

# 7

## **Applying the Community Well-being Index and the Human Development Index to Inuit in Canada**

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### **Introduction**

Recent trends in Aboriginal research have placed much emphasis on examining the living conditions existing within Canada’s Aboriginal populations and communities. This interest has generated a great deal of research, as we have outlined in the preceding chapters. This research has included investigations of well-being<sup>1</sup> which have measured and compared the well-being of First Nations in Canada with that of other Canadians and have assessed disparities over time using an extension of the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) (See Chapter 3). Of particular interest is the challenge to produce a measure of the well-being of populations residing within communities. To tackle the issue, researchers have developed the First Nations Community Well-Being Index (CWB) (See Chapter 6).

These initial research developments have proved very influential in the policy research environment in Canada and have been widely integrated in the body of knowledge of Aboriginal living conditions. They have also lead to several questions which warrant further research. Amongst the key issues raised was the inclusion of other types of Aboriginal populations and communities, such as Inuit and Inuit communities within the larger grouping of “other Canadians” to which First Nations were compared. It is also interesting to look at such Aboriginal communities and the peoples in those communities types in relation to one another and in relation to other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Widening the scope of our analysis will push forward our understanding of Aboriginal well-being. This is particularly true for the Inuit, as they are often left out of policy research and policy development. They represent a small proportion of the Canadian population and they tend to live in very remote areas of the country. Inuit numbers are often “drowned” in the sea of First Nations numbers, which vastly surpass them. As a result, the specificity of Inuit issues, even in cases where research is focused on the wider “Aboriginal” concept, is often not clearly assessed.

This chapter will address this issue by providing an extension of the CWB and HDI with a specific focus on Inuit residing in four regions of the Canadian North.

## **Inuit Population and Inuit Communities in Canada**

Of the 976,305 individuals who identified themselves as Aboriginal<sup>2</sup> in the 2001 Census, about 5% or 45,070 reported that they were Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2003a). The majority (83%) of Inuit are living in communities situated in the Canadian Arctic. About half of the population lives in Nunavut, while Quebec's northern portion (Nunavik) is home to 19%. The northern coastal and south-eastern areas of Labrador and the Inuvialuit region in the northwest corner of the Northwest Territories are home to most of the remainder of the Inuit population with 7%, in each of these regions (Health Canada, 2004).

The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) is the national Inuit organization in Canada representing the four Inuit regions located in two provinces and two territories and living within four land claim areas—Nunatsiavut (Labrador), Nunavik (northern Quebec), Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest Territories.<sup>3</sup> ITK represents the interest of those Inuit living in one of the 53 communities dispersed throughout these regions: 6 in Labrador,<sup>4</sup> 14 in Nunavik, 27 in Nunavut and 6 in the Northwest Territories.

This chapter uses two distinct approaches to explore the Inuit reality. In the first section dealing with the HDI of Inuit-inhabited areas, a geographic-based model is used to identify areas of the North which contain large portions of Inuit inhabitants. Limitations in basic data source have prevented us from being able to perfectly match the land claims areas. As such, these areas do not match perfectly the Inuit land claims areas but are fairly close. The second portion of the chapter will apply the CWB concepts to 51 selected Inuit communities representing all of Canada's Inuit communities with a population size of 65 and over. This was the population utilized in the CWB assessment of other Aboriginal populations in Canada (see Chapter 6).

## **The Inuit Human Development Index**

The Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate (SRAD) at Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) introduced an application of the United Nations Development Programs Human Development Index to the Registered Indian Population of Canada (Beavon & Cooke, 2003). This was considered an important first step in measuring the relative well-being of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations and in allowing to monitor improvements associated with well-being experienced over time by this important part of the Aboriginal populations of Canada. This measure, focused on educational attainment, average annual income, and life expectancy illustrated the gaps between Registered Indians, a sub-portion of the total Aboriginal populations of Canada, and that other Canadians (Beavon &

Cooke, 2003). A further study looking at HDI scores from 1981 to 2001 has also illustrated that although the gap in overall HDI scores between these two populations declined somewhat during the period, large disparities still remained (Cooke, Beavon, and McHardy, 2004).

As part of this research, Registered Indians were compared with a reference population defined as "... Canadians who are not registered, and includes both non-registered First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, as well as non-Aboriginal people" (Cooke, Beavon, and McHardy, 2004, 6). This section will highlight the specific human development of the Inuit-inhabited areas of Northern Canada, thus partly bridging some of the limitations of previous efforts.

## **Applying the HDI to Inuit: Challenge and Solution**

While applying the methodology developed for the Registered Indian population to the Inuit seems like a logical and straightforward idea, in fact such an application is more complicated than would appear. As is often the case when dealing with Inuit issues, data availability is again an impediment. Numerous data sources do not adequately cover the Canadian territories, which are home to a large portion of Inuit. Additionally, Aboriginal identity of individuals is not collected by most provincial and territorial vital statistics programs. Hence, basic Inuit demographic and health indicators, such as life expectancy at birth, cannot be estimated nationally through standard data sources and methodologies for the Inuit (Wilkins et al., forthcoming). There were previously no national estimates of life expectancy, a key component of the HDI, for the Inuit.

The SRAD, in partnership with the Health Analysis and Measurement Group at Statistics Canada, and the Health Information and Analysis Division at Health Canada have developed a geographic-based approach as a means to fill this important health data gap for Inuit.

With this geographic-based methodology, it becomes possible to calculate HDI components and scores for the areas identified as Inuit-inhabited. While the resulting scores do not represent all Inuit of Canada, and while non-Inuit are also included to some level within the calculation of the scores, the large concentration of Inuit in Northern areas of the country, combined with the fact that they represent the vast majority of the population of these areas, are more than supportive for applying this methodology, especially in the absence of adequate alternatives.

### **Methodology**

In order to apply the UNDP methodology to the Inuit, an adaptation of the measures comprised in the international HDI had to be used because of data availability issues. This adaptation is similar to that required to calculate an HDI for Registered Indians and involves substituting the original HDI's per capita GDP and education indicators with appropriate measures from the Census (for an in-depth description of the methodology see Chapter 3).

