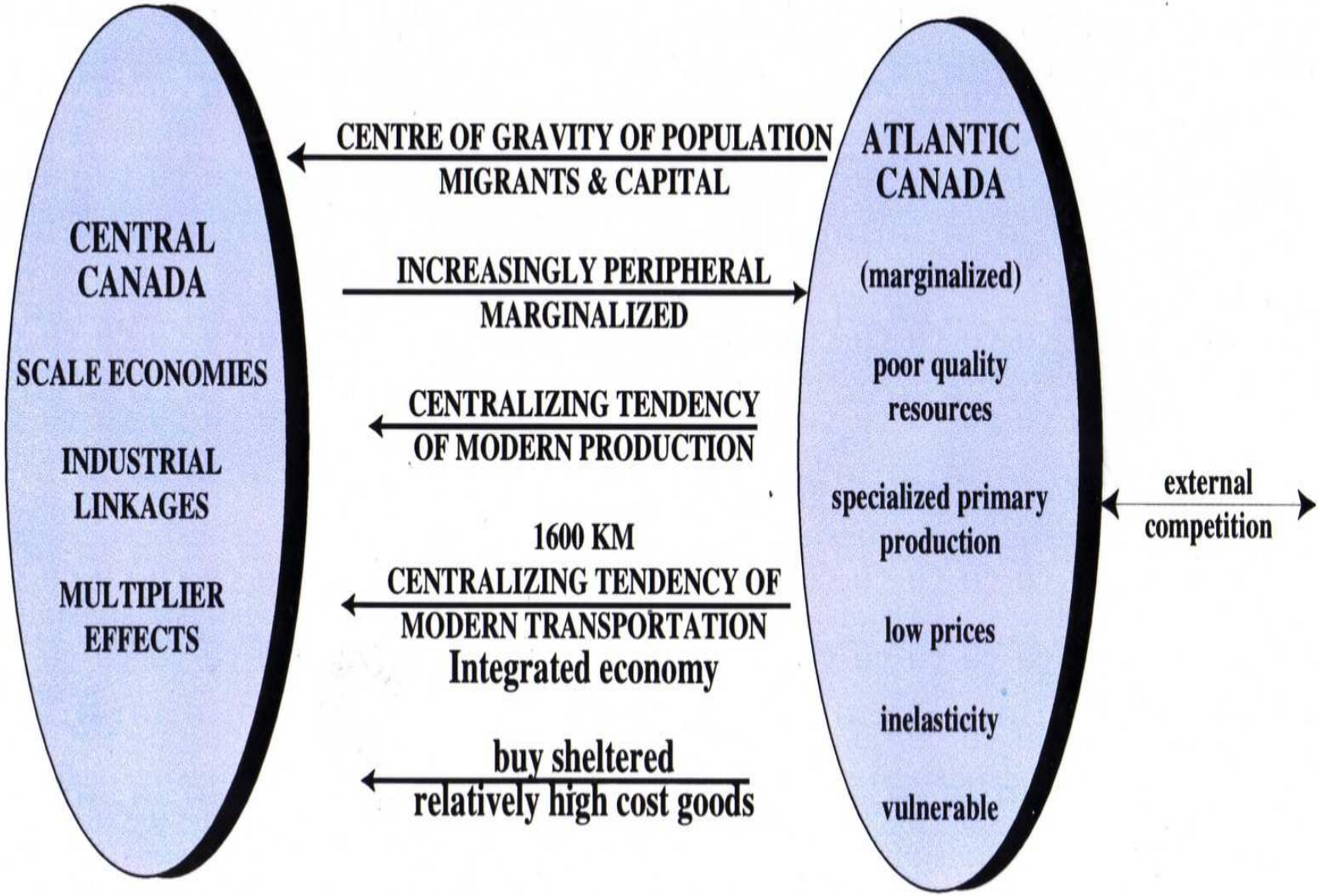
ATLANTIC CANADA

- Area: 540,000 sq. km – 5.4% of Canada
- Population: 2,285,000 – 7.7% of Canada
- French speakers: 10.6% of the population
- Aboriginals: 2.5% of the population
- 5.5% of Canada's GDP (the lowest)
- Unemployment: 11% (the highest)
- Four provinces: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland & Labrador
- Main reasons for a weak economy
    1. The region's fragmentation – economic development costly
    2. Exhaustion of much of the resource base (both renewable and non-renewable)
    3. Small and dispersed population base – small market
    4. Far from Canada's and America's chief markets and population centres

