Demographic Change and Context in Rural Canada

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Introduction

• Purpose
  • To provide an overview of:
    • The degrees of rural in Canada
    • Changes in rural populations in rural Canada over time
    • Differences in the percentage of rural Canadians across Canada
    • Provide case study communities for context

• Outcome
  • A better understanding of
    • How and where rural populations are changing
    • The importance of Statistics Canada in understanding demographic patterns and change
    • How rural still matters across Canada
Demographic Changes in Canada: 1901-2016

The Transition from Rural to Urban Society

The Key Census Year in the Transition

• 1931 Census
  • More people lived in urban areas than rural
  • Not true for all regions
    • This lecture illustrates this point
Rural Differs across Canada and within Provinces and Territories

Different Rural – Urban Regions

• Statistics Canada’s Demographic Categories
  • Predominately urban
  • Intermediate
  • All predominately rural
  • Rural – metro adjacent
  • Rural – non metro adjacent
  • Remote
Rural Population - Atlantic

- 1901: 75.5%
- 1921: 61.2%
- 1941: 55.9%
- 1961: 49.9%
- 1981: 45.1%
- 1991: 45.9%
- 2001: 46.1%

Source: Bone (2003), derived from Table 4.4., p. 168

In Newfoundland, population decline since 1991

Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1981 - 2001. A predominantly rural region has over 50 percent of its population living in rural communities. An intermediate region has 15 to 49 percent living rural communities and a predominantly urban region has less than 15 percent of its population living in rural communities.
In Prince Edward Island, general population growth

In Nova Scotia, rural population decline since 1991

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1981 - 2001. A predominantly rural region has over 50 percent of its population living in rural communities. An intermediate region has 15 to 49 percent living rural communities and a predominantly urban region has less than 15 percent of its population living in rural communities.
In New Brunswick, urban decline and growth in rural metro-adjacent

Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1981 - 2001. A predominantly rural region has over 50 percent of its population living in rural communities. An intermediate region has 15 to 49 percent living rural communities, and a predominantly urban region has less than 15 percent of its population living in rural communities.

Rural Population - Quebec

- 1901  63.9%
- 1921  48.2%
- 1941  38.8%
- 1961  25.7%
- 1981  22.4%
- 1991  22.4%
- 2001  19.6%

Source: Bone (2003), derived from Table 4.4., p. 168)
In Quebec, growth in rural metro-adjacent since 1986

- Predominantly urban regions
- Intermediate regions
- All predominantly rural regions
- Rural metro-adjacent regions
- Rural non-metro-adjacent regions
- Rural northern regions

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1981 - 2001. A predominantly rural region has over 50 percent of its population living in rural communities. An intermediate region has 15 to 49 percent living rural communities, and a predominantly urban region has less than 15 percent of its population living in rural communities.

Rural Population - Ontario

- 1901 59.7%
- 1921 41.2%
- 1941 32.5%
- 1961 22.7%
- 1981 18.3%
- 1991 18.2%
- 2001 15.3%

Source: Bone (2003), derived from Table 4.4., p. 168)
In Ontario, decline in rural northern regions in 2001

- Predominantly urban regions
- Intermediate regions
- All predominantly rural regions
- Rural metro-adjacent regions
- Rural non-metro-adjacent regions
- Rural northern regions

Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1981 - 2001. A predominantly rural region has over 50 percent of its population living in rural communities. An intermediate region has 15 to 49 percent living rural communities and a predominantly urban region has less than 15 percent of its population living in rural communities.

Rural Population - Prairies

- 1901  80.7%
- 1921  71.3%
- 1941  67.6%
- 1961  42.4%
- 1981  28.6%
- 1991  25.6%
- 2001  24.3%

Source: Bone (2003), derived from Table 4.4., p. 168)
In Manitoba, strong growth in rural metro-adjacent regions

Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1981 - 2001. A predominantly rural region has over 50 percent of its population living in rural communities. An intermediate region has 15 to 49 percent living rural communities, and a predominantly urban region has less than 15 percent of its population living in rural communities.

