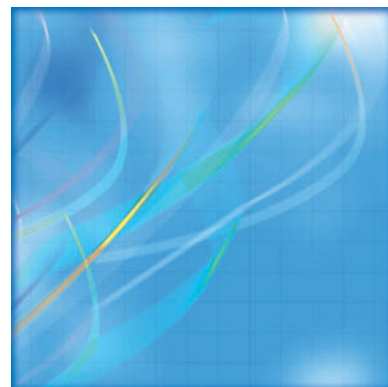


Catalogue no. 97-551-XIE

# Portrait of the Canadian Population in 2006, by Age and Sex, 2006 Census

Age and sex, 2006 Census

Census year 2006



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Statistics Canada

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### Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.

# Portrait of the Canadian population in 2006, by age and sex

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## Highlights of the Canadian population in 2006, by age and sex

- According to the 2006 Census, the number of Canadians aged 65 and over increased 11.5% in the previous five years, and the number of children under age 15 declined by 2.5% over the same period.
- The 65-and-over population made up a record 13.7% of the total population of Canada in 2006. The proportion of the under-15 population fell to 17.7%, its lowest level ever.
- An increase in immigration since 2001 gave Canada a higher rate of population growth than in the previous intercensal period, but it did not slow the aging of Canada's population.
- The median age, which divides the population into two groups of equal size, has risen steadily since 1966, reaching 39.5 years in 2006. It is expected that the median age will rise in the future and could exceed 44 years by the year 2031.
- Canada is still one of the youngest countries in the G8, as only the United States has a lower proportion of elderly people (12.4% compared with 13.7%).
- Never before has Canada had so many persons aged 80 years and over: their number topped the 1 million mark for the first time in 2006 (1.2 million).
- Nearly two out of three persons aged 80 years and over were women, as women have a higher life expectancy than men (82.5 years compared with 77.7 years, in 2004).
- The number of centenarians in Canada increased to 4,635 in 2006, up more than 22% from 2001. According to the latest population projections, the number of centenarians could triple to more than 14,000 by 2031.
- The number of people aged 55 to 64, many of whom are workers approaching retirement, has never been so high in Canada, at 3.7 million in 2006.
- Baby-boomers, people born between 1946 and 1965, were between 41 and 60 years of age in 2006. Despite the fact that they are now older, they were still a very large group in the population: nearly one out of three Canadians was a baby-boomer in 2006.
- The proportion of people aged 65 and over increased in every province and territory in the last five years, while the percentage of children under age 15 continued to fall.
- The proportion of people aged 65 and over ranged between 15.4% in Saskatchewan and 2.7% in Nunavut. Nunavut also had the highest proportion of children under age 15 (33.9%), while Newfoundland and Labrador had the lowest (15.5%).
- Quebec now has more than 1 million people aged 65 and over. They made up 14.3% of the province's population, or one out of seven Quebecers, in 2006.
- Because of the Prairie provinces' higher fertility, the region has the highest proportions of children under age 15. Nearly one out of five residents of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta was under the age of 15 at the time of the last census.

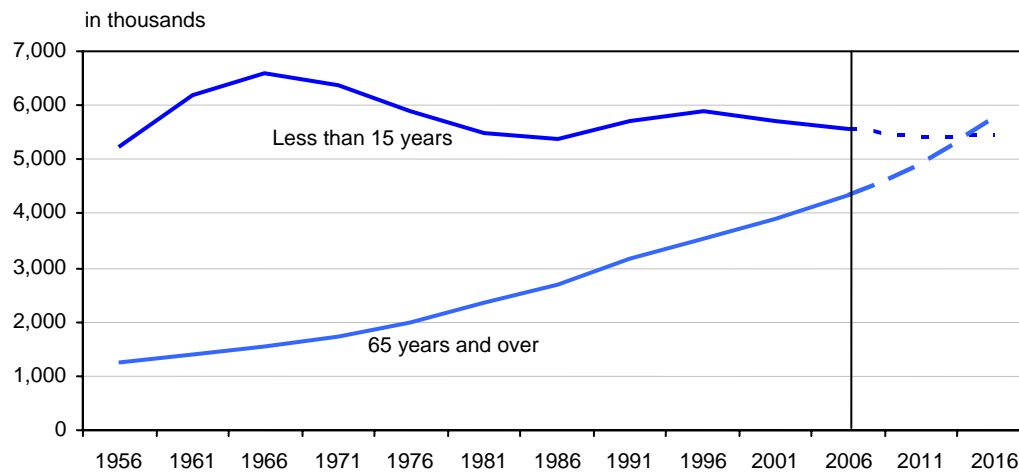
- Canada's urban areas had a much larger young working-age population (aged 20 to 44) than rural areas, which were generally older. The differences are due primarily to internal migration of young adults, who often leave the rural areas in their late teens or early twenties to pursue their education or find work in urban areas, and to international immigration, which is heavily concentrated in large urban centres.
- Nine of the 16 youngest CMAs are in southern Ontario; the oldest are Kelowna, British Columbia, and Peterborough, Ontario.
- The suburbs of large urban centres were younger than the downtown areas: nearly one out of five people was under age 15 in the suburban parts of CMAs, compared with 16.5% in the downtown areas, which also had more persons aged 65 and over (13.8% compared with 11.9% for peripheral municipalities).
- Four of the six youngest mid-size urban centres in 2006 were in Alberta: Okotoks, Cold Lake, Brooks and Grande Prairie.
- Parksville (British Columbia), and Elliot Lake (Ontario), were the oldest mid-size urban centres in Canada in 2006.
- Eleven of the 25 youngest small towns and rural communities were in Alberta. Sylvan Lakes and Lakeland County were not only two of the youngest small towns and rural areas in the country but also among the small towns and rural areas with the highest population growth since 2001.

## National Portrait

### More seniors, fewer children

According to the 2006 Census, the number of people aged 65 and over increased by more than 446,700 compared with 2001 (+11.5%), topping the 4 million mark for the first time (4.3 million). This is nearly four times as many seniors as in the first quinquennial census in 1956.

**Figure 1 Number of persons aged 65 years and over and number of children aged less than 15 years in the Canadian population, 1956 to 2016**



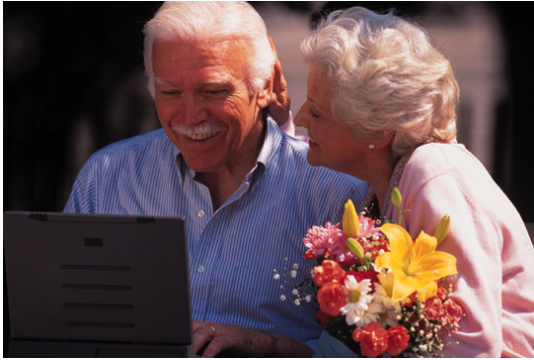
**Sources:** Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1956 to 2006; and Alain Bélanger, Laurent Martel and Éric Caron Malenfant, 2005. *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories 2005-2031*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-520, scenario 3.

In contrast, the under-15 population declined by almost 146,000 (-2.5%) to 5.6 million between 2001 and 2006. This is the second consecutive intercensal period in which the under-15 population has declined, as the last increase was in the 1991 to 1996 period.

**Note to reader:** Two indicators of the population age structure have been used in this analysis: (1) the proportion of persons aged 65 years and over; and (2) the proportion of children aged less than 15. A population will be considered as older than another one when its proportion of senior citizens will be higher. At the opposite, a population will be considered as younger if its proportion of children is higher. The use of these two indicators may lead to different results than those which would be obtained using other indicators of the population age structure, such as the median age, for example.

According to the most recent population projections published by Statistics Canada, the number of children aged less than 15 years could be outnumbered by the number of seniors aged 65 and over within about 10 years. The growth of the elderly population has been modest up to now, but it will start accelerating in 2011, when the first baby-boomers turn age 65.

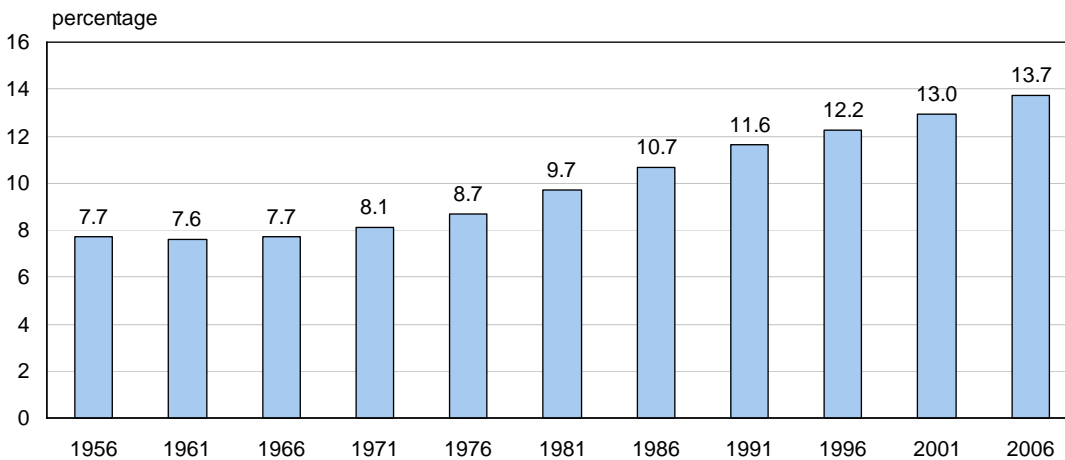
## A record one in seven Canadians is 65 years or older



As a result of the increase in the number of seniors since 2001, their proportion relative to the total population reached a record 13.7% in 2006. That proportion, the best indicator of the aging of Canada's population, has been rising steadily since 1966, when it was 7.7%.

The proportion of the under-15 population fell to 17.7%, its lowest level ever. By comparison, during the height of the baby-boom period, one person in three (34.0%) was under age 15 in 1961.

**Figure 2 Proportion of persons aged 65 years and over in the Canadian population, 1956 to 2006**



**Sources:** Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1956 to 2006.

According to the most recent population projections, the proportion of seniors in the Canadian population could nearly double in the next 25 years, while the proportion of children is expected to continue falling. If these demographic changes occur, they will have a major impact on the labour force, on public pension and health insurance plans and, in general, on the Canadian economy and society.

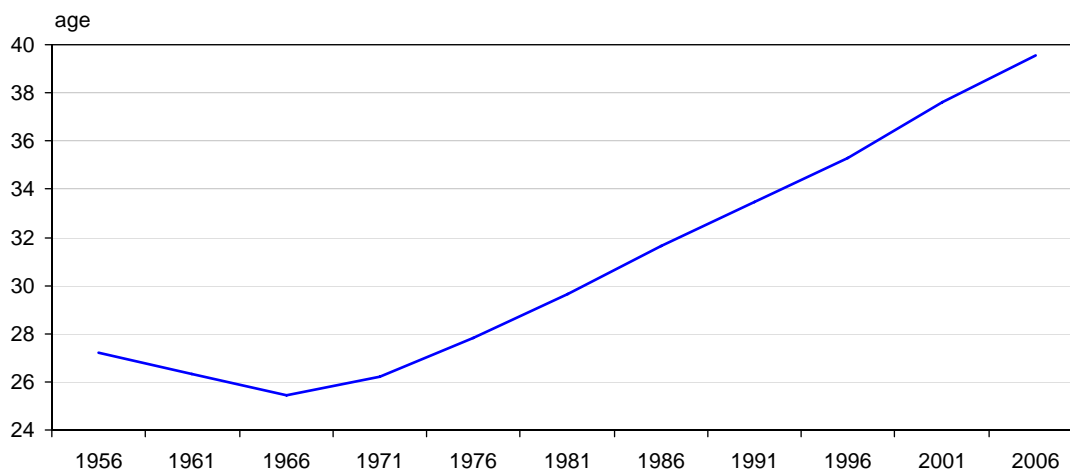
The progressive aging of the population is largely attributable to two factors. First, the fertility rate, which has averaged 1.6 children per woman over the last 30 years, is below the replacement level. Second, the life expectancy of Canadians increased appreciably during the 20th century and now stands at 82.5 years for women and 77.7 years for men. As a result of that increase, an increasing number of Canadians are reaching the age of 65, and once this age is attained, they also live longer. In 2004, the age where we observed the largest number of deaths was 84 years for women and 82 years for men.

While immigration has a significant effect on the growth and diversity of Canada's population and contributes towards meeting many of the country's emerging labour requirements, its impact on population aging is minor, since immigrants arrive when they are about 30 on average and then age along with the rest of the population. An increase in immigration since 2001 gave Canada a higher rate of population growth than in the previous intercensal period, but it did not slow the aging of Canada's population.

## The median age is up as well and now stands at 39.5 years

The median age, which divides the population into two groups of equal size, has been rising steadily since 1966, reaching 39.5 years in 2006. That is an increase of 1.9 from 2001, the third largest intercensal increase in the last 50 years, after the ones observed between 1996 and 2001 and between 1981 and 1986. The median age is expected to keep rising in the future and could exceed 44 years by 2031.

Figure 3 Median age in Canada, 1956 to 2006

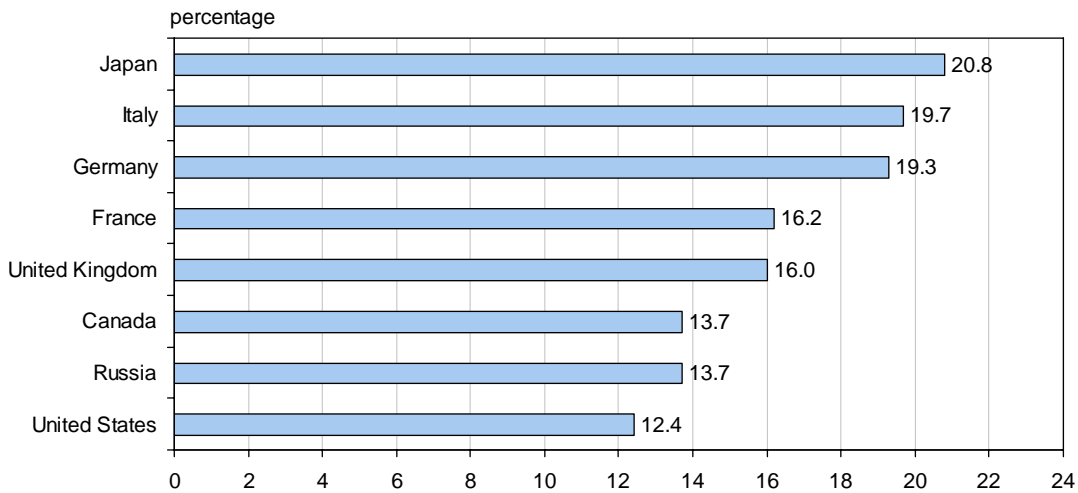


Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1956 to 2006.

## Despite our aging trend, Canada's population remains one of the youngest in the G8

The first results from the 2006 Census show that Canada experienced more rapid population growth than any other G8 country between 2001 and 2006. Canada is also one of the youngest countries in the G8, as only the United States has a lower proportion of elderly people (12.4% compared with 13.7%).

**Figure 4 Proportion of persons aged 65 years and over among the G8 countries in 2006**



**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006, U.S. Census Bureau - Population Estimates Program, Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, Institut National des Statistiques et des Études Économiques, United Kingdom National Statistics, Statistics Bureau of Japan, Federal Statistical Office of Germany and Federal State Statistics Service of Russia.

The difference is largely due to the fact that the American fertility rate is higher than the Canadian rate (about 2 children per woman, compared with 1.5), and, as a consequence, the proportion of children who are aged less than 15 years is higher in the United States than in Canada. Life expectancy is also lower in the United States (75.2 years for men and 80.4 years for women) than in Canada (77.7 years for men and 82.5 years for women).

