriginal population of the Canadian North is similar to the aboriginal population of Alaska and Greenland, but much smaller than that of the Soviet North.

Aboriginal languages are still widely used in the North. Over 60% of aboriginal peoples in the North still use an aboriginal language as their main language. Approximately 90% of northern aboriginal persons with an aboriginal mother tongue still use it as the main language in the home. This appears to be the case as well in the Soviet North. The exception that should cause some concern is that of the Yukon, where only 5% of aboriginal persons still use an aboriginal language in the home. Aboriginal language retention rates fell for northern Canadians with mixed aboriginal/non-aboriginal ancestry, most of whom lack an aboriginal language to retain.

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Aboriginal peoples in the North appear to have made few gains in educational achievement during the 1981 to 1986 period. Over 50% of aboriginal persons 15 years and over had less than a Grade 9 education (compared with just over 37% of all aboriginal Canadians). Although the Yukon was near the Canadian average, aboriginal persons in Nouveau-Québec and the N.W.T. fared particularly poorly. Of northern aboriginal peoples, the Métis had attained the highest levels of education, and the Inuit the lowest. The disparity in formal education between aboriginal and non-aboriginal persons is greater in the North than in Canada as a whole: aboriginal Northerners have less schooling than their southern counterparts, while non-aboriginal Northerners are more highly educated than their southern counterparts. Northern Canadians, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal, are similar to Canadians as a whole in terms of the fields of study they pursue in postsecondary education.

Compared with their Canadian counterparts, non-aboriginal Northerners are at the higher end of the income scale, with a higher labour force participation rate. Aboriginal Northerners, compared with their Canadian counterparts, are at the lower end of the income scale, with higher unemployment rates. In the North, aboriginal persons are more likely to be dependent on government transfer payments and to be unemployed than non-aboriginal persons.

The probability is higher that northern families will be husband-wife families than their counterparts in the South. Aboriginal families, however, are less likely to have both spouses present. Aboriginal families tend to be larger in size than non-aboriginal families, but no differences between North and South stand out. It is more probable that lone-parent families in the North will be headed by a male than they are in the South.

In general, housing quality is lower in the North than in all of Canada, although there has been a marked improvement in recent years. Greater disparity in housing conditions and in crowding between aboriginal and non-aboriginal families also exists in the North than at the national level. This was especially noticeable in Nouveau-Québec. A telling statistic came from the data on central heating systems, a proxy measure of housing quality. Non-aboriginal northern households had a higher percentage of central heating facilities in 1986 than they did in 1981, while aboriginal northern households had a lower percentage.

It is clear that the nature of the North is changing, as this profile suggests. A larger proportion of Canada's northern population is aboriginal, yet the disparity between aboriginal and non-aboriginal persons in the North appears to be growing in some areas. In all cases, disparities in the North are greater than similar disparities in the nation as a whole. Although some progress toward equality has been made, much remains to be done if everyone in Canada's North is to benefit from a future which holds great promise and excitement.

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