In Saskatchewan, strong growth in rural northern regions since 1986

Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1981 - 2001. A predominantly rural region has over 50 percent of its population living in rural communities. An intermediate region has 15 to 49 percent living rural communities, and a predominantly urban region has less than 15 percent of its population living in rural communities.
In Alberta, strong growth in rural metro-adjacent regions

Predominantly urban regions
Intermediate regions
All predominantly rural regions
Rural metro-adjacent regions
Rural non-metro-adjacent regions
Rural northern regions

Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1981 - 2001. A predominantly rural region has over 50 percent of its population living in rural communities. An intermediate region has 15 to 49 percent living rural communities and a predominantly urban region has less than 15 percent of its population living in rural communities.

Rural Population – B.C.

- 1901  53.6%
- 1921  49.1%
- 1941  36.0%
- 1961  26.4%
- 1981  22.0%
- 1991  19.6%
- 2001  15.3%

Source: Bone (2003), derived from Table 4.4., p. 168)
In British Columbia, decline in rural northern regions in 2001

Between 1996 and 2001, population decline in non-metro-adjacent and northern regions

Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1981 - 2001. A predominantly rural region has over 50 percent of its population living in rural communities. An intermediate region has 15 to 49 percent living rural communities and a predominantly urban region has less than 15 percent of its population living in rural communities.
Between 1996 and 2001, population decline in non-metro-adjacent and northern regions

Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1981 - 2001. A predominantly rural region has over 50 percent of its population living in rural communities. An intermediate region has 15 to 49 percent living rural communities and a predominantly urban region has less than 15 percent of its population living in rural communities.
### Rural Canada: 2006-2016

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Summary

• Perception of Canada as rural
  • Only in one region is this statistically true:
    • Atlantic Canada

• Rural is growing
  • But not proportionately to urban

• Rural growth and decline
  • Dependent on region
  • Dependent on metro-adjacency
  • Dependent on economic factors
    • E.g. Mine closure, agricultural/forestry restructuring

Welcome Home:
Travels in Small Town Canada

Stuart McLean,
1992
“Welcome Home”

- Author: Stuart McLean
  - Passed away February 2017
  - Perhaps most famous for CBC – Vinyl Café
  - Also a humourist, author, “story telling comic”

- “Canada recently lost one of its most treasured voices, Stuart McLean. His belief in the beauty and complexity of rural life in Canada was expressed throughout his stories, his tours and his sense of humour.” (Alyse Stuart, The Telegram, March 2017)

“Welcome Home”

- “Welcome Home: Travels in Small Town Canada”
  - Travel across Canada
  - Vignette of seven communities from BC to Newfoundland – no territories

- 6 of 7 have Web sites and census data
  - Here is a tour
Maple Creek, SK

- [www.maplecreek.ca](http://www.maplecreek.ca)
- “Where Past is Present”
- Population:
  - 2016 2,084 (-4.2%, 2011-16)
  - 2011 2,176 (-1.0%, 2006-11)
  - 2006 2,198
- Midway between Calgary and Regina
  - 8 km south of Trans Canada
  - Close to Cypress Hills Provincial Park
• “The sign on the door of the town’s arena says ‘No Sunflower Seeds Allowed Inside’.

• On the Currah Bakery:
  • "It used to be that every small town had a little bakery. But the big companies are pushing them out. What they do is put there bread on special. A guy tried to pen a bakery a few years ago over in Leader. Well, Weston cam in and dropped their bread prices to fifty cents. Now bread is up to $1.80 in Leader...Even here in Maple Creek the IGA will sometimes put their bread on sale. I don’t try to match them, though. You can’t sell something at a loss."

Dresden, ON

• [www.dresden.ca](http://www.dresden.ca)
• “Explore Dresden: the charm ... the beauty ... the lifestyle”
• Population:
  • 2016  2,451 (+2.8%, 2011-16)
  • 2011  2,385  (revised geography)
  • 2006  2,496

• An agricultural community in SW Ontario
• Uncle Tom’s Cabin historic site
  • Terminus of the Underground Railway
• “Dresden isn’t growing. In fact, the population hasn’t changed considerably since 1882, when it was already 2,080.”

• “There have been all manner of businesses over the years – four brickyards, an apple-evaporation plant, a sugar beet factory, a woodworking plant” (also Louisville Slugger bats and automobile parts)

• “The juke-box in the bar of the Dresden Hotel favours country artists like Johnny Paycheck and Merle Haggard.”