**Table 7.1: HDI and Component Measure Scores, Inuit, Registered Indians, and Other Canadians, 1991–2001**

Indicator	Population	1991	1996	2001
Life Expectancy at Birth (years)	Inuit	67.8	67.7	67.1
	Registered Indians	70.6	72.2	72.9
	Other Canadians	77.9	78.5	78.7
Life Expectancy Index	Inuit	0.713	0.712	0.674
	Registered Indians	0.760	0.786	0.799
	Other Canadians	0.881	0.891	0.896
Proportion Completed Grade 9 or Higher <sup>1</sup>	Inuit	0.585	0.700	0.739
	Registered Indians	0.721	0.781	0.825
	Other Canadians	0.863	0.881	0.903
Proportion Completed High School or Higher <sup>2</sup>	Inuit	0.469	0.520	0.544
	Registered Indians	0.456	0.514	0.567
	Other Canadians	0.680	0.717	0.754
Educational Attainment Index	Inuit	0.546	0.640	0.674
	Registered Indians	0.633	0.692	0.739
	Other Canadians	0.802	0.826	0.853
Average Annual Income (Year 2000 Constant Dollars) <sup>3</sup>	Inuit	11,182	13,139	15,125
	Registered Indians	8,243	8,887	10,094
	Other Canadians	20,072	19,989	22,489
Income Index	Inuit	0.819	0.826	0.838
	Registered Indians	0.725	0.737	0.759
	Other Canadians	0.873	0.873	0.892
HDI Score	Inuit	0.693	0.726	0.738
	Registered Indians	0.706	0.739	0.765
	Other Canadians	0.852	0.863	0.880

## Notes:

(1) The proportion completed high school or higher is estimated by the ratio of the population with a secondary school graduation certificate, some post-secondary or trades education, or some university with or without degree, to the population aged 19 years and over.

(2) The proportion completed grade 9 is the population aged 15 years and over completed grade 9 or higher, divided by the total population aged 15 years and over.

(3) The average annual income is the average income from all sources, for the total population with or without income, for the year before the Census enumeration, adjusted by the Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index to year 2000 constant Dollars.

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, custom tabulation, unpublished data, (Statistics Canada), 1995 and 1998; Rowe and Norris, 1995; Nault et al., 1993; Norris, Kerr, and Nault, 1996; DIAND, 1998; Verma, Michalowski, and Gauvin 2003; authors' calculations.

In order to extract adequate data on life expectancy for Inuit, a geographic approach was used. First, areas with a high proportion of Inuit residents were identified. For a given Census subdivision<sup>5</sup> (CSD), if the observed proportion of residents who were of Inuit identity was greater than or equal to a chosen cut-off point (33%), that census subdivision was then included in the list of Inuit-inhabited areas. The census subdivisions selected were then grouped into four regions: the Inuvialuit region (Northwest Territories, 6 communities), Nunavut (the entire territory, 28 communities), Nunavik (Quebec, 14 communities), and Nunatsiavut (Newfoundland and Labrador, 6 communities).<sup>6</sup>

Second, Census data and recorded deaths from death records are then used to compute life expectancy, education, and income per capita measures, for the Inuit-inhabited areas for the years 1991, 1996, and 2001 (for more details of the methodology, see Wilkins et al., forthcoming).

## **Results**

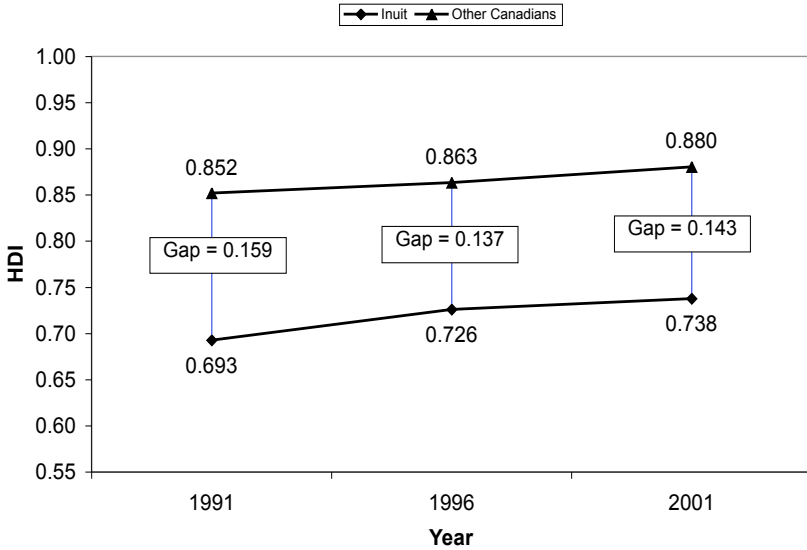
**Table 7.1** presents the basic HDI results for Inuit, Registered Indians, and other Canadians as well as the component scores from which the CWB scores are derived. In 2001, the Inuit of northern Canada were experiencing lower levels of Human Development than other Canadians<sup>7</sup> with an average score that was 0.14 lower. This placed the Inuit just below Registered Indians in terms of the overall HDI score for 2001.

**Figure 7.1** (page 154) shows the average HDI scores for Inuit and other Canadians for 1991, 1996, and 2001. The pattern of HDI scores over time reveal that, while a reduction of the gap was observed between 1991 and 2001, this gap reduction is entirely based on the large increase of HDI scores between 1991 and 1996. So, while the Inuit HDI scores were going up between 1996 and 2001, it was not growing as fast as that of other Canadian. As a consequence, the HDI gap has actually been increasing since 1996.

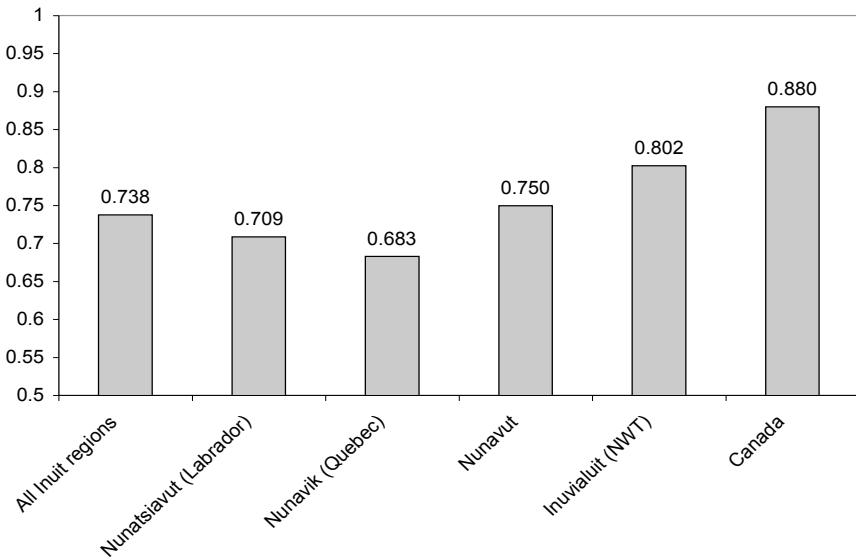
While there are some clear cultural connections between all Inuit in the country, there are recent historical differences between the Inuit of each of the four land claims areas. Such differences are also reflected in living conditions as measured with the HDI. **Figure 7.2** (page 154) clearly illustrates that there are large disparities across the four Inuit regions with scores ranging from a low of 0.683 in Nunavik to a high of 0.802 in the Inuvialuit region.

