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Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada

Internal Migration: Overview, 2015/2016

by Dylan Saunders

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Internal Migration: Overview, 2015/2016

by Dylan Saunders, Demography Division

Highlights

- In 2015/2016, British Columbia and Ontario were the principal beneficiaries of net interprovincial migration among the provinces in Canada.
- Three of the four Atlantic provinces posted gains through interprovincial migration in 2015/2016, New Brunswick was the lone exception. This was the first annual period since 2009/2010 that more than one Atlantic province added persons through interprovincial migration.
- Alberta and Quebec had the largest interprovincial migratory losses in absolute terms, while Saskatchewan and Manitoba had the lowest interprovincial migratory rates among the provinces. Alberta also had the largest fluctuation of interprovincial migration from one annual period to the next since the early 1980s.
- The largest migratory flows in Canada were from Alberta to British Columbia and Ontario.
- The country's three largest census divisions (CDs) – Toronto, Greater Vancouver and Montréal – all recorded losses through intraprovincial migration.
- The greatest net flows between CDs all originated from one of the three largest CDs (or in Toronto's case, its directly neighbouring CDs) to the surrounding more suburban CDs.
- Led by the Simcoe (Ontario) and Capital (British Columbia) CDs, the 10 largest internal migration growths in absolute numbers among CDs were all in Ontario and British Columbia. The 10 largest declines were observed in multiple provinces, particularly Alberta.

Key statistics

Number of interprovincial migrants:

2014/2015: 283,809 migrants
2015/2016: 277,029 migrants

Interprovincial migration rates:

2014/2015: 8.0 per thousand
2015/2016: 7.7 per thousand

Provinces with the highest net interprovincial migration rates (2015/2016):

- 1 – British Columbia (+5.6 per thousand)
- 2 – Nova Scotia (+0.8 per thousand)
- 3 – Ontario (+0.7 per thousand)

Provinces with the lowest net interprovincial migration rates (2015/2016):

- 1 – Saskatchewan (-3.7 per thousand)
- 2 – Manitoba (-3.7 per thousand)
- 3 – Alberta (-3.6 per thousand)

Census divisions with the highest net internal migration rates (2015/2016):

- 1 – Mirabel, Que. (+21.4 per thousand)
- 2 – Central Okanagan, B.C. (+20.3 per thousand)
- 3 – Okanagan-Similkameen, B.C. (+19.4 per thousand)

Census divisions with the lowest net internal migration rates (2015/2016):

- 1 – Division No. 16 (Wood Buffalo), Alta. (-64.0 per thousand)
- 2 – Northern Rockies, B.C. (-46.2 per thousand)
- 3 – Stikine, B.C. (-45.6 per thousand)

This article presents the most recent internal migration trends in Canada from 2015/2016 (July 1 to June 30). Internal migration represents all movements of people within Canada's geographical boundaries, involving a change in usual place of residence. It denotes movements of people from one province or territory to another (interprovincial migration) or from one region to another within the same province or territory (intraprovincial migration).

The analysis will cover a variety of migration indicators for the 2015/2016 annual period, divided into five sections: interprovincial migration, net interprovincial migration, interprovincial flows of in-migrants and out-migrants, age structures of interprovincial migrants, and internal migration between census divisions. A short section also gives an overview of preliminary data for 2016/2017.

Data source

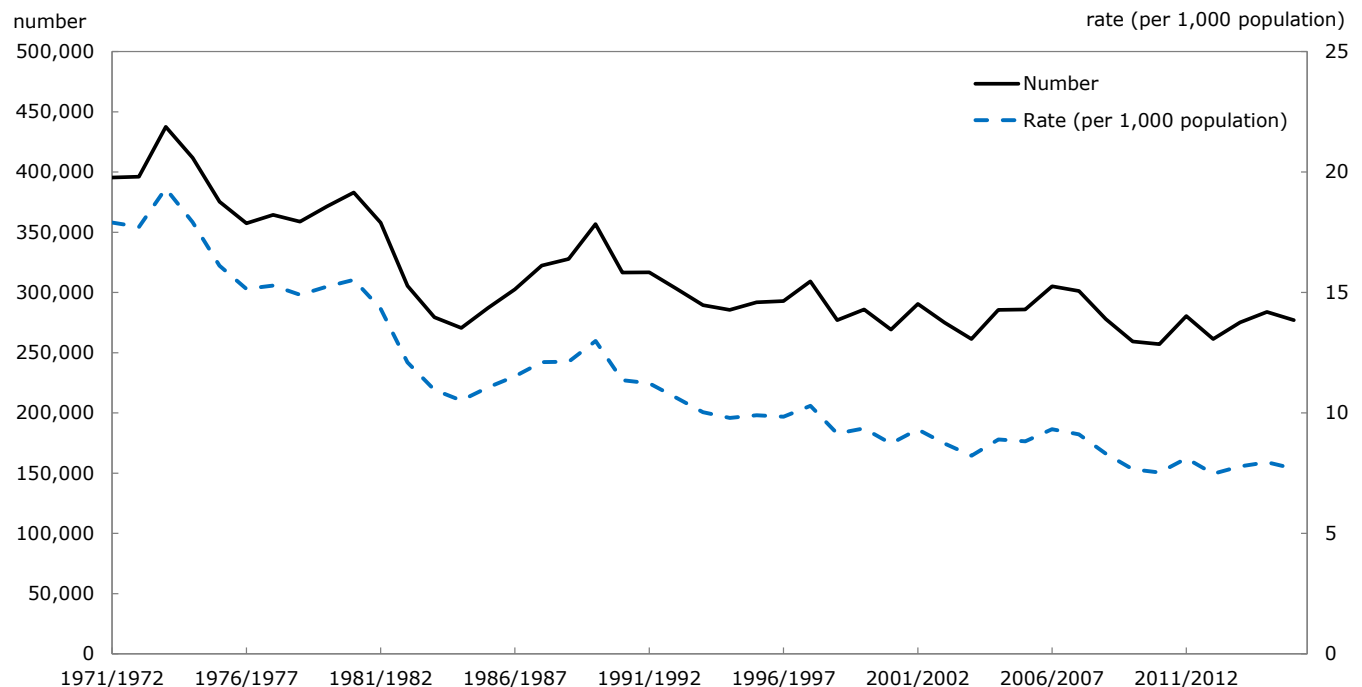
The interprovincial migration estimates used for this article are from Statistics Canada's Demographic Estimates Program (DEP). Since no mechanism exists to record interprovincial migratory movement in Canada, Statistics Canada produces these estimates using the T1 Family file (T1FF), an administrative data file composed of the individual T1 and T4 tax files, and the Canada child benefit file (CCB) (formerly Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB)) received from the Canada Revenue Agency. These data are used to estimate migrants by comparing the addresses over two consecutive tax years. Additional information on the methodology is available in the publication *Population and Family Estimation Methods at Statistics Canada*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-528-X.

Interprovincial migration

Interprovincial migration represents movements of people from one province or territory to another. In 2015/2016, the number of interprovincial migrants in Canada was 277,029, down from 283,809 in 2014/2015. Over the same period, the national interprovincial migration rate was down to 7.7 per thousand, from 8.0 per thousand (Figure 1).

Compared with recent years, interprovincial migration in Canada has been relatively steady. Since 2009/2010, the interprovincial migration rate has hovered between 7.5 per thousand and 8.1 per thousand, while the number of migrants has remained around 260,000 and 280,000. However, in relation to previous periods, as far back as 1971/1972, the beginning of the Demographic Estimates Program that marked the start of the period covered by the current system of demographic accounts, interprovincial migration has been very low.

Figure 1
Number and rate of interprovincial migrants, Canada, 1971/1972 to 2015/2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division, Demographic Estimates Program (DEP).

The interprovincial migration rate of 7.7 per thousand in 2015/2016 was the fourth lowest on record, and all four have come since 2009/2010. The 277,029 interprovincial migrants in 2015/2016 was considerably lower than the largest observed total of 437,549 interprovincial migrants in 1973/1974. In fact, the average number of interprovincial migrants over the seven annual periods from 2009/2010 to 2015/2016 was the lowest seven year average on record. The aging of the Canadian population is a trend that may potentially explain why fewer Canadians are migrating within Canada, as older Canadians are less likely to migrate than younger Canadians.

