

2 QUEBEC FIRST NATIONS: HOUSING SITUATION

Chapter 2 of the Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS, 2008) presents the state of the housing situation of Quebec First Nations living on a community. This is a summary of the information included in Chapter 2. Therefore, it does not include all the knowledge covered by the survey, and may be open to different interpretations. To have a complete understanding of the results, the reader is invited to consult the entire chapter.

Following the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Canada, 1996), a number of issues related to housing, such as the need for major repairs, access to running water, overcrowding, the degree of cleanliness, and the cost of rent were identified as problematic. This summary addresses the housing types, infrastructure and services, housing size and quality, mold and water quality in First Nations communities of Quebec.

Housing type

Regarding the types of occupied dwellings¹ in 2008, 61.2% of the First Nations population reported living in band housing, 5.2% said they were tenants and 30.5% owners. As shown in Table 1 below, the proportion of people living in band housing increased between 2002 and 2008.

¹ Property Housing

A unit is considered “owned” even if it is not fully paid, which is the case, for instance, of a home subject to a mortgage or other debt. Housing can be located on rented or leased land or part of a registered or unregistered divided co-property (condominium).

Rental Housing

A unit is considered “rented” even if it is rented out without rent being paid or at a reduced rent, or if it is part of a cooperative. For census purposes, all members of a cooperative have shares and they occupy their dwelling with a lease.

Band Housing

For historical and legal reasons, housing occupation in reserves does not lend itself to the usual occupation classifications. A special category called “band housing” has been created for census purposes.

² Geographic zone

Degree of geographic isolation is based on a zone system developed by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

Zone 1: The community is located less than 50 km from a service centre with year-round road access.

Zone 2: The community is located between 50 km and 350 km from a service centre with year-round road access.

Zone 3: The community is located over 350 km from a service centre with year-round road access.

Zone 4: The community has no year-round road access to a service centre.

Service centre: The nearest location where the community members must go in order to access service providers, banks and governmental services.

Table 1: Housing type in 2008 (N = 19,068) and 2002 (N = 16,689)

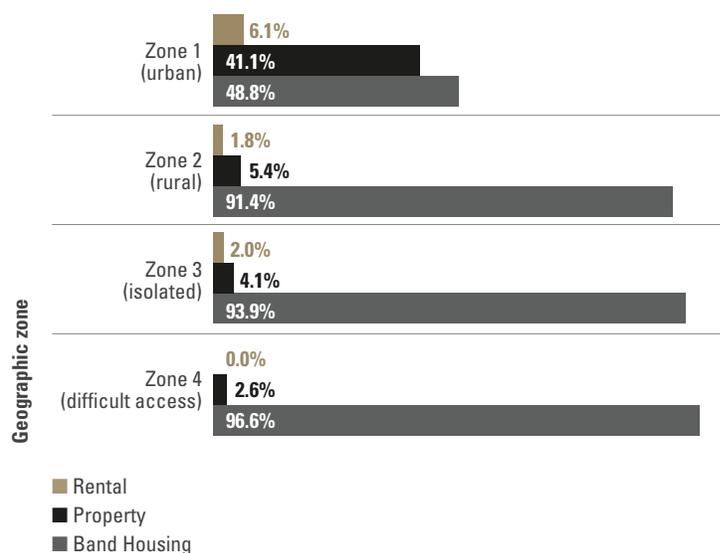
Housing type	RHS 2008	RHS 2002
	%	%
Rental [†]	5.2	7.9
Property ^{††}	30.5	39.9
Band housing ^{††}	61.2	48.7
Other, don't know, refused	3.1	3.5

[†] p < 0.01 (comparison between 2008 and 2002)

^{††} p < 0.001 (comparison between 2008 and 2002)

Figure 1 shows a significant decrease in the percentage of owners based on the geographical isolation of the community in which they reside; the more remote the community is,² the more the percentage of owners decreases. Specifically, 41.1% of the population of Zone 1 are homeowners while this is the case for only 2.6% of the people of Zone 4. In this regard, income also seems to have an influence on access to property. The proportion of ownership tends to increase with income.

