

Demographic Profile — Newfoundland and Labrador



Purpose of the Profiles

In any demographic analysis, births and in-migration increase the size of the population while deaths and out-migration decrease the population. Combined, these demographic factors determine the overall size and make-up of the population. The purpose of these profiles is to outline past demographic trends within the province and discuss how they affect the size and composition of our population today. Current measures of the population are provided for Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and the Rural Secretariat Regions. Also, a brief overview of population trends in Canada and the rest of the world is provided to help put NL trends into context.

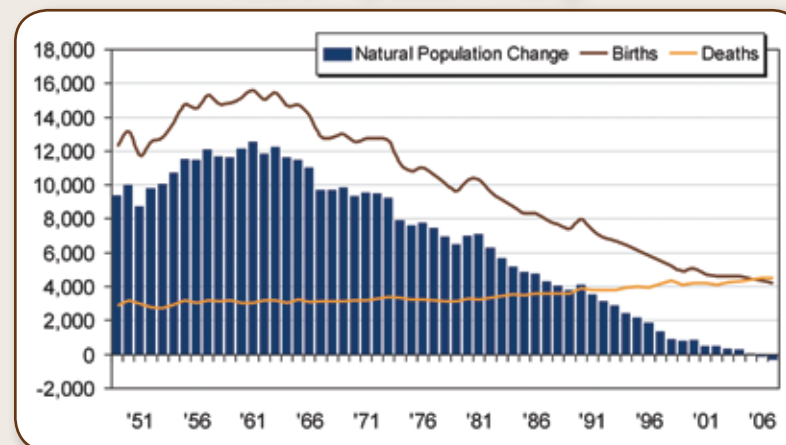
Why are Demographic Trends Important

Demographics affect most aspects of our society, our economy and our daily lives. In his book *Boom, Bust and Echo*, David Foot said “demographics explain about two-thirds of everything”. His statement reflects the importance of population to business, social and economic policies, especially as it relates to areas like health care, education, taxes, the labour market and economic development. Demographic trends are key factors to be aware of when trying to understand future events related to the size and make-up of the population.

Natural Population Change

The demographics of NL have changed significantly over the past four decades. The Total Fertility Rates (TFR)—the number of births per woman of child bearing age¹—has declined sharply from its peak at the height of the baby boom in the early 1960s. Currently, the province’s fertility rate is about 1.3 children, the lowest in the country. Births have

Natural Population Change



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¹ Females 15 to 49 years of age.

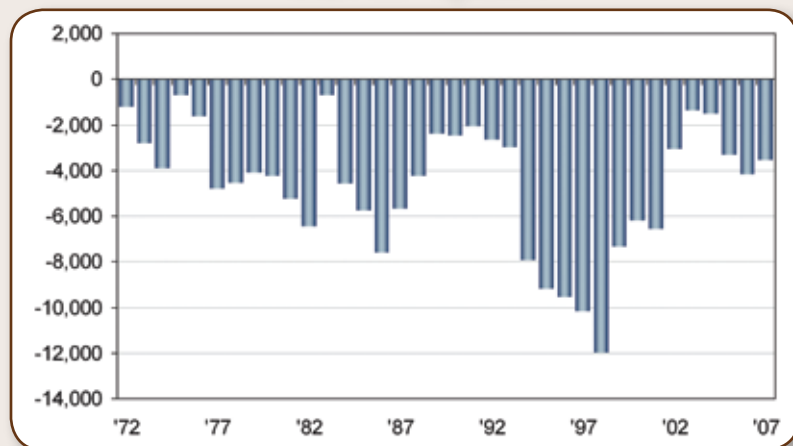
fallen along with fertility rates, declining from around 15,000 annually in the early 1960s to about 4,300 this year.

Deaths have increased, rising from around 3,000 annually in the 1960s to about 4,500 this year. Thus, natural population change has declined from an annual increase of over 10,000 in the 1960s to a decrease of roughly 200 this year.