Net interprovincial migration

Net interprovincial migration represents the difference between in-migrants and out-migrants for a given province or territory. It can be presented as either a number or a rate. Net interprovincial migration was negative in five provinces and two territories, and was positive in five provinces and one territory in 2015/2016 (Table 1).

Among the five provinces and two territories with negative interprovincial migration in 2015/2016, Alberta (-15,108) accounted for over 40% of this net loss. This was Alberta's first negative net interprovincial migration since 2009/2010 (-3,271), the year following the 2008/2009 economic downturn, and its lowest net interprovincial migration since 1987/1988 (-23,223). This negative net migration, which corresponds to a rate of -3.6 per thousand, coincided with the declining oil prices that affected Alberta's labour market starting at the end of 2014 and continued into 2016 (Bourbeau & Fields 2017). From July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, the average unemployment rate for the province was 7.1%, the highest 12 month moving average from July to June since 1995/1996 (not including 2016/2017) (Statistics Canada 2018). The difference in net interprovincial migration between the 2014/2015 (+21,594) and 2015/2016 (-15,108) annual periods was nearly 37,000. This was the second largest change in a province or territory's net interprovincial migration from one annual period to another since 1971/1972, which was the beginning of the period covered by the current system of demographic accounting. The largest change also occurred in Alberta from 1981/1982 to 1982/1983, for a difference of more than 48,000 migrants (+36,562 to -11,650), coinciding with the recession of 1981/1982.

Meanwhile in Quebec, despite posting the second largest negative net interprovincial migration in Canada (-11,118), due to its large population, its net interprovincial migration rate was somewhat moderated (-1.3 per thousand).

Despite having nearly twice the population of Alberta, there was noticeably less migratory movements in Quebec in 2015/2016 compared with the western province. Although their net interprovincial migration losses were similar, Alberta received nearly three times more (+56,978) in-migrants than Quebec (+19,259), and also had almost two and a half times more out-migrants (-72,086) than Quebec (-30,377). This is partly due to the fact that traditionally, francophone Quebecers have exceptionally low interprovincial migration rates (Finnie 2000).

Table 1

Net interprovincial migration of provinces and territories, Canada, 2006/2007 to 2015/2016

Period	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.	Total
														number of migrants
2006/2007	-4,067	-849	-4,126	-2,632	-12,865	-20,047	-5,500	1,549	33,809	15,005	101	-221	-157	305,062
2007/2008	-528	-291	-1,794	-908	-11,682	-14,750	-3,703	4,171	15,317	14,643	235	-420	-290	301,237
2008/2009	1,877	-536	-751	-237	-7,419	-15,601	-3,111	2,983	13,184	9,995	228	-577	-35	277,846
2009/2010	1,558	60	612	571	-3,258	-4,662	-2,412	2,153	-3,271	8,728	325	-351	-53	259,234
2010/2011	30	-210	-41	-158	-4,763	-4,007	-3,517	545	8,443	3,421	363	-179	73	257,085
2011/2012	545	-618	-2,866	-1,806	-6,915	-10,611	-4,212	1,878	27,652	-2,711	313	-496	-153	280,347
2012/2013	495	-901	-3,517	-3,290	-10,431	-13,901	-5,006	392	38,598	-1,868	-94	-482	5	261,295
2013/2014	234	-941	-2,571	-3,517	-14,312	-14,564	-6,851	-1,839	35,382	9,475	51	-488	-59	275,059
2014/2015	161	-682	-2,311	-2,790	-16,142	-8,695	-6,678	-4,528	21,594	20,379	87	-223	-172	283,809
2015/2016	232	30	754	-1,113	-11,118	9,077	-4,881	-4,272	-15,108	26,573	276	-250	-200	277,029
Net since 2006/2007	537	-4,938	-16,611	-15,880	-98,905	-97,761	-45,871	3,032	175,600	103,640	1,885	-3,687	-1,041	2,778,003

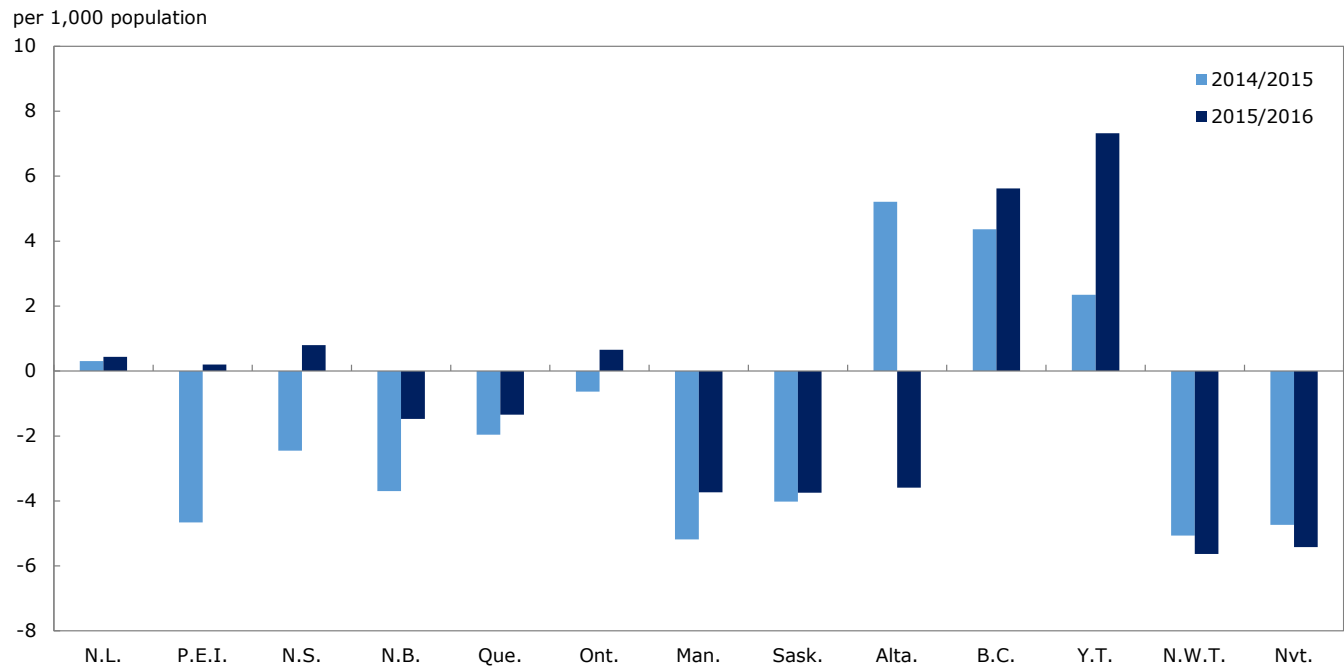
Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division, Population Estimates Program, CANSIM table 051-0018.

On the contrary, among the five provinces and one territory with positive interprovincial migration, British Columbia (+26,573) and Ontario (+9,077) accounted for most of these gains in 2015/2016. British Columbia's 26,573 net interprovincial migrants were the province's largest since 1994/1995. British Columbia's net interprovincial migration rate was also the highest among the provinces (+5.6 per thousand). The 2015/2016 annual period was the first since 2002/2003 in which Ontario recorded positive net interprovincial migration. However, due to the size of the province's population, its net interprovincial rate was relatively small (+0.7 per thousand).

The migratory dynamics of these two provinces differed in 2015/2016. While Ontario's population was nearly three times the size of British Columbia, they posted the two largest number of in-migrants for the annual period. Ontario paced the nation with 71,790 in-migrants, while British Columbia was not far behind at 63,788. Conversely, British Columbia had substantially fewer out-migrants (-37,215) compared with Ontario (-62,713) (Figure 2).

Among the Atlantic provinces, Nova Scotia (+0.8 per thousand), Newfoundland and Labrador (+0.4 per thousand) and Prince Edward Island (+0.2 per thousand) posted positive net interprovincial rates. Although these rates were relatively small, this was the first time since 2009/2010 that Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island recorded positive net migration rates. Their 2014/2015 rates were -2.5 per thousand and -4.7 per thousand, respectively. New Brunswick, at -1.5 per thousand, was the only Atlantic province to have a negative net interprovincial migration rate for 2015/2016.

