

# **Employment, Industry and Occupations of Inuit in Canada, 1981-2001**

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## 1. Background

This report is the fourth in a series that looks at some of the social, demographic and economic changes experienced by those with Inuit ancestry<sup>1</sup> in Canada over the past 20 years. Based on data from the census, it provides information on the changes in labour force participation and unemployment rates from 1981 to 2001, along with data on types of occupations and industries in which Inuit worked. Data for men and women are shown, comparisons are made between Inuit in the north and south, charts are provided on the situation in each Inuit region across the Canadian north and where appropriate, comparisons with non-Inuit are made.

The **Inuit ancestry population** includes those whose ancestors were all Inuit and those who reported having Inuit and non-Inuit ancestors on the census.

This report is based on research initially carried out by Jeremy Hull (2002) and has been developed by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami in collaboration with the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate (SRAD) of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

## 2. Employment Challenges in Inuit Communities

There are many factors impacting indicators of employment for northern Inuit<sup>2</sup> and these factors are often very different from those in the south. Just a few are discussed here. One major issue is a lack of employment opportunities across northern Canada. A recent study found that among Inuit in Nunavut who were not working, the most common reason given for not being employed was that they felt that there were no jobs available that matched their skills (Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP, 2003). A weak infrastructure in northern communities has been cited as another obstacle to employment. For example, lack of

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<sup>1</sup> There are many ways to define the Inuit population. For this report and for others in this series, the focus is on those with Inuit ancestry. Another way to define the Inuit ancestry population is by focusing on those whose ancestors were only Inuit (no non-Inuit ancestors). There are important differences between these two populations. For further information, please see the report in this series entitled, "Determining the Inuit Population - Definitional Issues and Differences" (INAC, 2006a). The Inuit identity definition is not used as data for the identity concept were not available from the Census until 1996. The counts exclude institutional residents.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report, "north" includes Inuit living in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Northern Québec and Labrador. The area that remains is considered "south". With the exception of Nunavut, the northern regions referred to here are somewhat different from those of the remaining Inuit land claim regions (Nunatsiavut in Labrador, Nunavik in northern Québec and the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest Territories). The geographic units provided here are based on census delineations. According to the 2001 Census (Statistics Canada, 2002), roughly seven in ten Inuit lived in the north of Canada.

housing in Inuit communities can make it difficult to move in order to find or accept employment (Conference Board of Canada 2002). In addition, high levels of formal education are often required for well paying government jobs (Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP, 2003). Many Inuit, however, have levels of formal education that fall below those required for these positions (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 2006b).

Northern and southern economies are also very different. The economy in the Canadian Arctic is unique in that it is “mixed” with both subsistence or land-based and wage economies existing side-by-side. While the size and state of the wage economy can be determined to some degree through standard measures such as the unemployment rate, the subsistence component of the economy is harder to quantify.

The subsistence economy has both a cash and non-cash component. While some goods from the land and sea are sold (for example, some skins and meat), most of what is harvested goes directly to feeding and clothing Inuit in their communities. Economically, it has been estimated that the replacement value of country food (which includes things like caribou, fish and berries among others) in Nunavut alone was approximately \$30 million (Simpson, 1999). However, because no income is received for most goods harvested, harvesting is rarely considered formal employment and its contribution to the local economy is not well-captured.<sup>3</sup> The same holds true for sewing of clothing for family and friends and looking after children without receiving financial compensation.

In this report, attention is focused solely on formal measures from the census. However, readers should bear in mind that throughout much of the north, the economic and culture benefits of hunting, fishing, gathering, sewing activities and so on are significant and not always captured through these indicators.

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<sup>3</sup> The contribution of country food to Inuit culture and identity is beyond estimation. It has been said that it “is the embodiment of the connection Inuit have to the land and its bounty. It is also a connection to the traditions of Inuit ancestors” (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2005). Similarly, despite the presence of contaminants in many types of country food, the physical health benefits to Inuit are still numerous- many country foods are high in omega-3 fatty acids, in protein and key vitamins and minerals (Makivik Corporation, 2000).

### Definitions

The **labour force** is made up of those that were either employed or unemployed during the week prior to the census.

Those who were **unemployed** are persons who, during the week prior to the census, were without paid work or without self-employment work and were available for work and either:

- (a) had actively looked for paid work in the past four weeks; or
- (b) were on temporary lay-off and expected to return to their job; or
- (c) had definite arrangements to start a new job in four weeks or less.

The **participation rate** is the labour force expressed as a percentage of the population aged 15 and over.

The **unemployment rate** is the unemployed population expressed as a percentage of the labour force aged 15 and over.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2002.

### 3. Labour Force Participation Rates

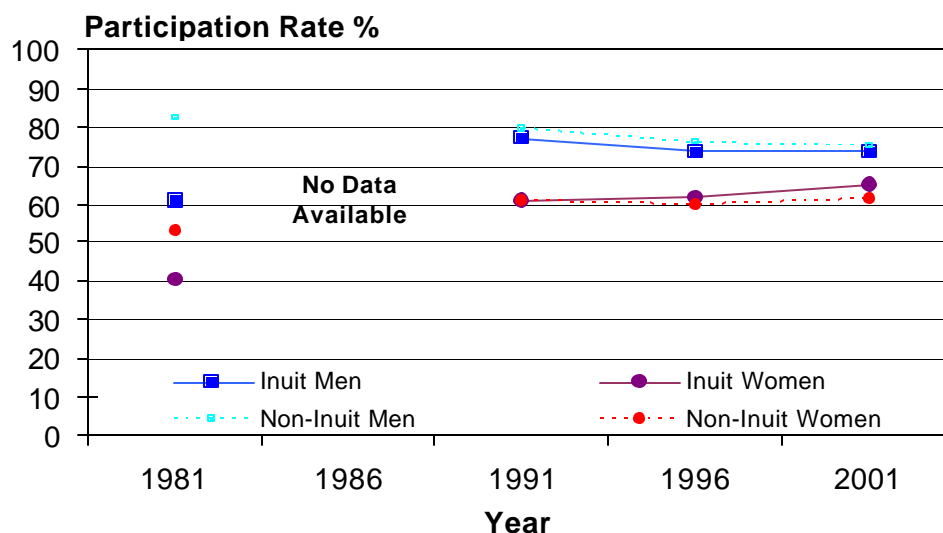
Figure 1 shows the labour force participation rates of Inuit men and women and, for comparison, of non-Inuit men and women. All figures on labour force participation rates and unemployment rates focus on the population 15 or older not attending school full-time because the labour market characteristics of full-time students are not usually typical of the labour market in general.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Charts showing information on labour force participation and unemployment do not include any data for 1986 because the 1986 Census did not ask a question concerning school attendance.