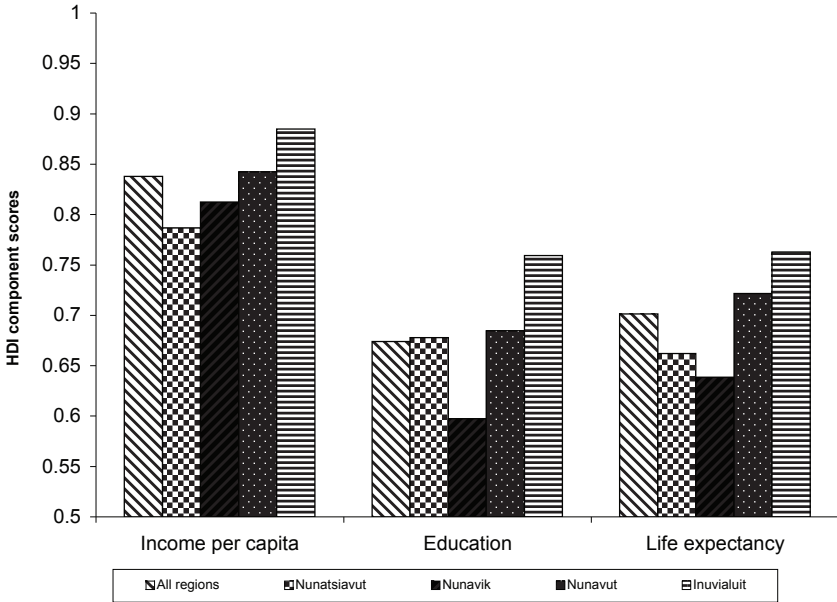
To further understand the variations outlined in HDI scores between Inuit regions, one needs to look at which components seem to be responsible for these observed differences. **Figure 7.3** (page 155) shows that while all three components exhibit important differences from region to region, the education component is the component for which the largest variation is observed with Nunavik showing the lowest scores (0.683) while the Inuvialuit region has the highest (0.802). While the Inuvialuit region consistently shows the highest scores for all HDI components, Nunavik places last in education and life expectancy while Nunatsiavut has the lowest income score.

**Figure 7.1: HDI Scores, Inuit and Other Canadians, 1991–2001**



**Figure 7.2: Average HDI scores by Inuit region, 2001**

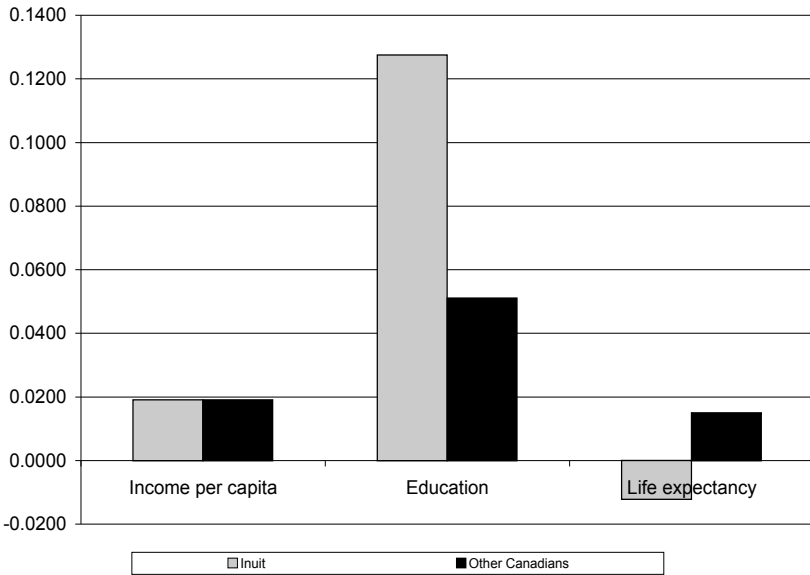


**Figure 7.3: HDI Score by Inuit Region, 2001**

Given that the HDI is a composite index, there can be differences in the way that each component behaves over time. **Figure 7.4** (page 156) presents the average change over time<sup>8</sup> between 1991 and 2001 by HDI components and shows clear variations across components in the degree of change. Three very different patterns emerge: (1) gaps in income have remained similar to what they were in 1991; (2) Inuit have made significant gains in education level; and (3) the life expectancy gap is actually increasing between Inuit and other Canadians. The latter is a source for concern as it highlights the fact that Inuit have been experiencing slight declines in life expectancy in the 1991–2001 period (Wilkins et al., forthcoming). The importance of education is clearly outlined in this figure, as all of the overall gap reduction in HDI between 1991 and 2001 can actually be attributed to this component.

## Discussion

Generally speaking, the levels of HDI in Inuit-inhabited areas have increased since 1991 and the gap between the population of these areas and other Canadians has decreased overall. However, this gap reduction occurred mostly between 1991 and 1996. Since 1996, the progress experienced in well-being in Inuit-inhabited areas has not been on par with that of other Canadians, which has led to a slight gap increase between 1996 and 2001. One the one hand, when broken down into HDI components, this gap increase is mostly due to life expectancy scores which have failed to rise as quickly as that of other Canadians. Education, on the other hand, is one area where significant progress has been achieved. Levels of

**Figure 7.4: HDI Component Change Over Time, 1991-2001**

well-being as well as individual components have been shown to vary quite significantly from one Inuit-inhabited region to the next. Such differences can likely be associated with specific historical, political, and socio-economic issues which are associated with each land-claim area. Regional variations observed can further stress the need to look at issues on a region-by-region basis.

Inuit regions across the country are going through significant changes. Signing of land claim agreements, establishment of government structure, and economic development—to name a few—all have clear impacts on the populations. In the case of some of the Inuit-inhabited areas, these changes can lead to important migration of workers, such as a fairly large contingent of educated workers migrating from the south to Inuit-inhabited areas. The shifting pattern of Inuit versus non-Inuit population contained within each Inuit-inhabited area is likely one potential explanation for some of the patterns observed. Other research has illustrated the differences between Inuit and non-Inuit in the North (see Wilkins et al., forthcoming, for a review of key socio-economic indicators). Further research should be aimed at assessing the specific well-being of Inuit and non-Inuit living in Inuit land claims areas. Additionally, research aimed at Inuit living “in the south” could also help fill in some of the limitations of the research presented here.

As discussed in previous chapters, we have used here the term “well-being” to refer to the overall welfare of a population in a way more or less synonymous with the UNDP’s “human development.” It is worth mentioning that the broad measures used here do not necessarily provide a clear and complete picture of what is commonly meant by well-being. Most notably, subjective and qualitative dimensions associated with one’s well-being are not easily addressed by such



broad data-driven indicators. Additionally, important elements such as preservation of culture and language; relationship with one's family, community, or the land; and spirituality, as well as numerous additional aspects of overall well-being, are also not addressed here. Despite its limitations, the HDI does show that there are important and continuing differences in the average achievement of Inuit and other Canadians in life expectancy, income, and educational attainment. While these do not capture well-being in its entirety, they do represent important issues for research and policy development.

