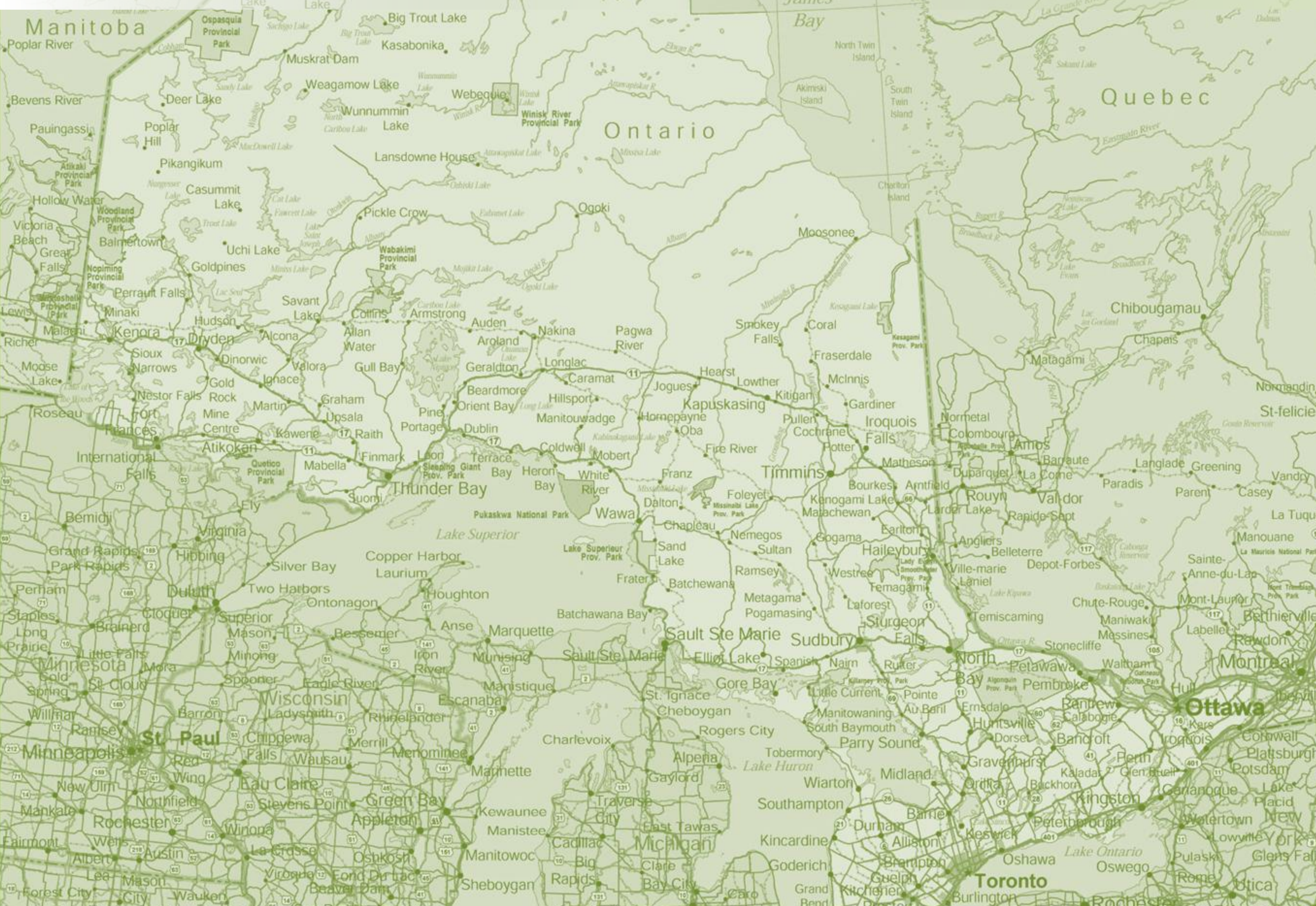
SPNO

Social Planning Network of Ontario

Ontario's Social Landscape:

Socio-demographic trends and conditions in communities across the province

June 2010



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The SPNO is a coalition of social planning councils, community development councils, resource centres and planning committees in various communities throughout Ontario. Member organizations have their own mandates but are connected in the cause of affecting change on social policies, conditions and issues. Copies of the report may be obtained from the Social Planning Network of Ontario, at www.spno.ca.

While this report draws upon data from multiple sources, the Canadian Census is the major data source. Census data was accessed by the research team through the Community Social Data Strategy (CSDS). CSDS data accessed through our local data consortia was instrumental in creating this report. Many thanks to the Halton, Hamilton and Toronto local data consortia.

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- Peterborough Social Planning Council
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- Social Planning Toronto
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Toronto

United Way Toronto

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Preface

Ontario communities, not unlike other communities in North America, are undergoing significant socio-economic changes. Some of the changes are common across Ontario (i.e. aging population, decreasing household size) and some are specific to certain communities (i.e. chronic high unemployment, population decline, significant population growth, influx of immigrants, growth of visible minority population).

These changes are generating additional demands on the limited resources of government and community organizations. In order to address the challenges, they require accurate and timely information on the populations they serve.

In 2007, the Social Planning Network of Ontario (SPNO) received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to develop social profiles of communities in Ontario as well as a provincial social profile. Each participating member has developed a social profile of the community it serves. The community social profile constructs a social portrait of each community. Each profile highlights the socio-demographic characteristics of the community as a whole and its population subgroups, such as seniors, youth, children, low income families, immigrants and visible minority groups.

Ontario's Social Landscape, the provincial social profile, highlights five themes that are of significance to Ontario as well as many of its communities. The themes are: aging population, diversity, economy and recession, housing and electoral participation.

In addition to the socio-economic characteristics of each theme, the temporal and spatial dimension of the changes are also captured. The changes at the provincial level are examined as well as those occurring at the Census Division level (CD). According to Statistics Canada, CD is the general term for provincially legislated areas (such as county and regional district) or their equivalents. In Ontario, examples of Census Divisions are: City of Toronto, Regional Municipality of Peel, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and District Municipality of Muskoka.

This document focuses primarily on changes between 1996, 2001 and 2006. More current data was used in the study of the economy and recession, housing issues and electoral participation.

The local stories at the end of each chapter serve to highlight how each theme is affecting communities in concrete ways and what steps communities are taking to address the issues. These local stories have been prepared by the Social Planning Councils in each community.

Terminology

Statistics Canada's terminology is used in this report. For example, Statistics Canada's term *visible minority* is used rather than people of colour or racialized community. Social planning bodies differ in their use of various terminology. In some communities, the term racialized is widely used and recognized by many equity-seeking groups. In others, it is not well known. For consistency, we have used Statistics Canada's terminology throughout this report.

Cartograms

This report uses cartograms to describe and analyze the geographic distribution pattern of various socio-demographic characteristics.

Cartograms provide a unique way to visualize the geographic distribution pattern of data of an area. They are transformations of maps in which the land area such as a province or a municipality is resized to approximate the value of a variable of interest (e.g. senior population, usage of electricity, election results, etc.).

Traditional maps can give a distorted view of the spatial distribution of a variable which is not related to the size of the area. For example, Map 1.1 shows the 2006 population distribution of Ontario by Census Division (CD). Kenora District, with a population of about 65,000, appears to be more dominant than the City of Ottawa, which has a population of over 800,000. The reader is visually comparing the difference in area instead of the population counts between the two CDs.

Map 1.2, which is a cartogram, provides a more realistic view of the population distribution pattern. The area of each CD is resized to represent the population counts. The reader can easily compare the population counts of each CD. The shape of each CD is slightly distorted in order to proportion its area coverage to the population counts.

By using a colour scheme, another variable can be added to the existing cartogram. This approach will help to reveal any spatial correlation that may exist between two phenomena (e.g. number of seniors and percentage of seniors) as shown in Map 1.3. Which areas have a large senior population where these seniors make up a large proportion of the total population?

"One of the wonderful features of contemporary cartograms is that they are very easy to read, requiring no special training or expertise. Larger [areas] have more of whatever it is the map is showing: smaller [areas] have less."[1]

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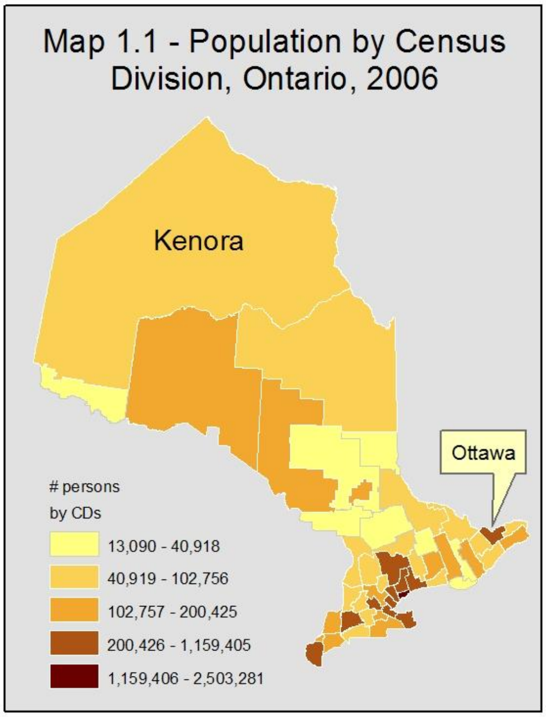
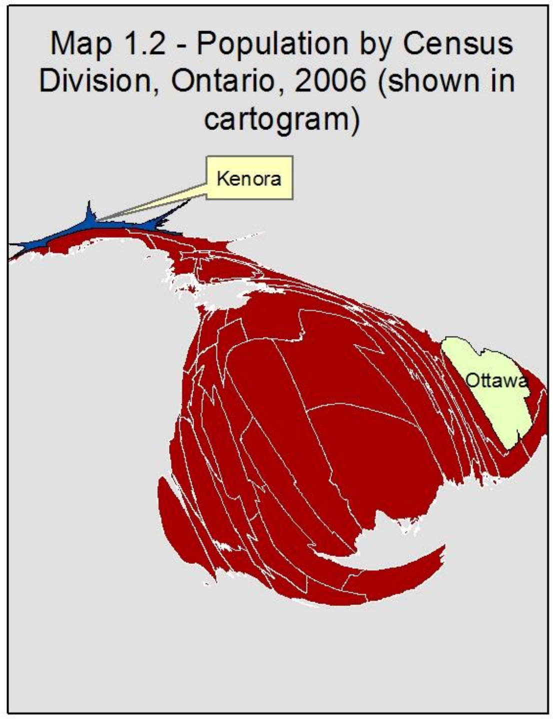
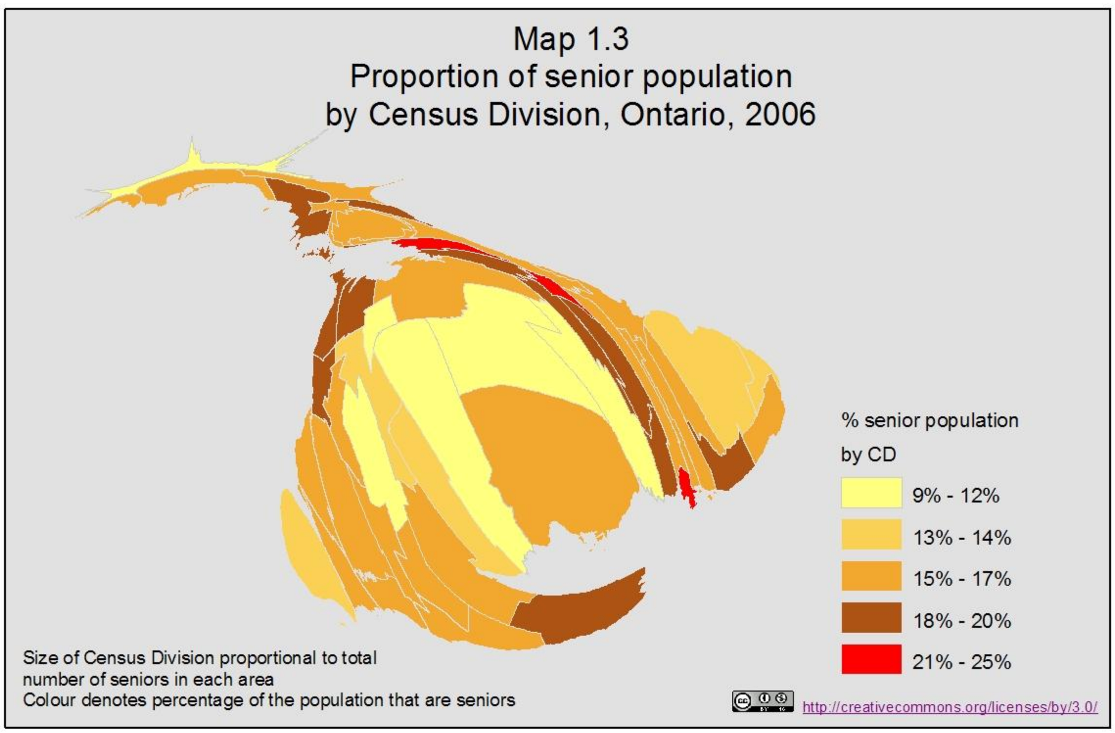
[1] Daniel Dorling, Mark Newman and Anna Barford. The Atlas of the Real World: Mapping the way we live (2008). Thames and Hudon: London.





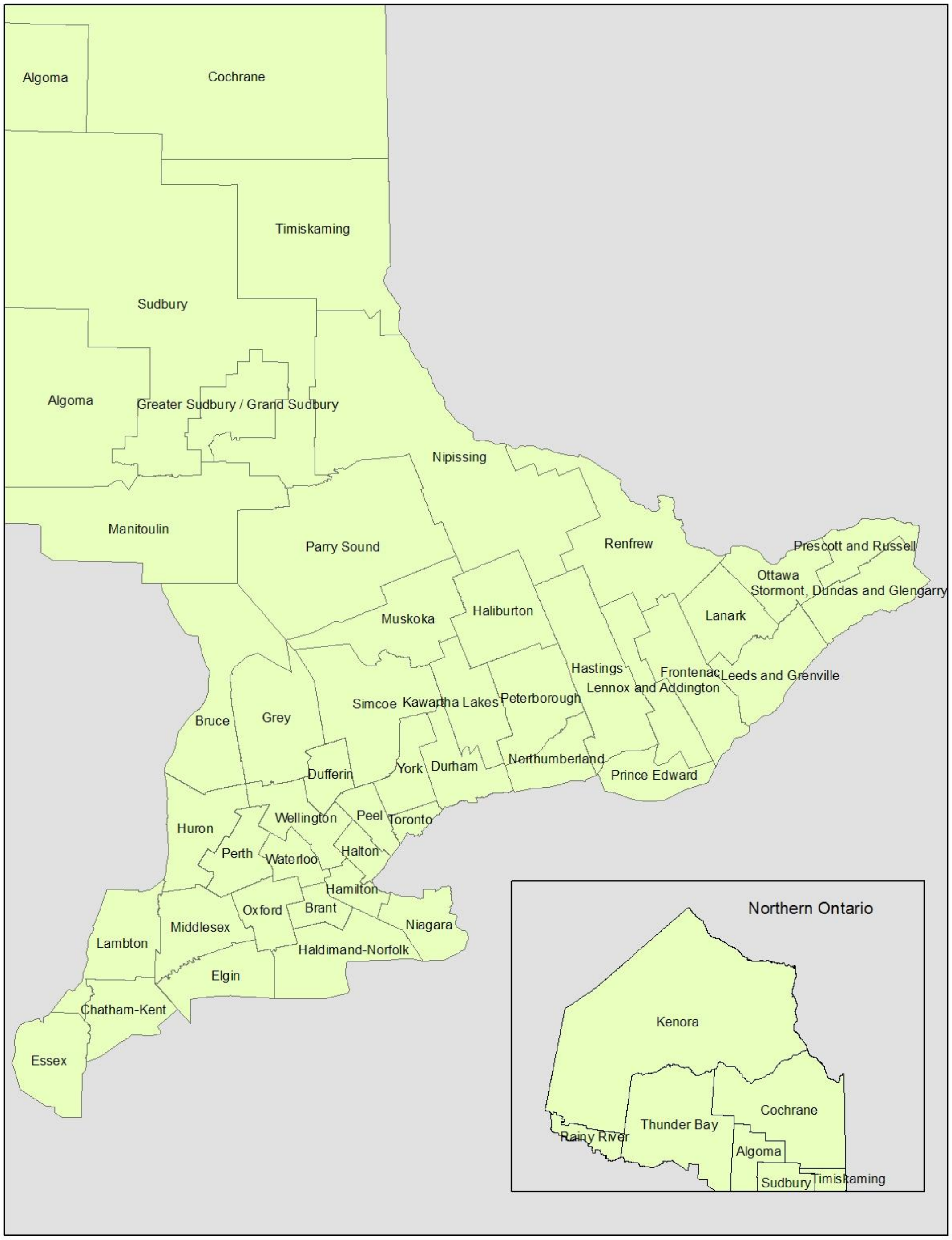


Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

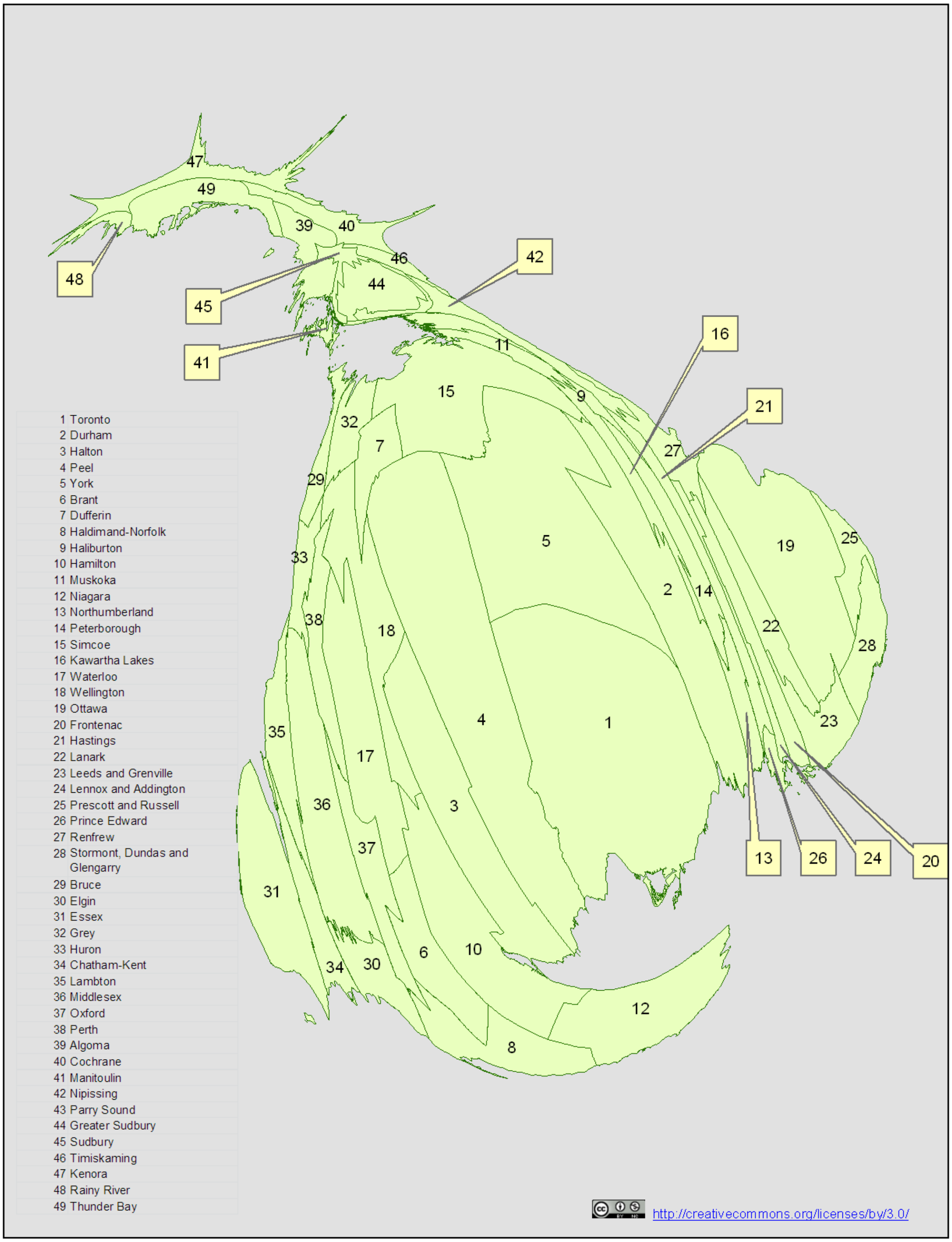
Map 1.4 shows the location of the Census Divisions in Ontario, while Map 1.5 provides a quick reference to the location of the Census Divisions when working with the cartograms.

Map 1.4 – Census Division, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Map 1.5 – Census Division (cartogram), Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

Chapter 2 – Diversity

Between 1996 and 2006, the population of Ontario has grown from 10,753,000 to 12,160,000. The addition of 1,470,000 people represents a 13% increase over a period of 10 years. This growth rate is higher than the national growth rate of 9.5%.

Not only has the size of Ontario's population increased significantly, its composition has also changed. With the continuing low birth rate in Canada, the major source of population increase has come mostly from immigration. Since the 1970s, the main source of immigrants to Canada has shifted from European to non-European countries. About 60% of recent immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1966 and 1971 were from European countries. Between 2001 and 2006, only 16% originated from those countries.

The shift in population sources has changed the socio-demographic characteristics of communities in Ontario and consequently increased its cultural diversity. The changes in the Francophone and Aboriginal populations are another important part of the diversity picture in Ontario.

Another way Ontario's population is diverse is the different physical abilities and mental health status of each resident. Physical and mental activity limitations that impact on people's daily lives are increasing in part due to our aging population. These impairments become disabilities when attitudes and environmental conditions create barriers for people. [2]

Visible Minority Population

The 1996 Census was the first time information on the visible minority population was collected directly from the respondents. In pre-1996 censuses, the information on this population subgroup was derived from answers to questions on ethnic or cultural origin. Visible minority is defined by the Employment Equity Act, as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour".

In 1996, there were over 1.68 million residents in Ontario who self-identified as members of the visible minority population. Within a span of ten years, the visible minority population has increased by over 60% to 2,745,000 people representing 22.8% of Ontario's population. In 2006, about three in ten visible minority persons in Ontario were born in Canada.

Map 2.1 shows the geographic distribution of the proportion of the visible minority population among the 49 Census Divisions. As discussed, the size of the area corresponds to the size of the visible minority population in each of the CDs. The cartogram clearly shows the concentration of visible minority population in southern

[2] Community Snapshot: People with Disabilities. Equity and Inclusion Lens Series, City of Ottawa. Pilot Version, Fall 2009. http://www.cawi-ivtf.org/pdf/EI-Lens/CS-disabilities-E-Nov09.pdf

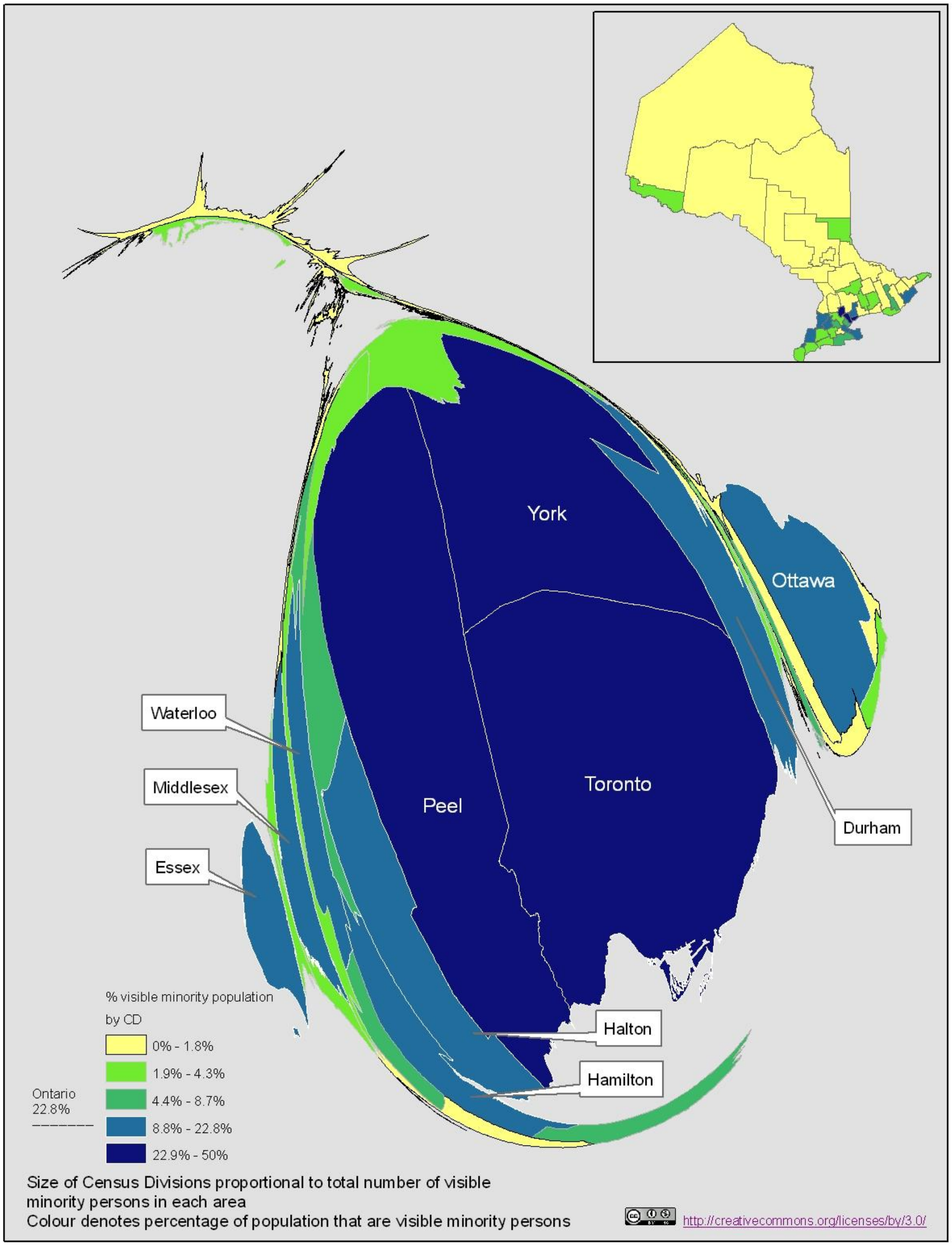
Ontario especially in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Over 80% of Ontario’s visible minority population resides in the municipalities of GTHA.

The colour scheme of the cartogram symbolizes the proportion of the visible minority population in each CD. There are three CDs (Toronto, York and Peel) with above provincial average (22.8%) concentrations of visible minority persons. They also have the highest number of visible minority persons. Toronto’s visible minority population has exceeded 1 million and represents about half of the total population of the city.

Toronto is followed by the Regional Municipalities of Peel and York with a visible minority population of 577,000 and 330,000, respectively.

In eastern Ontario, the largest concentration of visible minority persons is in the City of Ottawa. Over 100,000 visible minority persons live in the city, representing over 4% of the provincial total.

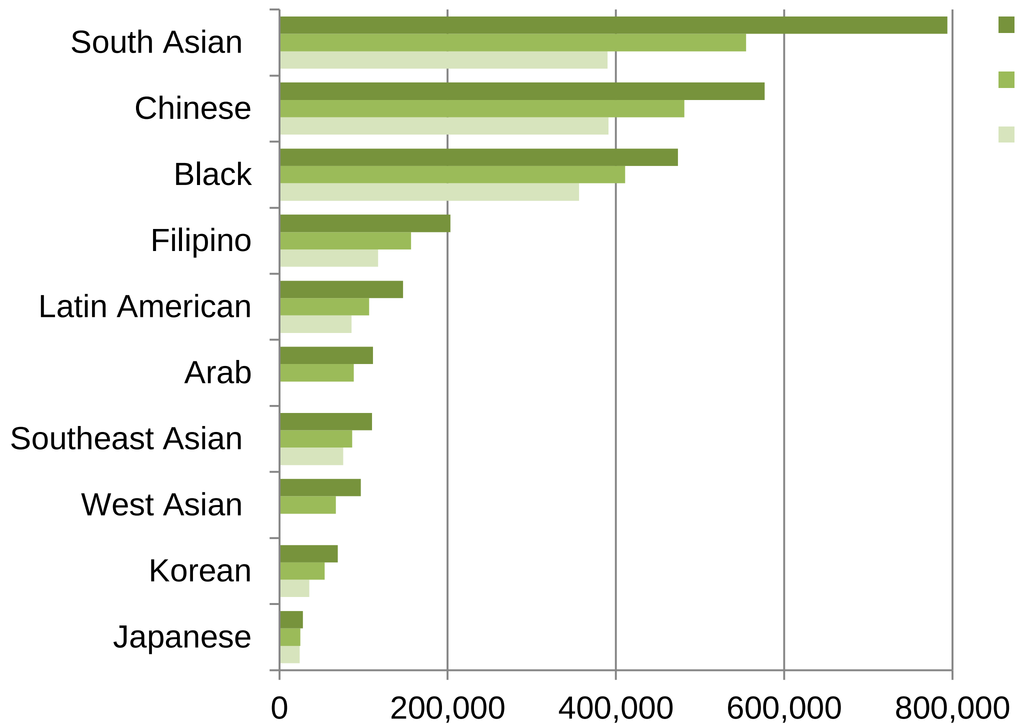
Map 2.1 – Visible minority population by Census Division, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

Figure 2.1 – Visible minority population, Ontario, 1996-2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

The top three visible minority groups are South Asian, Chinese and Black (Figure 2.1). In 2006, they represent over two-thirds of the visible minority population in Ontario.

The two fastest growing visible minority groups are the South Asian and Korean groups. Within a span of ten years (1996-2006), the South Asian population has doubled to over 790,000 and the Korean population has grown by 96% to over 69,000.

In the 1996 Census, the Arab and West Asian categories were combined together as a group which has grown by over 75% to over 200,000 individuals.

The size of the Japanese group has remained practically unchanged.

The City of Toronto is not only home to a considerable share of Ontario's total visible minority population in comparison with other CDs but also each of the visible minority groups.

A majority of the South Asian population lives in the City of Toronto and the Regional Municipality of Peel. They represent over 70% of the South Asian population in Ontario. Between 1996 and 2006, the South Asian population in Peel increased by 180% compared to 55% in Toronto.

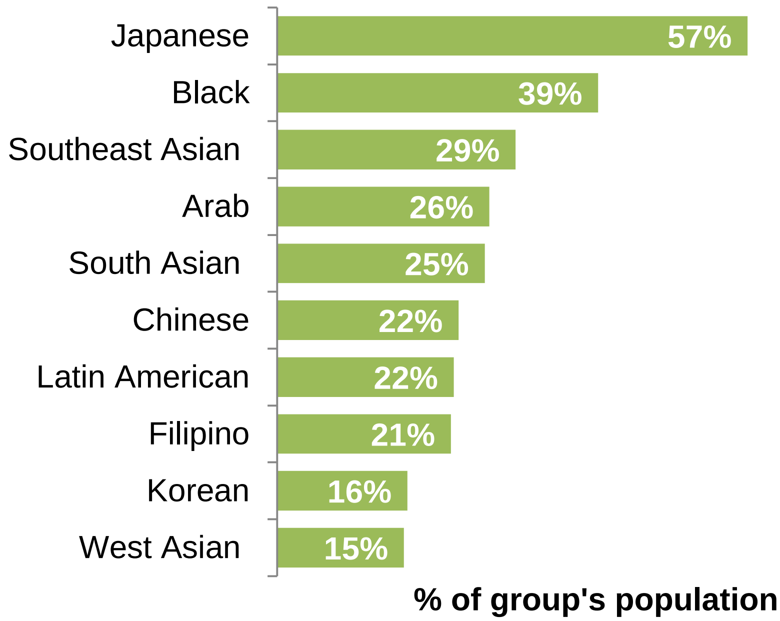
Although the Black and Latin American populations show a similar geographic distribution pattern as the South Asian population, they have a stronger presence in the City of Toronto. The Chinese population in the City of Toronto and the Regional Municipality of York accounts for about 73% of that visible minority group in Ontario.

In 2006, about three in 10 visible minority persons in Ontario were born in Canada. The proportion of Canadian-born population within each visible minority group varies according to their length of residence in the province.

As shown in Figure 2.2, Ontario's Japanese population has the highest proportion (57%) of Canadian-born residents. Most of the Japanese population has been in Canada for a considerable length of time and there were few recent Japanese immigrants.

On the other hand, Ontario's Black, South Asian and Chinese visible minority groups also have long histories in Canada; however, the significant increase in recent immigrants has also increased the proportion of their foreign-born population.

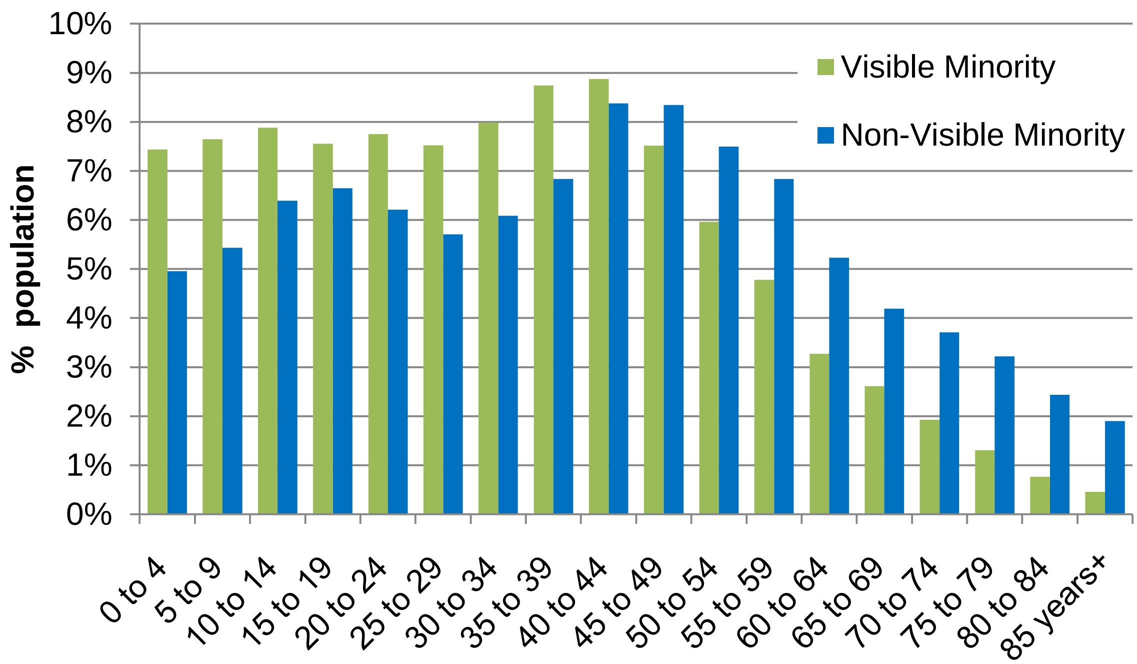
Figure 2.2 – Proportion of Canadian-born population by visible minority groups, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

The visible minority population is younger than the non-visible minority population (Figure 2.3). About 38% of the visible minority population is under 25 compared to 30% of their non-visible minority counterparts. The proportion of the senior population of the non-visible minority group is 15%, which is more than double the percentage for the visible minority group (7%).

Figure 2.3 – Age distribution of visible minority and non-visible minority populations, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Recent Immigrants

Statistics Canada defines recent immigrants as immigrants who arrived in Canada during the five years prior to a census. Between 2001 and 2006, Ontario received over half a million (580,700) recent immigrants which accounted for about 17% of its immigrant population.

Toronto has the highest foreign-born population, with about half (49.9%) of its residents being immigrants. Toronto is home to 36% of Ontario's immigrants and over 46% of its recent immigrants.

About 65% of Ontario's recent immigrants came from countries in Asia and the Middle East. Over 10% of the newcomers came from Central, South America and the Caribbean. The top five countries of birth for recent immigrants in 2006 are India (15%), China (14%), Pakistan (7.5%), Philippines (6.5%) and Sri Lanka (3.2%).

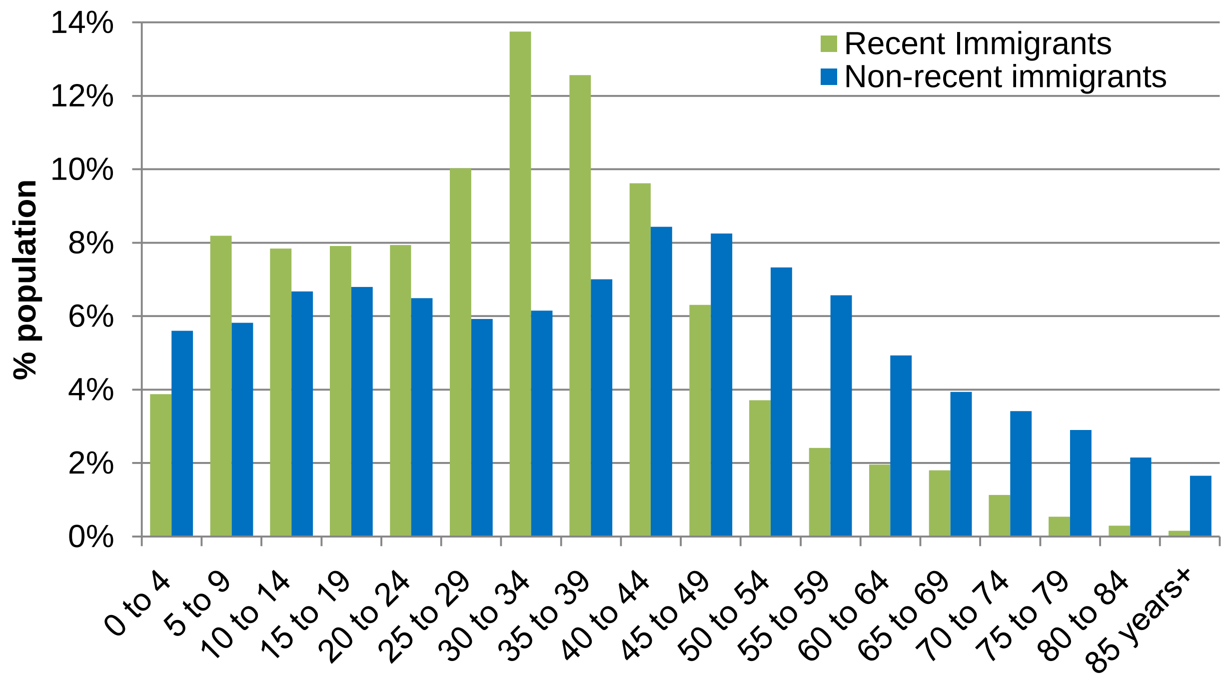
The geographic distribution of the recent immigrant population, to a large extent, mirrors that of the visible minority population. A majority of the recent immigrants settled in southern Ontario especially in the municipalities within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Over 80% of Ontario's recent immigrants reside in the municipalities of GTHA.

The City of Toronto is home to a considerable number of recent immigrants, representing over 40% of the provincial total. Toronto is followed by the Regional Municipality of Peel with a recent immigrant population of over 110,000.

In eastern Ontario, the largest concentration of recent immigrants lives in the City of Ottawa. About 30,000 recent immigrants live in the city and represent over 5% of the provincial total.

As shown in Figure 2.4, the age profile of recent immigrants is somewhat similar to that of visible minorities. The recent immigrant population is younger than the non-recent immigrant group. About 36% of recent immigrants are under 25 compared to 31% of their non-"recent immigrant" counterparts. The proportion of the senior population of the non-"recent immigrants" is 14% which is almost three times higher than that of recent immigrants at 4%. A significant portion of recent immigrants are in the 30-39 year age groups, reflecting in large part Canada's immigration policy aimed at attracting foreign workers and entrepreneurs.