**Figure 1**  
**Labour Force Participation Rates of Inuit and Non-Inuit Aged 15 and Over by Sex,**  
**Canada, 1981-2001**



Over the 1981-2001 period, labour force participation rates increased most consistently among Inuit women, and decreased among non-Inuit men. Rates for Inuit men declined slightly since 1991. The result is that, by 2001, the gap between Inuit and non-Inuit men was negligible, while that between Inuit and non-Inuit women was small. In 2001, the labour force participation rate for Inuit men was 74% compared to 75% for non-Inuit men. Among women, figures were 65% and 61% for Inuit and non-Inuit respectively.

From Figure 1, it appears that there was a significant increase in participation rates for Inuit men and women between 1981 and 1991. Although some of this increase may have been real as indicated by the data for non-Inuit women, it was in part due to changes in the census questions over time and changes in the way in which they were answered.<sup>5</sup>

A major factor affecting labour market trends is the age structure of the population. The Inuit population is much younger than the non-Inuit population with larger percentages in the younger age groups and a smaller percentage of seniors. Because many Inuit have been entering the prime labour market age groups while many non-Inuit have been entering older age groups which have lower participation rates, it is important to control for age

<sup>5</sup> For example, in 1981, the census question did not encourage people to provide more than one response to the question on ancestry. However, in 1986, multiple ancestries were encouraged. The characteristics of those with multiple ancestries are different from those with only Inuit ancestors. Similarly, on the 1991 Census form, check boxes were provided for those answering the ancestry question. An unusually large number of Ontario residents checked all boxes provided. This resulted in a large increase in the number of people reporting mixed Inuit ancestry in 1991.

differences when comparing the two populations. Figure 2 provides an example for the 15-24 year age group. It is clear that the gap between Inuit and non-Inuit has not narrowed to the extent shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 2**  
**Labour Force Participation Rates of Inuit and Non-Inuit Aged 15-24 by Sex, Canada, 1981-2001**

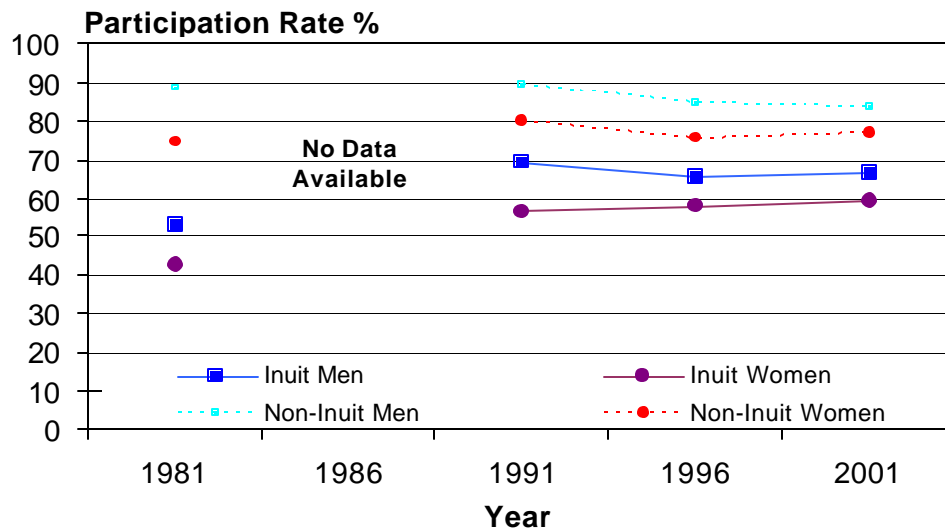
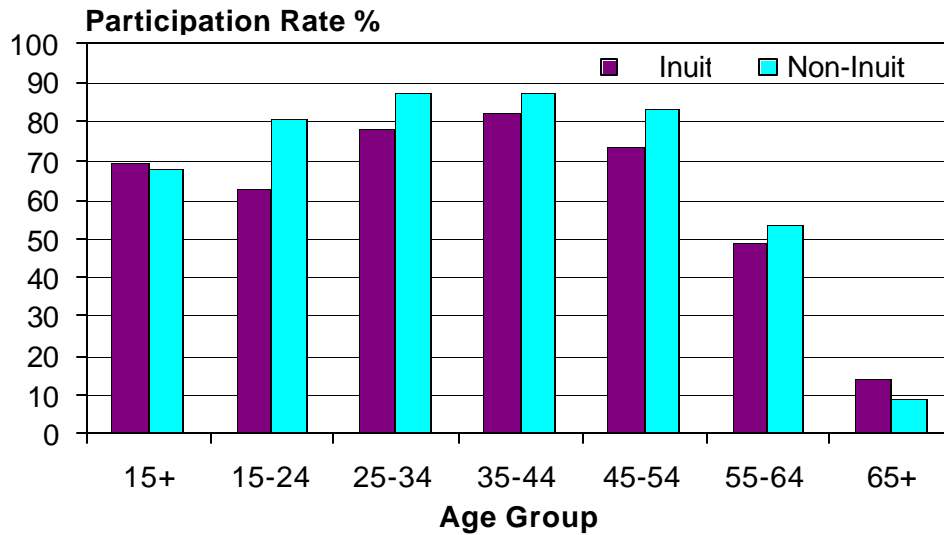


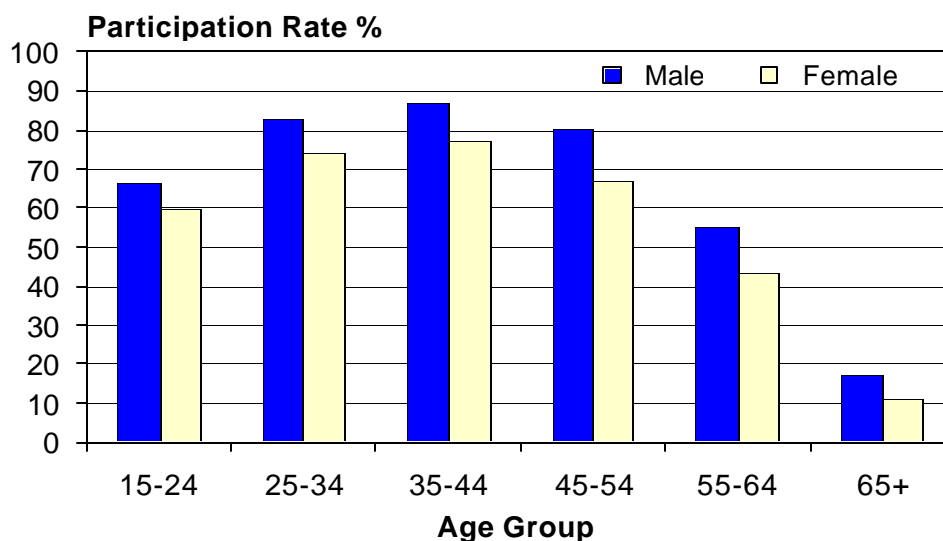
Figure 3 shows participation rates by age group for Inuit and non-Inuit in 2001. For all age groups except the 65 years and over group, rates were higher for non-Inuit.