## **International Human Development Index Ranking of the Inuit**

In its annual Human Development Report, the UNDP calculates several indicators of development and ranks countries according to their HDI scores. As part of the Registered Indian adaptation of the HDI, the SRAD has adjusted its HDI estimates to be able to estimate where the Registered Indian population would be placed among the countries ranked by the UNDP (See Beavon and Cooke, 2003, and Chapter 3 in this volume for more detail in terms of methodology. We have followed the same methodology).

**Appendix Table 1** (pages 170–172) presents the ranking of Inuit, Registered Indians, and the reference population among the countries included in the Human Development Report 2003 (UNDP, 2003). The population living in the Inuit-inhabited areas rank approximately 60th, alongside countries such as Malaysia, Panama, Macedonia, and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. This ranking places these Inuit-inhabited areas at the top of countries considered to have “medium human development” by the UNDP; higher than that of the Registered Indians on-reserve, but lower than those living off-reserve.

## **The Inuit Community Well-being Index**

In this book we present the collective research of the teams working on living conditions both from the Strategic Research Directorate at Indian and Northern Affairs and the First Nations Cohesion Project—Aboriginal Policy Research Consortium at The University of Western Ontario. This research has focused on individual First Nations communities. As such, the Community Well-Being Index (CWB) was developed as a complement to the Registered Indian Human Development Index (See Chapter 6 of this volume). While the HDI measures the well-being of Registered Indians at the national and regional levels, the CWB measures well-being at the community level. The CWB combines indicators of educational attainment, income, housing conditions, and labour force activity from the Census of Canada to produce well-being “scores” for individual communities.

As part of this research, First Nations communities were compared with “other Canadian Communities,” which included Inuit and Métis communities (see

### ***Housing in Inuit Communities: Quality and Quantity***

The CWB housing score is comprised of two distinct measures: quantity and quality. The resulting scores presented here are thus an aggregation of these two measures, each equally weighted.

Upon assessing each sub-component separately, it can be seen that Inuit communities typically show lower levels of quantity than of quality. The average Inuit community score for quantity was 0.69 while the sub-component score for quality was 0.75. This specific pattern is different than what is seen in either First Nations or other Canadian communities where quality is usually more of an issue than quantity. Even when looking only at Northern non-Inuit communities (either First Nations or other Canadian communities), we see that while overall scores are lower than in the south, quality typically is more of an issue than quantity.

This pattern highlights the significance of the issues associated with crowding in Inuit communities. The Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate at INAC has partnered with the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami to produce reports on several main themes linked to Inuit communities. These reports point to the high proportions of multiple family households and the high fecundity levels of Inuit (INAC and ITK, forthcoming).

Chapter 8). In this section of our chapter, we focus specifically on Inuit communities of Northern Canada, which will be assessed using CWB methodology, and then compared with both First Nations communities and other Canadian communities, now defined as non-First Nations and non-Inuit communities.

### ***Methodology***

Out of 4,685 communities included in the original CWB database, 51 communities were tagged as Inuit communities.<sup>9,10</sup> These 51 communities have an average size of 1,021 inhabitants, but it should be noted that they present variations in size with the largest showing a population of 7,969 compared to the smallest at 114 in 2001. **Table 7.2** shows the distribution of communities by region along with an indication of the average size. A few of these communities have road access to southern points or even neighbouring villages, but the vast majority of Inuit communities are accessible only by air, which impacts access to goods and services and as well as the cost of living. For most communities, a large majority of the population is Inuit.

The initial scores calculated for Canadian communities as part of the CWB research project were used as is. It is important to note that scores reflect the entire population of a community, regardless of their ethnicity and/or cultural background of its inhabitants.<sup>11</sup> Additional information pertaining to the methodology of the CWB is available in Chapter 6 of this book. While that chapter also provides a lengthy discussion of the limitations of the CWB model, the main issues should be highlighted again here. First, the CWB focuses primarily on the socio-economic aspects of well-being. Limitations of the Canadian Census prevented the incorporation into the model of equally important aspects of well-

**Table 7.2: Community Characteristics by Region**

Inuit Region	Number of Communities	Average Population	Standard Deviation	Smallest Community	Largest Community	Total Population	Average Proportion of Inuit Population (%)
Labrador	6	1,767	3,057	215	7,969	10,603	76
Nunavik	14	688	517	159	1,932	9,632	93
Nunavut	25	1,063	1,007	163	5,236	26,583	91
Inuvialuit	6	876	1,029	114	2,894	5,254	76
<b>Total</b>	51	1,021	1,303	114	7,969	52,072	86

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

being such as physical, psychological, and cultural well-being. It is also important to note that the socioeconomic indicators of which the index is comprised may not capture fully the reality of the Inuit communities' economic situation. Many Inuit are still heavily involved in traditional economic pursuits, which, although contributing to their material well-being, are not manifested directly in monetary income or paid employment (Usher, Duhaime, and Searles, 2003).

### ***Community Type Comparisons***

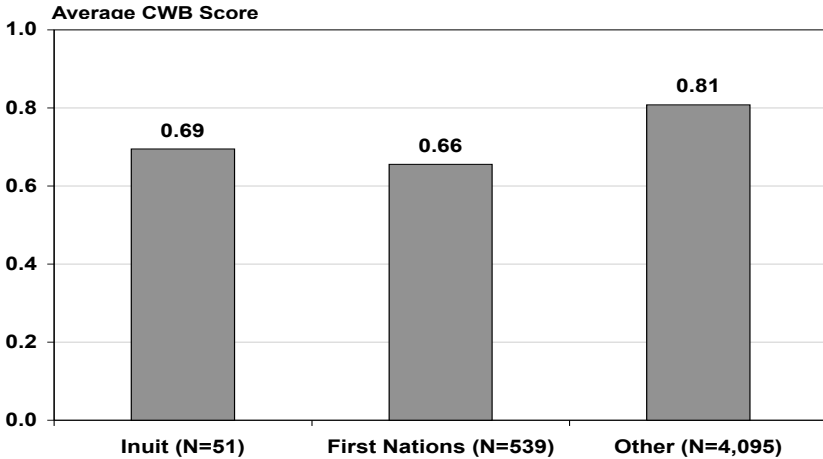
For the purpose of this report, Inuit communities are compared to First Nations and other Canadian communities. The distinction between First Nations and other Canadian communities is based on INAC's 2001 geography hierarchy (2002). The INAC listing of communities includes the legal list of Indian reserves and Indian settlements as well as a selection of other CSD types selected from Saskatchewan, Yukon, and Northwest Territories. It is the same as the listing used by the department to report on reserve population counts from the Census.<sup>12</sup> A total of 539 First Nations were available for analysis for the purpose of this study. Other Canadian communities exclude those communities identified as Inuit communities or as First Nations communities, for a total of 4,095 communities. Both First Nations and other Canadian communities were located in all Canadian territories and provinces with the exception of Nunavut which contained Inuit communities only.