Other countries already have a high proportion of persons aged 65 or more. In Japan, Germany and Italy, roughly one person in five is 65 years or older. Those countries have the highest proportions of elderly people in the world. In comparison, the proportion of elderly people in Canada would reach the 20% mark by about the year 2024. Japan has the highest life expectancy in the world, at 82.8 years (both sexes combined). The fertility rates of women living in Japan, Germany and Italy are also below that of Canada, at about 1.3 children per woman.

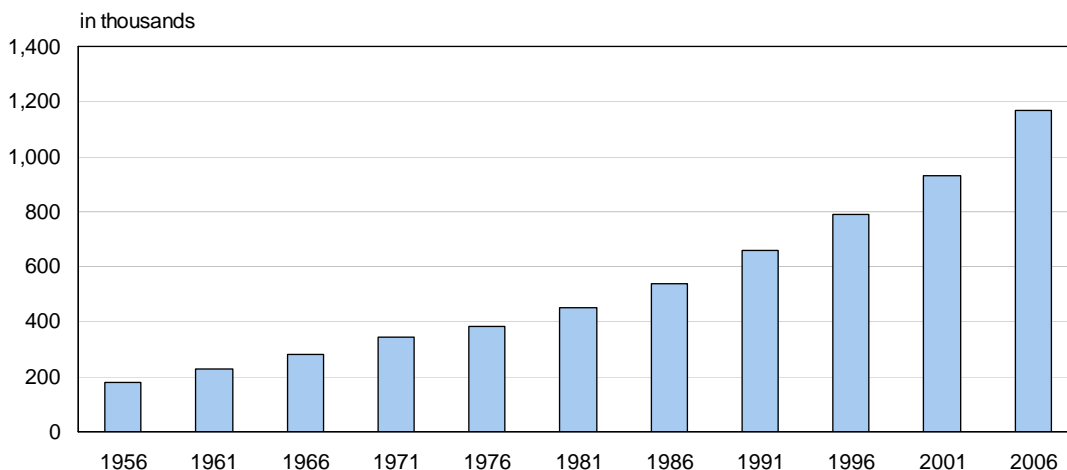
While Canada may be among the youngest of the G8 countries, it had the oldest population of the Americas in 2006. For example, just 5% of Mexico's population was age 65 and over. Elsewhere, for example in India (4.0%) or China (8.0%), the population of developing regions generally had a younger population than in Canada.

## The average age of seniors is increasing

Next to the 55 to 64 age group, the very elderly group (80 years or older) experienced the largest increase in population compared with 2001 (+25%). As a result, the number of people aged 80 and over topped the 1 million mark for the first time between 2001 and 2006. There were 1,167,310 persons in that group according to the 2006 Census, compared with just over 180,000 in 1956. Canada has never had so many very elderly people, which could have an impact on the demand for health care services in particular.



**Figure 5 Number of persons aged 80 years and over in the Canadian population, 1956 to 2006**



**Sources:** Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1956 to 2006.

More than a quarter of all seniors were aged 80 years or over in 2006. The proportion of people aged 80 and over in the 65-and-over population was 26.9% in 2006, up from 24.0% in 2001. The proportion in 1956 was 14.6%, or one person in seven.

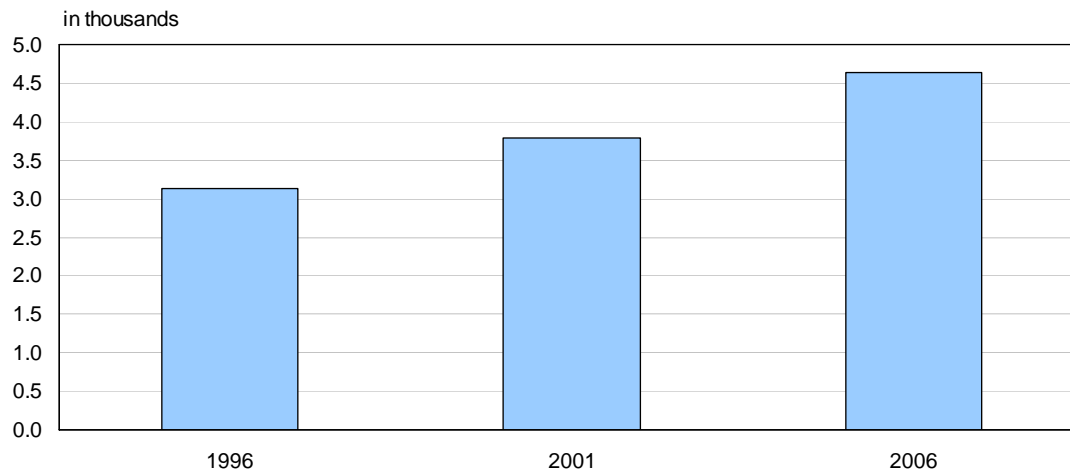
The majority (64.6%) of the very elderly were women, because the latter have a higher life expectancy than men (82.5 years compared with 77.7 years in 2004). However, the life expectancy gap between the sexes, which was 4.8 years in 2004, has been narrowing since the late 1970s. If the trend continues, it will eventually produce a better balance between the sexes at older ages, decreasing for example the number of women living alone. This could have an impact on the future demand for home-care services required by the very elderly persons.

## Sharp increase in the number of centenarians

According to the 2006 Census, there were 4,635 people aged 100 or older, up more than 22% from 2001 (3,790 centenarians) and nearly 50% from 1996 (3,125 centenarians). According to the latest population projections, the number of centenarians could triple to more than 14,000 by 2031.

Many industrialized countries have seen a similar surge in the number of centenarians. In Japan, for example, there were nearly 29,000 centenarians in 2006, which is over 23 centenarians per 100,000 population, a world record. There were about 14.7 centenarians per 100,000 population in Canada in 2006.

**Figure 6 Number of centenarians in the Canadian population, 1996, 2001 and 2006**



**Sources:** Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1996, 2001 and 2006.

In the centenarian population in 2006, there were nearly five women for every man (3,825 women and 805 men), since women enjoy longer life expectancy. The geographic distribution of centenarians was similar to the distribution of Canada's population among the provinces: 37% live in Ontario, 22% in Quebec and 13% in British Columbia.

Today's centenarians lived through almost all of the 20th century, including two world wars and the Great Depression. They were fortunate enough to witness profound changes in Canadian society and major advances in science and technology.

In addition to the overall population growth, the rapid increase in the number of centenarians is largely due to the substantial gains in life expectancy in the 20th century. Centenarians' longevity is often attributed to various factors: genetic predisposition, with some families 'producing' more centenarians than others, a healthy lifestyle and a positive attitude toward life, especially in difficult situations.

## Rapid aging of the working-age population (aged 15 to 64)

About 21.7 million Canadians were in the working-age population in 2006, an increase of 6.4% since 2001. Of all the age groups within the 15 to 64 age group, 55 to 64 year olds grew the fastest between 2001 and 2006 (+28%). This particular age group, some of whose members are older workers, grew only half as rapidly (+15%) between 1996 and 2001. The rapid expansion experienced since 2001 is due to the fact that the first baby-boomers entered this age group over the past five years.

As a result, the number of people aged 55 to 64 has never been so high, at nearly 3.7 million in 2006. Today, they make up 16.9% of the working-age population, or about one potential worker in six, compared with 14.1% in 2001. It is expected that the number of people aged 55 to 64 will continue to grow over the next few years and could represent more than 20% of the working-age population in 2016, when more than one in five potential workers will be in the 55 to 64 age group.

With workers generally leaving the workforce between the ages of 55 and 64, Canada has never had so many people close to retirement. The ratio of the 15 to 24 age group, people about to enter the labour market, to the 55 to 64 age group, people approaching retirement, was 1.1 in 2006. It means that for each person at the age where people leave the workforce, there was just over one person at the age where people are entering the labour force. In 1976, the ratio was 2.3. According to the population projections' medium-growth scenario, in about 10 years Canada may have more people at the age where they can leave the labour force than people at the age where they can begin working.

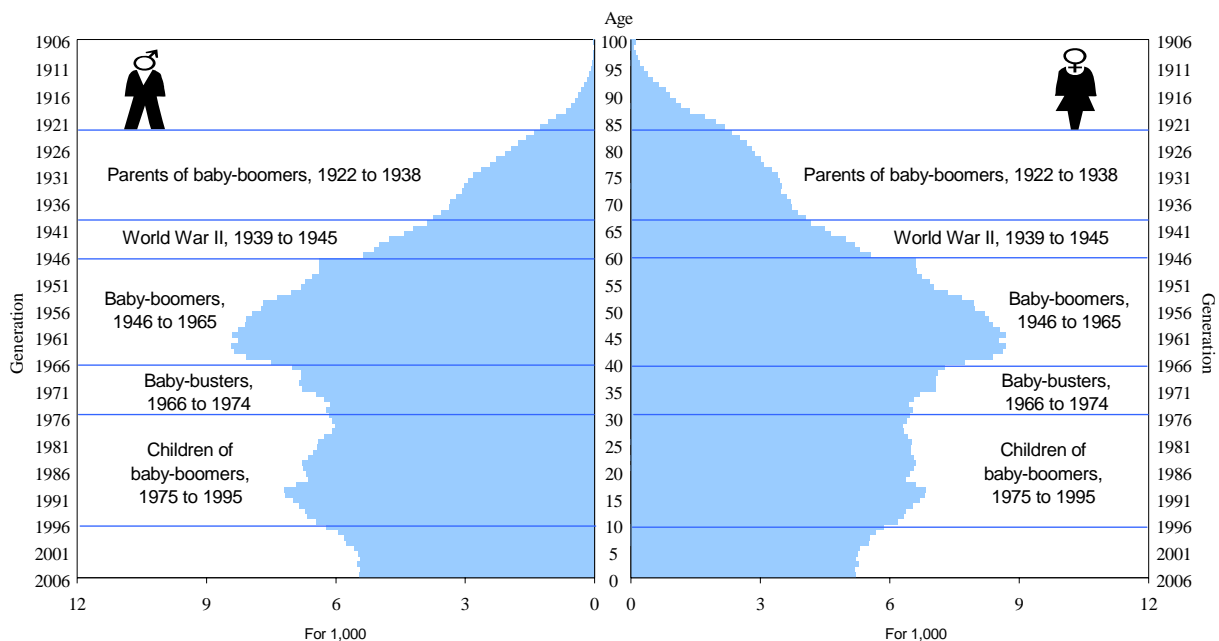


These rapid changes in the working-age population present many challenges for Canadian employers, who will have to adjust to a high rate of turnover among their employees. Knowledge transfer, employee retention, the health of older workers and continuous training for employees will also be key labour force issues in the future.

## Baby-boomers remain the largest generation

Baby-boomers, people born between 1946 and 1965, were between 41 and 60 years of age in 2006. Despite the fact that they are now older, they still remain the largest group in the population: nearly one out of three Canadians was a baby-boomer in 2006. Forty years ago in 1966, the baby-boomers made up more than 40% of the population.

**Figure 7 Different cohorts among the age pyramid of the Canadian population in 2006**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

Using the baby-boom cohort as a reference point, we can position other major cohorts born in the 20th century. For example, the cohort of the baby-boomers' parents, composed of people born between 1922 and 1938 and who were between 68 and 84 years of age in 2006, is located at the top of the age pyramid. As the number of people belonging to this cohort has already started to decrease under the effect of mortality, which is higher at older ages, they represented fewer than one Canadian out of ten in 2006.

The cohort of the baby-boomers' children is also evident on the age pyramid of the Canadian population in 2006. This group of people, born between 1975 and 1995 and who were between 11 and 31 years in 2006, represented 27.5% of all Canadians according to the 2006 Census. The important size of this cohort is not only explained by the fact that it is the 'echo' of the baby-boom but also because of a higher fertility at the beginning of the 1990s.

Two other cohorts, less important in size because they include fewer years of birth, can be identified on the age pyramid of the population in 2006. First, the Second World War cohort includes people born between 1939 and 1945 and who were between 61 and 67 years of age in 2006. These persons represented 6.4% of the Canadian population in 2006.

Second, there is the 'baby-bust' cohort (1966 to 1974) that corresponds to years following the baby-boom and where fertility declined rapidly in Canada. Largely made of children of the Second World War cohort, this cohort includes 3.9 million Canadians aged between 32 and 40 years in 2006 and represented 12.4% of the population.

Differences in growth of different age groups among the population can mostly be explained by the succession of cohorts of different sizes. For example, the rapid growth of the age group 55 to 64 years as well as the decrease of the age group 30 to 39 years since 2001 can largely be explained by the aging of the baby-boomers, the oldest of them being now more than 60 years and the youngest are no longer in their thirties. The arrival of the smaller size baby-bust cohort compared to the baby-boom at ages where women usually have most of their children also explains why the number of children aged less than 15 years has decreased in Canada since 1996.

The relative sizes of the generations can also help us anticipate certain life-cycle phenomena. For example, it is reasonable to assume that the baby-boomers' parents, who made up much of the seniors' group in 2006, can often rely on several children for support and companionship in their old age. Things could be different for the baby-boomers, many of whom are currently sandwiched between the needs of their aging parents and the needs of their children, many of whom are still at home. Because the baby-boomers limited their fertility more than did their parents, they will have fewer children to rely on when they get older. However, the smaller number of children may to some extent be offset by the larger number of siblings.

## Provincial/Territorial populations by age and sex

### Population aging affects every province

According to the census held on May 16, 2006, the proportion of people aged 65 and over increased in every province and territory during the preceding five years, while the percentage of people under 15 years continued to shrink. According to the medium-growth scenario of the most recent population projections, these trends are likely to persist over the next few years, so that by 2022, seniors will outnumber children in every province.

The fertility decline that began in the 1960s and the steady increase in life expectancy, which affected every part of Canada, contributed to the almost uninterrupted aging of all provincial and territorial populations over the last 40 years. The aging trend can be expected to accelerate throughout the country when the first baby-boomers turn 65 years in 2011.

**Table 1 Percentage of the population aged 65 years and over in the last 50 years, Canada, provinces and territories**

Census year	Canada	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
	percentage													
1956	7.7	6.0	10.4	8.5	7.8	5.7	8.4	9.0	8.9	7.2	10.8	4.9	2.6	...
1961	7.6	5.9	10.4	8.6	7.8	5.8	8.1	9.0	9.2	7.0	10.2	3.2	2.6	...
1966	7.7	5.9	10.8	8.9	8.2	6.1	8.2	9.2	9.3	7.1	9.5	3.6	2.7	...
1971	8.1	6.1	11.1	9.2	8.6	6.9	8.4	9.7	10.2	7.3	9.4	2.8	2.2	...
1976	8.7	6.6	11.2	9.7	9.0	7.7	8.9	10.4	11.1	7.5	9.8	2.9	2.7	...
1981	9.7	7.7	12.2	10.9	10.1	8.8	10.1	11.9	12.0	7.3	10.9	3.2	2.9	...
1986	10.7	8.8	12.7	11.9	11.1	10.0	10.9	12.6	12.7	8.1	12.1	3.7	2.8	...
1991	11.6	9.7	13.2	12.6	12.2	11.2	11.7	13.4	14.1	9.1	12.9	3.9	2.8	2.0
1996	12.2	10.8	13.0	13.1	12.6	12.1	12.4	13.7	14.7	9.9	12.8	4.4	3.0	2.1
2001	13.0	12.3	13.7	13.9	13.6	13.3	12.9	14.0	15.1	10.4	13.6	6.0	4.4	2.2
2006	13.7	13.9	14.9	15.1	14.7	14.3	13.6	14.1	15.4	10.7	14.6	7.5	4.8	2.7

... not applicable.