**Figure 3**  
**Labour Force Participation Rates of Inuit and Non-Inuit by Aged Group, Canada, 2001**



Participation rates vary by age and by sex. For both Inuit men and women, the rates peaked for the 35 to 44 year age group (Figure 4). For all age groups, rates for Inuit men were higher than those for Inuit women.

**Figure 4**  
**Labour Force Participation Rates of Inuit by Age Group and Sex, Canada, 2001**



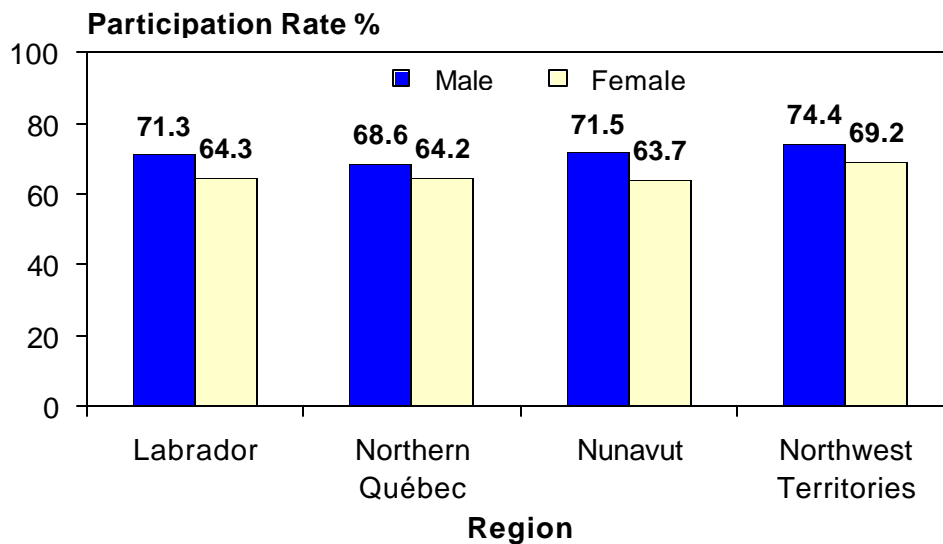
Inuit labour force participation rates were different in northern and southern regions (Table 1). Generally speaking, for young Inuit men and women, rates in the north were lower than those in the south. However, rates for Inuit in older age groups were higher in northern regions (with the exception of the 65 and over age group).

**Table 1**  
**Labour Force Participation Rates of Inuit by Age Group and Sex, Northern and Southern Canada, 2001**

Age Group	Male		Female	
	North	South	North	South
	Percent			
<b>All Ages</b>	71.1	80.3	64.5	67.0
<b>15-24</b>	61.1	81.8	55.2	73.7
<b>25-34</b>	78.9	91.6	74.3	73.6
<b>35-44</b>	86.9	87.4	77.5	76.7
<b>45-54</b>	81.3	77.2	68.8	61.9
<b>55-64</b>	59.1	46.6	46.5	36.8
<b>65 +</b>	15.5	25.8	12.6	7.5

Figure 5 provides a comparison of the labour force participation rates of Inuit men and women in the four Inuit regions across the Canadian north in 2001. Among men, rates were highest in the Northwest Territories and lowest in northern Québec. Participation rates for Inuit women were highest in the Northwest Territories while the rates for Labrador, northern Québec and Nunavut were approximately the same. The gap between Inuit women and men was greatest in Nunavut.

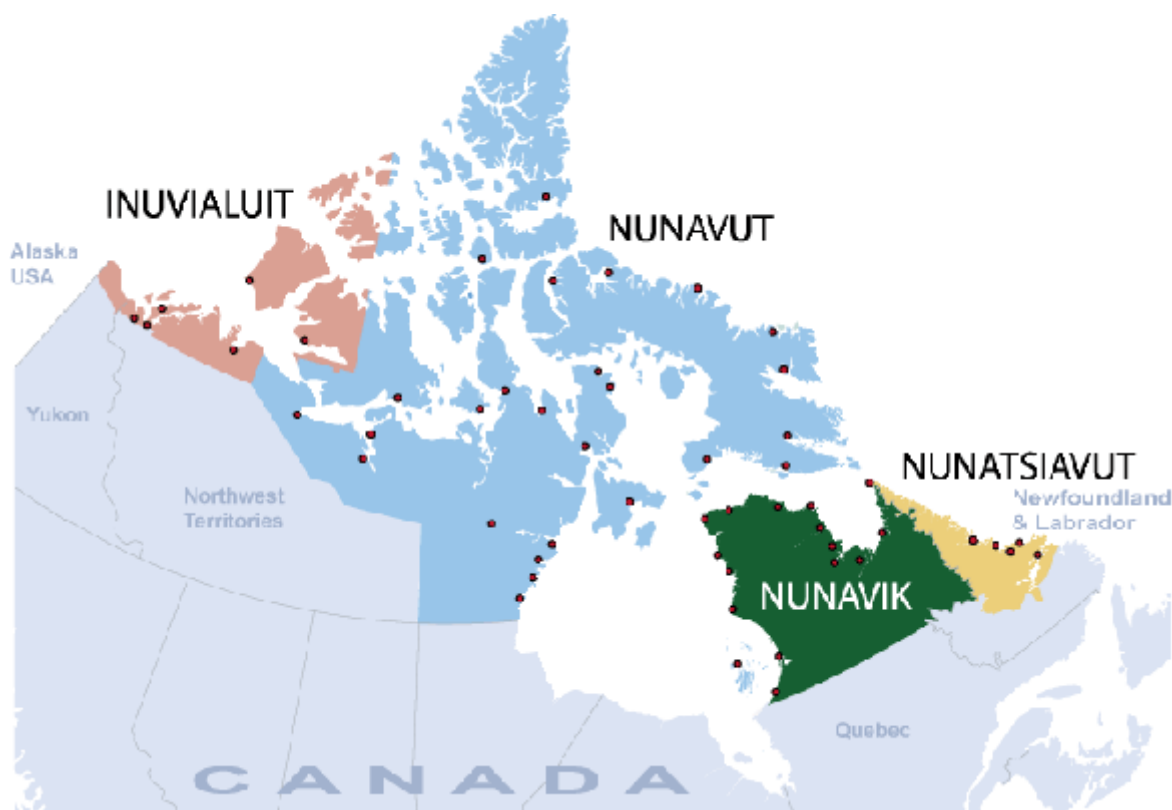
**Figure 5**  
**Labour Force Participation Rates of Inuit Aged 15 and Over by Sex and Region, 2001**



### Inuit Regions and Boundary Issues

In the Canadian Arctic, there are four main Inuit regions established through the settlement of land claims agreements: Nunatsiavut in Labrador, Nunavik in northern Québec, the territory of Nunavut and the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest Territories. These regions are outlined on the map below.

