
Nunavik health profile - 2018

Sociodemographic background

Medical-administrative component

PRODUCTION

The team responsible for Aboriginal health considerations at the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ) was mandated by the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) to produce this profile.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

DES	High school diploma
DCS	Diploma of college studies
DVS	Diploma of vocational studies

Highlights

A rapidly growing Inuit population

The population of Nunavik has grown significantly over the last few decades. Generally speaking, the Nunavik population is young, with a higher proportion of children and a lower proportion of older persons than in Québec. But yet, the growth rate of the population aged 55 years or more is more significant in Nunavik than elsewhere in Québec.

For over 30 years now, the total fertility rate in Nunavik¹ has been above the generation replacement level threshold² (TFR) and nearly two times the TFR for Québec as a whole. While the highest fertility rates are among women under 30 years of age, the greatest variance with Québec is for women less than 20 years old.

Difficult living conditions

One out of every two people in Nunavik has a high school diploma, for a graduation rate four times inferior to that for Québec. In addition, nearly one out of every three households is living in lodgings of insufficient size. This proportion is eight times higher than that for Québec households. As for unemployment, the rate has remained high over the last years, and is nearly double that for Québec. In the same vein, one out of every five persons has an income below the low income cut-off, a proportion which doubles in the case of single-parent families.

¹ According to Statistics Canada, total fertility rate refers to the number of children that a hypothetical female would have over the course of her reproductive life if she experienced the age-specific fertility rates observed in a calendar year (Statistics Canada, 2014). See section 3.3.1 for further details.

² According to Statistics Canada, the generation replacement level threshold refers to the number of children per female necessary for the population to independently replace itself, and this considering mortality from birth to the age of 15 years and in the absence of migration (Statistics Canada, 2014).

1 Objectives and background

Three health profiles³ were established for the purpose of providing an overall portrait of the health of the entire Nunavik population. These profiles present the medical-administrative data available up to 2018, and constitute an updated portrait of the health of the Nunavimmiut, given that the previous profiles were prepared in 2014-2015 (NRBHSS in collaboration with the INSPQ, [2014](#); NRBHSS in collaboration with the INSPQ, [2015](#)). These profiles were developed at the request of the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), in conjunction with the Nunavik Clinical Plan⁴ underway, an initiative that will be used in the preparation of a regional health services offer for 2040.

This present profile describes the demographic and socioeconomic background of the population of Nunavik. It begins by addressing sociocultural elements, such as the Aboriginal identity and knowledge of Inuktitut, after which it considers demographic changes over the last few decades. It then speaks to certain effects of these demographic changes on families in the region, as related to the large size of family units and poor housing conditions. A description of the socioeconomic background of these families follows, covering level of education, employment and income. In closing, the impacts of these living conditions on the health of the region's population are discussed.

To further document the health portrait depicted in this profile, reports published subsequent to the Inuit health survey [Qanuillirpitaa? 2017](#) are cited when relevant. *Qanuillirpitaa? 2017* is a representative health survey conducted in Nunavik in 2017 which addressed a wide range of health indicators. Overall, 1,326 people aged 16 years or more from Nunavik's 14 communities participated ([Hamel et al., 2020](#)). The survey is referred to as *Qanuillirpitaa? 2017* in this profile.

2 Methodological note

2.1 Targeted population and data sources

This profile concerns the sociodemographic background of **persons residing in Nunavik, regardless of age**. The demographic and socioeconomic data presented in this profile were extracted from several provincial medical-administrative databases, including registers concerning demographic events (births and deaths), the MED-ECHO database⁵ on regional hospitalizations, national databases (Canadian census information) and data on demographic projections. The primary and secondary sources are noted underneath each figure.

Warning regarding the validity of the Census data: The indicators obtained using data from the 2016 Census should be interpreted with caution as no adjustments were made to compensate for undercoverage. Given the high proportion of nonresponses in Nunavik (15%), there is a significant risk of bias.

Warning regarding the interpretation of projections: Projections must not be interpreted as forecasts of an expected future, but rather, as a possible future should trends continue. As with all statistical projections, the calculation of projections is based on assumptions for predicting population growth. Despite the scientific rigour of these assumptions, actual population growth can differ from what is predicted, particularly at the regional level. These data can also differ slightly from that obtained from other sources, and should thus be interpreted with caution.

Because this profile was primarily designed to support an improvement in the health services provided in the Nunavik region, **the control population, for comparison purposes, is that of Québec**. Whenever

³ The second profile, "The health of mothers and children", addresses various indicators regarding the health of Nunavik's families, mothers and children (INSPQ, 2021b) and the third one, "The health of adults and seniors", explores general health indicators, among them life expectancy and the primary causes of hospitalizations and deaths among Nunavik residents aged 15 years or more (INSPQ, 2021c).

⁴ The Clinical Plan is a document that will be submitted to the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (department of health and social services) (MSSS) for examination and approval. The objective of this document is to clearly define needs, propose pertinent clinical solutions and develop infrastructure models able to support the necessary clinical organization and meet current needs and needs over the next two decades (NRBHSS, 2021).

⁵ System that comprises data on hospitalizations in Québec (MED-ECHO).

possible and relevant, the data is presented according to gender (male/female), age groups of interest (e.g., 0-14 years, 15-34 years, 35-54 years) and the home coast (Ungava Coast/Hudson Coast).

2.2 Interpretation of the presented statistics

Working with small samples is unavoidable and must be top-of-mind when analyzing and interpreting data on Québec's Aboriginal populations, including in Nunavik. In order to take into account the statistical and ethical issues potentially associated with the use of such small numbers, the following rules of good practice were adopted (Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, 2015):

- A. To avoid any breach of confidentiality**, no statistics based on a numerator of less than 5 should be distributed, nor should certain categories of variables be aggregated to increase their size.
- B. With the goal of increasing the power** (and by extension, the stability) of the statistics presented, years are aggregated into 4- or 5-year periods and age categories are limited to no more than four.
- A. To decrease the risk of bias**, an asterisk (*) is placed after all data with a coefficient of variation between 16.66% and 33.33% to indicate that this information must be interpreted with caution. Data with a coefficient of variation greater than 33.33% are followed by two asterisks (**). These values (**) are provided for information purposes.
- C. Comparisons** that are temporal, territorial or between various subpopulations are only considered statistically significant when there is an absence of confidence interval overlap at 95%⁶. When variances do not meet these criteria, they are clearly identified as non statistically significant “trends” that should be interpreted with caution.

These good practices do not apply to all sources of population data, especially the Census as explained in the box in section 2.1. The various warnings explain why it is not always possible to display all of the desired overlaps (e.g., age, gender and administrative subregion) for all of the available indicators.

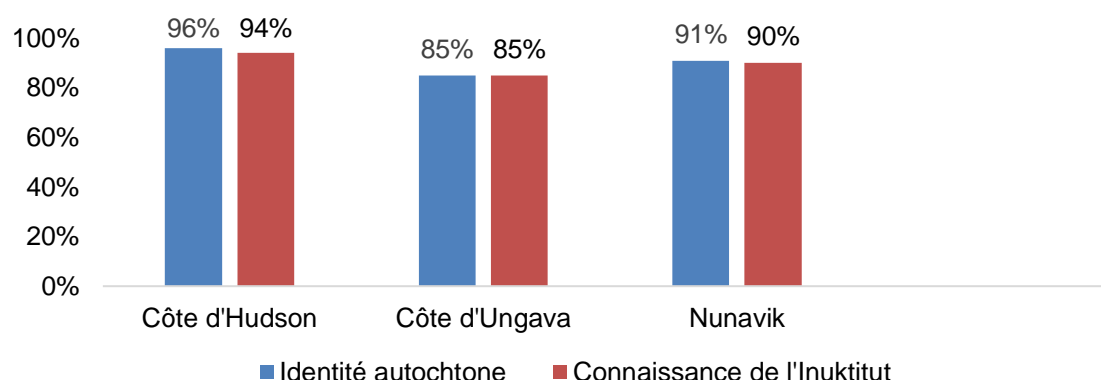
⁶ Confidence intervals of 95% are clearly indicated in the graphs; the text, in turn, will clearly mention the statistically significant variance.

3 Demographic and socioeconomic data

3.1 Aboriginal identity and knowledge of Inuktitut in Nunavik

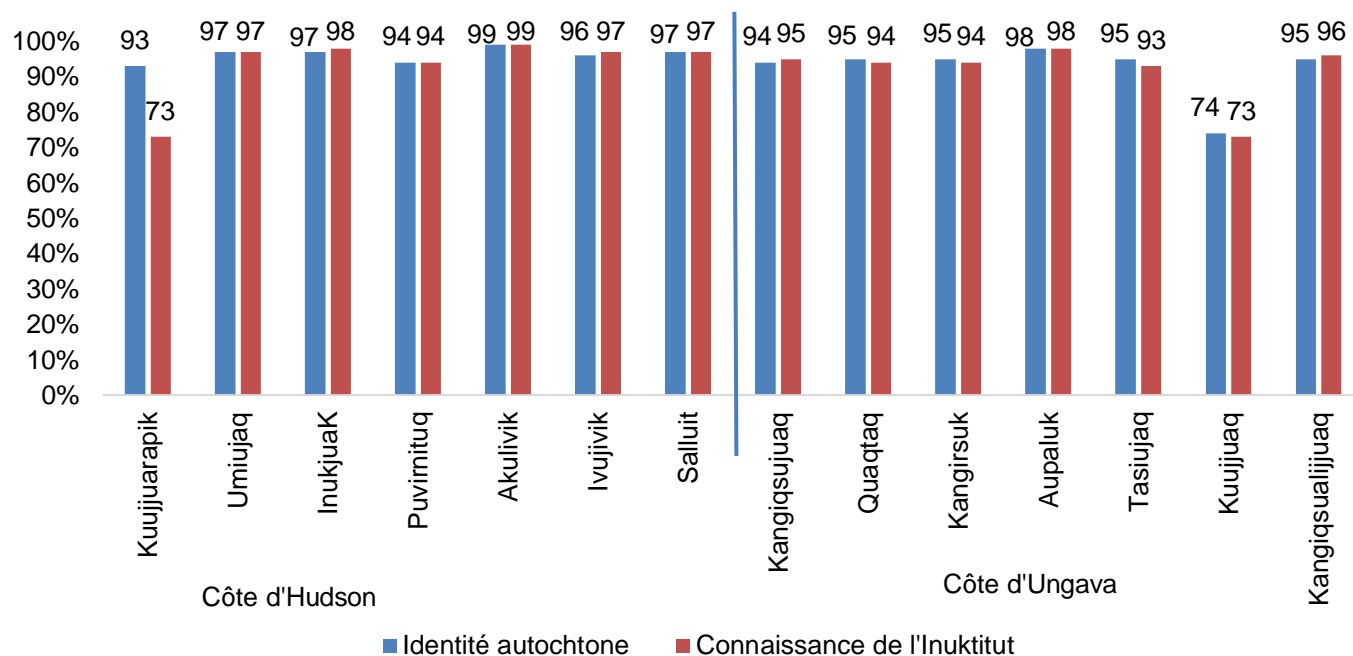
The majority of the Nunavik population claim to have an Inuit identity⁷ and a knowledge⁸ of Inuktitut (Figure 1). Figure 2 depicts data on the Aboriginal identity and the knowledge of Inuktitut in Nunavik communities. The population of the Hudson Coast has slightly higher proportions for these two indicators than does that of the Ungava Coast.