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Saint-Jean-du-Matha, QC


• a decouvrir en toutes saisons (A view to all seasons)

• Population:
  • 2016  4,450 (+2.7%, 2011-16)
  • 2011  4,335 (+4.4%, 2006-11)
  • 2006  4,152
"You can see winter in the architecture everywhere you look – the old houses small because they were easier to heat; the brightly painted tin roofs pitched steeper here than anywhere in the country..." (snowfall)

"These days the main crop....is tourists."

On the large trucks that go through town every hour:

"It’s garbage. For the dump. We are a nice little village but we are also a dumping ground. They bring garbage here from Montreal and Ottawa. It’s a big, big controversy."

Sackville, NB

Or ‘Suckville' as I heard when I lived there

www.sackville.com

“A great place to live and get creative"

“Home of Mount Allison University"

Population:

- 2016 5,331 (-4.1%, 2011-16)
- 2011 5,558 (+2.7%, 2002-11)
- 2006 5,411
• First farming, then foundries – stoves, furnaces, heaters fueled by wood, gas, oil and then electricity. The Molders Union was one of the first in Canada (March 1, 1889)
• From the local newspaper (clarification not correction!):
  • "Maurice (Jake) Fisher is not the "Jake" referred to in the letter to the editor in last week's Tribune Post. The "Jake" to which the letter was dedicated was the family pet dog found shot dead"

• Mount Allison University: Take back the town parties in spring
• How people got to know me - Bridget!

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**Foxwarren, MB**

• No community Web site but RM of Birtle:
  • [www.birtle.ca](http://www.birtle.ca)
• No tag line or motto
• Population (Prairie View RM – new geog)
  • 2016  2,088 (-3.6%, 2011-16)
  • 2011  2,167
• Population (Birtle RM)
  • 2011  632 (-5.1%, 2006-2011)
  • 2006  666
• Read p. 246
• “There are parts of the prairie where you are never out of sight of a grain elevator. You can glance at your rear-view mirror, and just as one elevator vanishes out the back, the top of another will poke over the horizon in front of you like a telephone pole. In western Canada, prosperity is calculated in units of verticality. Oils rigs, grain elevators, and silos measure the land.”
• “The town of Foxwarren will be gone soon” All sales are vacant farms.

Nakusp, BC

• www.nakusp.com
• Three Aboriginal groups: Shuswap, Solville, Kutenai
• 1892 sawmill opened

• Population (Population Centre):
  • 2016  1,130 (+3.3%, 2011-16)
  • 2011  1,094

• Population (CD):
  • 2016  1,605 (+2.3%, 2011-16)
  • 2011  1,569 (+3.0%, 2006-11)
  • 2006  1,524
“In the evening the streets are empty...When night finally settles on Nakusp, the town's teenagers take over, wheeling up and down Broadway like bats.”

“If you are a teenager in Nakusp, you might find the town boring and claustrophobic but there's always a party somewhere.”

Ferryland, NL

- [www.ferryland.com](http://www.ferryland.com)
- No tag line
- Famous for archaeological dig ([www.colonyofavalon.ca](http://www.colonyofavalon.ca))
  - Founded by Lord Baltimore (George Calvert) in 1621
  - First indoor plumbing?
  - Evidence of Beothuk's (last member died in 1829)

- Population:
  - 2016  414 (-11.0%, 2011-16)
  - 2011  465 (-12.1%, 2006-11)
  - 2006  529
• “People in this town don’t carry any money. You don’t need any money in this town. All you need here is your name and your face.”

• Two types of Newfoundlanders: Townies and baymen

• On Paul’s Store:
  • “Paul's sells gas: hardware, plumbing, electric and fishing supplies; floor coverings; dry goods and groceries; and has the only liquor and beer outlet between Bay Bulls and Trepassey – all under one roof”.
  • Half the business is on credit – not bank or CU in town

• He was there the year before the Cod moratorium and the dig at Ferryland began.

Summary

• Literature and rural and small town Canada

• Think about:
  • Similarities across Canada
  • Differences across Canada
  • Degree of change in communities over time
    • Traditional economies
    • Populations