Figure 2
Net interprovincial migration rate of provinces and territories, Canada, 2014/2015 and 2015/2016



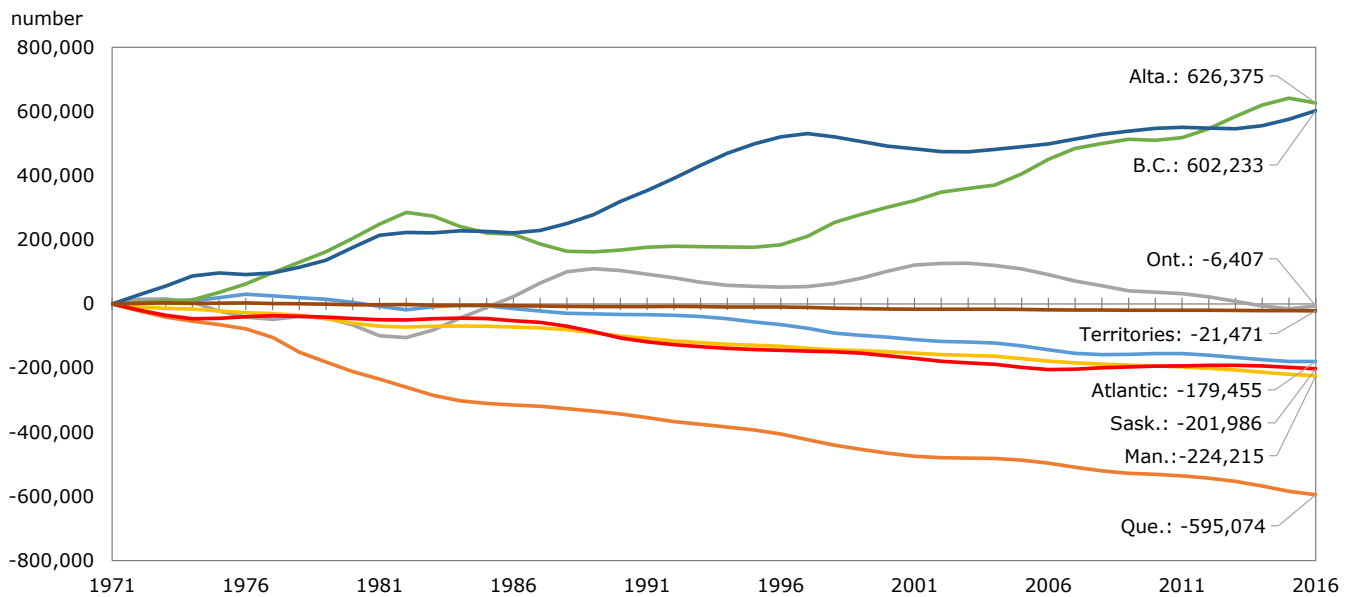
Note: The net rate of a province corresponds to its net interprovincial migration divided by its average population during the reference period.
Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division, Demographic Estimates Program (DEP).

Saskatchewan and Manitoba both had net interprovincial migration rates of -3.7 per thousand. Despite having the lowest rates among the provinces, both of the losses by these Prairie provinces have diminished from the previous year (-4.0 per thousand and -5.2 per thousand, respectively).

Yukon (+7.3 per thousand) was the sole territory with a positive net interprovincial rate for 2015/2016. The Northwest Territories (-5.6 per thousand) and Nunavut (-5.4 per thousand) both had negative net interprovincial migration rates over the same period. It is important to keep in mind that the territories exhibit significant fluctuations in their annual rates from year to year due to their small populations.

Since comparable data was available beginning in 1971/1972, Alberta and British Columbia have been the two primary recipients of net interprovincial migration in Canada. From 1971/1972 to 2015/2016, Alberta has gained 626,375 net interprovincial migrants, while British Columbia added 602,233 migrants. These were the only two regions as presented in Figure 3 that had positive cumulative net interprovincial migration between 1971/1972 and 2015/2016. With its first net interprovincial migration gain since 2002/2003, Ontario edged closer to regaining positive cumulative net interprovincial migration in 2015/2016 (-6,407 or essentially null), which it was accustomed to between 1985/1986 and 2012/2013. Since the data became available, Quebec (-595,074), Manitoba (-224,215) and Saskatchewan (-201,986) have consistently recorded cumulative net migratory losses. However these losses go in differing directions, as Quebec's cumulative net migratory losses primarily go to Ontario, while the bulk of Saskatchewan and Manitoba's go to Alberta and British Columbia. The Atlantic provinces (-179,455), after trifling with net gains in the 1970s, have had a cumulative net migratory loss starting in 1980/1981, predominantly to Alberta.

Figure 3
Cumulative net interprovincial migration by region, Canada, 1971 to 2016



Note: To facilitate analysis, the four Atlantic provinces were combined, as were the three territories.

Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division, Demographic Estimates Program (DEP).

Flows of interprovincial migrants

Interprovincial migratory flows refer to the movement of individuals from one province or territory to another. The analysis of interprovincial migratory flows serves to describe the migratory dynamics between each province and territory (Table 2).

The largest migratory flows (the largest 20%) are shown in the circular chart (Figure 4), in which a different colour is assigned to each province and territory. Origins and destinations are represented by the circle's segments. Flows have the same colour as their origin, the width indicates their size and the arrow their direction.

In 2015/2016, the largest flow of migration between two Canadian provinces was 29,304 persons from Alberta to British Columbia. The second greatest flow was also from Alberta, which was 19,421 persons to Ontario. These large migration exchanges at the expense of Alberta, which had the highest total of out-migrants among the provinces, coincide with the province's negative net interprovincial migration in 2015/2016.

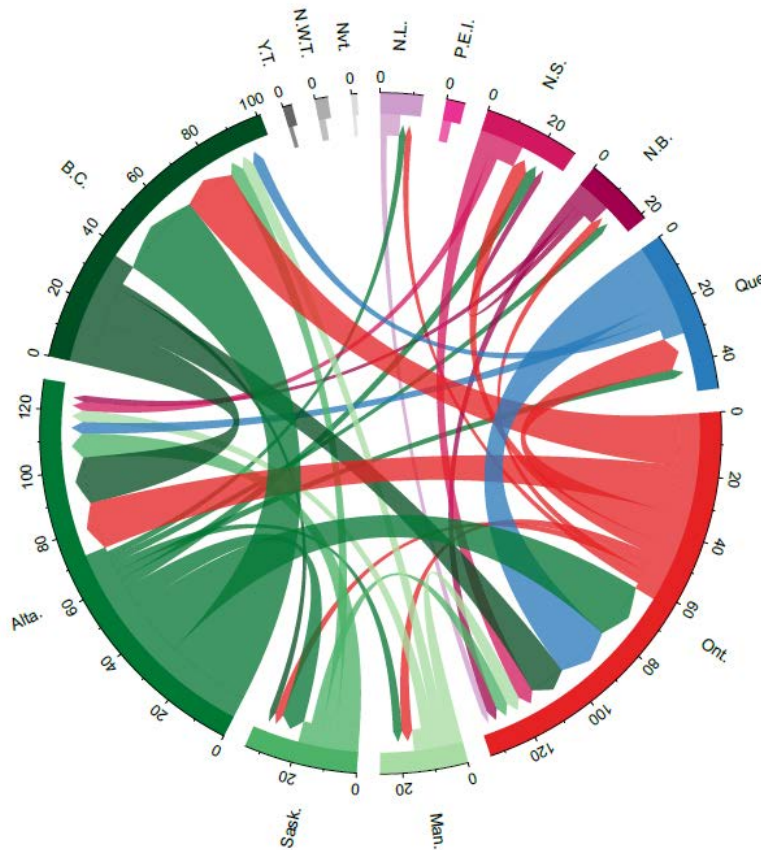
The following three largest exchanges all involved the largest province in terms of population, Ontario. These flows of migrants were from Quebec to Ontario (18,985), Ontario to British Columbia (17,666) and Ontario to Alberta (16,163).

