

The Return Migration Patterns of Canadian Seniors: Insights from the 1991 Census Cohort Study

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Roughly 1/3 of all people leave their birth province at some point in their lives to seek opportunities in other parts of Canada (or beyond, although we are unable to look at this in more detail). It is likely struggling local economies, or a mismatch between a person's skill set and the local opportunities they face that leads them to leave. Many probably did not find the greener pastures they sought, whereas others spent a large part of their adult lives in their new destination.

This does not necessarily mean that will remain in their new destination. As these people retire, however, the need for job opportunities subsides, and it is possible that high rates of youth out-migration in the past will result in return migration in the present and future. Using a unique dataset where 1991 census data are linked to annual place of residence data from 1986-2008, we are able to assess the prospect of a return migration boom by province of birth. Projected return migration patterns will be presented for several birth cohorts, including the baby boomers.

Results show wide differences in the propensity to out-migrate, but similarly low propensities to return migrate. This suggests that there is unlikely to be a wave of returning baby boomers in the near future.