Figure 2.4 - Age distribution of recent immigrants and non-recent immigrants, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

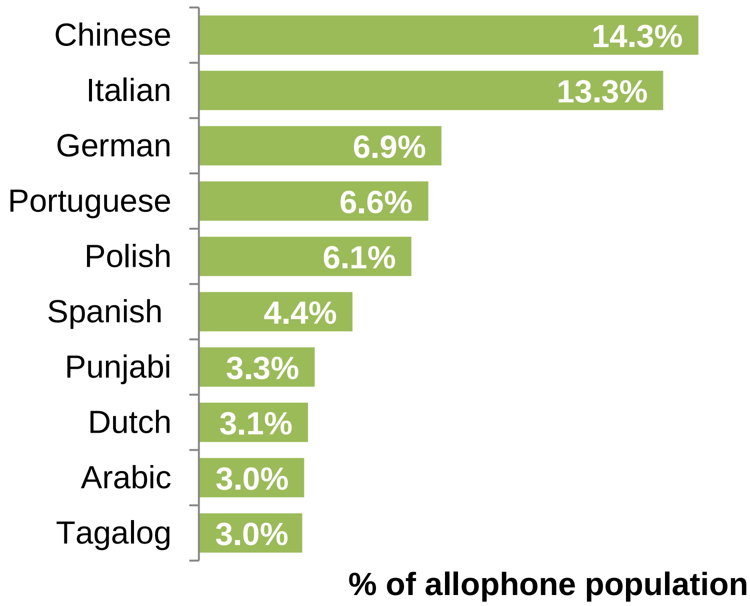
Allophone Population

Mother tongue is the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual. In Canada, people whose mother tongue is neither English nor French are allophones.

In 2006, there were more than 200 non- English or French mother tongues spoken in Ontario. About one-fifth of the population belongs to the allophone population. Ontario's allophone population has increased by 15% between 1996 and 2006.

In 1996, the top five non-official mother tongues were Chinese, Italian, German, Portuguese and Polish (Figure 2.5). Collectively, they were spoken by almost half (47%) of the allophone population.

Figure 2.5 - Top 10 non-official mother tongues, Ontario, 1996

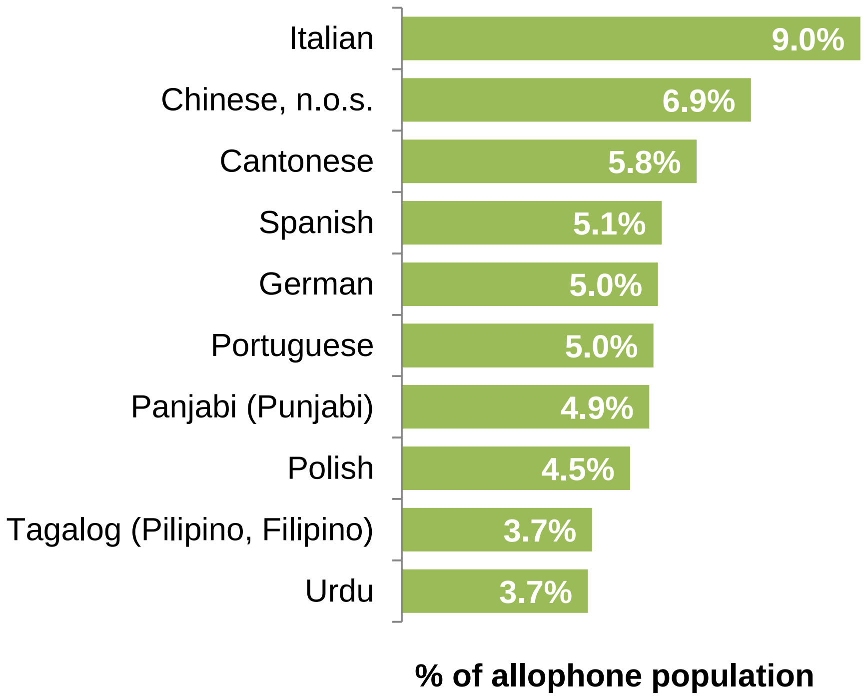


Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census

Ten years later, although Chinese (Cantonese and Chinese. n.o.s.- not otherwise specified), Italian, German and Portuguese still belong to the group of top five non-official mother tongues, their dominance has changed. They were spoken by less than one-third (31%) of the allophone population in 2006.

As the same time, other non-official mother tongues are being spoken by more allophones. Those languages include: Spanish, Punjabi, Tagalog and Urdu as shown in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6 - Top 10 non-official mother tongues, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Francophone Population

According to the 2006 Census, over one-fifth (22%) of Canadians are Francophone. One in four Canadians speaks French. There are significant variations in the geographic distribution of the Francophone population.

In Ontario, about 4% of the population belongs to the Francophone population. Between 1996 and 2006, that population grew by only 2%.

Map 2.2 shows its geographic distribution among the 49 CDs. The dominance of the Francophone population in eastern and northern Ontario is evident. The City of Ottawa has the largest Francophone populations (about 120,000) in Ontario. The other two CDs in eastern Ontario with large Francophone populations are the United Counties of Prescott and Russell (52,000) and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (24,000).

In contrast to its small population, northern Ontario has a significant Francophone population. The top five CDs are Greater Sudbury, Sudbury District, Cochrane, Timiskaming and Nipissing. The total Francophone population is over 115,000 and represents about 24% of the provincial total.

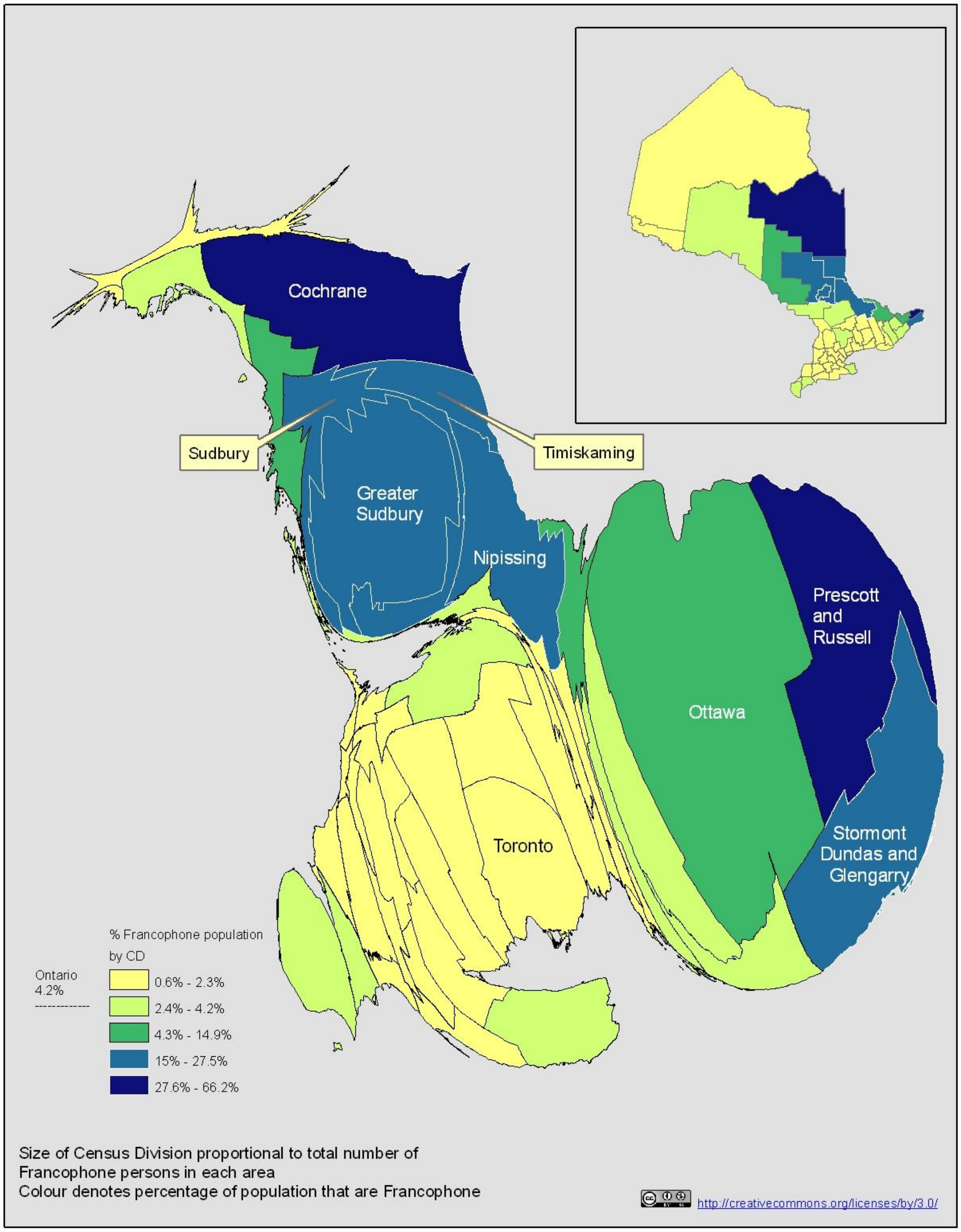
The United Counties of Prescott and Russell has the highest percentage of Francophones. Over 60% of its residents are of French mother tongue. It is closely followed by Cochrane District in northern Ontario. Over 46% of the population are

Francophone. Although Ottawa has the largest Francophone population, the population with French mother tongue represents about 15% of Ottawa's population.

On June 4, 2009, the Government of Ontario introduced a new, broader definition of the Francophone population to better reflect the changing face and diversity of Ontario's Francophone community. In addition to French mother tongue, the new more inclusive definition of Francophone includes language spoken at home and knowledge of official languages. Using the new inclusive definition, the total population of the Francophone community in Ontario was 582,695 in 2006 compared to 488,800 by the mother tongue definition.

For more information on the Francophone community in Ontario, please refer to the Ontario Trillium Foundation's *Profile of Ontario's Francophone Community.*

Map 2.2 - Francophone population by Census Division, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

Aboriginal Identity Population

Aboriginal Identity refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit), or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian as defined by the Indian Act of Canada, or those who reported they were members of an Indian band or First Nation.

However, it has been reported in many studies that the data collected by Statistics Canada on the Aboriginal population are not reliable3. Aboriginal people overall are less likely to participate in the enumeration process. Many Aboriginal people may not self-identify themselves. As a result, the census counts for the Aboriginal Identity population are often lower than the actual population numbers in many areas, especially urban areas. In 2006, the census counted about 242,000 Aboriginal persons living in Ontario, representing about 2% of Ontario's population. However, Ontario has the largest Aboriginal population of any province or territory, representing over 20% of the Canadian total.

From 1996 to 2006, the Aboriginal population of Ontario increased by over 70%, a rate faster than that of the nation. The Aboriginal community is a young community. Its median age in 2006 was 29.7 years compared to 39 years for the total population.

Map 2.3 shows the geographic distribution of the Aboriginal population in 2006 among the 49 CDs. Although northern Ontario has about 6.6% of Ontario's population, it is home to over 40% of the Aboriginal population. Kenora District has the largest number and highest percentage of Aboriginal peoples. Over 40% of Kenora's population are Aboriginal. Aboriginal people represent 39% of the population of Manitoulin District.

In southern Ontario, there are three CDs with over 10,000 Aboriginal people living in them (City of Toronto, City of Ottawa and Simcoe County). However, the proportion of the Aboriginal population in both Toronto and Ottawa is below the provincial average of 2%. About 3% of the population in Simcoe County are Aboriginal.

For more information on the Aboriginal community in Ontario, please refer to the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Aboriginal Communities in Profile: Ontario.

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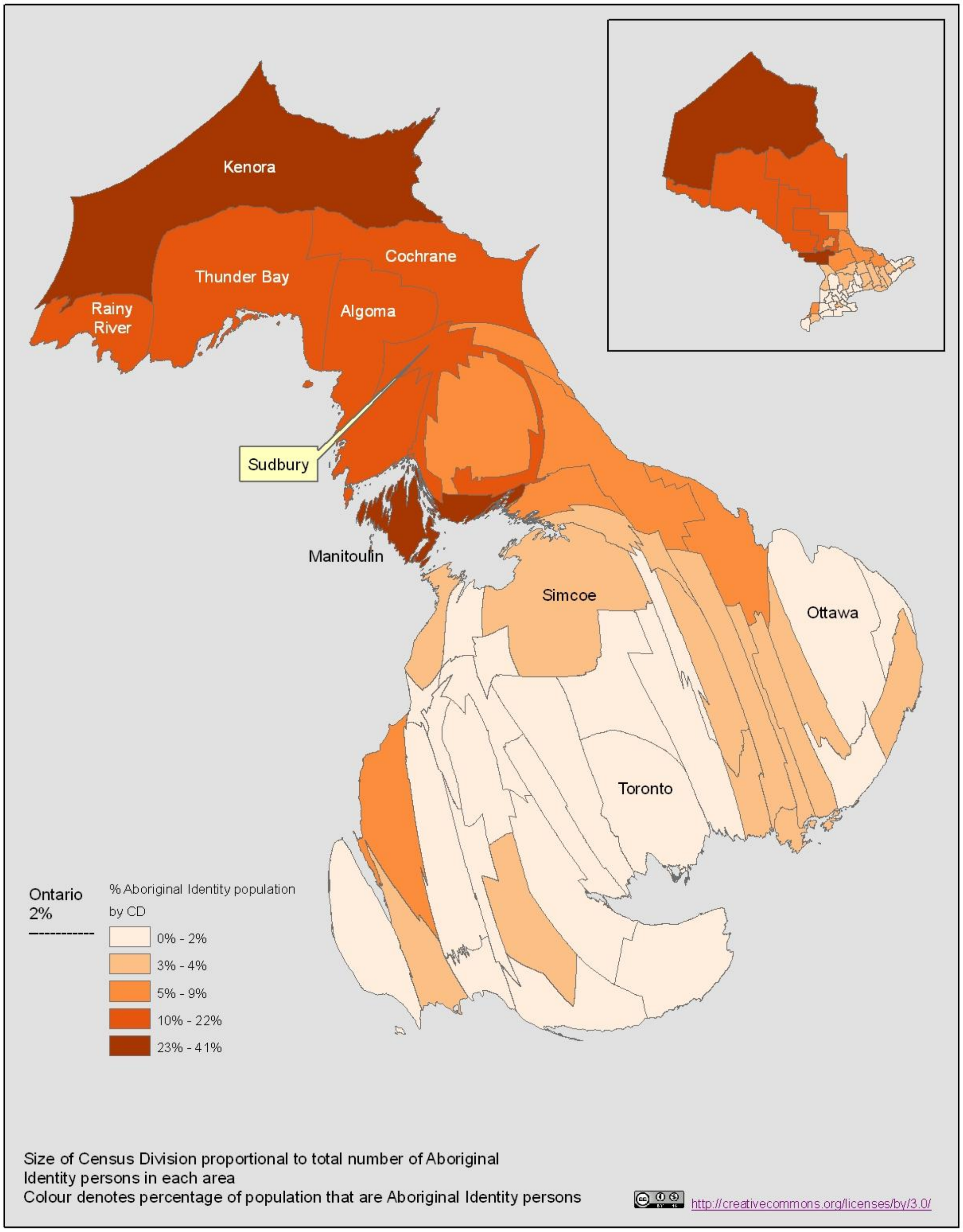
[3] Chapter 5: Aboriginals in Hamilton's Social Landscape, produced by the Social Planning Council of Hamilton has an overview of the problems with data quality in the census with regards to the Aboriginal population in Canada, particularly in urban areas.

Map 2.3 - Aboriginal Identity population by Census Division, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

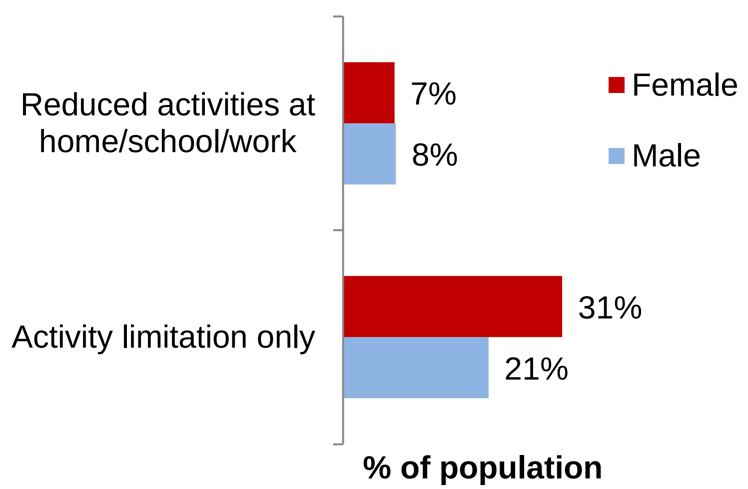
People with Disabilities

People with mental and physical disabilities are another important group reflecting the diversity of Ontario's population. However it is difficult to find consensus on the exact definition of disability and how to measure disability in the population.

"Defining disability is a difficult task. A multitude of perceptions surrounds the question of what constitutes a disability and a disability to one person can be a typical part of life to the next. To confuse the issue further, perceptions of disability are fluid and ever-changing as society evolves and the sources of information about disability continue to change."[4]

Census data is available for what is termed "self-declared activity limitations", one definition of disability. In 2006, 34% of Ontario's population had activity limitations and Figure 2.7 shows that more women declared activity limitations alone, but that almost the same proportion of men and women declared that these activity limitations reduced their activities at home, school or work.

Figure 2.7 - Persons with activity limitations, by sex, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

The age profile (Figure 2.8) of Ontario's population with activity limitations shows that a greater portion of the oldest age groups have such impairments as compared to the younger age groups. While 51% of seniors have activity limitations, only 14% of those under 65 have such impairments.

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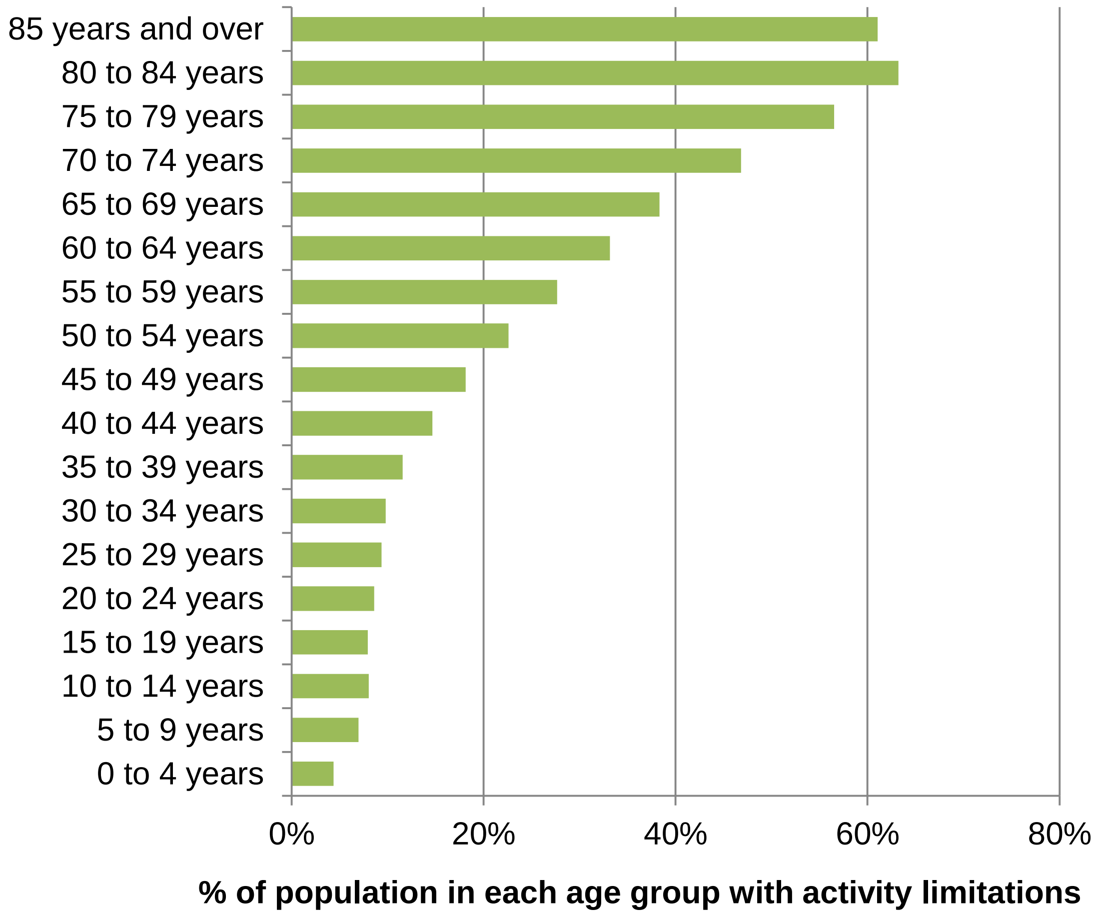
[4] Andrew MacKenzie, Matt Hurst and Susan Crompton. 2009. Living with disability series Defining disability in the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey. Canadian Social Trends, Statistics Canada. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2009002/article/11024-eng.htm

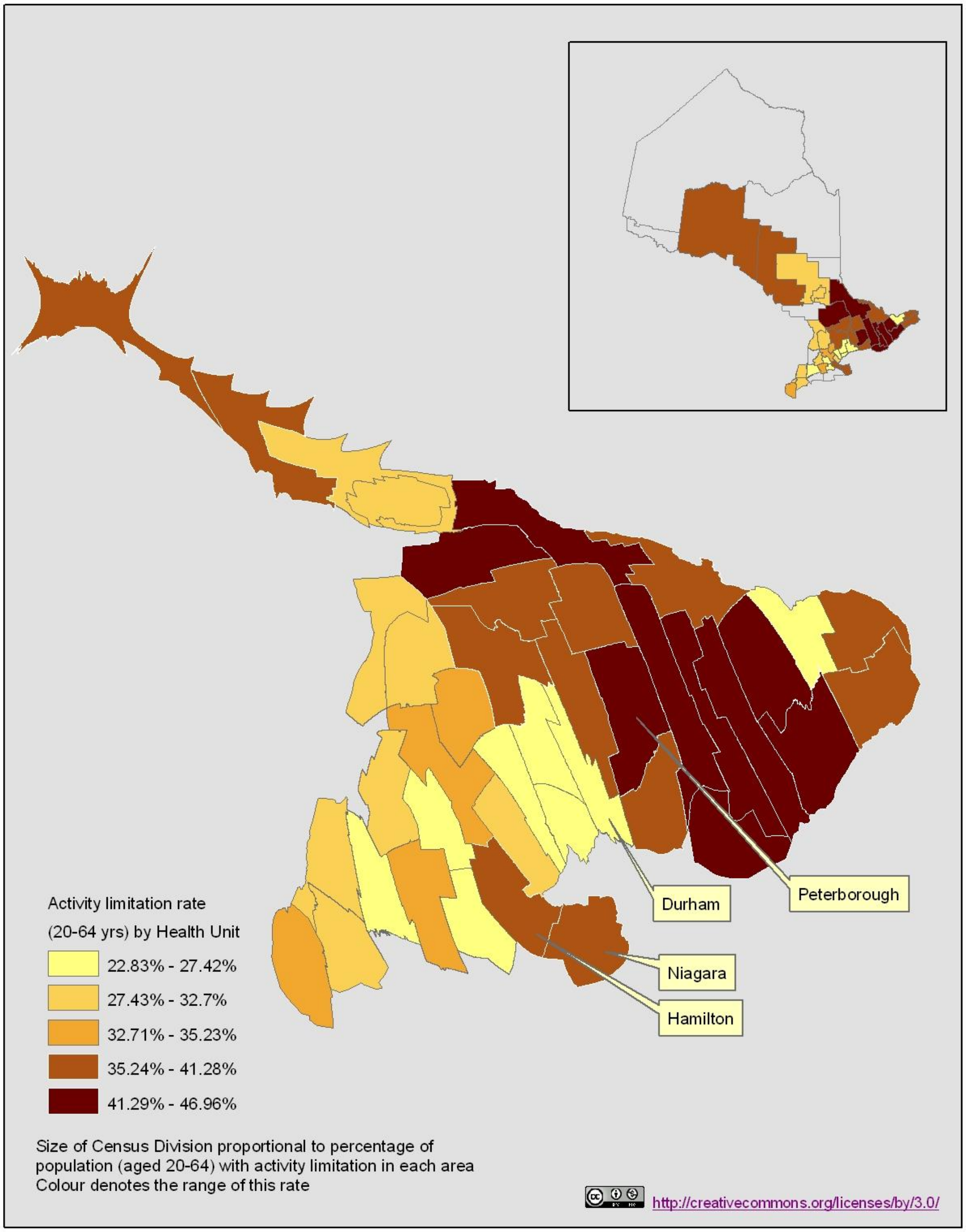
Figure 2.8 - Proportion of persons with activity limitations, by age, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey also reports data on activity limitations and Map 2.4 shows the distribution of activity limitation rates for adults between 20-64 years of age across Ontario in 2005. Peterborough has the highest rate with almost half (47%) of the population in that age group declaring activity limitations. Many other areas in eastern Ontario have similarly high rates of people with activity limitations. In southern Ontario the highest rates are in Hamilton and Niagara, both with 39%. The lowest rate is found in Durham with less than a quarter (23%) of the persons in the age group declaring activity limitations. Most areas of the GTA also have lower than average rates.

Map 2.4 - Activity limitation rates (20-64 years) by Health Unit, Ontario, 2005



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2005

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

Conclusion

Ontario is a richly diverse province. Equitable access to programs and services is vital to the health and well-being of all of Ontario's residents. Understanding our diversity, in all of its facets, is critical to shaping public policy, social services and community programs to meet our individual and collective needs.

Diversity - Local Stories

Cultural Diversity in Peel

Peel is one of the fastest growing regions in Canada, with more than one million people. Between 2001 and 2006, its growth rate was 17.2%. Immigration is the primary factor driving the rapid population growth in Peel. In 2006, immigrants made up 48.6% of Peel's total population. In addition, fully half (50%) of Peel's population identify themselves as members of visible minority groups compared to only 22.8% and 16.2% respectively in Ontario and Canada (Canada Census, 2006).

As a growing immigrant recipient region, Peel has become richly diverse and vibrant with over 93 distinct ethnic groups, 60 different spoken languages, and several different religions practised by its residents. This region is undergoing a real-world social experiment. This experiment involves discovering how a tremendously diverse population, made up of people from all over the world, of different races and cultures, can live and prosper together in harmony.

In recognition of this, the Social Planning Council of Peel has been instrumental in the establishment of collaboratives aimed at designing and delivering culturally appropriate services to meet the needs of the diverse immigrant and refugee communities in Peel. One such collaborative is *The Regional Diversity Roundtable (RDR) Peel Region*. This was born out of one of the recommendations from a SPC research and training project on diversity management for nonprofit organizations in Peel and Halton in 2004. The SPC facilitated the development of the founding documents of the RDR (vision, mission, mandate, strategic directions) as well as a 3-year funding proposal.

RDR is a network of organizations and institutions committed to the values of diversity and equity in our society and to the institutionalization of those values within the structures and systems of organizations in Peel's human services sector. The members of the Collaborative are mostly Diversity managers and other persons responsible for the "diversity/accessibility" portfolio within their respective organizations.

The SPC Peel is currently the lead agency and financial sponsor for this Collaborative.

Cambridge: Neighbourhood Betterment Project Bolsters Residents Pride

Like many other parts of the city, Cambridge's Alison Neighbourhood has been experiencing a growing newcomer population. The creation of a *Community Partners Group* provided a forum for different kinds of community stakeholders to exchange information and dialogue about how best to support the changing needs of the neighbourhood.

In the spring of 2009 the *Community Partners Group* hosted a community conversation event. Many newcomer residents attended to voice their opinion about safety, recreation, and support services and to discuss how to work together to make the community a safer, more inclusive place. A major concern was the state of the Elgin Street pedestrian tunnel - an old train tunnel closed to vehicular traffic and the quickest route from the residential area to local businesses and the Mosque. The tunnel was littered with trash and broken glass. Overhead lights were burned out, the pavement was cracked, and there were blind spots caused by overgrown brush.

In the summer of 2009 residents of all ages worked side by side to beautify this badly neglected area. Graffiti was painted over, the brush was cut back, bags of garbage were picked up and people waded through the creek to fish out old bicycles and scrap metal. The event created an air of community spirit and excitement. Media attention prompted the city to respond by investing funds into further enhancement of the area. The end result is that today neighbourhood residents enjoy a repaved pathway, new signage, better lighting and, above all, a sense of safety and accomplishment.

As the newcomer population continues to grow, the *Community Partners Group* continues its work to bridge the gap between agencies and residents and to find ways to support grassroots projects that engage people in the well-being of their community.

Peterborough: Support for Newcomers and a Changing Community

Peterborough is changing. We are fortunate to be far enough away from the GTA to be able to be seen as a community that has carved out its own sense of place. It is a community that has a rich heritage built by the Irish immigrants of the 19th century along with the Aboriginal communities that continue to be an important part of the County's population. We have the ability to enjoy the cultural and social benefits offered by an urban city, yet are able within minutes to be in the country enjoying opportunities of rural life.

Extreme population growth has not occurred in Peterborough. It continues to grow but not at the rate that has caused cities such as Barrie to explode. But we know that the next decade will see a change in the face of Peterborough.

Peterborough is no exception and is planning for change with the overall goal of maintaining a high quality of life. Community partners are committed to building a future Peterborough County and City that is based on sound social and physical community planning principles.

The Peterborough Social Planning Council (PSPC) recently released its report "Heading Down the Road to the Future". The report considers a number of local municipal plans that provide direction for the enhancement of the central core. As part of the analysis we considered the impact of the proposed eastward extension of Highway 407. And we worked with the Partnership Council on Immigrant Integration to envision what our community will need in order to prosper.

The integration of immigrants into the fabric of our community is not just market labour integration or economic resettlement. True integration arises only when newcomers are fully woven and integrated into the everyday life of a community. As Peterborough changes, the community saw the need for the formation of a cross sector partnership council to enhance the current understanding and practice of resettlement and integration. PSPC is a member of the Partnership Council on Immigrant Integration. Collectively we are looking at how to respond to the growing needs of potential and new community members. As we integrate newcomers into the economic, educational, recreational, and social aspects of Peterborough so too do we bring them into the social fold of our civil and political communities.

Greater Sudbury: Belonging

A sense of belonging has been shown to be positively linked to general health and well-being in addition to being a good indicator of community engagement. In terms of community belonging, the City of Greater Sudbury – as part of the larger Sudbury and Manitoulin Health District – enjoys significantly higher rates when compared to other provincial and/or national health districts.

On closer analysis, higher rates of belonging tended to go hand in hand with health districts that are less urban-based and those with higher socio-economic status. These findings support the importance of social networks and reciprocal relationships, as well as measures to reduce low-income, as key strategies to improve individual and community health outcomes, all of which are tied directly to a 'sense of belonging'.

In Greater Sudbury community leaders have recognized the need for a more inclusive and diverse community in their implementation of Community Action Networks, - neighbourhood based civic action groups - and in their adoption of a broad civic engagement strategy, meant to mobilize local residents on important issues and allay feelings of alienation.

In addition, the City's 'Diversity Thrives Here' campaign and more recently, its newly formed immigration partnership board will build on efforts to improve relations between the Francophone, Anglophone and Aboriginal sectors, as well as follow through with a targeted initiative to improve the city's chronically low immigration levels.

The Urban Aboriginal Task Force: Sudbury Final Report calls for the development of the Sudbury Urban Aboriginal Alliance - a leadership group dedicated to the development of strategies for the advancement of Aboriginal people in Greater Sudbury. As well the Francophone community is committed to strengthening their participation in community development and has recently developed États généraux de la communauté francophone du Grand Sudbury – a social development initiative aimed at engaging the Francophone community in planning in regards to arts and culture, the economy, education, health, social services and immigration. In late 2009 with support from the Trillium Foundation the Francophone and Anglophone communities were brought together to discover common interests and develop a better way of working together.

Chapter 3 - Aging Population

This chapter focuses on various aspects of Ontario's aging population and the seniors living in the 49 Census Divisions (CD). It provides information and preliminary analysis on the aging trend and pace of aging, seniors' residential mobility and housing, volunteering, incomes and health conditions.

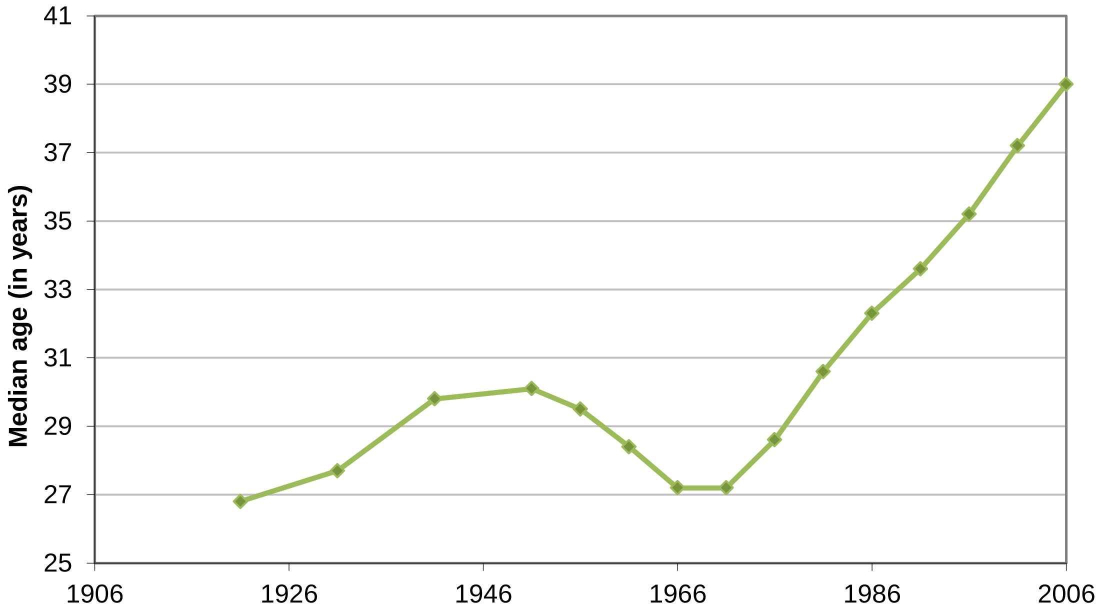
Aging Trend

The aging trend of the Ontario population was evident as early as in the 1920s. Figure 3.1 shows the change of median age in Ontario since 1921. Median age is the age at which half of the population is above (older) and the other half is below (younger). The median age increases as the older population grows faster than the younger population.

In 1921, the median age for the Ontario population was 26.8. In a span of over eighty years, the median age has reached 39 in 2006. The arrival of the baby boomers between 1946 and 1966 had temporally lowered the median age to the 1920 level. However, since 1971, the aging trend resumed its upward movement as the median age continued to rise.

This upward aging trend is mainly the result of declining birth rate and growing longevity of the population. Canada's birth rate continues to decline and has gone below the replacement level (2.1 children/woman). The size of the child population is shrinking, while the senior population is expanding and people are living longer.

Figure 3.1 – Median age of population, Ontario, 1921-2006



Source: Statistics Canada

Pace of Aging

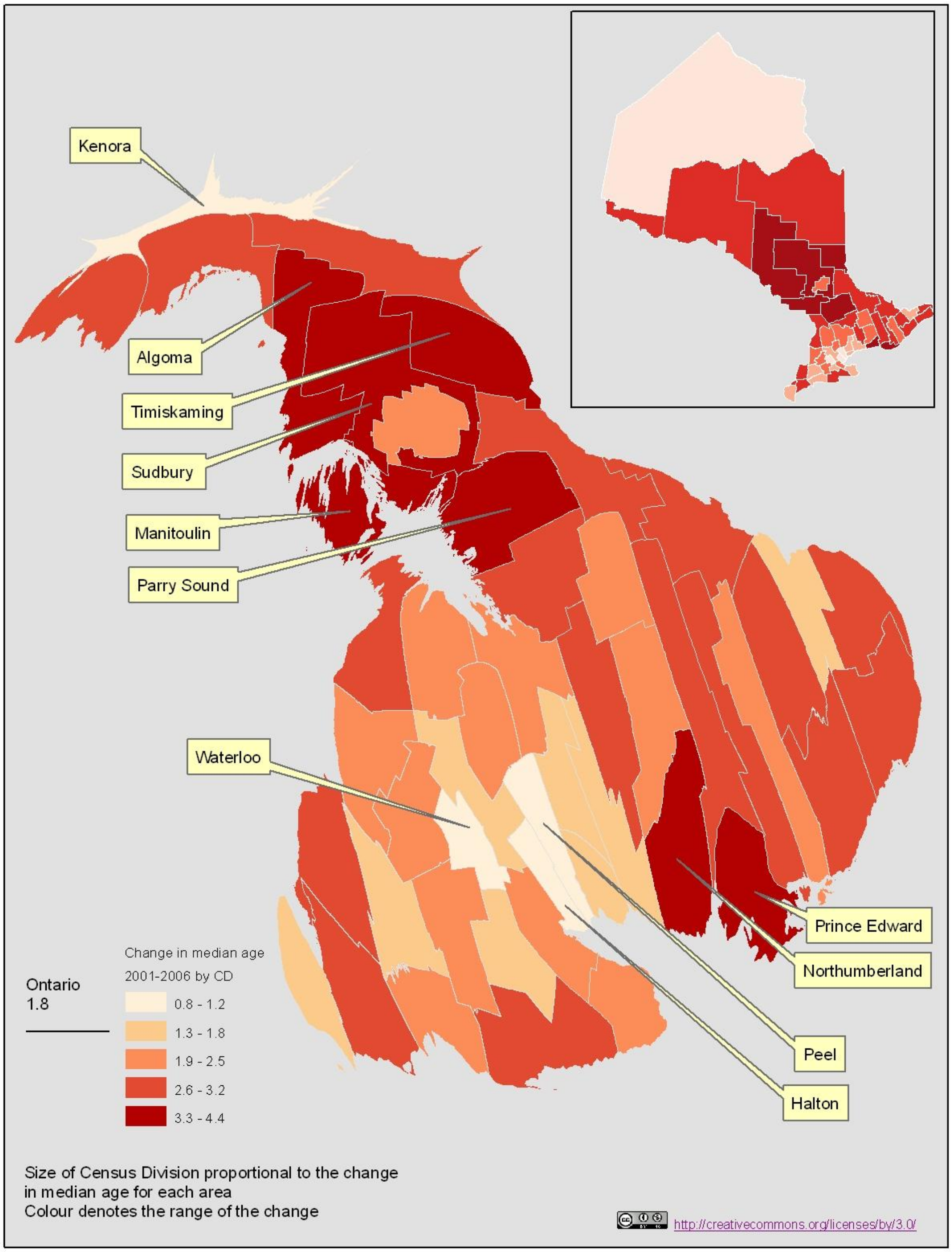
As a province, the median age of the Ontario population increased by 1.8 years from 37.2 in 2001 to 39 in 2006. However, the pace of aging as measured by the change in median age varies among the 49 Census Divisions (CDs).

As shown in Map 3.1, over three-quarters of the CDs aged faster than the province as a whole. There are six CDs with increases that doubled the provincial average. Five of them are located in northern Ontario. Sudbury District has the largest increase of median age of 4.4 years.

With the exception of Kenora District, all CDs with changes below the provincial average are located in southern Ontario. The three CDs with the lowest increase in median age are Waterloo, Halton and Peel.

The overall increase in median age is the result of declining birth rates and growing longevity. However, the pace of the increase or decrease can be further influenced by the migration process. For example, the median age of a community can become significantly lower with a large influx of young families and individuals either through international or intra/interprovincial migration. On the other hand, a continuous out migration of the youth population, without any significant change in birth rate or longevity rate, can easily raise the median age of a community considerably.