Table 2
Annual number of interprovincial migrants, Canada, 2015/2016

Origin	Destination												
	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.
	number												
Newfoundland and Labrador	...	108	987	373	196	2,081	141	108	1,738	496	16	78	46
Prince Edward Island	96	...	494	318	85	897	24	46	528	330	8	6	12
Nova Scotia	786	450	...	1,714	628	5,239	329	248	3,046	1,663	68	114	68
New Brunswick	351	369	2,175	...	1,456	3,385	175	238	2,203	872	18	51	68
Quebec	186	115	735	1,545	...	18,985	461	314	4,006	3,788	64	103	75
Ontario	2,128	925	4,970	2,718	10,862	...	3,548	2,770	16,163	17,666	297	448	218
Manitoba	172	32	328	199	403	4,638	...	1,863	3,985	4,090	46	74	45
Saskatchewan	129	37	330	217	347	3,942	1,594	...	8,249	4,551	64	55	17
Alberta	2,216	640	3,637	2,445	3,086	19,421	2,961	7,434	...	29,304	289	571	82
British Columbia	392	146	1,230	602	2,007	12,390	1,610	2,068	15,933	...	515	248	74
Yukon	3	18	42	25	42	180	23	35	293	554	...	32	8
Northwest Territories	71	25	96	43	56	283	51	113	765	423	125	...	43
Nunavut	70	9	83	49	91	349	77	23	69	51	21	64	...
Total in-migrants	6,600	2,874	15,107	10,248	19,259	71,790	10,994	15,260	56,978	63,788	1,531	1,844	756
Total out-migrants	6,368	2,844	14,353	11,361	30,377	62,713	15,875	19,532	72,086	37,215	1,255	2,094	956
Net migration	232	30	754	-1,113	-11,118	9,077	-4,881	-4,272	-15,108	26,573	276	-250	-200

Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division, Demographic Estimates Program (DEP), CANSIM table 051-0019.

Figure 4
Largest interprovincial migration flows, by region of origin and destination, Canada, 2015/2016

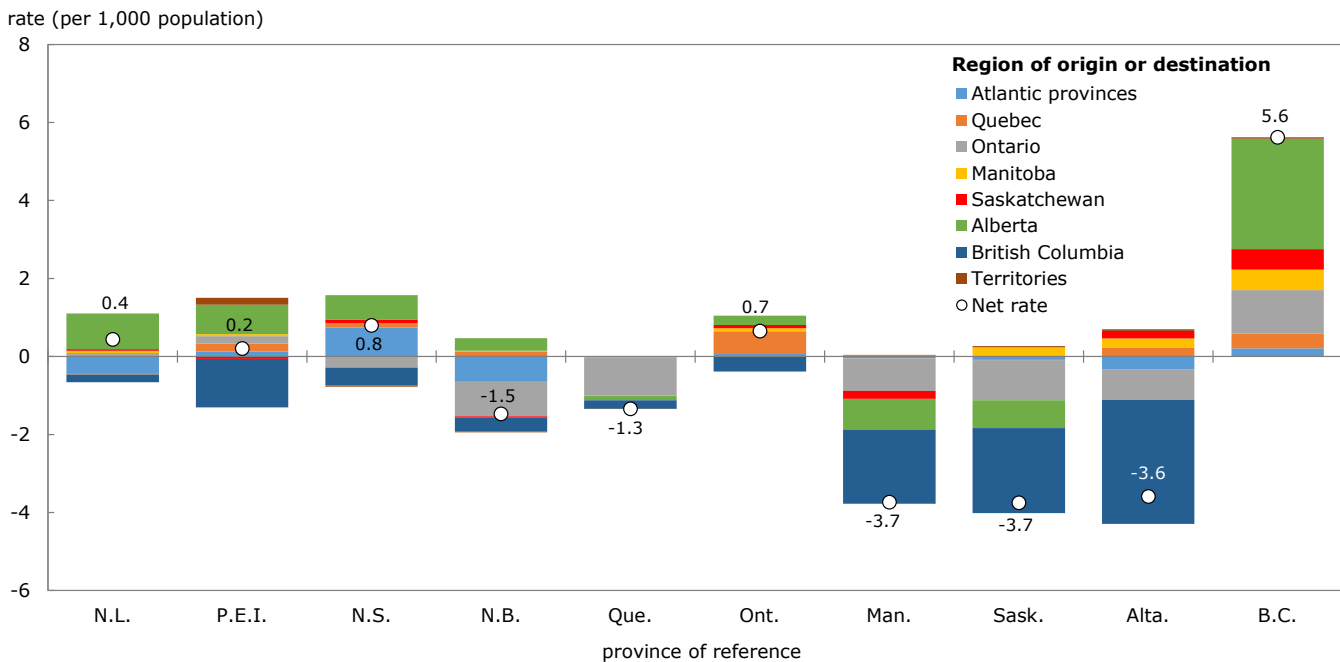


Note: Origins and destinations are represented by the circle's segments. Each region is assigned a colour. Flows have the same colour as their origin, the width indicates their size and the arrow their direction. Indicates the absolute number (in 1,000's) of interprovincial in-migrants and out-migrants. The most important flows (top 20%) are shown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division, Demographic Estimates Program (DEP), CANSIM table 051-0019.

As an alternative to interpret the migratory relationships among the provinces, the net interprovincial migration rates can be broken down by reference province. Arranging the net interprovincial migration rates of each province by the reference province makes it possible to analyze the relationships among the provinces while considering the impact of these flows in relation to the size of the province or territory (Figure 5). An example of this is the flow of persons from Saskatchewan to British Columbia. In Saskatchewan, the negative exchange with British Columbia contributed to a rate of -2.2 per thousand for the Prairie province. On the contrary, this exchange had a less profound impact on British Columbia due to its larger population, for a rate of 0.5 per thousand.

Figure 5
Net interprovincial migration rates, by province of reference and regions of origin or destination, Canada, 2015/2016



Notes: To have a scale that provides information on interprovincial variations, the territories are not displayed as regions of reference. Also, to facilitate analysis, the four Atlantic provinces were combined as regions of origin or destination, as were the three territories.

Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division, Demographic Estimates Program (DEP).

A prominent trend when analyzing the net interprovincial migration rates by the province of reference was the impact Alberta had on other provinces in 2015/2016. In previous years, the net interprovincial rate of Alberta was the highest among the provinces, which subsequently contributed to most of the provinces having negative net migration exchanges with Alberta. However in 2015/2016, a majority of the provinces had positive net flows with Alberta, most notably British Columbia (+2.8 per thousand). The four Atlantic provinces also benefited from migratory exchanges with Alberta. Newfoundland and Labrador (+0.9 per thousand), Prince Edward Island (+0.8 per thousand), Nova Scotia (+0.6 per thousand) and New Brunswick (+0.3 per thousand) all recorded positive net flows with Alberta in 2015/2016. Although these positive net migration rates with Alberta were relatively small, they were much more impactful when compared with 2014/2015 in which all the Atlantic provinces' net interprovincial migration rates with Alberta were negative.

Another noticeable migratory relationship in 2015/2016 was the net migration gains British Columbia obtained from all provinces. Net exchanges with Alberta (+2.8 per thousand) and Ontario (+1.1 per thousand) contributed the most to the largest net interprovincial migration rate of 5.6 per thousand among the provinces.

Despite a negative migration rate of -0.4 per thousand with British Columbia, Ontario had its first positive net interprovincial migration rate since 2002/2003 (+0.7 per thousand). Migration from Quebec to Ontario (+0.6 per thousand) was the main contributor to Ontario's positive net interprovincial migration rate, as was having a positive net contribution from Alberta (+0.2 per thousand).