Figure 1: Housing type, by geographical zone (N = 19,068)



Basic infrastructure and services

The proportion of First Nations who indicated having different infrastructure and amenities in their housing (e.g., running water, electricity, refrigerator, computer, internet connection, etc.) tends to increase with household income and education. Moreover, it seems that the more geographically isolated the community is, the less the individuals who reside there have computers or access to the Internet. Homeowners are also more likely to have a variety of infrastructure and amenities in their homes.

Housing size and quality

Observing Table 2, we note that the percentage of people living in overcrowded conditions remained similar between 2002 and 2008. However, the proportion of people living in these conditions tends to increase with geographic isolation. Specifically, 24.1% of the population of Zone 2 and 26.2% of Zone 3 live in housing with more than one person per room.

Table 2: Housing size in 2008 (N = 19,068) and 2002 (N = 16,688)

Number of persons per room	RHS 2008	RHS 2002
	%	%
One person or less per room [†]	71.0	88.3
More than one person per room (overcrowding)	8.8	9.4
Missing value [†]	20.2 *	2.3

[†]p < 0.001 (comparison between 2008 and 2002)

*The number of missing values is very high. The data should be used with caution. The high percentage of missing values in 2008 can be explained by changes in how to administer questions relating to the number of persons in a household.

In 2003, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada estimated at 8,500 the number of additional housing units required to meet demand in the communities. In 2008, this number was estimated at 20,000, which represents a 135% increase in the demand for housing. Compared with the Canadian population, of whom 3% live in overcrowded conditions, the proportion of Quebec First Nations experiencing this reality is three times higher (9%). In band housing, the rate was 13.3%.

As for housing quality, we note that 27.5% of the population of Quebec First Nations lived in a home needing major renovations in 2008. As shown in Table 2, this is a slight increase as compared to 2002 (24.7%). The needs in terms of housing quality vary by geographic isolation zones. While 19% of Zone 1 lived in housing requiring major renovations, such was the case for 42.4% in Zone 2, 52.7% in Zone 3 and 42.6% in Zone 4. In other words, these proportions can vary widely depending on the zones in question.

Table 3: Housing quality in 2008 (N = 19,068) and 2002 (N = 16,688)

Does this housing require repairs?	RHS 2008	RHS 2002
	%	%
Yes, major repairs	27.5	24.7
Yes, minor repairs [†]	25.3	29.1
No, only maintenance work (painting, furnace)	43.9	44.2
Don't know, refused	3.4	2.0

[†]p < 0.05 (comparison between 2008 and 2002)

Mold

Regarding mold, there are also significant differences according to the geographical isolation of the community. Zone 2, where we observe the largest proportion of people living in a dwelling affected by mold, appears particularly affected.

Table 4: Presence of mold in housing in past year by geographic zone in 2008 (N = 19,068) and 2002 (N = 16,688)

Presence of mold	Zone 1 (urban)	Zone 2 (rural)	Zone 3 (isolated)	Zone 4 (difficult access)
	%	%	%	%
No mold	67.6	41.0	58.2	49.8
Presence of mold	28.7	54.0	40.9	44.9
Don't know, refused	3.6	5.0	0.9	5.3

p < 0.001

Water quality

According to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, the analysis of water in First Nations communities would be below standard recommendations for water quality in Canada. Moreover, as shown in Table 4, 26.4% of the population of the First Nations of Quebec considers that the water coming from their main supply source is not safe, year-round.

Table 5: Perception of water quality in 2008 (N = 19,068) and 2002 (N = 16,688)

In your opinion, is the water that comes from your main supply source drinkable throughout the year?	RHS 2008	RHS 2002
	%	%
Yes	67.4	69.0
No	26.4	27.1
Don't know [†]	5.9	3.9
Refused	0.3	0.1

[†]p < 0.01 (comparison between 2008 and 2002)

Finally, this summary provides an overview of Chapter 2 of the Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey. For more details on the survey results, the full chapter is available at the following link: <http://www.cssspnql.com/docs/centre-de-documentation/chapitre-2-eng.pdf?sfvrsn=2>



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