ATLANTIC CANADA - DISPARITIES



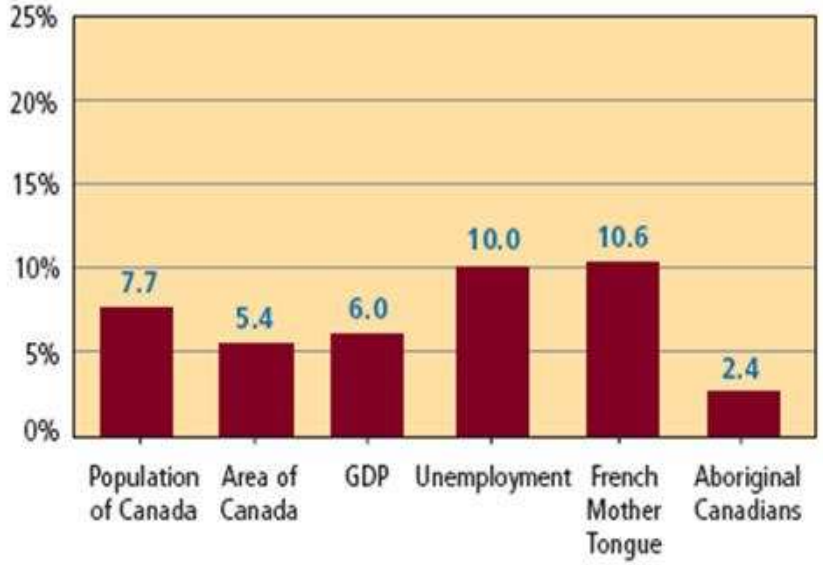


Figure 9.1 Atlantic Canada, 2006. Except for its oil and gas sector, Atlantic Canada has a weak economy. All four provinces are considered have-not provinces and they receive equalization payments. The region has 7.2 per cent of Canada's population but produces only 6.0 percent of the country's GDP. The high rate of unemployment is another indication of its poor economic performance. Acadians account for the high number of French-speaking Canadians in Atlantic Canada, which has the second highest percentage by region in Canada. In 2001, Aboriginal peoples, however, formed only 2.4 per cent of the region's population.

Figure 9.1
Atlantic Canada, 2006

Topography and Climate

- Two topographic regions
    1. The Appalachian Uplands – Maritime provinces and Newfoundland
    2. The Canadian Shield – Labrador

- Climate – an important factor: a long north-south coastline (2,000 km)
- The Labrador Current – the main determinant of climate in Atlantic Canada

- Three climatic sub-zones
    1. Atlantic – Newfoundland, the Maritimes
    2. Sub-Arctic – the Labrador interior
    3. Arctic – Labrador coast

