

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN CANADA: Understanding identification in today's evolving context

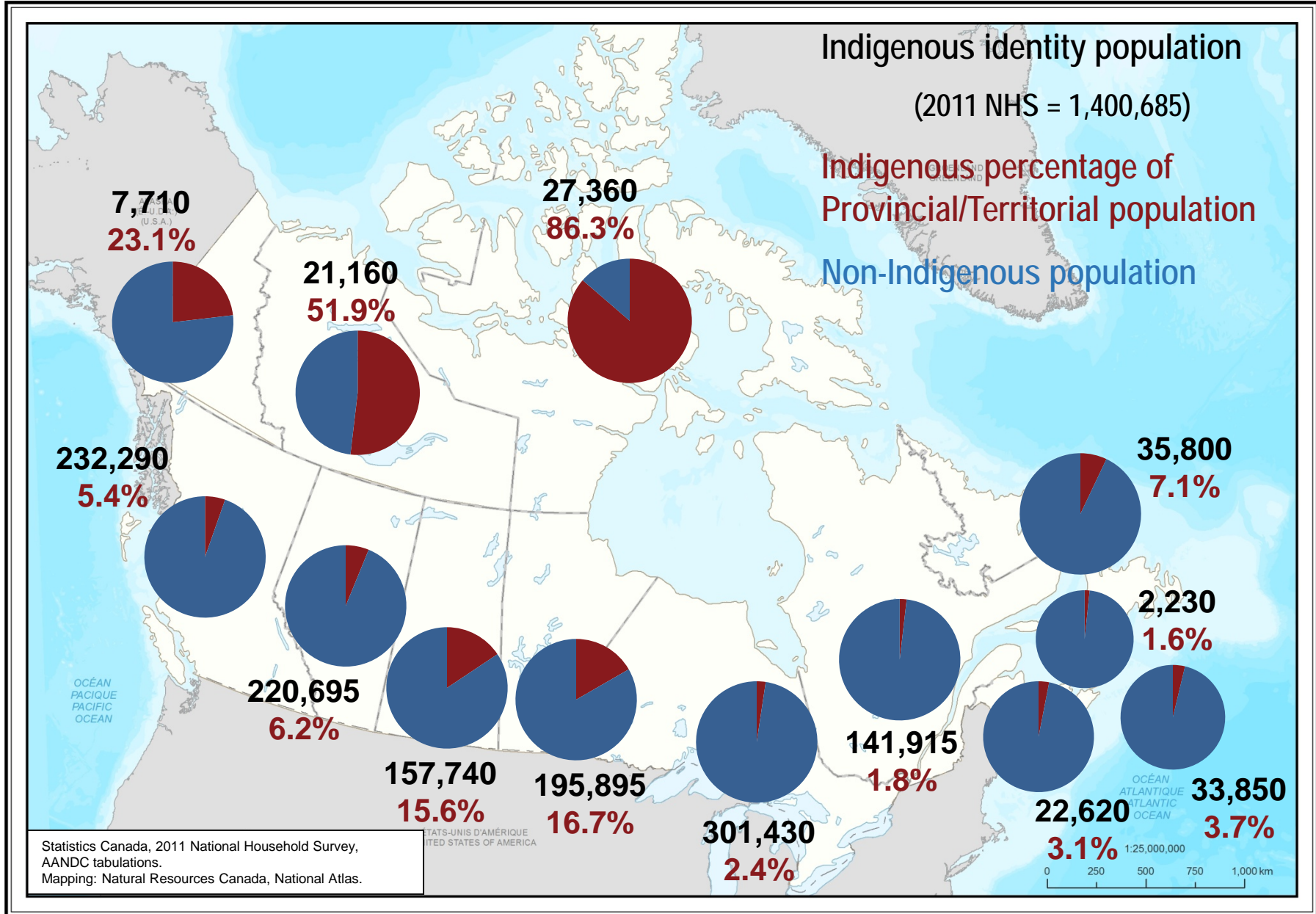
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Desmond (Algonquin, Mattawa FN), Mary (Ojibwa / Mohawk, Nipissing FN) and daughter Mary (my mother)

