

■ Is Northern Saskatchewan's Population Growing?

ICNGD Discussion Paper #1

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International Centre for Northern
Governance and Development



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Population is an important piece of information for community, government, nonprofit organizations, and businesses. At the basic level population is a measure representing the total number of people living in a given area, such as a town or First Nation. Although a simple measure, population data has substantial implications on community and regional development. Population, and in particular changes in population, illustrates patterns of growth (or decline), size of the labour force, and the need (or lack of need) for public services (e.g. education, health). This International Centre for Northern Governance and Development Discussion Paper focuses on examining the population growth rates in northern Saskatchewan based on the recent 2011 census of population.

Every five years Statistics Canada conducts the census of population to collect information from all households in the country. The census provides snapshot of the Canadian population on census day. Data collected from the census is compiled at multiple levels: community, region, provincial, and national. This discussion paper focuses on the census division level. A census division is a group of neighbouring communities and municipalities for the purposes of data collection. Statistics Canada creates the boundaries for the census divisions in consultation with the provinces. In Saskatchewan there are 18 census divisions (see Map 1). The boundary of the Northern Saskatchewan Administrative District parallels the boundary of Census Division 18.



Population Change in Saskatchewan

From 2006 to 2011, the province of Saskatchewan welcomed 65,000 new residents, representing a population growth rate of 6.7%. The rate of population growth in Saskatchewan was among the highest in Canada. Saskatchewan's population growth rate was higher than the national average and ranked among the top five in Canada (see Table 1).

Table 1. Population Growth Rates in Canada, 2006-2011

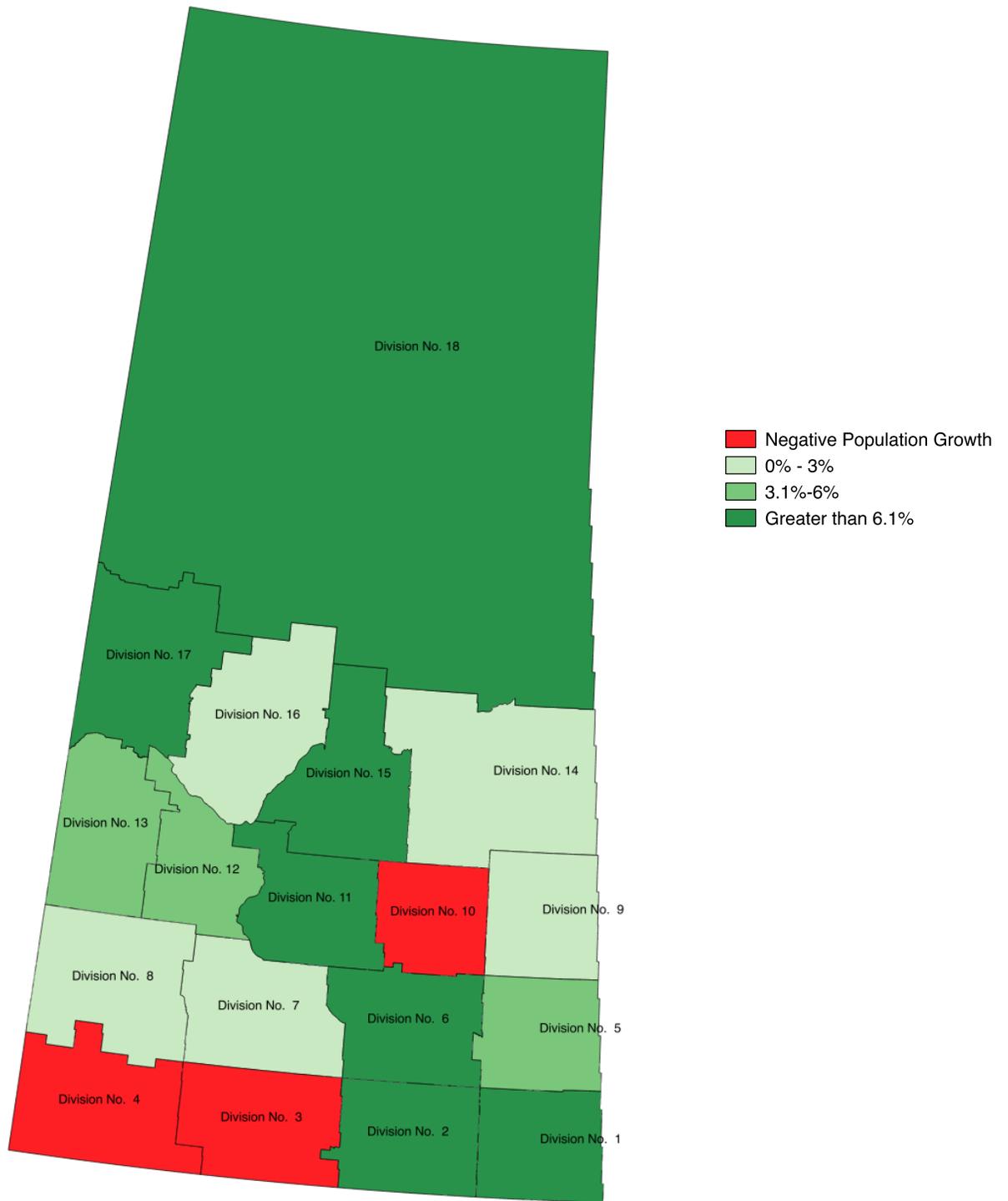
	Population Growth Rate, 2006-2011
Yukon	11.6%
Alberta	10.8%
Nunavut	8.3%
British Columbia	7.0%
Saskatchewan	6.7%
Canada	5.9%
Ontario	5.7%
Manitoba	5.2%
Quebec	4.7%
Prince Edward Island	3.2%
New Brunswick	2.9%
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.8%
Nova Scotia	0.9%
Northwest Territories	0.0%