Map 3.1 – Change in median age of population by Census Division, Ontario, 2001 and 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

Size of the Senior Population

Between 1996 and 2006, the population of Ontario grew by 13% to 12.1 million. The senior population (65 years and over) grew at a much faster rate of 33% to 1.65 million. (1,242,080 in 1996 to 1,649,195 in 2006).

The size of Ontario's senior population is significant. If Ontario's seniors were a province, it would rank fifth among the provinces and territories. Ontario's senior population is larger than the entire population of Manitoba.

In 1966, about 12.4% of Ontario's population was 65 years of age or older; in 2006, the proportion increased to 13.5%. According to the 2006 Census, one in eight persons is a senior.

According to the latest population projections prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Finance[5], by 2021, the proportion of seniors will increase to 18%. About one in six people will be a senior. The size of the senior population will be more than double that of 1996. By 2017, for the first time, there will be more seniors than children aged 0-14[6] in Ontario.

Geographic Distribution

Map 3.2 shows the geographic distribution of the senior population among the 49 CDs. Again, the size of the area reflects the size of the senior population (i.e., the larger the area, the larger the senior population). Similar to the population distribution, most of the seniors live in the large CDs in southern Ontario. The City of Toronto has the largest senior population. Its 353,000 seniors represent over one-fifth (21%) of the provincial total.

The next tier of CDs with over 100,000 seniors includes the City of Ottawa and the Regional Municipality of Peel. They account for 6.1% and 6.3% of Ontario's senior population respectively.

Manitoulin District in northern Ontario has the lowest number of seniors (2,400).

The colour scheme shows the proportion of the senior population within each CD. The proportion of seniors within each area is determined by two factors, the size of the senior population and the size of the total population.

Over three-quarters of the CDs have higher percentages than the provincial average of 13.5%. In Prince Edward County, Haliburton District and Parry Sound District, seniors account for about one-fifth of the total population. In Haliburton, one in four residents is a senior.

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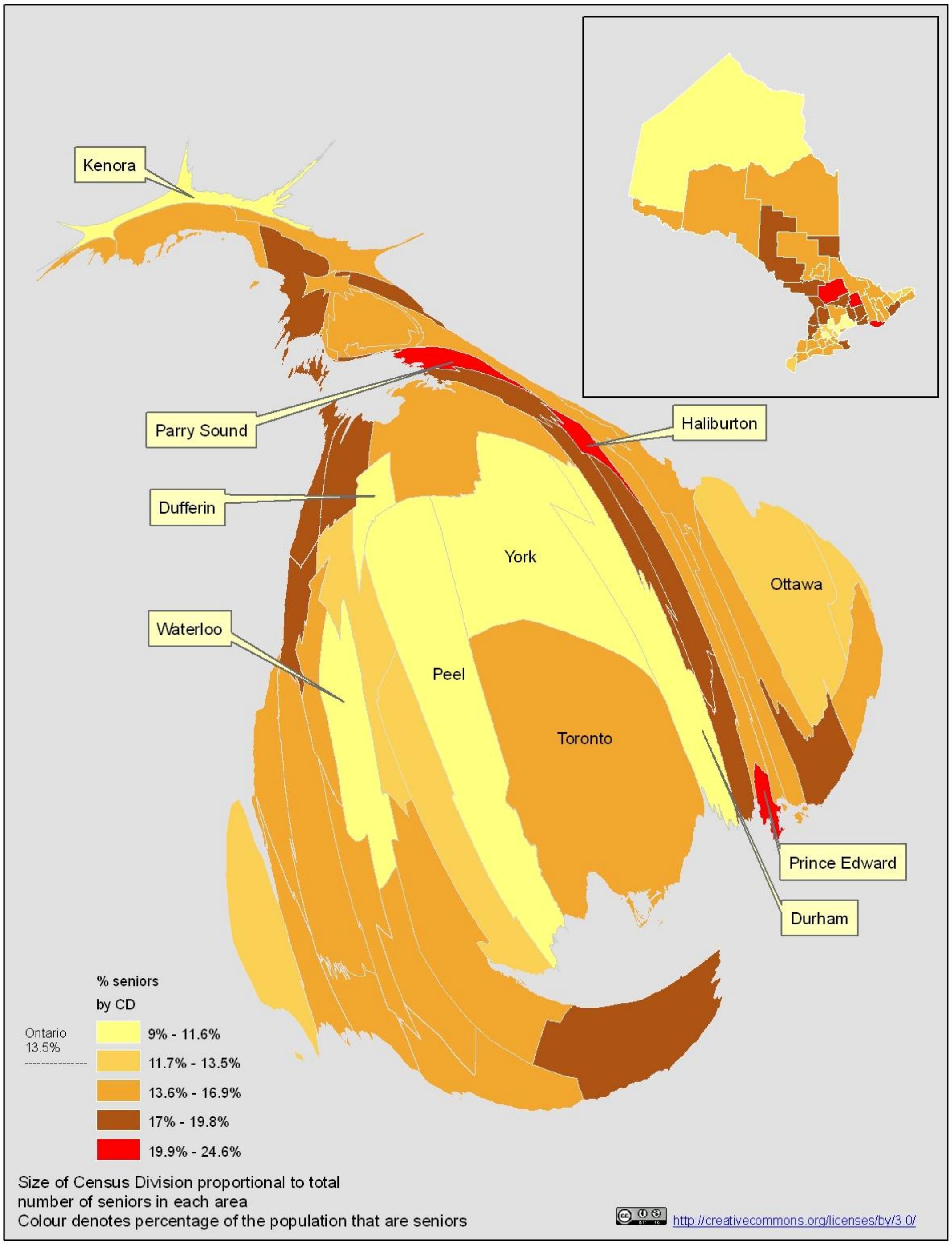
[5] Ontario Ministry of Finance, Ontario Demographic Quarterly, Office of Economic Policy, Labour and Demographic Analysis Branch, Toronto, Ontario, December 2009
[6] Ontario Ministry of Finance, Ontario Population Projections, 2008-2036, Ontario and its 49 Census Divisions, Fall, 2009

With the exception of Kenora District, all the CDs with the lowest proportion of seniors are located in southern Ontario. The Region of Peel has the lowest proportion of seniors. Although it has the second highest number of seniors after the City of Toronto, less than 10% of its population are seniors.

Seniors represent about 14% and 13% of the population of the City of Toronto and City of Ottawa respectively.

Map 3.2 - Senior population by Census Division, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

Age Distribution and Sex

Between 1996 and 2006, the fastest growing senior age groups are those over age 80 (Figure 3.2). The two age groups (80-84; 85 and over) experienced a combined growth rate of over 50%. They represent 26% of the senior population.

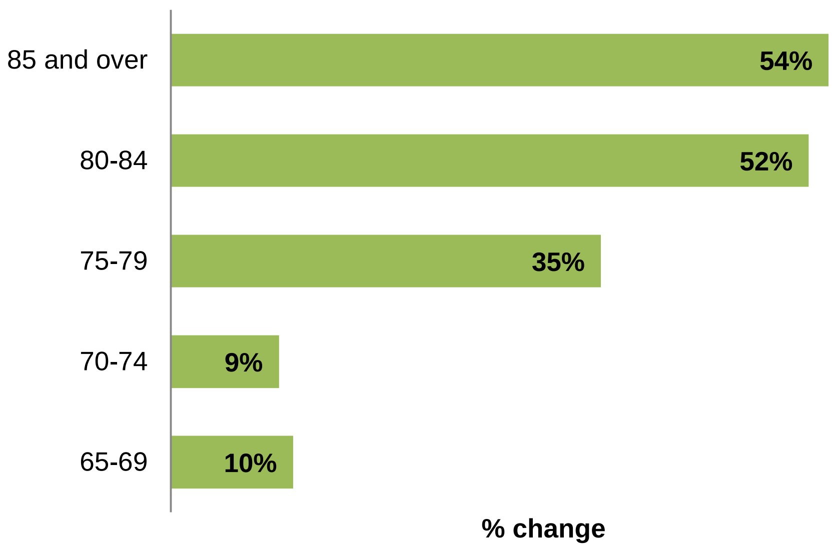
On the other hand, the age group between 65 and 69, which represents 28% of the seniors, grew by 10% in the same period.

However, as the baby boomers enter their retirement age, the younger senior population will increase faster.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Finance projection, within the period of 15 years (2006 to 2021), the senior population will increase by 62% compared to 19% for the total population.

The senior population between the age of 65 and 74 will increase by 75% to over 1.5 million. The older senior population will grow by 47% to 1.1 million.

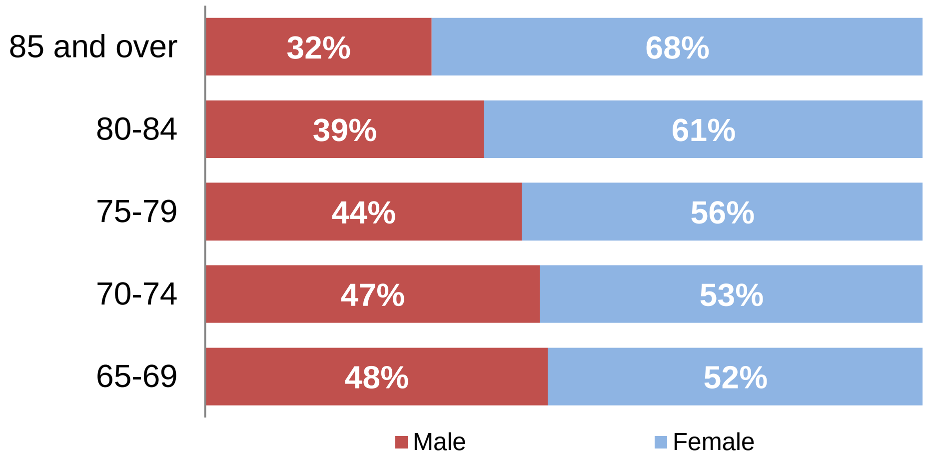
Figure 3.2 - Percent change of senior population by age groups, Ontario, 1996-2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 and 2006 Censuses

Although seniors are living longer, as shown in Figure 3.3, most female seniors out-live their male counterparts. For seniors older than 85 years, over two-thirds are women.

Figure 3.3 – Proportion of senior population by age and by sex, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Residential Mobility and Senior Housing

Seniors' residential mobility is also different from other age groups. As shown in Figure 3.4, the mobility status varies among different age groups reflecting the life cycle of most Ontarians.

Between 50 to 60% of those under the age of 19 are non-movers. Many youth stay home with their families. The proportion of non-movers decreases as they get older and leave home for further education, employment or starting a new family. Over the age of 35, the proportion of non-movers starts to rise again, as many are starting new families.

Seniors have the highest proportion of non-movers. Over eight in 10 seniors over the age of 75 years are non-movers. For seniors who moved between 2001 and 2006, the majority of them moved within their municipalities of residence.

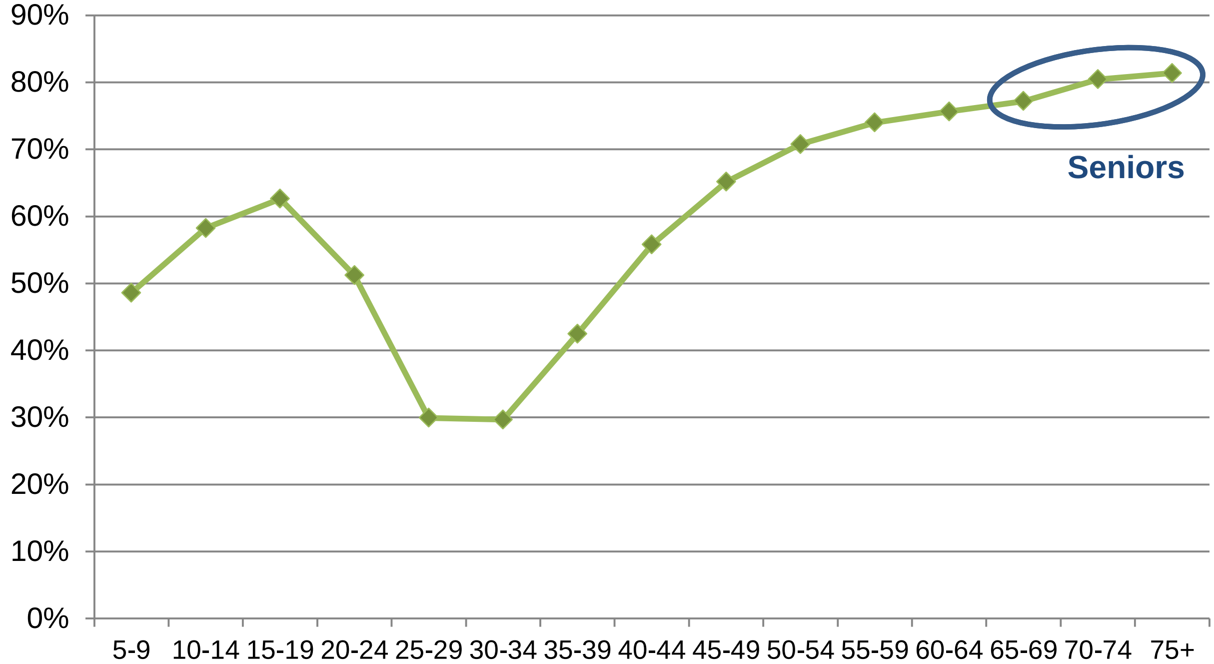
Most seniors prefer to age in place. Consequently, this mobility pattern will have a significant impact on housing demands and requirements.

For example, there are more seniors choosing apartments. In part, this may be because the residence is on a single floor, and requires less upkeep than a house.

Some of the current housing amenities may not be suitable as seniors age. There will be increasing demands for modifications and adaptations within the housing units to accommodate the changing needs such as access ramps or wheelchair-accessible bathrooms.

Within a community, demand for social and community services for seniors will also increase.

Figure 3.4 – Proportion of non-movers* by age groups, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Housing Affordability

In a national research study[7], housing has been identified as one of the key issues affecting seniors' quality of life. Some of the housing characteristics include: tenure (homeownership), dwelling types and affordability.

The proportion of total income spent by each household on shelter is generally accepted as a measure of housing affordability. For tenant households, shelter costs include rental payments and utilities (electricity, fuels, water and other municipal services). For households that own, shelter costs include mortgage payments, property taxes, condominium fees and utilities.

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the standard for affordable shelter cost is 30% of gross household income. In Ontario, about 45% and 21% of tenant and owner households had housing costs above the 30% threshold respectively.

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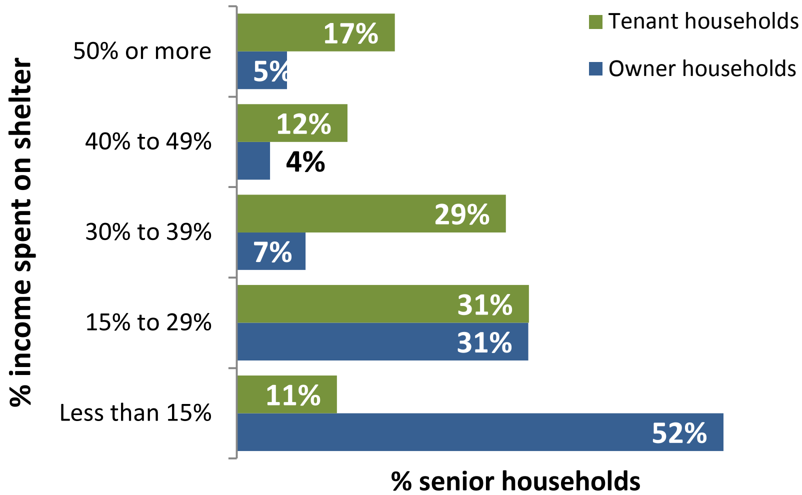
[7] Bryant, T., Brown, I., Cogen, T., Dallaire, C., Laforest, S., McGowan, P., Raphael, D., Richard, L., Thompson, L., Young, J., (2004), What do Canadian seniors say supports their quality of life? Findings from a national participatory study, Canadian Journal of Public Health, Jul-Aug., 905(4): 299-303

Figure 3.5 – Proportion of income spent on shelter by senior tenant and owner household, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

For Ontario senior households, the corresponding percentages are 58% and 16% as shown in Figure 3.5. These percentages represent 120,000 owner and 138,000 tenant households. Over one in four senior households (26%) face housing affordability problems.

Over 8% (80,000 households) of all senior households spend 50% or more of their total income on shelter. Senior tenant households are three times more likely to spend 50% or more of their income on shelter than their owner counterparts.

Over 70% of this group of senior households are one person households. After spending half or more of their income on shelter, there is very little left for other essentials such as food, transportation, and clothing.

Knowledge of Official Language

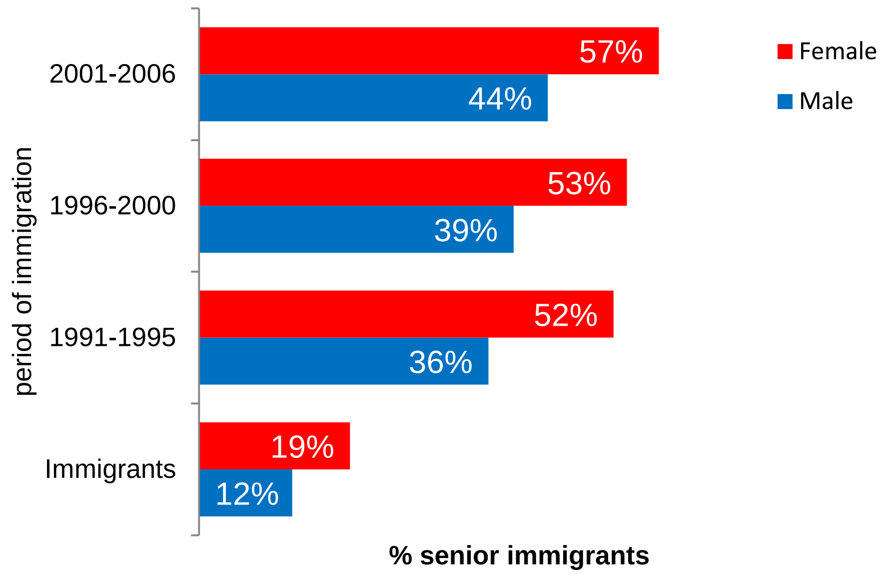
In 2006, about 6.5% of all seniors in Ontario could not speak neither English nor French compared to 2.2% for the total population. These percentages have not changed significantly since 2001.

The inability to speak one of the official languages can severely restrict a senior's involvement within his/her community. In some cases, they may not be able to communicate with their grandchildren if the latter speak only one of the official languages.

However, this percentage is much higher among immigrant seniors. About one in seven (16%) immigrant seniors cannot speak neither English nor French.

As expected, the ability for immigrant seniors to speak one or both official language increases as their residence in Canada lengthens. However, nearly half of those who migrated to Canada in the last 15 years are not able to speak English or French (Figure 3.6). Female senior immigrants fared worse than their male counterparts.

Figure 3.6 – Knowledge of neither English nor French among senior population by period of immigration and by sex, Ontario, 2006



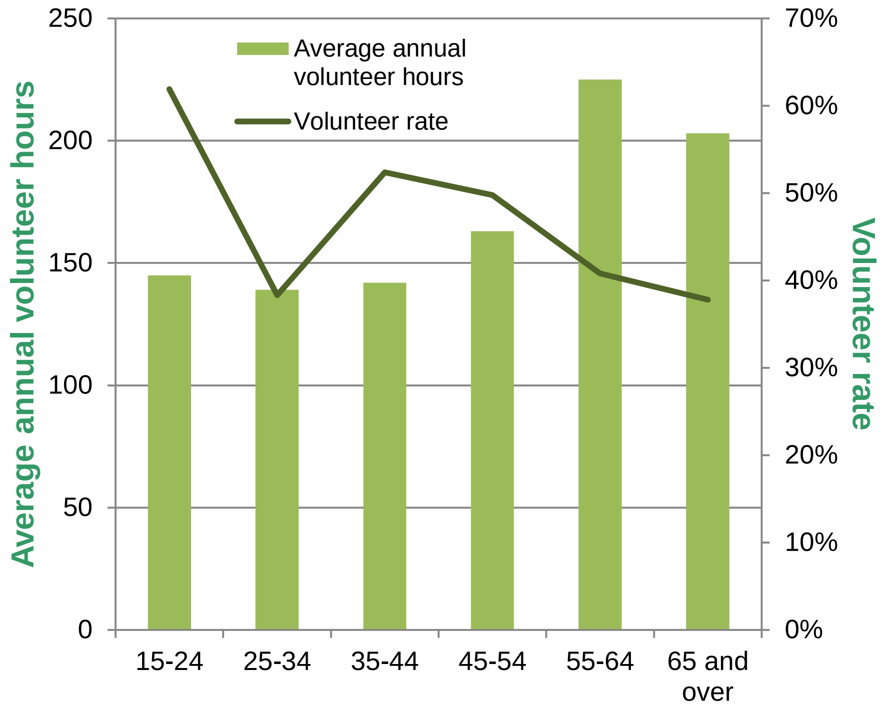
Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Volunteering

Many seniors stay active by volunteering in their communities. According to the latest Canada Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (2007) in Ontario, over 620,000 seniors, or 38% of seniors volunteer their time through a charitable or nonprofit organization.

Although the volunteer rate of seniors is the lowest among the various age groups, senior volunteers contribute the second most amount of time (Figure 3.7). They volunteered on average over 200 hours in 2007 compared to 237 hours in 2004.

Figure 3.7 - Volunteer rate and average volunteer hours by age groups, Ontario, 2007



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2007

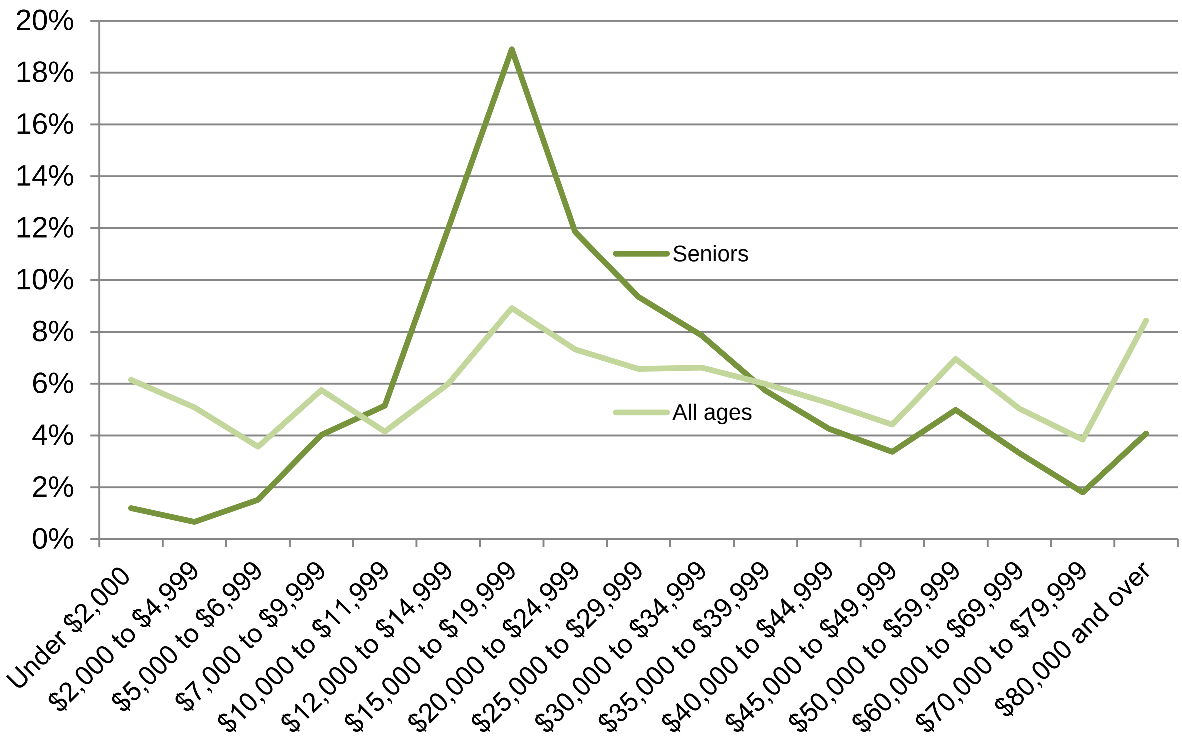
In Ontario, senior volunteers collectively contributed over 122 million hours in the 12 month reference period (September-December 2006 to September-December 2007). The number of volunteer hours when converted into employment is equivalent to 64,000 full-time year-round jobs (assuming 40 hours of work per week for 48 weeks).

Income

Although the 2005 median income of seniors in Ontario is about 17% lower than that of the total population (Figure 3.8), it has increased by about 10% since 2000 (not inflation-adjusted). In the same period, the median income for all individuals decreased marginally by about 2% (not inflation-adjusted).

Median income is the dollar amount which divides the population into two halves; the incomes of the first half are below the median, while those of the second half are above the median. It is less sensitive to extremely low or high income values which are included in the calculation of average income.

Figure 3.8 - Proportion of senior and total population by income groups, Ontario, 2005



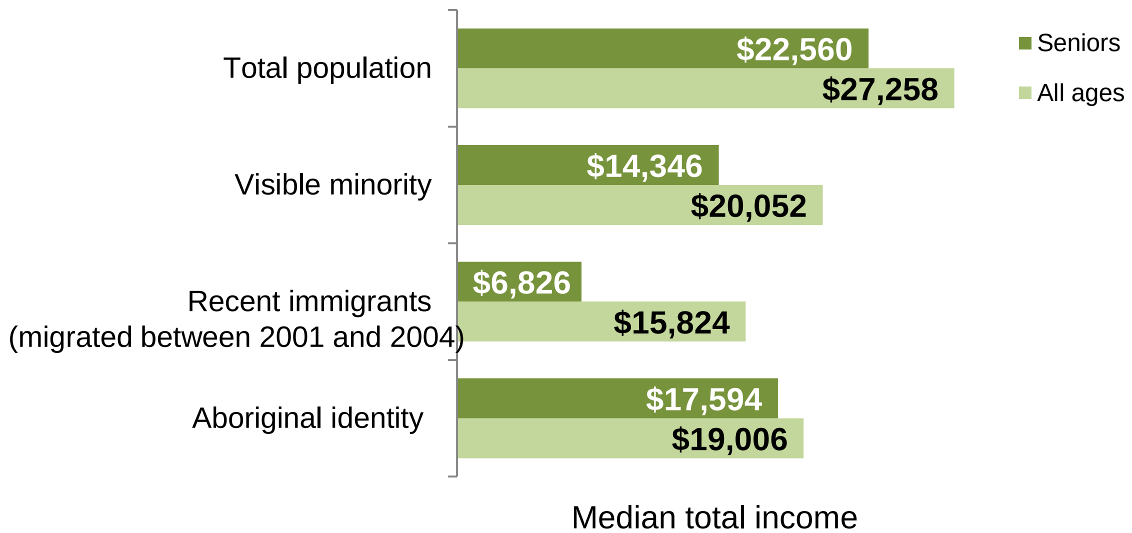
Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

In comparison with the total population, there are smaller proportions of seniors in both the lowest and highest income groups (Figure 3.8). For example, less than 2% of seniors belong to the income group under $2,000 compared to 6% of the total population. About 4% of seniors are in the income group earning $80,000 and over compared to over 8% for the total population. About one in five (19%) seniors belonged to the income group between $15,000 to $19,999.

The age differential in median income is also evident in three population subgroups (visible minority, recent immigrants and Aboriginal identity population). Within the recent immigrant population, the median income of seniors represents less than half (43%) of the income made by recent immigrants in all age groups. Visible minority seniors' income is about 20% less. As shown in Figure 3.9, the age differential in income is least within the Aboriginal Identity population. Aboriginal seniors' income is only 8% lower.

The gender difference in individual income also exists within the senior population. The senior female-male income ratio is about 63%. That is, for every dollar made by male seniors, female seniors made about 63 cents. This gender differential is very similar to that for all ages.

Figure 3.9 - Median total income of seniors by selected population groups, Ontario, 2005

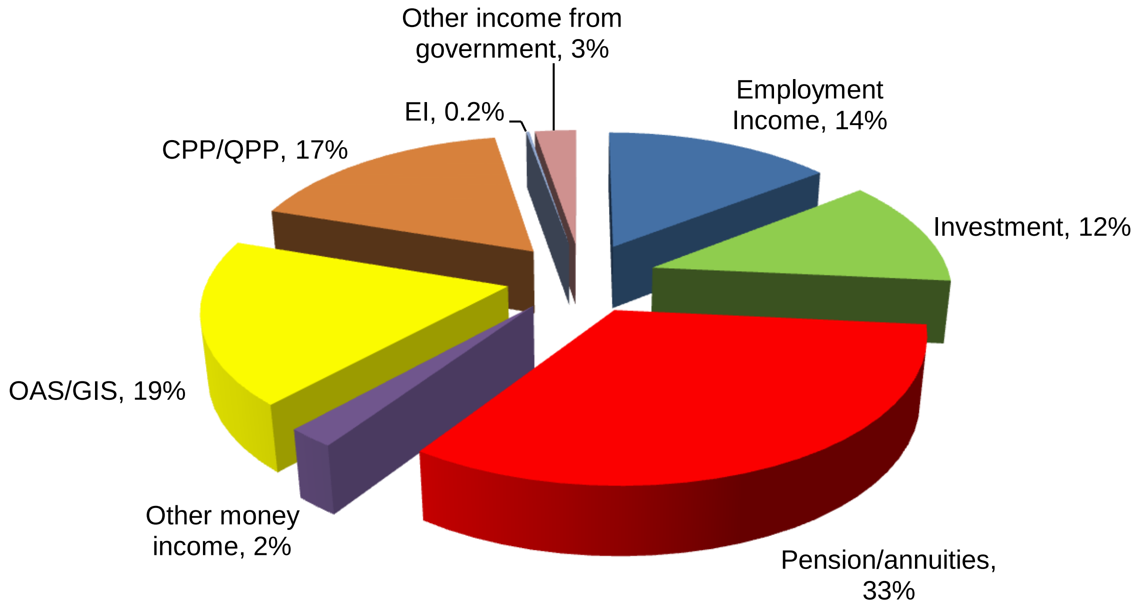


Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Sources of Income

As expected, income sources for seniors are different than those for all ages. Most noticeably, employment income (wages, salaries, commissions) which represents about 90% of all incomes for the general population accounts for about 14% of the income for seniors. (Figure 3.10)

Figure 3.10 – Sources of income for seniors, Ontario, 2005

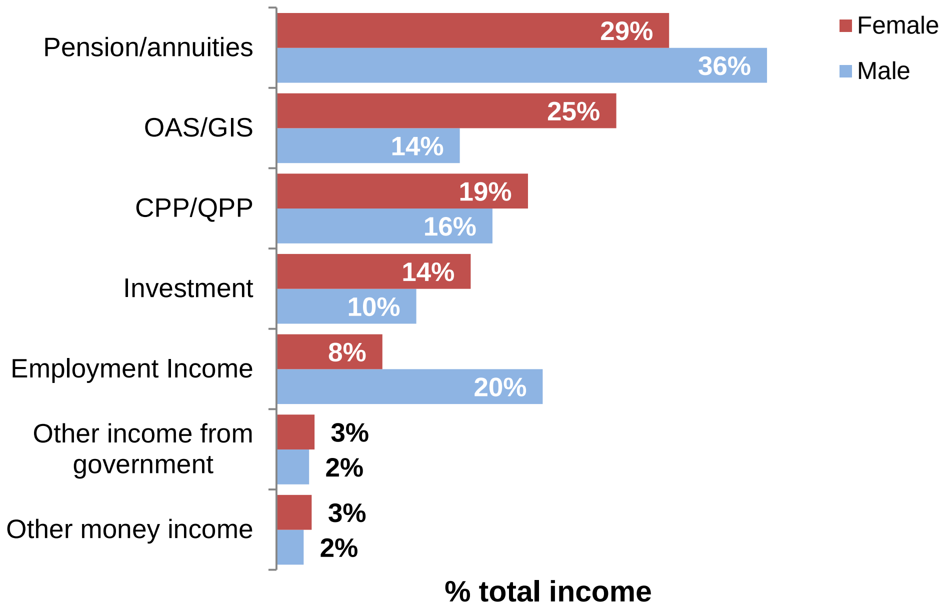


Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Government transfers which include Canada/Quebec Pension Plan (CPP/QPP) benefits and Old Age Security (OAS) pensions and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and other income from government represent almost 40% of seniors' total income. About one-third (33%) of seniors' income comes from retirement pensions, superannuation and annuities. Another 12% comes from investment income.

As shown in Figure 3.11, female seniors rely more on government transfers than their male peers. About 47% of their incomes comes from CPP/QPP, OAS and GIS. One-fifth of the income for male seniors comes from employment compared to 8% for female seniors.

Figure 3.11 – Sources of income for seniors by sex, Ontario, 2005



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Low Income

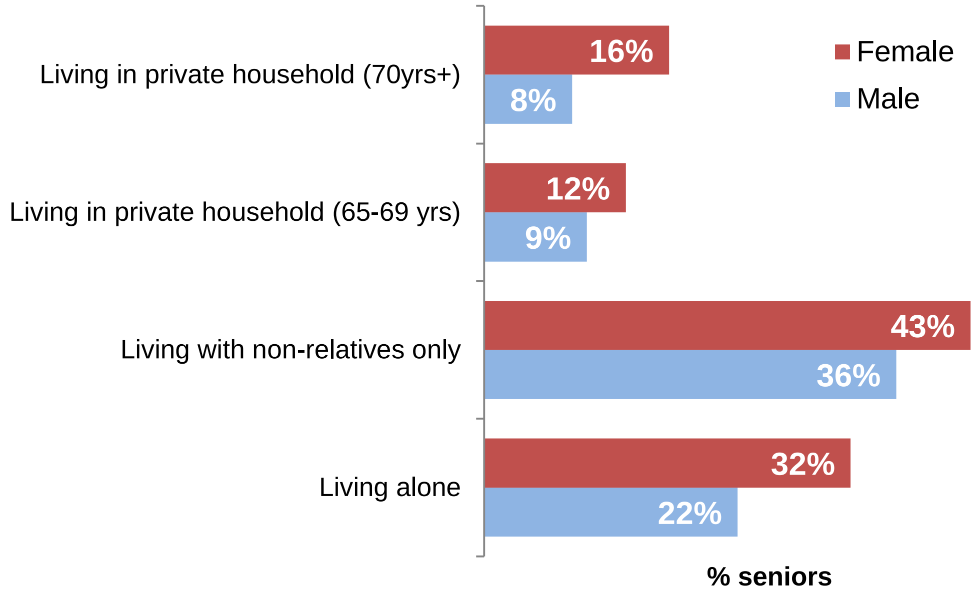
The Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) measurement established by Statistics Canada is a widely recognized approach to estimating the low income threshold below which a family or individual will likely spend 20% or more than the average on food, shelter and clothing. The LICO is Canada's most common relative measure of poverty. When researchers or the media refer to "poverty lines" or "incidence of poverty", they are generally referring to the LICO measure.

In 2005, about 12% of the seniors (over 180,000 seniors) in Ontario lived in low income compared to about 15% for the general population.

There is a higher proportion of low income seniors aged 70 and over than those between 65 and 69 years of age (Figure 3.12). Also, female seniors were more likely to live with low income than their male peers.

The difference in prevalence of low income also reflects seniors' living arrangements. Again, female seniors fared worse than their male counterparts. For example, over 40% of female seniors living with non-relatives (e.g. friends) lived in low income.

Figure 3.12 – Living arrangement of low income seniors by sex, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

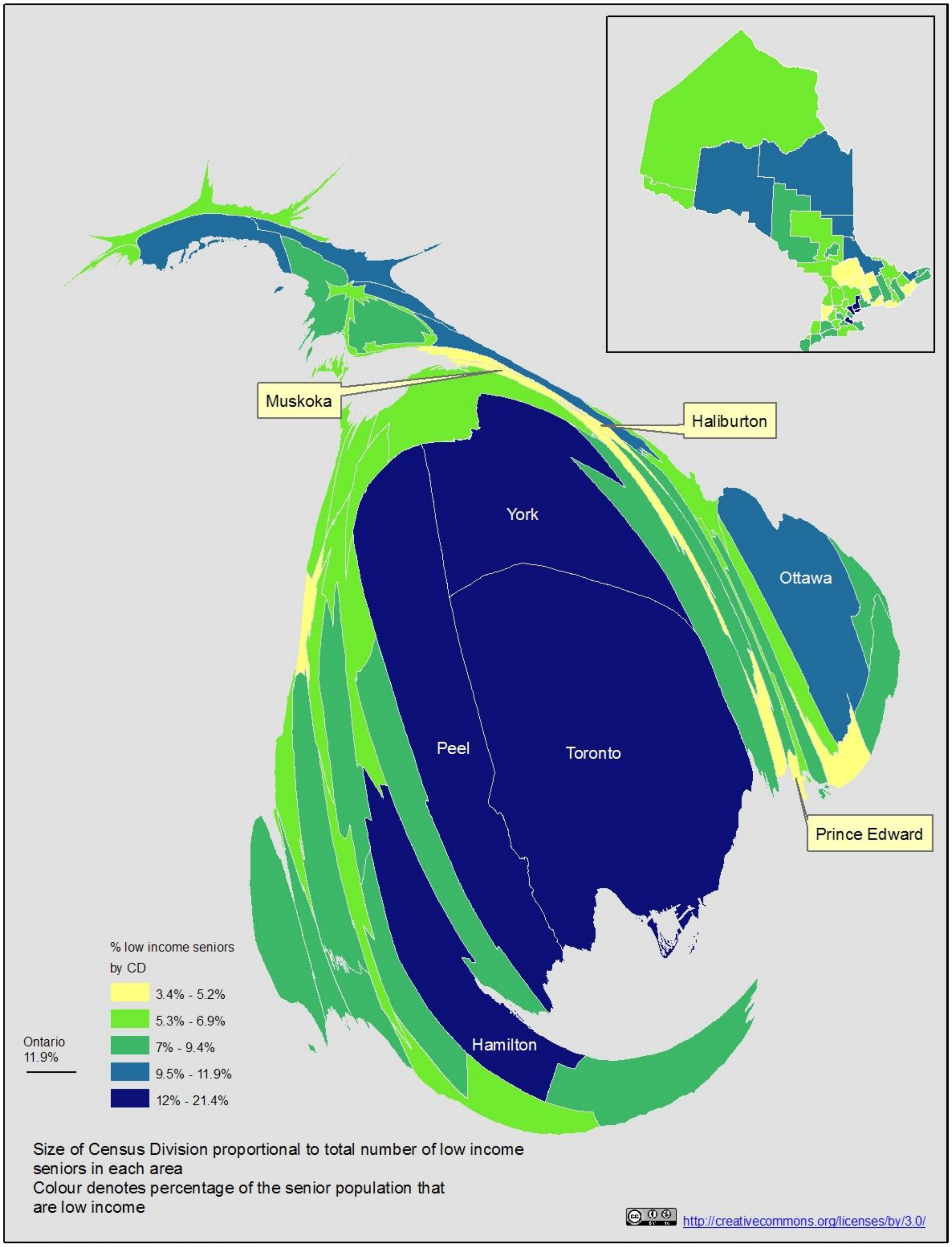
The low income senior population also has a characteristic geographic distribution pattern at the CD level. As shown in Map 3.3, a majority of the CDs had a prevalence of low income seniors below the provincial average of 11.9%. The size of the area represents the size of the low income senior population. The colour scheme shows the percentage of low income seniors.

There are four CDs (Toronto, York, Hamilton and Peel) above the provincial average. The CDs with a large number of low income seniors also have the highest percentage of seniors. Ottawa is at the provincial average. Collectively, they account for over 60% of all of the low income seniors in Ontario.

The City of Toronto which has over 20% of the Ontario's senior population is home to about 40% of Ontario's low income seniors. One in five seniors in Toronto lives in low income.