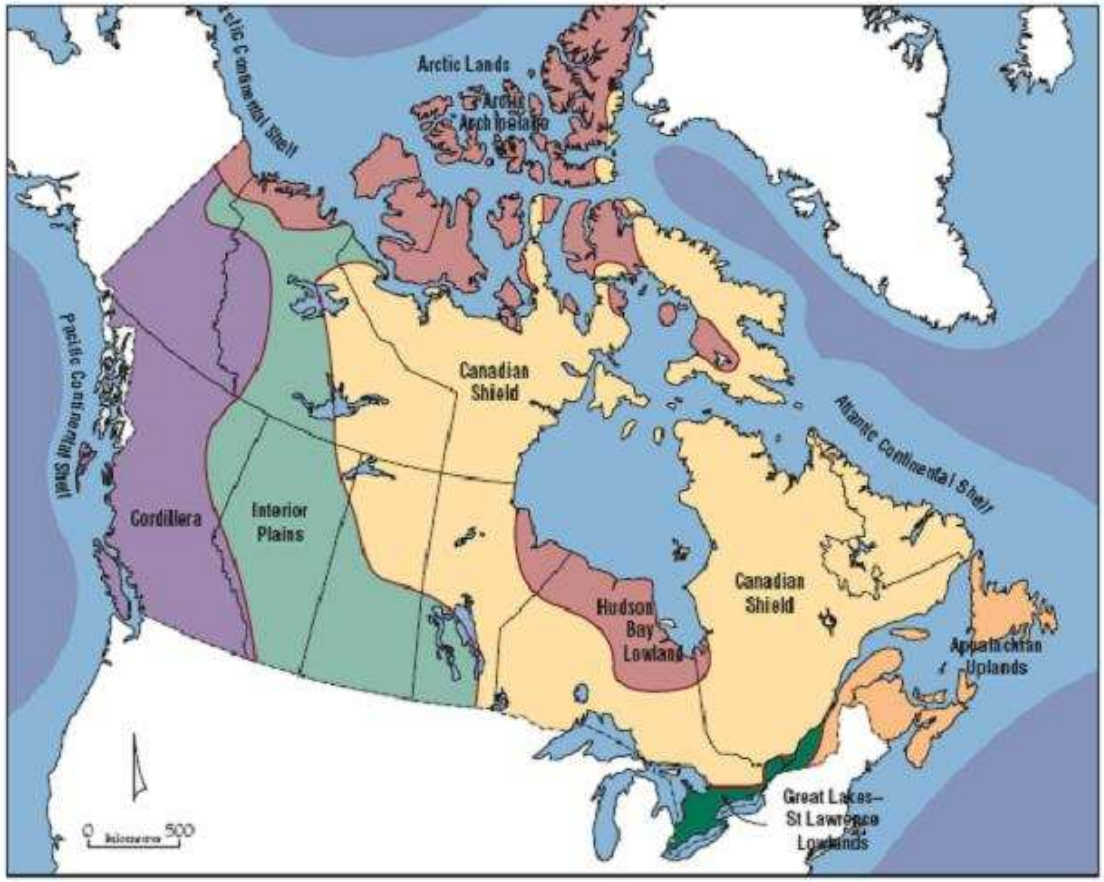


Figure 2.1 Physiographic regions and continental shelves in Canada. The Arctic Lands consist of a dozen large islands and numerous small islands that together are known as the Arctic Archipelago. The Canadian Shield is the largest physiographic region and extends beneath the Interior Plains, the Hudson Bay Lowland, and the Great Lakes–St Lawrence Lowlands. (Further resources: Student website, National Atlas section, Maps 2 and 3. Website instructions are found on p. xx.)