The purpose of comparing Inuit communities to these two groupings separately is to avoid inducing bias. As First Nations typically present lower levels of well-being (McHardy and O'Sullivan, 2004) and because they are sufficient to influence overall Canadian scores, a decision was made to present comparisons of Inuit communities to these two sets of communities separately.

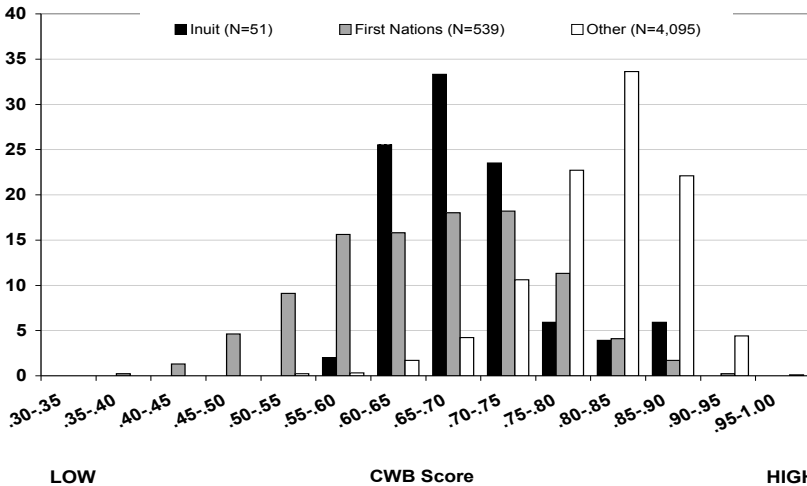
### ***Time Series Component***

When assessing disparities between communities in terms of well-being, it is important to take time into consideration. Demographic changes, migration to

**Figure 7.5: Average Community Well-being Score by Community Type, 2001**

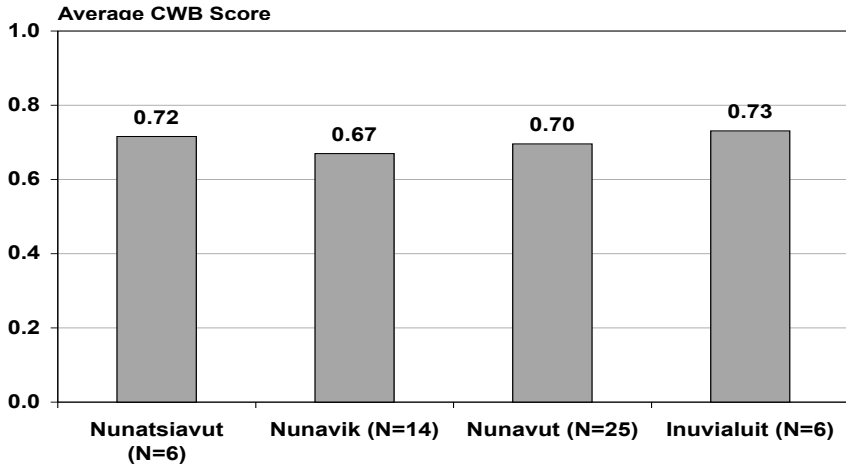


**Figure 7.6: Distribution of Inuit, First Nations, and Other Canadian Communities by Community Well-being Score, 2001**



and from communities, and economic developments are just a few of the factors which, over time, may affect well-being either positively or negatively.

In order to reflect such potential changes in the well-being of communities, CWB scores have been calculated for three censuses—1991, 1996, and 2001. This timeseries obviously involves concrete steps to ensure that communities may be compared adequately over time. It is worth mentioning that out of the Inuit communities initially available for analysis in the CWB database, all 51 were also deemed as “consistent geographic entities” over time. This was neither the case for First Nations nor other Canadian communities, several of which could

**Figure 7.7: Average Community Well-being Score by Inuit Region, 2001**

not be tracked over time. For an in-depth description of the steps taken to ensure comparability, as well as details on the resulting set of communities, see Chapter 6 in this book, and O’Sullivan and McHardy, 2004.

## **Results**

### ***Overall Community Well-being Scores***

**Figure 7.5** indicates that the average CWB score for Inuit communities is slightly higher than that of First Nations, but that both are much lower than the average score for other Canadian communities. This initial finding points to the overall lower level of well-being in Inuit communities and First Nations when compared to other Canadian communities.

**Figure 7.6** further illustrates the clear disparities between Inuit, First Nations, and other Canadian communities. Inuit communities are typically distributed towards the middle point of the CWB range. When compared with other Canadian communities, it can also be observed that their CWB scores are higher overall than those of First Nations who are more concentrated towards the bottom of the range of scores. It is also worth mentioning that Inuit communities, while showing significant disparities in their levels of well-being, are more densely concentrated than First Nations, whose range of scores is wider and spreads across more categories. In other words, Inuit communities tend to share more “even levels” of well-being than First Nations, for which the gap between “have” and “have not” communities is wider.

Inuit communities can vary in terms of well-being across regions. As such, looking at the national picture may in fact hide such interregional variations. **Figure 7.7** presents average CWB scores for Inuit communities by region. It can be seen that Nunavik presents the lowest average CWB when compared to other regions.

**Table 7.3: Community Well-being Index (CWB): Distribution of Inuit Communities by Inuit Region, 2001**

Region	CWB Score Range							Total
	0.55 – 0.60	0.60 – 0.65	0.65 – 0.70	0.70 – 0.75	0.75 – 0.80	0.80 – 0.85	0.85 – 0.90	
	Nunatsiavut	0	1	2	1	1	0	
Nunavik	1	6	3	3	1	0	0	14
Nunavut	0	5	10	6	1	2	1	25
Inuvialuit	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	6
<b>Total</b>	1	13	17	12	3	2	3	51

**Table 7.4: Average Community Well-being Component Score by Community Type, Canada, 2001**

Community Type	Income	Education	Housing	Labour
Inuit	0.57	0.64	0.71	0.80
First Nation	0.47	0.68	0.69	0.69
Other Canadian	0.70	0.76	0.93	0.81

**Table 7.5: Descriptive Statistics of the CWB Index Across Time for Inuit Communities (N=51)**

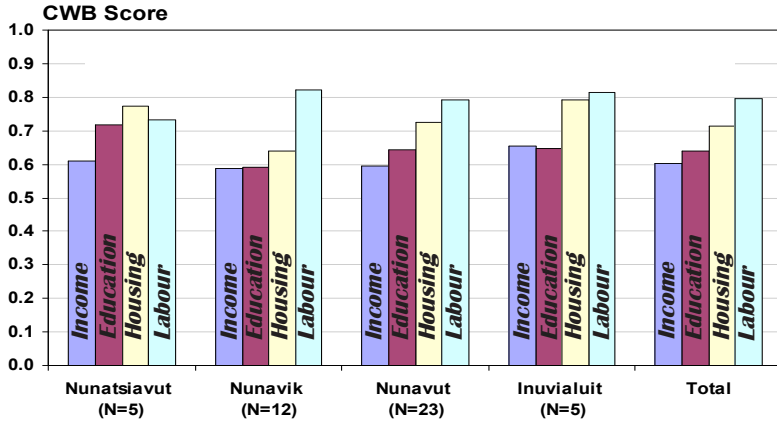
Census Year	Minimum CWB Score	Maximum CWB Score	Average CWB Score	Standard Deviation
1991	0.50	0.85	0.63	0.078
1996	0.58	0.84	0.67	0.069
2001	0.57	0.87	0.69	0.068