On the other hand, there are CDs with a relatively low prevalence of low income seniors. For example, each of the three CDs (Prince Edward, Haliburton and Muskoka) has a prevalence of low income among seniors below 4%. However, the number of seniors in those three areas is also low.

Map 3.3 - Low income seniors by Census Division, Ontario, 2005



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

Working Seniors

The number and proportion of Canadians still working after age 65 are growing. In 1996, over one-quarter of a million (255,200) seniors were employed, accounting for 7.7% of the senior population. In 2006, the number of working seniors reached 421,000 representing almost one in 10 seniors (9.7%).

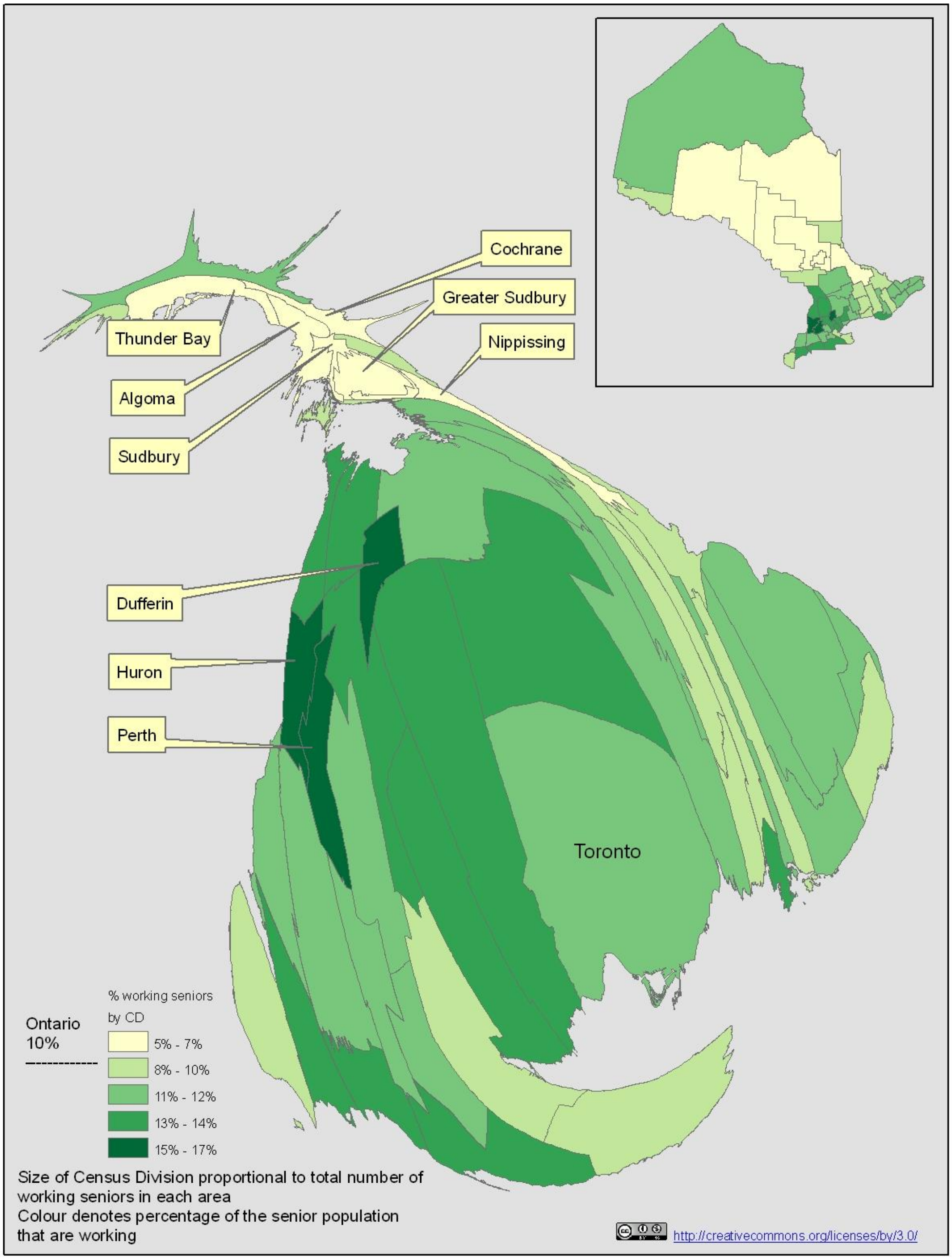
In Ontario, there were over 175,000 working seniors in 2006. The proportion of working seniors is slightly higher than the national average at about 10%. Almost two-thirds (65%) of the working seniors were men.

The proportion of working seniors varies among the CDs (Map 3.4). It ranges from 5% to 17%. The CDs with the lowest proportion of working seniors are in northern Ontario. They include Sudbury District, Greater Sudbury, Cochrane, Nipissing, Algoma and Thunder Bay. Cochrane District has the lowest percentage, with only one in 20 of its seniors working.

The CDs with the highest proportion of working seniors are located in southern Ontario. Over 17% of the seniors living in Dufferin and Huron were still in the workforce. This may reflect the characteristics of the agricultural labour force of the communities.

The City of Toronto which accounts for over one-fifth (21%) of the seniors in Ontario has 10% of its seniors in the workforce.

Map 3.4 - Working seniors by Census Divisions, Ontario, 2006



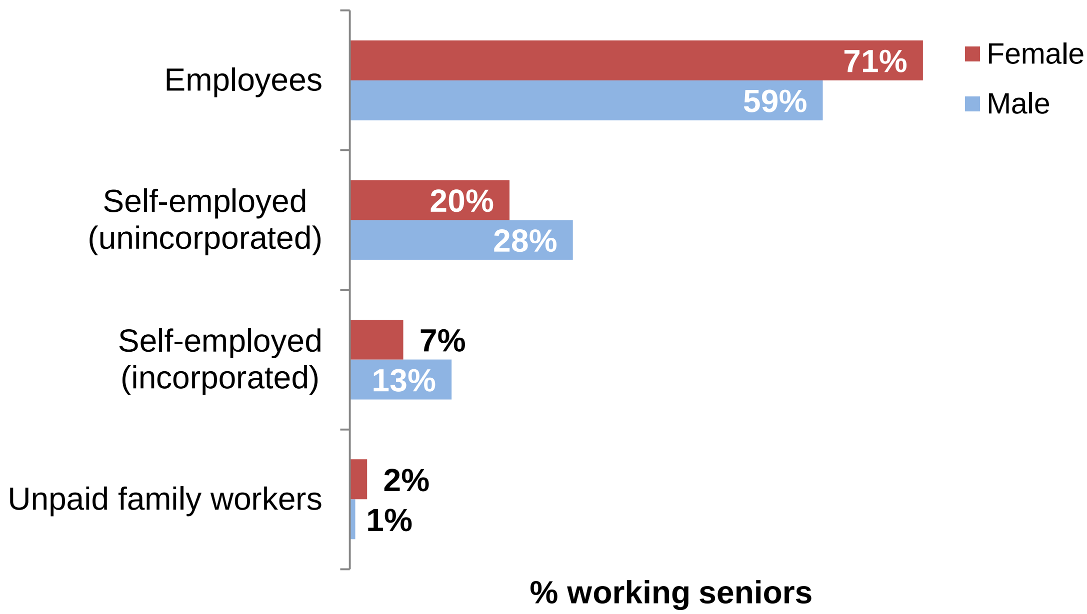
Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

The work arrangement of working seniors is different from the non-senior population. Almost nine in 10 of the non-senior workers (age 15 to 64) are employees. They work mainly for wages, salaries, commissions, tips, piece-rates, or payments “in kind”. Among working seniors, about 63% were employees. Over 70% of female working seniors worked for someone else.

As shown in Figure 3.13, over one-third (35%) of working seniors were self-employed, compared to 10% of the workers aged 15 to 64. About one-quarter of working seniors were working owners of unincorporated businesses. There is a higher proportion of self-employed male working seniors than their female counterparts.

Figure 3.13 – Work arrangement of working seniors by sex, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Slightly over half (52%) of working seniors worked mostly full time in 2005. They worked 30 hours or more per week. Over 60% of full-time working seniors worked the full year (49-52 weeks). On the other hand, over one-third (36%) of part-time working seniors worked the full year. They worked less than 30 hours weekly.

The average employment income for seniors in 2005 was $21,400. Male working seniors earned about $25,400 compared to $14,100 for their female counterparts. For those who worked full-year, full-time, the average employment income was about $53,400.

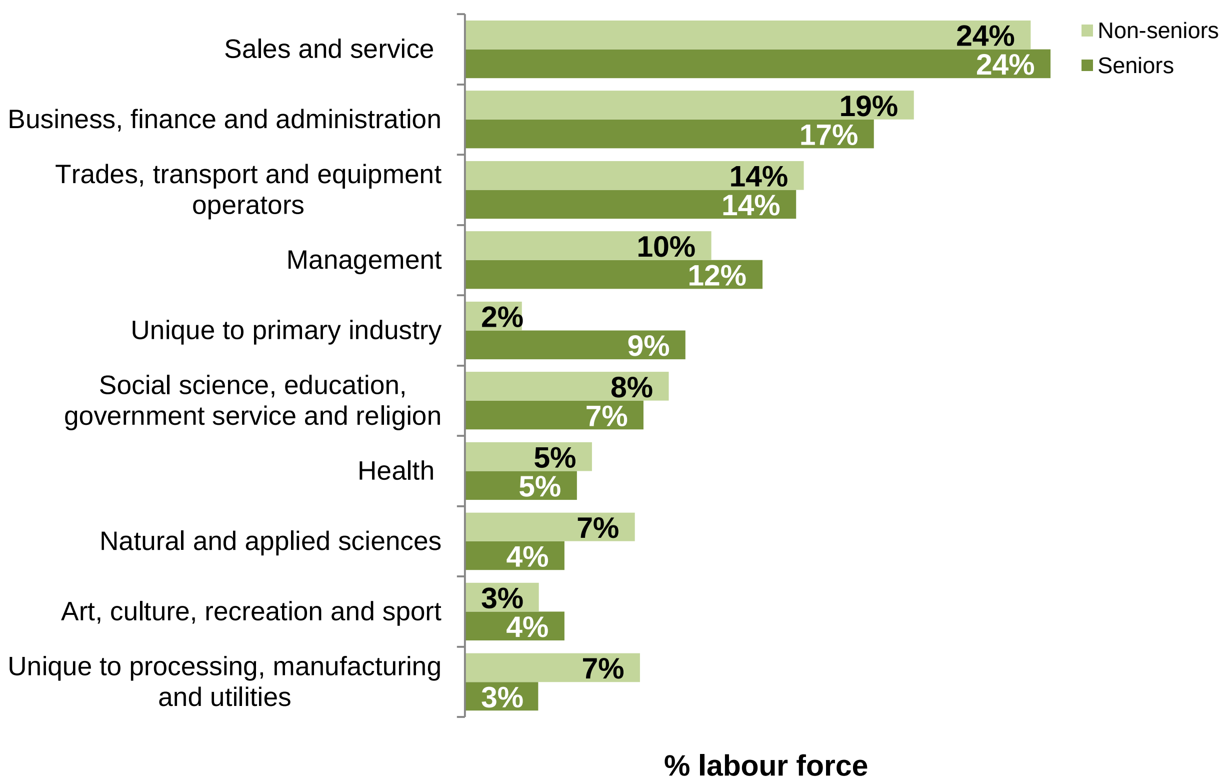
As shown in Figure 3.14, the occupational profile of working seniors is very similar to that of their non-senior counterparts.

The top occupation is sales and service. Close to one in four (24%) working seniors was in occupations such as retail sales, cashiers, insurance and real estate sales, homecare and support workers, cooks and chefs, and food and beverage service.

Two noticeable differences are the occupations unique to the primary industry and those unique to processing and manufacturing. Almost one in ten (9%) working seniors worked in occupations unique to the primary industry compared to only 2% of non-senior workers. A majority (88%) of working seniors in this occupation were involved in farming, livestock, landscape and horticulture, nursery and greenhouse operations.

On the other hand, about 7% of non-seniors were in the occupations unique to processing and manufacturing which include manufacturing, processing, machine operators, and assemblers in manufacturing. Only 3% of working seniors were in these occupations.

Figure 3.14 – Occupational profile of non-senior/senior population, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Health and Well-being

The health and well-being of seniors is vital to their ability to remain active and live independently. The 2008 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) provides an opportunity to learn about some of the latest health-related conditions of seniors in Ontario.

The CCHS is a cross-sectional survey that collects information related to health status, health care utilization and health determinants for the Canadian population. It has a large sample of respondents and is designed to provide reliable estimates at the national, provincial and sub-provincial level (e.g. health region/unit or combined health regions/units).

In Ontario, health data are available for Health Units which are made up of one or more CDs. For example, Sudbury District Health Unit includes three CDs: Greater Sudbury, Sudbury District and Manitoulin District.

Perceived Physical Health

In the survey, seniors were asked about their self-perceptions of their physical health, mental health and life stress. Perceived health refers to the perception of a person's health in general. It means not only the absence of disease or injury but also physical, mental and social well-being.

In 2008, almost 60% of the Ontario population aged 12 years and over reported perceiving their own health status as being either excellent or very good. A lower percentage of seniors reported a similar health status. On average, about 41% of the seniors reported that they enjoyed very good to excellent physical health compared to 37% in 2003.

The proportion of seniors with perceived good physical health varies among Health Units. Over half of the Health Units are above the provincial average of 41.4%. York Region Health Unit reported the lowest percentage of 30.5%. Over two-thirds of its seniors did not perceive their physical health as very good or excellent. On the other hand, over half (52.8%) of the seniors in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit reported excellent health status.

Perceived Mental Health

Perceived mental health provides a general indication of the population suffering from some form of mental disorder, mental or emotional problems, or distress, not necessarily reflected in perceived health.

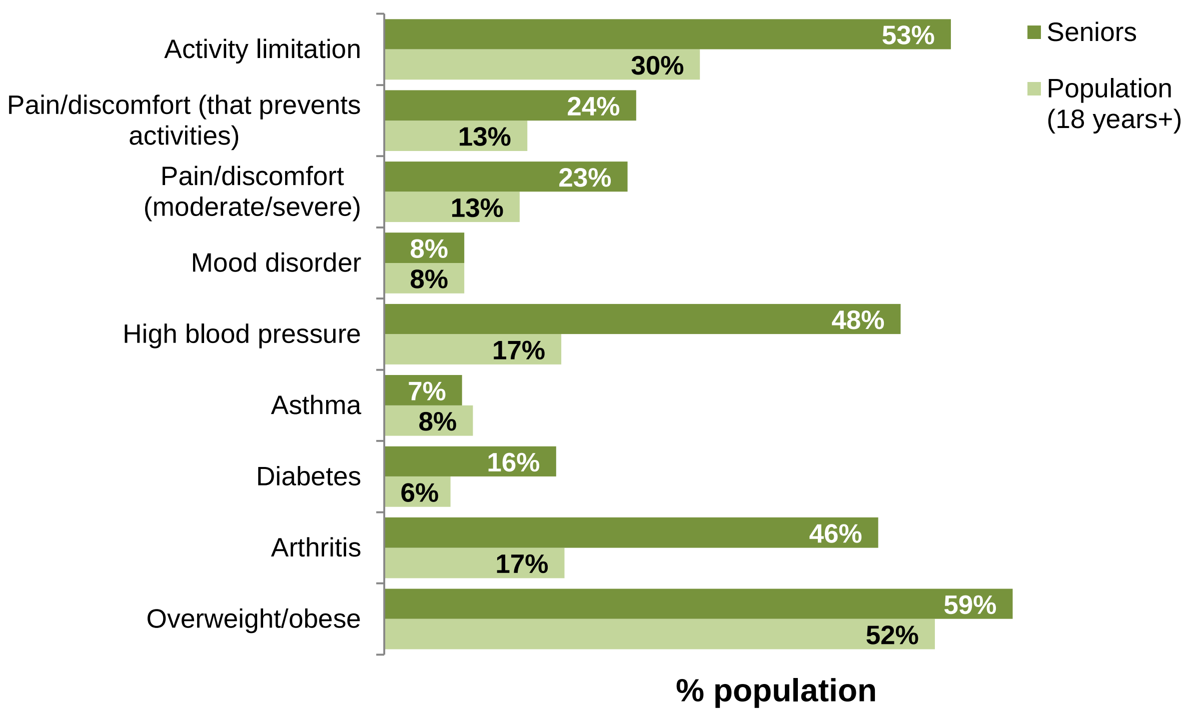
About 71% of the seniors reported very good or excellent perceived mental health compared to about 75% of the population aged 12 years and over. The difference between the two populations is significantly smaller than that for the perceived physical health status. In 2003, about 69% of the seniors reported very good or excellent mental health.

About 40% of the Health Units are above the provincial average of 71.5%. The lowest percentage is found in Timiskaming Health Unit where less than half (46.8%) of its seniors reported very good or excellent mental health. On the other hand, over 80% of the seniors in Brant County Health Unit reported excellent mental health status.

Health Conditions

In the 2008 CCHS, the top four health conditions faced by seniors were: overweight/obese, arthritis, high blood pressure and activity limitation (Figure 3.15)

Figure 3.15 – Top health conditions of seniors and general population, Ontario, 2008



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2008

The proportion of overweight/obese seniors has increased from 54% in 2003 to 59% in 2008. A person who has a BMI (Body Mass Index) between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight. Those with a BMI over 30 are obese. Research has found health risks for overweight seniors are not as high as young adults.

Slightly over half (52%) of the Health Units are above the provincial average of 58.9%.

Durham Region Health Unit has the lowest proportion (49.9%) of overweight/obese seniors. Almost 70% of the seniors in the City of Hamilton Health Unit are overweight/obese, the highest percentage among Health Units within Ontario.

The proportion of seniors diagnosed by a health professional as having high blood pressure has also increased from 44% in 2003 to 48% in 2008.

Activity limitation is a health condition which limits one’s selected activities (home, school, work and others) because of a physical condition, mental condition or health problem which has lasted or is expected to last 6 months or longer. The activity limitation rate for the population (12 years+) is about 29%. As expected, this health condition deteriorates with age. Over half (53%) of the seniors reported some sort of activity limitation. This percentage is lower than the 2003 rate of 57%.

Less than half (46%) of the seniors reported suffering from arthritis which includes rheumatoid arthritis (a chronic, systemic inflammatory disorder that may affect many tissues and organs, but principally attacks the joints) and osteoarthritis (degenerative joint disease) but excludes fibromyalgia (muscle and connective tissue pain). This rate is lower than that of 2003 (50%).

Conclusion

The aging of Ontario's population raises important questions for policy-makers and service providers. Will the supports be available to facilitate seniors aging in place? How do we address pension issues to ensure that every senior enjoys a decent quality of life in their retirement? What are the implications of the aging trend on the labour force? We are beginning to grapple with the challenges that the aging trend presents, but much more dialogue and planning is required to shape our programs and institutions to meet societal needs now and in the years to come.

Aging Population - Local Stories

Burlington: A Community's Path to an Age-Friendly City

The City of Burlington has the highest number (25,000+) and percentage (15%) of seniors among the local municipalities in Halton Region – over 46% of the region's seniors live in Burlington and the senior population is increasing rapidly.

On May 4th, 2009 Burlington City Council passed a resolution to "identify Burlington as an age-friendly city", adopting the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities paradigm. On June 15th, 2009 the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton (UWBGH) kicked off a series of four roundtables to explore further concerns that the growing and changing senior population of the City of Burlington is having difficulty meeting their basic needs and participating actively in society.

The overall theme of the roundtable was "health community" and focused on four areas (health economics, healthy housing, healthy aging and healthy community issues), all integral elements of Age-Friendly Cities. The roundtables took an asset building approach that sought to identify and map the assets in the community along with existing gaps.

Various sectors of the community, nonprofit service agencies, seniors, faith groups, and members of the business community were invited to participate in the process. An average of twenty-five people attended each roundtable session.

The umbrella recommendations flowing from the roundtable discussions include: establish a strong relationship between the work done by the UWBGH and the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Seniors related to Burlington as an Age-Friendly City; convene a community-based task force to develop and implement an assessment of the age-friendliness of the City; provide adequate funding to ensure seniors have an independent voice in the decision-making process; set as a principle to involve community agencies, to work together with a coordinated approach towards integrated service provision for Burlington seniors.

Peterborough: The Second Oldest CMA in Canada

Among the 33 CMAs (Census Metropolitan Areas), Peterborough CMA has the second highest proportion of seniors, second only to Kelowna CMA, British Columbia. When the Peterborough Social Planning Council completed the Peterborough Profile (this report documents the demographic and social changes in our community), the most significant growth occurred in the 85 plus age category.

In the city, the growth rate of seniors 85 years and older was 21.8%. It was even greater in the Peterborough County, with an increase of 29.5%, compared to the provincial rate of 27.8%. Nineteen percent of the total population of the city and county is over 65 years of age. This poses some serious implications for our community as we must plan for more supports, services and opportunities to help people to age in their own communities.

The City of Peterborough in partnership with the Peterborough Social Planning Council hosted the community's first Seniors Summit. The goal for the day was to provide a gathering for seniors, families and service providers to make plans to meet the challenges of the 'senior tsunami'. Over one hundred people participated in this forum and consultation event. The consultation asked participants to consider the following questions:
What is one immediate action that could be taken in the next year to support aging at home?
Identify one longer-term strategy that may take some planning and development and have significant impact on supporting aging at home.
Identify the organizations that may collaborate to achieve the action and strategy identified in question 1 and 2.

Key themes identified through this consultation were the planning and development of a system that has:

- Enhanced transportation
- Better co-ordination of services and a capacity to easily navigate the system
- Increased training for people supporting seniors in the community
- More geriatric specialty services
- Housing with support services
- Models of support that replicate care systems in other countries such as Denmark

As a community, we want to be proactive in building a physical and social infrastructure that accommodates the changing needs of seniors.

Waterloo Region: Aging with and into Disabilities – Colliding Trends

Waterloo Region has almost 80,000 people with some level of disability according to the 2006 Census. The trend away from institutionalization has resulted in more adults with disabilities living and growing older in community. This, coupled with the trend toward an aging population, can be expected to put a strain on our community's social support and social assistance not to mention our health care system. Those with years of lived disability experience are finding this to be a mixed blessing – on the one hand they have knowledge and expertise that can shape a community inclusive of all persons with disabilities but on the other hand, the realities of aging on top of a multitude of long-term challenges can take an unexpected toll on even the most passionate community advocate.

Waterloo Region has many community advocates who have worked over the years to improve life conditions for those living with a disability. For some this has been a lifelong reality as they have had to work to make progress for themselves and others who live with a disability. And progress has been made. The first Independent Living Centre was in Kitchener. Waterloo Region schools have been models for inclusion for many years. City-wide curb cuts and other physical accessibility features were adopted as standards for the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo at least a decade before the Ontario Disabilities Act was introduced. Many great strides for persons with disabilities were made in Waterloo Region thanks to these local leaders.

At a community consultation on Disabilities and Human Rights in 2007, it was noted that few younger advocates were coming up in the ranks. The leaders where getting older, some approaching retirement age. Many admitted to experiencing physical changes that affected their health and were finding themselves tiring out. They wanted to see the younger generation stepping up to take their place. This led to a series of meetings to discuss what might be done to change the situation.

Many local leaders had grown up in Kitchener-Waterloo; others moved here for schooling or work. It was a sobering realization in the early discussions that theirs was the first generation of adults with disabilities that had been permitted to grow old. It was not that long ago that people with disabilities had no choice but to live out their lives in institutions. Life expectancy sadly was limited and many did not reach old age.

There were two outcomes from these discussions: the formation of a Disabilities and Human Rights Group to encourage self and community advocacy amongst younger adults with a disability, and readiness to take part in a project that focused on what makes a Liveable Community for those who are aging with or into disabilities.

The Waterloo Region population is younger, on average, than the Ontario population (median of 36.4 compared to 39 years). More people are exhibiting activity limitations as they get older. This experience is backed up by statistics showing a positive correlation between aging and living with a disability. Sixty percent (60%) of the Waterloo Region population over 50 years has some level of activity limitation. Planning to meet the needs of our most vulnerable members, and increasingly large numbers of vulnerable seniors, is a priority now. Engaging those with direct lived experience to provide guidance from their knowledgeable vantage point may be the most effective strategy to ensure success.

Hamilton: What Happens to Schools When the Birth Rate is Declines…

Hamilton is experiencing a declining birth rate, a phenomenon seen in many parts of Ontario, and one of the major consequences has been declining enrolment in schools. In the recent past, enrolment in Hamilton public and Catholic schools was seeing small increases, but after peaking at just over 84,000 students in 2001-2002, there has been a drop of over 7,000 students in the 2008-2009 school year, even lower than 1997 levels.

Because school board funding is tied to the number of students registered, the most important outcome of this trend has been the closing of schools in Hamilton. Hamilton school boards have now 23 fewer elementary schools combined than in 2002, down to 149. Most of the schools have been closed in older, often lower income neighbourhoods. Suburban and generally more affluent areas have seen more construction of newer schools.

The school closings in Hamilton have a major impact in the neighbourhoods they were located in. Although children often benefit by attending larger schools, which have better facilities and programs and are often in a more modern building, the extra distance of students' daily commutes can have a negative impact on children and their families. In addition, the school's community development role and anchor for community activities has been lost when a school is closed. In Hamilton, some schools have been torn down completely while others have been sold to developers who have turned them into condominium housing. By law, schools must sell vacant schools and land at market prices to fund the construction of new schools, but recently Ontario changed the regulations to order schools to offer to sell their real estate first to public institutions (including other school boards, universities and colleges and the City) before private developers.

Community groups in one Hamilton neighbourhood, Keith, collaborated on a fundraising plan to purchase and renovate the Robert Land public school (closed in 2004) and turned it into a community centre, now named the Eva Rothwell Centre, which opened in 2007. This is one way that neighbourhoods can prevent the loss of community assets when school boards make decisions that they cannot otherwise control. As the headline in the Hamilton Spectator summarized "Old school gets new life, new hope". But it is not an easy path, as finding funding for the on-going operations of the new community centre remains a challenge for the neighbourhood.

Chapter 4 - Economy and Recession

Introduction

In late 2008 the global economy entered into the worst economic recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Jurisdictions around the world have been greatly affected by this downturn in economic activity and the province of Ontario is certainly no exception to this. In fact, Ontario has been the hardest hit of all Canadian provinces, excepting Newfoundland and Labrador[8]. Between 2007 and 2009 the province experienced a 5.0% drop in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and lost over 200,000 jobs. Declining global economic conditions in the province have resulted in a nearly 50% drop in corporate profit, lowered business investments, rising unemployment, and lower incomes. However, despite the acute impact of current global economic conditions the provincial data suggests that the Ontario economy was in a state of transition for a number of years leading up to the 2008 global financial crisis. This may be most notably seen in the shifting provincial labour market, characterized for most of the last decade by dramatic losses in manufacturing sector jobs.

In this chapter we will review the available data on the provincial economy, both leading up to, and since the global economic recession officially began in 2008, as well as data that provides insight into the immediate and ongoing social impact of the recession on the province. We will conclude with a brief discussion of the potential long-term impacts of economic recession on individuals and communities in the hopes of providing some insight into potential interventions and proactive planning processes.

The Provincial Economy

Through 2008 and 2009 the economy in Ontario experienced significant decline, with a 5.0% drop in real GDP and the loss of 205,200 jobs. In fact, according to the Ontario Ministry of Finance, in 2009 the province's GDP decreased by 3.5% and the number of jobs in the province decreased by 2.6% (Figure 4.1). Recovery from this dramatic economic decline is expected to be slow, with the Ontario Ministry of Finance stating that "the pace of [economic] growth is expected to be gradual," and that GDP is "not expected to return to its pre-recession level until the second quarter of 2011." Labour market recovery will take more time, as employment levels tend to lag GDP growth during times of economic recovery, with the Ministry of Finance predicting that employment in Ontario will reach pre-recession levels in late 2011. In real terms, the province of Ontario lost over 170,000 jobs in 2009 and is only expected to make modest gains of about 40,000 jobs in 2010 (Figure 4.2).

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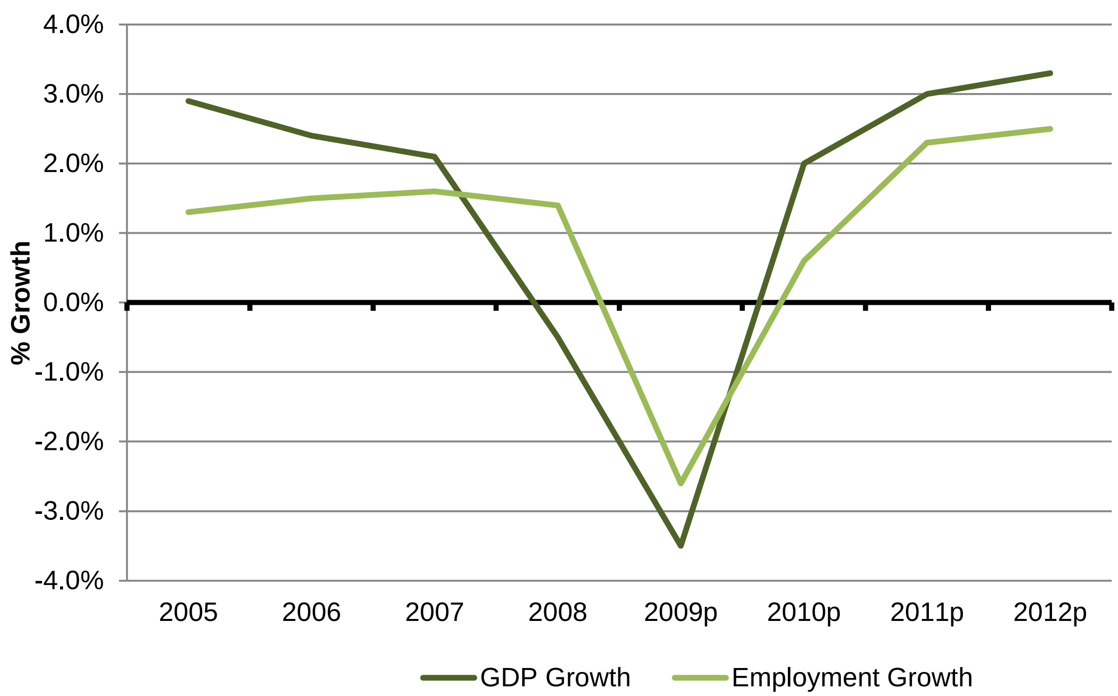
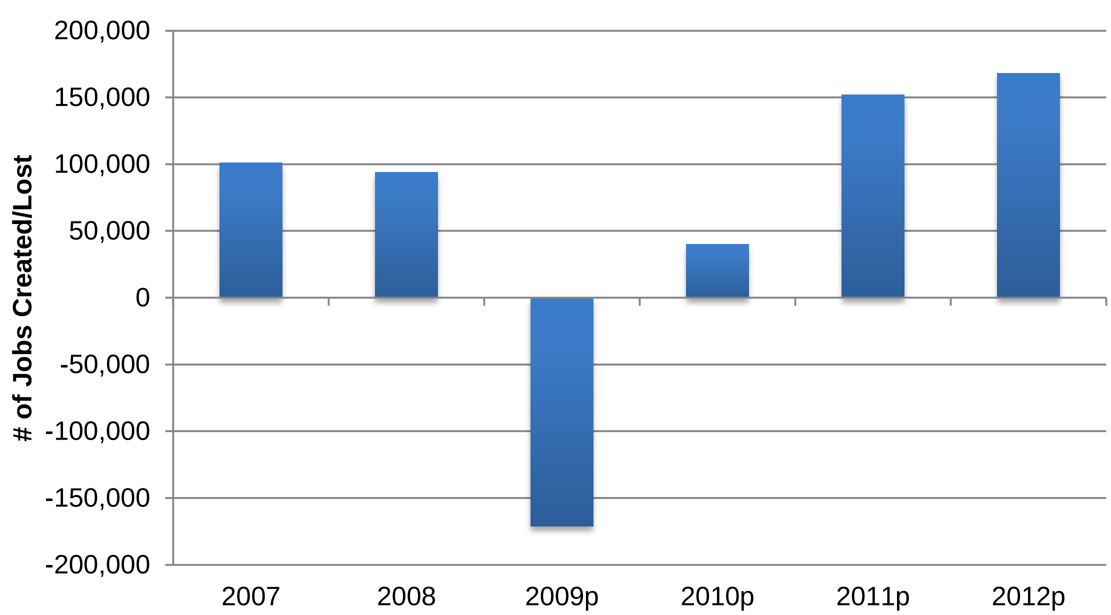
[8] Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2009, 2009 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, Available online at: www.fin.gov.on.ca

Figure 4.1 – Ontario's economic growth, 2005-2012 (predicted)



Data source: Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2009, *2009 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review*

Figure 4.2 - Ontario job creation, 2007-2012 (predicted)

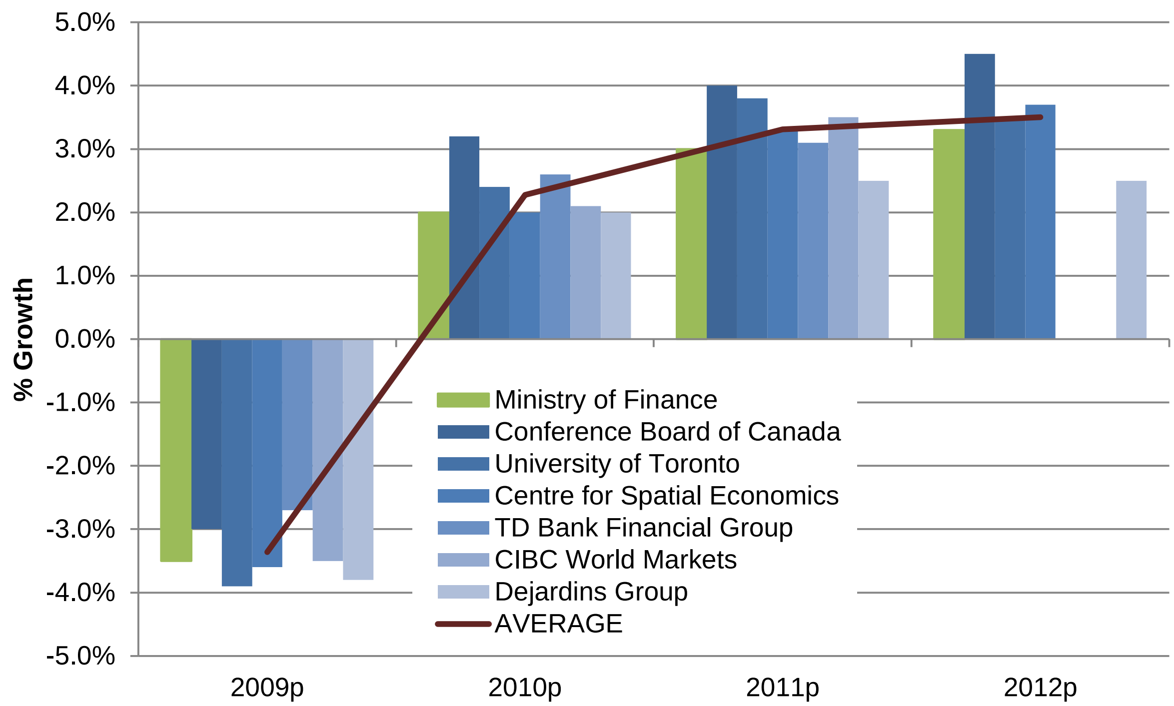


Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2009, *2009 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review.*

This slow growth is reflected in data from both the Ontario Ministry of Finance, as well as several private-sector forecasters. All have predicted that the provincial economy will start to grow slowly again in 2010 with an average anticipated increase in provincial GDP of 2.3% in 2010 (Figure 4.3). The most optimistic growth forecast comes from the Conference Board of Canada that predicts that the province's GDP will grow by 3.2% in 2010. The Ontario Ministry of Finance, along with the Centre for Spatial Economics and the Dejardins Group, are more conservative, predicting GDP growth of 2.0% in 2010.

