

Canada. It excludes collective households such as hotels, hospitals and prisons. It usually consists of a family group with or without lodgers or employees, but may comprise a group of unrelated persons, one person living alone, or two or more families sharing the same dwelling. For census purposes, each person is a member of only one household.

Of particular note in the 1981 Census was the growth in the number of households, the decrease in the number of persons per household and a movement toward more non-family households.

The highest percentage of family households was in Newfoundland (87.7%), followed by New Brunswick (80.7%) and Prince Edward Island (79.0%), while British Columbia was the lowest with 71.7%.

Percentage increases in the number of households ranged from a high of 32% in Alberta and 20% in British Columbia to a low of 9% in Manitoba.

2.6.1 Household size and type

While the one-family household remained the major sub-type, its predominance decreased slightly to 74.1% from 77.3% in 1976 and 79.7% in 1971. Only 1.1% of family households contained more than one family occupying the same dwelling.

Among the non-family households, by far the greatest number (82.0%) had only one occupant. There were 18.0% with two or more persons. One-person households increased by almost 40% between 1976 and 1981, while households larger than seven persons decreased by over 40%. The average number of persons in each household dropped to 2.9 in 1981 from 3.1 in 1976 and 3.5 in 1971. Average household size declined from east to west. The average household size was largest in Newfoundland and Northwest Territories (3.8 persons) and smallest in British Columbia (2.7).

2.6.2 Family size and composition

A census family consists of a husband and wife without children or with children who have never married, regardless of age, or a lone parent with one or more children who have never married, regardless of age, living together in the same dwelling. Adopted children and stepchildren have the same status as own children. Persons living common-law were directed to report as "now married" on the 1981 Census questionnaire. They were therefore indistinguishable from the legally married, and appear as a husband-wife family in the census reports.

The number of families in private households in Canada increased to 6.3 million in 1981, from 5.7 million in 1976. Following the patterns of provincial population growth, and reflecting the factors of migration, the largest rate of increase occurred in Alberta (26.0% in the 1976-81 period), followed by British Columbia (15.8%).

Families by size. The number and average size of families are given in Table 2.29 for 1971, 1976 and 1981. The average size dropped to 3.3 persons in

1981 from 3.5 in 1976, and also decreased in all provinces and both territories. The largest average family size occurred in Northwest Territories (4.0 persons), the smallest (3.1) in British Columbia.

Family structure. Husband-wife families formed the vast majority of total families, 88.7% in 1981, though this was down from the 1976 level of 90.2%. Correspondingly, lone-parent families increased from 9.8% to 11.3%. This decrease in husband-wife families with associated increase in lone-parent families was observed in all provinces and territories. Among all the provinces, Newfoundland at 10.0%, and Saskatchewan at 9.6%, reported the lowest percentages of lone-parent families, and higher than average percentages of husband-wife families, at 90.0% and 90.4%. Yukon, New Brunswick and Quebec showed the highest percentage increases in lone-parent families, with corresponding decreases in husband-wife families. Lone-parent families rose in Yukon to 12.4% in 1981 from 10.0% in 1976, in New Brunswick, to 12.2% from 10.0% and in Quebec to 12.5% from 10.3%.

Children in families. In the 1981 Census as in 1976, statistics for children in families included never-married sons and daughters of all ages who were living in the same dwelling as their parents. Unrelated wards, foster or guardianship children whether or not pay was received for them were classified as lodgers rather than as children in families.

In 1981, there were almost 8.7 million children in families in private households, a decrease of 2.5% from the 1976 level of 8.9 million. Except in Alberta, British Columbia and Northwest Territories, the number of children at home declined, reflecting the continued downward spiral of fertility and family formation and hence the continuing steep declines in the number of younger age children at home. In Quebec, the number of children decreased by 156,330 or 6.2% for that province, although representing 71.0% of the total national decline of 220,060 children reported for the period 1976 to 1981. The decline in number of children was much smaller in Manitoba, at 24,165, but this represented a 6.4% decrease for Manitoba.

On the other hand, in Alberta, the addition of about 68,400 children at home reported in 1981 represented a 9.8% increase, more than four times the 2.4% increase reported for British Columbia. The increase in Northwest Territories was minimal, slightly under 1.0%.

The average number of children in each family declined from 1.6 in 1976 to 1.4 in 1981.

2.7 The vital components

Vital statistics are an indispensable tool to the measurement and interpretation of population change. They provide information such as the rate at which men and women marry and have children,