Figure 1 Aboriginal identity and knowledge of Inuktitut, Nunavik, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census, Special compilation, BIESP.

Figure 2 Aboriginal identity and knowledge of Inuktitut, Nunavik communities, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census, Special compilation, BIESP.

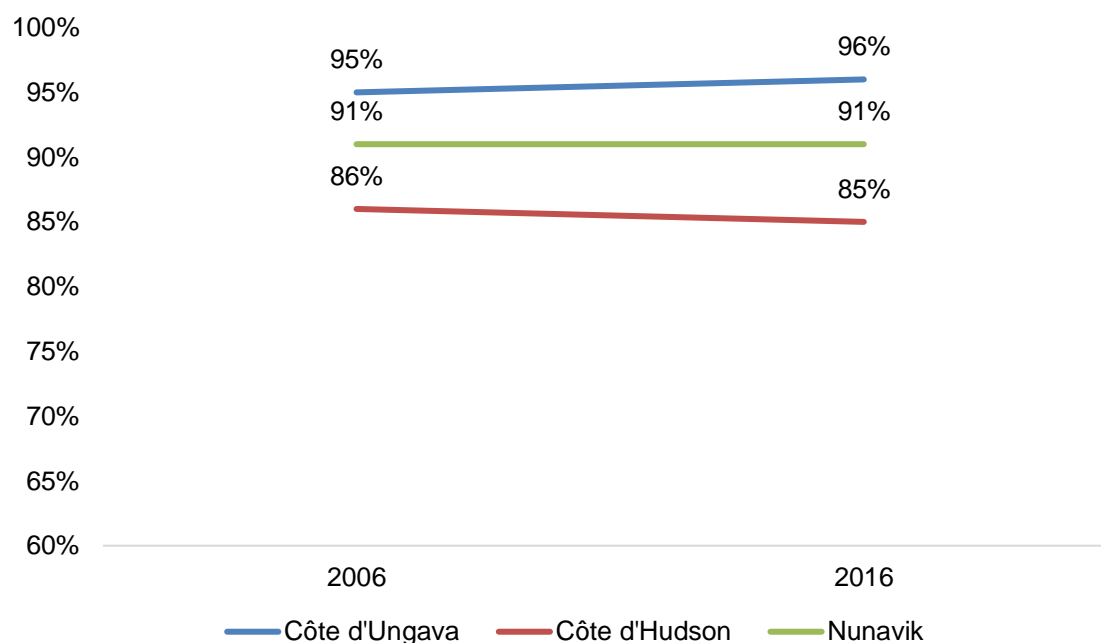
⁷ According to Statistics Canada, the Aboriginal identity refers to persons who identify as belonging to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2015c), and is, in this case, the Inuit identity.

⁸ The "knowledge" of a language, in this case Inuktitut, refers to a person's ability to engage in a conversation in a language other than French or English (Statistics Canada, 2009).

As regards Aboriginal identity and in this case, Inuit identity, the proportion of people claiming an Aboriginal identity has remained stable over the last years (Figure 3). 1996, 2006 and 2011 data illustrate that 99% of Nunavik Inuit mention having sufficient knowledge of Inuktitut to engage in a conversation (not illustrated; Statistics Canada, 2009, p. 12).

Of note, *Qanuillirpita?* 2017 queried the matter of the language primarily spoken at home and the ability to speak and read Inuktitut ([Riva et al., 2020b](#)), in addition to closely examining the matter of identity through a 12-item questionnaire ([Muckle et al., 2020](#)).

Figure 3 **Aboriginal identity, Nunavik and Nunavik coasts, 2006 and 2016**



Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census, Special compilation, BIESP.

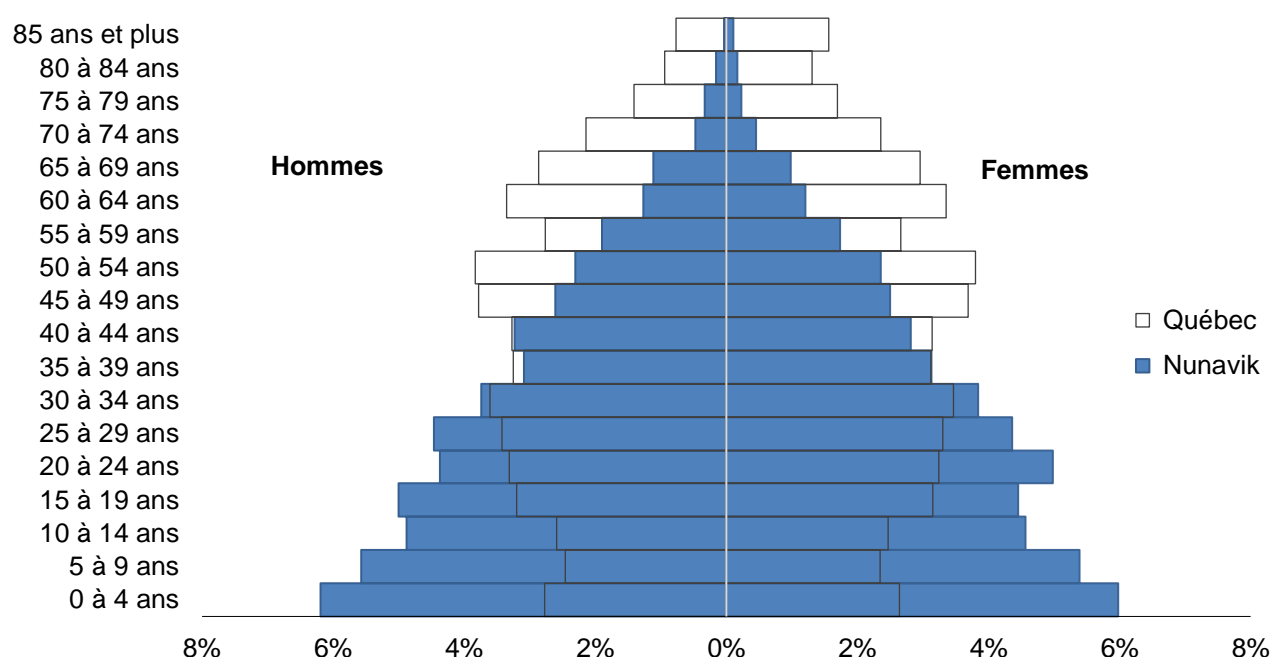
3.1.1 IN SHORT

1. Over 9 out of 10 Nunavik residents identify as Inuit, a proportion that has remained stable between 2006 and 2016.
2. The Nunavimmiut, generally speaking, have a very good knowledge of Inuktitut.
3. Residents of the Hudson Coast tend to have a better knowledge of Inuktitut and are more likely to identify as Inuit.

3.2 Nunavik population's composition according to age

A young population

The Nunavik population is much younger than that elsewhere in Québec (Figure 4). More specifically, the proportion of children between the ages of 0 and 5 and those between the ages of 5 and 9 are twice those elsewhere in Québec. At the other end of the spectrum, there is a lesser proportion of older persons in Nunavik than elsewhere in Québec, especially as regards people aged 60 years or more. These observations are backed by data in *Qanuillirpita?* 2017 ([Riva et al., 2020b](#)).

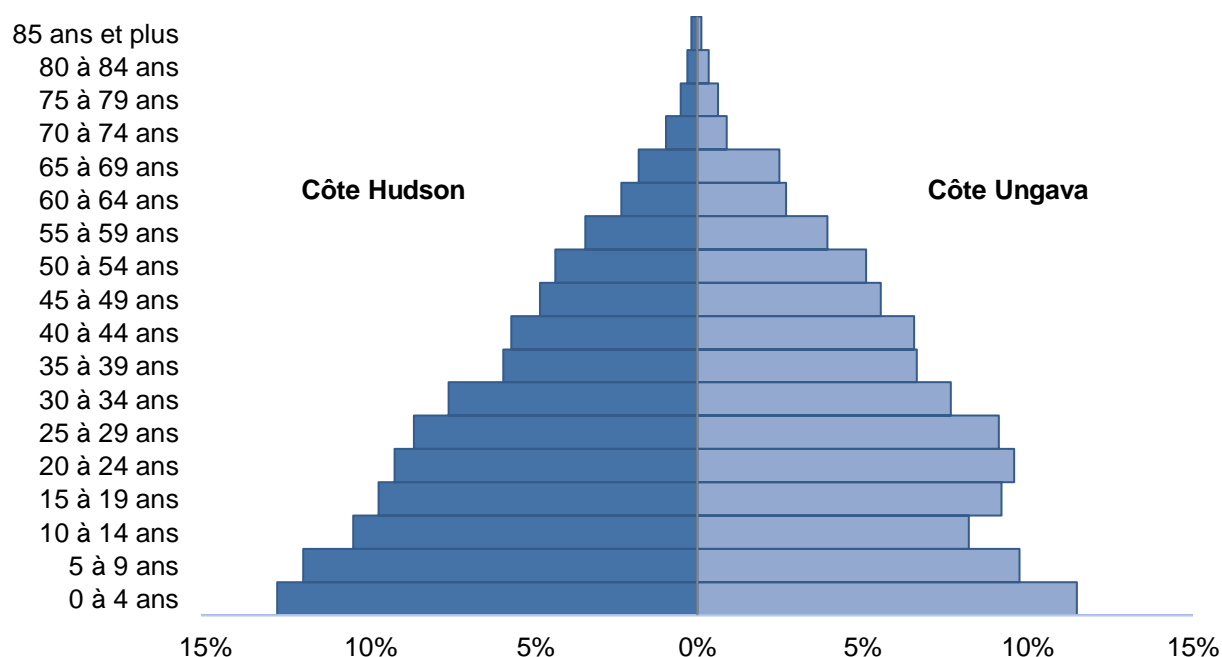
Figure 4 Population distribution according to age and gender, Québec, Nunavik, 2016

Source: Infocentre de santé publique du Québec. MSSS, *Estimations et projections démographiques à partir de 2011*, electronic version (1981-1995: April 2012 version, 1996-2036: May 2017 version).

Note: The data consists of projections beginning in 2011.

The onset of a demographic transition

The detailed analysis of data based on the home coast reveals that the distribution of the population according to age on the Hudson Coast corresponds to the expected pyramidal evolution of age groups where the number of residents per age group decreases as the age in question increases. This is also true for the Ungava Coast, despite the slight decrease in fertility (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Population distribution according to age and Nunavik coast, 2016

Source: Infocentre de santé publique du Québec. MSSS, *Estimations et projections démographiques à partir de 2011*, electronic version (1981-1995: April 2012 version, 1996-2036: May 2017 version).