**Map 1**  
**Inuit Regions in Canada**



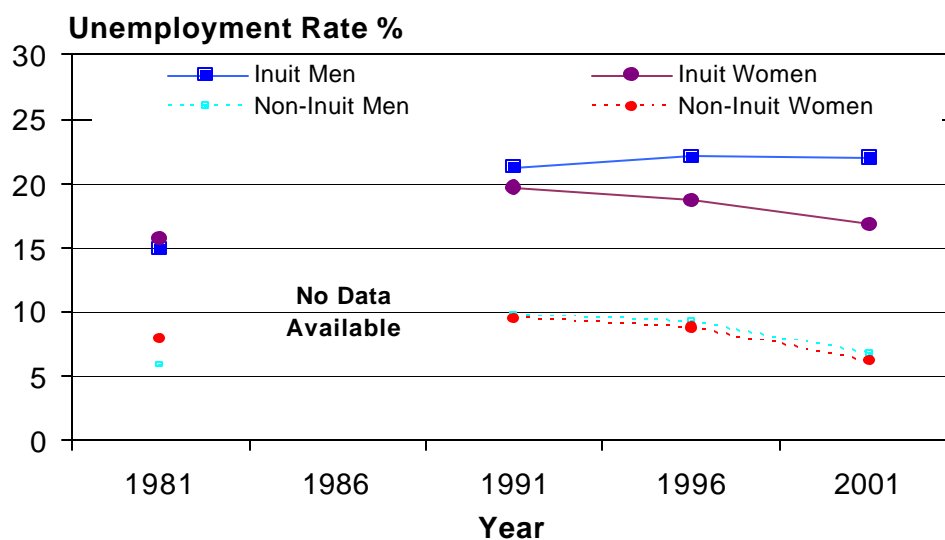
Source : Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2005.

It is important to note that with the exception of Nunavut, the Inuit regions discussed in this report are **different** from those shown above. The data are not specifically for the Inuvialuit region, but for the Northwest Territories as a whole. The Labrador data are for Labrador in its entirety and not just for the land claim area. Similarly, the Nunavik boundaries are somewhat different from those for the whole of northern Québec. **The boundaries used in the report are not based on land claim boundaries, but on census delineations.** These census delineations are used as proxies for those of the actual land claim regions.

#### 4. Unemployment Rates

This part of the report focuses on unemployment rates for Inuit in Canada. Figure 6 is concerned with unemployment rates for Inuit from 1981-2001. It is important to note that unemployment rates are based on those not working but available for and looking for work. Those that would like to work but who are not looking for a job are excluded. If these people were included in the unemployment figures, the rate would be higher.

**Figure 6**  
**Unemployment Rates of Inuit and Non-Inuit Aged 15 and Over by Sex, Canada, 1981-2001**



There was a large gap in unemployment rates between the Inuit and non-Inuit populations. The rate for Inuit women was declining more quickly than that for Inuit men. Unlike the pattern with labour force participation rates, the gap in unemployment rates between Inuit and non-Inuit grew over time, especially for men. As of 2001, the unemployment rate for Inuit men was more than three times higher than that of non-Inuit men - 22% compared to 7% respectively. For women, the Inuit rate was almost three times the non-Inuit rate - 17% versus 6%.

If rates between men and women are further compared, it can be seen that the difference between non-Inuit men and women was negligible over the 20 year period. However, since 1991, the gap between Inuit men and women had been widening. In 2001, the unemployment rate for Inuit women was 17% compared to 22% for Inuit men.

For all age groups except the oldest, unemployment rates for Inuit men were higher than those for Inuit women. Young Inuit were the most likely to be unemployed. In 2001, 28% of Inuit men aged 15-24 and 25% of Inuit women the same age were unemployed.

**Figure 7**  
**Unemployment Rates of Inuit by Age Group and Sex, Canada, 2001**

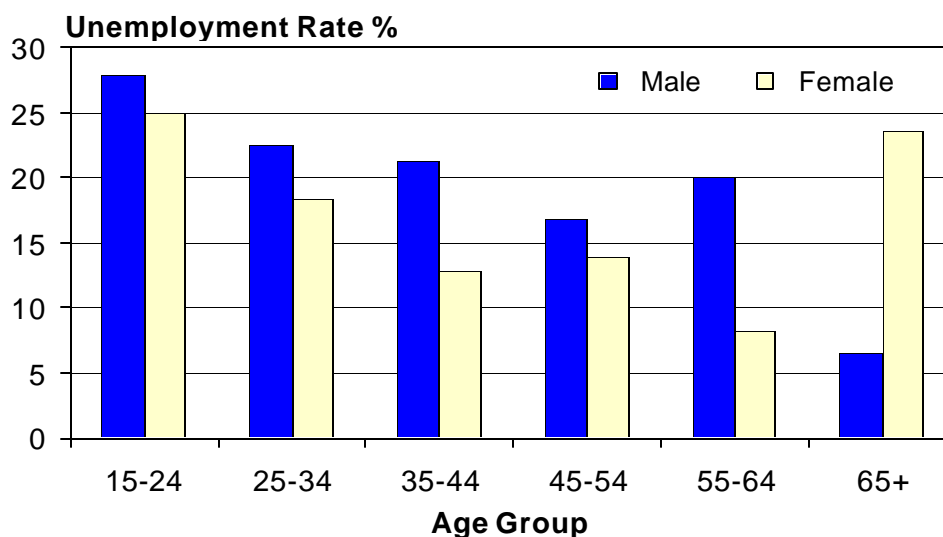


Table 2 compares the unemployment rates of Inuit in the north to those in the south. In 2001, for both men and women, rates were higher in the north. The north-south gap was especially large among Inuit men. Young Inuit men and women in the north were the most likely to be unemployed with rates of 35% and 29% for men and women aged 15-24. In the south, those aged 25-34 were the most likely to be unemployed as the rate for both Inuit men and women was 16%.