**Note:** In this table, Nunavut is included in the Northwest Territories until 1986.

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1956 to 2006.

**Table 2 Percentage of the population aged less than 15 years in the last 50 years, Canada, provinces and territories**

Census year	Canada	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
	percentage													
1956	32.5	40.7	34.8	33.9	37.0	35.0	29.9	31.1	32.6	33.2	29.0	32.0	36.3	...
1961	34.0	41.8	36.0	34.8	38.0	35.4	32.2	32.6	34.0	35.2	31.3	36.1	40.1	...
1966	32.9	40.3	34.7	33.7	36.0	33.6	31.7	31.9	33.6	34.9	30.6	37.6	42.5	...
1971	29.6	37.3	31.7	30.5	32.0	29.6	28.7	29.0	30.3	31.6	27.9	34.6	42.9	...
1976	25.6	33.7	28.1	27.0	28.5	24.9	25.1	26.0	26.9	27.4	24.1	29.4	38.6	...
1981	22.5	29.5	24.8	23.4	24.9	21.7	21.9	23.2	24.6	24.2	21.4	26.3	34.8	...
1986	21.3	25.8	23.2	21.5	22.8	20.5	20.5	22.2	24.3	23.7	20.5	25.1	32.8	...
1991	20.9	22.5	22.6	20.5	20.9	20.0	20.4	22.0	24.0	23.6	20.2	24.6	32.8	39.5
1996	20.5	19.9	21.6	19.8	19.6	19.2	20.6	22.0	23.1	22.8	19.7	24.0	32.6	38.8
2001	19.1	17.3	19.7	18.2	17.8	17.8	19.6	20.9	21.2	20.8	18.1	21.0	27.0	37.1
2006	17.7	15.5	17.7	16.0	16.2	16.6	18.2	19.6	19.4	19.2	16.5	18.8	23.9	33.9

... not applicable.

**Note:** In this table, Nunavut is included in the Northwest Territories until 1986.

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1956 to 2006.

**Table 3 Median age of the population in the last 50 years, Canada, provinces and territories**

Census year	Canada	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
	in years													
1956	27.2	20.4	25.7	25.7	23.3	24.6	29.5	28.6	27.2	26.5	31.0	26.7	22.3	...
1961	26.3	19.1	24.5	24.9	22.3	24.0	28.4	27.7	26.6	25.5	29.8	25.6	21.4	...
1966	25.4	19.3	24.0	24.7	22.2	23.9	27.2	26.7	25.6	24.5	28.2	23.6	19.4	...
1971	26.2	20.7	24.8	25.4	23.9	25.6	27.2	26.8	26.7	24.9	27.9	24.1	19.1	...
1976	27.8	22.6	26.6	27.1	25.7	27.7	28.6	28.0	27.6	26.1	29.1	24.9	20.6	...
1981	29.6	25.2	28.8	29.3	28.1	29.7	30.6	29.9	28.7	26.9	30.9	26.6	22.0	...
1986	31.6	27.9	30.6	31.2	30.5	32.0	32.3	31.4	30.1	29.2	33.1	28.9	23.7	...
1991	33.5	30.8	32.8	33.4	33.2	34.2	33.6	33.0	32.6	31.3	34.7	31.0	27.1	20.8
1996	35.3	34.2	34.7	35.8	35.5	36.2	35.2	34.7	34.4	33.4	35.9	32.7	25.7	21.3
2001	37.6	38.4	37.7	38.8	38.6	38.8	37.2	36.8	36.7	35.0	38.4	36.1	30.1	22.1
2006	39.5	41.7	40.8	41.8	41.5	41.0	39.0	38.1	38.7	36.0	40.8	38.4	31.2	23.1

... not applicable.

**Note:** In this table, Nunavut is included in the Northwest Territories until 1986.

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1956 to 2006.

The fact that the first baby-boomers recently turned 60 also contributed to the rapid aging of the working-age population over the last 10 years in every province and territory. In Eastern Canada, nearly one in five working-age people (20%) was between the ages of 55 and 64 at the time of the last national census, a higher proportion than the national average (16.9%). This percentage is expected to increase over the next few years.

While all provinces and territories are aging, there remains a number of significant differences. For example, the proportion of people aged 65 and over ranged from 15.4% in Saskatchewan to 2.7% in Nunavut. Nunavut also had the highest proportion of children in the country, at 33.9%, while at the other extreme, the 0 to 14 years age group made up only 15.5% of the population of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Nunavut's population grew much more rapidly than the national average between 2001 and 2006, and Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador are the only two provinces whose population declined during the same period.

As was the case in the 2001 Census, the population was generally older than the average east of Ontario and much younger in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Alberta. The latter remained the province with the smallest proportion of seniors.

## **The Atlantic provinces are among the oldest provinces in the country**

Of all of Canada's major regions, the one formed by the four Atlantic provinces was the oldest. According to the 2006 Census, the region had proportionally more people aged 65 and over (14.7%) and fewer people under 15 years (16.1%) than the rest of the country.

This is in sharp contrast to the situation some 50 years ago, when the Atlantic provinces were among the youngest provinces in Canada. In 1956, 36.5% of the population was under 15 years, a higher proportion than in any other region. In addition, seniors made up only 7.8% of the population, less than in Ontario, the Prairies and British Columbia.

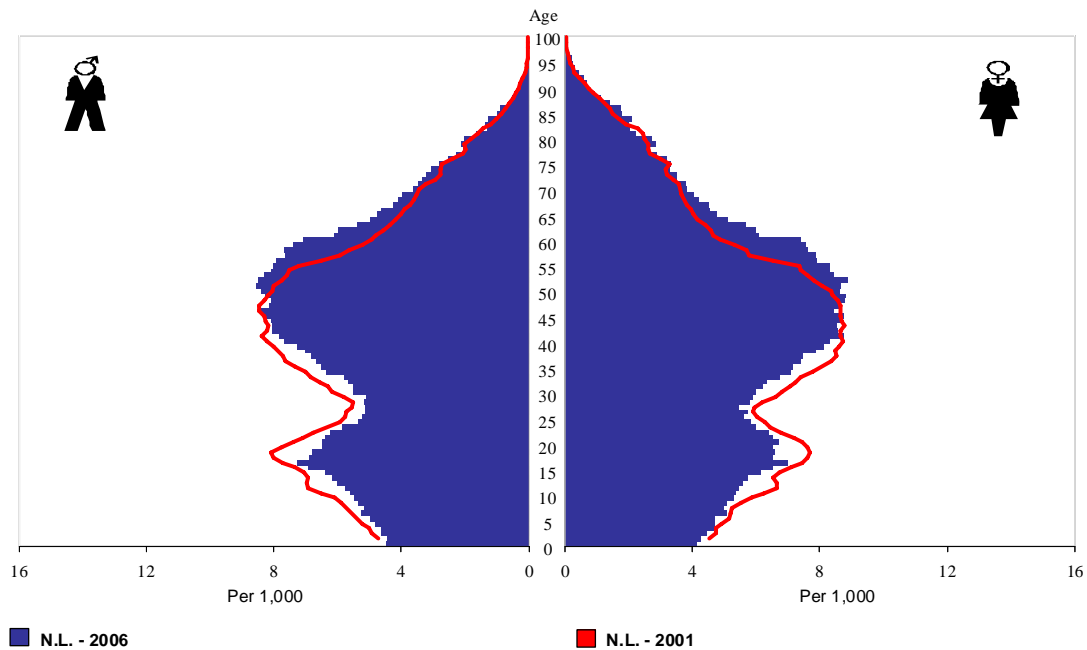


At that time, women in the Atlantic provinces were having more children on average than women in almost every other province. For example, the average number of children per woman was 4.6 in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, and the national average was 3.9 children per woman. The Atlantic provinces currently have one of the lowest fertility rates in Canada.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the number of people under 15 years continued to decline at a rapid pace, slipping from 88,760 in 2001 to 78,235 in 2006. Children account for a mere 15.5% of the population of Newfoundland and Labrador, the lowest proportion in the country. In 1956, however, more than four out of 10 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were under age 15.

The proportion of seniors (13.9%) remains lower than in the other Atlantic provinces, but with its large numbers of baby-boomers, the lowest fertility in Canada and recurring losses of young adults to other provinces (visible on the age pyramid), Newfoundland and Labrador is likely to become the oldest province in the country within a few years.

Figure 8 Age pyramid of Newfoundland and Labrador population in 2001 and 2006

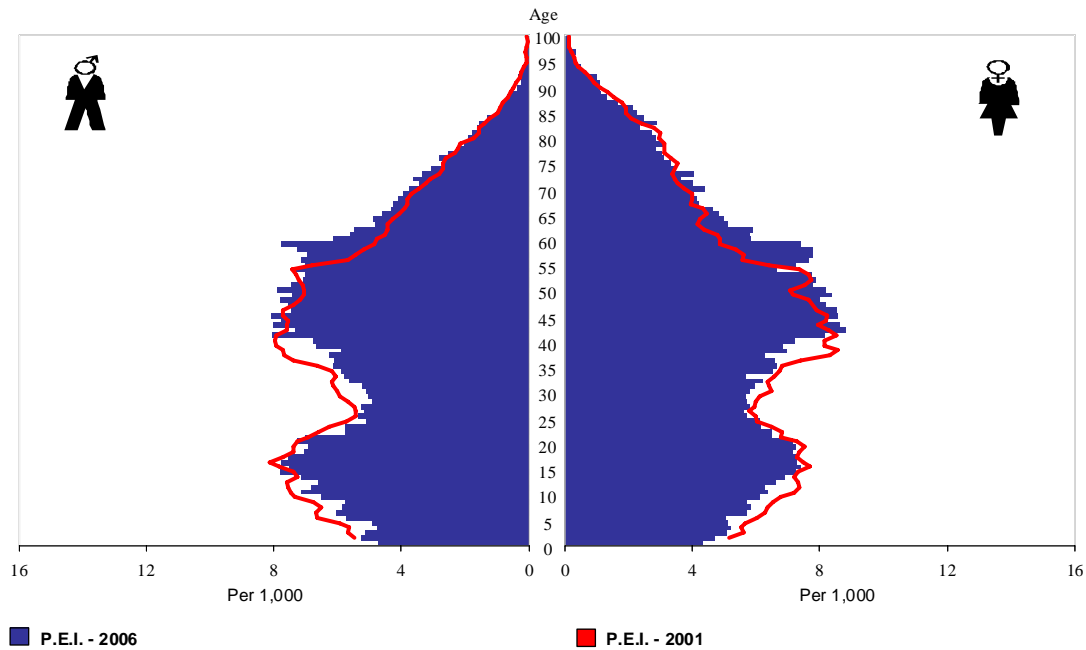


Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

The 20,165 seniors enumerated in Prince Edward Island in the 2006 Census made up nearly 15% of the population of Canada's smallest province. That number was almost double what it was 50 years earlier, when there were 10,300 people aged 65 and over.

The number of children aged less than 15 years, though declining, was comparatively a larger percentage of the population compared with any of the other provinces located east of Ontario. In 2006, 17.6% of Prince Edward Island's residents were still under 15 years, a higher percentage than in the other Atlantic provinces, Quebec or British Columbia. The reason for this relatively higher proportion of children is that in contrast to these other provinces, Prince Edward Island's fertility rate over the past 15 years has rarely fallen below the national average.

Figure 9 Age pyramid of Prince Edward Island population in 2001 and 2006

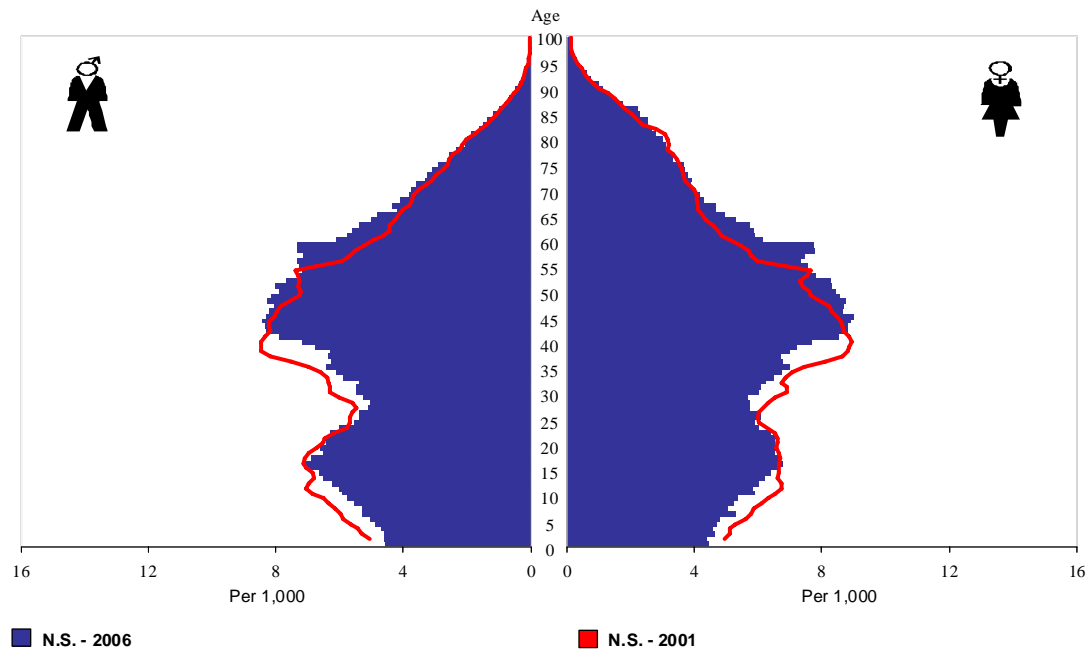


Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

With 15.1% of its residents aged 65 or over in 2006, Nova Scotia was the oldest province in Eastern Canada and the second-oldest in the country behind Saskatchewan (15.4%). Approximately 138,195 Nova Scotians were at or above age 65 in 2006, compared with 58,900 in 1956. This number has grown steadily over the last 50 years, as it has in most other provinces.

Nova Scotia also has few children in its population. In 2006, only 16.0% of its residents were under 15 years, the second-lowest proportion in the country after Newfoundland and Labrador. That situation is largely attributable to the fact that the average number of children per woman has been below the national average for over 20 years in Nova Scotia. The lower percentage of women of child-bearing age, due to migration to other provinces, also tends to keep the number of births down.

