

Territories were omitted from this calculation, there would be 4.21 persons/km² in 1976 compared to 3.67 persons/km² in 1966 and 2.95 persons/km² in 1956. However, such average density figures over all types of land terrain and open spaces in the country or in individual provinces obscure the high urban densities which can reach close to 7,722 persons/km² as in Montreal and Toronto. Moreover, the highest provincial densities are not necessarily found among the provinces with the largest populations. For example, the highest average density of any province is that of Prince Edward Island (20.90 persons/km²) which has the smallest population and represents an anomaly resulting from its limited land area rather than from heavy concentrations of population. In contrast, the far more populous British Columbia, with its vast mountainous regions and areas of sparse population, has an average density of only 2.65 persons/km².

Urban and rural

4.2.2

The urban population was defined in the 1976 Census as all persons living in an area having a population concentration of 1,000 or more and a population density of at least 386 a square kilometre. All the remaining population was classified as rural.

Over 75.5% of Canada's population live in an urban environment, with the degree of urbanization ranging from 37.1% in Prince Edward Island to 81.2% in Ontario. In comparison with the national average, only Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia were more highly urbanized (Table 4.11).

The rural population, 24.5% of the Canadian total in 1976, is classified as non-farm or farm. The rural farm population was defined for census purposes as persons living in rural areas on an agricultural holding of at least 0.4 ha (hectares) with sales of agricultural products amounting to \$1,200 or more during 1975. The rural non-farm category in 1976 accounted for 20% of the population, compared to 4.5% for the rural farm segment.

Demographic and social characteristics

4.3

Age, sex and marital status

4.3.1

The distribution of a population by age, sex and marital status represents the effect of the most fundamental variables of vital trends: births, deaths, marriages, and dissolutions of marriages. Social and economic factors, by their effects on vital events and migration, also influence this distribution. An unbroken series of census data is available as far back as the first Census of Canada in 1871; only recent trends are summarized here.

More females than males. In 1976, for the first time in the history of Canadian census-taking, the number of females exceeded that of males (Table 4.12). A total of 11,449,525 males and 11,543,080 females were recorded giving a sex ratio of 99.2 males for every 100 females.

Before 1976, with the exception of 1971 when the sex ratio was almost balanced (at 1,002 males per 1,000 females), all other censuses showed Canada's population as being male dominated. In 1961, for example, the ratio was 102 males for every 100 females. The historical data show that the sex ratios recorded in decennial censuses of 1851 through 1961 fluctuated in the range of 102.2 to 112.9.

Higher death rates among males has an important effect on the sex ratio. Although more boys are born than girls (in 1976, 105 boys were born for every 100 girls), mortality is higher for males than for females. Because most important mortality changes have benefited women more than men, life expectancy at birth has increasingly favoured women.

Another factor for the variations in sex ratios has been immigration which is generally male selective. This was particularly responsible for the upward trend in sex ratios between 1881 and 1911. However, the change in the sex pattern of migration shows increasing female immigrants in recent periods.

Fewer children, more elderly. Two of the most striking changes in the structure of Canada's population are the declining proportions of children up to 5 years and the