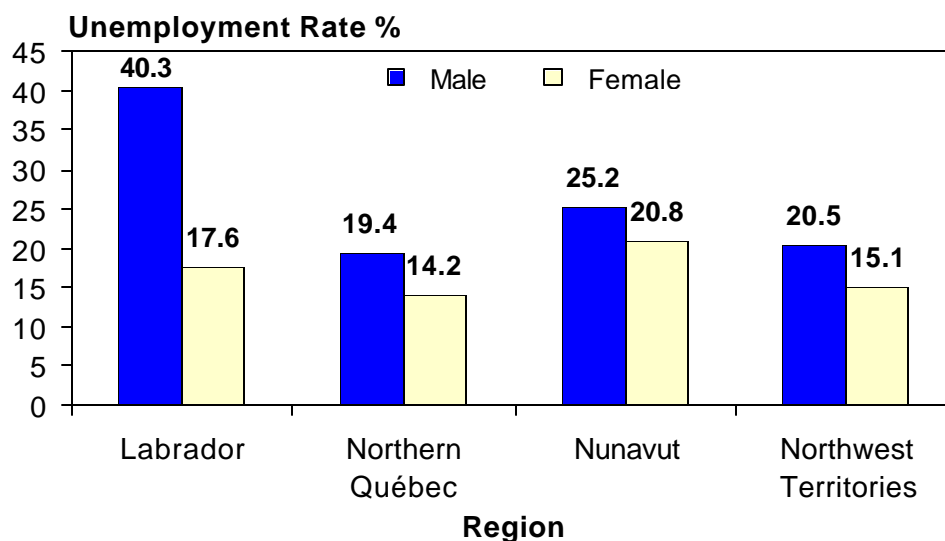


**Table 2**  
**Unemployment Rates of Inuit Aged 15 and Over by Sex, Northern and Southern**  
**Canada, 2001**

Age Group	Male		Female	
	North	South	North	South
	Percent			
<b>All Ages</b>	25.6	13.7	18.1	13.6
<b>15-24</b>	35.1	12.7	28.8	13.8
<b>25-34</b>	26.0	15.5	19.4	16.3
<b>35-44</b>	25.0	13.9	13.7	11.7
<b>45-54</b>	19.1	11.6	14.1	15.1
<b>55-64</b>	21.3	14.8	11.0	0.0

Figure 8 compares the unemployment rates of Inuit men and women in the four Inuit regions in 2001. As was the case for labour force participation rates, there are different patterns across regions and for men and women. In all regions, Inuit men had higher unemployment rates than women, and rates for men were lowest in northern Québec (19%) and highest in Labrador (40%). Inuit women's unemployment rates were also lowest in northern Québec (14%) and highest in Nunavut (21%). The gap between Inuit women and men was greatest in Labrador where the figure for men was more than twice that for women.

**Figure 8**  
**Unemployment Rates of Inuit Aged 15 and Over by Region, 2001**



## 5. Occupations

The next section of this report highlights the various occupations held by Inuit. Because of changes to census occupational classifications from one census to the next<sup>6</sup>, the occupational distribution of the Inuit population is described in two parts: 1981 to 1991 and 1991 to 2001. It is important to note that data from these two periods cannot be compared because of these changes.

### 5.1 Occupations – 1981 to 1991

Table 3 shows the distribution of the experienced labour force from 1981 – 1991 based on 11 occupational groups for Inuit men and women, comparing Inuit and non-Inuit.

<sup>6</sup> No single set of occupational categories has been used in all five Censuses from 1981 through 2001. The 1980 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) is available for the 1981-1991 Censuses. The 2001 data were based on the 2001 National Occupational Classification for Statistics (NOC-S 2001) with 1991 and 1996 Census occupation data coded to the 1991 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). The NOC-S 2001 data are comparable to those from 1991 and 1996.

(See link: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/concepts/occupation.htm>.)

**Table 3**  
**Occupational Distribution of Inuit and Non-Inuit Aged 15 and Over by Sex,**  
**Canada, 1981-1991**

Occupation	Total Inuit Ancestry			No Inuit Ancestry		
	1981	1986	1991	1981	1986	1991
<b>Male</b>	Percent					
Upper level managers	1.3	1.9	1.7	1.4	2.2	1.9
Middle and other managers	4.4	5.7	6.7	8.1	8.6	10
Professionals	4.0	5.1	7.1	9.1	10.3	11.1
Semi-professionals and technicians	5.0	4.9	6.0	4.7	4.1	4.3
Supervisors	0.9	0.7	1.2	2.7	2.3	2.2
Foremen/forewomen	2.2	2.4	2.2	5.1	4.4	3.7
Clerical workers	7.4	6.7	6.9	6.1	6.1	6.3
Sales and service workers	6.8	10.1	11.6	13.0	14.0	14.0
Skilled crafts and trades workers	16.4	12.4	11.8	15.9	12.7	11.9
Semi-skilled manual workers	17.9	21.2	18.6	14.1	13.9	13.2
Other manual workers	18.9	23.9	20.8	16.2	18.5	17.4
Not stated	14.7	5.0	5.1	3.6	3.1	3.9
<b>Total, male*</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>99.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.2</b>	<b>99.9</b>
<b>Female</b>						
Upper level managers	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.6	0.8
Middle and other managers	3.8	4.8	6.5	4.0	5.5	7.5
Professionals	13.2	14.5	16.7	13	14.9	16.2
Semi-professionals and technicians	5.7	6.0	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.5
Supervisors	0.8	1.1	1.4	3.0	2.7	2.5
Foremen/forewomen	0.0	0.9	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4
Clerical workers	22.6	24.8	28.9	34.0	31.6	29.6
Sales and service workers	16.2	21.7	21.1	21.0	21.5	21.3
Skilled crafts and trades workers	2.5	2.1	1.1	2.4	1.4	1.5
Semi-skilled manual workers	1.9	2.4	1.9	2.5	2.8	2.1
Other manual workers	17.2	16.3	11.8	9.9	9.6	8.6
Not stated	15.7	4.9	3.9	3.7	3.1	4.1
<b>Total, female*</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.1</b>	<b>99.8</b>	<b>100.1</b>

Note: Data for the table above are coded to the 1980 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC).

\* Totals do not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

The **experienced labour force** includes those who were employed or unemployed during the week prior to the census and who worked for pay or in self-employment since January 1 in the year preceding the census.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2002.

All information in the occupation and industry sections of this report is for the experienced labour force.

Among Inuit men, the percentage of the labour force in managerial and professional occupations increased over the period. For example, from 1981-1991, the percentage of both professionals and middle and other managers increased from 4% to 7%. There was also an increase of 5% in the sales and service workers occupations. Meanwhile the proportion in skilled crafts and trades declined. Inuit women were much more likely than their male counterparts to be concentrated in a professional category and the percentage of women in these types of occupations increased from 1981 to 1991 from 13% to 17%. Among Inuit women, some other large increases were in the clerical workers and sales and service workers categories. One of the largest decreases was in other manual worker occupations which declined from 17% to 12%.

## 5.2 Occupations – 1991 to 2001

Table 4 compares the occupational distribution of men and women from 1991 to 2001. When comparing tables 3 and 4, it can be seen that the occupations in table 4 are categorized by skill level. As previously mentioned, different classification schemes were applied to the data from 1981 to 1991 and 1991 to 2001 and the data across the two time points cannot be compared. The 1991-2001 approach classified occupations into four skill levels with skill level A occupations requiring the most skill and skill level D occupations requiring the least.