Source: Statistics Canada (2013)

The rate of population growth between 2006 and 2011 was not uniform across all census divisions in the province. In fact, three census divisions witnessed negative population growth, or a decline in population. All other census divisions in the province recorded a positive population growth rate. Northern Saskatchewan, represented as Census Division 18, recorded the fourth highest rate of population growth in the province. Only Census Division 11 (Saskatoon and area), Census Division 17 (Lloydminster and area), and Census Division 2 (Weyburn and area) recorded higher rates of population growth.



Map 1. Population Change by Census Division, 2006-2011





Population Change in Northern Saskatchewan

Northern Saskatchewan communities and First Nations experienced a similar unevenness of population growth to census divisions. Of the 58 communities and First Nations in the region 27 recorded positive population growth rates, while 25 recorded negative population growth rates. Table 2 illustrates the dispersion of population growth rates in the region.

Table 2. Number of Communities/First Nations by Population Growth Rate, 2006-2011

Population Growth Rates	Number of Communities/First Nations
Less than 0%	25
0%	5
0.1% - 9.9%	9
Higher than 10.0%	18

Source: Statistics Canada (2013)

The population growth and decline can also be examined by community type. Northern Saskatchewan distinguishes five types of community: northern towns, northern villages, northern hamlets, unincorporated communities, and First Nations. The pattern of population growth rates from 2006-2011 varied across these types of communities (see Table 3). Communities experiencing negative population growth included: all northern towns, almost half of all northern hamlets, one-third of northern villages, and nearly half of all First Nations.

Table 3. Population Growth Rate by Type of Community in Northern Saskatchewan, 2006-2011

	Population Growth Rate, 2006-2011	Proportion of Communities with Positive Population Growth
Northern Towns	-5.37%	0%
Northern Villages	3.3%	64%
Northern Hamlets	2.0%	55%
First Nations	14.3%	66%

Source: Statistics Canada (2013)



Summary

Is northern Saskatchewan's population growing? Although a simple question, there are multiple answers. The Northern Saskatchewan Administrative District, as represented by Census Division 18, witnessed an increase of 2,628 people between 2006-2011. This represents a population growth rate of 7.8%. The population growth rate in Northern Saskatchewan was higher than both the provincial growth rate (6.7%) and the national growth rate (5.9%) during the same time period.

On the other side of the coin, population growth rates in northern Saskatchewan communities and First Nations are uneven. Although the region's population growth was positive, twenty-five communities and First Nations experienced negative population growth rates. Communities experiencing negative population growth included: all northern towns, almost half of all northern hamlets, one-third of northern villages, and nearly half of all First Nations.

Population data is an important element in community and regional planning. Community and First Nation leaders, government representative, service providers, and industry need to examine how the increases and decreases in population may influence their activities.

Further Information

- Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics - <http://stats.gov.sk.ca>
- Saskatchewan Northern Administrative District - <http://www.saskatchewan.ca/live/first-nations-citizens/economic-development/northern-administration-district>
- Statistics Canada 2011 Census Profiles – <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
- International Centre for Northern Governance and Development – www.usask.ca/icngd

About the Author

Ryan Gibson is an ICNGD Centre Member and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Saint Mary's University (Halifax, Nova Scotia). Ryan's research focuses on rural and regional development, governance, philanthropy, and public policy. Ryan is a former president of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (www.crrf.ca) and a board member with the Canadian Community Economic Development Network of Canada (www.ccednet-rcdec.ca). For more information visit www.ryangibson.org.



International Centre for Northern Governance and Development

With an emphasis on innovation, the goal of the International Centre for Northern Governance and Development (ICNGD) is to further research, graduate training, and capacity building around the issues of governance and development – economy, environment, social and health – in partnership with northern and Aboriginal communities, industry, and government.



International Centre for Northern
Governance and Development

ICNGD draws together an impressive network of researchers from not only the University of Saskatchewan, but also the Circumpolar world, to address questions of governance and development in the North. The Centre provides a powerful forum for partnerships among northern communities, including First Nations and municipal; provincial, and federal governments; industry stakeholders, and; the university community. The North has often led the way in developing partnerships, from local to international, that foster mutual understanding, cooperation and capacity building which together seeks prosperity for all.

ICNGD Discussion Paper Series

As part of the ICNGD's mandate to share knowledge on topics of interest to northern Saskatchewan the Centre has created a discussion paper series. The papers are designed to highlight emerging statistics, trends, and topics for Northern Saskatchewan. Each discussion paper is designed to be brief and provide hyperlinks where further information can be obtained.

ICNGD welcomes comments on the discussion papers and suggestions of paper topics. Please contact the Centre at (paola.chiste@usask.ca) to discuss the discussion papers further.