Typical population movements in Canada are those from the central and eastern provinces to the western provinces and those among the western provinces. However in 2015/2016, this dynamic had changed. Although there were still substantial movements among western provinces, especially from the Prairie provinces to British

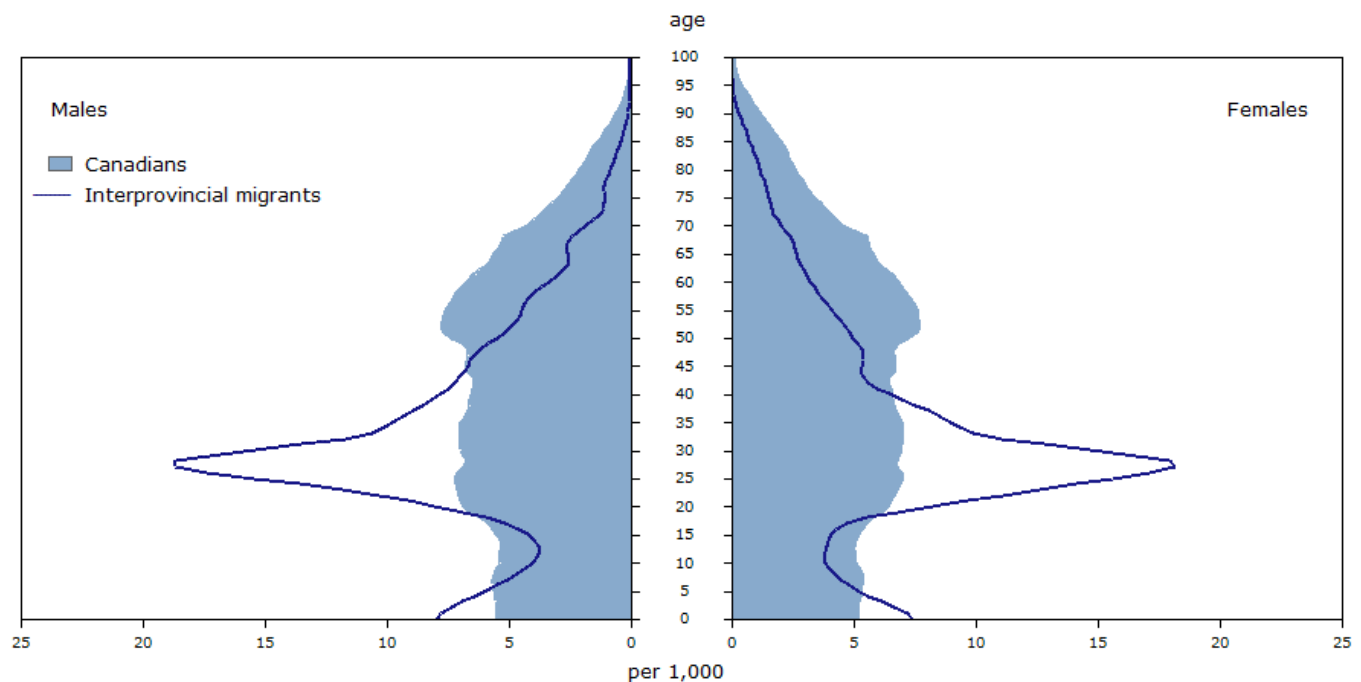
Columbia and from the central and eastern provinces to British Columbia, there were also considerable movements from other western provinces to Central and Eastern Canada. Ontario and the Atlantic provinces, which normally lose people to Alberta and to a lesser extent Saskatchewan and Manitoba, were the beneficiaries of migration from these Prairie provinces in 2015/2016. This shift in the migration of persons from the Prairie provinces to Central and Eastern Canada can be partly attributed to the economic conditions surrounding declining oil prices beginning at the end of 2014 (Bourbeau & Fields 2017).

Age structures of interprovincial migrants

The age structures of interprovincial migrants differ when compared with all Canadians. In 2015/2016, roughly one-third (33.2%) of Canadians were aged 15 to 39, whereas over half (53.7%) of migrants were between the same ages. In contrast, over one-third (34.4%) of Canadians were between the ages of 40 to 64, while less than one-quarter (24.0%) of migrants were in the same age cohort. Adding to this contrast, 16.3% of Canadians were aged 65 and over, but just 6.7% of migrants were seniors. On the other hand, the 0 to 14 year old distribution of all Canadians and migrants were relatively similar (16.0% and 15.6% respectively).

An analysis of the age pyramid of interprovincial migrants and that of all Canadians overall, shown in relative values, clearly indicates the substantial differences in behaviour by age (Figure 6). Young adults and their young children made up the largest share of migrants. Internal mobility was greatest among individuals aged 0 to 4 and 20 to 39 years old, as shown on the age pyramid. The 25 to 29 year old age group was the most mobile, accounting for 17.3% of interprovincial migrants whereas they represented only 6.9% of the total population. This was not surprising since pursuing postsecondary studies, joining the labour market and starting a family are some examples of the many motivations for moving to another province.

Figure 6
Age pyramid of interprovincial migrants and Canadians as a whole (per 1,000 population), by sex, Canada, 2015/2016



Note: Persons aged 100 and over are included at age 100.

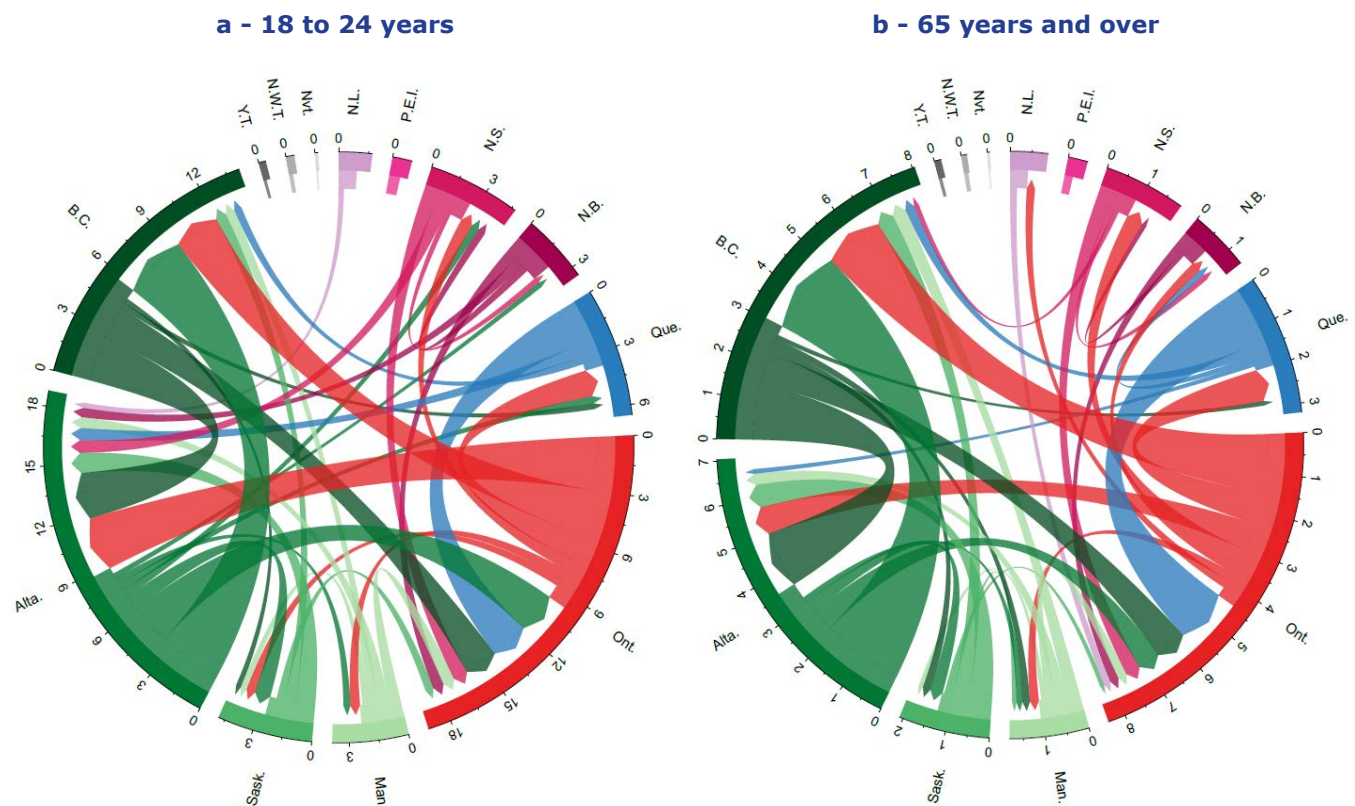
Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division, Demographic Estimates Program (DEP).

The circular charts (Figures 7a and 7b) show the largest interprovincial migratory flows for the 18 to 24 and the 65 and older age groups in 2015/2016 (the largest 20%), and reveal the contrasting migratory dynamics of these two age groups. Comparing the scales of the two figures show that the magnitude of the flows were much larger for the 18 to 24 year old age group, despite the population for the 65 year old age group being almost twice as large. One major difference in 2015/2016 compared with 2014/2015 was the decrease of in-flows to Alberta among the 18 to 24 year old age group. With that being said, Alberta still had the largest in-flows for the 18 to 24 year old age group in 2015/2016, while Ontario had the greatest out-flows and the largest net flows were observed in British Columbia. For those aged 65 and older, the largest out-flows originated in Ontario, whereas both the largest in-flows and net flows were observed in British Columbia. Despite the difference in the volume of flows between the two age groups, it is evident that a similar proportion of the migratory flows were shared among the provinces for both age groups.