**Table 4**  
**Occupational Distribution of Inuit and Non-Inuit in the Experienced Labour Force**  
**Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex, Canada, 1991-2001**

Occupation	Total Inuit Ancestry			No Inuit Ancestry		
	1991	1996	2001	1991	1996	2001
	Percent					
<b>Male</b>						
<b>Skill level A</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>26.4</b>
Senior managers	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.9
Middle and Other Managers	6.2	5.7	5.2	11.0	9.8	10.7
Professionals	8.4	8.3	8.8	11.6	12.6	13.8
<b>Skill level B</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>33.4</b>
Semi-professionals and technicians	7.2	8.3	8.0	5.7	5.9	6.9
Supervisors - clerical sales and service	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Supervisors - manufacturing, processing, trades, primary industry	2.5	1.7	2.4	6.6	5.6	4.9
Administrative and Senior clerical	1.6	1.8	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.5
Skilled sales and service	2.8	2.6	3.3	4.8	5.0	4.4
Skilled crafts and trades	16.8	15.1	16.2	15.2	13.3	14.5
<b>Skill level C</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>27.5</b>
Sales and service	7.1	6.5	6.2	7.2	7.4	6.7
Semi-skilled manual workers	21.1	20.6	20.2	16.7	16.8	15.9
Clerical	4.2	4.9	4.0	5.5	5.9	4.8
<b>Skill level D</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>12.7</b>
Other sales and services	12.1	12.7	14.0	7.5	8.1	7.5
Other manual workers	8.8	9.5	7.7	6.2	5.4	5.2
<b>Total, male*</b>	<b>101.3</b>	<b>100.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>101.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Data for the table above are coded to the 2001 National Occupational Classification for Statistics (NOC-S, 2001).

\* Totals do not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

Occupation	Total Inuit Ancestry			No Inuit Ancestry		
	1991	1996	2001	1991	1996	2001
	Percent					
<b>Female</b>						
<b>Skill level A</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>25.5</b>
Senior managers	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.7
Middle and Other Managers	4.3	3.4	4.8	6.0	5.8	7.2
Professionals	13.6	16.4	17.5	15.0	16.4	17.6
<b>Skill level B</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>26.2</b>
Semi-professionals and technicians	8.3	7.2	11.5	6.9	6.4	8.6
Supervisors - clerical sales and service	1.3	1.1	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.6
Supervisors - manufacturing, processing, trades, primary industry	0.4	0.4	0.2	1.3	1.3	1.3
Administrative and Senior clerical	9.1	7.9	9.0	12.0	10.2	9.8
Skilled sales and service	4.2	3.4	3.4	4.2	4.2	3.9
Skilled crafts and trades	2.0	1.2	0.9	1.2	0.8	1.0
<b>Skill level C</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>36.1</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>35.7</b>
Sales and service	19.1	19.1	13.8	17.4	17.5	16.0
Semi-skilled manual workers	3.4	3.4	2.3	5.6	5.1	5.0
Clerical	15.3	13.6	12.3	17.3	17.2	14.7
<b>Skill level D</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>12.6</b>
Other sales and services	18.7	20.6	20.4	10.4	11.3	10.7
Other manual workers	1.6	1.5	1.7	2.0	1.8	1.9
<b>Total, female*</b>	<b>101.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>101.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Data for the table above are coded to the 2001 National Occupational Classification for Statistics (NOC-S, 2001).

\* Totals do not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

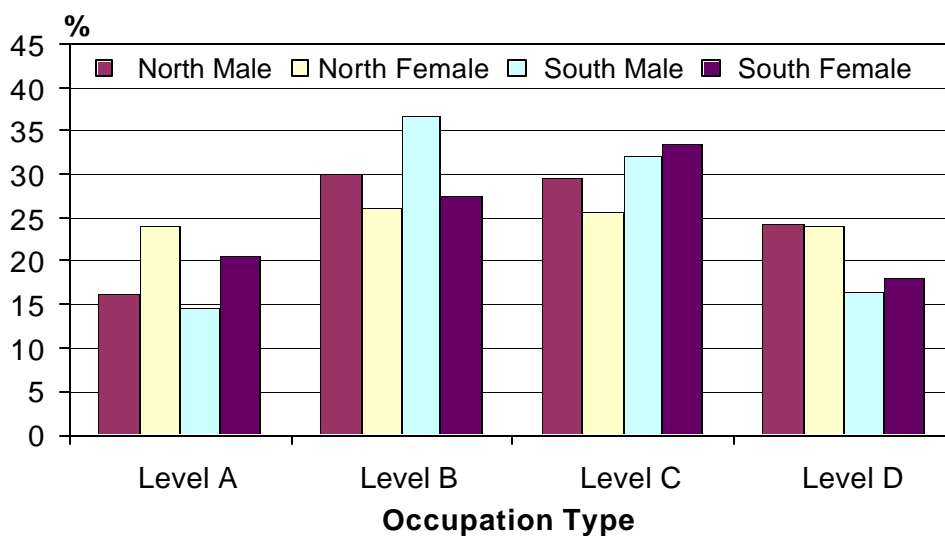
Among Inuit men, there were only slight changes in the proportions in level A through D occupations. The only notable change was a small decline in skill level C occupations from 1991 to 2001. In 1991, 33% of the Inuit male labour force was concentrated in these jobs compared to 30% in 2001. In 2001, the largest percentage of Inuit men – nearly one-third - held jobs in the skill level B occupations which included supervisors, skilled crafts and trades people and technicians among others.

The changes in occupational levels for Inuit women in the labour force were most pronounced in level A and C occupations. The 5% increase in level A occupations from 1991 to 2001 was due largely to an increase in the professional category from 14% in 1991 to 18% in 2001. Over the 10 year period, there was a significant decrease in level C occupations (from 38% in 1991 to 28% in 2001). This decline was primarily due to a decrease in sales and service occupations which fell from 19% in 1991 to 14% in 2001. In 2001, the largest proportion of Inuit women (28%) was employed in level C occupations which included sales and services, clerical and semi-skilled manual occupations.

The table also points to some differences in occupations between Inuit and non-Inuit. For all years, non-Inuit men were more likely than Inuit men to have skill level A occupations while Inuit men were more highly concentrated in skill level D jobs. In 2001, 16% of Inuit men held jobs in level A occupations compared to 26% of non-Inuit men. For level D jobs, the figures were 22% and 13% respectively. Among women, the differences between Inuit and non-Inuit for level A and B jobs were very small. However, in 2001, non-Inuit women were more highly concentrated in level C occupations – 36% compared to 28% of Inuit women in the labour force. For level D jobs, there was a larger proportion of Inuit women – 22% compared to 13% for their non-Inuit counterparts.