Figure 2.1 Physiographic regions and continental shelves in Canada

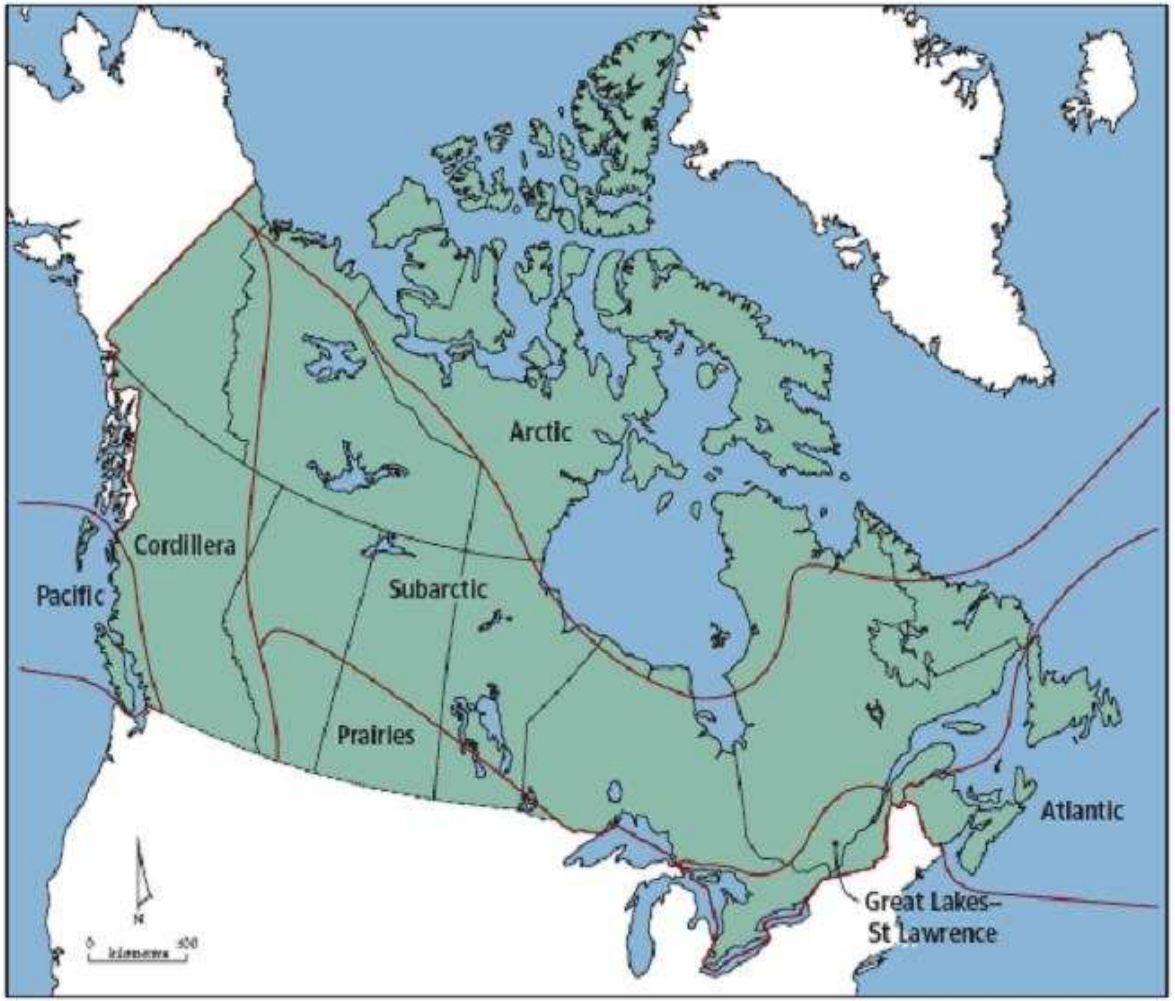


Figure 2.6 Climatic zones of Canada. Each climatic zone represents average climatic conditions in that area. Canada's most extensive climatic zone, the Subarctic, is associated with the boreal forest and podzolic soils. (Further resources: Student website, National Atlas section, Map 7. Website instructions are found on p. xx.)

Figure 2.6 Climactic zones of Canada

Historical Geography

- Before the Confederation – main events & trends
- The Confederation of 1867: Nova Scotia and New Brunswick join as the original provinces
- After the Confederation: P.E.I. – 1873, Newfoundland – 1949
- The main reason for Newfoundland not joining in 1867 - an independent streak of the region's population

- After 1867 – a gradual economic and population decline
    1. Rapid growth of Central Canada
    2. Less demand for Atlantic resources (e.g. timber)
    3. Loss of New England markets

- 1949: Newfoundland joins Canada – reasons
    1. Access to Canada's generous social programs
    2. Improved access to Central Canadian markets
    3. Less dependence on the fisheries industry

- Recent population trends

Atlantic Canada's Economy

- Main disadvantages
    1. Infrastructure more expensive to build and maintain
    2. Lack of economies of scale
    3. Transportation costs too excessive for companies & businesses to locate there

- Provincial barriers to trade: political fragmentation - too many provincial governments for too small a population
- Possible solution: a political union – not likely to happen
- Historically: a heavy reliance on the federal government
- Economic structure and employment
- Fishing industry

- Forestry industries
- Mining industries

- Megaprojects

    1. Hibernia energy industry developments
    2. Voisey’s Bay mine

- Agriculture – three main regions

    1. Prince Edward Island
    2. Saint John River valley, New Brunswick
    3. Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia

