

# CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE ARCTIC

Designed by Noreen Hosny



We tend to think of the Arctic as an unchanging landscape of ice and snow, but...

The Arctic, a region home to nearly **10 million people**, is on the move.

Each Arctic country, city, and village is different. Arctic communities differ in population size, growth rates, settlement structures, fertility, epidemiological, and migration patterns. Let's learn how Arctic populations are changing and moving.

## HOW DO DEMOGRAPHICS CHANGE?

### A HEALTH & EPIDEMIOLOGICAL MORTALITY TRANSITION

Mortality shifts away from infants, children, and mothers impacted by communicable and infectious diseases to degenerative and lifestyle causes of death in older ages.



### FERTILITY TRANSITION

Shift from high births to more controlled fertility

### AGE TRANSITION

Older average age and relatively more people in the older ages than younger age groups



### MIGRATION TRANSITION

Overpopulation in rural areas leading to out-migration to urban areas

### URBAN TRANSITION

More and more of the population resides in urban areas that centralize economic activity

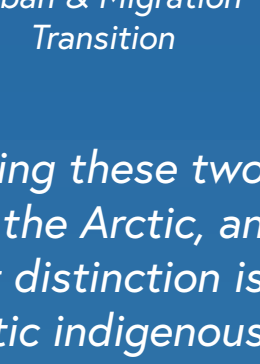


## HOW ARE DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE ARCTIC CHANGING?

Arctic population change consists of two components: **natural increase**—based on health, fertility, and age transitions; and **net migration**—based on migration and urban transitions.



Natural Increase



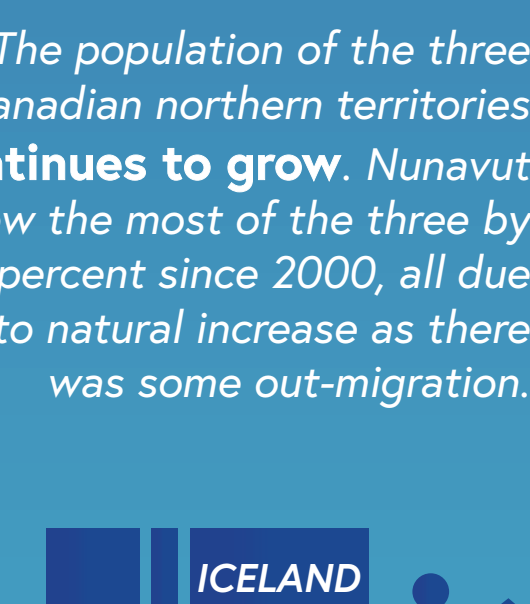
Urban & Migration Transition



When analyzing these two components in the Arctic, an important distinction is between Arctic indigenous populations and others. Arctic indigenous populations tend to have higher birth and death rates, larger families, younger age structures, and reside more in rural areas.

## LET'S TAKE A TRIP AROUND THE ARCTIC TO SEE HOW EACH REGION CHANGED SINCE 1990.

The population of **Alaska** grew by **one-third** because of higher natural increase and moderate out-migration. There has been net out-migration from Alaska since 2012, and in 2017, the population of the state declined for the first time in three decades.

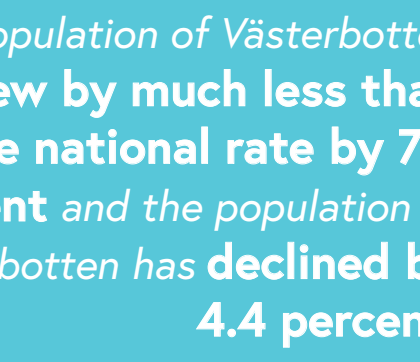


There has been considerable **population growth of 38 percent** in **Iceland**. In 2017, there was the highest ever recorded migration into the country of 14,929 persons, equivalent to more than 4 percent of the population.

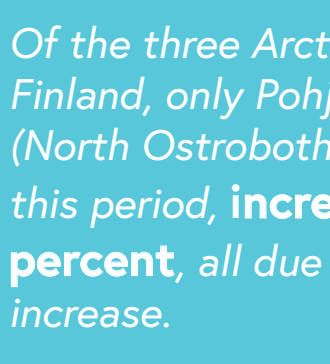


KINGDOM OF DENMARK

The populations of the three Arctic regions **increased only slightly**, Nordland by 1.6 percent, Troms by 13.6 percent, and Finnmark by 2.7 percent.



NORWAY



SWEDEN

The population of Västerbotten grew by much less than the national rate by **7.3 percent** and the population of Norrbotten has **declined by 4.4 percent**.

Of the three Arctic regions of Finland, only Pohjois-Pohjanmaa (North Ostrobothnia) grew over this period, **increasing by 18 percent**, all due to natural increase.



FINLAND



RUSSIA

The population of the Russian north adjusted to post-Soviet economic conditions by **declining by 20 percent**, and a number of settlements were either closed or abandoned.

## WHERE IS THE ARCTIC HEADING?

Common trends seen in nearly all Arctic regions in the future areas:



aging populations



more balanced gender ratios



urbanization from educational and job opportunities



depopulation of smaller settlements

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Policy makers need to be aware of these demographic trends when planning for the future. Demographics aren't the only changes the Arctic is facing. Climate changes like ice melt, permafrost thaw, shoreline erosion, and changing weather patterns



MIGRATION IN HARMONY  
Research Coordination Network

Heleniak, T., Turunen, E., & Wang, S. (2020). Demographic Changes in the Arctic. In The Palgrave Handbook of Arctic Policy and Politics (pp. 41-59). Palgrave Macmillan.  
Heleniak, T. (2020). The future of the Arctic populations. Polar Geography, 1-17.