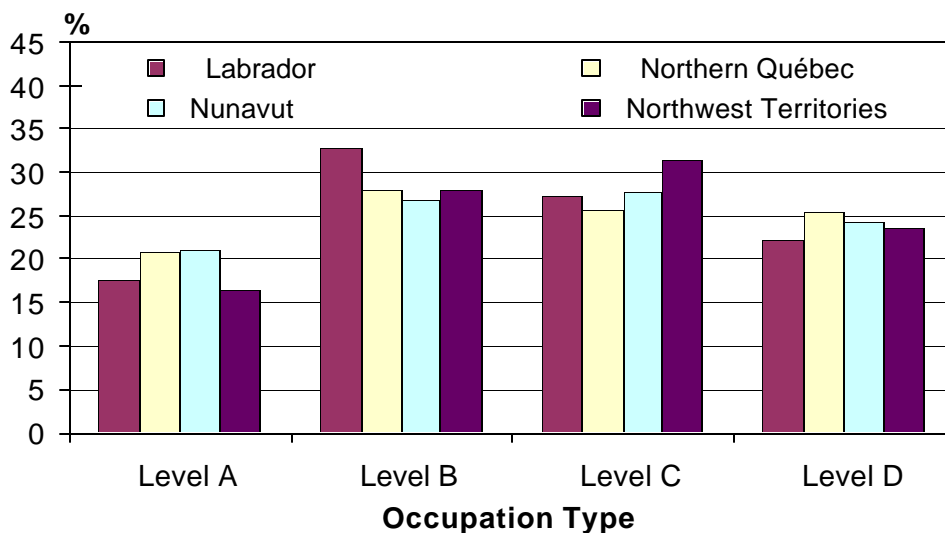
Figure 9 focuses on the Inuit labour force in 2001, comparing those in the north with those in the south and also comparing men and women. The northern labour force more frequently held skill level A and D occupations and less often level B and C occupations than the southern labour force. The north-south difference for Inuit men was greatest for level B and level D occupations. For level D, there was a north-south difference of 8% compared to 7% for level B occupations. Among women, the greatest difference between the north and south was found in skill level C. In the north, 34% of the female Inuit labour force was in level C occupations in 2001, compared to 26% of those in the south.

**Figure 9**  
**Occupational Distribution of Inuit Aged 15 and Over by Sex, Northern and Southern Canada, 2001**



There was considerable regional variation in occupational distribution among Inuit in the north (Figure 10). Nunavut and northern Québec were the regions with the largest percentage of people employed in level A occupations (21%).

**Figure 10**  
**Occupational Distribution of Inuit Aged 15 and Over by Region, 2001**





## 6. Industries

The focus of this report now shifts to the industries in which Inuit worked. Table 5 gives the distribution of the Inuit labour force from 1981 - 2001 by sex. There are three main types of industry – primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary industries are usually those that change natural resources into primary products. Fishing and mining are examples of primary industries. Secondary industries are those involved in manufacturing while tertiary are those that remain. Some examples of tertiary industries include government services, education and construction.

Table 5 shows that for both Inuit women and men, the large majority were concentrated in tertiary industries. For Inuit men, the proportion in the tertiary sector increased over the 20 year period, reaching 85% in 2001. Within the tertiary sector, by far the greatest proportion of Inuit men were employed in government services.<sup>7</sup> This industry accounted for 22% of the male labour force in 1981, and declined slightly to 20% in 2001. Other tertiary industries which included substantial numbers of Inuit men were trade, transportation, communications and utilities and construction, each with about 13% of the labour force in 2001.

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<sup>7</sup> Includes local, provincial and federal governments.

**Table 5**  
**Industry Distribution of Inuit Aged 15 or Over by Sex, Canada, 1981-2001**

<b>Sex and Industry</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1986</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2001</b>
	Percent				
<b>Male – 15 or Older</b>					
<b>Primary industries</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>8.8</b>
Agriculture	0.9	1.4	0.8	0.4	0.5
Fishing and trapping	3.9	3.0	3.6	3.6	2.7
Forestry and logging	0.6	2.1	1.2	0.8	0.8
Mining, quarrying, oil	10.2	5.7	3.4	3.6	4.9
<b>Secondary industries (manufacturing)</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.8</b>
<b>Tertiary industries</b>	<b>77.0</b>	<b>80.0</b>	<b>84.5</b>	<b>86.5</b>	<b>85.3</b>
Construction	8.8	9.1	10.0	10.4	12.9
Transportation, communications, utilities	11.1	13.5	13.0	14.5	12.7
Trade	11.4	12.3	14.5	12.9	13.2
Finance, insurance, real estate	5.0	2.4	2.5	3.6	2.5
Accommodation, food, beverage	2.3	3.9	3.6	4.0	4.5
Business services	1.6	2.3	3.4	1.8	3.1
Government services	22.1	23.0	23.0	21.5	19.6
Education	5.0	4.6	5.5	5.5	5.0
Health and social services	2.3	3.1	3.1	3.5	4.9
Other services	7.3	5.7	5.9	8.8	7.0
<b>Total, male*</b>	<b>100.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>99.9</b>
<b>Female – 15 or Older</b>					
<b>Primary industries</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>
Agriculture	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.5
Fishing and trapping	0.6	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.3
Forestry and logging	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2
Mining, quarrying, oil	1.9	1.4	0.3	0.6	1.0
<b>Secondary industries (manufacturing)</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.1</b>
<b>Tertiary industries</b>	<b>89.5</b>	<b>91.1</b>	<b>93.1</b>	<b>94.3</b>	<b>94.9</b>
Construction	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.7	1.4
Transportation, communications, utilities	4.3	6.6	6.0	5.3	5.0
Trade	17.5	16.1	17.7	16.7	15.2
Finance, insurance, real estate	4.1	2.9	3.5	3.5	2.9
Accommodation, food, beverage	8.5	11.0	9.7	8.9	9.2
Business services	2.1	1.4	2.5	2.4	3.4
Government services	15.6	17.3	18.5	15.7	14.8
Education	14.3	14.4	12.4	14.4	14.1
Health and social services	11.5	9.9	13.6	16.5	21.2
Other services	10.5	10.4	7.9	9.0	7.6
<b>Total, female*</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.1</b>	<b>100.1</b>

\* Totals do not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

The proportion of Inuit men working in the primary sector fell by about half over the 1981-2001 period with the greatest decline in the mining, quarrying and oil sector. The smallest industrial sector for Inuit men was the secondary or manufacturing sector which declined slightly from 7% to 6%.

Compared to Inuit men, Inuit women had a smaller proportion of the labour force in the primary sector, and a larger proportion in the tertiary sector. By 2001, 95% of the female labour force was in tertiary industries. A large proportion of the Inuit female labour force was found in three public sector industries: government services, education, and health and social services. Taken together, these three industries represented half of the female labour force in 2001. Over the 20 year period, there was little change in the proportions in government services and education. However, from 1981-2001, the percentage of Inuit women in health and social service industries nearly doubled from 12% to 21%. The other industry accounting for a large proportion of the female labour force was trade (15% in 2001).

Inuit were as likely to work in primary industries as non-Inuit in Canada. However, they were more likely to be employed in tertiary industries and less likely to be in secondary industries (Figure 11). In 2001, 90% of Inuit were employed in tertiary industries compared to 81% of the non-Inuit population. Within the tertiary sector, one of the largest differences between Inuit and non-Inuit was in the government services industry (17% for Inuit compared to 6% of non-Inuit).