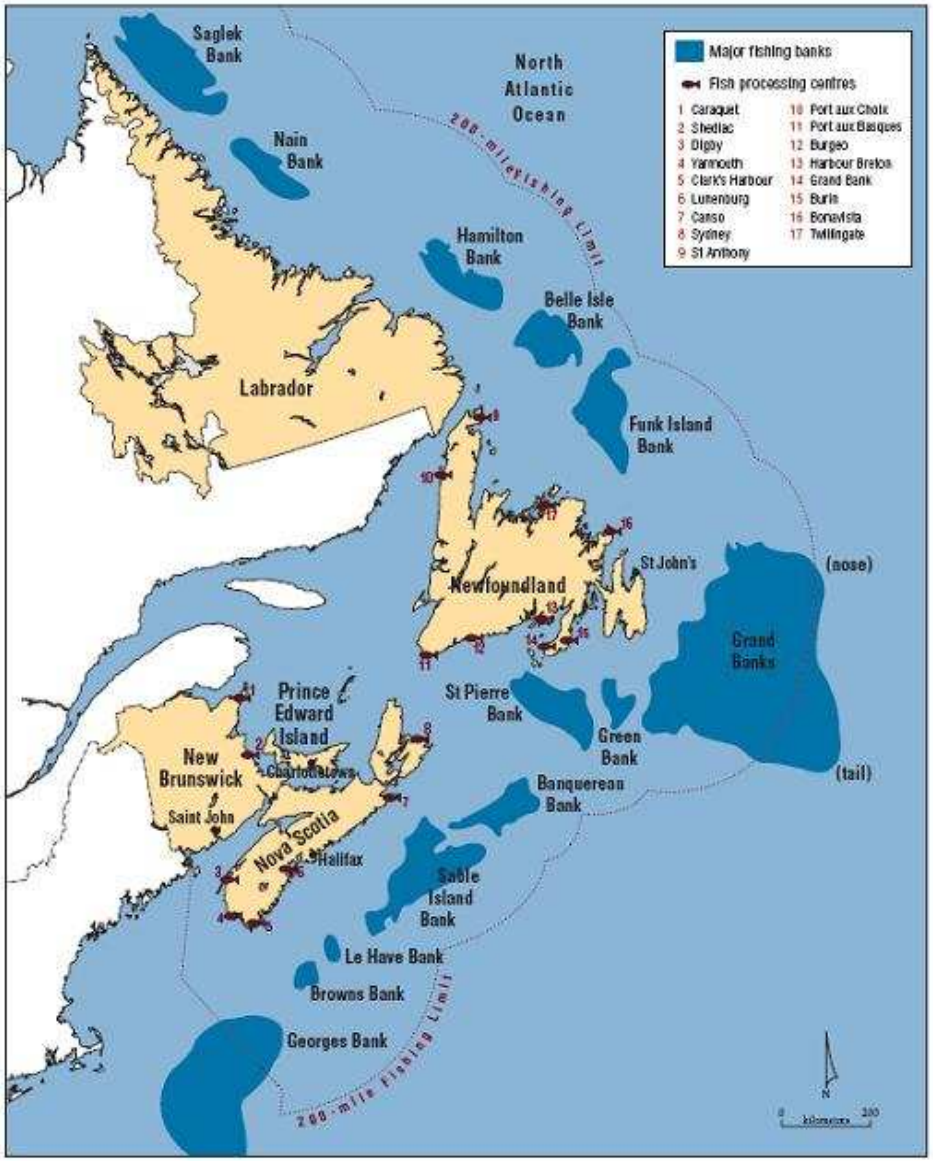


Figure 9.3 Major fishing banks in Atlantic Canada. The Atlantic coast fishery operates within a vast continental shelf that extends some 400 km eastward into the Atlantic Ocean, southward to Georges Bank, and north to Saglek Bank. Within these waters are at least a dozen areas of shallow water known as 'banks'. The Grand Banks of Newfoundland is the most famous fishing ground while Georges Bank contains the widest variety of fish stocks. (Further resources: Student website, National Atlas section, Map 26. Website instructions are found on p. xx.)