For more information, see *CANSIM table 051-0012: Interprovincial migrants, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces and territories annual (persons)*.

Figures 7a and 7b

Largest interprovincial migration flows, by region of origin and destination, migrants aged 18 to 24 and aged 65 and over, Canada, 2015/2016



Notes: Origins and destinations are represented by the circle's segments. Each province or territory is assigned a colour. Flows have the same colour as their origin, the width indicates their size and the arrow their direction. Indicates the absolute number (in thousands) of interprovincial in-migrants and out-migrants. The most important flows (20%) are shown.

Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division, Demographic Estimates Program (DEP).

Internal migration between census divisions (CDs)

For the analysis of this section, a rate higher than -1 per thousand and lower than 1 per thousand is considered to be nil or low. Rates are based on the ratio of the number of events during the period (t, t+x) to the average of the populations at the beginning and end of the period.

This section analyzes internal migration in Canada at the CD level.¹ Internal migration of the CDs can be broken down into two components – interprovincial migration which is composed of movements of people from one CD to another in different provinces or territories, and intraprovincial migration which is the movement of people from one CD to another within the same province or territory. Canada has 293 CDs, which are neighbouring municipalities joined together for the purpose of regional planning and managing common services.²

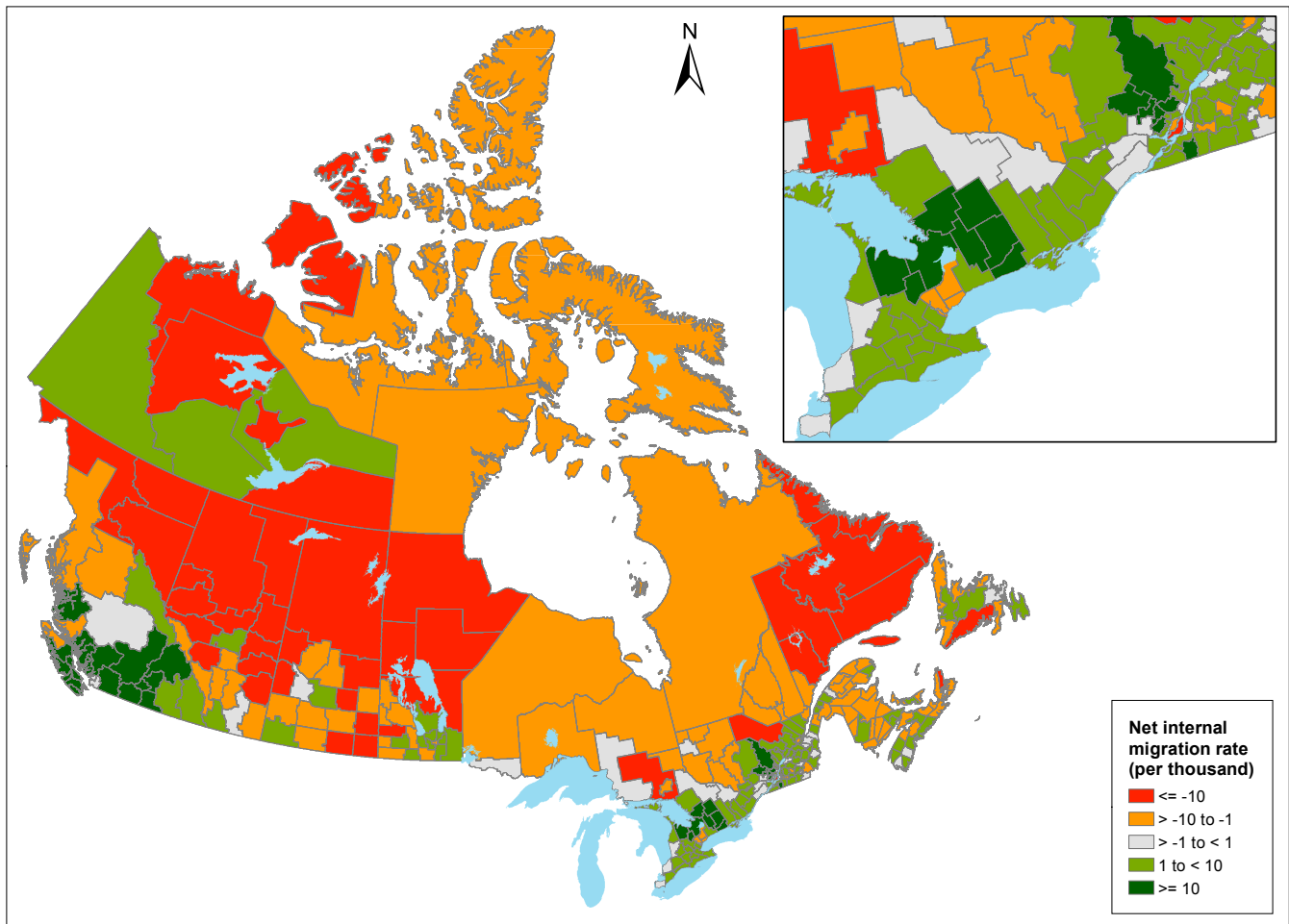
In 2015/2016, internal migration gains (Map 1) were observed in 132 of Canada's 293 CDs (45.1%), losses were recorded in 130 CDs (44.4%) and 31 CDs remained relatively stable. Over the same period, intraprovincial migration growth (Map 2) was posted in 136 of the 293 CDs (46.4%), 128 CDs (43.7%) endured losses and the remaining 29 CDs held relatively steady. On the other hand, only 64 CDs (21.8%) had interprovincial migration gains (Map 3), whereas 93 CDs (31.7%) had interprovincial losses and nearly half of the CDs (136 or 46.4%) were relatively unchanged.

1. CDs are classified using Standard Geographical Code 2011, for more information please visit: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/subjects/standard/sgc/2011/index>.

2. For more information, please visit the Census Dictionary, 2011: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/dict/geo008-eng.cfm>.

Map 1

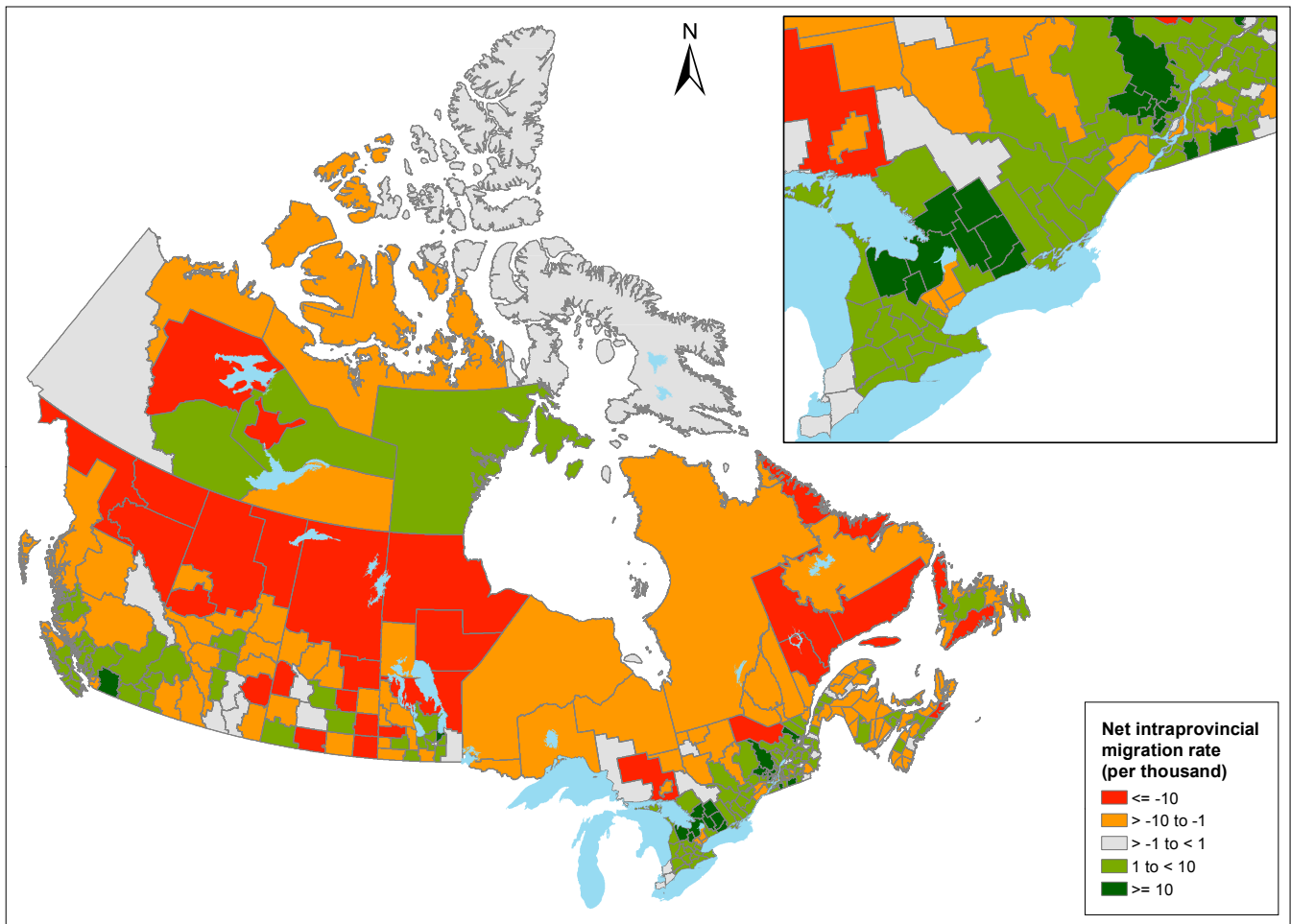
Net internal migration rate (per thousand), by census division, 2015/2016