**Table 7.6: Community Well-being Gaps between Community Types, 1991–2001**

Gap Between Community	1991	1996	2001
Other Canadian–Inuit	0.14	0.10	0.11
Other Canadian–First Nations	0.19	0.15	0.15
First Nations–Inuit	-0.05	-0.05	-0.04

**Table 7.7: Descriptive Statistics of the Evolution of Community Well-being Scores by Community Type, Between 1991 and 2001**

Community Type	Minimum Variation	Maximum Variation	Average Variation	Standard Deviation
Inuit	-0.06	0.14	0.06	0.04
First Nation	-0.07	0.29	0.07	0.06
Other Canadian	-0.17	0.26	0.03	0.04

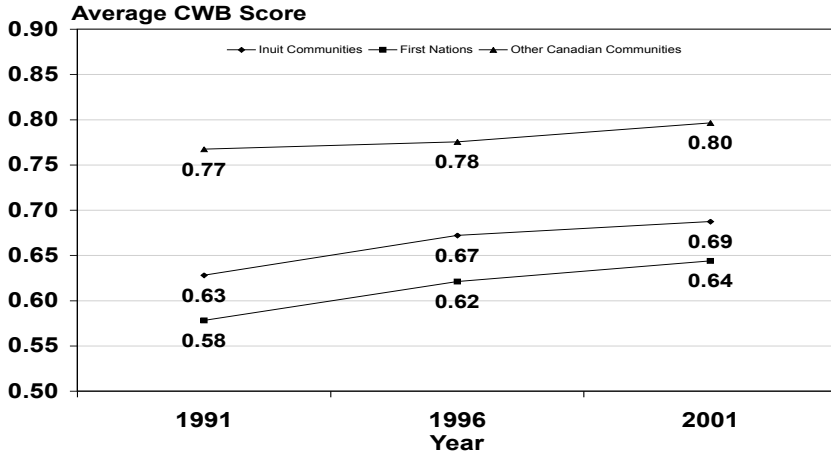
**Figure 7.8: Community Well-being Average Component Scores by Inuit Region, 2001**

**Table 7.3** further breaks down the distribution of Inuit communities by looking at the distribution of CWB scores by Inuit region. While it deals with very small numbers, it can nevertheless be observed that well-being scores are not distributed evenly across regions, with Nunavik showing lower scores. This finding points to the distribution of CWB scores across Inuit communities in Canada. This kind of disparity between lowest and highest communities in terms of their CWB scores was also previously observed to an even higher degree with First Nations communities (Chapter 6; McHardy and O’Sullivan, 2004). While the average CWB score for all 51 Inuit communities is 0.69, the range of scores is actually quite large, going from a low of 0.58 to a high of 0.87.<sup>13</sup>

### **Component Scores**

As variations are outlined between Inuit regions on the overall CWB score, it is interesting to assess which components of the CWB may be responsible for the overall observed differences. **Figure 7.8** shows that while all components show some variations from region to region, education and housing are the two components for which the larger variations are observed. For both of these components, lowest scores are observed in Nunavik which explains the overall lower scores obtained by that region. It is worth mentioning, however, that Nunavik shows the highest score on the labour component of the CWB. Another interesting element is observed for the Labrador communities, which show the highest score on the education component, while also presenting the lowest labour characteristics. This last finding highlights the specific economic and labour market characteristics of this region in contrast to other Inuit regions.

When assessing individual CWB components by community type, interesting differences are highlighted. Differences by component are not systematic between the three community types examined in this report. **Table 7.4** shows that Inuit communities fall about midway between First Nations and other Canadian communities on the income component, slightly behind First Nations in education,

**Figure 7.9: CWB Average Scores by Community Type, 1991–2001**

slightly above First Nations in terms of housing, and very close to other Canadian communities on labour force. When looking more closely at these patterns, it can further be seen that First Nation minimum scores on each component are much lower than those of Inuit communities, which tend to be closer to the minimum observed for other Canadian communities.

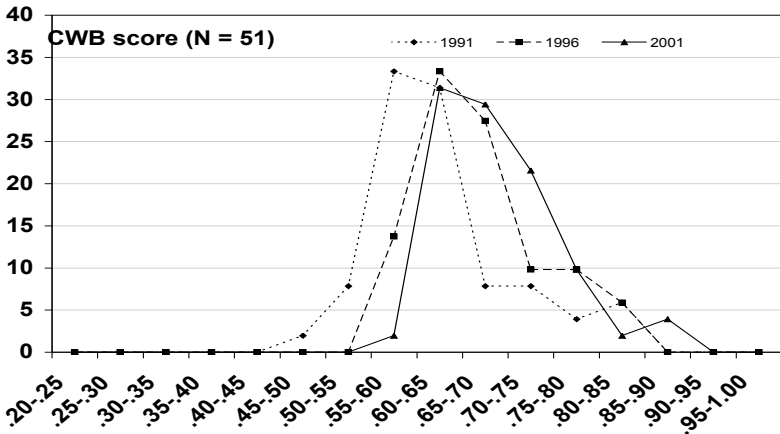
### ***Community Well-being Time Series***

The evolution of the CWB score in Inuit communities between 1991 and 2001 is presented in **Table 7.5** (page 162). It can be seen that while scores progressed during that period, much of the growth is observed between 1991 and 1996. This finding mirrors what was previously found for First Nations (Chapter 6; O’Sullivan and McHardy, 2004).

The increase in well-being of Inuit, First Nations, and other Canadian communities is further compared in **Figure 7.9** (this page) and **Table 7.6** (page 162). An almost perfect parallelism is found between the two types of Aboriginal communities along with a closure of the gaps with Other Canadian communities in the first intercensal period (1991–1996) followed by a somewhat more static gap in the subsequent period (1996–2001).

When looking at the individual evolution of CWB scores for Inuit communities in the 1991–2001 time period, it can be seen that the vast majority (47 communities) have seen some form of increase in their well-being, while just a few communities (4) have actually experienced a decline, with two of these actually showing a very small decline of only 0.01. **Table 7.7** (page 162) further assesses changes between 1991 and 2001 and shows that the average variation of scores for Inuit communities is comparable to that of First Nations and that both are experiencing higher positive variations than other Canadian communities. It can also be seen that the highest increase in Inuit communities is much smaller than



**Figure 7.10: Inuit Communities CWB Distribution Over Time: 1991-2001**

that of both First Nations and other Canadian communities. On the other hand, the largest decline amongst Inuit communities is similar to the largest decline in First Nations, with both showing smaller declines than other Canadian communities.

