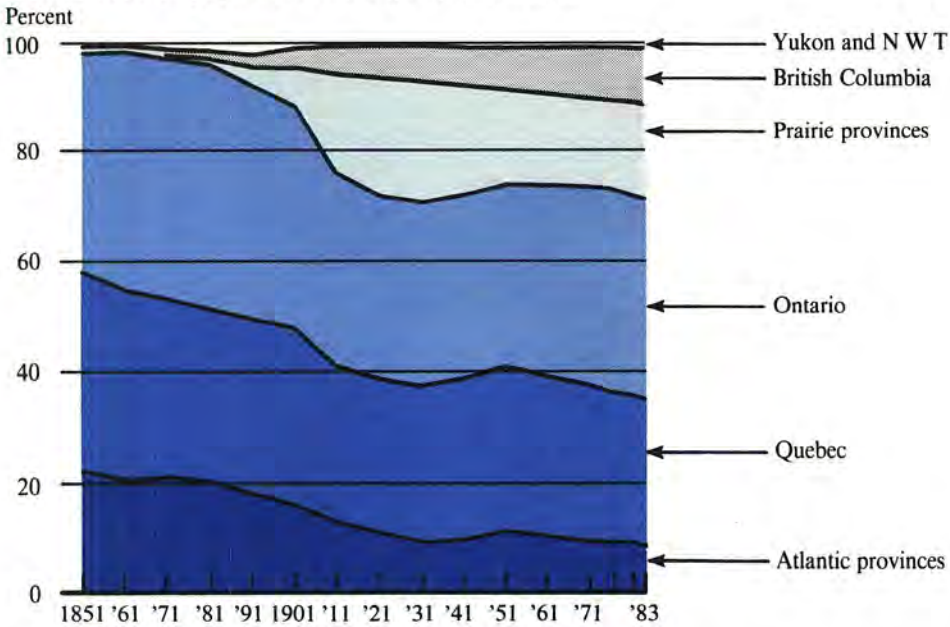


Chart 2.1
Distribution of population by region, 1851-1983



Note: Atlantic includes Newfoundland from 1951.

adjacent municipal entities, each at least partly urban. Its urbanized core is a continuous built-up area including the largest city and, where applicable, the urban part of surrounding municipalities, the urban fringe and rural fringe. A CA with an urbanized core of 100,000 or more, based on previous census figures, is called a census metropolitan area (CMA). Usually the CMA or CA takes the name of its largest component city.

2.4.1 Population density

At 2.60 persons a square kilometre in 1981, Canada's average population density still ranks among the lowest in the world. 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 reach 3,566.1 persons/km² in Montréal and 3,392.2/km² in Toronto. Moreover, the highest provincial densities are not necessarily found in the provinces with the largest populations. For example, the highest average density of any province is that of Prince Edward Island (21.6 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 3.1 persons/km², while largely-rural Saskatchewan has 1.7 and Manitoba 1.9.

2.4.2 Urban and rural

The urban population was defined in the 1981 Census as all persons living in an area having a population concentration of 1,000 or more and a population density of at least 400 per square kilometre. All the remaining population was classified as rural. Between 1976 and 1981, Canada's urban population grew by 5.0%, while the rural population, reversing past trends, grew slightly faster, by 8.9%.

In 1981, 75.7% of Canada's population lived in an urban environment, with the degree of urbanization ranging from 36.3% in Prince Edward Island to 86.3% in Ontario. British Columbia also was highly urbanized (77.9%). Only in Prince Edward Island and Northwest Territories was the rural population larger than the urban population, while in New Brunswick the two categories were nearly equal.

The rural population, 24.3% of the Canadian total in 1981, was classified as non-farm or farm. The rural farm population was defined for census purposes as members of households of farm operators who had lived on their farms for any length of time during the 12-month period prior to the census. In 1981 only