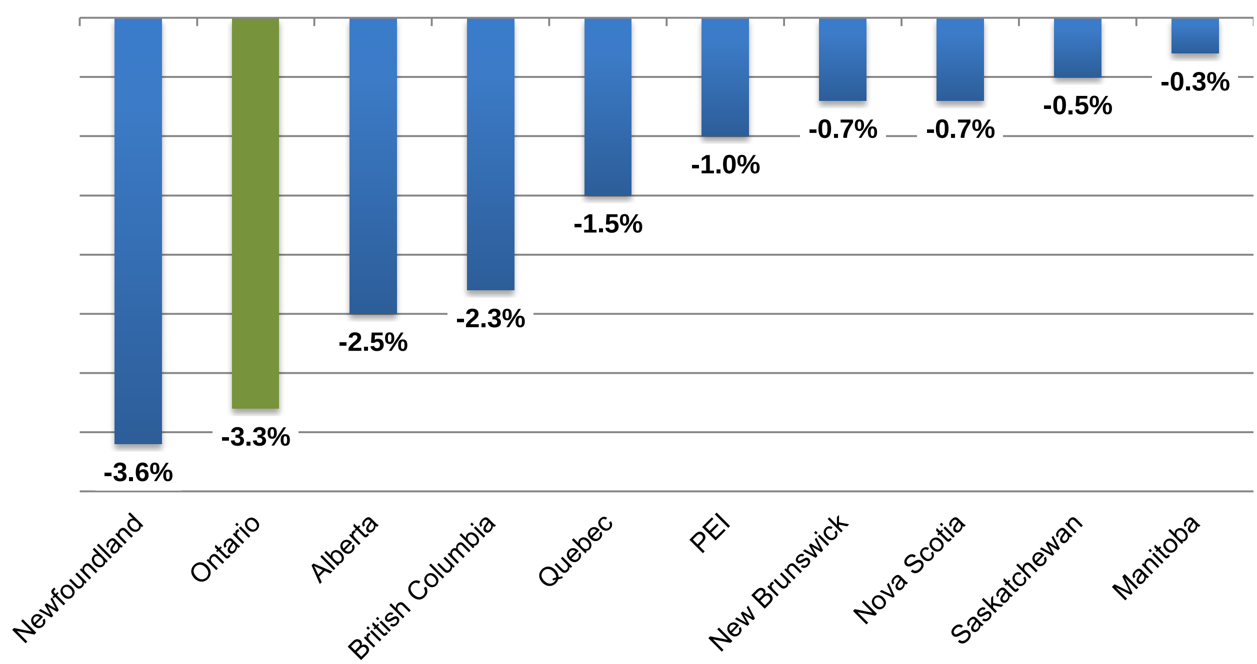
Although all Canadian provinces experienced contracting economies in 2009, Ontario was one of the worst hit, with only Newfoundland and Labrador having a greater decline in provincial GDP (Figure 4.4). This was also reflected in the change to provincial labour markets, with only Newfoundland and Labrador and British Columbia losing a higher proportion of jobs than Ontario (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.3 – Ontario's predicted GDP growth from various sources, 2009-2012



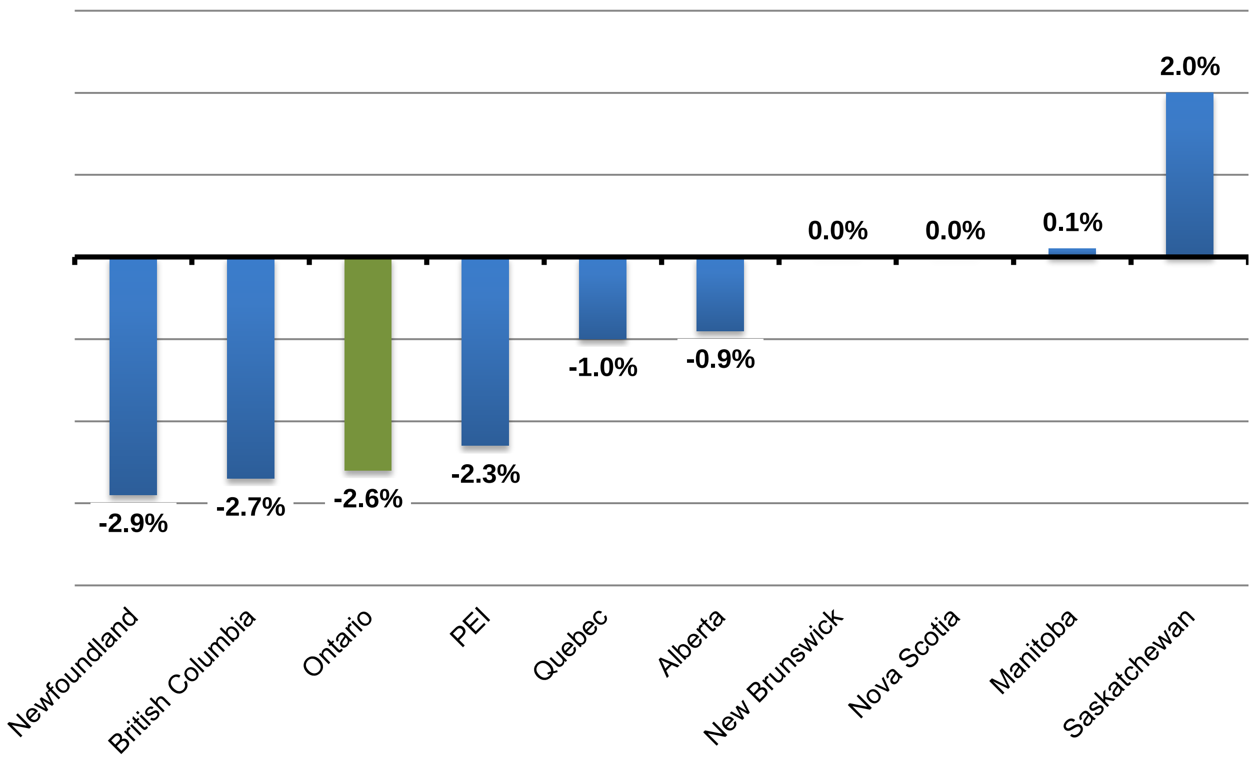
Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2009, *2009 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review*

Figure 4.4 – Predicted percent change in real GDP, Canadian provinces, 2008-2009



Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2009, *2009 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal*

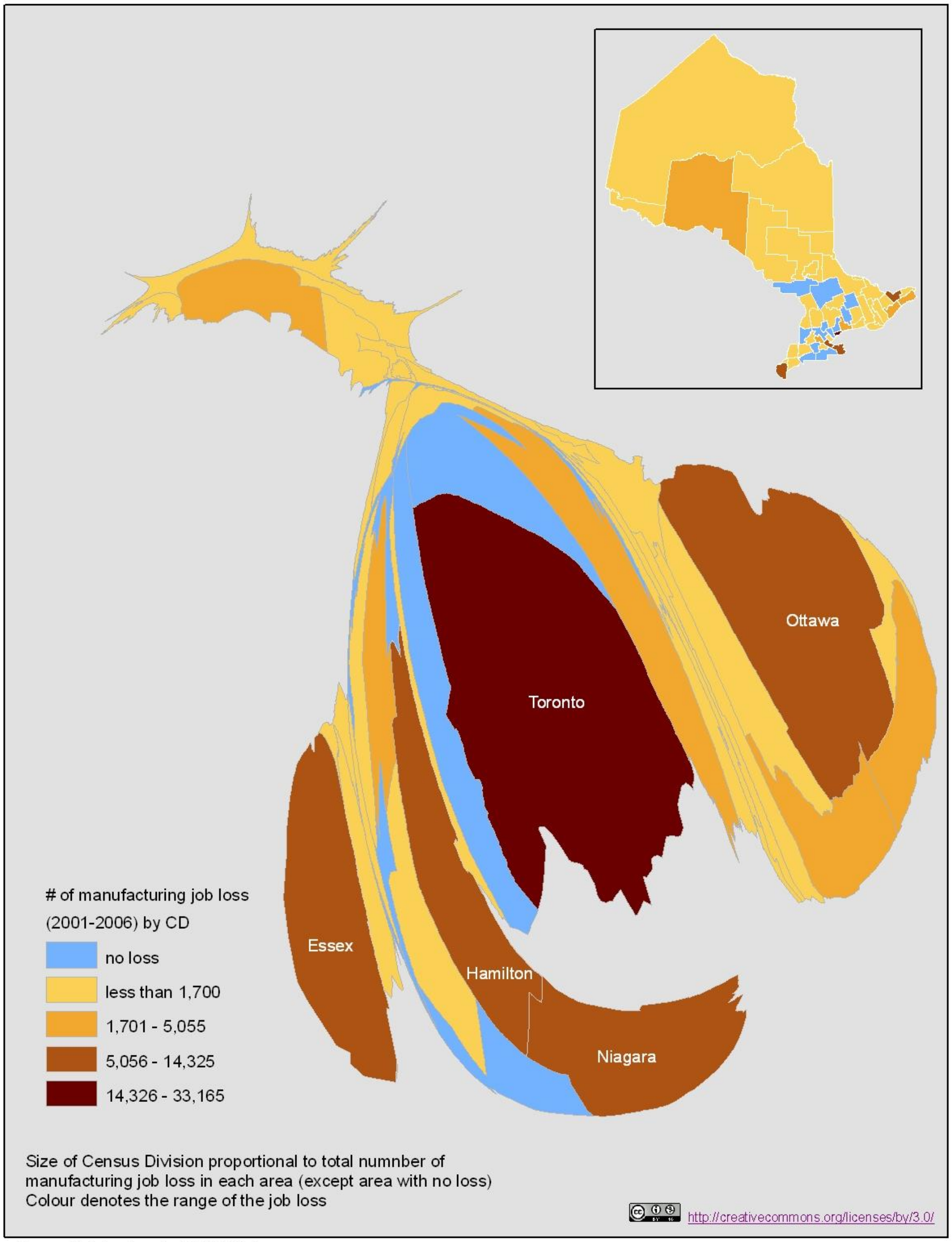
Figure 4.5 – Percent change in employment, Canadian provinces, 2009



Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2009, *2009 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review*.

Although the contraction in the provincial economy since 2008 has been very significant, having an acute impact on the provincial labour market and the livelihoods of a great many Ontarians, the province's economy has actually been in flux for most of the last decade. This is most poignantly seen in the shifting provincial labour market (Figure 4.6). Between 2001 and 2006, the province lost nearly 100,000 manufacturing jobs, largely in communities in the Greater Toronto Area, Hamilton and Niagara region, and southwestern and eastern Ontario (see Map 4.1).

Map 4.1 - Loss of manufacturing jobs, by Census Division, Ontario, 2001-2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001/2006 Censuses

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

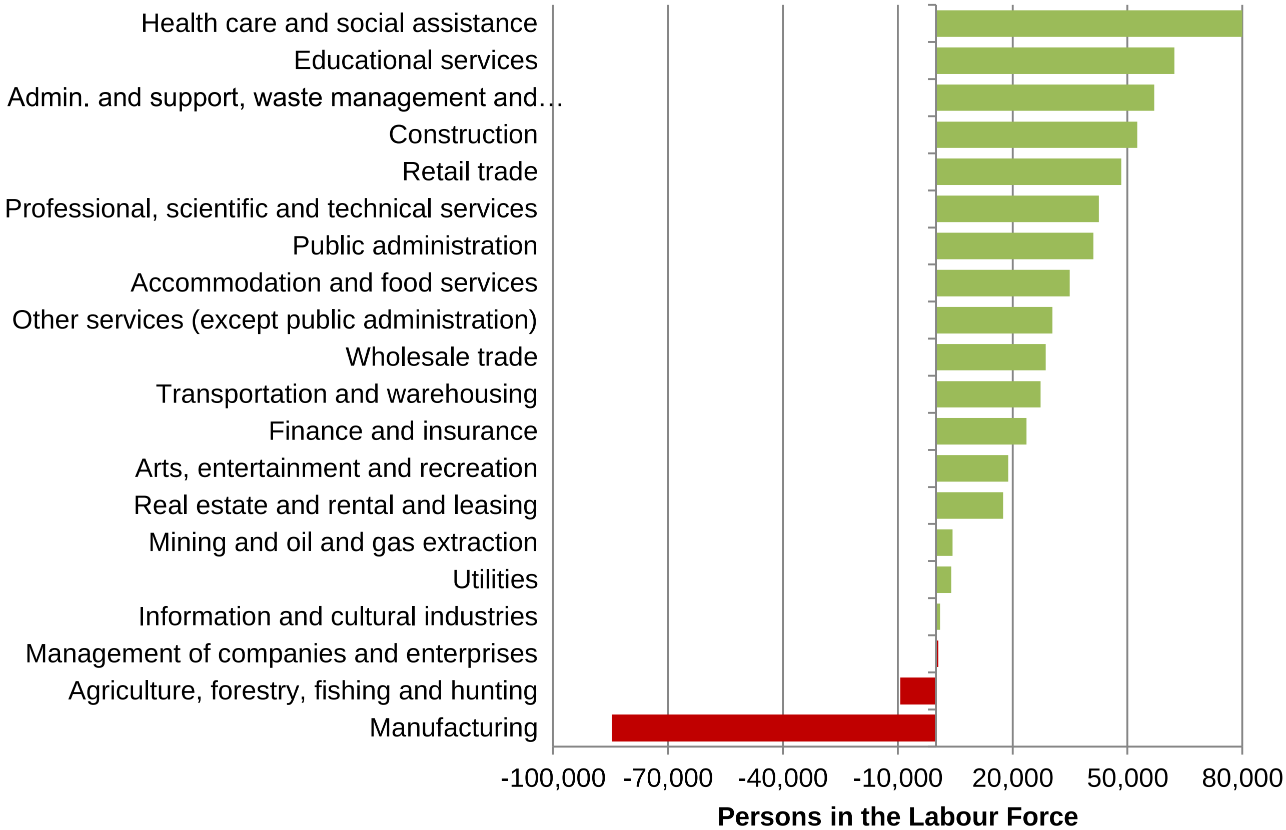
This decline has been compounded by the effects of the recession on North American communities. Manufacturing, especially the auto sector (a significant part of Ontario's economy), has been greatly impacted by declining demand in both Canada and the United States. In fact, auto manufacturing sales declined by 37% over the first eight months of 2009, compared to the same period in 2008[9]. As a result, Ontario's auto sector employment fell by 25.5% over the first eight months of 2009, compared to the same period in 2008.

Between 2001 and 2006, Ontario gained over nearly 375,000 jobs. Over 70,000 of these new jobs were in the health care sector and a further 55,000 were in educational services. Additional significant gains were made in professional, scientific and technical services and administrative support services. In this we can see the province shifting away from a primarily manufacturing-based economy to a more diverse economy with more knowledge-based and service-oriented jobs. The caveat is that there is a wide range of pay scales, benefits and security in these jobs. Many authors have pointed out that most new service sectors jobs are poorly paid and precarious (part-time and/or temporary) with none of the stability and economic security of the manufacturing jobs that have been lost.

These gains and losses were not equally distributed. Men lost the vast majority of manufacturing jobs while women made the majority of gains in health care and education (Figure 4.7). In fact, between 2001 and 2006 women in Ontario gained 46% more new jobs than men, with 178,000 new jobs created, compared to 120,000 new jobs filled by men.

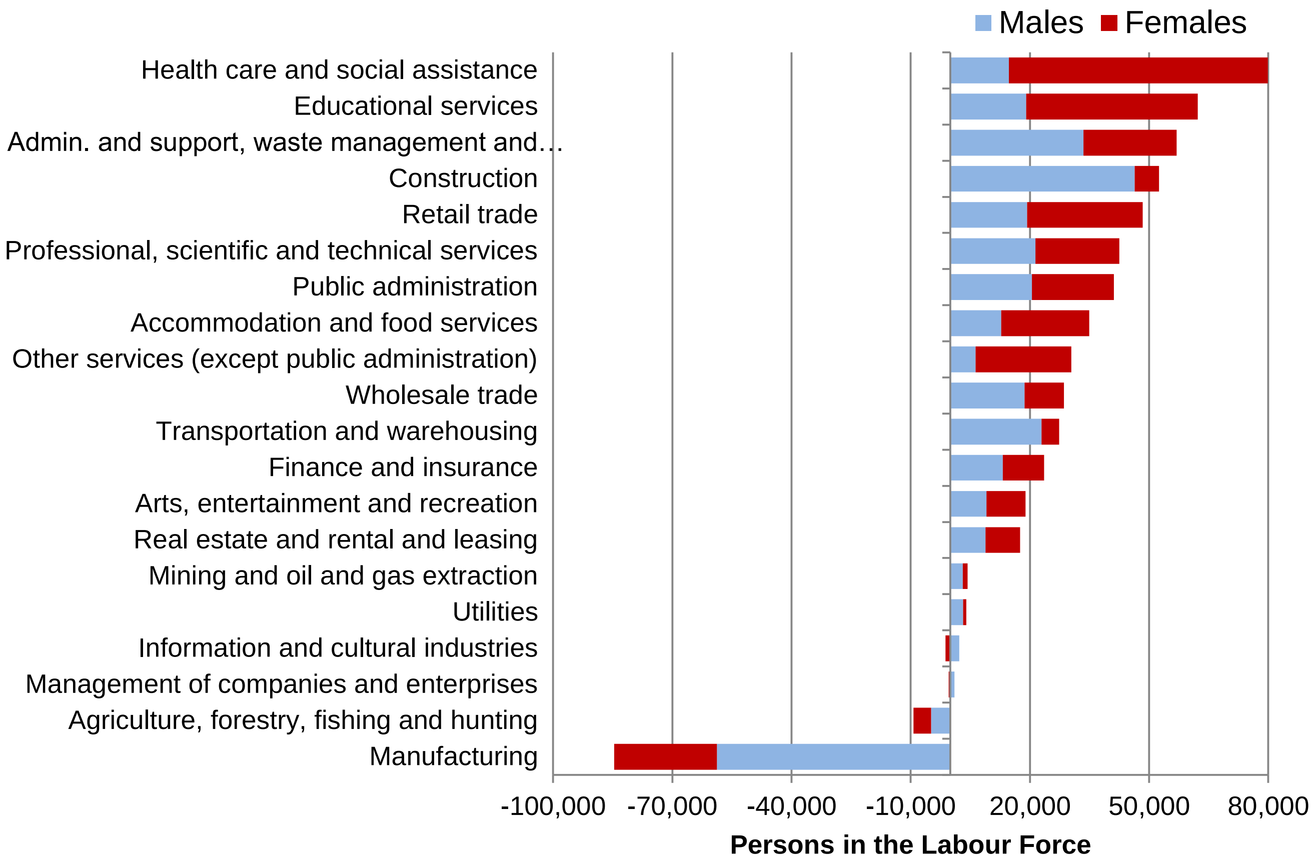
[9] Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2009, 2009 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, Available online at: www.fin.gov.on.ca, pp. 20

Figure 4.6 – Change in labour force by industry, Ontario, 2001-2006



Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 and 2006 Census

Figure 4.7 - Change in labour force by industry and sex, Ontario. 2001-2006



Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 and 2006 Census

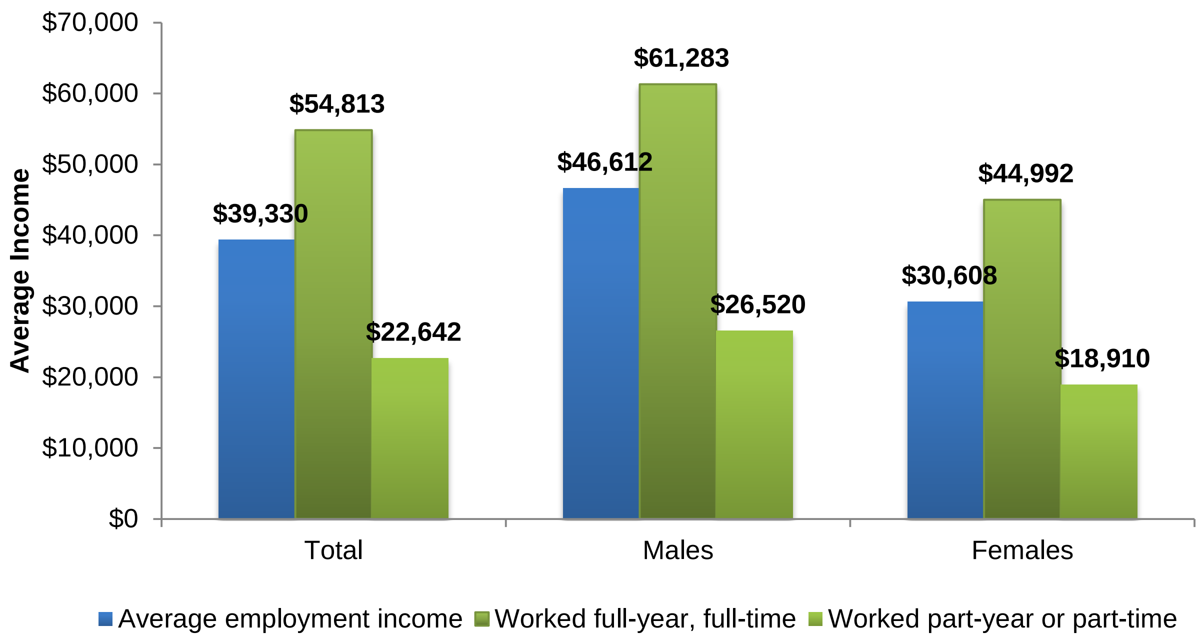
Income

The average employment income for an individual in Ontario in 2005 was $39,330. This was an increase of $4,643 from 2000. Men continue to have higher earnings than women, with the average male earnings 50% more than the average female earnings in Ontario in 2005 (Figure 4.8). This trend holds true across employment tenures, with men earning more in both full-time and part-time jobs. We see this gender difference clearly reflected in the distribution of income levels by sex (Figure 4.9) where a significantly higher proportion of men are in the highest income category as compared to women.

Further, female lone parent families earn significantly less than male lone parent families, with an average income of just over $40,000 in 2005 (Figure 4.10). In fact, on average, female lone parent families earn around $10,000 less than male lone parent families.

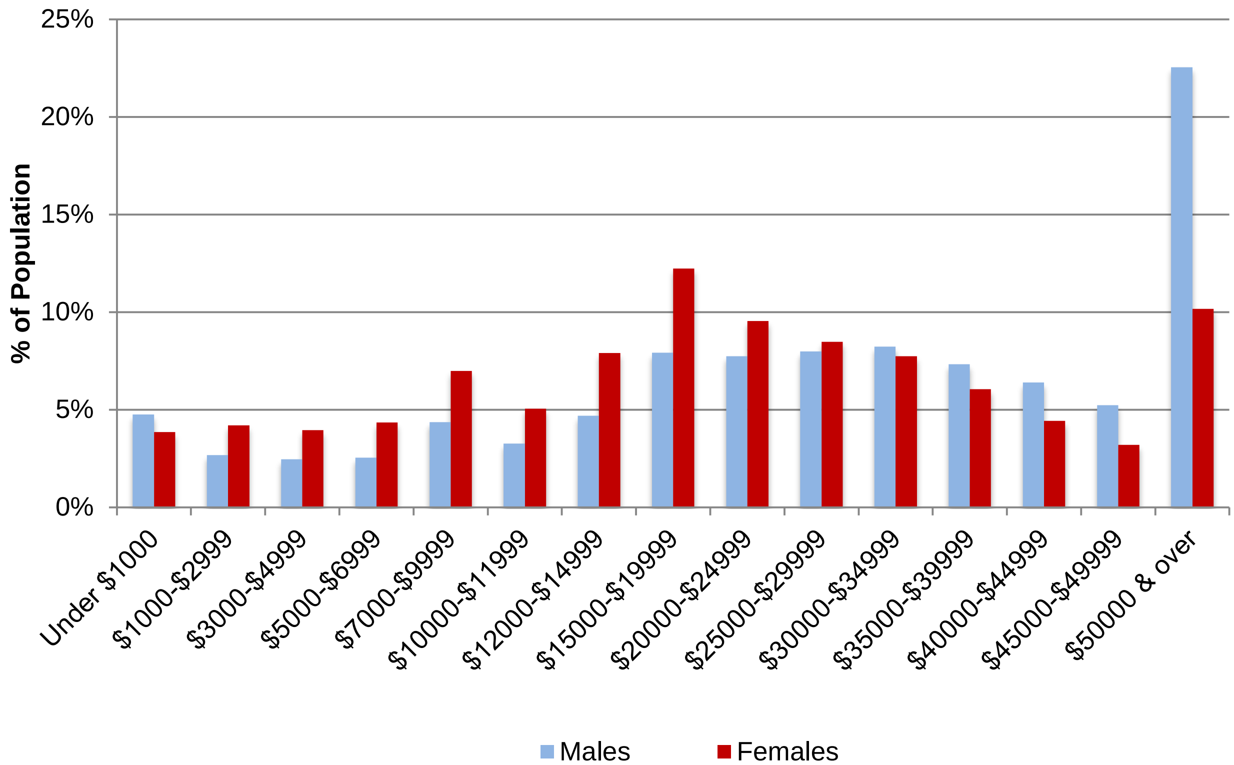
In 2009 there was a nearly 1% projected decrease in average personal incomes in Ontario and a 1.2% projected decrease in labour income (Figure 4.11). In 2010, the Ontario Ministry of Finance predicts modest increases in both of these levels, however, they also anticipate that income levels will not return to pre-recession levels in Ontario until 2012.

Figure 4.8 – Average employment income by employment tenure and sex, Ontario, 2005



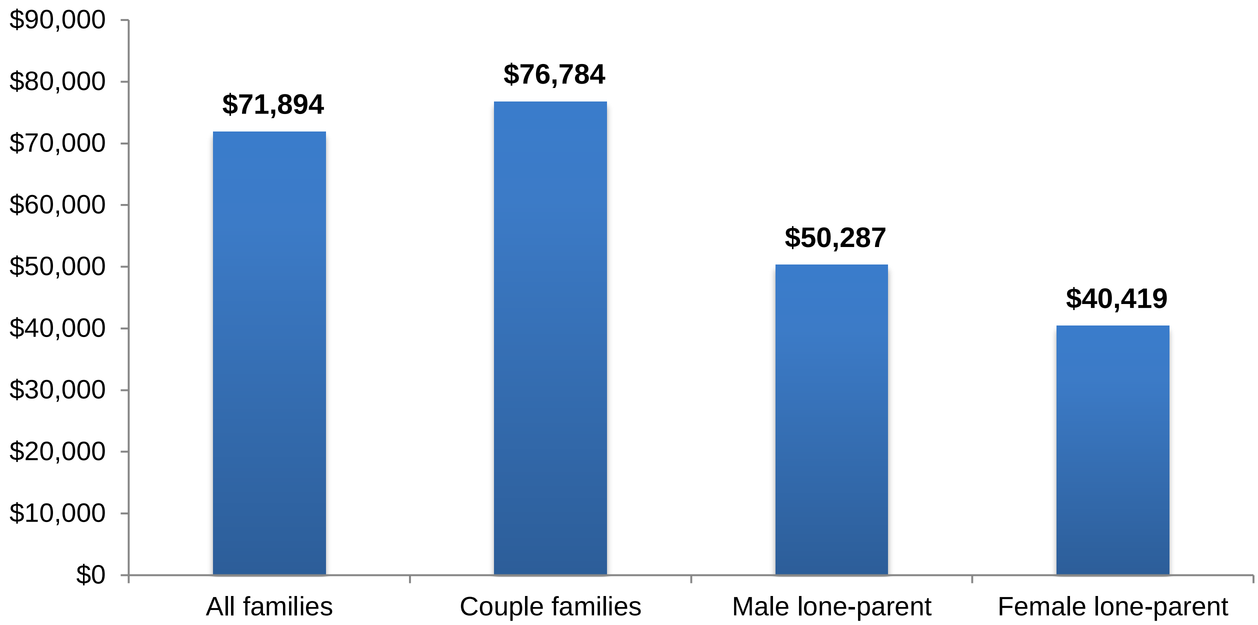
Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Figure 4.9 – Distribution of income levels by Sex, Ontario, 2005



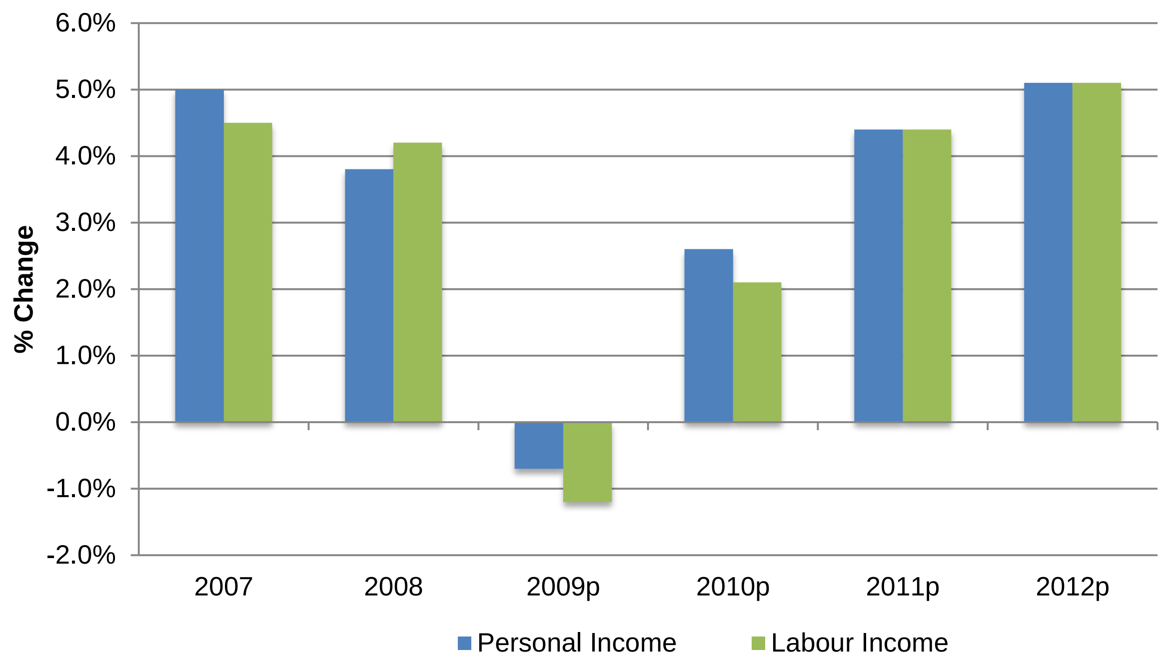
Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Figure 4.10 – Average after-tax family income by family type, Ontario, 2005



Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Figure 4.11 – Change in income levels, Ontario, 2007-2012 (projected)



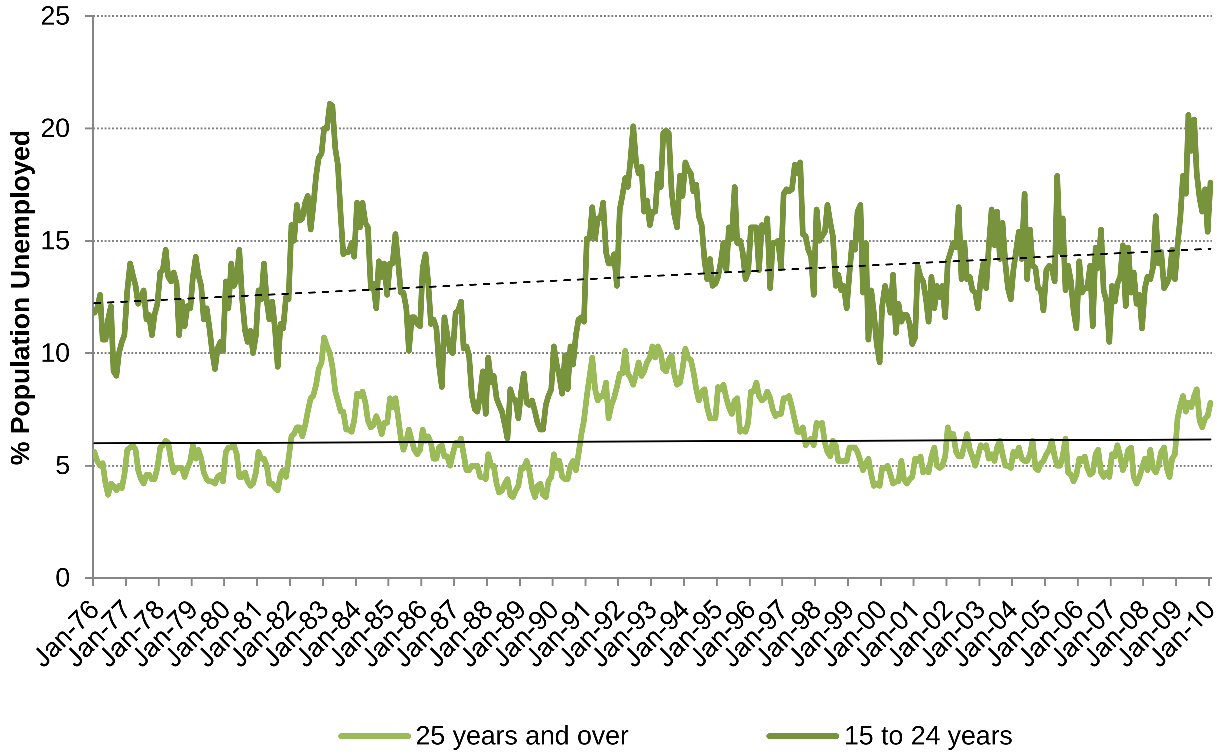
Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2009, *2009 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review.*

Unemployment and Employment Insurance

During times of economic recession, unemployment rates inevitably increase. The current spike in unemployment in Ontario remains consistent with levels reached in previous major recessions in the early 1980s and early 1990s (Figure 4.12). Youth (aged 15 – 24) unemployment over the period of 1976 to early 2010 has remained consistently higher than unemployment for those over the age of 25. However, over this period the unemployment rate for the overall population has averaged out over time, showing little overall increase, while the youth unemployment rate has steadily increased over the same period (Figure 4.12).

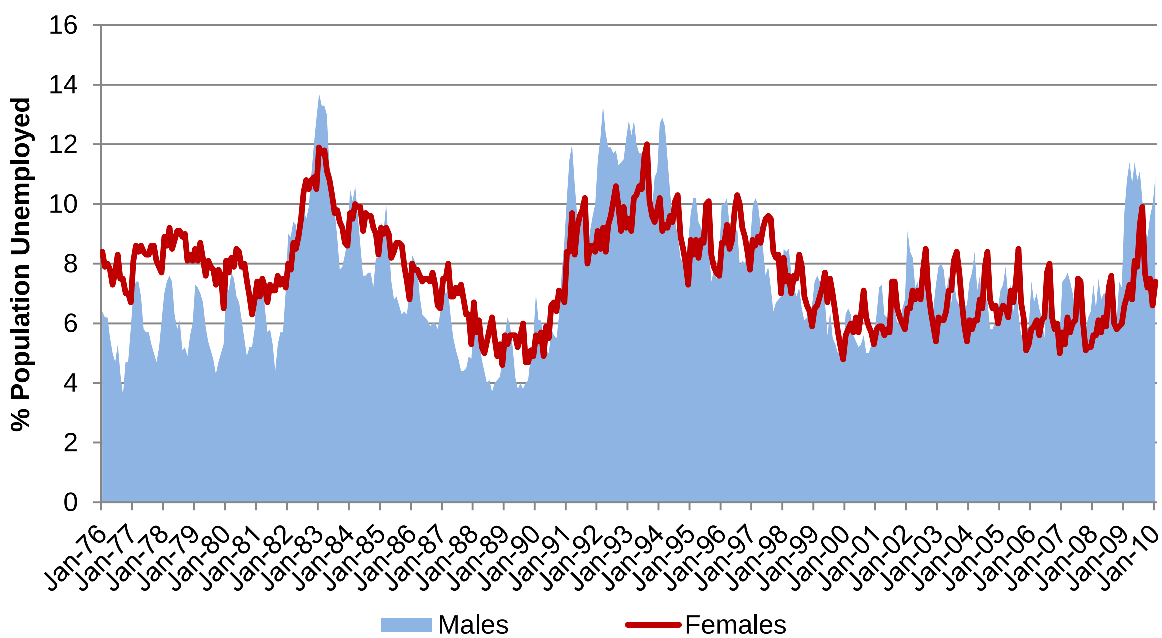
The unemployment rate for women is consistently higher than that of men over the period of 1976 to early 2010 (Figure 4.13). The only exception to this is during times of economic recession where the male unemployment rate spikes and surpasses the female rate. This is most likely due to the nature of jobs that have been lost during these recessions, which are largely in Ontario's manufacturing sector; a sector, as we saw above (Figure 4.7) that is largely dominated by men.

Figure 4.12 – Unemployment rate by age group, Ontario, 1976-2010 (monthly)



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Estimates (Table 282-0085), Accessed February 17, 2010

Figure 4.13 – Unemployment rate by sex, Ontario, 1976-2010 (monthly)



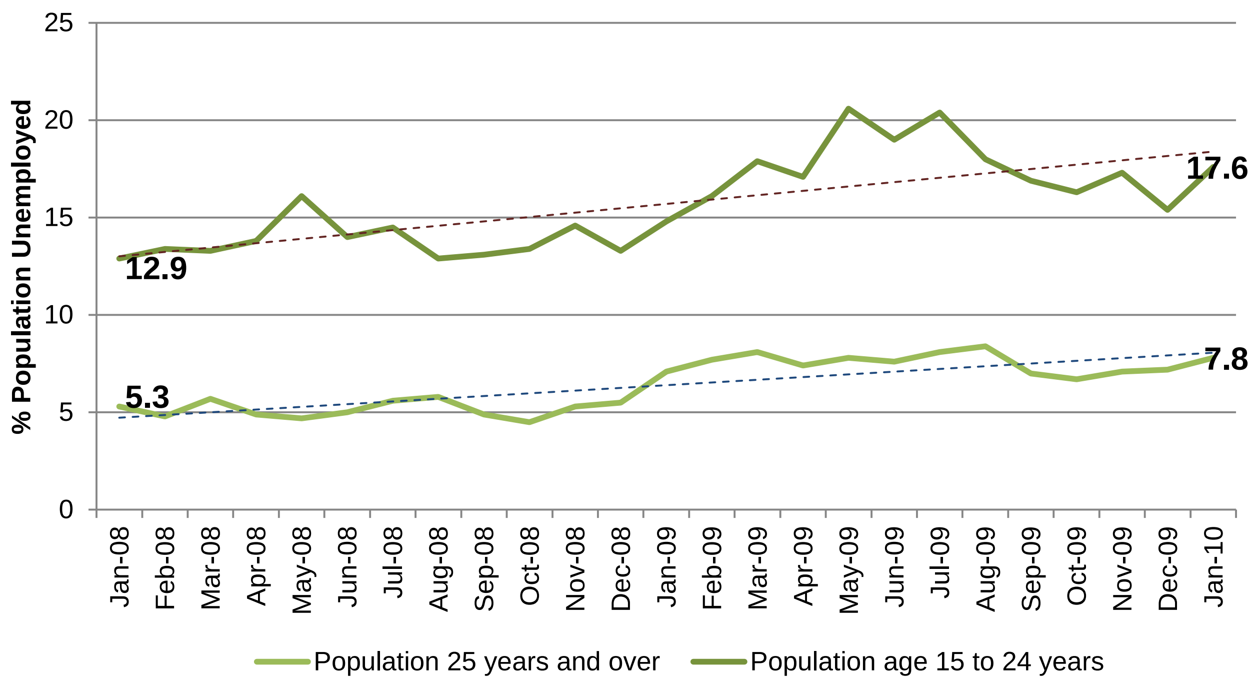
Data Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Estimates (Table 282-0085), Accessed February 17, 2010

The overall unemployment rate for individuals aged 15 years and over in Ontario in January 2010 was 9.2%.[10] The unemployment rate for men aged 15 years and over was 10.9%, significantly higher than that of women in the same age group, which stood at 7.4% in January 2010.[11]

The unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 years remains higher than the rest of the adult population (Figure 4.14), sitting at 17.6% in January 2010. This represents an increase of 4.7% since January 2008. The unemployment rate for the adult population age 25 and over was 7.8% in January 2010, and although this rate has increased by 2.5% since January 2008, the growth remains nearly half of that of youth under the age of 25.

As with previous recessions in Ontario the male population has experienced a higher rate of unemployment, sitting at around 10.9% in January 2010 (Figure 4.15). This represents an increase of 3.6% since January 2008. In contrast, the female unemployment rate in Ontario sat at 7.4% in January 2010, an increase of 1.8% since January 2008. Again, this gender disparity in unemployment during times of economic recession appears to result from the significant loss of manufacturing jobs in the province, jobs that are largely filled by men.

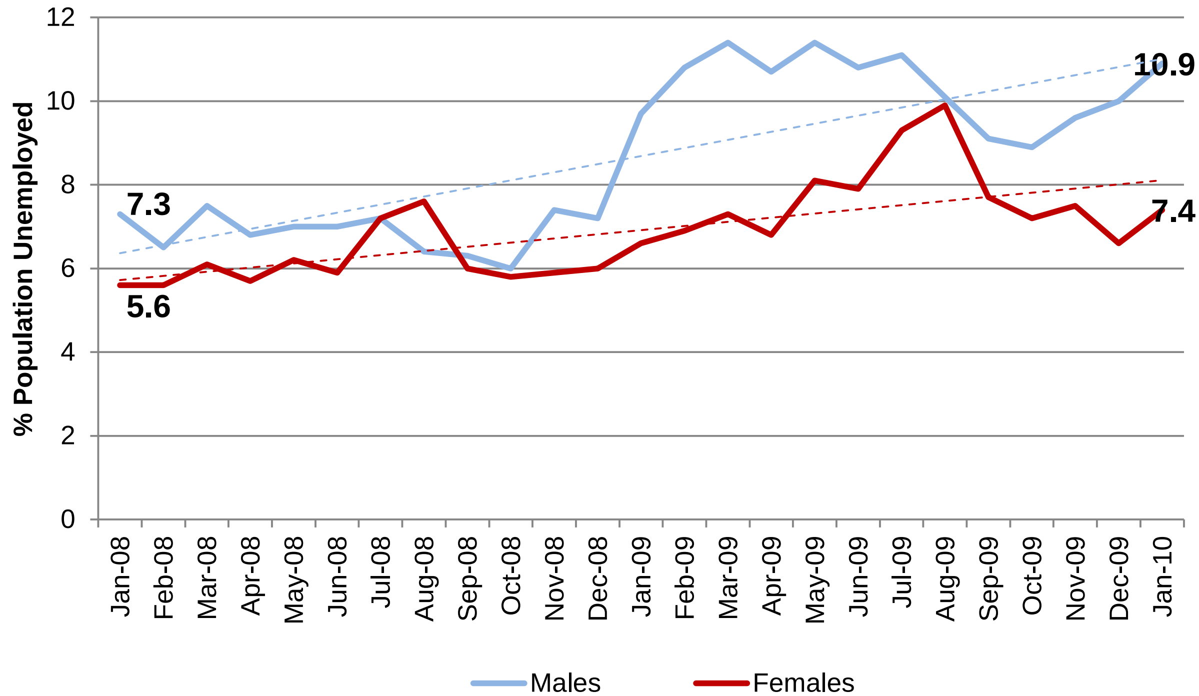
Figure 4.14 - Unemployment rates by age group, Ontario, January 2008-January 2010



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Estimates (Table 282-0085), Accessed February 17, 2010

[10] Statistics Canada, Table 282-0085 – Labour Force Survey Estimates, Accessed February 17, 2010
[11] Ibid

Figure 4.15 – Unemployment rates by sex, Ontario, January 2008-2010



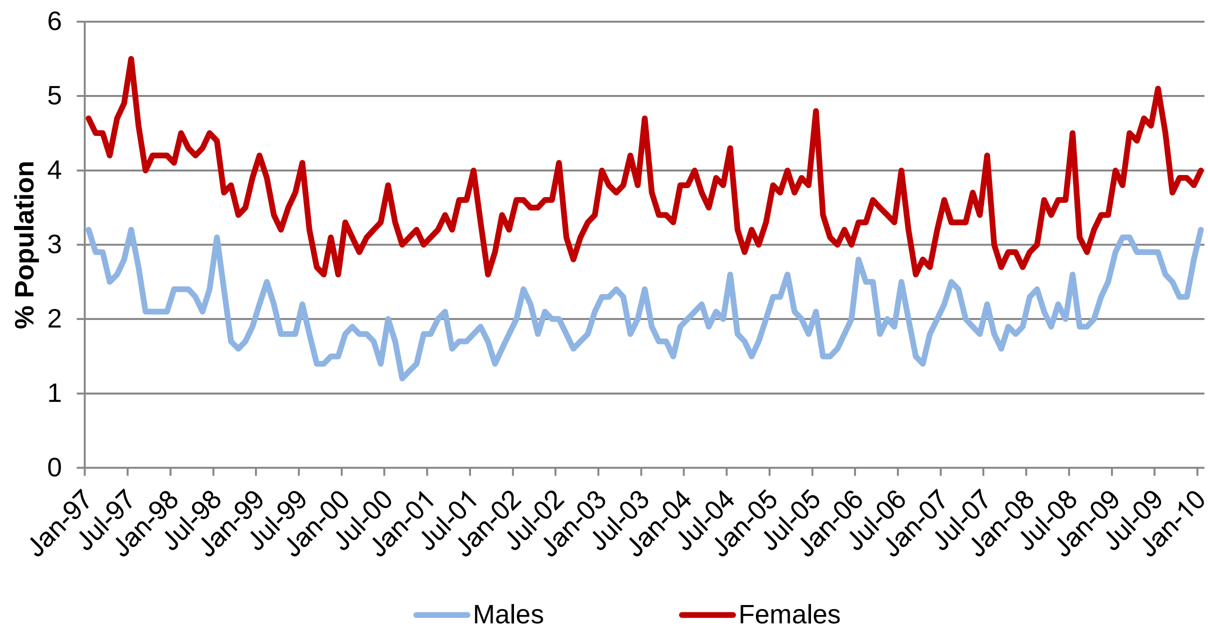
Data Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Estimates (Table 282-0085), Accessed February 17, 2010

When we look at the rates of discouraged[12] and involuntary part-time workers (those seeking full-time work) we see a general rise during times of economic recession. Overall, in January 2010 the rate of discouraged or involuntary part-time workers was 3.6%. This represents an increase of 1% since January 2008. As with unemployment trends in general, the rate of female workers who have left the labour market or are working involuntary part-time jobs is greater than that of males (Figure 4.16).