Over time and in general, the distribution of the CWB scores of Inuit communities present a shift to the right, while retaining the same shape, which can be seen in **Figure 7.10**. This is associated with an “across the board” improvement of well-being in Inuit communities and is consistent with what is observed for both First Nations and other Canadian communities (see Chapter 6; O’Sullivan and McHardy, 2004, for these data).

### **Discussion**

The CWB index provides us with a tool that can be replicated over time. This offers us an additional tool in our attempt to move towards a deeper understanding of the socio-economic conditions in Inuit communities and of their well-being relative to First Nations and to the broader Canadian population. The descriptive statistics contained herein illustrate clearly the marked disparity in socio-economic well-being between Inuit communities and other Canadian communities. This places Inuit communities closer to First Nations than to other Canadian communities in terms of well-being. These statistics also highlight the great disparities that exist between Inuit communities, with some communities enjoying fairly high levels of well-being, while others are still facing difficulties.

This report highlights the relative well-being of Inuit communities with respect to Canada’s First Nations and other Canadian communities. We would caution readers to keep in mind that these Inuit communities have characteristics that may influence this direct comparison. First, all Inuit communities are located very far from large urban centres, in isolated northern locations. This is associated with high costs, especially when it comes to goods which have to be “imported” from

southern locations. As such, the high cost of living probably has an impact on income, which is incidentally the lowest component score in Inuit communities. We can also observe that there is a widely acknowledged role for the traditional economy that still exists in many communities (Usher, Duhaime, and Searles, 2003). This may soften the impact of cost of living on the overall well-being.

## Conclusion

This chapter combines the results of two research projects that we carried out. We hope that they point to a coherent picture of the living conditions of the inhabitants of Canada's northernmost areas. Key socio-economic indicators represented within both the Human Development Index and the Community Well-Being Index clearly illustrate the gap that inhabitants of the North are experiencing today. Results also show the progress accomplished to date, the areas where improvements have occurred, as well as key areas presenting further challenges.

While the projects presented here can be seen as first steps in establishing a better understanding of the dynamics of socio-economic progress within the North, further research is—as usual—required to refine this understanding. Key steps required would be to dig deeper in the distribution of well-being between the Inuit and non-Inuit inhabitants of the North, to include and consider additional elements related to the specific cultural, social, economic, and historical realities of the Inuit, and to assess qualitative elements associated with the core concepts of well-being.

In this chapter, Inuit communities are compared to all First Nations and all other Canadian communities, regardless of size and location. If, as proposed above, the specific geography of Inuit communities has an impact on well-being, it would be interesting to compare Inuit with other northern communities. This work was done by White and Maxim for the First Nations of the south (see Chapter 8) and proved to be very valuable for isolating geographic and related influences. Future research plans are aimed at this very issue and will try to establish a comparable community framework which could help in refining the findings of this study. This comparable research and further analysis aimed at causes and correlates of community well-being are required. Elements such as the cultural composition of communities in terms of Inuit versus other cultural/ethnic identities, isolation, size, and the like would help refine our understanding of the relative well-being of Inuit communities.

Despite their inherent limitations, these two projects contribute to the body of knowledge available on the well-being of Inuit. Limitations in data availability and the tendency of numerous research programs to be focused solely on First Nations population have in the past contributed to the lack of public awareness on key issues associated with Inuit well-being. It is hoped that the focus of research such as the ones presented here can elicit the interest of stakeholders within the policy research area so that a clearer picture can emerge. Along those lines, improvements of available data sources on the Inuit are seen as one of the key in helping researchers and stakeholders in their quest for knowledge.

## Endnotes

- 1 Note that throughout the literature, several concepts such as living conditions, quality of life, life chances, living standards, human development, social progress, and well-being are often used to refer to similar socio-economic concepts (see Cooke, 2005). Within the present chapter, the terms “well-being” and “living conditions” will be used interchangeably to refer to such concepts. Where appropriate, the terms Human Development Index and Community Well-Being Index will be used to refer to specific indicators introduced here.
- 2 In the Census, the Aboriginal identity population refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, i.e. North American Indian, Métis or Inuit (Eskimo), and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada and/or who were members of an Indian Band or First Nation.
- 3 For more information on ITK, visit <[www.itk.ca](http://www.itk.ca)>, and for additional information on the history and current situation of Inuit communities, see ITK, 2003.
- 4 The case of Happy Valley–Goose Bay is worth discussing in more details. While it is technically not within the boundaries of the Nunatsiavut land claim settlement, a large portion of its residents are Inuit. Through discussions with ITK and with the Labrador Inuit Association, it was decided to include Happy Valley–Goose Bay in the list of Labrador Inuit communities.
- 5 Census subdivision is the general term used by Statistics Canada for municipalities (as determined by provincial and territorial legislations) or their equivalent (Statistics Canada, 2003b).
- 6 See Wilkins et al., for a detailed list of areas included.
- 7 Other Canadians is defined here as that portion of Canada’s population which is not a registered Indian and is not residing in the Inuit-inhabited areas defined in the context of this research. It does include non-registered Indians, Métis, as well as Inuit residing outside of Inuit-inhabited areas.
- 8 Change over time is calculated by subtracting the 2001 score from the 1991 score for each component. A positive value thus illustrates an increase in the component score from 1991 to 2001, while a negative value represents a decrease.
- 9 Two communities from the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut (Bathurst Inlet and Umingmaktok, which are identified by ITK as Inuit communities) were excluded from the analysis, as their population was under the threshold of 65 used in this study.
- 10 The actual list of communities can be consulted in a previous version of this research posted at: <[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/cwb/icc/index\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/cwb/icc/index_e.html)>.
- 11 Inuit communities are to a large degree inhabited by individuals of Inuit ancestry and/or identity. In this analysis, only four communities had less than 75% of their population self-identifying as Inuit.
- 12 With two exceptions: Aklavik and Inuvik (in the Northwest Territories), which are both First Nations and Inuit communities, have been tagged here as Inuit communities. This explains why the First Nations total is lower than that presented in other chapters of this book.
- 13 See Appendix A for a map representing CWB levels of Inuit communities for all regions.