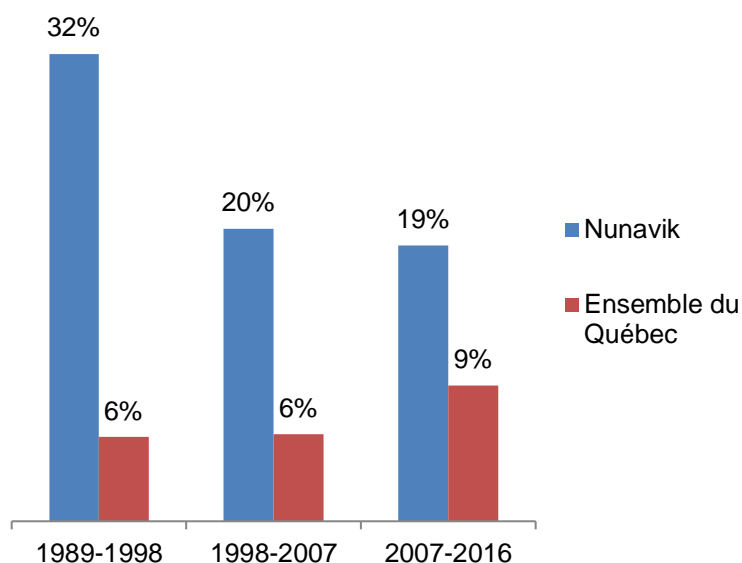
Note: The data consists of projections beginning in 2011.

Population with a strong demographic growth

The population of Nunavik has grown significantly over the last few decades. Whereas the growth rate was highest for the period between 1989 and 1998⁹, the pace has slowed down since then (Figure 6). For each census period, rates are significantly higher than those for Québec as a whole; the latter rates nonetheless appear to be experiencing a slight increase.

⁹ The natural growth rate is due to the difference between number of births and number of deaths (Government of Canada, 2013).

Figure 6 Growth rate of the population, Nunavik and elsewhere in Québec, 1989-1998, 1998-2007 and 2007-2016



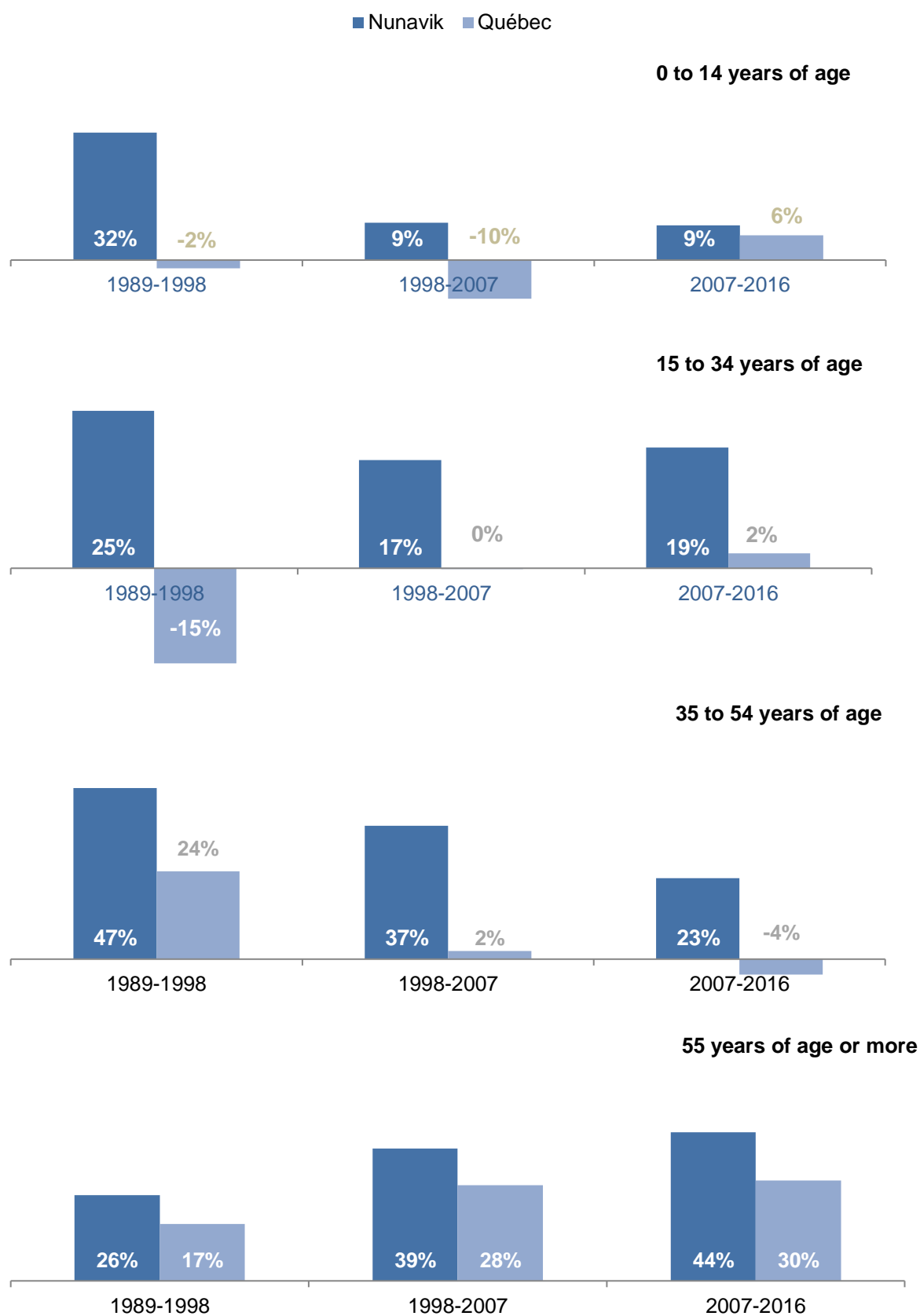
Source: Infocentre de santé publique du Québec. MSSS, *Estimations et projections démographiques à partir de 2011*, electronic version (1981-1995: April 2012 version, 1996-2036: May 2017 version).

Note: The data consists of projections for Nunavik, beginning in 2011.

The evolution of these growth rates varies according to age group (Figure 7). Generally speaking, while the age groups included in the range of 0 to 54 years have experienced a drop in their growth rates in Québec as well as in Nunavik, for all periods examined, they remain positive in Nunavik, reflecting a certain degree of growth for these groups. The negative growth rates observed for Québec are rather an indication that these age groups experienced periods where growth was decreasing during a same examined period.

Conversely, in both Nunavik and elsewhere in Québec, persons aged 55 years or more experienced constantly increasing growth rates; this rate, however, grew faster in Nunavik than in Québec.

Figure 7 Growth rate of the population by age group, Nunavik and Québec, 1989-1998, 1998-2007 and 2007-2016

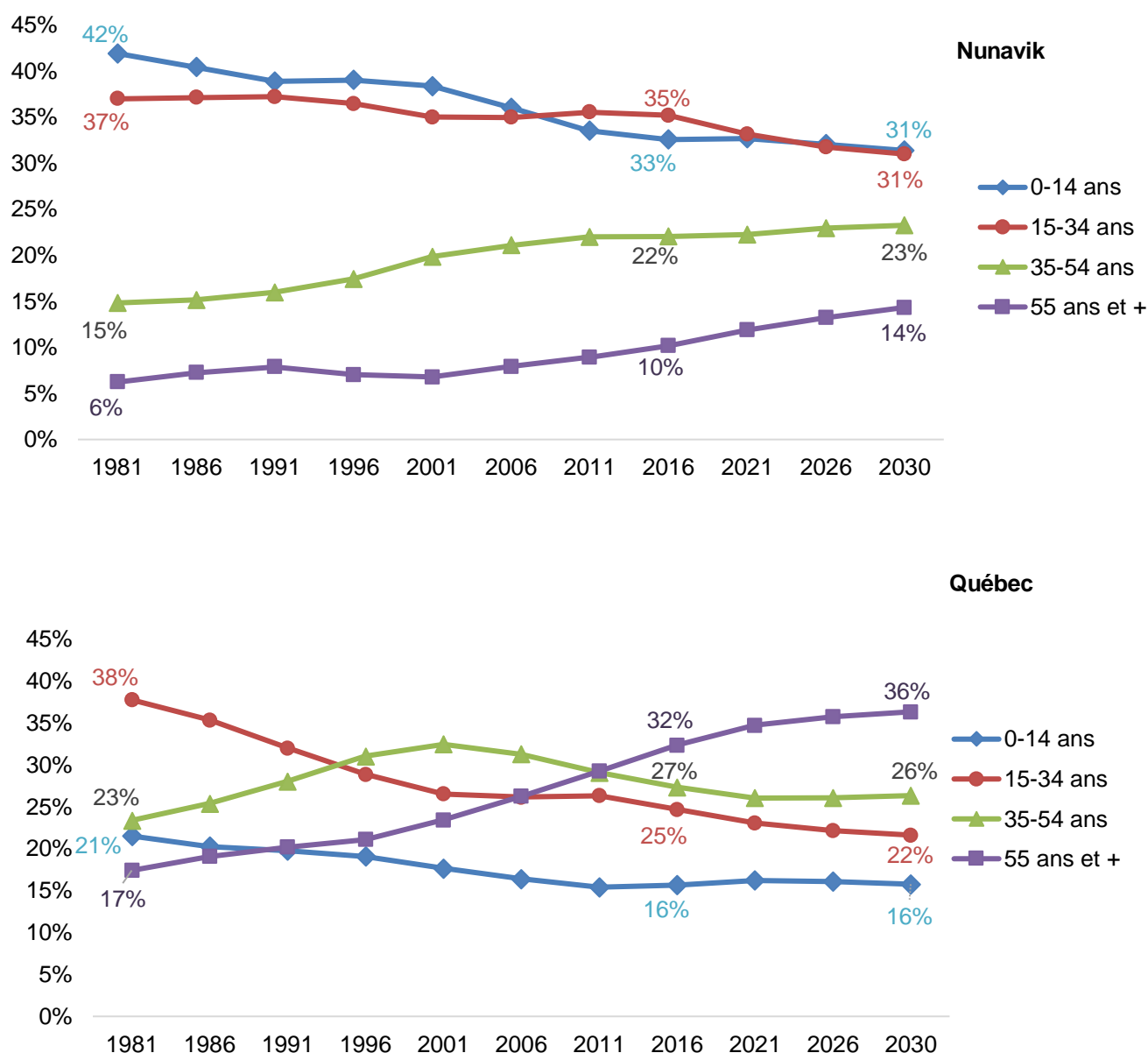


Source: Infocentre de santé publique du Québec. MSSS, *Estimations et projections démographiques à partir de 2011*, electronic version (1981-1995: April 2012 version, 1996-2036: May 2017 version).