Figure 10 Age pyramid of Nova Scotia population in 2001 and 2006

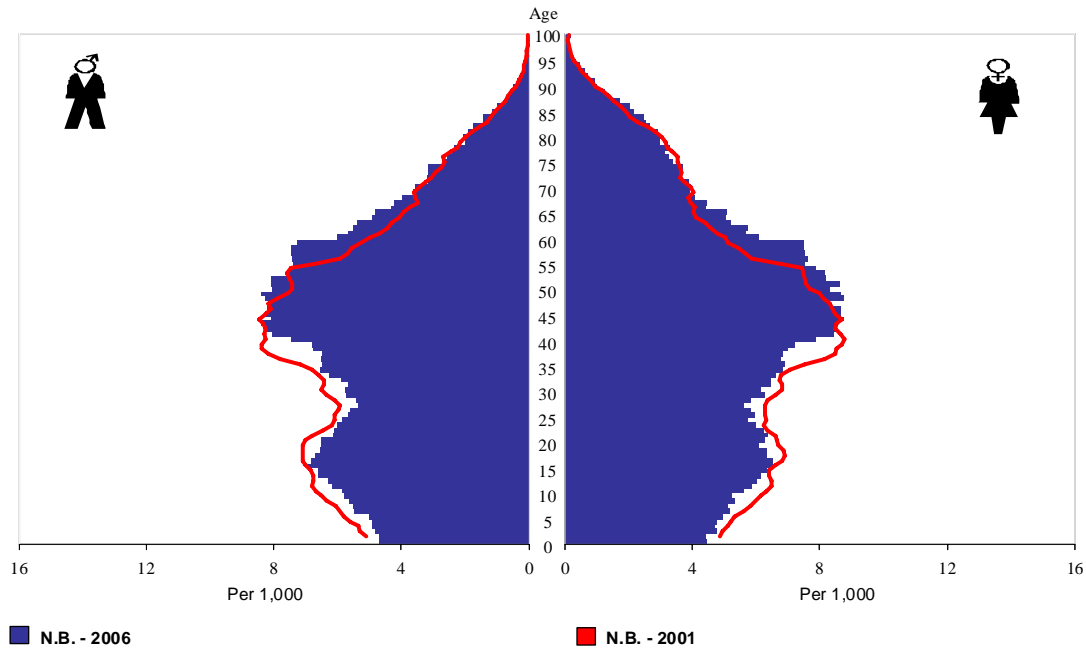


Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

In the period since 2001, the number of elderly people in New Brunswick topped 100,000 for the first time in its history. The 2006 Census counted 107,655 residents aged 65 and over in 2006. Seniors made up 14.7% of the province's population, one percentage point higher than the proportion for Canada as a whole. This group, which was largely born before the Second World War, is reflective of a period when New Brunswick had one of the highest fertility rates in Canada; in other words, the number of births in the province was very large.

High fertility is no longer the case today, however, as the average number of children per woman in New Brunswick is below the national average, which is also the situation in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. As a consequence of this drop in fertility, the children aged less than 15 years decreased from 222,000 at the end of the baby-boom (1966) to 118,250 in 2006. This 47% decrease was second only to the 61% decrease in Newfoundland and Labrador experienced over the same forty year period. In contrast, since 1966, the number of children in Canada as a whole fell by just 15%.

Figure 11 Age pyramid of New Brunswick population in 2001 and 2006



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

## Quebec has more than 1 million seniors

According to the 2006 Census, Quebec now has more than 1 million people aged 65 and over. Seniors made up 14.3% of the province's population, or one Quebecer in seven. This is substantially different from the situation that existed 50 years ago. In 1956, only 5.7% of Quebec's population was 65 years and older, a lower proportion than in any other Canadian province.

At the time, Quebec had the lowest life expectancy in Canada and for many years previous experienced a fertility rate higher than the national average. However, the province's demographic profile was about to change: life expectancy rose to the national average and fertility dropped more rapidly than in the rest of the country, remaining below the national average for some 40 years.

The result of increased longevity and a rapid drop in fertility has been a very rapid aging. This is particularly evident as the number of seniors has more than quadrupled in the last 50 years. The number of children also declined appreciably, though the decline was not continuous. In 2006, the number of Quebecers under the age of 15 was slightly less than 1.3 million.

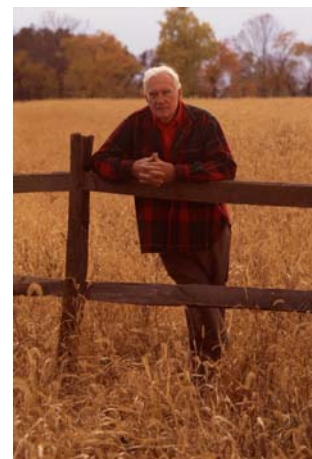
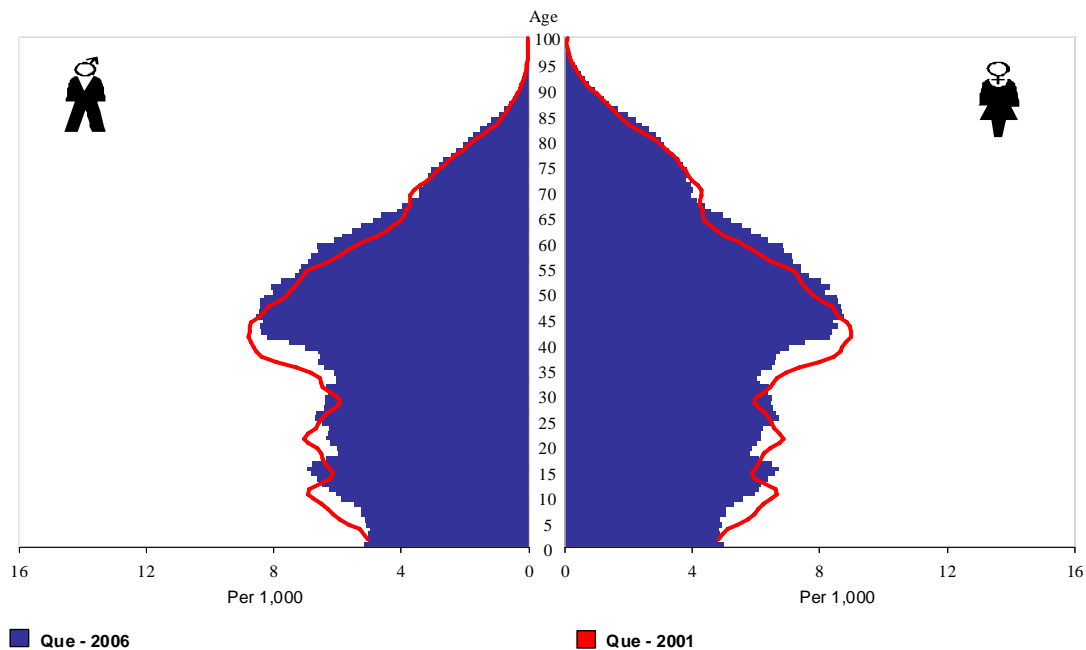


Figure 12 Age pyramid of Quebec population in 2001 and 2006



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

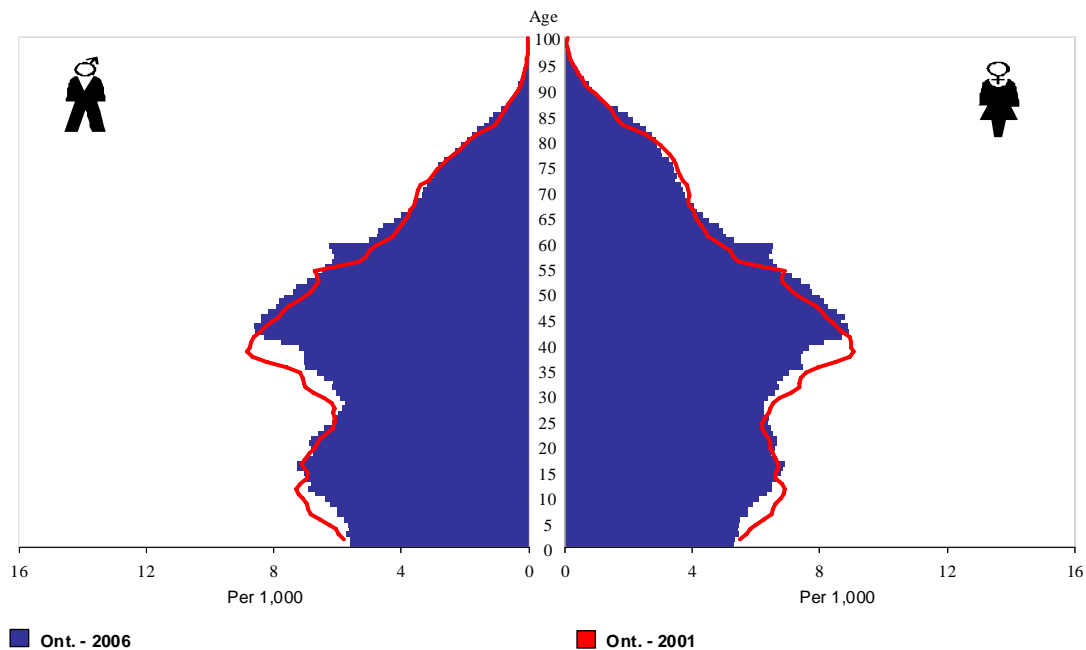
## Ontario remains one of the younger provinces, but it too is aging

Canada's most populous province is also one of the youngest, according to the Census of Population held on May 16, 2006. The proportion of people aged 65 and over is smaller in Ontario (13.6%) than in all other provinces except Alberta, and children form a larger portion of the population (18.2%) than in most other provinces. It is also noteworthy that Ontario was the only province other than Alberta whose population grew faster than the national average between 2001 and 2006.

The relative youthfulness of Ontario's population is due to a combination of factors. The cohorts born in Ontario between the First and Second World Wars were relatively small as the province had one of the lowest fertility rates in Canada at the time. These same small cohorts are the people who are age 65 and over today. Moreover, sustained immigration to Ontario since the late 1980s seems to have had an indirect impact on the number of births. Arriving in the province when they were about 30 on average, female immigrants come to Canada at an age when women are more likely to have children. That is one of the reasons that the percentage of children in Ontario has been higher than the national average since 1996.

Nevertheless, the population is aging in Ontario, as it is in every other part of Canada. The proportion of people aged 65 and over in the province rose from 12.9% in 2001 to 13.6% in 2006. Over the same period, the proportion of people under the age of 15 declined from 19.6% to 18.2%.

Figure 13 Age pyramid of Ontario population in 2001 and 2006



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

## Nearly one person in five is under 15 years in the Prairie provinces

Excluding the territories, the Prairie region has the highest proportion of children aged less than 15 years. At the time of the last census, May 16, 2006, 19.3% of the residents of the region formed by the three Prairie provinces were less than 15 years old. The proportion of children was above 19% in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, but less than 17% in most other provinces.

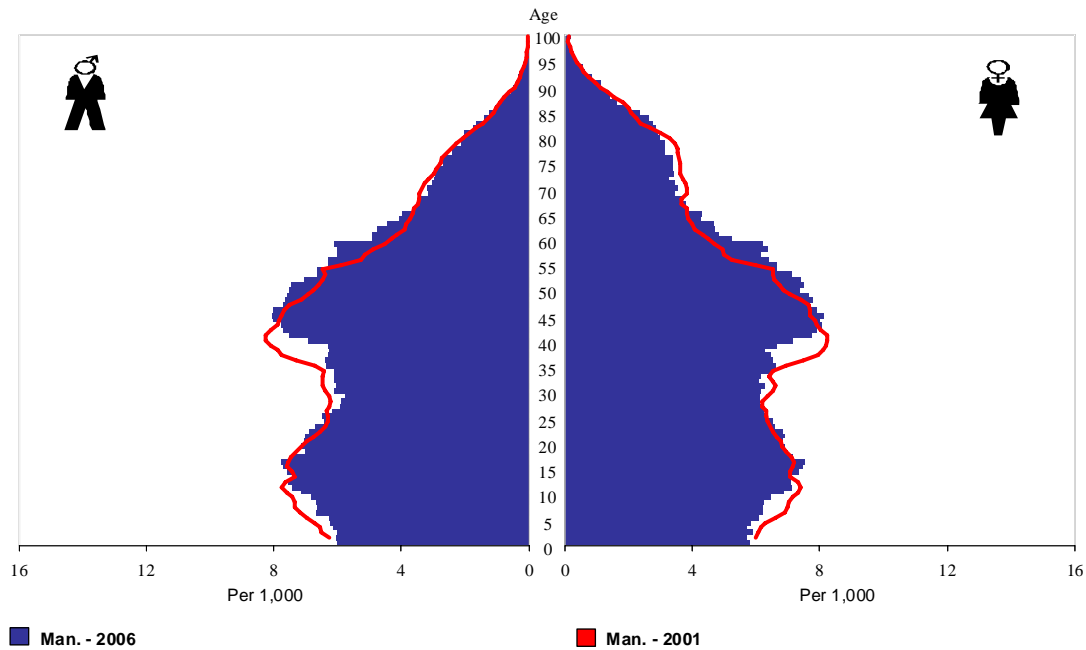
The high percentage of children under 15 years in the Prairie provinces stems largely from the fact that those provinces have a higher fertility rate than the rest of Canada. Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta currently have a higher average number of children per woman than any other province. Aboriginal populations contributed in no small measure to the higher fertility in the three provinces.

While the age structures of the Prairie provinces share some common features at the younger ages, they also show some significant differences.

With one of the highest fertility rates in the country and a smaller proportion of seniors than its neighbour Saskatchewan, Manitoba became the province with the largest proportion of children in 2006. Its 225,185 children under age 15 made up 19.6% of its population in 2006, slightly higher than the 19.4% recorded for Saskatchewan, which had ranked first since 1991.

Meanwhile, the number and percentage of Manitobans aged 65 and over are rising at a very modest pace compared with the rest of the country. Since 2001, the number of elderly people (161,900 in 2006) increased by only 3.5%, compared with 11.5% in Canada as a whole. Moreover, the proportion of seniors in the population (14.1%) rose by a mere 0.1 percentage point in the five-year period, compared with 0.8 percentage point at the national level. This is probably due to Manitoba's life expectancy, which is lower than that of most other Canadian provinces.

**Figure 14 Age pyramid of Manitoba population in 2001 and 2006**

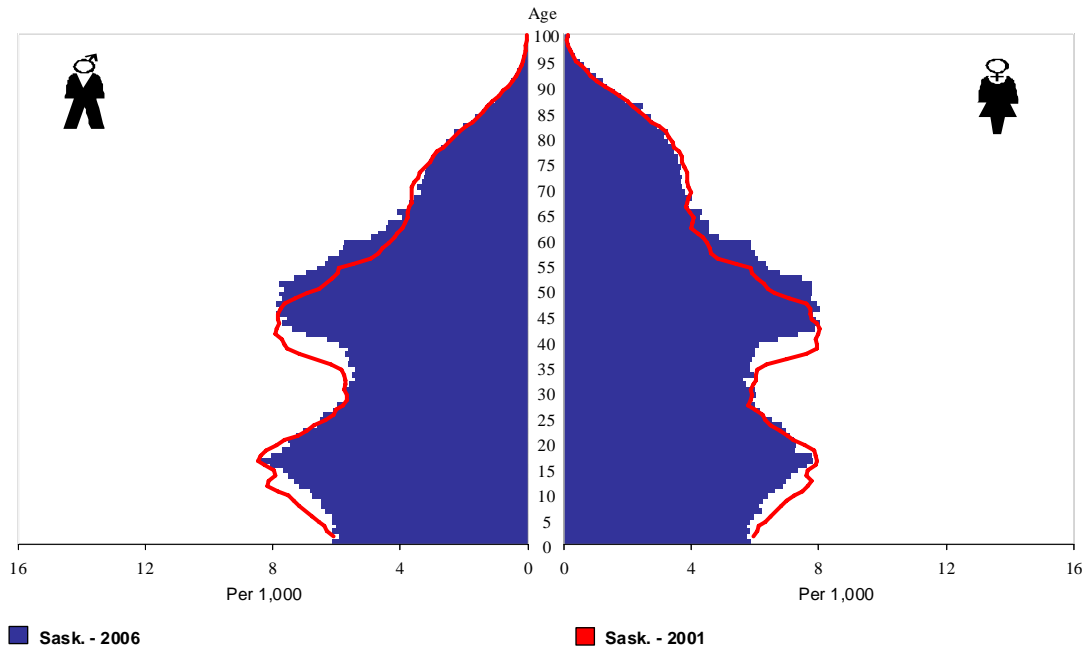


**Sources:** Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

Saskatchewan's situation is interesting in that it has both the largest proportion of seniors (15.4%) and one of the largest proportions of children among the provinces (19.4%). This seemingly paradoxical state of affairs is attributable to several factors: higher fertility than any other Canadian province, a life expectancy that was until quite recently one of the highest in the country coupled with substantial losses of young adults migrating to Alberta, all of which tends to reduce the proportion of Saskatchewan residents between the ages of 20 and 40.