Further, the youth population (aged 15 – 24 years) is more likely to be discouraged from the labour force or be in a part-time position than is the adult population over the age of 25 years. These rates have increased steadily since January 2008 (Figure 4.17).

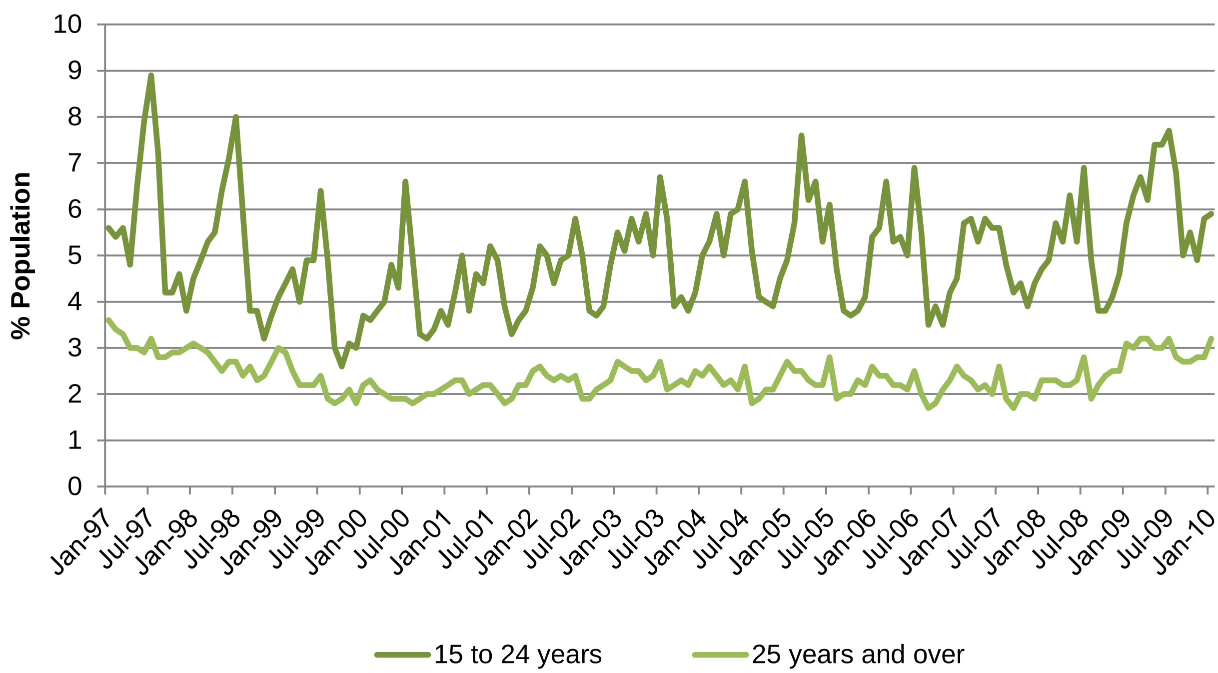
12 A discouraged worker is defined in economics as an individual who is of legal employment age who is not actively seeking employment. This is usually because an individual has given up looking or has had no success in finding a job, hence the term "discouraged." Their belief may derive from a variety of factors including: a shortage of jobs in their locality or line of work; perceived discrimination for reasons such as age, race, sex and religion; a lack of necessary skills, training, or experience; or, a chronic illness or disability (Akyeampong, E.B., 1992, “Discouraged workers – where have they gone?”, Perspectives on Labour and Income 3(4), Available online at: http://www.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=75-001-X199200328&lang=eng. Retrieved 2010-03-05)

Figure 4.16 – Discouraged searcher and involuntary part-time workers by sex, Ontario, January 1997-January 2010



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Estimates (Table 282-0085), Accessed February 17, 2010

Figure 4.17 – Discouraged searcher and involuntary part-time workers by age, Ontario, January 1997-January 2010



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Estimates (Table 282-0085), Accessed February 17, 2010

Over the period of 1975 to 2009, the number of men receiving Employment Insurance (EI) benefits has generally decreased while the number of women receiving EI has generally increased (Figure 4.18). This reflects the changing labour market in Ontario where more women are working and thus qualifying for EI benefits and fewer men are employed in highly cyclical industries such as manufacturing.

The impact of the current recession is seen in Figure 4.19 as there is both a spike in EI recipients and the number of male recipients briefly surpasses the number of female recipients. Because of restrictions to EI access, EI access for unemployed men is now lower than the highest rates during the recession of the 1980s and 1990s.

In a recent paper, Jackson and Schetagne argue that the current economic recession represents an extreme "stress test" for Canada's EI program[13]. The data they present indicates that in Ontario the percentage of unemployed workers in Ontario receiving EI benefits increased from 32.3% in October 2008 to 41.4% in October 2009. The increase in the percentage of unemployed workers receiving regular EI benefits is attributed to the nature of unemployment that marked the initial stages of the recession. Those experiencing layoffs at this time were mostly male industrial and construction workers who have typically been steadily employed and paying into the EI system prior to unemployment[14]. Many of those who have not qualified for EI benefits, who have "fallen through the cracks", are women. Jackson and Schetagne show that the number of male regular EI beneficiaries (aged 25 and over) rose much faster than the number of unemployed men over the same time. For women the number of EI beneficiaries rose at around the same rate as the number of unemployed women.

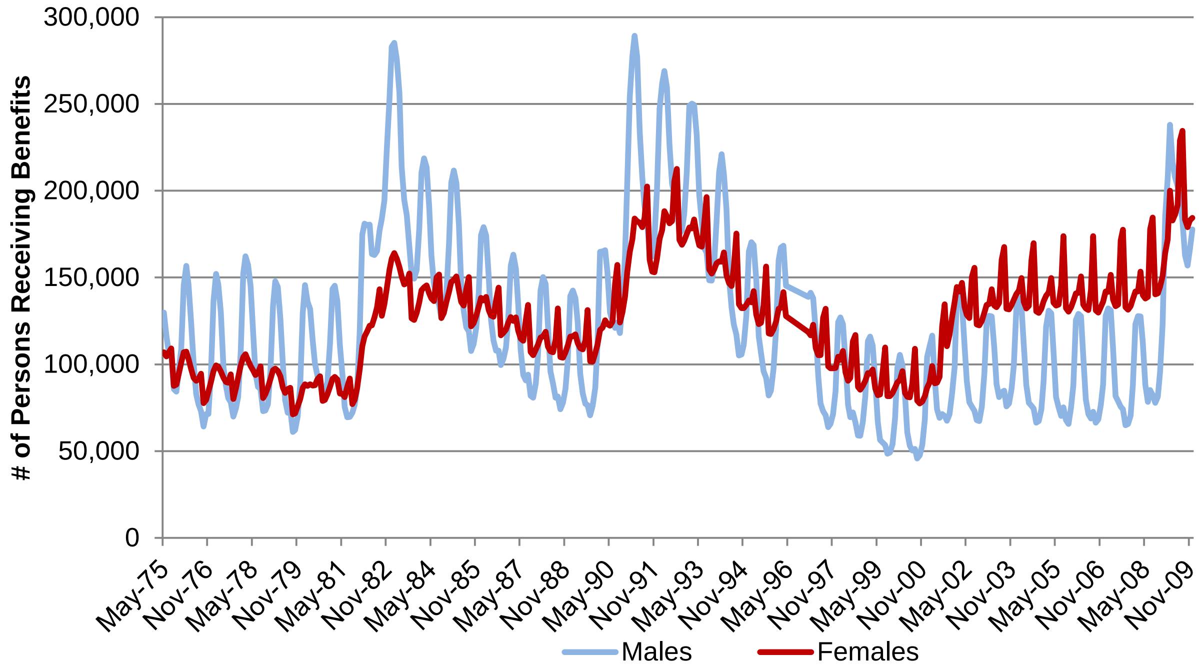
They contend that this is most likely the result of the type and tenure of employment that men and women affected by the recession had prior to unemployment. As stated above, men affected by the recession were generally employed in stable manufacturing jobs, while women were more likely to be employed in precarious, part-time jobs in, for example, the retail and service sectors.

The other factor that affects differences in EI rates between men and women is that many female-dominated jobs are not as affected by economic cyclical forces as male-dominated jobs. For example, many more women are employed as teachers and nurses than men, and these jobs are not as likely to be cut during a recession as jobs more typically held by men, such as in the manufacturing sector.

[13] Jackson, A and Schetagne, S, 2010, Is EI Working for Canada's Unemployed?: Analyzing the Great Recession, Available online at: http://www.policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/updates/ei-isnt-working-canadas-unemployed

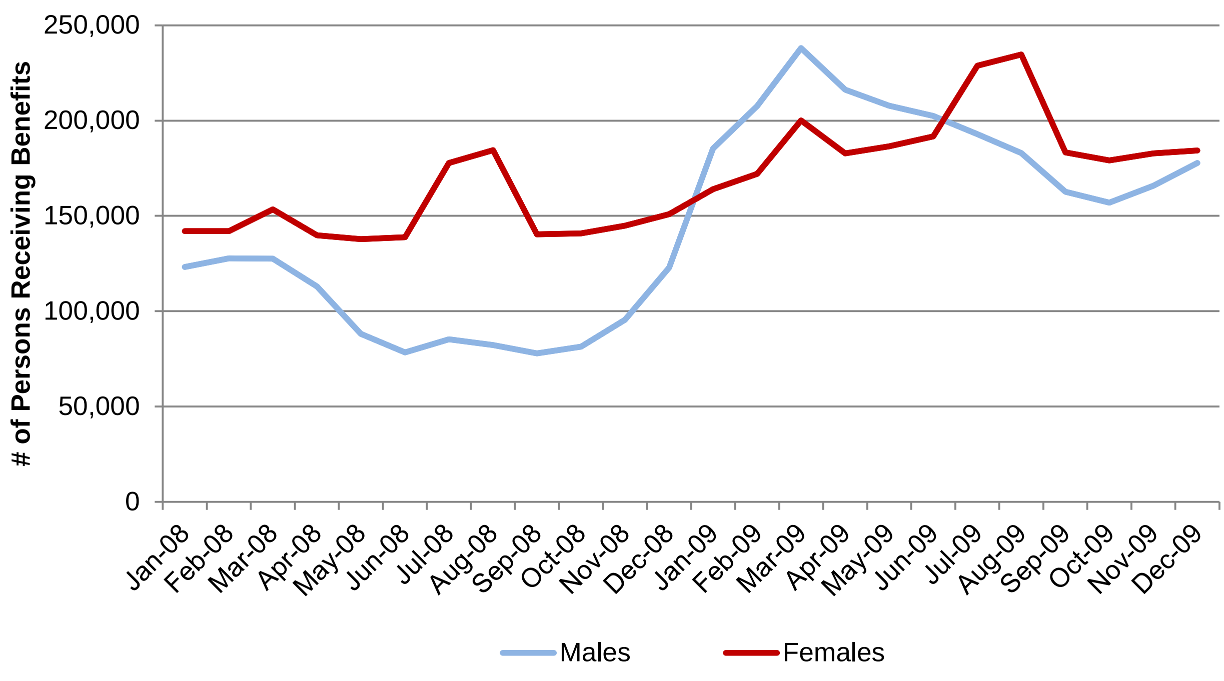
[14] Jackson, A and Schetagne, S, 2010, Is EI Working for Canada's Unemployed?: Analyzing the Great Recession, Available online at: http://www.policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/updates/ei-isnt-working-canadas-unemployed, pp. 1

Figure 4.18 – Persons receiving employment insurance benefits by sex, May 1975-December 2009



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Estimates (Table 282-0085), Accessed February 17, 2010

Figure 4.19 – Persons receiving employment insurance benefits by sex, Ontario, January 2008-December 2009



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Estimates (Table 282-0085), Accessed February 17, 2010

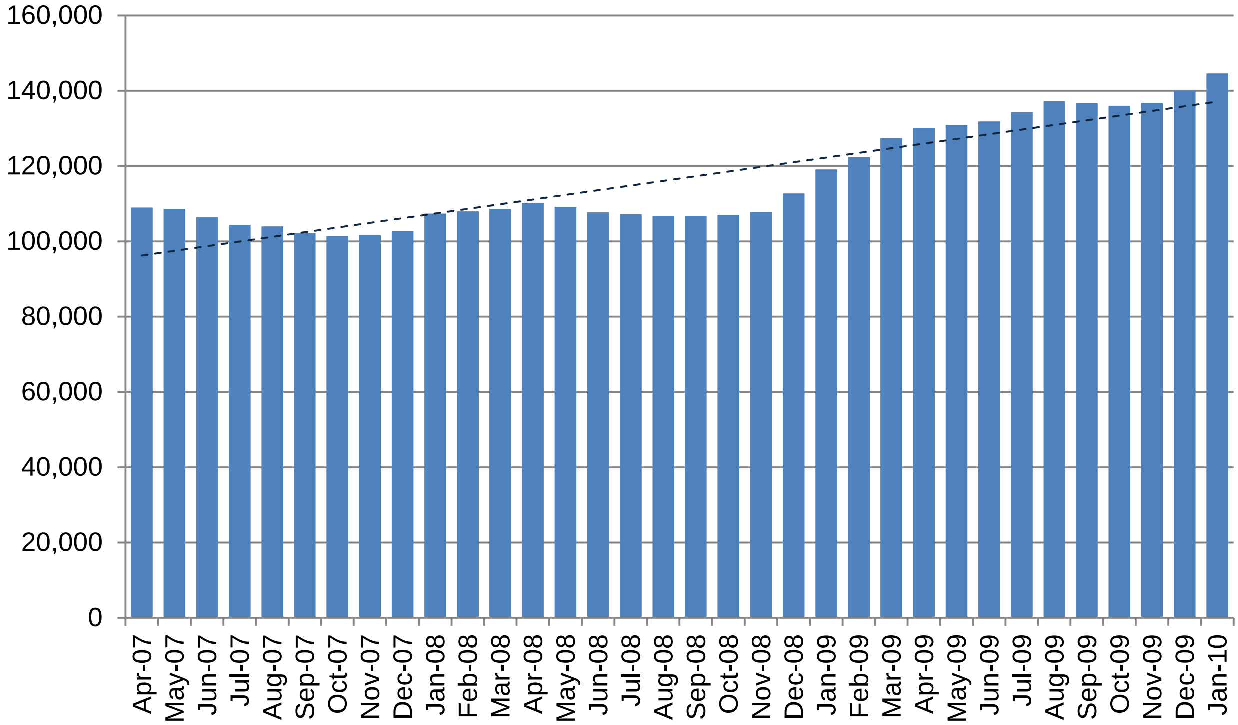
Social Assistance

As of December 2009, 246,748 single individuals/families were receiving Ontario Works benefits across the province, including 450,111 beneficiaries (Figures 4.20, 4.21 and 4.22). This figure includes 144,604 single adults, 27,487 couples (with and without children), and 74,657 lone parent families.

The number of single individuals/families receiving Ontario Works benefits has increased gradually in Ontario since 2007, with sharp increases since the recession began. The recent increase is driven largely by the number of single individuals receiving benefits.

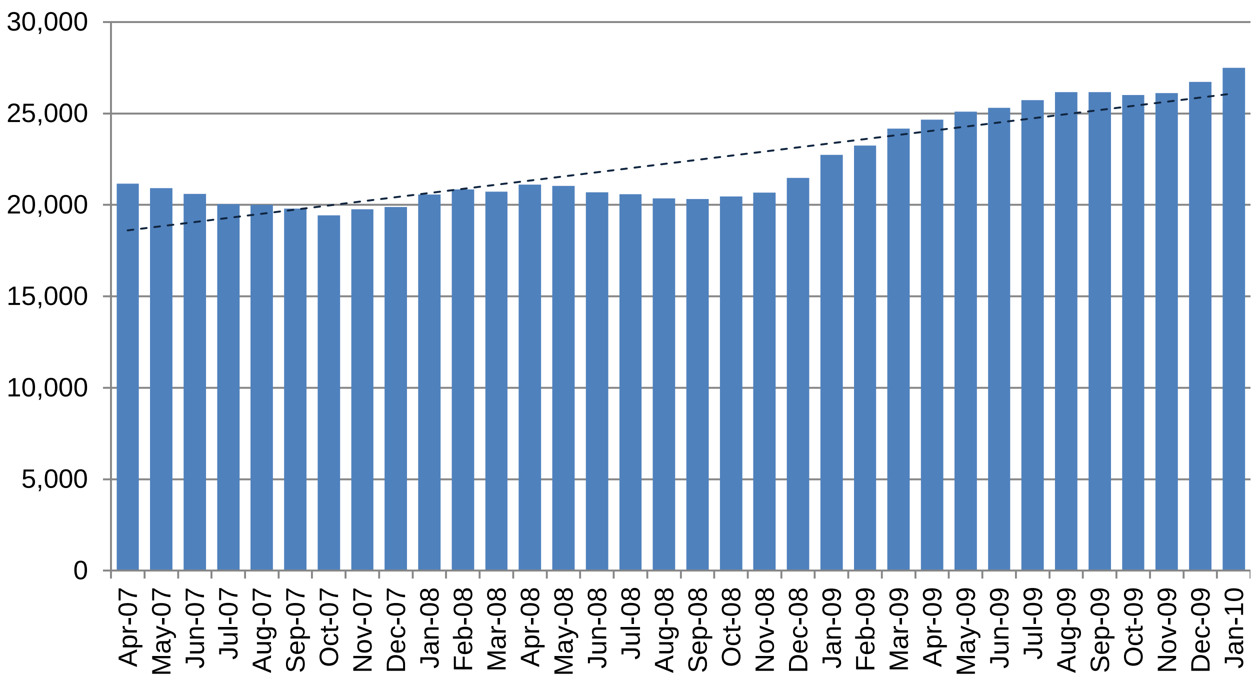
The number of Ontario Disability Support Program beneficiaries has risen steadily in Ontario since 2007, with little discernable impact of the recession (Figure 4.23). This is likely because of the nature of the program, which is designed to support individuals unable to work due to illness or disability. The number of program recipients would not be expected to rise dramatically during a recession.

Figure 4.20 – Ontario Works cases (singles), April 2007–January 2010



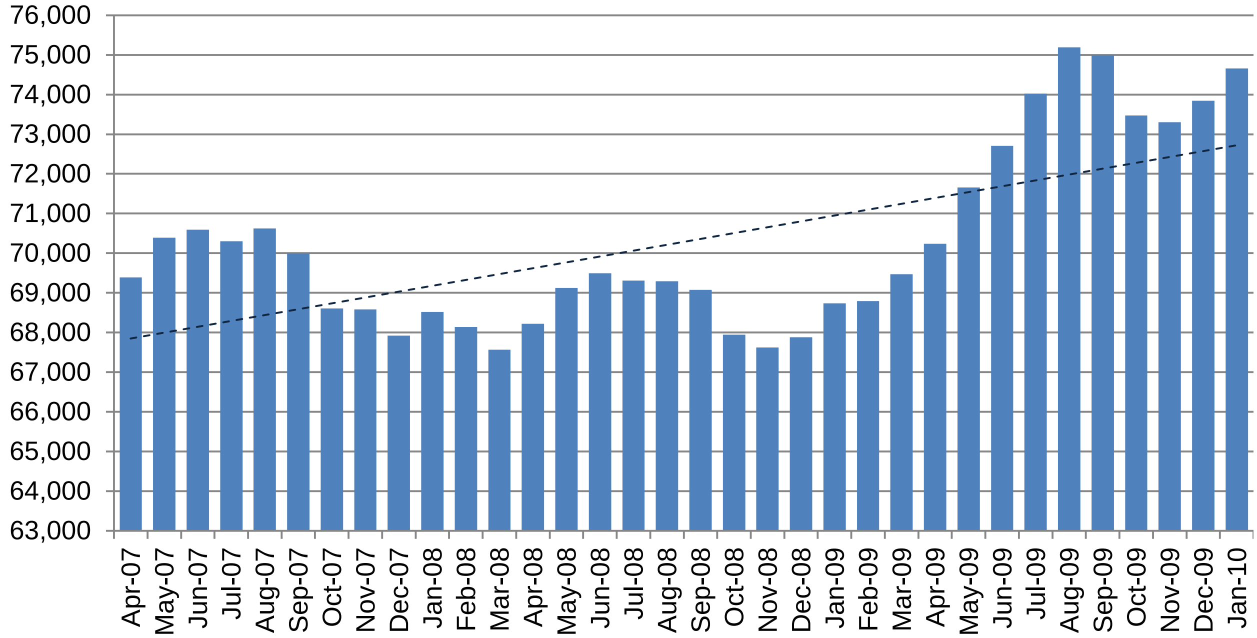
Data Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services, Statistics and Analysis Unit, January 2010

Figure 4.21 – Ontario Works cases (couples), April 2007–January 2010



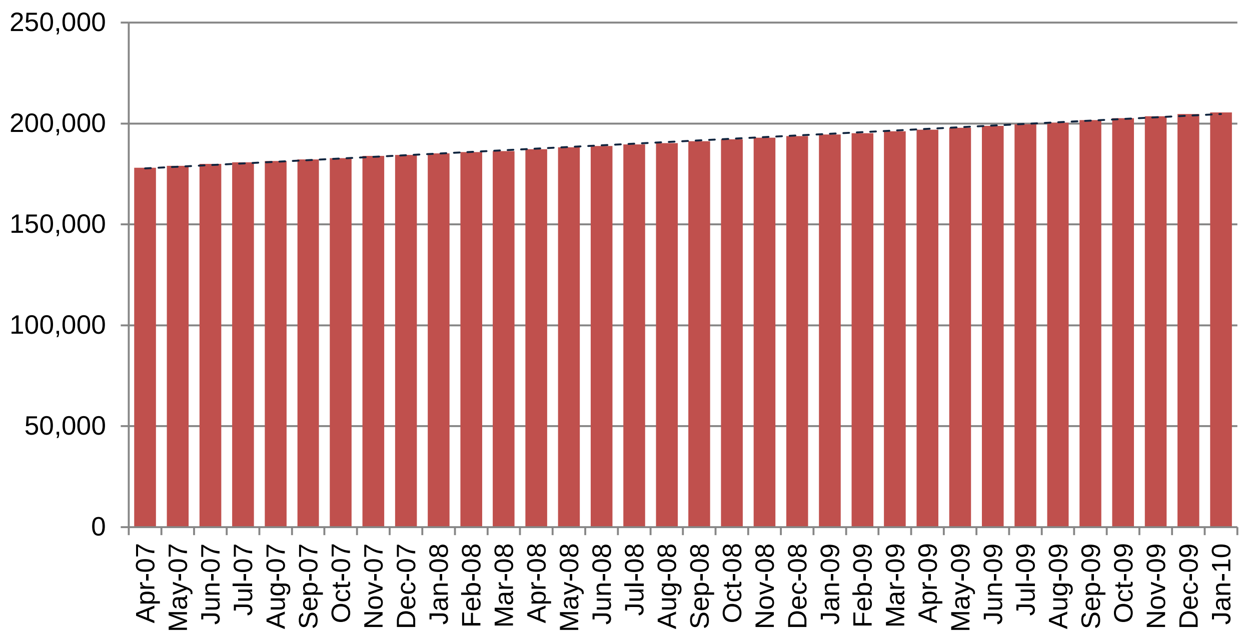
Data Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services, Statistics and Analysis Unit, January 2010
Ontario Social Assistance Monthy Statistical Report

Figure 4.22 – Ontario Works cases (lone parents), April 2007–January 2010



Data Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services, Statistics and Analysis Unit, January 2010
Ontario Social Assistance Monthy Statistical Report

Figure 4.23 – Ontario Disability Support Program cases (singles), April 2007–January 2010

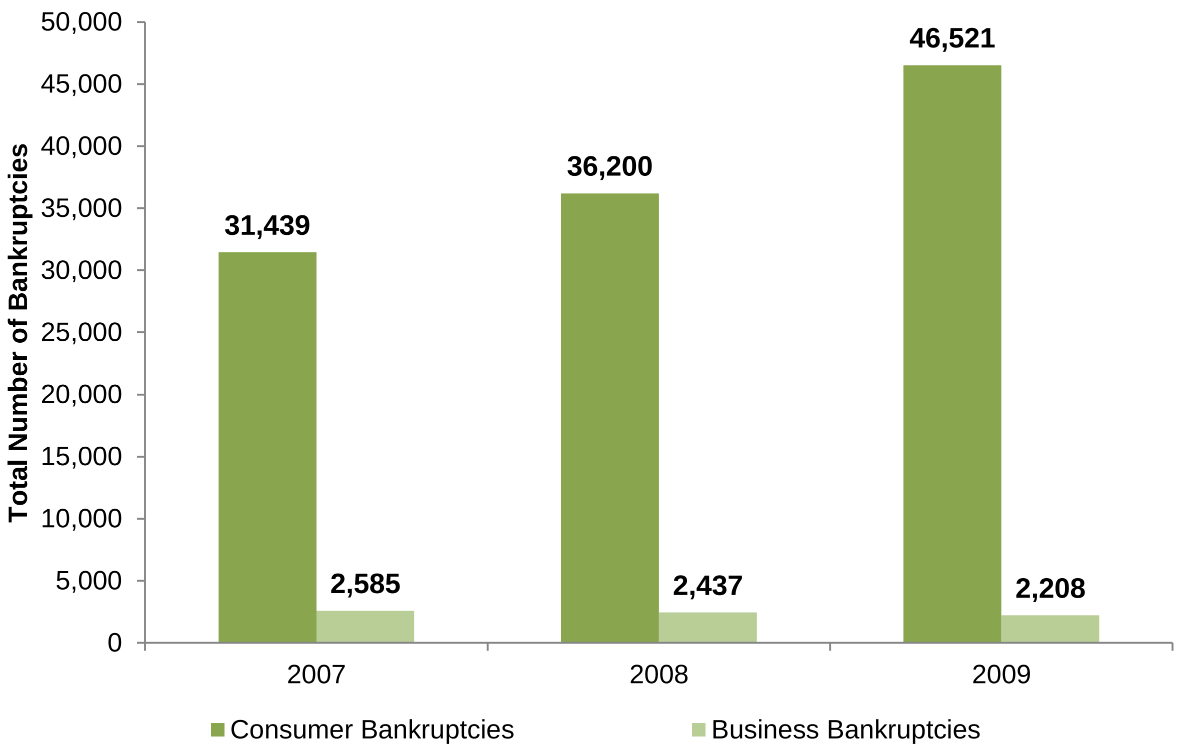


Data Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services, Statistics and Analysis Unit, January 2010
Ontario Social Assistance Monthy Statistical Report

Insolvency Data

The number of consumer (personal) bankruptcies filed in 2009 was 46,521 (Figure 4.24), an increase of 28.9% since 2008 and 48.0% since 2007. Further, the number of consumer creditor proposals[15] filed in 2009 was 20,414 (Figure 4.25), an increase of 43.3% since 2008 and 70.5% since 2007. When compared to other provinces, Ontario falls in the middle when we look at the overall increase in bankruptcies and creditor proposals (Figures 4.26 and 4.27).

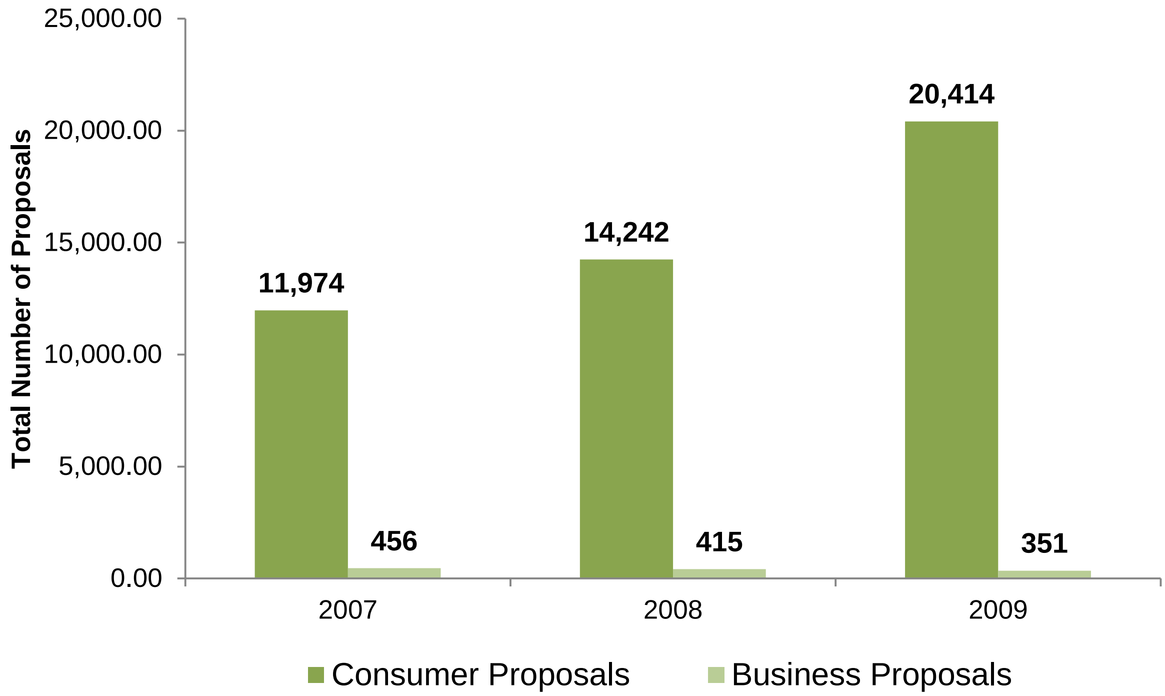
Figure 4.24 – Bankruptcies by type, Ontario, 2007-2009



Data Source: Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada, 2009, *Insolvency Statistics in Canada – December 2009*

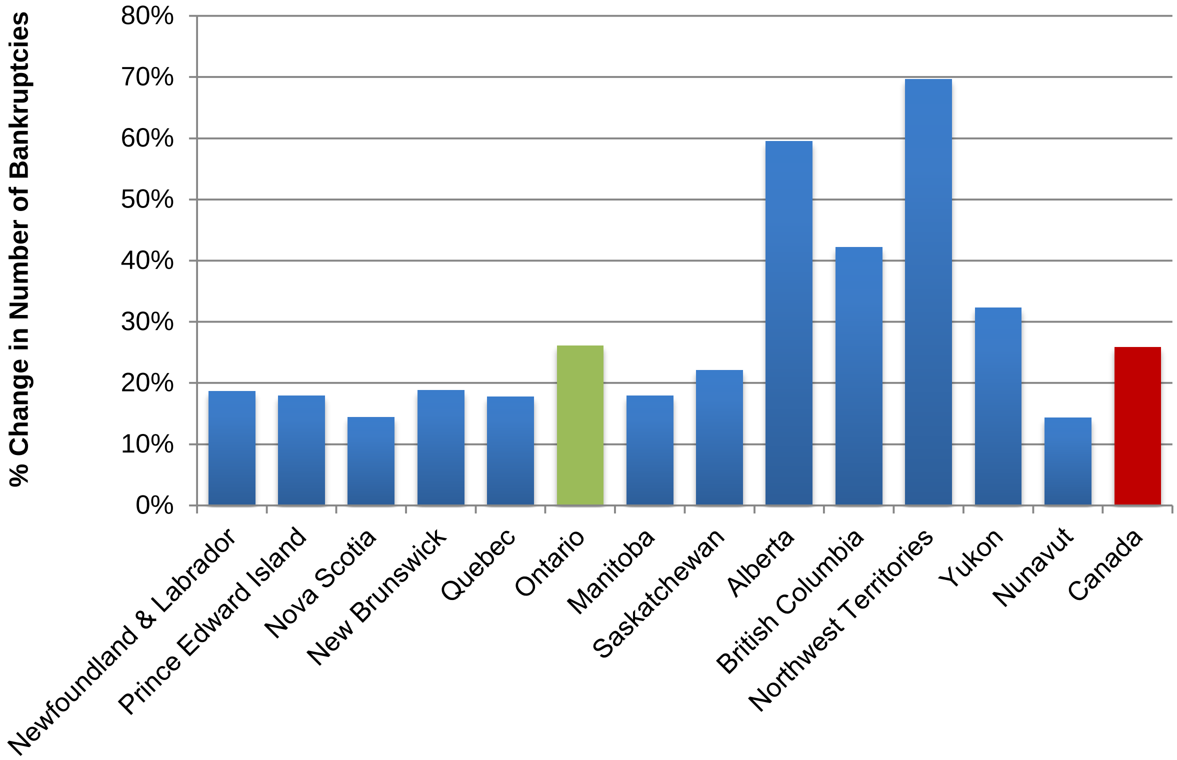
[15] A proposal is an offer to creditors to settle debts under conditions other than the existing terms. A proposal is a formal agreement under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act.

Figure 4.25 - Creditor proposals by type, Ontario, 2007-2009



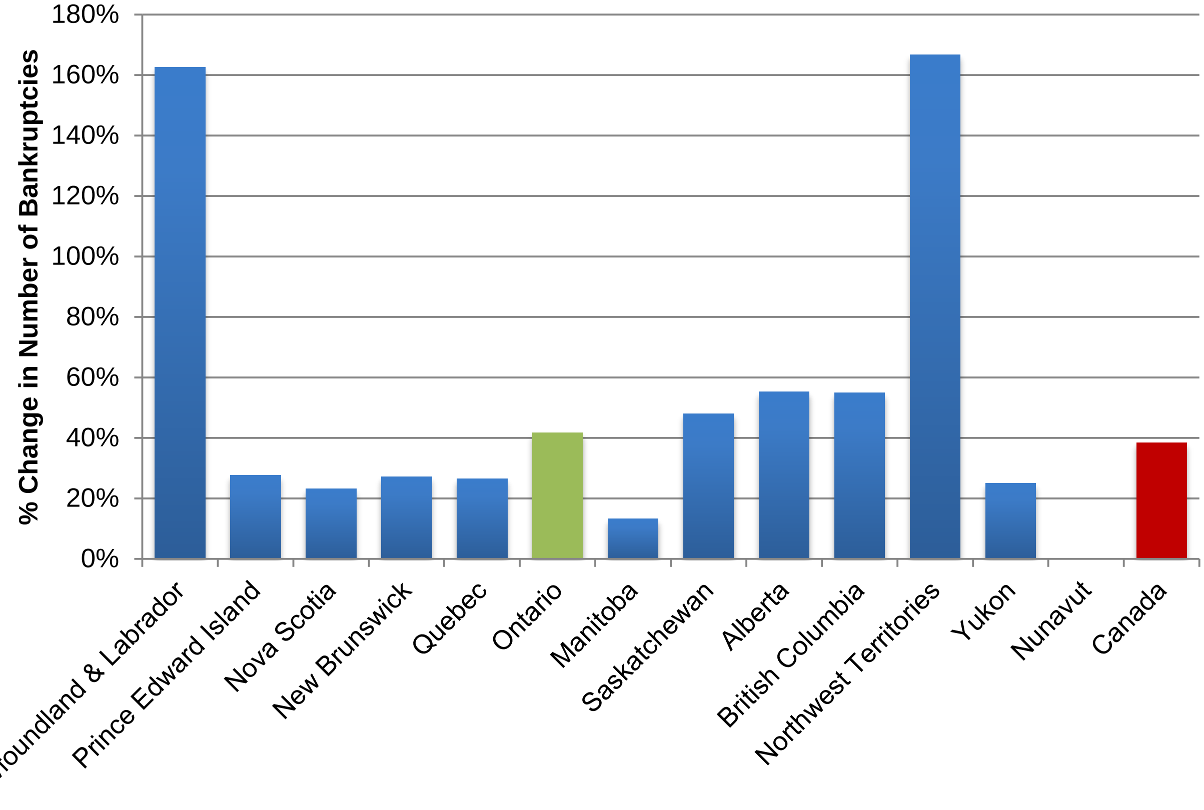
Data Source: Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada, 2009, *Insolvency Statistics in Canada – December 2009*

Figure 4.26 – Change in the number of bankruptcies (2008-2009), by Province and Territory, Canada



Data Source: Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada, 2009, *Insolvency Statistics in Canada – December 2009*

Figure 4.27 – Change in the number of creditor proposals (2008-2009), by Province and Territory, Canada



Data Source: Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada, 2009, *Insolvency Statistics in Canada – December 2009*

Social Impacts of the Recession

The social impacts of economic recession are deep and may extend well beyond the period of economic recovery. In the following we highlight some of the potential long-term social impacts that recession may bring to Ontario communities.

1. Loss of employment has been significantly related to the onset and exacerbation of many health concerns[16] [17], including:
   - Depression, other mental health issues and addictions
   - The adoption of less healthy lifestyles (more consumption of cheap food, and alcohol and nicotine due to stress)

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[16] Green, A., 2009, *The Social Impacts of Recession*, Available online at: *www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/.../Andy%20Green_tcm6-34149.pdf*

[17] Bezruchka, S., 2009, "The effect of economic recession on population health," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 181(5), pp. 281 - 285

- Heart disease and other stress related cardiopulmonary conditions
- Poor disease management due to overburdened health care services

The risk and severity of these health concerns may increase with the length of unemployment.[18] The situation is most poignant for those who are in a precarious financial situation prior to the loss of employment.