Out-Migration

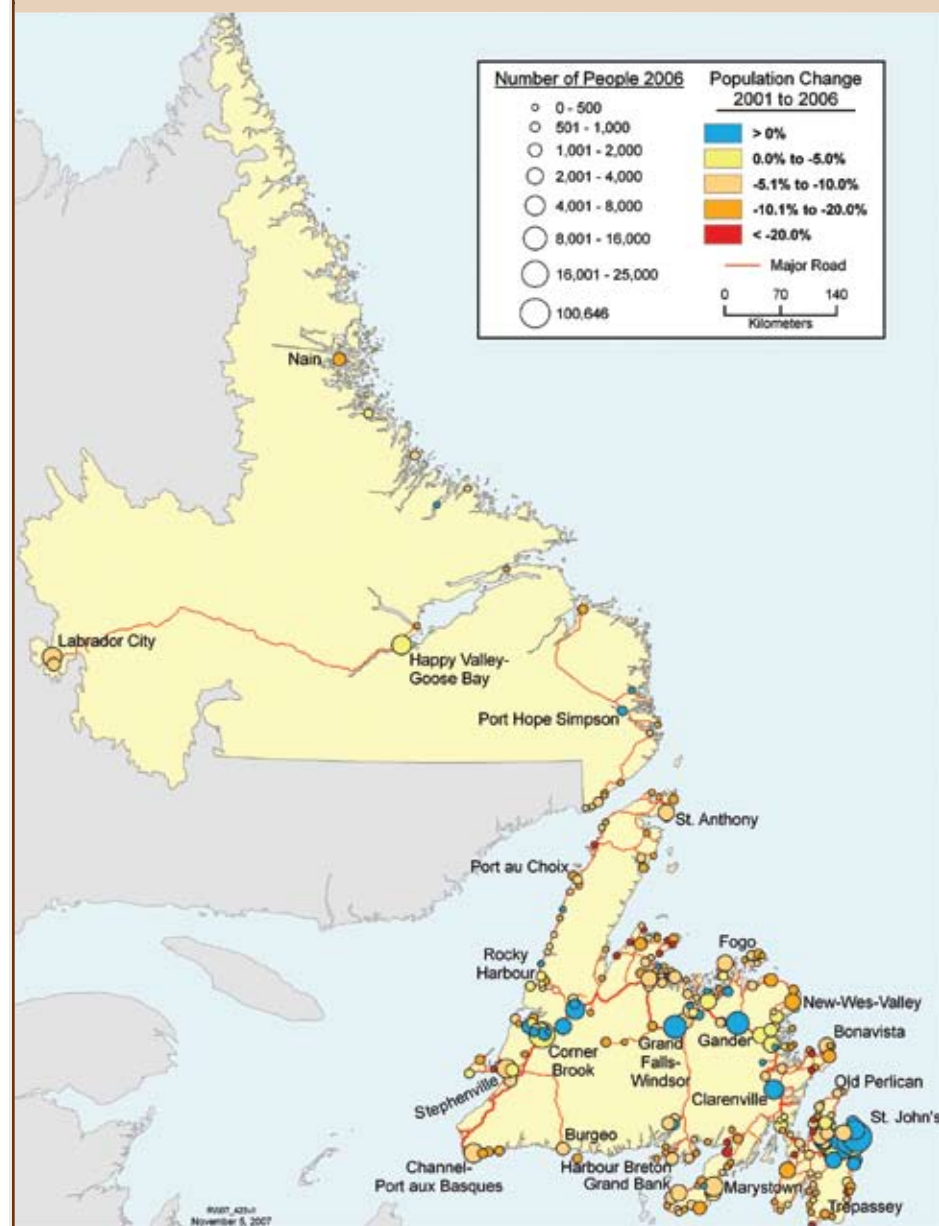
Since 1972 net-migration has been negative on an annual basis. Between 1972 and 1993, annual net out-migration averaged roughly 3,800 per year. Since 1994 net out-migration increased, exacerbated by the collapse of the fishery and a recession along with other factors, and reached a peak of around 12,000 in 1998. It subsequently slowed to some 2,000 annually over the 2002 to 2004 period. However, net out-migration increased again in recent years reaching nearly 4,200 in 2006 before falling to 3,400 in 2007. Recent challenges in the fishery and forestry industries, and the increased number of attractive high paying jobs in other provinces, particularly Alberta, have provided strong incentives for people to migrate.

Total Net-Migration



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Newfoundland and Labrador



NL Population Today

Declining natural population change and high levels of net out-migration—particularly amongst youth—have reduced the provincial population from a peak of 580,000 in 1992 to roughly 506,000 today.