Breakdown based on age which is evolving

The growth rates previously described directly impact changes in the breakdown of these populations, based on age. Hence, despite continuing to be nearly double those in Québec (Figure 8), the proportion of children (0 to 14 years) and the proportion of young adults (15 to 34 years) has dropped significantly in Nunavik since 1981. It can also be seen that the proportion of persons aged 55 years or more is rising in both Nunavik and Québec. In 2016, persons aged 55 years or more accounted for the most numerous group in Québec but the smallest group in Nunavik.

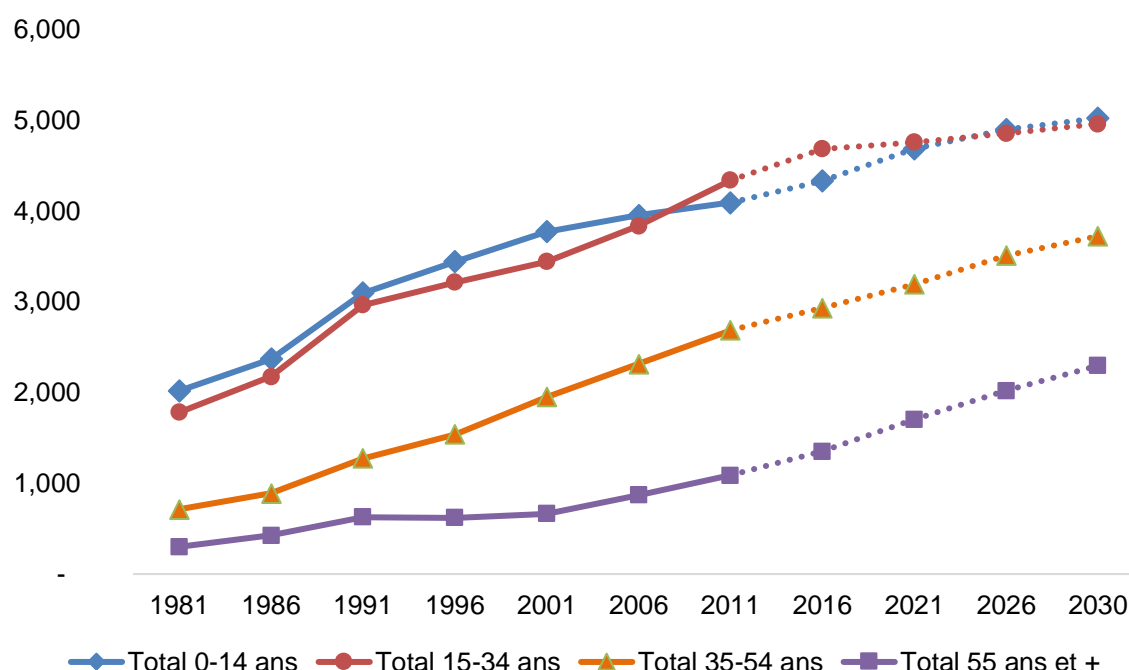
Figure 8 Evolution and projections of the population breakdown, by age category, Nunavik and Québec, 1981 to 2030



Source: Infocentre de santé publique du Québec. MSSS, *Estimations et projections démographiques à partir de 2011*, electronic version (1981-1995: April 2012 version, 1996-2036: May 2017 version).

Based on these projections, the illustrated trends should persist for several decades. Figure 9 illustrates these trends in terms of number of persons according to the different age groups.

Figure 9 Evolution of the population by age group, between 1981 and 2011, and projections up to 2030, Nunavik



Source: Infocentre de santé publique du Québec. MSSS, *Estimations et projections démographiques à partir de 2011*, electronic version (1981-1995: April 2012 version, 1996-2036: May 2017 version).

3.2.1 IN SHORT

1. The Nunavik population is younger than that elsewhere in Québec.
2. The population in Nunavik continues to grow, at a rate that is constantly greater than elsewhere in Québec.
3. While the proportion of children (0-14 years) and young adults (15-34 years) has diminished since 1981, the proportion of persons aged 55 years or more is on the rise.

3.3 Families

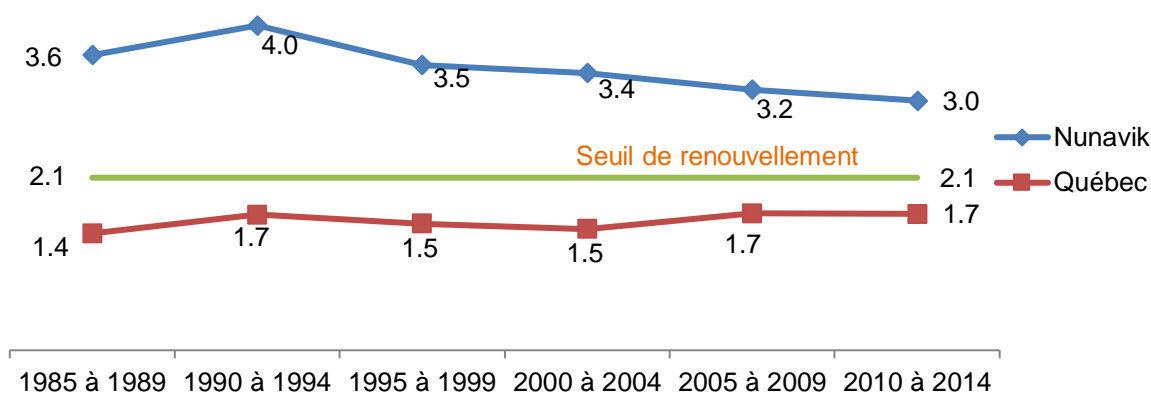
3.3.1 FAMILIES WITH NUMEROUS CHILDREN

For over 30 years now, the total fertility rate in Nunavik¹⁰ has remained high, at nearly twice that for Québec as a whole (Figure 10). Despite a very slight drop since the 1990s in Nunavik, the fertility rates¹¹ have nonetheless stayed above the generation replacement level threshold¹², and this for all of the periods examined.

¹⁰ According to Statistics Canada, total fertility rate refers to the number of children that a female would hypothetically have over the course of her reproductive life if she experienced the age-specific fertility rates observed in a calendar year (Statistics Canada, 2014).

¹¹ The fertility rate referred to for a given period is the average number of live births among mothers in a determined age group within the female population in this age group for a same period (MSSS, 2019).

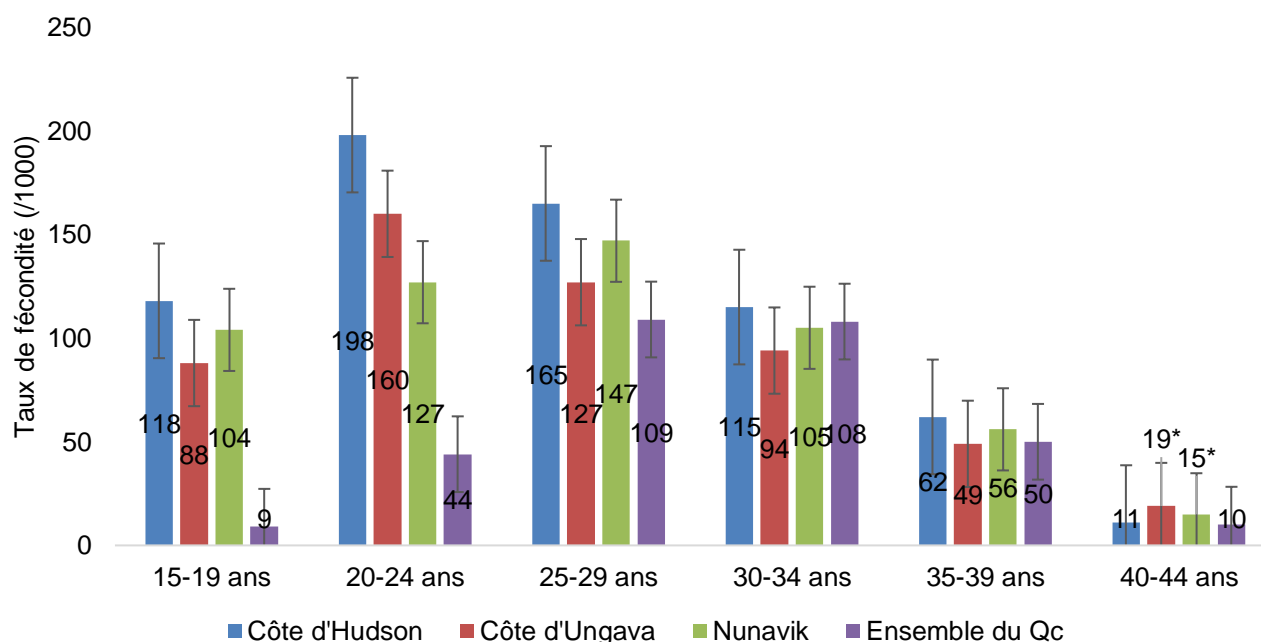
¹² According to Statistics Canada, the generation replacement level threshold refers to the number of children per female necessary for the population to independently replace itself, and this considering mortality from birth to the age of 15 years and in the absence of migration (Statistics Canada, 2014).

Figure 10 Total fertility rate, Nunavik and Québec, 1985-1989 to 2010-2014

Source: Infocentre de santé publique du Québec. MSSS, Register of births.

While the difference is not statistically significant, Figure 11 reveals that women living on the Hudson Coast have slightly higher fertility rates than do women from the Ungava Coast. In addition, it appears that fertility rates for persons aged 15 to 19 years are higher in Nunavik than in Québec (Figure 11). Data in the report *Sexual and Reproductive Health from Qanuillirpita? 2017* supports this observation with its description of the age of first pregnancy and comparison of teenage pregnancies (≤ 19 years) and adult pregnancies (≥ 20 years), according to gender and age (Moisan et al., 2021).

The highest fertility rates in Nunavik are found among women under 30 years of age, but the greatest variance with Québec is for women less than 20 years old.

Figure 11 Fertility rate (/1000) based on age, Nunavik, Nunavik coasts and Québec, 2010-2014

Source: Infocentre de santé publique du Québec. MSSS, Register of births.