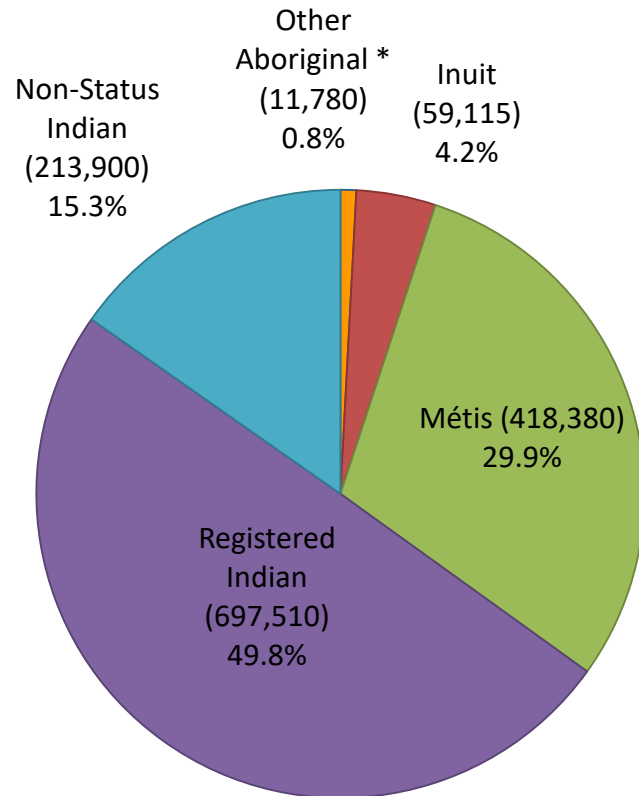
“Each man’s and woman’s liberty was absolute and inviolable. He was untainted by civilization, did what he liked, and was moved only by natural impulses, and if, the **Nipissing was not a free man and independent man, then there was no absolute freedom or independence on earth.**”

– Jean Recollet in The Jesuit Relations



Demographics

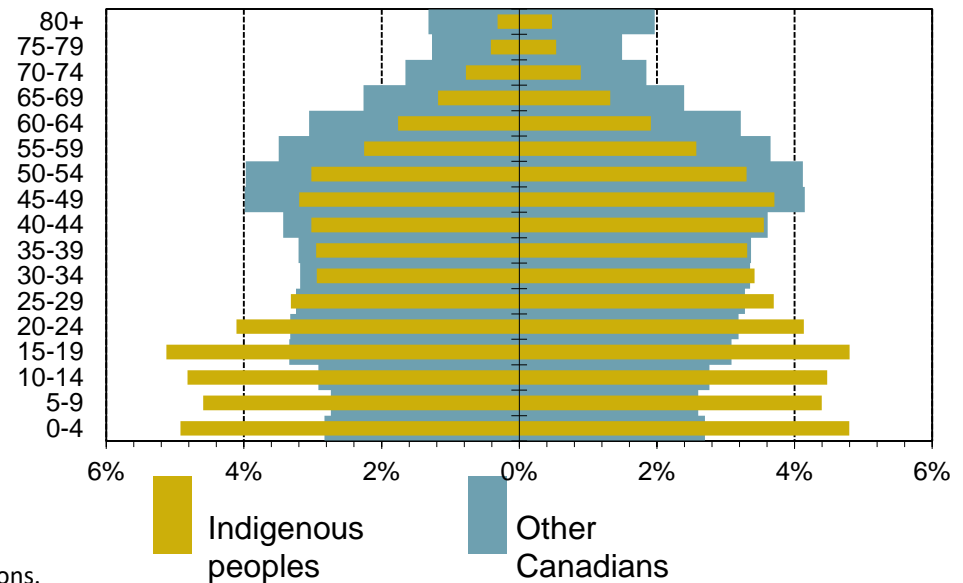
In 2011, there were 1,400,685 Indigenous peoples in Canada. This was 4.3% of the total population.



Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, AANDC tabulations.

The age structure of the Indigenous population is much younger than the rest of the Canadian population.

46% of First Nations, Inuit and Métis are under age 25 (versus 29% for the rest of the Canadian population).



2016 census

- Results not yet available
- Overall collection response = 98.4% (higher than in 2006 or 2011)
- Long-form collection response = 97.8% (highest ever)
- Indigenous population anticipated to be higher (4.6-5%)
 - Mostly endogenous growth

2011 census – Indigenous ID questions

18. Is this person an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit)?

Note: First Nations (North American Indian) includes Status and Non-Status Indians.

If "Yes", mark the circle(s) that best describe(s) this person now.