Another distinctive characteristic of Saskatchewan is that it has the largest proportion of very elderly people (80 and over) in Canada. In the 2006 Census, one out of 20 Saskatchewan residents was 80 and older. By comparison, only one Albertan in 36 was in that age group. The national average is one in 27.

Figure 15 Age pyramid of Saskatchewan population in 2001 and 2006



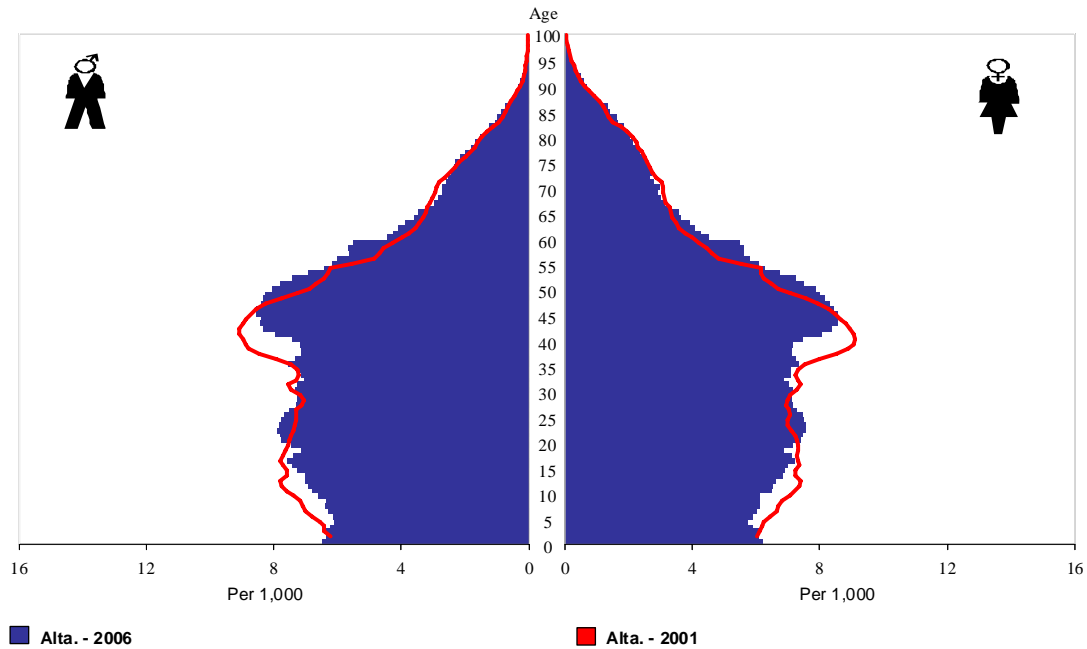
Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

Alberta, which is experiencing an unprecedented economic boom and enjoying very rapid population growth due to the influx of many workers from other provinces, differs in that it has the youngest population of the three Prairie provinces. The number of Alberta residents under age 15 declined in every province except Alberta where their population increased by 13,940 persons between the 2001 and 2006 censuses. As well, the proportion of seniors is only 10.7%, a proportion that is far lower than in any other province.



Alberta is also the only province with more men than women. This unique characteristic is due to the fact that more of the large numbers of workers who migrated to Alberta were men and that the province's elderly population (in which women are invariably overrepresented) is relatively small.

Figure 16 Age pyramid of Alberta population in 2001 and 2006



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

Table 4 Sex ratio in the last 50 years, Canada, provinces and territories

Census year	Canada	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
	Number of males for 100 females													
1956	102.8	106.3	103.5	103.4	101.7	100.3	101.4	103.6	108.6	109.1	106.3	130.2	138.3	...
1961	102.2	105.4	104.1	103.2	102.3	100.2	101.1	103.4	107.6	107.3	103.6	126.8	126.0	...
1966	100.9	104.5	102.6	101.3	101.1	99.7	99.9	101.1	104.9	104.1	102.5	118.7	118.2	...
1971	100.2	103.9	101.5	101.0	101.4	98.7	99.4	100.2	103.3	103.5	101.5	117.1	110.6	...
1976	99.2	103.3	100.7	99.9	100.4	97.9	98.3	98.9	101.8	102.9	99.9	115.5	111.3	...
1981	98.3	101.3	99.0	98.1	98.7	97.1	97.0	97.5	100.8	104.5	99.0	110.9	110.0	...
1986	97.4	100.1	98.7	97.3	97.8	96.1	96.4	97.1	99.8	101.6	98.1	110.3	110.4	...
1991	97.2	99.7	97.2	96.4	97.4	96.0	96.5	97.3	98.5	100.7	98.2	108.8	109.3	108.3
1996	96.5	97.6	96.4	94.7	96.7	95.8	95.7	96.7	97.7	100.0	97.7	106.7	106.2	109.9
2001	96.1	95.8	94.6	93.6	95.7	95.4	95.6	96.4	96.9	99.9	96.5	101.5	104.8	107.2
2006	95.9	94.6	93.4	92.9	94.9	95.6	95.2	96.3	96.4	100.2	95.9	101.3	104.9	105.2

... not applicable.

Note: In this table, Nunavut is included in the Northwest Territories until 1986.

Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1956 to 2006.

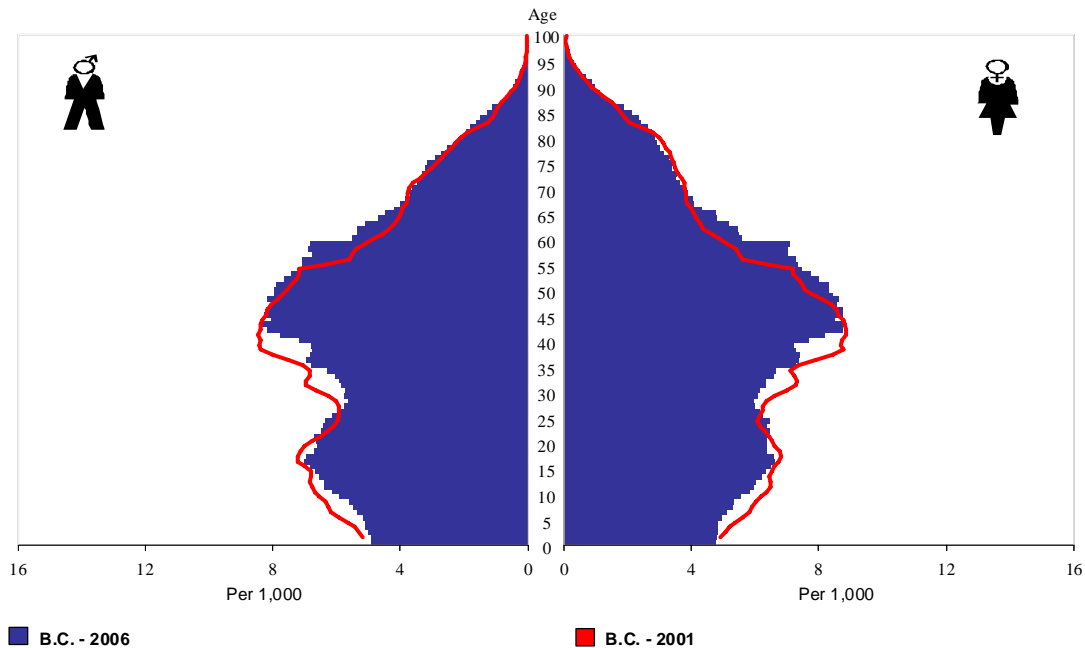
## British Columbia is older than average

According to the results of the last census, British Columbia's population remains one of the oldest provinces in Canada. In 2006, 14.6% of its population was 65 years or older, compared with 13.7% for Canada as a whole. People under the age of 15 made up only 16.5% of the population. The national average was 17.7%.

British Columbia's population has been one of the oldest for many years. In fact, 50 years ago it was the oldest province in Canada.

Through the entire 20th century, British Columbia always had lower fertility than the other provinces. In the 1930s, its total fertility rate even fell below 2 children per woman, which was unusual for that time. Meanwhile, British Columbians have experienced the highest life expectancy in Canada. The main causes of population aging are, of course, low fertility and increasing life expectancy.

**Figure 17 Age pyramid of British Columbia population in 2001 and 2006**



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

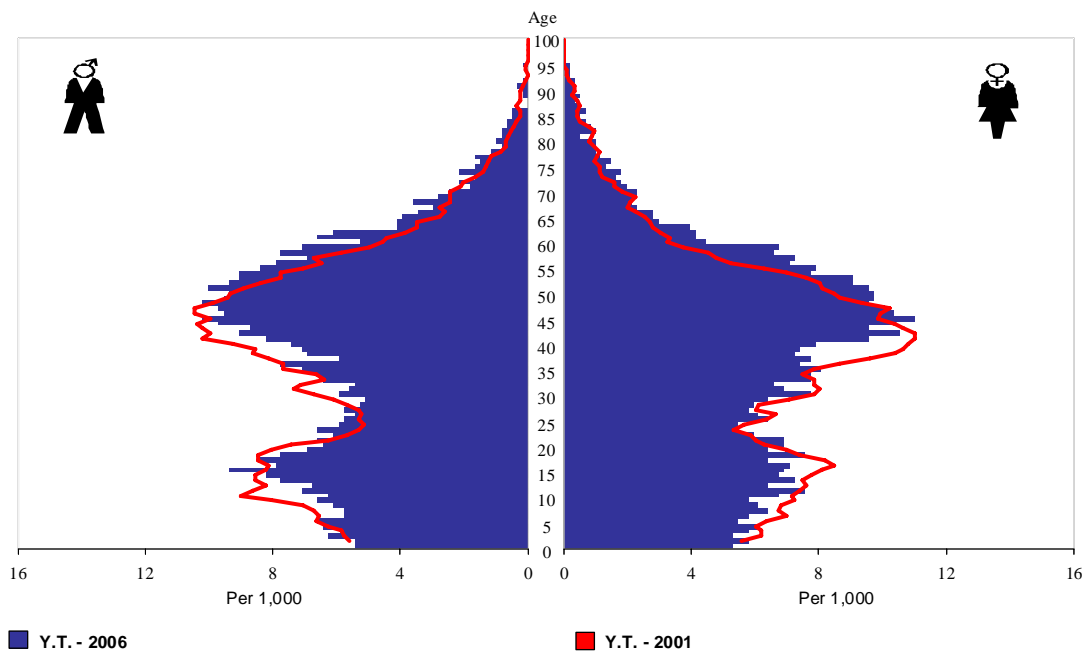
## The territories have the youngest populations in Canada

With more than one in four people under 15 years and only one person in 20 aged 65 and over, the region formed by the three territories was the country's youngest region in 2006. The territories' relative 'youth' is attributable to the high fertility rate, particularly among the Inuit population, and lower life expectancy than in the provinces.

Yukon is somewhat different from the other territories in that it has proportionally a smaller Aboriginal population and its fertility is closer to the national average. In 2006, it had a smaller proportion of children (18.8%) than the other territories and the Prairie provinces. In addition, it had a smaller proportion of people aged 65 and over in the population (7.5%) compared with Canada (13.7%) as a whole.



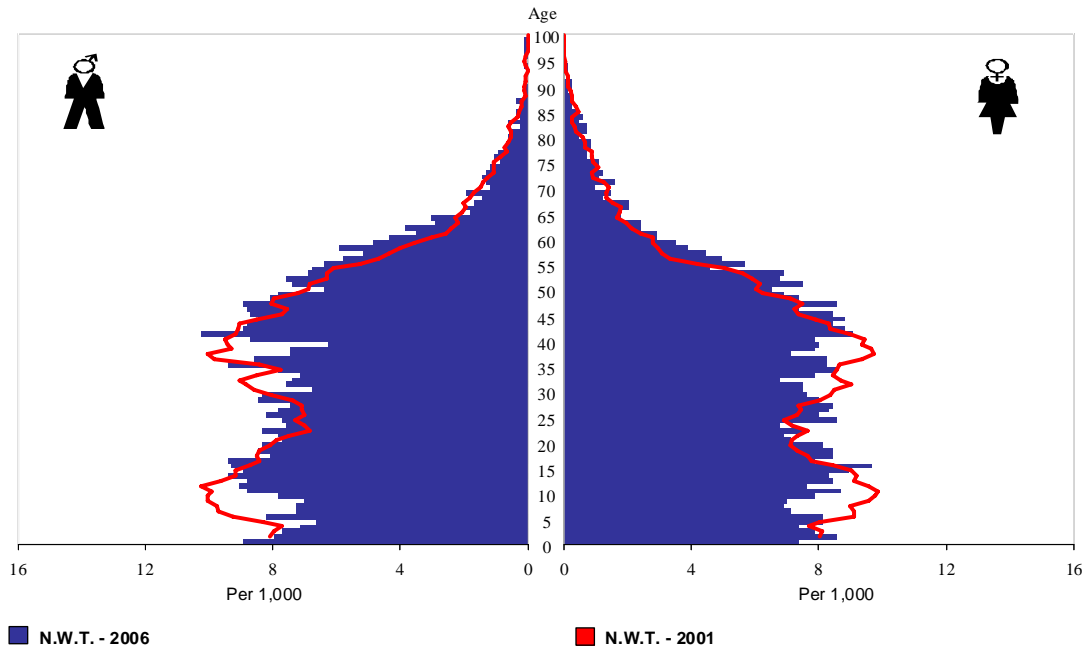
Figure 18 Age pyramid of Yukon population in 2001 and 2006



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

In the Northwest Territories, 9,940 people, or one person in four, were under 15 years in 2006. At less than 5%, the proportion of seniors remained nearly three times smaller than the national average. Only Nunavut had a younger population than the Northwest Territories at the time of the 2006 Census.

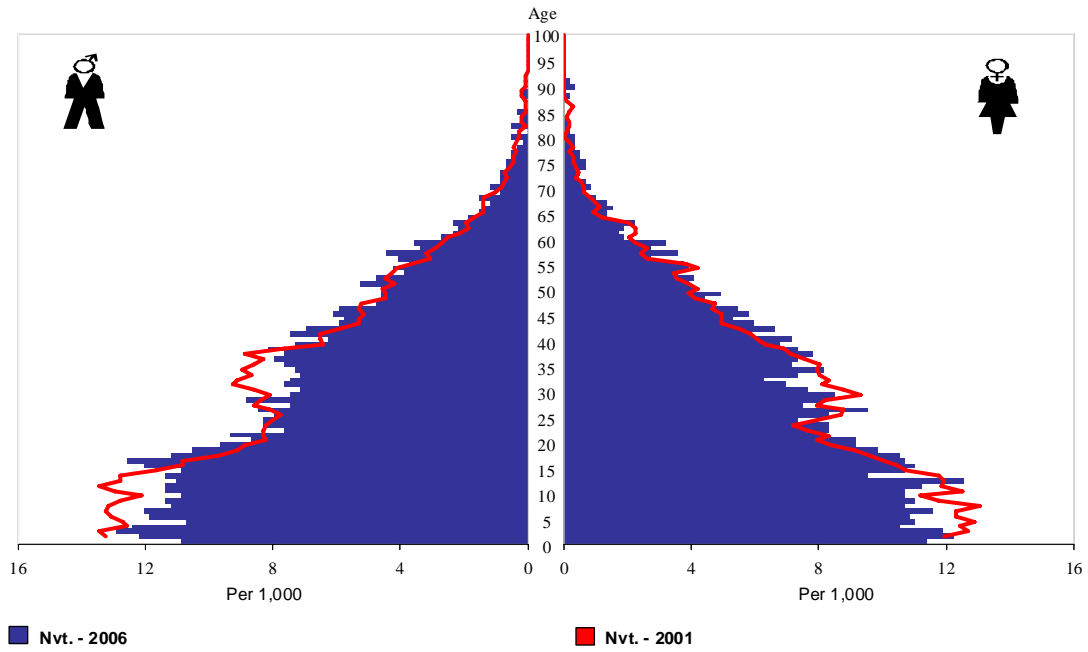
Figure 19 Age pyramid of Northwest Territories population in 2001 and 2006



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

With its majority Inuit population, Nunavut today is the only one of the provinces and territories with an age structure that looks like a pyramid. It has a large proportion of children (more than a third of the population is under 15 years) and the lowest proportion of seniors in Canada (one in 37, compared with one in seven nationally). As in any very young population, there are more males than females. The reason for this is that more boys are born than girls, but the male-to-female ratio falls below 1 after a certain age because mortality is higher among males. As a result, a younger population will have more males than females, and the opposite will be true in an older population.