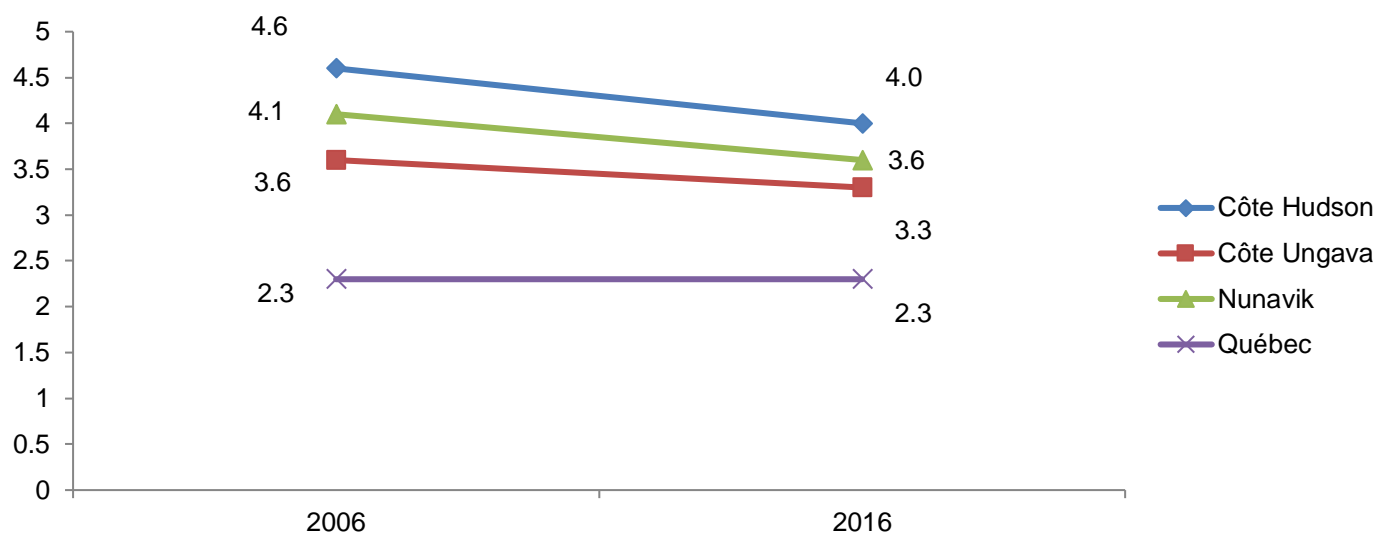
Note: The 15-19 age group includes births to mothers aged 14 years or less. Between 1981 and 2014, the average number of births each year in Québec by mothers aged 14 years or less was fewer than 50.

* Coefficient of variation between 16.66% and 33.33%: the value must hence be interpreted with caution.

3.3.2 HOUSING

The average number of persons per household¹³ in Nunavik dropped slightly between 2006 and 2016, even though this figure is still twice that for Québec for the two periods examined (Figure 12). And while the decrease in number of persons per household is true for the entire region, it is greater on the Hudson Coast.

Figure 12 Evolution over time of the average number of persons per household, Nunavik, Nunavik coasts and Québec, 2006 and 2016

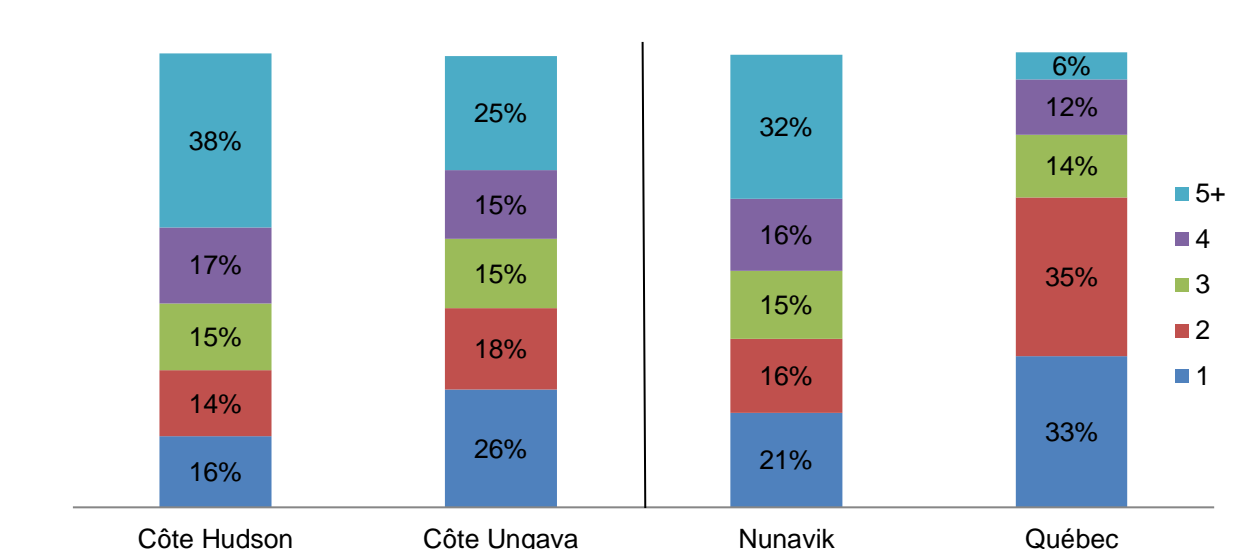


Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census, Special compilation, BIESP.

Figure 13 depicts population distribution according to size of household. The number of persons per household is greater on the Hudson Coast than the Ungava Coast. Moreover, one out of every three households in Nunavik is comprised of 5 persons or more. This proportion is only 6% elsewhere in the province (i.e., five times less than in Nunavik).

¹³ This profile refers to private households only, where the lodging is occupied by one or more persons (Statistics Canada, 2017b).
The average number of persons per private household = Number of persons living in private households / Number of private households.

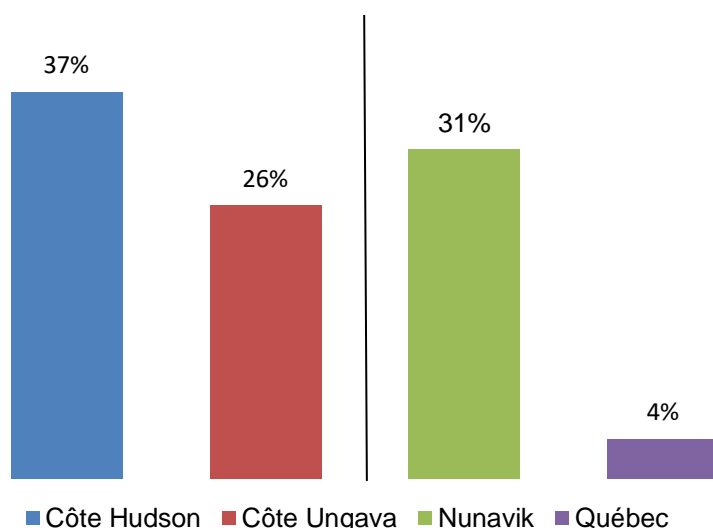
Figure 13 Population distribution according to size of household, Nunavik, Nunavik coasts and Québec, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census, Special compilation, BIESP.

In addition, more than one in every 3 households in Nunavik lives in a lodging that is too small¹⁴; this proportion is 8 times greater than that for Québec households (Figure 14). The Hudson Coast counts more lodgings of an insufficient size than does the Ungava Coast.

Figure 14 Proportion of households living in a lodging of insufficient size, Nunavik, Nunavik coasts and Québec, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census, Special compilation, BIESP.

The matter of overcrowded lodgings in the region is compounded by the need for major repairs. In 2016, close to one out of four lodgings in Nunavik required major repairs¹⁵. This proportion is 4 times higher than that for Québec, which is at 6% (no illustration; Government of Canada, 2017). *Qanuilirpitaa? 2017* also

¹⁴ According to the National Occupancy Standard (NOS), a lodging of acceptable size includes the number of bedrooms required given the household's size and composition. This standard further specifies that "number of bedrooms required" refers to one bedroom for a couple (two adults), two children of the same sex if under 18 years of age, and two children of the opposite sex if under 5 years of age (Statistics Canada, 2017c).

¹⁵ Major repairs include repairs to the electrical or plumbing systems as well as structural repairs of the walls, floors/ground or ceilings (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

comprises information on lodgings in Nunavik, by providing data on household size and composition, overcrowding and the necessary repairs to lodgings, based on gender and age ([Riva et al., 2020a](#)).

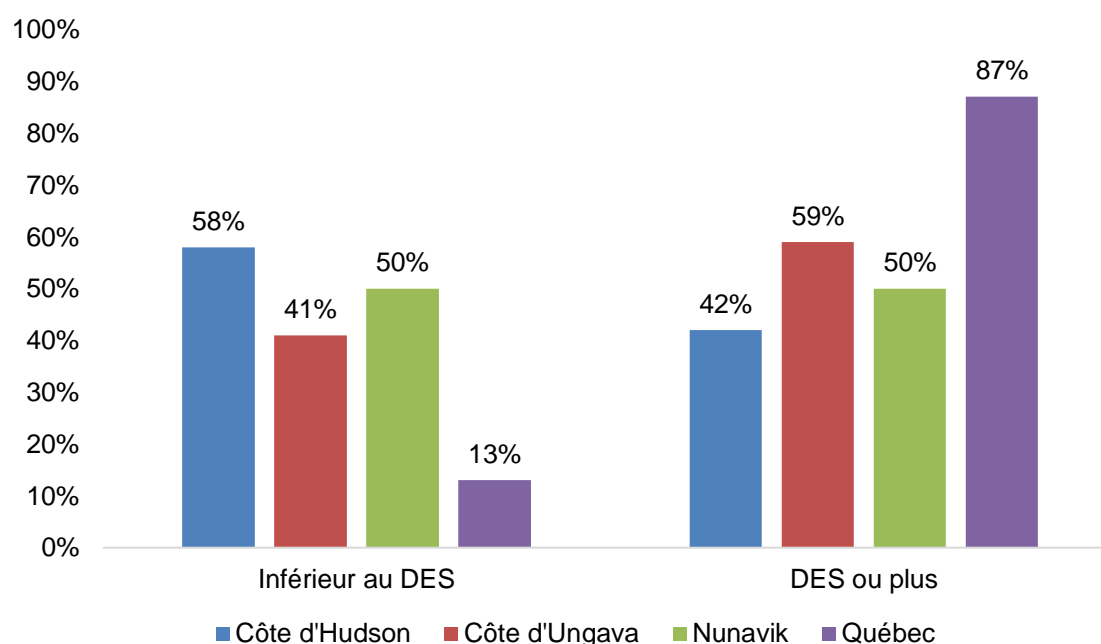
3.3.3 IN SHORT

1. Fertility rates have remained above the generation replacement level threshold, and were higher on the Hudson Coast. This rate is particularly high for the 15-19 age group in Nunavik, compared with Québec.
2. The average number of persons per household is nearly twice as high as in Québec. Moreover, the proportion of households composed of 5 people or more is five times higher in Nunavik than elsewhere in Québec.
3. One in every 3 households in Nunavik lives in a lodging that is too small; this proportion is 8 times greater than that for Québec households.

3.4 Level of education

In 2016, one out of every two adults in Nunavik had obtained at least a high school diploma¹⁶ (DES; Figure 15). This illustrates that the proportion of adults who have not finished high school was then nearly 4 times greater in Nunavik than elsewhere in Québec. Moreover, the population living on the Ungava Coast has a higher level of education than does that on the Hudson Coast. *Qanuillirpita?* 2017 also provides information on the primary, secondary and postsecondary education levels completed, as well as the vocational or technical training programs followed, among Nunavimmiut and according to age ([Riva et al., 2020b](#)).