2. Job loss places increased financial pressures on individuals and families (e.g. increased debt-loads, depletion of assets and/or savings) that, if not mitigated or resolved quickly, may place them into long-term financial difficulties.[19] These issues extend well beyond the recovery of the economy.
3. Research from the United Kingdom indicates that approximately one in ten people who lost their job will experience a breakdown in their intimate relationship within five years. This concern was most true for those experiencing long-term unemployment. Further, family breakdown may lead to stress in children resulting in behavioural problems, poor academic performance and health concerns.
   - Chronic psychological stress caused by unemployment may lead to dramatic shifts in behaviour over time, which may be manifest in many harmful ways (e.g. family conflict, arguing, substance abuse, and even domestic violence)[20].
4. Sustained unemployment, or underemployment that may result after layoff caused by recession may lead to social isolation as individuals withdraw from social networks and other forms of social life that were associated with work.
5. Social cohesion can decrease in communities as individuals withdraw and struggle in isolation. The long-term result may be neighbourhood degradation, business closures, and increases in rates of crime.

[18] Barnes, M., Mansour, A., Tomaszewski, W., and Oroyemi, P., 2009, *Social impacts of recession: The impact of job loss and job insecurity on social disadvantage*, Available online at: *www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/319351/natcen-social-impacts.pdf*

[19] Barnes, M., Mansour, A., Tomaszewski, W., and Oroyemi, P., 2009, *Social impacts of recession: The impact of job loss and job insecurity on social disadvantage*, Available online at: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/319351/natcen-social-impacts.pdf

[20] Williams, D. 1999, Pyschological effects of the UK recession, 1990-94, Available online at: www.eoslifework.co.uk/pdfs/uk90srecess.pdf

Economy and Recession - Local Stories

Greater Sudbury: Learning, Working and the Economy

The links between learning (early and lifelong) and working have been the subject of much research and it is now an acknowledged fact that learning -- which includes literacy – directly impacts the ability of communities to realize successful economic development strategies.

As a percentage of the total population Greater Sudbury has fewer 15-24 year olds not attending school and is reporting slight improvements with respect to drop out rates in comparison to provincial rates. There has been a slight increase in the number of students who graduated in 2007-08 as compared to 2006-07. While local literacy rates are not easily available we do know that approximately 1,200 individuals accessed literacy training in 2008. The number of people with post-secondary education has increased over the last 10 years.

In an environmental scan of the employment support sector in 2008 the Social Planning Council determined that the majority of respondents (62%) reported family incomes of less than $20,000 annually and the same percentage having a college or university education.

Recent turmoil in global economics coupled with a prolonged local strike in the major mining company in Greater Sudbury has increased pressure on community leaders to work towards an improved and diversified local economy.

Efforts to provide integrated, one-stop shop service delivery to those seeking work have benefitted directly from the City's recently implemented Labour Adjustment Committee and the resulting labour adjustment centre which offers an array of services to displaced workers. The committee is focusing on identifying short- and long-term actions in order to mitigate the impact of fluctuating commodity prices on the local economy while at the same time offering support to those out of work. Lessons learned from the pilot project in the Far Northeast Training Board (Timmins area) in local labour market planning that identifies current and future needs and ensures that training is aligned with the work that is (will be) available in communities is key to building on the success in Greater Sudbury.

Waterloo Region: Manufacturing Job Losses – The Tip of an Iceberg?

Waterloo Region comprises approximately 4% of the population of Ontario but has had about 18% of the loss of jobs from manufacturing industry cutbacks and closings. We estimate that close to 30,000 people have lost jobs in Waterloo Region.

Manufacturing jobs have, until recently, been well paying and somewhat low skill work that many people could go into as young adults with or without completing high school. These jobs provided a good income and solid foundation for retirement. No more.

The unemployment rate in Waterloo Region has continued to rise. Many displaced workers are not able to find employment and are turning to social assistance for the first time. Waterloo Region is envied by many as a high tech centre and yes, we hear there are openings for hundreds and sometimes thousands that go unfilled because there are not enough qualified applicants. But those who are losing manufacturing jobs are not usually the best candidates for the emerging economy.

This is a story that is still unfolding. Each month we hear news that gives signs of hope but also warns of what is still to come. We hear some success stories, often with the start-up of a new business. But many positions offer less security at half the salary that workers previously earned on the assembly line. Our social service providers are working overtime to meet the needs, all the while managing cuts in their funding which directly impact the service they can provide to the community.

Former factory workers are seeking to become social service workers as they test out an entirely new sector. To some extent, people are discovering or re-discovering community. There are signs of stress and strain as anecdotal accounts of increased alcoholism, drug use and violent episodes demonstrate. Have we seen the worse or is there more to come?

Recession Relief Coalition

The federal government and business have declared the recession to be over. The economy as measured by GDP is expanding. However, the impact of the recession will linger for many years on Main Street as the effect of massive layoffs and underemployment will result in impaired income levels, and declining standards of living.

People in desperation are turning to front line agencies for support. Credit counselling services report an increase in caseload of 42%; food banks see visits and demand increasing by on average 20%. Drop-ins are seeing the number of people lining up for meals increasing dramatically (in some cases by 100% or more).

Front line agencies have found funding levels to be impacted as individuals, corporations, foundations and governments have been either unable or unwilling to meet the increased demand in services with increased funding and donations. Program cuts and deficits are resulting.

In response, the Recession Relief Coalition (RRC) came together to document the impact of the recession and generate public support to keep all levels of government accountable by ensuring that the needs of those suffering from the effects of the recession are addressed and communities are strengthened. Among its activities, the coalition has organized community forums, produced bulletins on the recession's impact and held a soup line demonstration in front of Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's office.

At our February town hall forum, MPs from the Green, Liberal and NDP parties, joined a community panel, including the Social Planning Network of Ontario, to discuss the federal role in responding to communities rocked by the recession. Many excellent ideas emerged. Despite repeated invitations, the Conservative seat was left empty.

Communities are looking to their governments to help them weather the storm. The time for leadership is now.

For more information and to endorse the RRC Declaration:
www.recession-relief-coalition.org

Chapter 5 - Housing

This chapter focuses on housing tenure, condition of dwellings, and housing affordability in Ontario and its 49 Census Divisions (CD). The chapter provides information about trends in housing costs in Ontario's 15 Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA). Finally, it concludes with a look at the housing situations of equity-seeking groups for Ontario.

A CD is a group of one or more neighbouring municipalities. In contrast, CMAs are areas consisting of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA has a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core.

Housing Tenure

In this section, housing tenure refers to non-institutional dwellings that are either owned by their occupants, rented by their occupants or band housing. Band dwellings are those located on Native reserves.

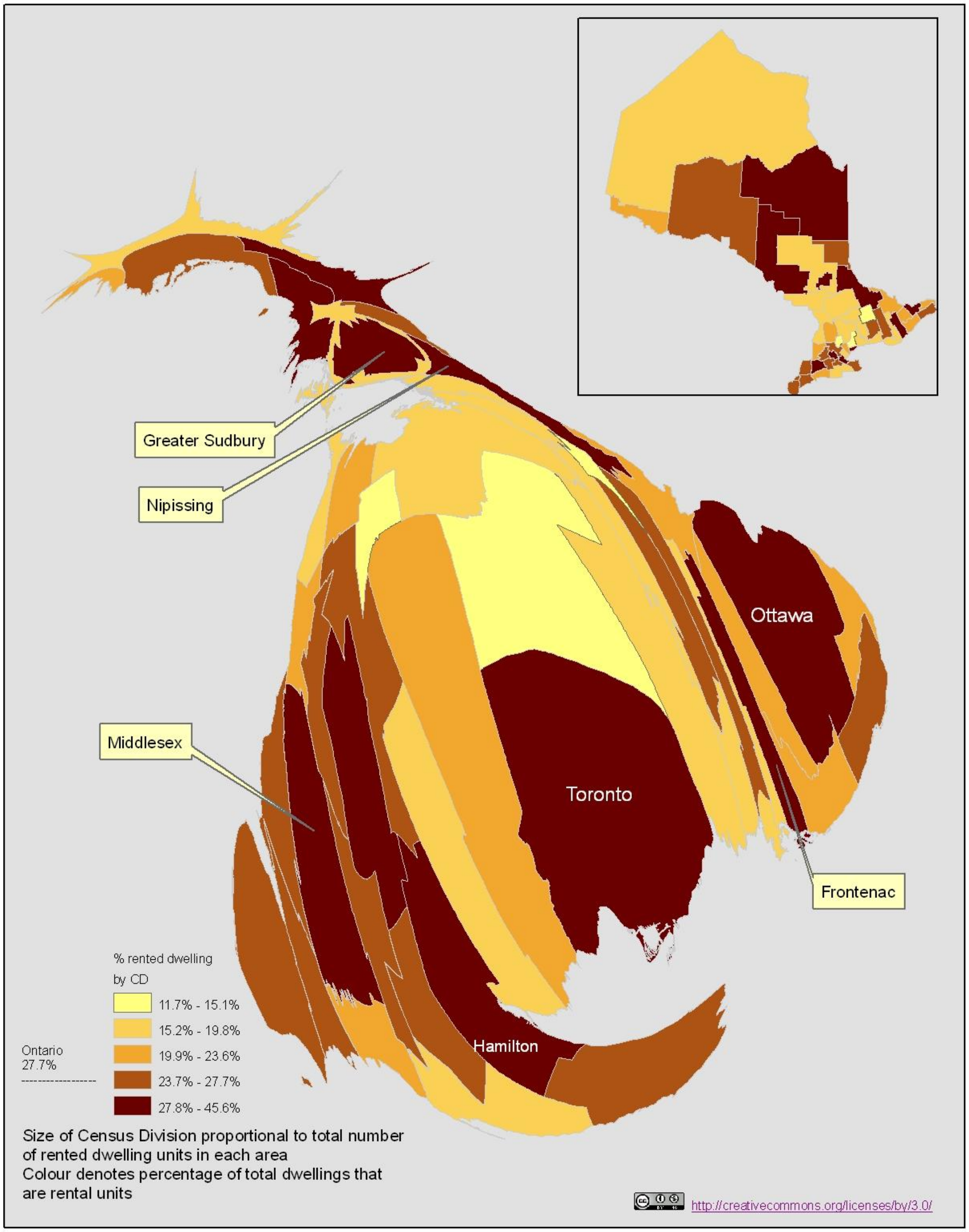
A total of 34.1% of occupied dwellings in Ontario are rented dwellings compared to owned dwellings at 65.7% and band housing at 0.2%. Ontario has one of the lowest rates of rented dwellings among the provinces, second only to Newfoundland and Labrador with 27.7% rented housing. In contrast, Quebec has the highest rate of rented dwellings at 53.6% followed by Saskatchewan at 50.6%.

As shown in Map 5.1, the City of Toronto stands out with the highest rate of rented dwellings in Ontario at 45.6%. Its percentage of rented dwellings is one of the highest among CDs in all of the provinces, following Montreal (62.1%), Sherbrooke (50.6%) and Quebec (46.4%). The CDs of Middlesex, Ottawa, Greater Sudbury, Frontenac, Nipissing and Hamilton have the next highest rates of rented dwelling in Ontario, with rates from 31.7% to 34.4%. Just over one-third of Ontario's rented dwellings are located in the City of Toronto.

York has the highest rate of owned dwellings at 88.3% followed by Haliburton, Dufferin, Parry Sound, Kawartha Lakes, Halton, Bruce, Muskoka, Durham and Haldimand-Norfolk, all with over 80% of dwellings that are owned.

Kenora has the highest rate of band dwellings at 19%, followed by Manitoulin at 8.6% and Rainy River at 5.2%. Almost three-quarters of Ontario's band housing are located in these three CDs.

Map 5.1 - Rented dwelling units by Census Division, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

Condition of Dwellings

The Census categorizes the condition of dwellings as either in a state of good repair requiring only regular maintenance, in need of minor repairs or in need of major repairs. Regular maintenance includes painting, furnace cleaning and the like. Minor repairs include repair of missing or loose floor tiles, bricks of shingles, defective steps, railing or siding. Major repairs include repair of defective plumbing or electrical wiring, and structural repairs to walls, floors and ceilings.

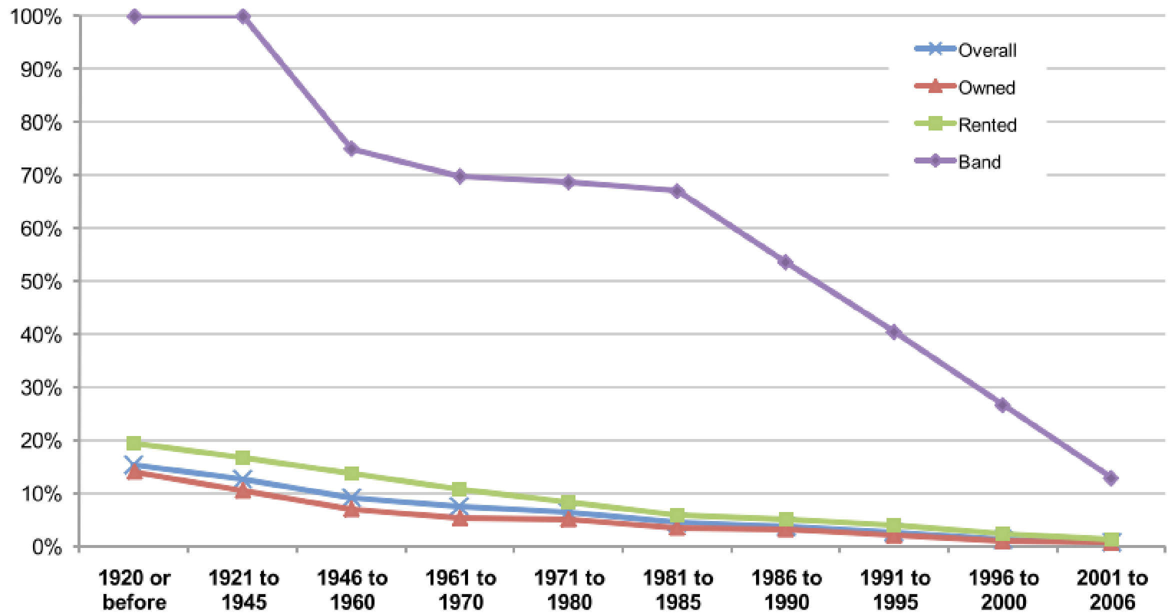
Housing experts have raised concerns about the undercounting of rented dwellings in need of major repair, suggesting that the extent of the problem may be greater than that reflected in the Census (M. Shapcott, personal communication, April 30, 2009). Housing in need of major repair is based on respondent self-reports. In particular, tenants may be unaware of the repair needs of their dwellings (e.g. roof, sewage, electricity, etc.) unless these repair issues are immediately obvious to the individual tenant. As such, the extent of tenant dwellings in need of major repair may be undercounted in the Census.

At 6.6%, Ontario has the lowest rate of dwellings in need of major repair among the provinces. In contrast, Saskatchewan has the highest rate at 10.5%, followed by Manitoba at 10.3%. Rented dwellings in Ontario have nearly twice the rate of being in need of major repairs (10.0%) compared to owned dwellings (5.1%).

The state of band housing in Ontario is a serious concern with 44.7% in need of major repair – 8.7 times that of owned dwellings and 4.4 times that of rented dwellings. The poor state of repair of on-reserve Aboriginal housing is apparent across the country with 47.3% of Canada's band housing in need of major repairs.

As shown in Figure 5.1, the percentage of dwellings in need of major repair is associated with period of construction. Older homes are more likely to be in need of major repair than newer ones across all housing tenures. There are much higher rates of band housing in need of major repair when compared to rented and owned dwellings constructed in the same time period across all time periods. Even among the most recently constructed housing from 2001 to 2006, band housing in need of major repair is 10 times higher than rented housing and 18 times higher than owned housing built in the same time period. Also consistent across periods of construction, we find higher rates of rented dwellings in need of major repair compared to owned housing constructed in the same time period.

Figure 5.1 - Dwellings in need of major repair by period of construction, Ontario, 2006



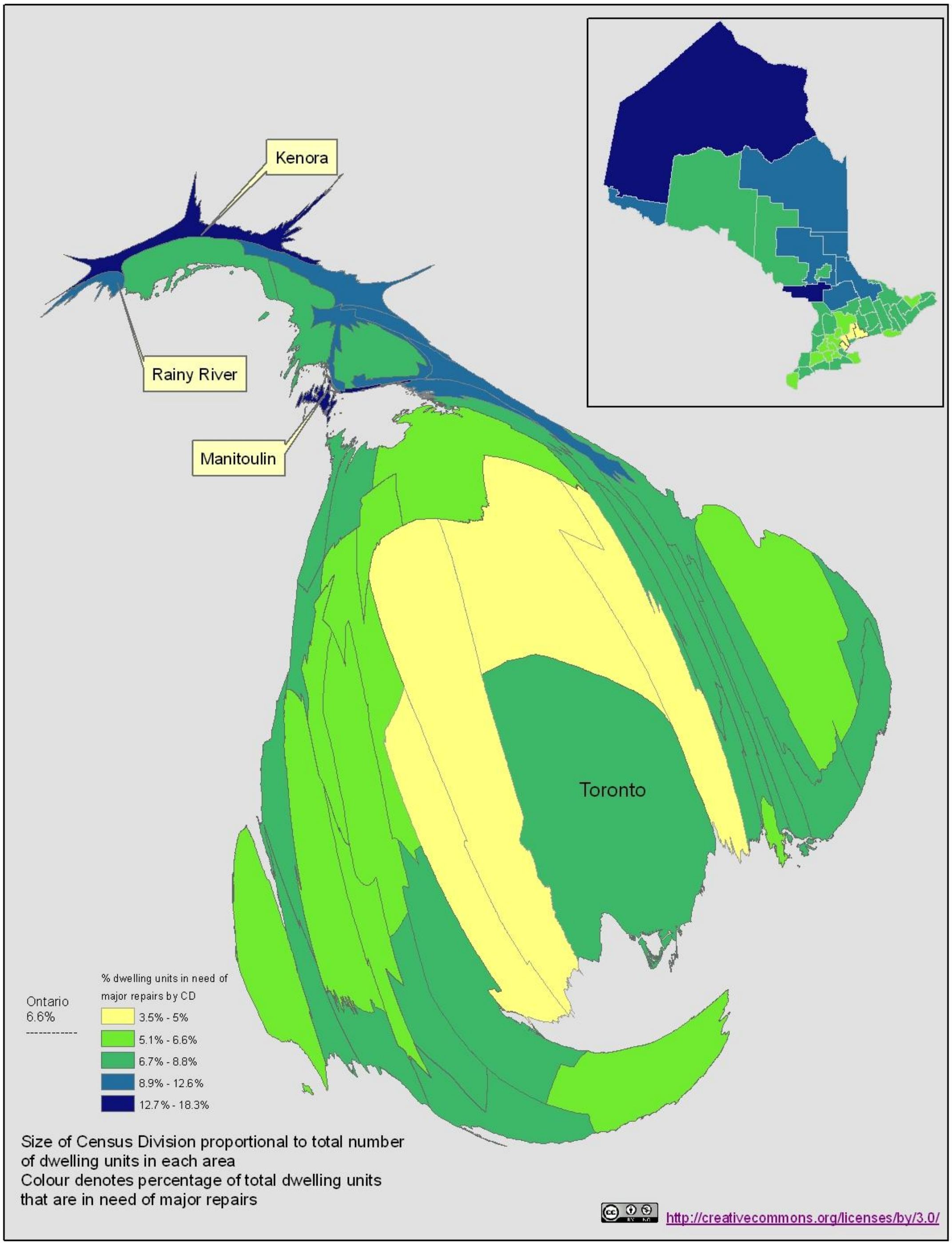
Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Canada

Halton (75.6%), Peel (75.4%) and York (75%) have the highest rates of dwellings in a state of good repair requiring only regular maintenance.

Map 5.2 shows the rates of dwellings in need of major repair by CD. With nearly three-quarters of Ontario's band housing in Kenora, Manitoulin and Rainy River, it is not surprising to find the highest overall rates of dwellings in need of major repair in these three CDs. In Kenora, 18.3% of all dwellings are in need of major repair, including half of all band housing. A total of 15.8% of all dwellings in Manitoulin are in need of major repair, including 22.3% of band housing. In Rainy River, 12.6% of all dwellings are in need of major repair with 47.2% of all band housing. These three CDs also have high rates of owned and rented dwellings in need of major repairs as well.

Manitoulin (15.5%), Timiskaming (10.5%) and Kenora (10.1%) have the highest rates of owned dwellings in need of major repair. Rainy River (16.0%), Parry Sound (15.8%) and Sudbury (14.9%) have the highest rates of rented dwellings in need of major repairs. Among CDs with more than 100 band dwellings, Cochrane (72.7%), Kenora (49.7%) and Rainy River (47.2%) have the highest rates of band housing in need of major repairs.

Map 5.2 – Dwelling units in need of major repair by Census Division, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

Housing Affordability

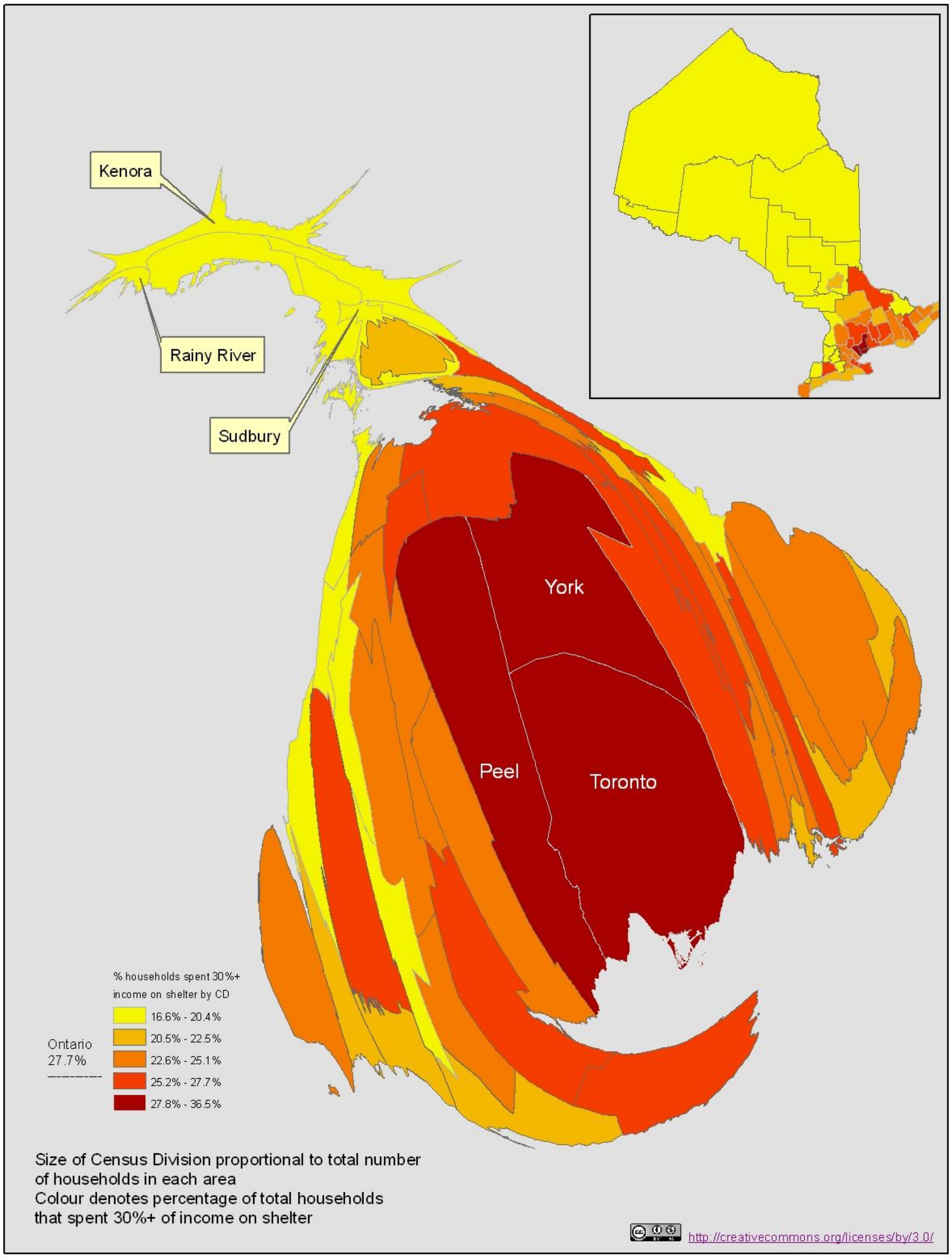
Through the Census, we are able to identify households spending 30% or more of their gross income on shelter. While some individuals and families, particularly those with high income, may choose to spend 30% or more of their household income on shelter and do not have an affordability problem, Statistics Canada considers the 30% threshold a useful benchmark for assessing trends in housing affordability. In this section, households with housing affordability problems refer to those spending 30% or more of gross income on shelter.

Among the provinces, Ontario has one of the highest rates of housing affordability problems affecting 27.7% of households. Only British Columbia has a higher rate at 29.1%. Ontario households have the highest rate of housing affordability problems among owners with and without a mortgage at 29.5% and 8.2%, respectively. Renters in Ontario have the second highest rate of housing affordability problems affecting 44.6% of tenant households. Nova Scotia at 45.1% has the highest rate.

Map 5.3 shows the rates of housing affordability problems by CD in Ontario.

Among CDs, Toronto has the highest rate of housing affordability problems in Ontario and all of the provinces, affecting 36.5% of households. Peel (32.0%) and York (29.7%) have the next highest rates in Ontario. While having high rates of dwellings in poor condition, Kenora (16.6%), Rainy River (17.5%) and Sudbury (18.1%) have the lowest levels of housing affordability problems in Ontario.

Map 5.3 – Households with housing affordability problems by Census Division, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

Toronto has the highest rate of ownership households with and without a mortgage paying 30% or more of household income on shelter at 40.8% and 12.1%, respectively. Peel (37.5%) and York (37.1%) have the next highest rates of housing affordability problems for owners with a mortgage. Among owners without a mortgage, York (10.4%) and Dufferin (9.6%) have the second and third highest rates of housing affordability problems.

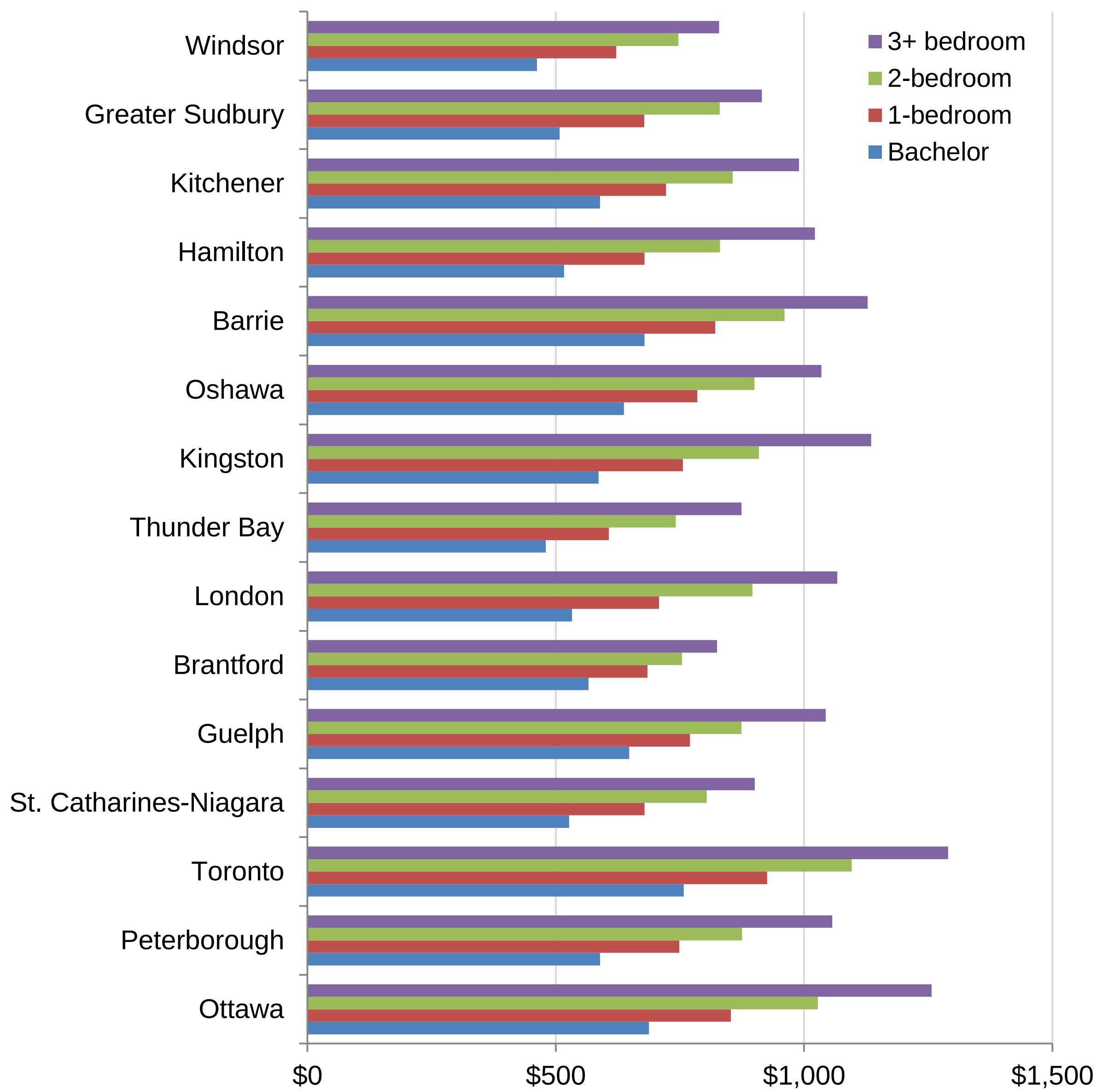
Housing Costs

Unlike previous sections of this chapter, this section provides information on average rents and MLS average home prices for Ontario's 15 CMAs from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The CMHC data presented provides trend data up to 2008 for average home prices and 2009 for average rents.

Previous sections have provided housing information for Ontario's 49 CDs from the Census. This section uses CMHC data for Ontario's 15 CMAs.

Figure 5.2 shows the October 2009 average rents by apartment size for Ontario CMAs. Toronto CMA has the highest rents in Ontario for all apartment sizes, followed by Ottawa CMA. Barrie CMA has the third highest rents for bachelor, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments. Kingston CMA has the third highest rents for 3-bedroom apartments, followed closely by Barrie CMA with the fourth highest.

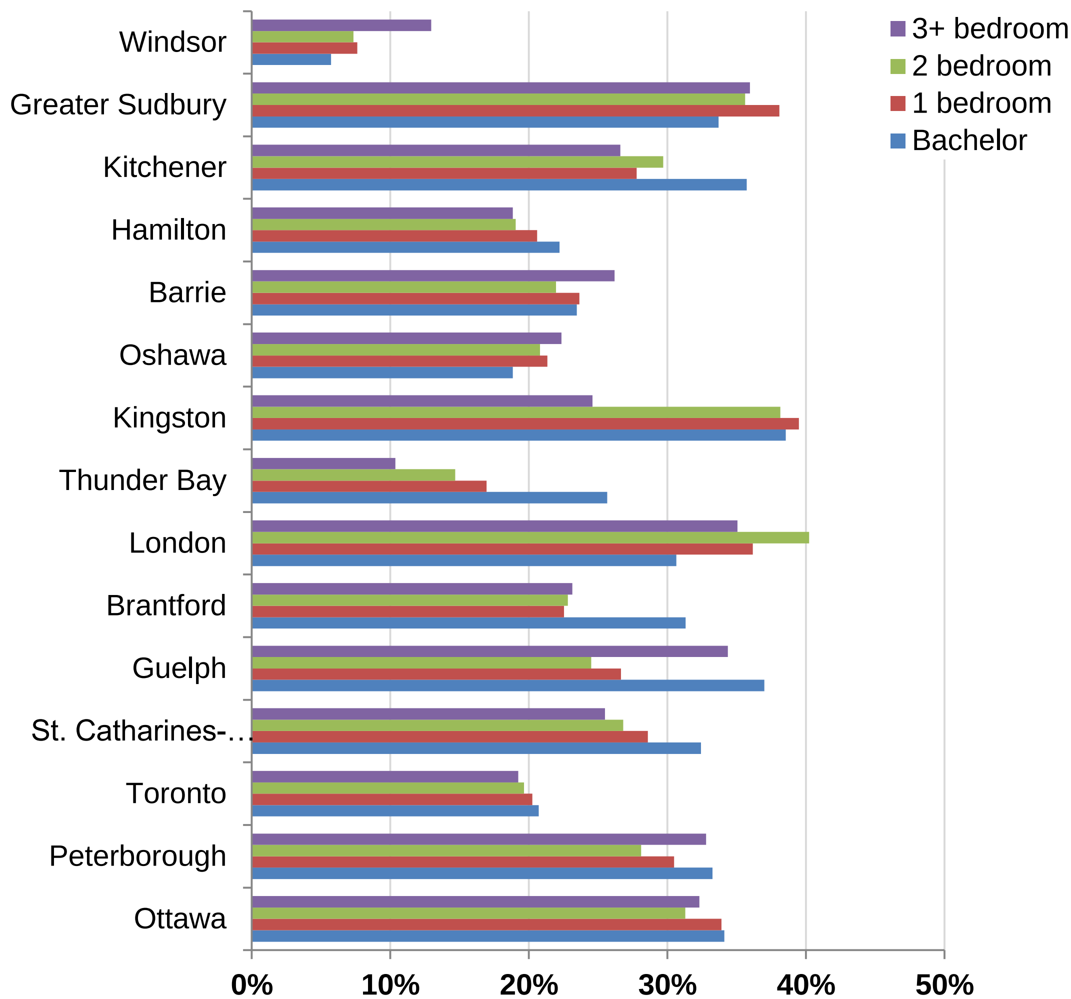
Figure 5.2 – Average rents, Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas, October 2009



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corportiation, Rental Market Reports, Fall 2009

As shown in Figure 5.3, the CMAs of Barrie, Greater Sudbury, Guelph, Kingston, Kitchener and London have had the highest percentage increases in average rent for various apartment sizes in the past 10 years.

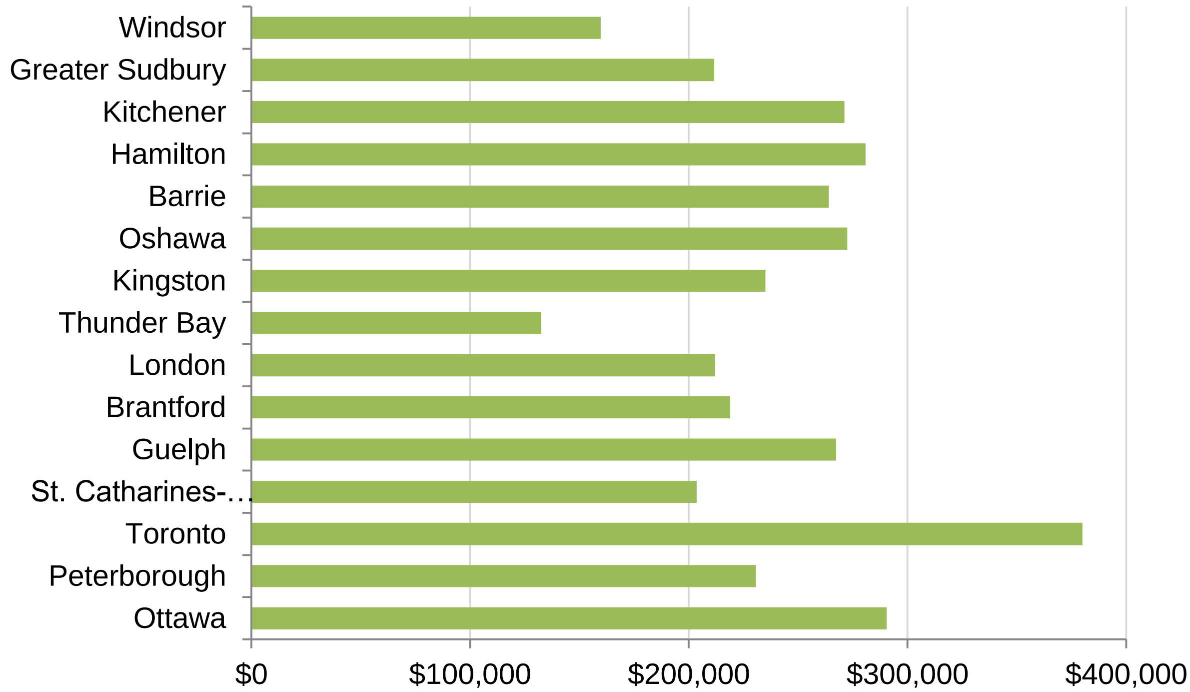
Figure 5.3 – Percentage change in average rents, Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas: 1999-2009



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corportiation, Rental Market Reports, Fall 2009

Figure 5.4 shows the 2008 MLS average home prices for Ontario CMAs. Toronto CMA had the highest average home price at $379,943 followed by Ottawa CMA ($290,483) and Hamilton CMA ($280,790).

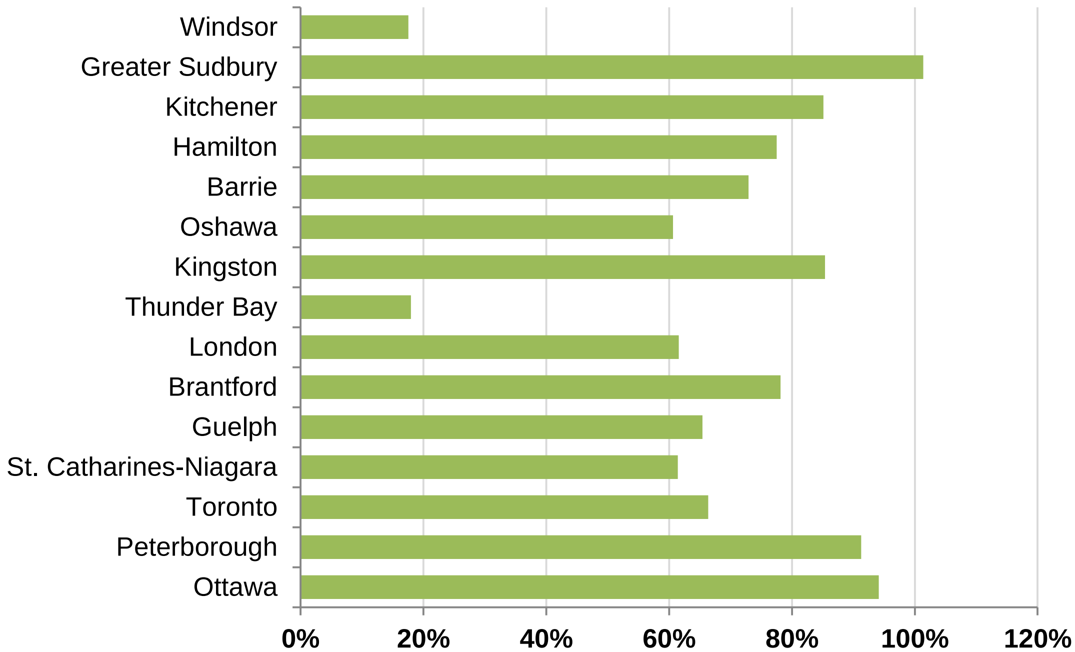
Figure 5.4 – MLS average home prices, Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas, 2008



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corportiation, Rental Market Reports, Fall 2009

As shown in Figure 5.5, average home prices rose most rapidly in Greater Sudbury CMA, where they slightly more than doubled between 1999 and 2008. Ottawa CMA (94.1%) and Peterborough CMA (91.3%) had the next largest increases in average home prices over that period.

Figure 5.5 – Percentage change in MLS average prices, Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas: 1999-2008



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corportiation, Rental Market Reports, Fall 2009

Equity-Seeking Groups and Housing

This section looks at the housing situations of various equity-seeking groups including women, Aboriginal groups, racialized groups (referred to as visible minority by Statistics Canada), recent immigrants (who became permanent residents between 2001 and 2006), people with activity limitations, seniors and different household types. People with activity limitations are also referred to as people with disabilities by Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada's definition is quite broad referring to people with difficulties with daily activities and who experience a reduction in the amount or kind of activities that they can engage in due to physical or mental health conditions or health problems. These are conditions that have lasted or are expected to last 6 months or more. For children, these are conditions that have been diagnosed by a professional. As such, activity limitations, while not a perfect measure, is a proxy for disability status. Data from the 2006 Census are presented for Ontario.