Figure 20 Age pyramid of Nunavut population in 2001 and 2006



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

## Subprovincial population dynamics

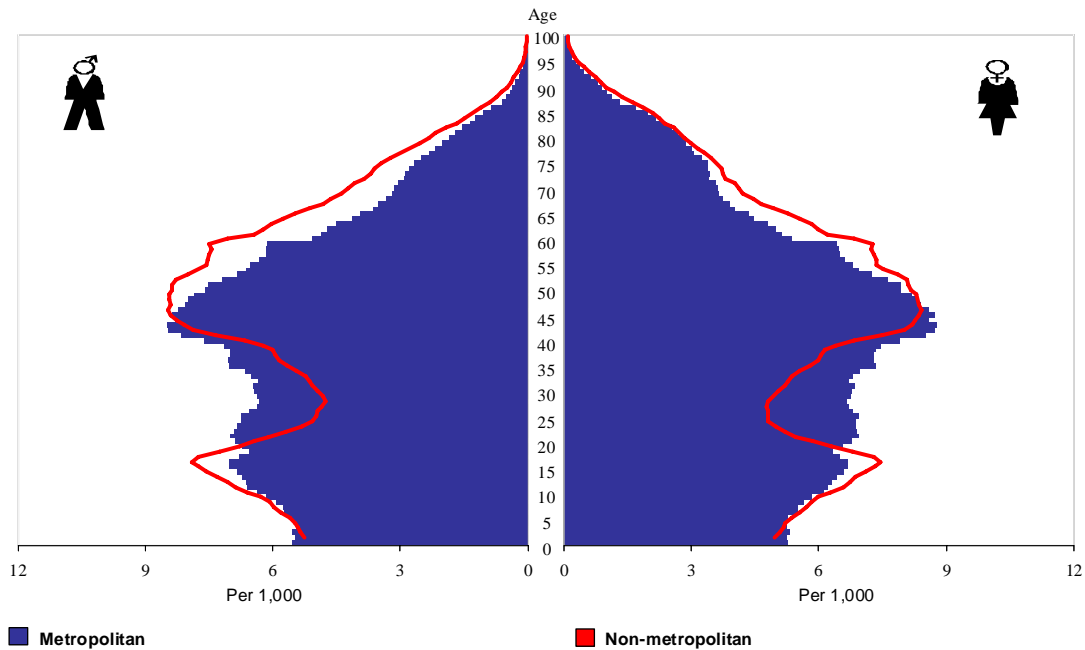
### Urban and rural Canada: the difference is young adults

The initial results of the 2006 Census show that urbanization is continuing in Canada. More than four out of five Canadian were living in urban areas, and those areas grew more rapidly between 2001 and 2006 than rural areas. Canada's urban areas also have a very different age structure from its rural areas.

In this report, the terms 'metropolitan' and 'urban' are used interchangeably to refer to regions formed by census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and mid-size urban centres (census agglomerations – CAs). The terms 'non-metropolitan' and 'rural' both refer to other areas, that is, areas that are not part of a CMA or a CA.

In all metropolitan areas combined, more than one person in three (35.7%) was between 20 and 44 years of age in 2006, a much higher proportion than in rural areas, where young adults made up only 27.7% of the population. The difference is primarily due to internal migration of young adults, who often leave rural areas in their late teens and early twenties to pursue their education or to find a job in urban areas.

**Figure 21 Age pyramid of the Canadian population living in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas in 2006**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

The differences between urban and rural areas is further exacerbated by the fact that most international immigrants, whose average age when they arrive in Canada is about 30, tend to settle in the largest urban centres, further adding to the young adult populations living in these places. The young adult population in the three most populous CMAs—Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver—was particularly important for that reason, contributing to their strong economies.

This significant difference between urban and rural populations has many social and economic implications. Since participation rates are highest for people between the ages of 20 and 44, urban areas have a larger, much younger labour force than rural areas. More than one person out of five in the labour force of rural areas is aged between 55 and 64 years, compared with 16.4% in the labour force of urban areas. This small, older workforce in rural areas presents many challenges, including recruitment of skilled workers and workforce turnover.



**Table 5 Percentage of persons aged less than 15 years and persons aged 65 years and over in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, 2001 and 2006**

Region	Less than 15 years			65 years and over		
	2001	2006	Difference	2001	2006	Difference
Metropolitan	18.8	17.5	-1.3	12.6	13.3	0.7
Non-metropolitan	20.1	18.2	-1.9	14.4	15.5	1.1
Total	19.1	17.7	-1.4	13.0	13.7	0.7

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

Rural areas also have a higher proportion of people aged 65 and over, and that proportion is growing faster than in urban areas. Between 2001 and 2006, the proportion of seniors increased by 1.1 percentage points to 15.5% in rural areas, compared with 0.7 percentage point to 13.3% in metropolitan areas.

With fewer young working-age adults, more seniors and more rapid population aging, rural areas may encounter some challenges in meeting the needs of an older population, for example, in the area of health and home-care services. These challenges may increase in the near future, when the first baby-boomers turn 65 years.

The maps provide a more detailed geographic picture of the differences between urban and rural areas in Canada. Of particular note is the fact that in 2006, the St. John's, Halifax, Moncton and Fredericton, Québec, Montréal, Ottawa - Gatineau, Toronto, Winnipeg, the Calgary-Red Deer-Edmonton corridor and Vancouver metropolitan areas generally had the lowest concentrations of elderly people in Canada and high concentrations of people under 15 years.

The maps also show that rural areas in Northern Canada generally had much younger populations than other rural areas and many urban areas. This situation is largely due to the presence of Aboriginal communities, which have higher fertility, and, in the case of northern Alberta, employment opportunities linked to the oil boom which attracts younger workers and their families.

## Census metropolitan areas, though younger, are aging too

More than two-thirds of Canadians live in the country's 33 census metropolitan areas. The population of all CMAs combined grew at a faster pace than the national average between 2001 and 2006. At the level of individual CMAs, however, there was considerable variation in growth rates, from +19.2% for Barrie, Ontario, to -2.1% for Saguenay, Quebec.

A census metropolitan area (CMA) is a region that has a population of at least 100,000, including an urban core of at least 50,000. Canada has 33 CMAs today, up from 27 in 2001. The six new CMAs are Barrie, Guelph, Brantford and Peterborough, Ontario; Moncton, New Brunswick; and Kelowna, British Columbia.

No matter whether a CMA's population growth was positive or negative, its population continued to age during the five years that preceded the 2006 Census. The proportion of people aged 65 and over in all CMAs combined rose from 12.6% in 2001 to 13.3% in 2006. At the same time, the proportion of people under 15 years declined to 17.5% in 2006 from 18.8% five years earlier.

While the CMAs as a whole were aging, their population contained just 13.3% of persons who were seniors. CMAs had younger age profile than did small urban centres and rural areas, where the proportion of elderly people was 15.5%.

### **Nine of the 16 youngest census metropolitan areas are in southern Ontario**

According to the results of the census held on May 16, 2006, 16 census metropolitan areas had a proportion of children under 15 years that was above the national average of 17.7%.

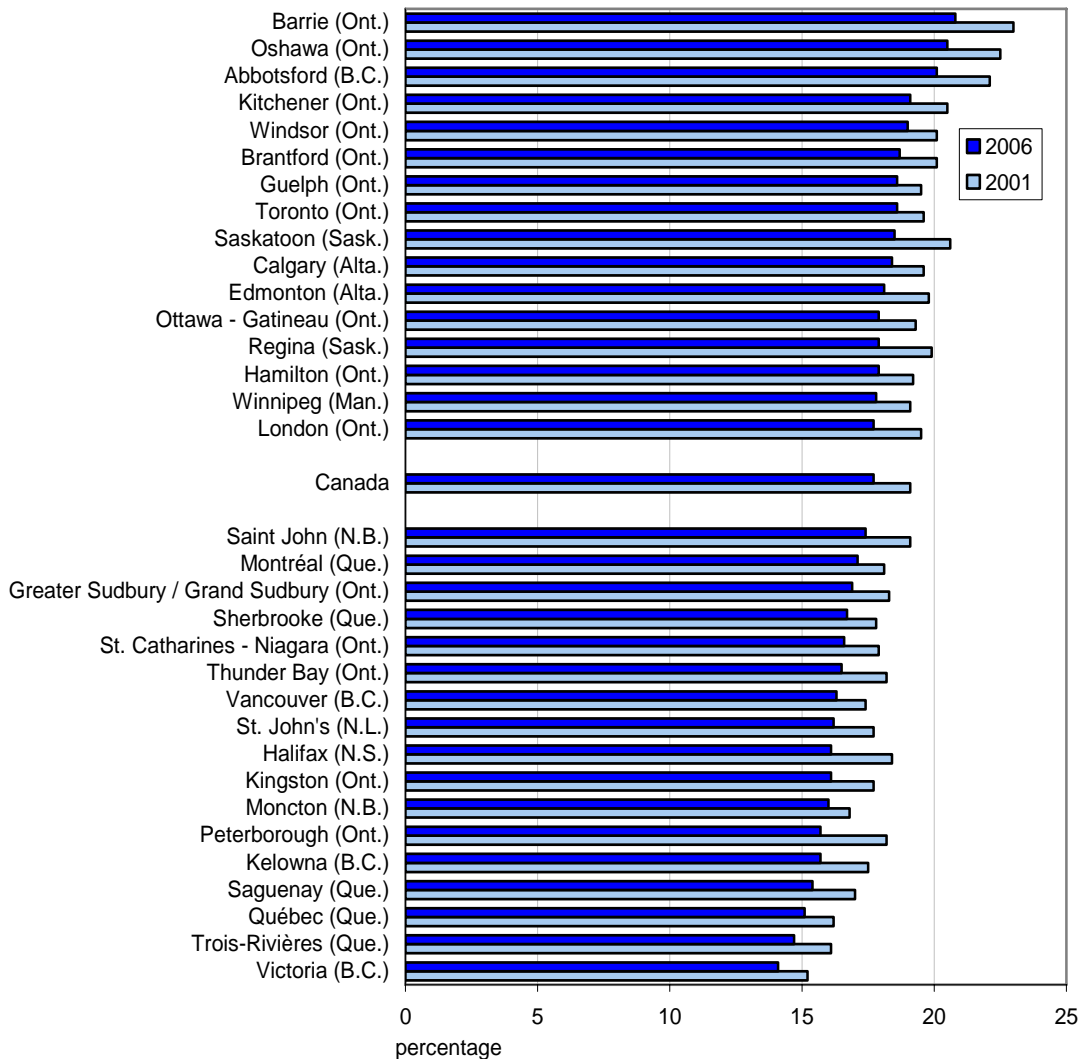
Nine of them were in the heavily industrialized southern Ontario region: Barrie (20.8%), Oshawa (20.5%), Kitchener (19.1%), Windsor (19.0%), Brantford (18.7%), Guelph (18.6%), Toronto (18.6%), Hamilton (17.9%) and London (17.7%). Most of those urban centres also enjoyed a faster rate of population growth than Canada as a whole between 2001 and 2006.

That is particularly true of Barrie, which was not only the youngest CMA but also the CMA with the highest population growth rate in the 2001 to 2006 period. Among the factors responsible for this situation are Barrie's high fertility rate and the large influx of internal and international immigrants of child-bearing age.



The five census metropolitan areas in the Prairies (Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton) also had a higher proportion of children than the national average. As noted earlier, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta are the provinces with the youngest populations. The 2006 Census shows that this characteristic is evident in both the rural parts of the Prairie region and its main metropolitan areas.

**Figure 22 Proportion of the population aged less than 15 years in the census metropolitan areas in 2001 and 2006**



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

The other two CMAs in which the proportion of children was above the national average, Abbotsford and Ottawa - Gatineau, both enjoyed more rapid population growth than Canada as a whole in the five years leading up to the 2006 Census. Also of note is the fact that the average number of children per woman in Abbotsford was higher than in most other large urban centres in Canada.

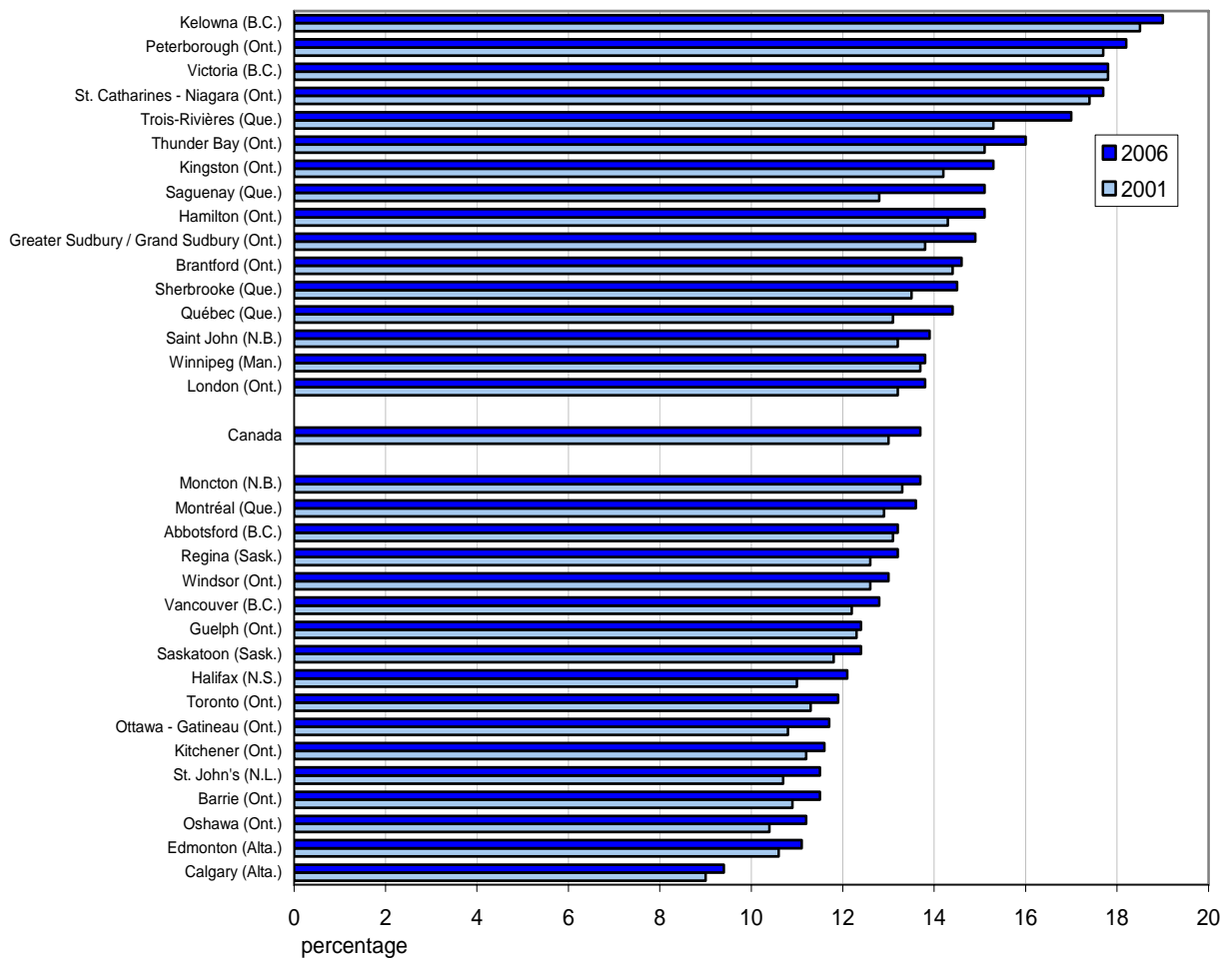
In contrast, Victoria and Trois-Rivières, which in the past were the CMAs with the oldest populations, were the only two CMAs in which people under 15 years made up less than 15% of the population.