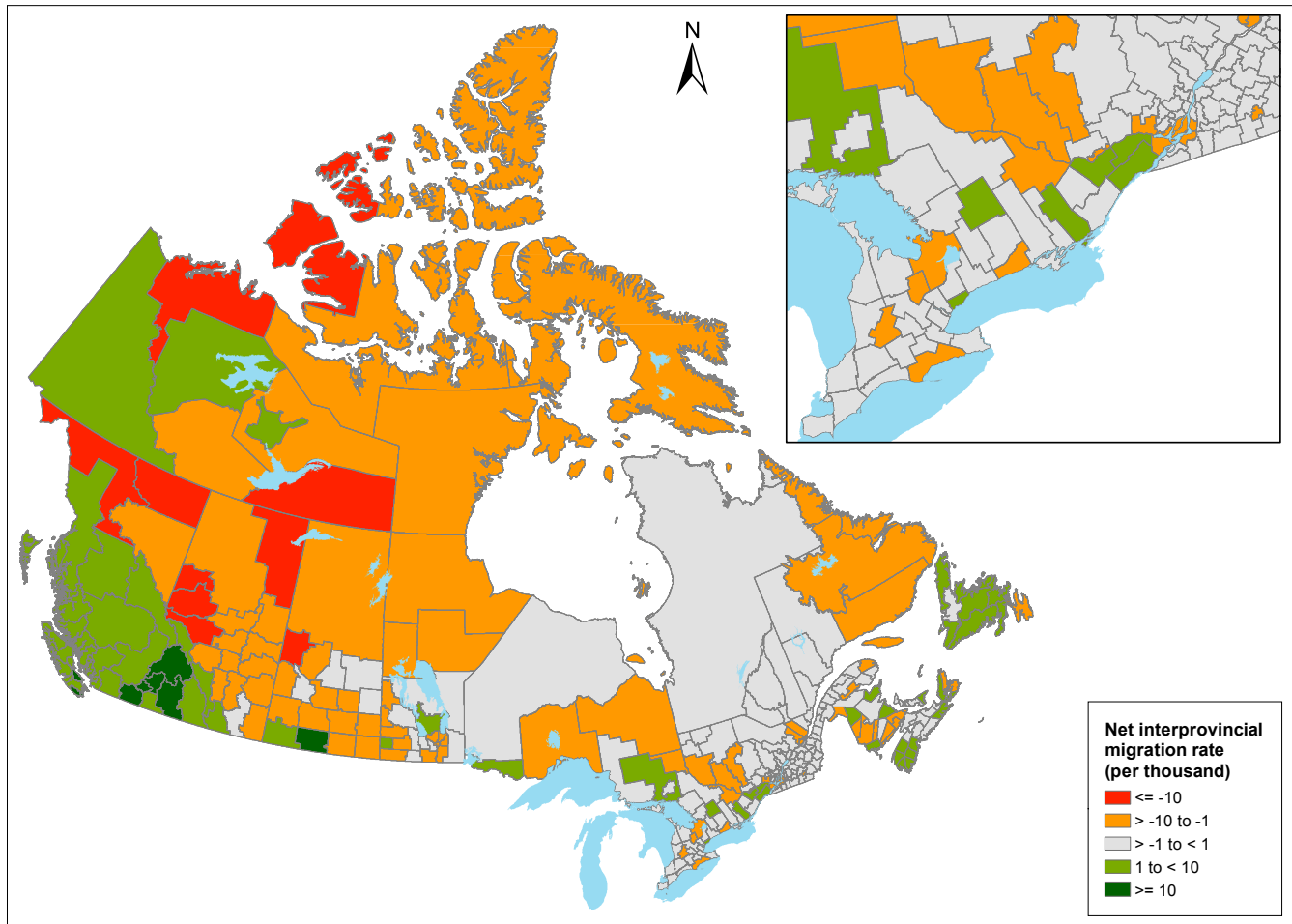
Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

Map 2

Net intraprovincial migration rate (per thousand), by census division, 2015/2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

Map 3**Net interprovincial migration rate (per thousand), by census division, 2015/2016**

Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

As Table 3 shows, the Mirabel CD (Quebec) had the largest internal migration rate in Canada for 2015/2016 (+21.4 per thousand) – primarily due to an intraprovincial migration rate of 21.3 per thousand, the second highest in Canada. A majority of the intraprovincial migration for Mirabel came from the nearby suburban CDs of Thérèse-De Blainville and Laval, which are located halfway between Montréal and Mirabel. The neighbouring British Columbia CDs of Central Okanagan (+20.3 per thousand) and Okanagan-Similkameen (+19.4 per thousand) had the second and third largest internal migration rates over the same period. These two CDs benefited from having the second and third largest interprovincial migration rates in the country, behind the Columbia-Shuswap CD (British Columbia) which borders with Alberta. The Ontario CD of Dufferin had the fourth largest internal migration rate at 19.3 per thousand. This CD had the largest intraprovincial migration rate in the country (+21.8 per thousand), which predominantly came from the Peel CD, located halfway between the country’s most populated CD of Toronto and Dufferin. The fifth largest internal migration rate in 2015/2016 was the Nanaimo CD (+19.0 per thousand).

Table 3
Net interprovincial, intraprovincial and internal migration (number and rate) by census division, Canada, 2015/2016