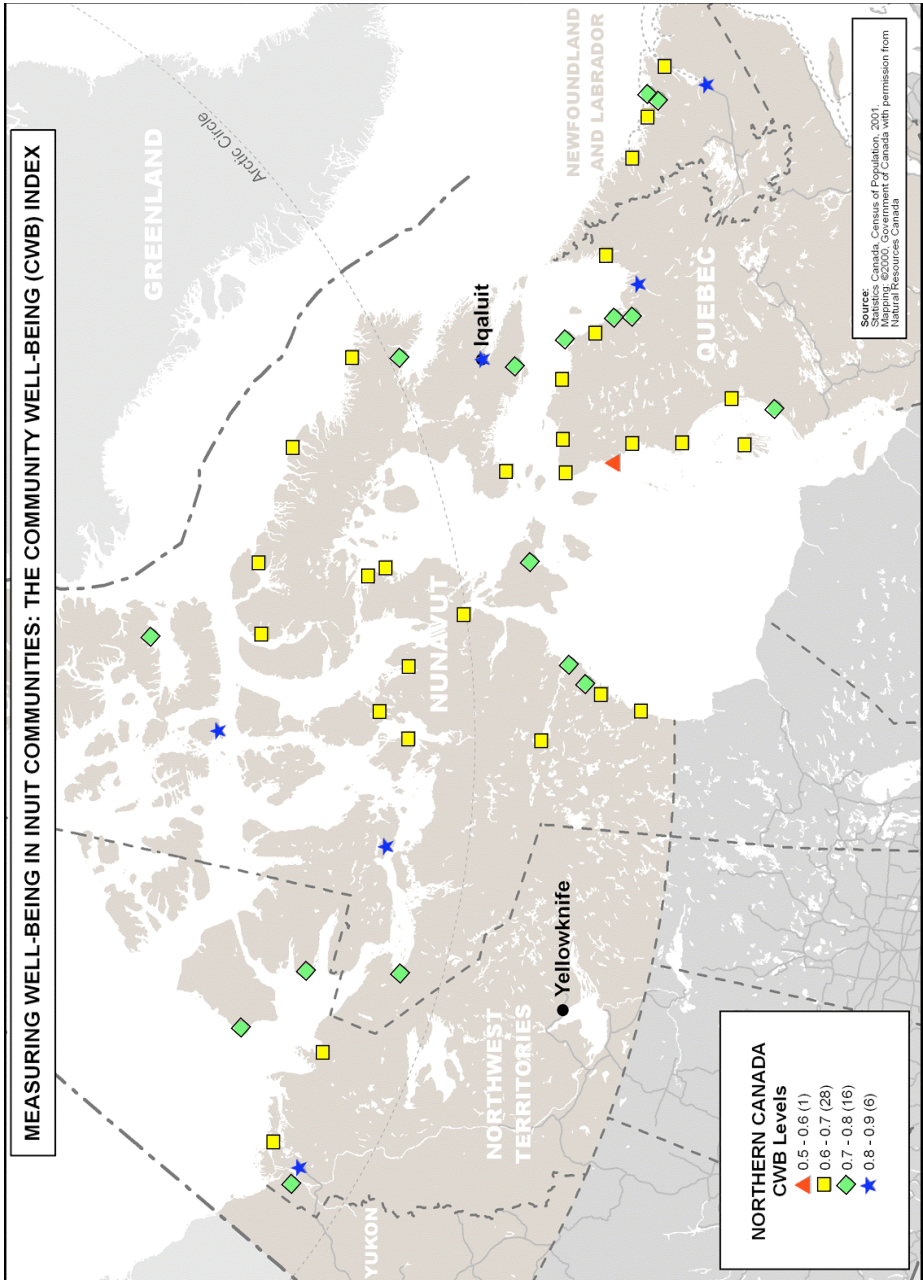
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# Appendix

**Appendix Map 1: Measuring Well-being in Inuit Communities: The Community Well-being Index (CWB)**



**Appendix Table 1: Ranking of Selected Countries and Registered Indian and Reference Populations by Human Development Index, 2001**

HDI Rank	Country	HDI Score
<i>Countries with High Human Development</i>		
1	Norway	.944
2	Iceland	.942
3	Sweden	.941
4	Australia	.939
	<b><i>Reference Population</i></b>	<b>.939</b>
5	Netherlands	.938
6	Belgium	.937
7	United States	.937
8	<b><i>Canada</i></b>	<b>.937</b>
9	Japan	.932
10	Switzerland	.932
13	United Kingdom	.930
16	Austria	.929
17	France	.925
19	Spain	.925
20	New Zealand	.917
23	Portugal	.896
30	Republic of Korea	.879
31	Brunei Darussalam	.872
32	Czech Republic	.861
	<b><i>Registered Indian off-Reserve</i></b>	<b>.856</b>
33	Malta	.856
34	Argentina	.849
35	Poland	.841
36	Seychelles	.840
37	Bahrain	.839
38	Hungary	.837
39	Slovakia	.836
40	Uruguay	.834
41	Estonia	.833
42	Costa Rica	.832
43	Chile	.831
44	Qatar	.826
45	Lithuania	.824
46	Kuwait	.820
47	Croatia	.818

**Appendix Table 1 Continued**

HDI Rank	Country	HDI Score
	<i>Registered Indian Population</i>	<b>.817</b>
48	United Arab Emirates	.816
49	Bahamas	.812
50	Latvia	.811
51	St. Kitts and Nevis	.808
52	Cuba	.806
53	Belarus	.804
54	Trinidad and Tobago	.802
55	Mexico	.800
<i>Countries with Medium Human Development</i>		
56	Antigua and Barbuda	.798
57	Bulgaria	.795
58	Malaysia	.790
59	Panama	.788
60	Macedonia, TFYR	.784
	<i>Inuit inhabited areas population</i>	<b>.783</b>
61	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	.783
62	Mauritius	.779
63	Russian Federation	.779
64	Colombia	.779
65	Brazil	.777
66	Bosnia and Herzegovina	.777
67	Belize	.776
68	Dominica	.776
69	Venezuela	.775
70	Samoa (Western)	.775
71	Saint Lucia	.775
72	Romania	.773
	<i>Registered Indian On-Reserve</i>	<b>.772</b>
73	Saudi Arabia	.769
74	Thailand	.768
75	Ukraine	.766
76	Kazakhstan	.765
77	Suriname	.762
78	Jamaica	.757
79	Oman	.755
80	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	.755
81	Fiji	.754

**Appendix Table 1 Continued**

HDI Rank	Country	HDI Score
82	Peru	.752
83	Lebanon	.752
84	Paraguay	.751
85	Philippines	.751
<i>... 85–102 deleted</i>		
103	Cape Verde	.727
104	China	.721
105	El Salvador	.719
<i>... 106–135 deleted</i>		
135	Lao People's Democratic Republic	.525
136	Bhutan	.511
137	Lesotho	.510
138	Sudan	.503
139	Bangladesh	.502
140	Congo	.502
141	Togo	.501
<i>Countries with Low Human Development</i>		
142	Cameroon	.499
143	Nepal	.499
144	Pakistan	.499
145	Zimbabwe	.496
146	Kenya	.489
147	Uganda	.489
148	Yemen	.470
149	Madagascar	.469
<i>... 150–175 deleted</i>		
<b>Source:</b> Data from HDI table, p. 237-240 from "Human Development Report 2003" by UNDP (2003) by permission of Oxford University Press; Remaining data: Authors' Calculations		