**Kelowna is the oldest CMA**

According to the most recent census, there were proportionally more people aged 65 and over in 2006 than in 2001 in every census metropolitan area in the country. The magnitude of the senior population differed by CMA, as the percentage of seniors ranged from single digits at one extreme to double digits at the other.

With 19.0% of its population, or nearly one person in five, aged 65 and older, Kelowna (British Columbia) was the oldest CMA in Canada in 2006. Second on the list was Peterborough (Ontario), 18.2% of whose residents were 65 years and over. Both CMAs have age structures that bear the marks of recurring losses of young adults through migration, as people between the ages of 20 and 44 are substantially underrepresented.

**Figure 23 Proportion of the population aged 65 years and over in census metropolitan areas in 2001 and 2006**



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

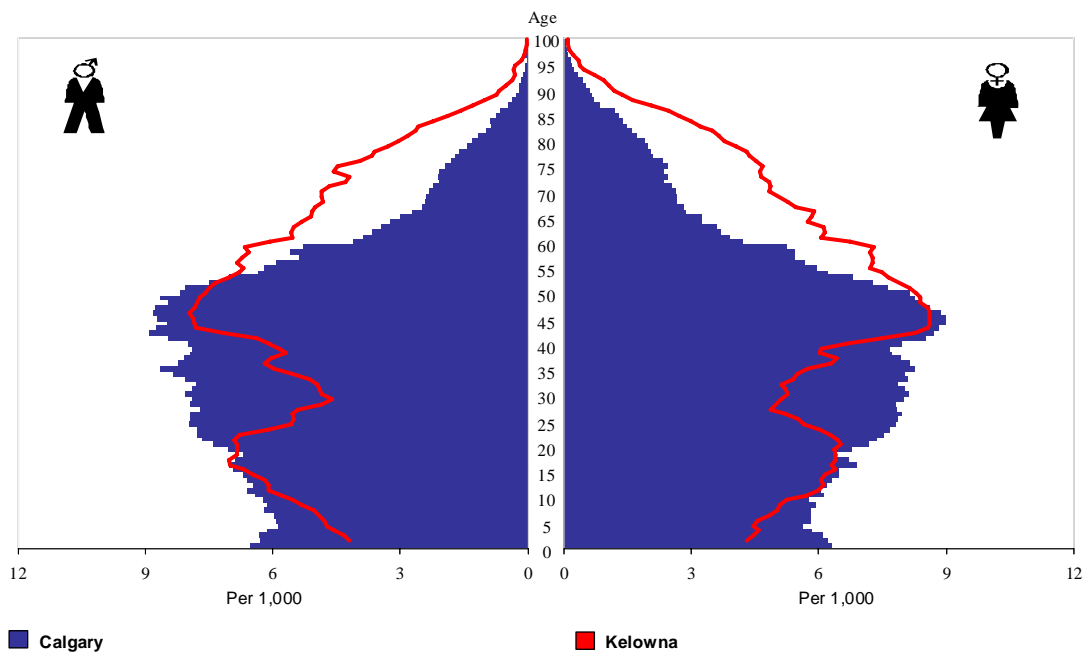
## Portrait of the Canadian Population in 2006, by age and sex

Victoria (British Columbia) with 17.8% of seniors, St. Catharines - Niagara (Ontario) with 17.7% of seniors, and Trois-Rivières (Quebec) with 17.0% of seniors, ranked third, fourth and fifth respectively and continued to have the oldest populations in the country. In fact, Victoria had a higher proportion of very elderly people (aged 80 and over), at 6.4%, than any other CMA. The national average was 3.7%.

At the other end of the spectrum, Calgary was the only census metropolitan area where fewer than one person in 10 was 65 years and older (9.4%). The CMA with the next lowest proportion was Alberta's other CMA, Edmonton, with 11.1%. Over the last 10 years, Calgary and Edmonton have enjoyed an economic boom that has brought them substantial gains through the migration of workers from other parts of Canada. The result is an age structure with a high proportion of people between the ages of 20 and 44. It also contributes to a higher birth rate since women of child-bearing age are overrepresented. Thus, internal migration has probably helped to dampen the growth of the proportion that represents the elderly population in Alberta's two major urban centres.

Oshawa and Barrie also had a low proportion of seniors, at 11.2% and 11.5% respectively. It is interesting to note that along with Calgary and Edmonton, Barrie and Oshawa had the highest rates of population growth among Canadian CMAs.

**Figure 24 Age pyramid of the population in Kelowna (B.C.) and Calgary (Alta.) CMAs in 2006**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

## The suburbs of census metropolitan areas are younger than the downtown areas

The increasing urbanization of Canada's population is accompanied by urban spread, a phenomenon characterized by faster population growth in the suburban areas located around metropolitan areas than in the central municipalities. Urban spread presents many challenges, especially in the areas of transportation, services to the public and impact on the environment.

The suburbs, or peripheral municipalities, of the country's 33 CMAs had, on average, a younger population than the central municipalities in 2006. Nearly one person in five (19.7%) was under 15 years in the peripheral municipalities, compared with 16.5% in the central municipalities. In addition, the proportion of seniors was lower in the suburbs (11.9%) than in the central municipalities (13.8%).

It is important to distinguish between census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and municipalities (census subdivisions – CSDs). A CMA usually consists of many municipalities, one of which, called the central municipality, lends its name to the CMA. For example, the Montréal CMA includes nearly 100 municipalities, such as Laval, Longueuil, La Prairie and Mirabel. The municipality of Montréal, on the island of Montréal, is the central municipality, that is, the census subdivision for which the CMA is named.

Peripheral municipalities also had a larger population of residents between 40 and 59 years of age, many of whom probably live in families with children. This kind of age structure may well be typical of neighbourhoods that are more residential and family-oriented.

**Table 6 Percentage of persons aged less than 15 years and persons aged 65 years and over for central and peripheral municipalities of the 33 census metropolitan areas, 2001 and 2006**

Regions	Population		Less than 15 years		65 years and over	
	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006
Central municipalities	12,230,430	12,739,120	17.7	16.5	13.3	13.8
Peripheral municipalities	7,890,925	8,769,435	20.6	19.7	10.7	11.9
Total of census metropolitan areas	20,121,355	21,508,575	18.8	17.6	12.3	12.9

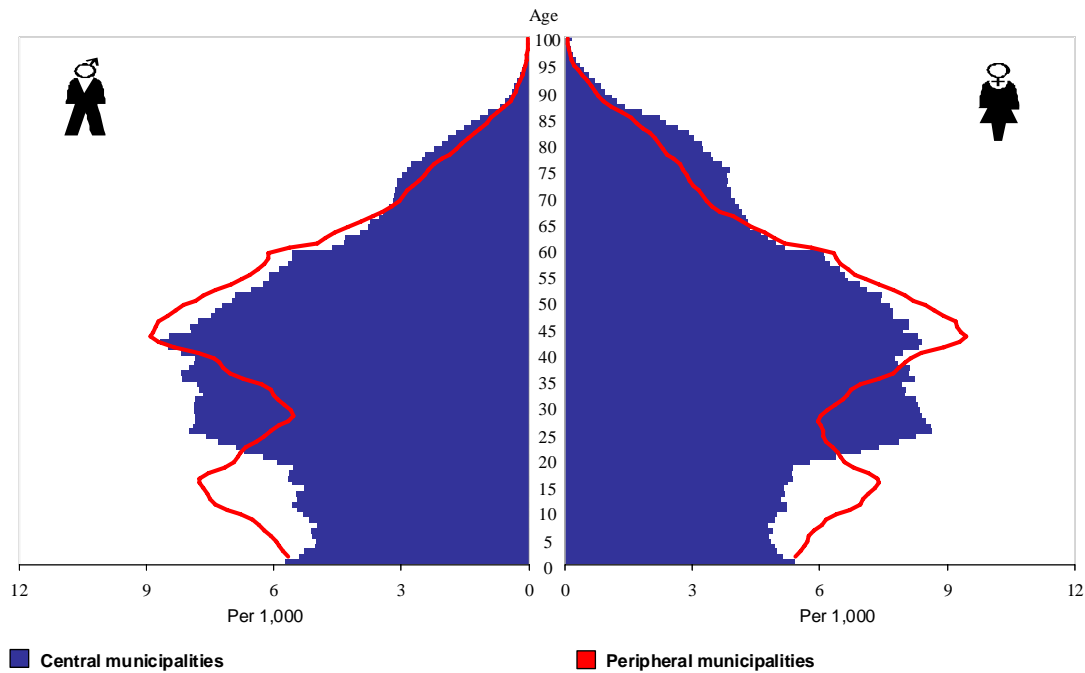
Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

The differences between central and peripheral municipalities are particularly apparent in Canada's three largest urban centres: the Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver CMAs. The age structure of the suburbs, which closely matches the pattern just described, differs substantially from that of the central municipalities, which have a large proportion of people between 20 and 34 years. This characteristic, which affects the working-age population, larger and younger in the downtown areas, may be due to the influx of young migrants from other parts of the country and the large numbers of international immigrants.

The larger proportion of seniors in the central municipalities of Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, compared with their suburbs, may be associated as well with the presence of senior residences and health services that meet the special needs of the elderly population.

The next section explains the differences between the central and peripheral municipalities in Canada's three major urban centres: the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Montréal CMA and the Vancouver CMA.

**Figure 25 Age pyramid of the central and peripheral municipalities of Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver CMAs in 2006**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

## Three large urban areas

### The Montréal census metropolitan area

#### The youngest municipalities are all outside the island of Montréal

The Montréal metropolitan area, which is home to roughly half of Quebecers, consists of nearly 100 municipalities, including Montréal, Laval and Longueuil. The size of the area currently encompassed by the CMA, which runs from Mont St-Hilaire in the east to Mirabel in the west and from Beauharnois in the south to St-Jérôme in the north, clearly illustrates the impact of the urban spread that has occurred over the last few decades. Age and sex data from the 2006 Census indicate that urban spread has also left its mark on the age structures of the CMA's municipalities.

The municipalities with the youngest population profile in 2006 are almost all located outside the island of Montréal and Laval and largely compose the 'new' suburbs. These municipalities generally experienced the fastest population growth since 2001.

The maps show that most of the municipalities with the highest proportions of children under 15 years and the lowest proportions of people aged 65 and over were outside the island of Montréal, in the large ring of suburbs that includes municipalities such as Mirabel and Saint-Colomban to the north, Varennes and Saint-Basile-le-Grand to the east, La Prairie and Delson to the south, and Vaudreuil-sur-le-Lac and Coteau-du-Lac to the west. In fact, the CMA's two youngest municipalities, Saint-Lazare and Blainville, where one person in four was under 15 years, are part of the suburban ring surrounding the island of Montréal and Laval.

On the island of Montréal itself and in some older suburbs such as Laval and St-Lambert, the population profile was an older one. Six of the 10 municipalities with the highest proportions of elderly people were on the island of Montréal. The municipality of Montréal, which had 15.2% of its population being senior, had one of the oldest populations in the CMA.

Of particular note is the municipality of Côte-Saint-Luc, on the island of Montréal, where nearly one resident in three (30.2%) was 65 years and older in 2006. The proportion of very elderly people (aged 80 and over) was also almost four times the national average (13.7% compared with 3.7%).

## **The Greater Golden Horseshoe**

### **The populations located on the fringe of the Greater Golden Horseshoe are older than the central populations**

The Greater Golden Horseshoe, which lies to the west of Lake Ontario, is the most heavily urbanized region in Canada. It contains nine CMAs as well as more than 100 municipalities, 16 of which have a population of more than 100,000. The region has enjoyed sustained population growth since 2001, in particular because many international immigrants settle there.

Most of that population growth was concentrated in populous municipalities in a zone that extends from Hamilton to Oshawa, encircling the municipality of Toronto to the north. Some of those suburbs of Ontario's metropolis had the youngest populations in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, with at least one person in five being under the age of 15. Within the zone, Brampton had the distinction of being the municipality with both the highest rate of population growth since 2001 and the highest proportion of children (22.9%).

In contrast, the municipality of Toronto had an older population than the surrounding suburbs, as its proportion of seniors was higher and its proportion of children lower. In fact, of all the municipalities that make up the Toronto CMA, the municipality of Toronto was the only one whose proportion of children under 15 years was less than the national average.

In other Greater Golden Horseshoe CMAs, the central municipalities were older than the adjacent suburbs. This is the case for the Kitchener and Oshawa CMAs and their suburbs of Cambridge and Clarington.

Apart from the municipality of Toronto, the municipalities with the oldest populations in 2006 were situated at the northern and southern ends of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Niagara Peninsula, a resort area popular with retired people, had a proportion of seniors that was high overall in 2006, especially in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where nearly one person in four was 65 years or older. To the north, the Kawartha Lakes area and the shores of Georgian Bay, also favoured by retired people, had populations older than the national average.

## The Vancouver census metropolitan area

### The southern and eastern parts of the Vancouver census metropolitan area are younger

Located in the south-westernmost part of Canada, the Vancouver CMA includes about 40 municipalities, five of which had a population of more than 100,000 in 2006. Since the CMA is bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the mountains to the north, most of the urban spread has taken place to the east and south over the last few decades.

The CMA's municipalities with the youngest age profile in 2006 were also located to the south and east. Surrey, Maple Ridge and Port Moody all had populations in which at least one person in five was under 15 years. They are also among the municipalities with the highest rates of population growth in the CMA since 2001.

The municipalities of Vancouver, Burnaby and West Vancouver, all located in the western part of the CMA, had populations with a high proportion of seniors and a low proportion of children. Burnaby and West Vancouver also experienced population growth that was below the national average between 2001 and 2006.

The municipality of White Rock, at the southern end of the Vancouver CMA, had not only a high proportion of people aged 65 and over (27.8%) but also one of the highest proportions of very elderly people (80 and over) in Canada (11.7%).

## Portrait of mid-size urban centres

In addition to its 33 census metropolitan areas, urban Canada has 111 mid-size urban centres (census agglomerations – see box).

A mid-size urban centre, or census agglomeration (CA), is an urban area that has an urban core with a population of at least 10,000, but is not a census metropolitan area (CMA). Canada now has 111 CAs, down from 113 in 2001. Six CAs have become CMAs since 2001: Barrie, Guelph, Brantford and Peterborough (Ontario), Moncton (New Brunswick) and Kelowna (British Columbia). Seven new CAs were established: Bay Roberts (Newfoundland and Labrador), Canmore (Alberta), Centre Wellington and Ingersoll (Ontario), Miramichi (New Brunswick), Okotoks (Alberta) and Salmon Arm (British Columbia). Two 2001 CAs were no longer CAs in 2006: Gander and Labrador City (Newfoundland and Labrador). Also, Magog (Quebec) is now part of the Sherbrooke CMA.