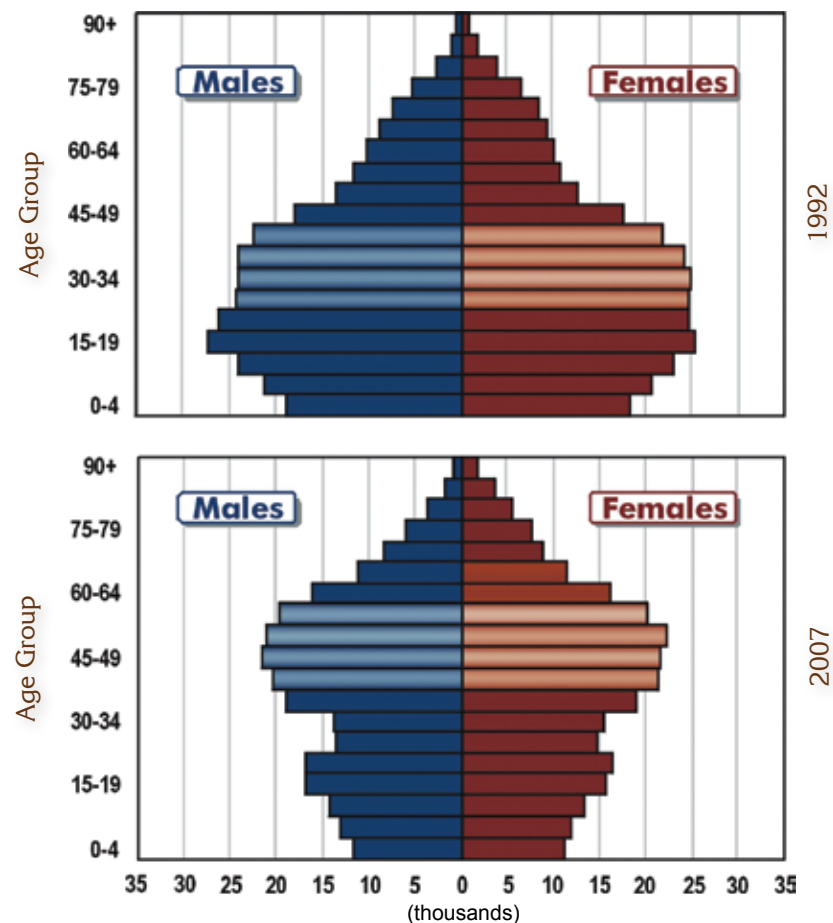


The population has aged rapidly with median age increasing from 20.9 years in 1971 to about 42 years today.

Furthermore, the geographic distribution of the population has changed; generally, the population of rural communities has declined while the population of urban areas has remained relatively stable or grown. For example, between 1991 and 2007, the population of the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area grew by about 8,600 while the population in the rest of the province declined by around 82,000 people.

Between 2001 and 2006 many of the larger towns experienced modest population growth (see the larger blue dots on the map) while the population in smaller towns continued to decline (see the small red, orange and yellow dots on the map).

Population Pyramids
Newfoundland and Labrador



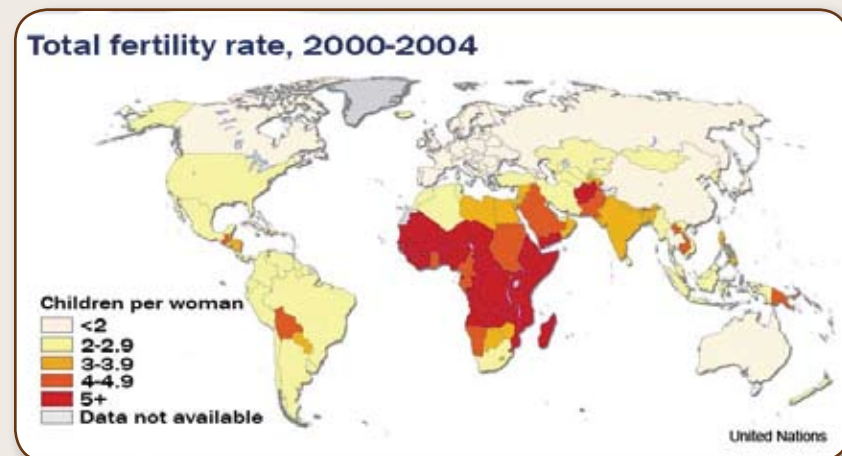
Statistics Canada; Economics and Statistics Branch, Department of Finance

Interpreting Population Pyramids

Population pyramids show the make-up of the population in terms of the number of males and females grouped by age. Pyramids that are wide at the bottom and small at the top reflect a younger population while those smaller at the bottom and larger at the top reflect an older population. The lighter bars above represent the "baby boomers" (i.e., those born between 1947 and 1966).

How We Compare

Declining fertility rates, population aging and increased urbanization are world-wide trends. The world TFR has declined from almost 5 in the 1960s to near 2.5 today and 88 countries, including Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and Japan currently have rates well below the long-term replacement rate needed to maintain population in the absence of migration. Low fertility is the main factor causing population aging and the proportion of elderly persons is increasing in nearly every country in the world.



The industrial revolution ushered in an era of urbanization and, from a global perspective, that trend continues today. Over the past 55 years, the percentage of people living in rural areas has declined steadily while the share living in urban centres has risen. The percentage of Canada's population living in urban areas rose from 61% in 1950 to over 81% in 2005 while the share of the global population living in urban areas has increased from just 29% in 1950 to over 49% in 2005.

Future Expectations

Future changes in the size and composition of a region's population depend on many factors including the composition of current population; future fertility and mortality rates; and future migration flows. Economic prospects and social attitudes can influence future migration flows and fertility rates making it difficult to predict future population levels. However, the composition and distribution of future population will continue to be influenced by demographic trends being experienced today. To view three possible future population scenarios for NL and its regions plus the detailed assumptions behind each scenario, visit the Economics and Statistics Branch population projection web site at www.economics.gov.nl.ca/population.