**Figure 11**  
**Industry Distribution of Inuit and Non-Inuit Aged 15 and Over, Canada, 2001**

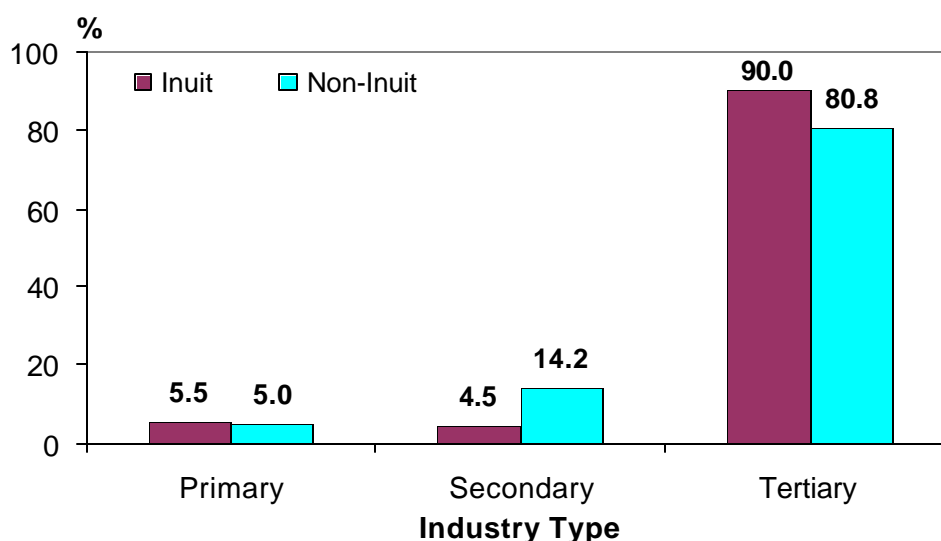
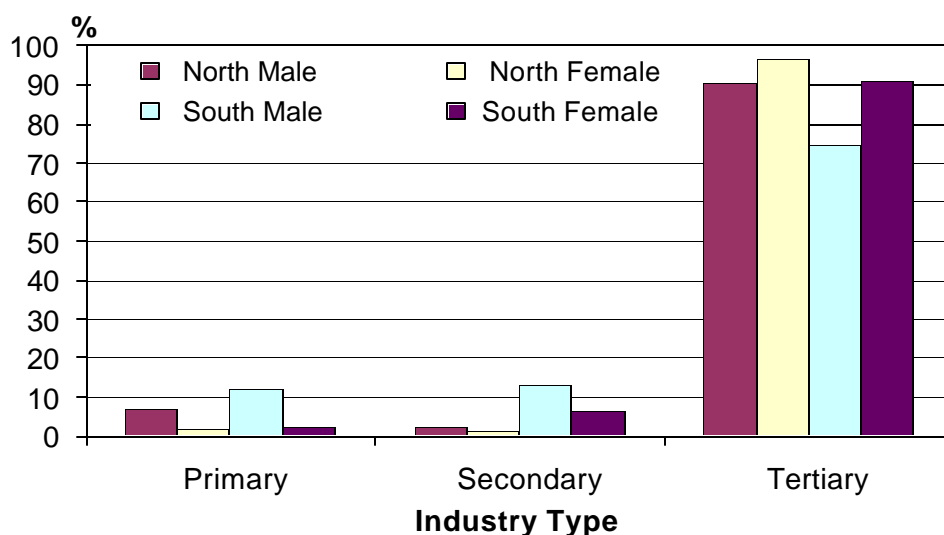


Figure 12 compares the distribution of the Inuit male and female labour forces in northern and southern regions of Canada in 2001. Employment in primary and secondary industries was greater in the south than in the north among both Inuit men and women. For both sexes, larger percentages were employed in the tertiary sector in the north.

**Figure 12**  
**Industry Sector of Inuit by Sex, Northern and Southern Canada, 2001**



Within the tertiary sector, there were great north-south differences in the government and educational services industries. The various levels of government found in Inuit communities were major employers of Inuit as one-quarter (25%) of Inuit men in the north were employed in the government service industry compared to 9% of Inuit men in the south. For Inuit women, the corresponding numbers were 18% and 8%. The educational service industry employed 17% of northern Inuit women and 8% of those in the south.

Across the 4 regions, there were some variations in industry sector concentration for both men and women. Table 6 shows information on selected industries.

**Table 6**  
**Inuit in Selected Tertiary Sector Industries by Sex and Region, 2001**

Industry	Sex	Region			
		Labrador	Northern Québec	Nunavut	Northwest Territories
		Percent			
Construction	Male	14.0	5.2	12.9	16.0
	Female	1.5	0.7	0.8	3.8
Trade	Male	13.5	12.1	12.3	9.9
	Female	14.5	12.3	16.4	11.3
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	Male	14.4	16.9	13.8	16.7
	Female	4.5	5.5	4.9	7.5
Educational Services	Male	4.7	9.8	6.2	3.1
	Female	7.5	23.5	19.4	9.4
Government Services	Male	12.6	29.6	27.5	19.1
	Female	11.5	14.3	21.1	20.1
Health and Social Services	Male	8.8	9.1	3.3	3.1
	Female	27.5	32.8	17.6	20.1

Some of the largest differences were in the educational and government services industries. While only 8% of Inuit women in Labrador and 9% in the Northwest Territories were concentrated in educational services, the proportions for Nunavut and northern Québec were much higher – 19% and 24% respectively. Nearly 30% of Inuit men in northern Québec and Nunavut worked in government services industries, while the proportions for the Northwest Territories and Labrador were 19% and 13%.

## 7. Summary

Although many standard measures of employment may not be as appropriate for Inuit as for other Canadians, some useful information on employment, occupation and industry can still be provided by the census. From 1981 to 2001, the labour force participation rate increased for both Inuit women and men. For all years, the rate for Inuit men was higher than that for Inuit women. For both sexes, the participation rate was highest for those aged 35-44. In southern Canada, rates for Inuit were higher than those in the north. In 2001, among the 4 Inuit regions, the highest labour force participation rates were found in the Northwest Territories.

The unemployment gap between Inuit and non-Inuit was increasing from 1981-2001 with unemployment rates higher for Inuit. Among Inuit in 2001, the rate was highest for the youngest people and rates were higher for Inuit men than women. The unemployment rate for Inuit was higher in the north than the south and among the 4 Inuit regions, the rate for Inuit men peaked in Labrador while for Inuit women, Nunavut had the highest unemployment rate.

When classifying occupations, 4 main categories are used. Level A jobs involve the greatest skill while level D occupations require the least. From 1991-2001, for Inuit men, there was little change in the percentages in each of the 4 levels of occupations. For women, there were more changes over time. For example, there was a 5% increase over the period for Inuit women in Level A occupations. In 2001, while the majority of Inuit men were concentrated in level B positions, the largest percentage of Inuit women were in level C occupations. While Inuit men were less likely than their non-Inuit counterparts to hold Level A jobs, Inuit women were nearly as likely as non-Inuit women to do so.

The majority of Inuit men and women were concentrated in tertiary industries in 2001. The largest percentages of Inuit women were in health and social services, trade and government services industries while the largest percentage of Inuit men were employed in government service industries.

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