Figure 15 Proportion of the population with a high school diploma, aged between 25 and 64 years, Nunavik, Nunavik coasts and Québec, 2016



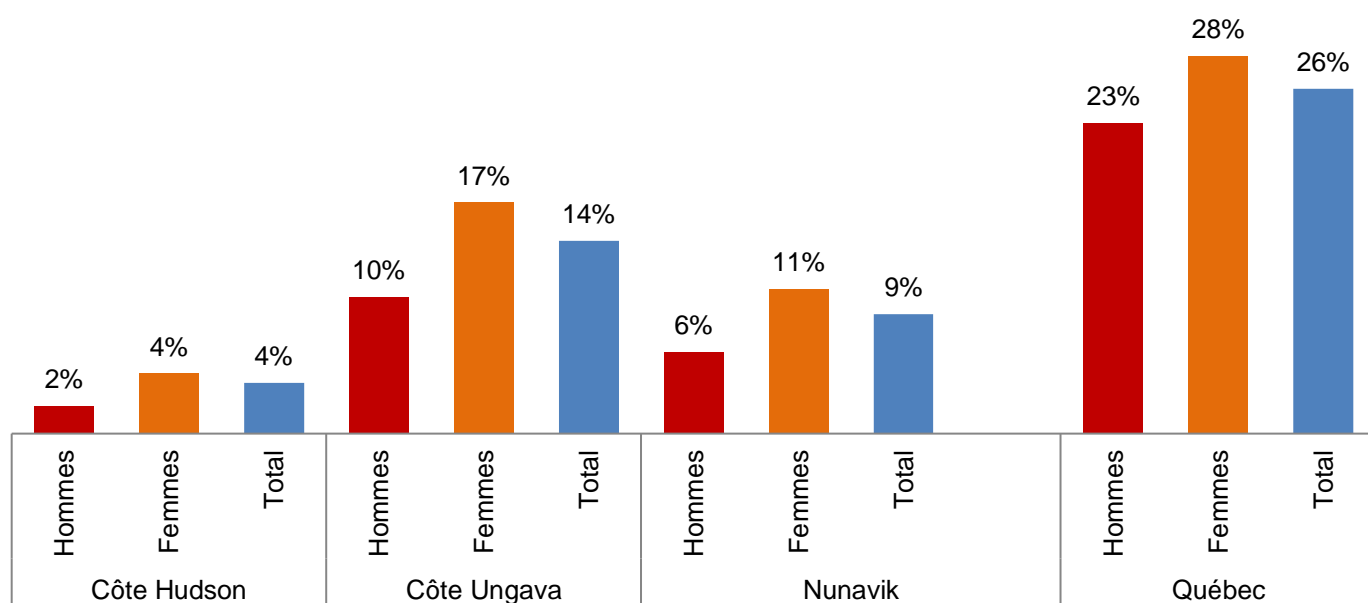
Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census.

A more in-depth analysis of the different postsecondary education levels reveals that there are proportionally more women than men in Nunavik with a university diploma (Figure 16). There is also a difference in holders of a university diploma between the two coasts. The graphs in Figure 17 show that in

¹⁶ This category incorporates: high school diploma (DES), DCS (diploma of college or university studies) and diploma of vocational studies (DVS).

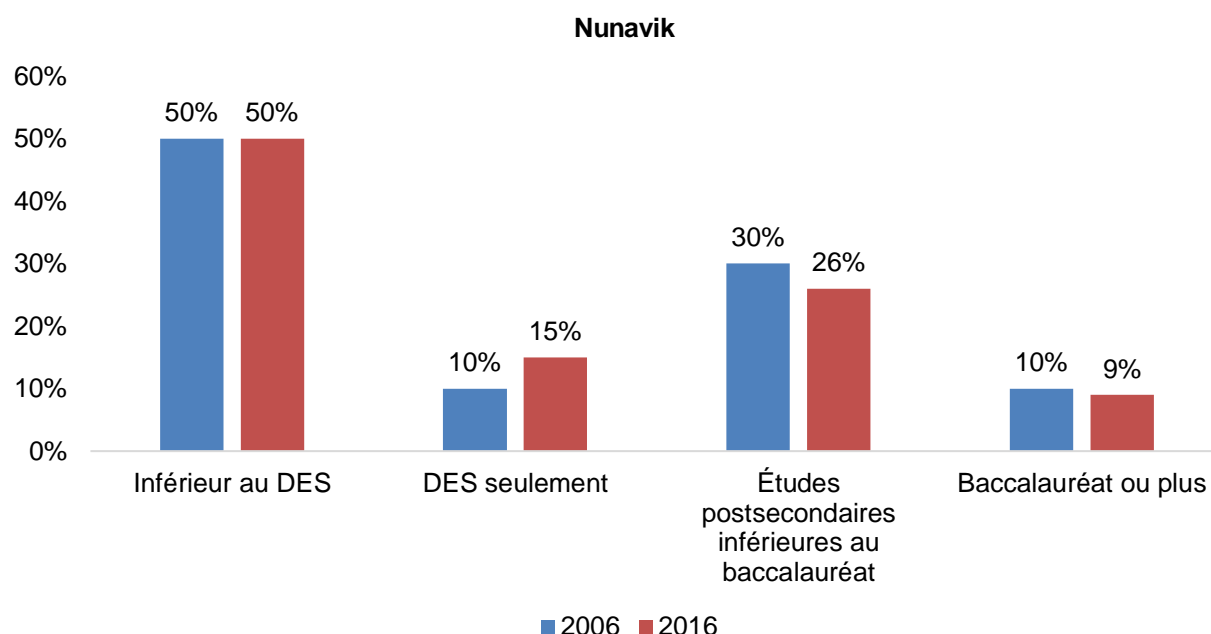
general, levels of education in the region have remained stable over the past years, thereby upholding the variances with the population of Québec in this regard.

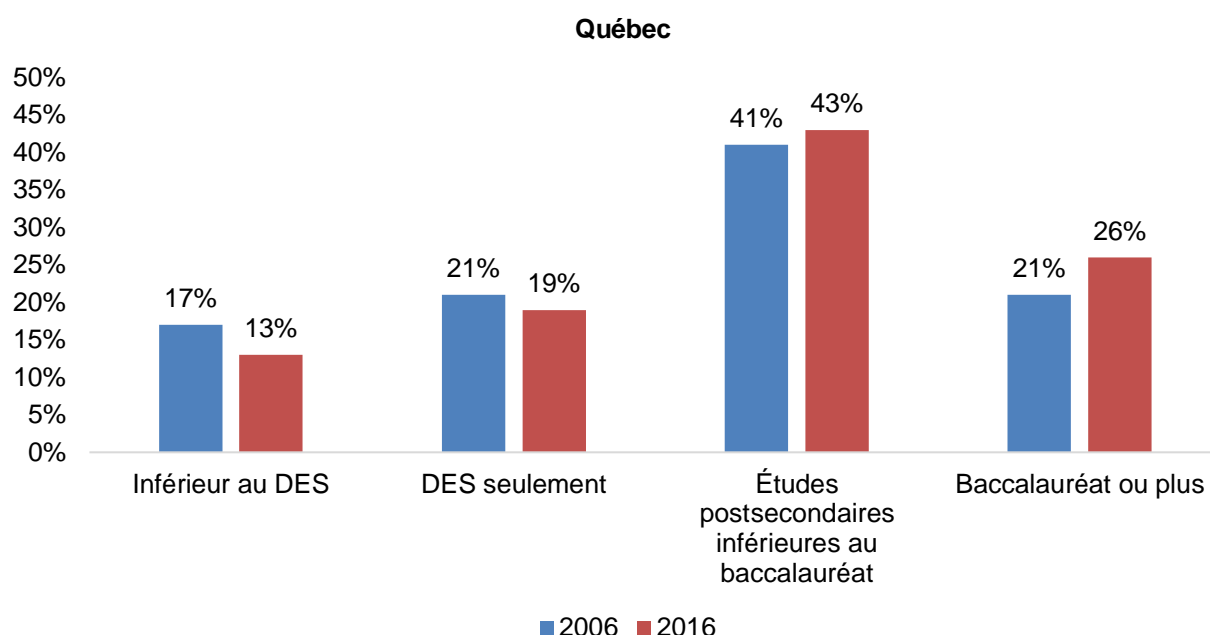
Figure 16 Proportion of the population with a university diploma, aged between 25 and 64 years and by gender, Nunavik, Nunavik coasts and Québec, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census, Special compilation, BIESP.

Figure 17 Evolution of the level of education, population aged between 25 and 64 years, Nunavik and Québec, 2006 and 2016





Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2006 Census and 2016 Census, Special compilation, BIESP.

Note: "Postsecondary education at a level below that of a Bachelor's degree" refers to a DCS or DVS.

3.4.1 IN SHORT

1. Levels of education in the region have remained stable over the past few years.
2. In 2016, one in two adults in Nunavik had a high school diploma, with this rate being slightly higher on the Ungava Coast.
3. A greater proportion of women than men have a university diploma, an observation that also applies to the Ungava Coast and the Hudson Coast.

3.5 Employment and unemployment

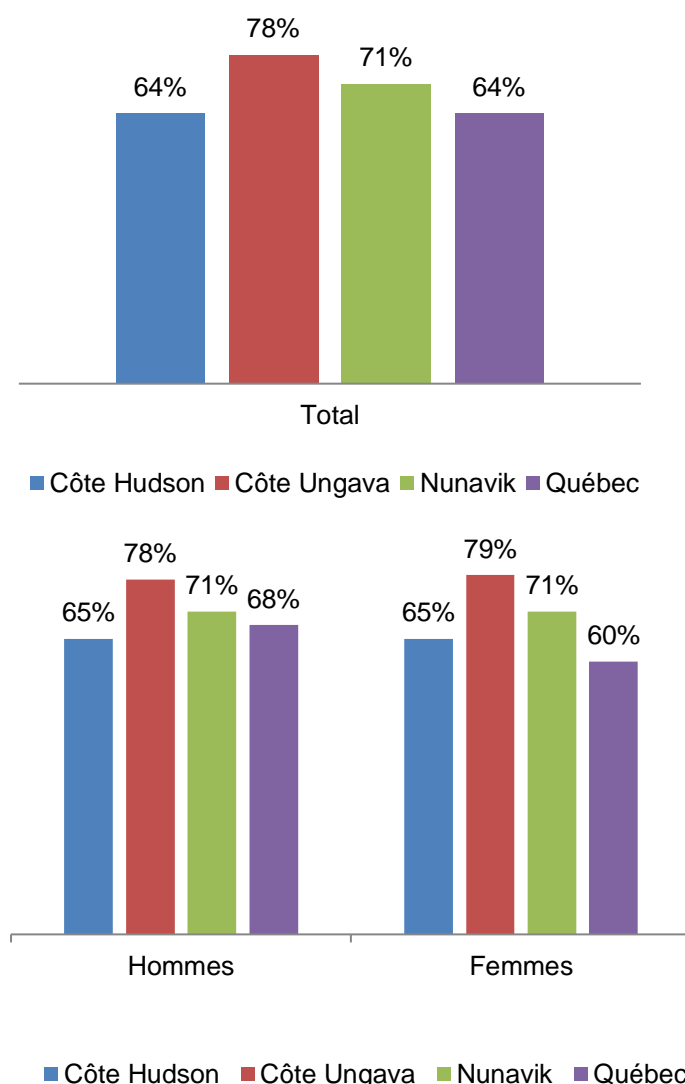
This next section will consider the labour market in Nunavik, which will be described from three different perspectives, namely labour force participation rate, employment rate and unemployment rate. Appendix A includes more information on the definitions of these concepts and the related calculations. As regards employment status, the *Qanuillirpitaa? 2017* sociodemographic report considers paid work and volunteer work, both full-time and part-time, according to age and gender ([Riva et al., 2020b](#)).