Census division	Interprovincial		Intraprovincial		Internal	
	number	rate per 1,000	number	rate per 1,000	number	rate per 1,000
5 largest net internal migrations (number)						
Simcoe (Ontario)	-501	-1.0	8,763	17.8	8,262	16.8
Capital (British Columbia)	3,918	10.1	2,110	5.5	6,028	15.6
Fraser Valley (British Columbia)	1,333	4.4	4,185	13.8	5,518	18.2
Durham (Ontario)	-619	-0.9	5,743	8.6	5,124	7.7
Ottawa (Ontario)	3,181	3.3	1,659	1.7	4,840	5.0
5 largest net internal migration rates						
Mirabel (Quebec)	7	0.1	1,077	21.3	1,084	21.4
Central Okanagan (British Columbia)	2,770	14.0	1,238	6.3	4,008	20.3
Okanagan-Similkameen (British Columbia)	932	11.5	649	8.0	1,581	19.4
Dufferin (Ontario)	-160	-2.5	1,381	21.8	1,221	19.3
Nanaimo (British Columbia)	1,757	11.3	1,190	7.7	2,947	19.0
5 lowest net internal migrations (number)						
Montréal (Quebec)	-5,654	-2.8	-17,032	-8.5	-22,686	-11.4
Toronto (Ontario)	5,515	1.9	-28,073	-9.9	-22,558	-7.9
Peel (Ontario)	1,177	0.8	-10,419	-7.2	-9,242	-6.4
York (Ontario)	292	0.3	-5,218	-4.6	-4,926	-4.3
Division No. 16 (Wood Buffalo, Alberta)	-1,944	-25.4	-2,962	-38.7	-4,906	-64.0
5 lowest net internal migration rates						
Division No. 16 (Wood Buffalo, Alberta)	-1,944	-25.4	-2,962	-38.7	-4,906	-64.0
Northern Rockies (British Columbia)	-113	-21.0	-136	-25.2	-249	-46.2
Stikine (British Columbia)	-14	-27.8	-9	-17.8	-23	-45.6
Division No. 18 (Greenview No. 16, Alberta)	-219	-14.5	-293	-19.4	-512	-33.9
Division No. 15 (Neepawa, Manitoba)	-212	-9.8	-277	-12.8	-489	-22.6
Canada's 3 largest CDs						
Toronto	5,515	1.9	-28,073	-9.9	-22,558	-7.9
Greater Vancouver	9,088	3.6	-9,928	-3.9	-840	-0.3
Montréal	-5,654	-2.8	-17,032	-8.5	-22,686	-11.4

Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division, Demographic Estimates Program (DEP).

On the contrary, the Division No. 16 CD (Wood Buffalo, Alberta) had the lowest internal migration rate in the country in 2015/2016 (-64.0 per thousand). This was due to both the lowest intraprovincial migration rate (-38.7 per thousand) and second smallest interprovincial migration rate (-25.4 per thousand) in Canada. This migration out of Division No. 16 CD coincided with the rising unemployment in Alberta beginning in 2015, which reached a peak at the end of 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2017), as well as the Fort McMurray wildfires in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2017). The British Columbia CDs of Northern Rockies (-46.2 per thousand) and Stikine (-45.6 per thousand) had the second and third smallest internal migration rates. The Division No. 18 CD (Greenview No. 16, Alberta) had the fourth lowest rate (-33.9 per thousand), while Division No. 15 (Neepawa, Manitoba) had the fifth smallest rate (-22.6 per thousand) in the country. The negative net internal migration rates for these four CDs were also due to the combined losses of both intraprovincial and interprovincial migration.

Of the country's three largest CDs – Toronto, Greater Vancouver and Montréal – only Greater Vancouver did not record a considerable loss through internal migration in 2015/2016. However, all three of these CDs incurred losses of persons through intraprovincial migration, predominantly to their surrounding more suburban CDs. The Greater Vancouver CD's internal migration was virtually null (-0.3 per thousand), with intraprovincial migration (-3.9 per thousand) offset by interprovincial migration (+3.6 per thousand). In contrast, internal migration in both the Montréal CD (-11.4 per thousand) and Toronto CD (-7.9 per thousand) were negative over the same period. Montréal's negative internal migration rate was a combination of losses through intraprovincial (-8.5 per thousand) and interprovincial migration (-2.8 per thousand). Positive interprovincial migration (+1.9 per thousand) in Toronto could not offset the losses incurred through intraprovincial migration (-9.9 per thousand).

Table 4
Main origin-destination net flows (net number and rate)
of census divisions, Canada, 2015/2016

CD of origin	CD of destination	Province	Net	Rate
			number	per thousand
Peel	Dufferin	Ontario	1,707	27.0
Greater Vancouver	Fraser Valley	British Columbia	4,617	15.2
Greater Vancouver	Squamish-Lillooet	British Columbia	648	14.5
Peel	Halton	Ontario	7,484	13.3
Durham	Northumberland	Ontario	1,140	13.1
Greater Vancouver	Sunshine Coast	British Columbia	383	13.1
Durham	Kawartha Lakes	Ontario	990	12.9
Toronto	Durham	Ontario	8,187	12.3
Montréal	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	Quebec	1,512	10.1
York	Simcoe	Ontario	4,637	9.4

Note: The net rate corresponds to the net migration between both census division (CD), divided by the average population of the destination CD during the period.

Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division, Demographic Estimates Program (DEP).

Lillooet (+14.5 per thousand). The only net flow among the 10 largest in the country from the Montréal CD was to the neighbouring Vaudreuil-Soulanges CD (+10.1 per thousand), the ninth largest in the country.

According to this analysis, the long-term migratory trend of urban spread persisted in 2015/2016. As Table 4 shows, all 10 of the largest flows expressed in net rates between census divisions originated from one of the three largest CDs (or their neighbouring CDs), and were directed towards their suburban areas. 6 of the 10 largest net flows between census divisions came from Toronto or one of its three direct neighbouring CDs – Peel, Durham and York. The largest net flow was 27.0 per thousand from Peel to Dufferin. The second and third largest net flows between CDs were from Greater Vancouver to its neighbouring CDs of Fraser Valley (+15.2 per thousand) and Squamish-

Overview of the 2016/2017 period

The analysis in this section is based on preliminary data. These data will be revised over the coming years, and it is possible that some trends described in this section will change as a result of these revisions. Therefore, this section should be interpreted with caution.

The preliminary estimates for the 2016/2017 period that were released in September 2017 indicated that interprovincial migration in Canada was up by nearly 10,000 from the previous year, for a total of 286,932 migrants. This preliminary data shows that the interprovincial migration rate was 7.9 per thousand, a slight increase from the rate of 7.7 per thousand in 2015/2016.

Net interprovincial migration for 2016/2017 was the largest in Ontario and British Columbia. In Ontario, which had its first positive net interprovincial migration since 2002/2003 in 2015/2016, had 25,689 net interprovincial migrants for 2016/2017. This preliminary estimate would be the largest positive net interprovincial migration for the province since 1987/1988 (+35,215), and would also be the largest in the country for 2016/2017. Over the same period, British Columbia posted an annual net interprovincial migration estimate of 16,163. Despite having the second largest net interprovincial migration for 2016/2017, interprovincial migration in the province was down by more than 10,000 when compared with 2015/2016. The only other province that recorded positive net interprovincial migration for the preliminary 2016/2017 estimates was Nova Scotia (+645).

The net interprovincial migration loss of -15,108 in Alberta in 2015/2016 remained essentially the same at -15,131 for 2016/2017. Alberta had the largest loss through interprovincial migration for a second consecutive year. Nonetheless, preliminary estimates for the third and fourth quarters of 2017 indicated recent trends may have tempered, as the province recorded moderate gains in net interprovincial migration of 1,045 from July to December 2017. In comparison, the net interprovincial migration estimate for the second half of 2016 was -7,275. These third and fourth quarter estimates of 2017 coincide with Alberta's improved labour market conditions over the same period, in which the province's unemployment rate fell from 7.8% in July 2017 to 7.0% in December 2017 (Statistics Canada 2018).

For a second consecutive year, Quebec trailed Alberta for the largest negative net interprovincial migration, at -10,759. The other net interprovincial migration losses observed among the provinces for 2016/2017 were in Manitoba (-6,906), Saskatchewan (-5,615), Newfoundland and Labrador (-1,954), New Brunswick (-849) and Prince Edward Island (-436).

Summary

Interprovincial migration is an integral component of population growth, particularly in Western Canada. Historically, Alberta and British Columbia have been the main beneficiaries of this migration. While British Columbia characteristically had positive net interprovincial migration in 2015/2016, with the weakening of oil prices that affected Alberta's labour market beginning at the end of 2014 and continued into 2016, Alberta recorded its first negative net interprovincial migration since 2009/2010 (and second since 1994/1995). Typically recording positive net flows with most provinces, Alberta had a negative net flow with all of the Atlantic provinces, Ontario and British Columbia. With this exchange, the Atlantic provinces (except for New Brunswick) and Ontario (for the first time since 2002/2003) registered gains in net interprovincial migration for 2015/2016.

Another prominent trend in 2015/2016 was the net internal migration from one of the three largest CDs (or in Toronto's case, also its direct neighbouring CDs) to the surrounding more suburban CDs. Toronto, Greater Vancouver and Montréal all recorded losses through intraprovincial migration. Most of the 10 largest net internal migration rates over this period were to CDs located near one of the three largest CDs or near one of their neighbouring CDs.

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