- No, not an Aboriginal person → **Continue with next question**
- Yes, First Nations (North American Indian) → **Go to Question 20**
- Yes, Métis → **Go to Question 20**
- Yes, Inuk (Inuit) → **Go to Question 20**

20. Is this person a Status Indian (Registered or Treaty Indian as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada)?

- No
- Yes, Status Indian (Registered or Treaty)

2011 census – Indigenous ID questions

21. Is this person a member of a First Nation/Indian band?

If "Yes", which First Nation/Indian band? For example, Musqueam Indian Band, Sturgeon Lake First Nation, Atikamekw of Manawan.

- No
- Yes, member of a First Nation/Indian band
Specify name of First Nation/Indian band

2006 census – Indigenous ID questions

- Ancestry

- What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person's ancestors?

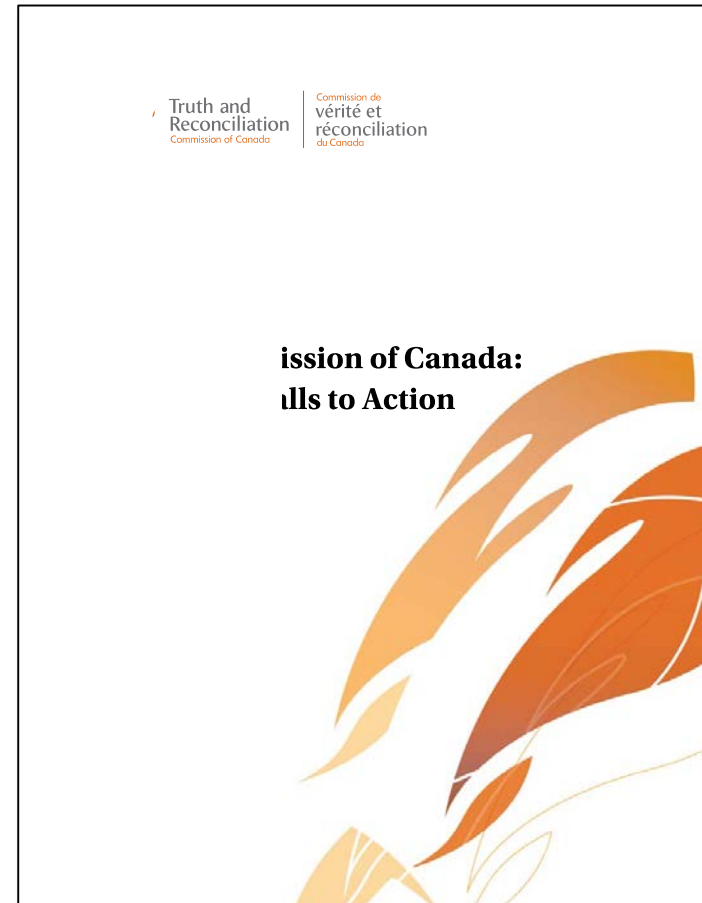
- Identification

- Is this person an Aboriginal person, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit (Eskimo)?
- Is this person a member of an Indian Band / First Nation?
- Is this person a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada?

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

94 Calls to Action:

- Child welfare
- Education
- Language and culture
- ***Health (18-24)***
- Justice
- ***Reconciliation (43-94)***



TRC C2A – Health

18. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the **current state** of Aboriginal health in Canada is a **direct result** of previous **Canadian government policies**, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.

TRC C2A on UNDRIP

43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as **the framework for reconciliation**.
44. We call upon the Government of Canada to develop **a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals** of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Daniels v. Canada

(Indian Affairs and Northern Development)

- Supreme Court of Canada, April 14 2016
- Métis and non-status Indians are "Indians" as per s.91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*
- "Indians" under s.91(24) is a broad term referring to all Indigenous peoples in Canada
- There is no need to delineate which mixed-ancestry communities are Métis and which are non-status Indians

Indigeneity as a Health Determinant

Positive identity, identity based on deficits, and negative identity are all seen within Indigenous populations

- Dispossession, alienation, subjugation
- Forced and learned dependency
- Essentialized, static
- Oldest cultures in the world – strong, vibrant, adaptable, resilient, sustainable
- Culture, language, tradition
- Self-determination, self-governance, non-interference, tolerance

Durie – the challenge is to facilitate the development of healthy identities based on cultural strengths, not on disadvantage, disease burden and discrimination.