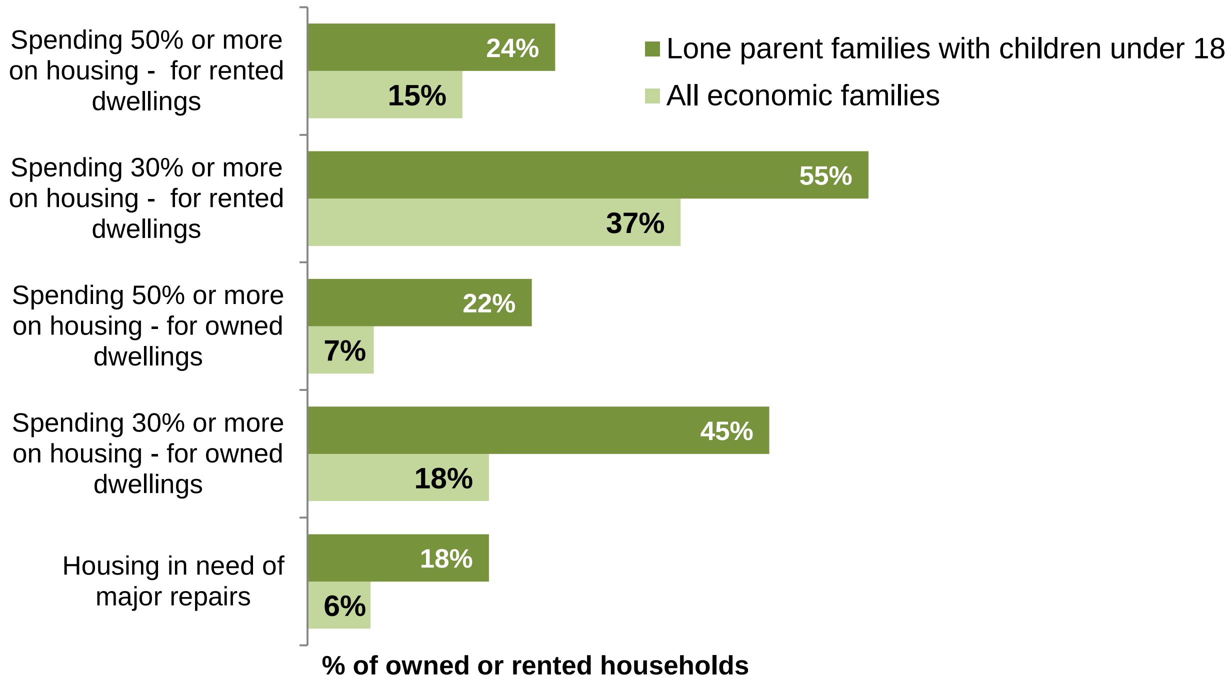
While the Community Social Data Strategy provides a wealth of data to consortia partners, there is relatively little information about gender issues in housing included in the data files. The primary household maintainer is a variable that in a limited way speaks to this issue. A primary household maintainer is generally the person who contributes the greatest amount towards the payments for shelter expenses. In the case of a household where two people share these expenses equally, the first person listed on the relevant Census question is chosen as the main household maintainer. In Ontario, just over two-thirds of primary household maintainers in owned dwellings are men. In contrast, men make up about half of primary household maintainers in rented and band housing.

Family composition addresses gender issues indirectly as the great majority of lone parent families are mother-led. In Ontario, 81.6% of lone parent families are mother-led.

Lone parent families have lower rates of home ownership at just 55.6% compared to 79.3% for all family households in Ontario.

Lone parent families have considerably higher rates of housing problems compared to economic families in general in Ontario. Figure 5.6 shows the rates of dwellings in need of major repair, and households paying 30% or more and 50% or more of gross household income on shelter for owned and rented dwellings. Lone parent families experience these housing problems at 1.5 to 3.3 times the rate of economic families in general.

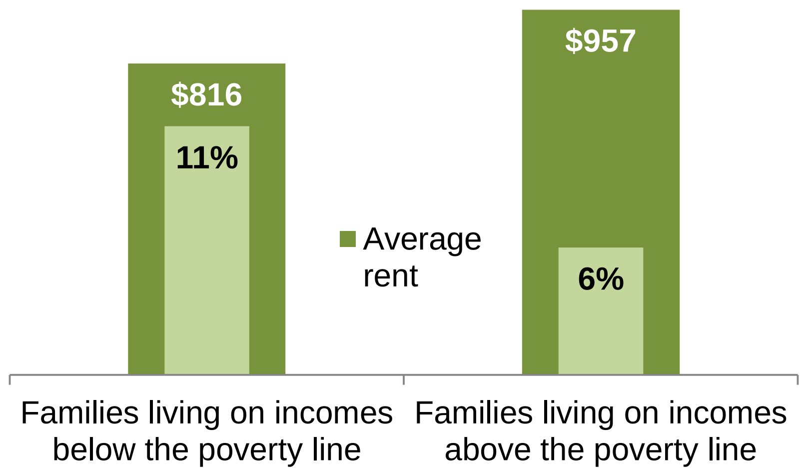
Figure 5.6 – Housing problems among economic families and lone parents, Ontario, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Figure 5.7 shows the rental prices and housing quality for lower and higher income tenant families. These rental prices are based on 2006 Census data rather than CMHC data as was presented previously. As shown, low income families live in housing in need of major repairs at about twice the rate of higher income families yet only pay $141 less in rent per month.

Figure 5.7 – Rental prices and housing quality for lower and higher income tenant families, Ontario, 2006

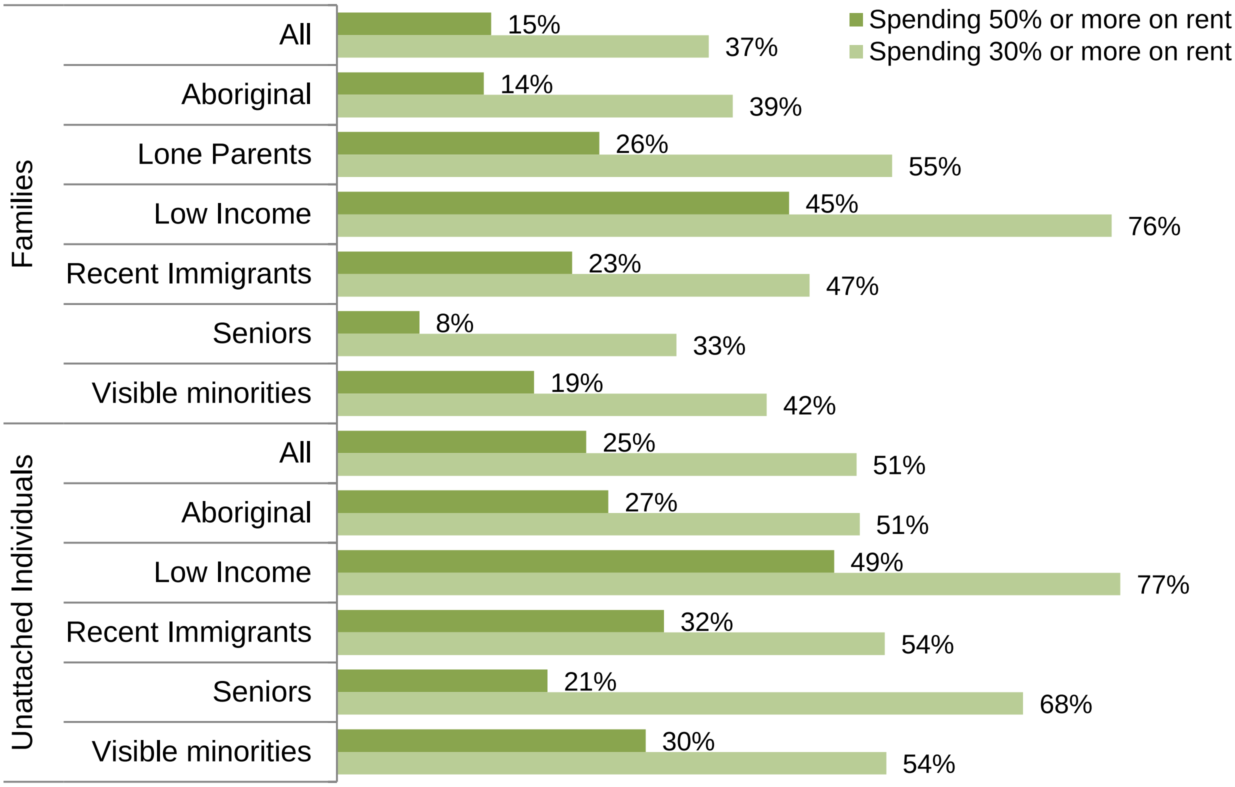


Before tax Low income Cut-Off (LICO) used as poverty line for this chart.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Figure 5.8 shows the rates of housing affordability problems of tenants from selected demographic and equity-seeking groups. As shown, unattached individual tenants, most commonly people living alone or with roommates, have especially high rates of housing affordability problems (51% paying 30% or more) compared to economic families (36.6%). More than half of all unattached individuals that are Aboriginal, recent immigrants or racialized group members have housing affordability problems. A total of 32.2% of recent immigrants and 30.4% of racialized group members that are not in economic families have severe housing affordability problems paying 50% or more of their gross household income on rent. Similarly, recent immigrant and racialized group members in economic families have especially high rates of housing affordability problems.

Figure 5.8 - Housing affordability problems of tenants from selected groups, Ontario 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Conclusion

Ontario has considerable housing affordability problems, disproportionately affecting equity-seeking groups. Lack of affordability in housing undermines health and well-being, and jeopardizes the quality of life of Ontarians. The poor condition of band housing on Native reserves in Ontario and across Canada has been the subject of international rebuke at the United Nations, and requires sustained and concerted action by senior levels of government.

The Ontario government's commitment to develop a long-term affordable housing strategy for the province is much welcome and long overdue. However the proof will be in the pudding. The plan must deliver real change for Ontarians without adequate housing.

All federal parties, with the exception of the Conservative Party, have committed to a federal poverty reduction strategy, including action on housing. Commitment at the federal level is critical to moving forward on the human right to safe, decent and affordable housing in Ontario and across Canada.

Housing - Local Stories

Greater Sudbury: Housing and Homelessness

Greater Sudbury has shown both positive and negative trends with respect to its housing and homelessness situation. As of 2006, GS residents were slightly less likely than their provincial counterparts to be renters; less likely to spend more than 30% on shelter and were far less likely to be priced out of the housing market compared to residents residing in other comparably-sized cities.

Unfortunately, the city's slightly improved apartment vacancy rate – though still low – has not translated into lower social housing wait lists. In fact, Greater Sudbury has experienced a slight increase in its social housing wait list with the average wait time for a unit approximating 19 months.

In terms of homelessness, an updated report by the Social Planning Council indicates that approximately 445 individuals are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Greater Sudbury at any given time. Demographically speaking, 41% of homeless persons are girls or women, 32% are Aboriginals, and 79% are adults between the ages of 20 and 59.

In response to what has become a chronic problem with homelessness, Greater Sudbury has incorporated a strategic response. Based on a report by a Solutions Team appointed by City Council in 2007 the City has adopted a "Housing First" strategy.

Emanating from best practice literature, Housing First focuses on finding or stabilizing housing for those who are homeless or at risk. Once housed, and offered ongoing support by case managers, individuals and families are linked to the community supports that help them address other issues like education, training, access to mental health supports etc.

A unique network that brought together service providers from nine diverse agencies in a joint proposal to the City was successful in receiving municipal funding. The Network ensures that the diverse population has its needs met while reducing duplication of service or losing individuals through cracks in the system.

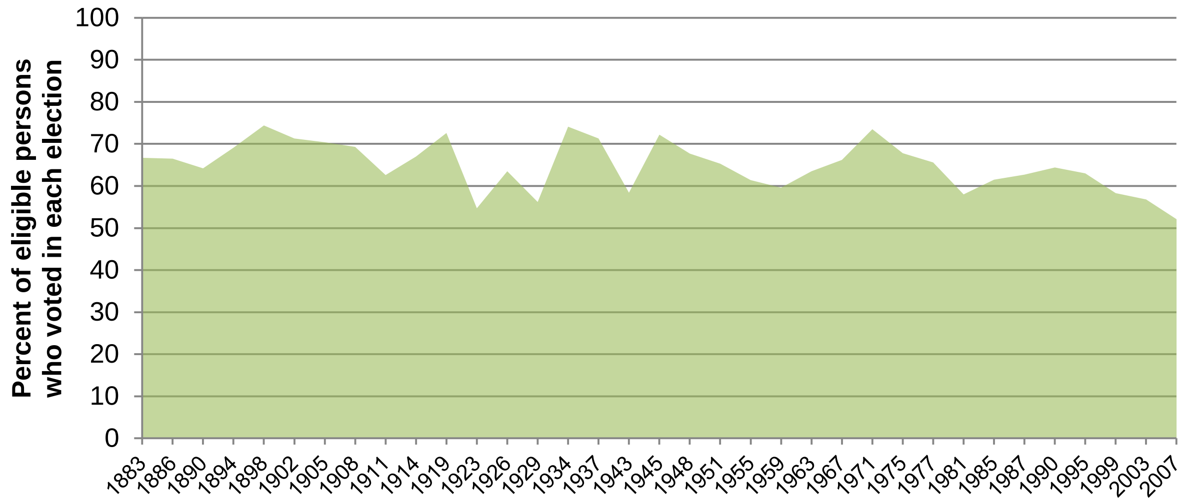
Most recently the community has engaged in developing the Map to Housing First – an easy to use visual wall chart of services offered and contact names. The Map is linked to www.nowrongdoor.ca that provides more extensive information on housing and homelessness. The work on homelessness is being closely linked to the implementation of the local poverty reduction strategy in Greater Sudbury. It is clear that being coordinated and integrated is key to meeting the needs of those most marginalized in our community.

Chapter 6 - Electoral Participation in Ontario

Decline in Participation Rates

Recent elections have shown a steady decline in voter turnout across all levels of elected office in Canada. The historic pattern of voter turnout in Ontario elections has often been variable with multiple periods of significant decline (Figure 6.1). But since 1990, there has been another period of steady decline in Ontario, and the last election in 2007 broke the record of the lowest voter turnout with only 52.1% of electors casting a ballot.

Figure 6.1 - Voter turnout, Ontario General Elections, 1883-2007



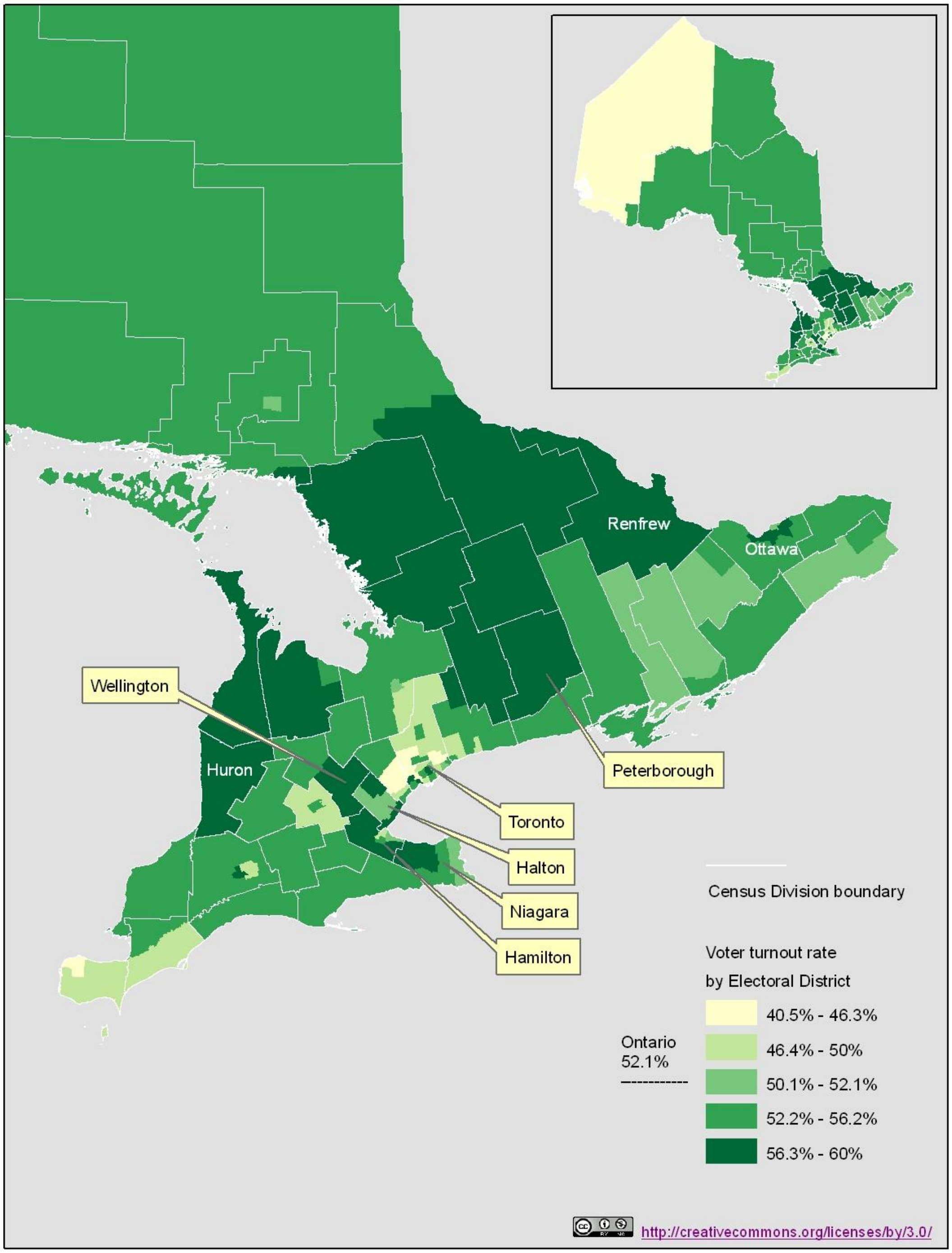
Data Source: Elections Ontario

A map of voter turnout in Ontario in the last election shows that there are some clear geographic patterns (Map 6.1). There are two "belts" of high voter turnout, with the first stretching across the mainly rural part of central Ontario, from the Huron Census Division in the west across Georgian Bay and all the way east to the Renfrew and south to Peterborough. Another belt surrounds Hamilton's central area, with high voter turnout in some of Hamilton's suburbs and further south into parts of Niagara and further north into most of Wellington and east into parts of Halton. Some of the ridings in these Census Divisions such as Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale, Burlington and Oakville are much wealthier than their neighbouring communities with lower voter turnout.

Toronto has a patchwork of rates, with some of the areas of very high voter turnout, such as Parkdale-High Park and Don Valley-West that be attributed to very competitive races between candidates. Some ridings in Ottawa also have high rates attributable to close outcomes. These close races both attract more media coverage and voter interest, and along with the additional resources marshalled by the parties, more electors take the time to cast their ballots.

The three ridings with the lowest turnout were Markham-Unionville (40.5%), Windsor West (41.0%) and Scarborough-Rouge River (41.8%)

Map 6.1 – Voter turnout by riding, Ontario General Election, October 10, 2007



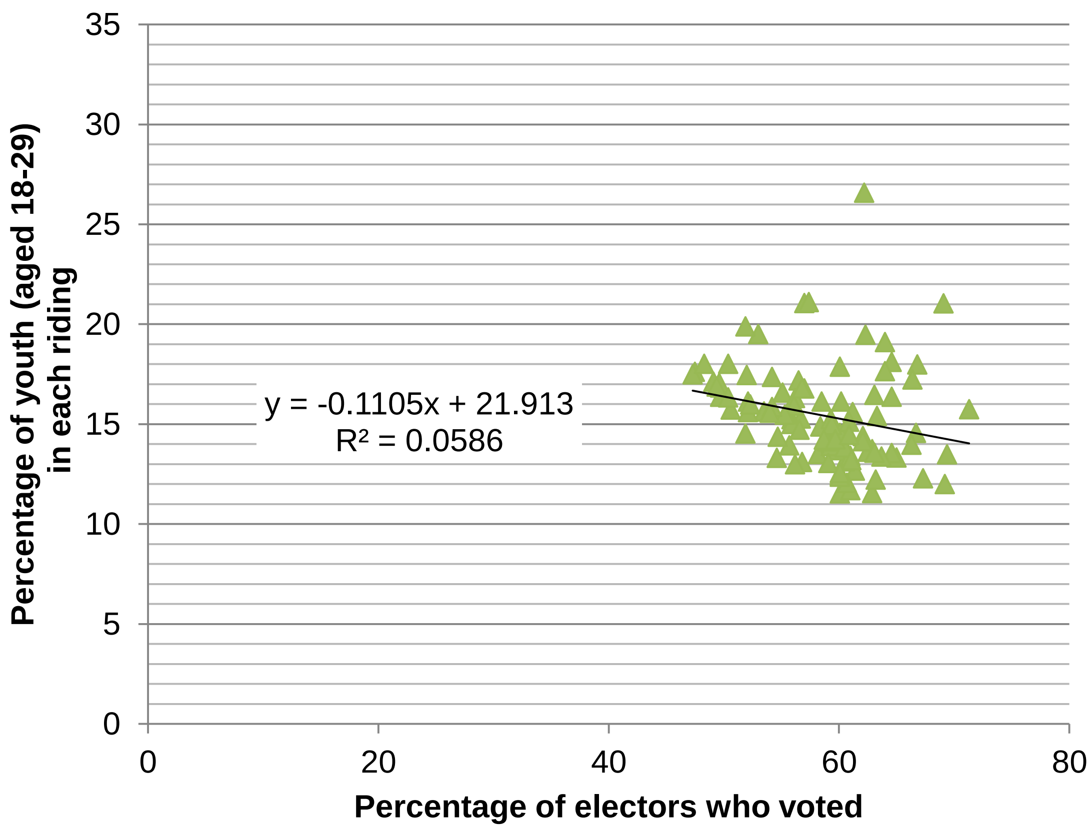
Source: Elections Ontario

Produced by Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010

Lower Rates of Voter Turnout Among Poor

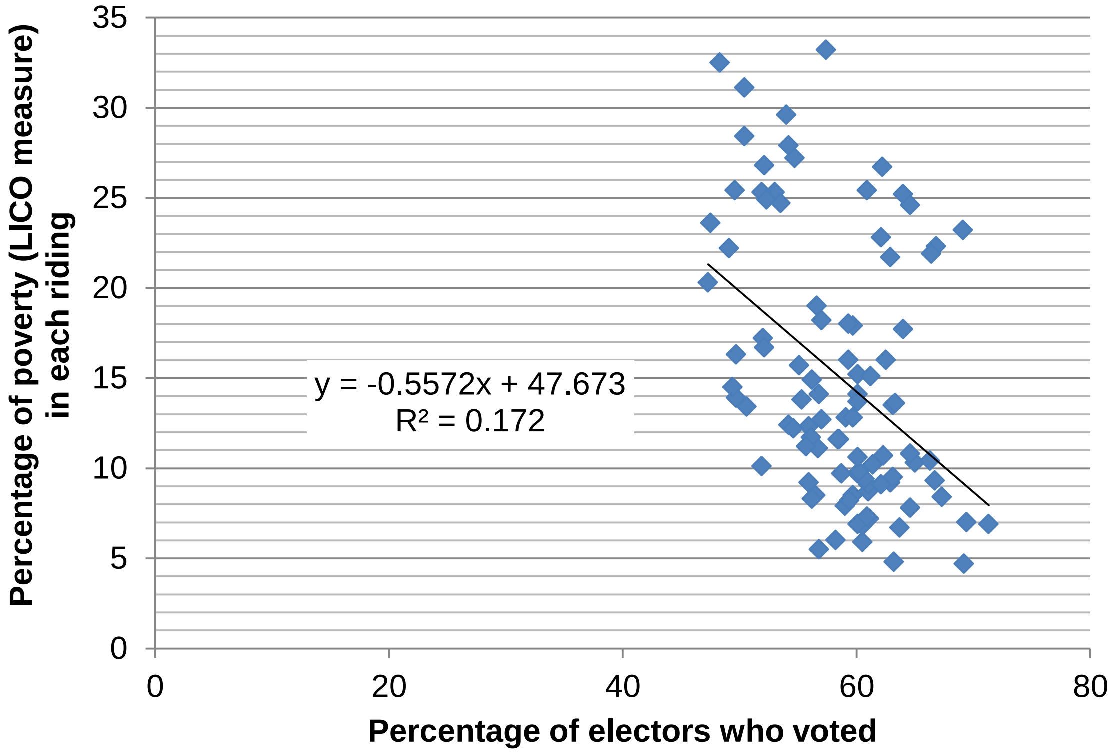
Statistics Canada produces Federal Electoral District Profiles, which aids in correlating demographic characteristics of federal ridings with the voter turnout in federal elections. Simple scatter plots of voter turnout with poverty and proportion of youth in each riding shows that high rates of poverty is more highly correlated with low voter turnout than proportion of youth in each riding (Figure 6.2 and 6.3). This analysis however is limited in part because it only looks at data at the riding level, although within each riding there are hundreds of neighbourhoods each with very different income levels and turnout rates.

Figure 6.2 – Scatter plots of voter turnout vs. proportion of youth, Ontario ridings, 2008 Federal Election



Data Sources: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census and Elections Canada

Figure 6.3 – Scatter plots of voter turnout vs. prevalence of poverty, Ontario ridings, 2008 Federal Election



Data Sources: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census and Elections Canada

In the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton's Social Landscape report, they produced a map of voter turnout for the central riding of their city by polling area. They showed that there were more areas of lower voter turnout in the parts of the riding with high rates of low income. Further research could repeat this analysis in other ridings to determine which ridings in Ontario have the highest correlations between high rates of poverty and low voter turnout in their polling areas.

There are numerous American studies showing the correlation between income inequalities and declining voter turnout. "Income has been shown to have strong, consistent effects on voter turnout, with individuals with high income exhibiting significantly higher rates of turnout and other kinds of political participation than those at the lower end of the income spectrum."[21]

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[21] Kim Nguyen and James Garand. "Income Inequality and Voter Turnout in the American States: 1960-2004" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the APSA 2008 Annual Meeting, Hynes Convention Center, Boston, Massachusetts, Aug 28, 2008.

The link between income and voter behaviour has been less studied in Canada and arguably not even on the radar in the public discourse. In Canada, voter's age has been the leading factor that has been put forward to explain the decline in voter turnout. "While rates of non-voting among people born prior to 1970 have remained fairly steady in elections since 1988, those of the post-1970 generation have declined markedly. Non-voting increased by 14 percentage points between 1993 and 2000 for the post-generation X cohort."[22]

Andre Blais, a leading Canadian elections scholar, also argues that increasing education is dampening declining voter participation as persons with higher education are more likely to vote. "The increase in educational attainment has prevented turnout from decreasing even more."[23] Blais et al.'s study of declining voter turnout in the last 50 years (ibid) actually showed that income was a much stronger predictor of voter behaviour than education, and even some age cohorts. The only stronger factor was being born in the 1970s. But because they found that the impact of income has been stable over time, they chose not to focus on it.

Once generational effects are uncovered, they are generally stable from election to election; so for example unless strategies are found to help increase turnout rates among currently younger voters, the overall voting behaviour of that generation can be somewhat predictable from election to election. Income trends over time, on the other hand, are not as predictable so perhaps that is why they have not been as prominent in the public discussion about voter turnout.

After the 2000 federal election, Elections Canada commissioned a survey of over 5,000 persons to deepen their understanding of non-voters[24]. This study showed that household income was a statistically significant predictor of voter turnout in the 1993, 1997 and 2000 Federal elections. While age was found to be the demographic factor that influences voter behaviour by far, income was the second most important one, and was found to have a greater impact than education, immigration status, or years of residence in one's neighbourhood.

The analysis blamed in part administrative problems for the lower electoral participation of low income persons: "People of lower income are more likely to report not being on the list; problems making sure their names were on the list, and problems finding out where to vote."

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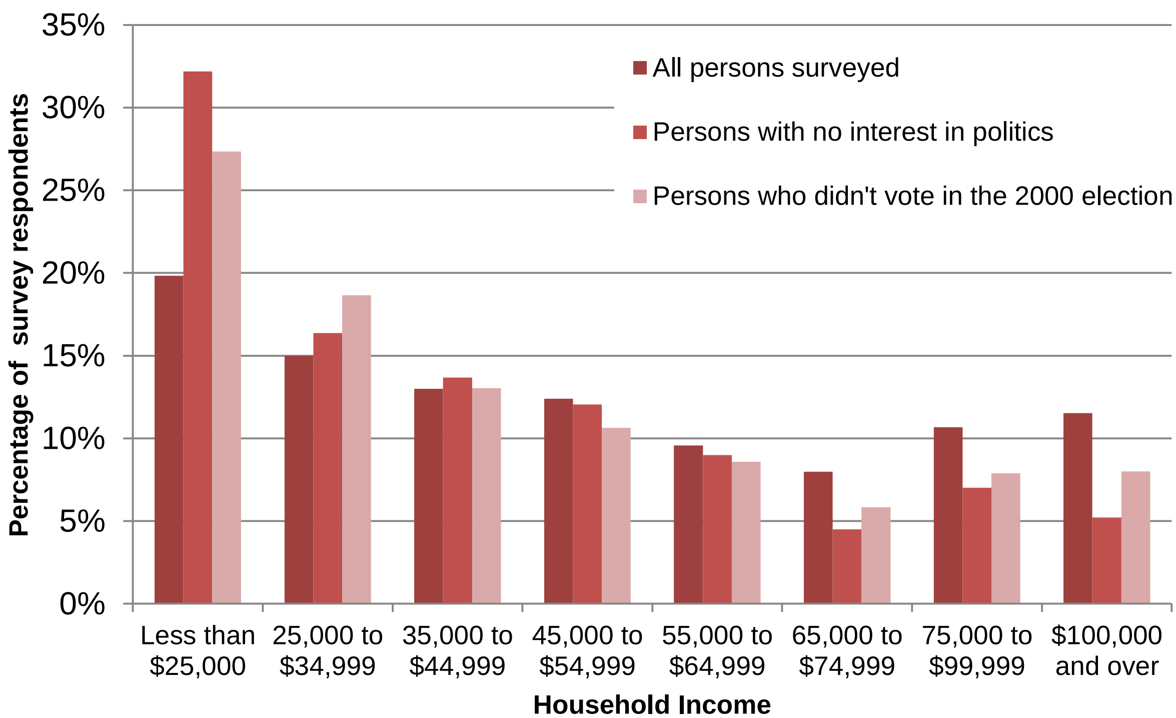
[22] Daniel Rubenson, André Blais, Patrick Fournier, Elisabeth Gidengil, and Neil Nevitte, "Does Low Turnout Matter? Evidence from the 2000 Canadian Election." Electoral Studies, 26 (2007): 589-597.

[23] André Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, Neil Nevitte, and Richard Nadeau, "Where Does Turnout Decline Come From?" European Journal of Political Research, 43 (2004), 221-236.

[24] Jon H. Pammett and Lawrence LeDuc, "Explaining the Turnout Decline in Canadian Federal Elections: A New Survey of Non-voters." Elections Canada, March 2003. http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=loi&document=index&dir=tur/tud&lang=e&textonly=false

The report however did not provide any further analysis of reasons for lower participation in this group. For this chapter, we have further analysed the dataset from this survey, and a chart produced from the data shows that lower income persons are much more likely to report no interest in politics at all as compared to higher income persons (Figure 6.4). This shows that the problem with low voter turnout among lower income persons is much deeper than overcoming administrative or logistical hurdles. The fundamental disinterest in the political process by so many lower income persons is one that will require broad and tailored strategies to better engage this population.

Figure 6.4 – Interest in the political process, by income, Canada

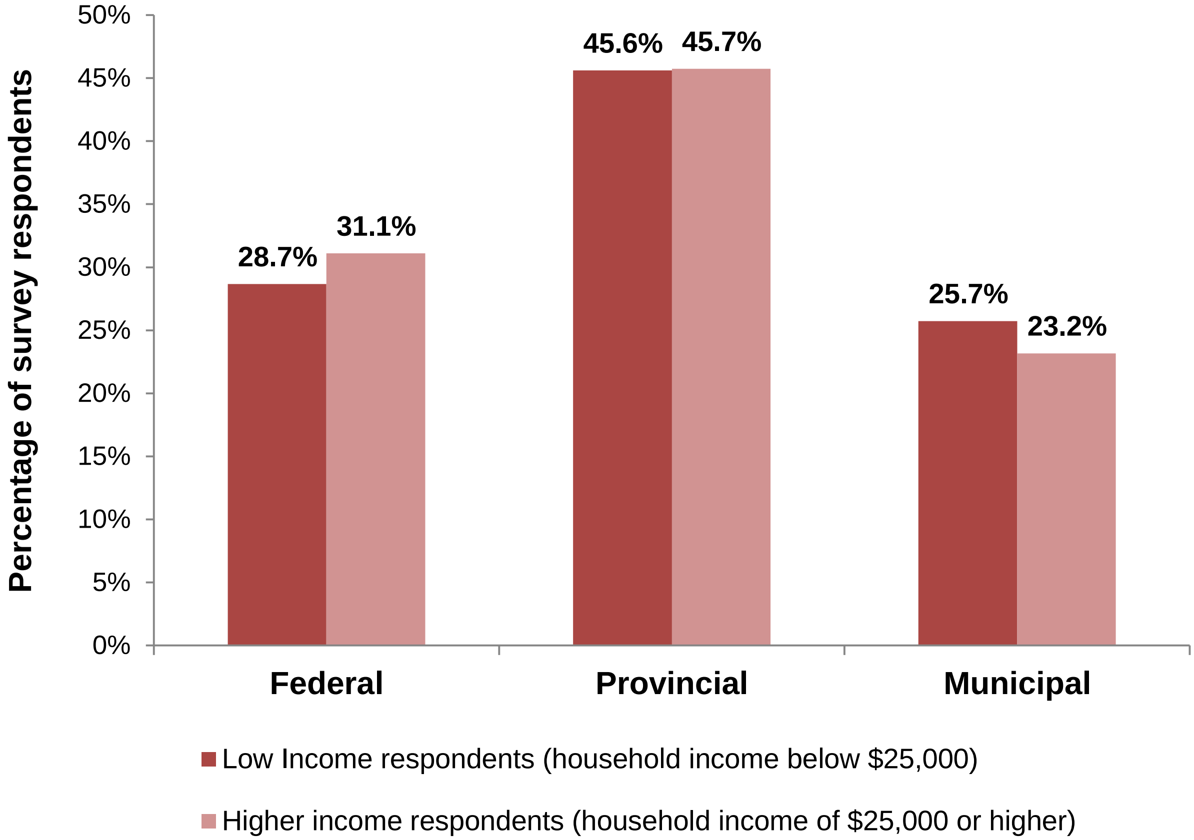


Data Source: Jon H. Pammett and Lawence LeDuc (2003). *Explaining the Turnout Decline in Candian Federal Elections: A New Suvery of Non-voters*. Elections Canada

Despite the clear relationship between income and voting behaviour, Elections Canada or Elections Ontario do not seem to have made any special efforts to engage greater numbers of low income persons in the electoral process. Elections Canada commissioned four working papers in 2006 to refine its outreach strategies, and low income persons were completely absent from their list of target groups. Yet clearly there is a need for more investigation into the link between voting apathy and income – and to develop strategies to combat it.

One additional finding from our analysis of the Survey of Non-Voters database is that while provincial politics garners the most interest of persons of all income levels (Figure 6.5), low income persons were more likely to show more interest in municipal politics than those of a higher income (and less of an interest in federal politics). This suggests that strategies aimed at increasing voter turnout in low income groups might be most successful if they focus on municipal elections.

Figure 6.5 – Interest in Federal, Provincial or Municipal politics by income, Canada



Data Source: Jon H. Pammett and Lawence LeDuc (2003). *Explaining the Turnout Decline in Candian Federal Elections: A New Suvery of Non-voters*. Elections Canada

Electoral Participation in Ontario – Local Stories

Toronto Women's City Alliance and Hamilton's Elect More Women

Women in Toronto make up 52% of the city's population but are only 25% of elected officials. In Hamilton the rate of city councillors is ever lower at just 12.5%. The reality for the diverse women of Toronto and Hamilton is that they face higher rates of poverty; violence in their homes; poor diets; homelessness; unemployment; precarious work; discrimination; lack of childcare services; and unaffordable and inaccessible public transit.

The Toronto Women's City Alliance is working to change this reality. They are a group of women who came together in 2004 with a common concern that women and girls' issues were disappearing from the planning and policy making at City Hall. It has since grown into a vibrant community representing a rich, diverse cross-section of Toronto's women. Through advocacy and public education and outreach, the Toronto Women's City Alliance works towards equality for women in Toronto through systemic institutional change.

To address many of the issues impacting women's lives, they have started a campaign for the establishment of a Women's Equalities Office at City Hall. This effort emerged in part from a project where in-depth interviews and focus groups with women were conducted with a broad range of women which revealed that many city services were not meeting their needs because they were not designed for women. In major cities across the world, Women and Gender Equality Offices have created systemic change towards equality by incorporating women's lived experience in their budgets, planning, and policy making. In cities like San Francisco, London, and Seoul these offices have been able to increase the employment rates of women; make transit safer and more accessible; and adapt policies to reduce the barriers for women's participation in municipal programs. A Women's Equalities Office would be a significant step towards making equality a reality for women of Toronto.

In Hamilton, the Elect More Women campaign is recruiting, supporting and training female candidates to run in the 2010 municipal elections. Supported by the City of Hamilton's Status of Women Advisory Committee and the Hamilton YWCA, the group aims to help Hamilton achieve the goal set by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities of 30% women in municipal seats by 2026.

For more information on Toronto Women's City Alliance: www.twca.ca
For more information on Elect More Women Hamilton: www.electmorewomen.ca

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

This report has provided a socio-demographic profile of Ontario's communities, focusing on diversity, aging, the economy and recession, housing and electoral participation in Ontario. It is intended as a resource for community groups, social agencies, policy-makers, researchers and others.

We have drawn mainly from Statistics Canada's Census, and incorporated indicators from additional sources. The report is unique in its use of the cartogram to tell the story of emerging trends in Ontario's 49 Census Divisions.

The following sources offer additional data and analysis on the key themes addressed in this report:

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

- Provincial and national data and reports on a broad range of housing issues
- Housing in Canada Online (HICO) - interactive tool that provides housing condition and affordability data for 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006
- www.cmhc.ca

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

- Provincial and national data and reports on a broad range of public policy issues
- Economic and labour force data and analysis
- www.policyalternatives.ca

Canadian Council on Social Development

- Provincial and national data and reports on a broad range of public policy issues
- Stats and facts sheets
- www.ccsd.ca

Community Social Data Strategy

- 2001 and 2006 Census data
- Interactive mapping
- Census tract data
- National and regional atlases
- www.csds-sacass.ca (no password required for most of this website)

Elections Ontario

- Election results
- Information on political contributions, candidate/party expenses
- www.elections.on.ca

Homeless Hub

- National, provincial and local research, data and information on housing and homelessness
- www.homelesshub.ca

Ontario Human Rights Commission

- Fact sheets, data and policy discussions on discrimination as its affects a variety of groups and across areas such as employment and housing
- www.ohrc.on.ca

Seniors' Info: a collaborative online resource

- Province of Ontario portal for all things senior
- Links to research and statistics
- www.seniorsinfo.ca

Statistics Canada

- Census tract profiles
- Community profiles (cities)
- Detailed information on various geographies
- www.statcan.gc.ca
- For immediate help navigating the website, call toll-free during office hours: 1-800-263-1136