3.5.1 LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

The labour force participation rate¹⁷ reflects the proportion of people able to work (unemployed or working; Statistics Canada, 2015a) in the population aged 15 years or more. Figure 18 depicts a higher labour force participation rate in Nunavik than elsewhere in Québec. In other words, a greater proportion of people in Nunavik work or are unemployed than in Québec. On a regional scale, the labour force participation rate is higher on the Ungava Coast than on the Hudson Coast. We also observed that the labour force participation rate in Nunavik is similar among both men and women, but higher for men elsewhere in Québec.

¹⁷ The labour force participation rate does not account for all activities or positions, for example, the Hunter Support Program or retirees, students and persons on parental leave.

Figure 18 Labour force participation rate by gender, population aged 15 years or more, Nunavik, Nunavik coasts and Québec, 2016



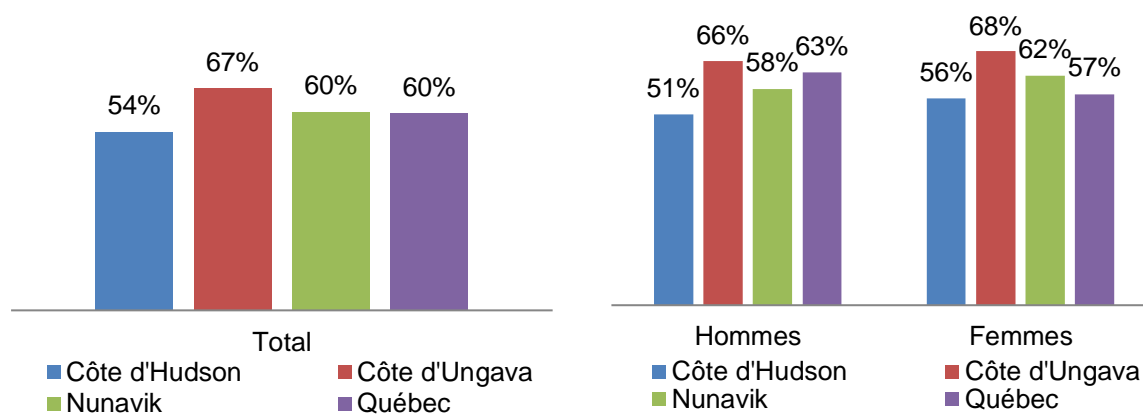
Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census. Special compilation, BIESP.

Note: A person aged 15 years or more was considered a member of the labour force if working or unemployed during the week of Sunday May 1 to Saturday, May 7, 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2011).

3.5.2 EMPLOYMENT RATE

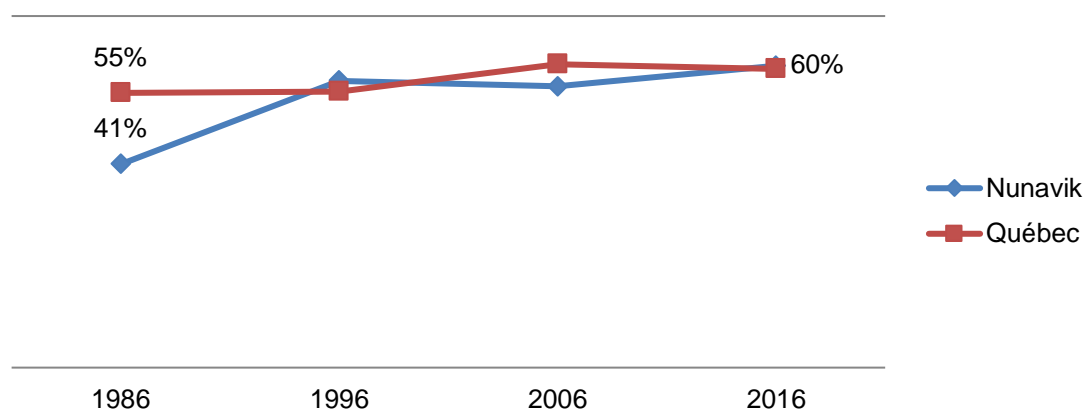
Figure 19 illustrates that the employment rate is lower on the Hudson Coast than on the Ungava Coast. It also reveals that the employment rate in Nunavik is relatively similar to that in Québec (graphic on the left). Unlike the situation in Québec, the employment rate of Nunavik women is slightly higher than that of their male counterparts. Hence, whereas Nunavik men have a lower employment rate than men elsewhere in Québec, the respective employment rates for women in Nunavik and Québec are similar. In addition, Figure 20 indicates that the Nunavik employment rate rose over the last few decades to catch up to Québec's rate in the mid-90s.

Figure 19 Employment rate by gender, population aged 15 years or more, Nunavik, Nunavik coasts and Québec, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census. Special compilation, BIESP.

Figure 20 Employment rate, population aged 15 years or more, Nunavik and Québec, 1986-1996-2006-2016

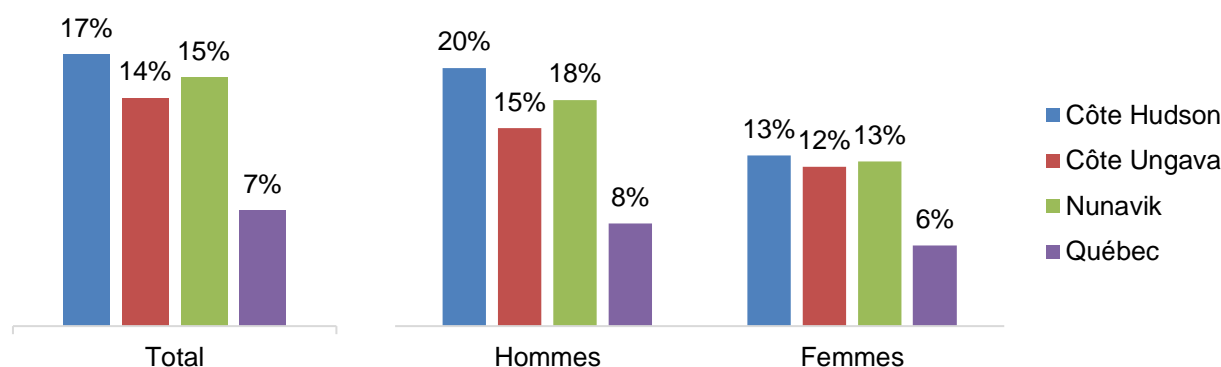


Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census, Special compilation, BIESP.

3.5.3 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The unemployment rate in Nunavik is twice that of Québec as a whole (Figure 21). Furthermore, the unemployment rate among residents of the Hudson Coast is slightly higher than for the population of the Ungava Coast, and these variances are more obvious among men than women.

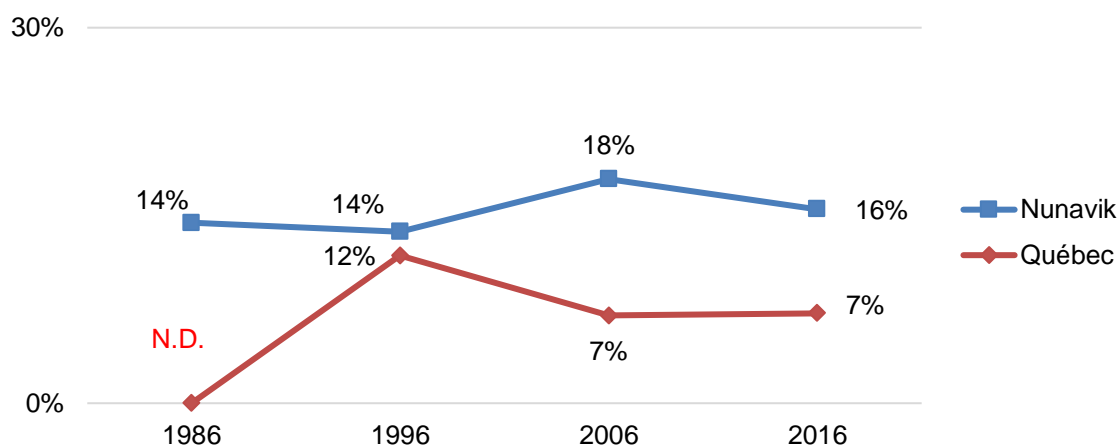
Figure 21 Unemployment rate by gender, population aged 15 years or more, Nunavik, Nunavik coasts and Québec, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 2016 Census. Special compilation, BIESP.

Figure 22 shows that the unemployment rate in Nunavik rose slightly at the time of the 2006 Census; the opposite occurred in Québec at this same period. This hike had the effect of bringing Nunavik's unemployment rate to more than twice that of Québec in 2006. This rate has remained relatively stable since then.

Figure 22 Unemployment rate, population aged 15 years or more, Nunavik and Québec, 1986-1996-2006-2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Census Profile, 1986, 1996, 2006 and 2016 Census, Special compilation, BIESP.

3.5.4 IN SHORT

1. In Nunavik, the labour force participation rate is comparable for both men and women.
2. The employment rate in Nunavik has increased over the past few decades, and women now boast a slightly higher employment rate than men.
3. The unemployment rate in Nunavik is two times higher than that in Québec and also higher for residents of the Hudson Coast and men.