Figure 9.3

Major fishing banks in Atlantic Canada

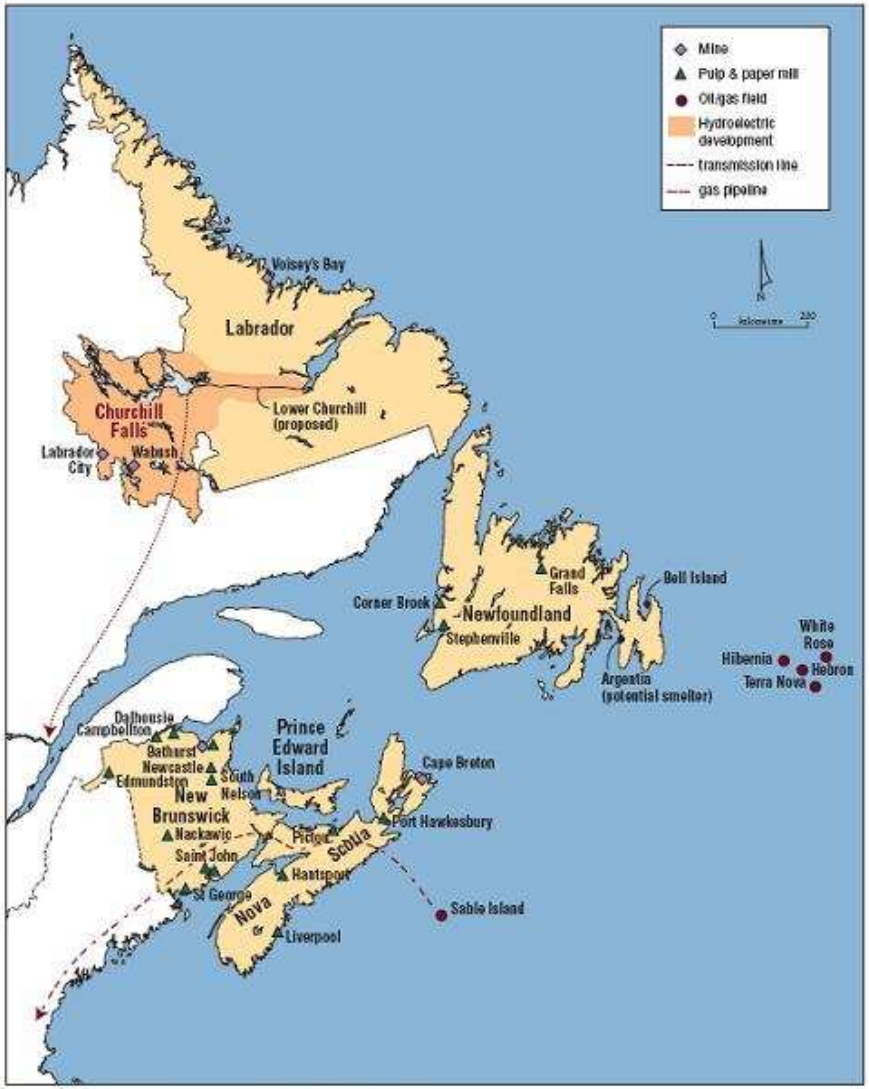


Figure 9.4 Natural resources in Atlantic Canada. Besides fish, Atlantic Canada contains important natural resources. Enormous iron and nickel deposits are located in Labrador, huge oil and gas reserves are found below the continental shelf, and one of Canada's largest hydroelectric facilities is situated on the Churchill River. Especially important for Newfoundland and Labrador is that, in late August 2007, Premier Danny Williams negotiated a stake in the Hebron-Ben Nevis offshore project, including a 4.9 per cent equity share that could amount to $16 billion over the 25-year life of the project (McCarthy, 2007).

Figure 9.4

Natural resources in Atlantic Canada

The Urban Patterns

- A highly dispersed settlement pattern
- Only about 53% urban: the lowest in Canada
- Coastal settlements dominate
- Only 4 cities over 100,000 in population (2002)
  - Halifax, Nova Scotia – 360,000
  - St. John's, Newfoundland – 172,000
  - Saint John, New Brunswick – 121,000
  - Moncton, New Brunswick – 118,000
- Halifax: character, importance
- St. John's: a fishing port, a new energy centre
- The most prevalent urban pattern: small towns, mostly administrative and service centres
- Many one-industry towns (mining towns)