According to initial results from the 2006 Census, mid-size urban centres experienced a 4.0% population growth between 2001 and 2006, slightly lower than the growth rate for Canada as a whole (+5.4%) and just over half the rate for all CMAs combined (+6.9%).

Mid-size urban centres also have a different age structure from CMAs. In addition to growing more slowly, they were, on average, older than CMAs in 2006, as their proportion of people aged 65 and over was 15.5%, compared with 12.9% for CMAs.

**Parksville (British Columbia) and Elliot Lake (Ontario) are the oldest mid-size urban centres...**

Roughly one person in three is 65 years and older in the mid-size urban centres of Parksville, British Columbia, and Elliot Lake, Ontario. The two urban centres were by far the oldest in Canada in 2006. They are known as resort centres that attract many elderly people because of their climate and because they meet the needs and interests of seniors.

Parksville is the mid-size urban centre with the highest proportion of very elderly people (aged 80 and over) in Canada, at 10.2%. Put another way, nearly one person in 10 was 80 or older in Parksville in 2006, the highest proportion in Canada. The national proportion is about one person in 27.

**Table 7 Mid-size urban centres with the highest proportion of persons aged 65 years and over in 2006**

Order	Mid-size urban centre	Province	Proportion (in percentage)
1	Parksville	British Columbia	33.8
2	Elliot Lake	Ontario	31.6
3	Penticton	British Columbia	24.8
4	Cobourg	Ontario	24.5
5	Tillsonburg	Ontario	23.0
6	Salmon Arm	British Columbia	22.6
7	Thetford Mines	Quebec	22.1
8	Yorkton	Saskatchewan	20.9
8	Shawinigan	Quebec	20.9
10	Collingwood	Ontario	20.6
11	Hawkesbury	Ontario	20.5
12	Camrose	Alberta	20.3
13	Powell River	British Columbia	20.2
13	Swift Current	Saskatchewan	20.2
15	Vernon	British Columbia	20.1
16	Kawartha Lakes	Ontario	19.5
17	Moose Jaw	Saskatchewan	19.3
18	Orillia	Ontario	19.1
19	Courtenay	British Columbia	19.0
20	Lachute	Quebec	18.9
21	Owen Sound	Ontario	18.8
22	Brockville	Ontario	18.6
22	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	18.6
24	Pembroke	Ontario	18.5
25	Joliette	Quebec	18.4

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

Other urban centres, including Penticton (British Columbia), Cobourg (Ontario) and Thetford Mines (Quebec), had between 20% and 25% seniors in their populations. Most of them were in British Columbia and Ontario.

**...and Thompson (Manitoba) is the youngest**

Four of the six youngest mid-size urban centres in 2006 were in Alberta: Okotoks, Cold Lake, Brooks and Grande Prairie. Lloydminster and Wood Buffalo are also on the list of the 25 mid-size urban centres with the highest proportions of children under the age of 15 in Canada. A number of those urban centres are located in areas of rapid population growth, where oil sands development is a major industry, attracting many young workers who form families there.

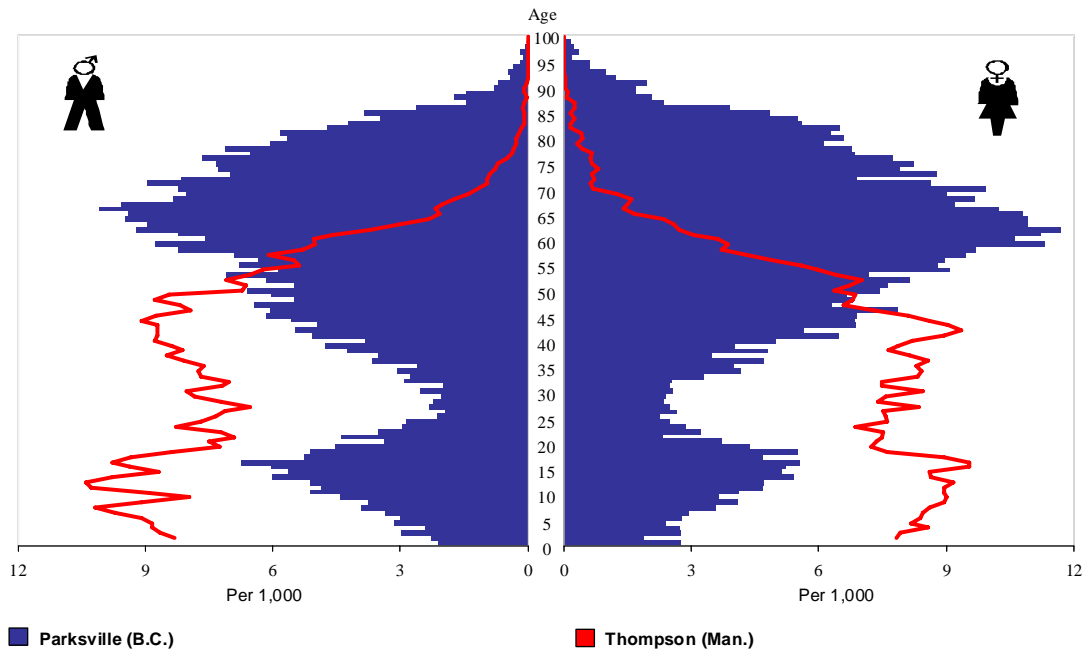
**Table 8 Mid-size urban centres with the highest proportion of persons aged less than 15 years in 2006**

Order	Mid-size urban centre	Province	Proportion (in percentage)
1	Thompson	Manitoba	26.5
2	Okotoks	Alberta	25.4
3	Cold Lake	Alberta	24.1
4	Petawawa	Ontario	22.6
5	Brooks	Alberta	21.9
5	Grande Prairie	Alberta	21.9
5	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	21.9
8	Fort St. John	British Columbia	21.8
9	Lloydminster	Saskatchewan/Alberta	21.5
9	Yellowknife	Northwest Territories	21.5
11	Terrace	British Columbia	21.3
12	Portage la Prairie	Manitoba	21.0
13	North Battleford	Saskatchewan	20.8
14	Dawson Creek	British Columbia	20.6
15	Squamish	British Columbia	20.5
16	Prince Rupert	British Columbia	20.2
16	Wood Buffalo	Alberta	20.2
18	Chilliwack	British Columbia	20.0
19	Ingersoll	Ontario	19.8
20	Centre Wellington	Ontario	19.6
21	Leamington	Ontario	19.5
22	Prince George	British Columbia	19.2
23	Sept-Îles	Quebec	19.1
23	Whitehorse	Yukon	19.1
25	Estevan	Saskatchewan	19.0

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of population, 2006.

Nevertheless, the youngest mid-size urban centre in Canada was Thompson, Manitoba, with more than one person in four under the age of 15. The small northern Manitoba town, which has a population of just over 13,500, includes a large Aboriginal community. Aboriginal peoples generally have a higher fertility rate.

Figure 26 Age pyramid of the mid-size urban centres population of Parksville (B.C.) and Thompson (Man.) in 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

## Portrait of small towns, rural areas and the territories

Roughly six million Canadians were living in small towns and rural areas in 2006. Rural areas close to urban centres<sup>1</sup> experienced a much higher rate of population growth (+4.7%) than more remote rural areas (-0.1%).

In this section, the terms 'rural areas' and 'non-metropolitan areas' are used interchangeably to refer to areas that are not part of a CMA or a CA.

The population of remote rural areas was also older than that of rural areas close to urban centres. Remote rural areas had a much higher proportion of people aged 65 and over (16.1%) than metropolitan areas (13.2%) or rural areas close to urban centres (13.9%).

1. In rural areas close to urban centres, more than 30% of the labour force commutes to work in the urban centre.

**Table 9 Percentage of persons aged less than 15 years and persons aged 65 years and over by area type, 2001 and 2006**

Area type	Less than 15 years		65 years and over	
	2001	2006	2001	2006
Metropolitan areas of Canada	19.1	17.5	12.6	13.3
Total of rural areas and small towns	20.1	18.2	14.4	15.5
Rural areas close to urban centres	20.2	18.0	12.9	13.9
Remote rural areas	19.9	18.1	15.0	16.1
Territories	31.8	28.9	4.4	5.1
Canada	19.1	17.7	13.0	13.7

Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

### Eleven of the 25 youngest small towns and rural communities are in Alberta

A number of the small towns and rural communities with the youngest populations in 2006 were located in Alberta, particularly the northern part of the province. As in 2001, Mackenzie No. 23 was the youngest rural area in Canada, as the proportion of children there was more than one in three.

Sylvan Lakes and Lakeland County, also in northern Alberta, are not only on the list of Canada's youngest rural areas but are also among the rural areas with the highest rates of population growth since 2001.

There are other reasons for the high proportion of children in some rural areas: the presence of a large Aboriginal population (Iqaluit, Nunavut and Big Lakes, Alberta) or the presence of particular communities, such as Mennonites (Stanley and Hanover, Manitoba and Mapleton and Wellesley, Ontario) or Mormons (Taber, Alberta), which have higher fertility rates.

**Table 10 Small towns and rural communities with the highest proportion of persons aged less than 15 years in 2006**

Order	Small town or rural community	Province	Population	Proportion (in percentage)
1	Mackenzie No. 23	Alberta	10,002	35.6
2	Stanley	Manitoba	6,367	35.0
3	Hanover	Manitoba	11,871	31.6
4	Peace River B	British Columbia	5,538	30.6
4	Taber	Alberta	6,280	30.6
6	Mapleton	Ontario	9,851	28.1
7	Wellesley	Ontario	9,789	28.0
8	Big Lakes	Alberta	5,805	26.6
9	Malahide	Ontario	8,828	25.2
9	Iqaluit	Nunavut	6,184	25.2
11	Slave Lake	Alberta	6,703	25.1
12	Willow Creek No. 26	Alberta	5,337	25.0
13	The Pas	Manitoba	5,589	24.6
14	Sylvan Lake	Alberta	10,208	24.3
14	Bayham	Ontario	6,727	24.3
16	Norwich	Ontario	10,481	24.1
17	Perth East	Ontario	12,041	24.0
18	Whitecourt	Alberta	8,971	23.8
19	Bonnyville No. 87	Alberta	10,194	23.5
20	Lakeland County	Alberta	6,365	23.2
21	Oromocto	New Brunswick	8,402	23.0
22	Kneehill County	Alberta	5,218	22.9
22	West Lincoln	Ontario	13,167	22.9
24	Wheatland County	Alberta	8,164	22.5
25	Smithers	British Columbia	5,217	22.4

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

In contrast, some of the oldest small towns and rural communities were very popular with retired people, such as Capital G, on Vancouver Island; Summerland, in the Okanagan Valley; Trail, in the Kootenay Valley in British Columbia; Perth and Wasaga Beach, Ontario; and Saint-Sauveur, Quebec. In all cases, the proportion of seniors in the population was greater than one in five.

**Table 11 Small towns and rural communities with the highest proportion of persons aged 65 years and over in 2006**

Order	Small town or rural community	Province	Population	Proportion (in percentage)
1	Capital G	British Columbia	5,101	28.6
2	Gimli	Manitoba	5,797	28.3
3	Perth	Ontario	5,907	28.0
4	Humboldt	Saskatchewan	5,000	27.3
5	Trail	British Columbia	7,237	27.1
5	Westlock	Alberta	5,008	27.1
7	Dauphin	Manitoba	7,906	26.3
8	Nanaimo E	British Columbia	5,462	26.2
9	Summerland	British Columbia	10,828	25.7
10	Sechelt	British Columbia	8,454	25.3
11	Wasaga Beach	Ontario	15,029	24.9
11	Minden Hills	Ontario	5,556	24.9
13	Blue Mountains	Ontario	6,825	24.8
14	Parry Sound	Ontario	5,818	24.4
15	South Bruce Peninsula	Ontario	8,415	24.1
16	Columbia-Shuswap C	British Columbia	7,695	23.8
17	Melfort	Saskatchewan	5,192	23.6
17	Asbestos	Quebec	6,819	23.6
19	Louiseville	Quebec	7,433	23.2
19	Brighton	Ontario	10,253	23.2
19	Dysart and Others	Ontario	5,526	23.2
19	Lambton Shores	Ontario	11,150	23.2
23	Saint-Sauveur	Quebec	9,191	23.0
24	Shediac	New Brunswick	5,497	22.9
25	Vegreville	Alberta	5,519	22.8

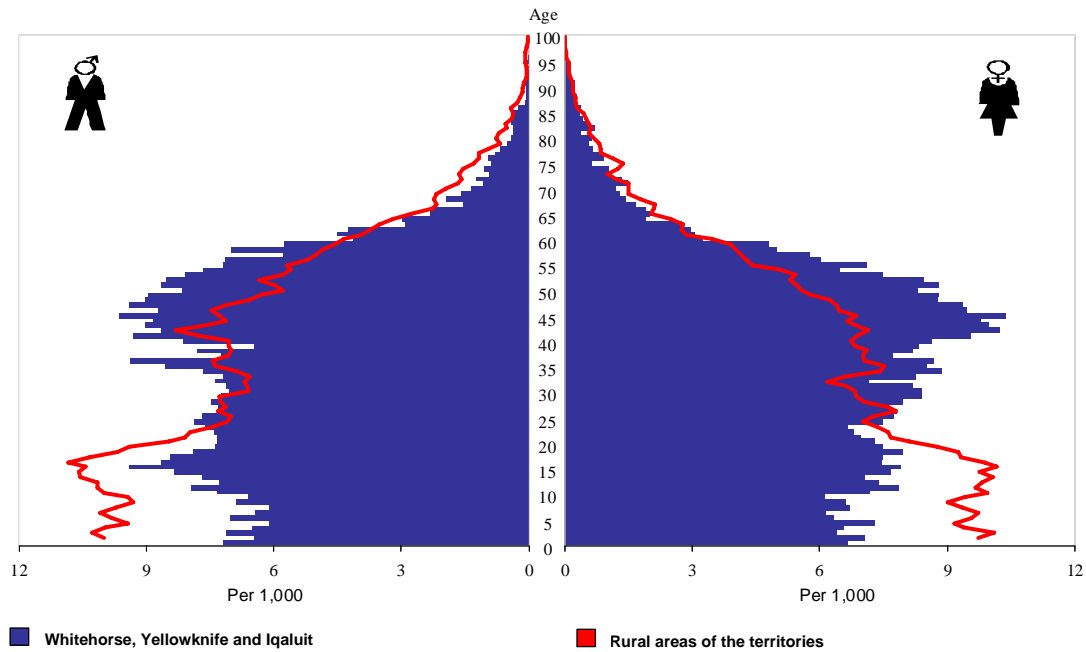
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

### Small towns and communities in the territories

As was the case in other parts of Canada, the age structure in the rural parts of Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut is different from the age structure found in Whitehorse, Yellowknife and Iqaluit. The age pyramid of rural areas of the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut was characteristic of a population with high fertility and lower life expectancy, so that the base of the pyramid was much wider than the top. It is also the only age pyramid for a Canadian region in which the large baby-boom cohorts are not clearly visible between the ages of 41 and 60.

The working-age population was proportionally larger in Whitehorse, Yellowknife and Iqaluit than in the rural areas of the three territories. This situation, which is typical of most large urban centres in Canada, has to do with the labour market in urban areas, which attracts and retains workers who, mainly in the case of Whitehorse, Yellowknife and Iqaluit, come from other parts of the territories or other parts of Canada.

Figure 27 Age pyramid of the population of the territories' three capitals compared to the rural areas of the three territories in 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

**Note to reader:** To obtain a copy of the maps referenced in this document, refer to the following link: <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/agesex/tables.cfm#maps>.

#### Acknowledgements

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