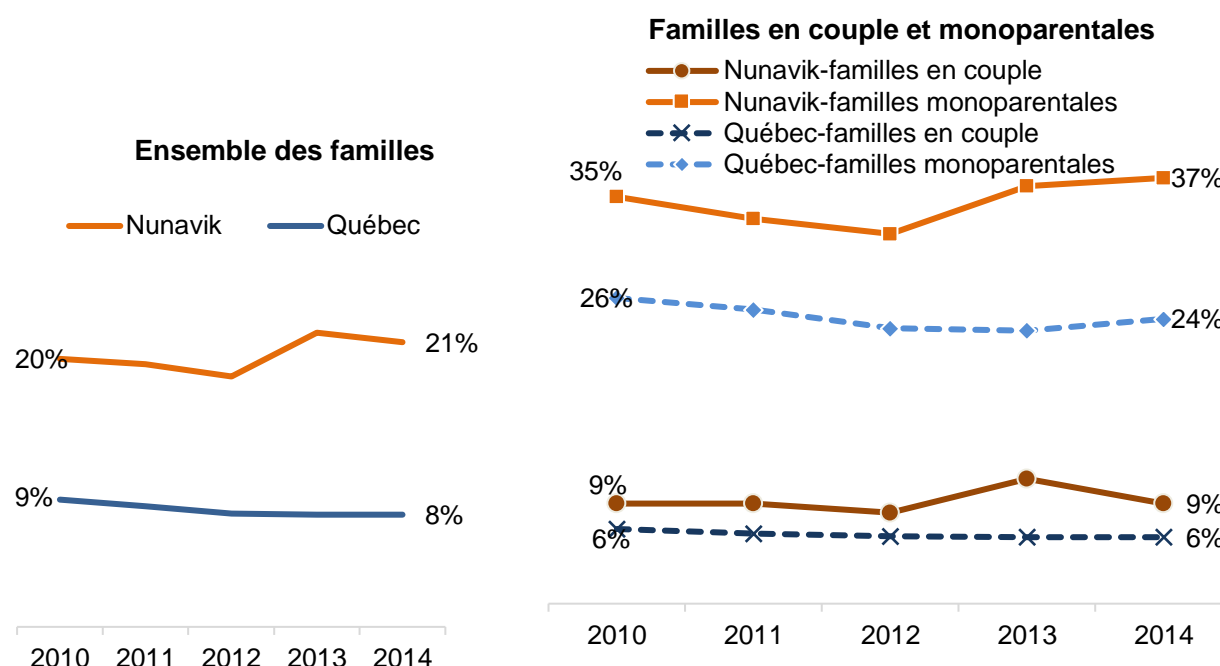
3.6 Income

The employment precarity discussed earlier poses a financial challenge for numerous families¹⁸ in Nunavik. Data from *Qanuillirpita? 2017* support this observation, reporting annual income proportions and

¹⁸ Data on families that include a couple and on single-parent families are included in this profile. Hence, families comprised of "a couple" usually have two incomes, while single-parent families have only one.

perceived financial security among the Nunavimmiut ([Riva et al., 2020b](#)). In fact, the low-income rate¹⁹ is twice as high in Nunavik than in Québec as a whole. These variances are greater in the case of single-parent families than a couple with children²⁰ (Figure 23).

Figure 23 Low-income rate according to the type of family, Nunavik and Québec, 2010 at 2014



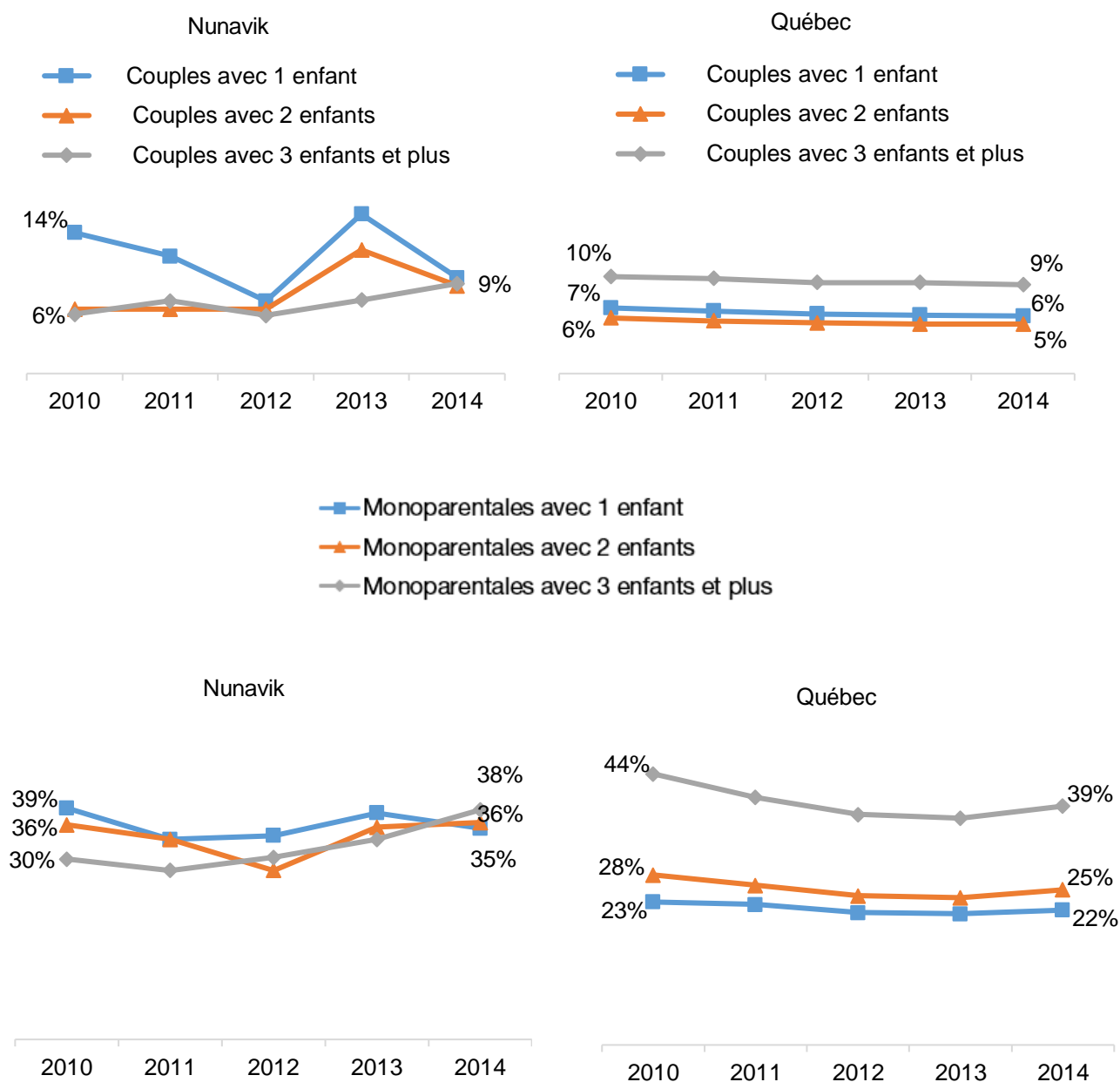
Source: Statistics Canada, Register of families, Q1, updated on February 17, 2017 and adapted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec. **Compilation:** Institut de la statistique du Québec.

For families comprised of a couple, the top graph in Figure 24 illustrates that the low-income rate according to the number of children varies throughout the year in Nunavik, while remaining stable elsewhere in Québec. It can also be seen, in the bottom graphs, that the low-income rate usually increases with a greater number of children of single-parent families. This type of increase is not present among single-parent families in Nunavik.

¹⁹ The low-income rate is calculated using the low-income measure (LIM), based on 50% of the median after-tax family income in Québec. The low income cut-off (LICO) corresponds to an income threshold below which a family will likely need to allocate a larger part of its income to the purchase of necessities such as food, lodgings and clothing than would the average family (Statistics Canada, 2015b). This threshold is unfortunately not tailored to the cost of living, which is generally much higher in Nunavik than elsewhere in Québec; for this reason, these statistics underestimate the true proportion of families in the region that are living in poverty.

²⁰ Families comprised of a couple are often dubbed as 'intact' families, i.e., a couple with children who are all the biological or adopted children of two spouses who are married or two partners living together. This does not include blended families with at least one biological or adopted child of only one of the married spouses or partners living together who was born or adopted prior to the beginning of the present relationship (Statistics Canada, 2012).

Figure 24 Low-income rate among families comprised of a couple and single-parent families, according to the number of children, Nunavik and Québec, 2010 at 2014



Source: Statistics Canada, Register of families, Q1, adapted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec. Compilation: Institut de la statistique du Québec.

3.6.1 IN SHORT

1. The low-income rate in Nunavik is over twice as high as it is elsewhere in Québec and these variances are more prominent for single-parent families than for families comprised of a couple.
2. The low-income rate is still high among single-parent families in Nunavik, regardless of the number of children.

4 Conclusion

The Nunavimmiut have always retained a strong Inuit identity. Inuktitut is also alive and well, with the vast majority of the population having a knowledge of the language that allows them to engage in a conversation. The reason why the population on the Hudson Coast has higher proportions for both these aspects than do residents of the Ungava Coast is likely related to the greater proportion of non-Inuit living in Kuujuaq, which is the primary administrative centre in Nunavik, on the Ungava Coast. Moreover, on the Hudson Coast, Kuujuarapik is home to a large number of Cree, who speak the Cree language rather than Inuktitut.

The population of Nunavik is growing rapidly, in part due to a high fertility rate. The population is also younger than that elsewhere in Québec. The proportion of older people is growing, however, and according to projections, will likely keep doing so over the next years. In addition, the size and number of housing units/lodgings remain insufficient in light of the population growth, with the result being that several families find themselves living in overcrowded lodgings that require major repairs.

One out of every two adults has a DES, and residents of the Ungava Coast and women are more numerous as regards having a university diploma. The fact that there is a greater proportion of people who work or are unemployed (labour force participation rate) in Nunavik, compared to Québec, does not necessarily mean that the region has more favourable employment prospects. In fact, the persistently high unemployment rate in Nunavik could point to a structural unemployment resulting from the incompatibility between limited access to postsecondary education and the qualifications required for a large proportion of the available jobs in the region. The high labour force participation rate in Nunavik can be in part explained by a greater number of young adults in the region than in Québec. And whereas the employment rate in Nunavik has increased over the past few decades, the income of numerous families is inadequate to meet their needs, particularly given the high cost of living²¹ in the region.

Health-related variances in the Nunavik population could be largely and sustainably met by taking quick action to directly improve the living conditions of all Nunavimmiut. To ensure a culturally appropriate approach, these actions should focus on the “[Translation] ... respect for the self-determination of the Inuit as regards choosing those measures most likely to uphold and strengthen their cultural, social, economic and political development. The federal and provincial governments have a duty to support these initiatives through political and financial support that is both appropriate and long-term.” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2014).

²¹ 60% of the expenses of the average Nunavik household are dedicated to food and lodging (Robitaille et al., 2018). This data provides a clear example of the high cost of living in the region.

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Appendix A

Note that the unemployment rate and employment rate have distinct denominators; this must be considered when interpreting the data.

Labour force =	Unemployed persons + Persons working
Labour force participation rate =	$\frac{\text{Labour force}}{\text{Total population aged 15 years or more}}$
Employment rate =	$\frac{\text{Persons working}}{\text{Total population aged 15 years or more}}$
Unemployment rate =	$\frac{\text{Unemployed workers}}{\text{Labour force}}$