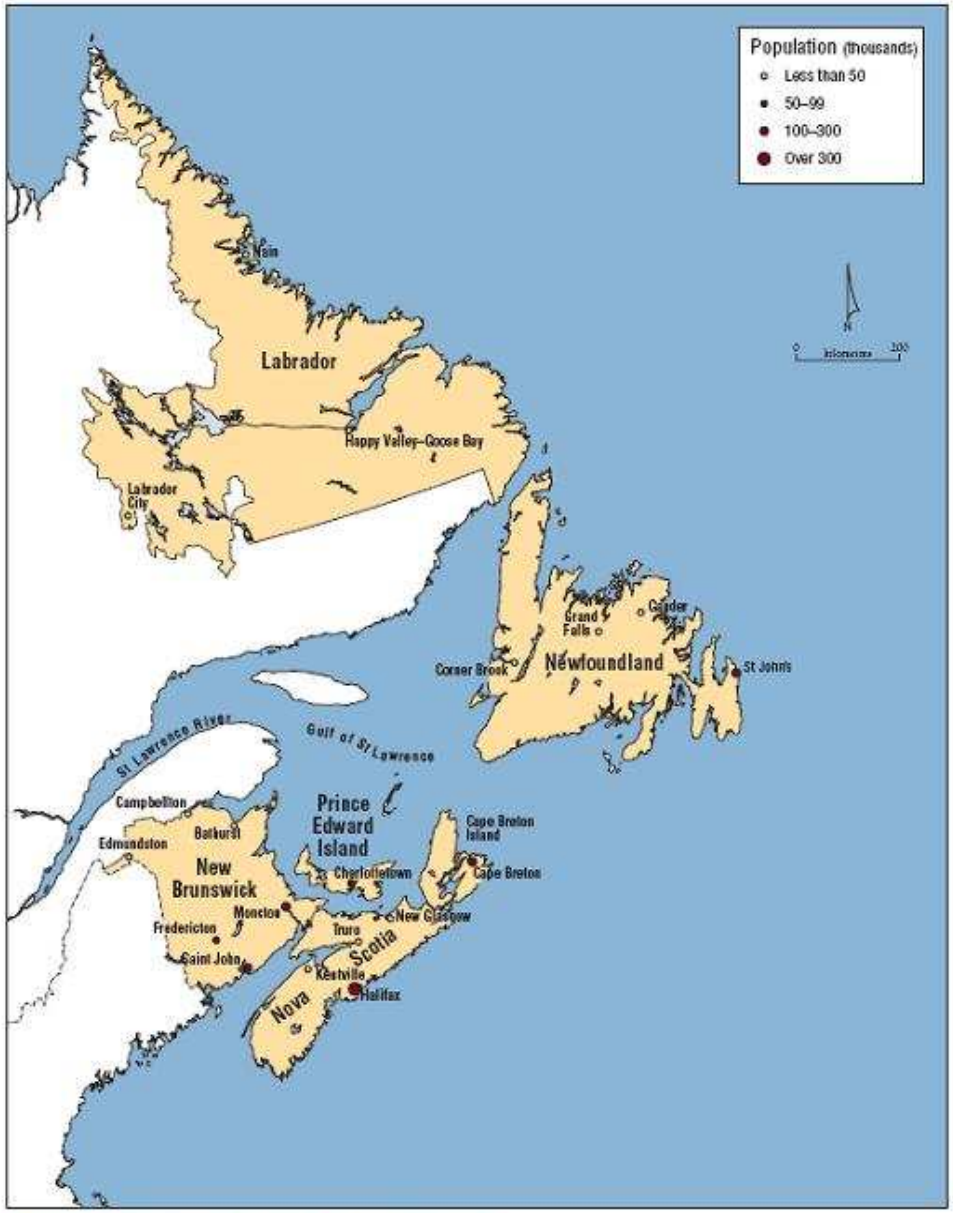


Figure 9.5 Major urban centres in Atlantic Canada. Atlantic Canada has few large cities and most urban centres are scattered across the region. Only five centres—Halifax, St John's, Moncton, Saint John, and Cape Breton—have populations exceeding 100,000, and Cape Breton is a political amalgamation of all the communities on Cape Breton Island.

Figure 9.5

Major urban centres in Atlantic Canada