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DEFINITIONS OF RURAL

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HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Several alternative definitions of “rural” are available for national level policy analysis in Canada.
- ◆ For each rural issue, analysts should consider whether it is a local, community or regional issue. This will influence the type of territorial unit upon which to focus the analysis and the appropriate definition to use.
- ◆ Different definitions generate a different number of “rural” people.
- ◆ Even if the number of “rural” people is the same, different people will be classified as “rural” within each definition.
- ◆ Though the characteristics of “rural” people are different for each definition of “rural”, in general, each definition provides a similar analytical conclusion.

Our recommendation

We strongly suggest that the appropriate definition should be determined by the question being addressed; however, if we were to recommend one definition as a starting point or benchmark for understanding Canada’s rural population, it would be the “**rural and small town**” definition. This is the population living in towns and municipalities outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres (i.e. outside the commuting zone of centres with population of 10,000 or more).



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Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.

1. Introduction

Rural policy analysts often start with the question, “*What is the size of the rural population?*” We suggest that an appropriate response is, “*The answer depends upon the issue you are addressing. Why are you asking?*”

An answer to this second question is important because several alternative definitions of “rural” are available for national and provincial level analysis in Canada. The challenge is to decide which one to use. The choice of rural definition matters because:

- different definitions generate a different number of “rural” people;
- even if the number of “rural” people is the same, different people will be classified as “rural” within each definition; and
- the characteristics of “rural” people are different for each definition of “rural.”

Almost every social, economic and environmental policy issue has a rural dimension.

The purpose of this bulletin is:

- to review various responses to “*Why are you asking about rural populations?*”
- to summarize and compare alternative definitions that have been used to delineate the “rural” population within the databases at Statistics Canada; and
- to offer alternative definitions of “rural” that would be appropriate to each reason for asking about the rural population.

2. Why are you asking? – alternative rural issues suggest different demands by analysts for “rural” data

Some issues are more appropriately addressed within a small, localized territorial unit – and the national picture should be obtained by adding together these small, localized territorial units. Other issues are more appropriately addressed within a larger (regional) territorial unit – and the national picture should be obtained by adding together these larger territorial units.

Analysts are encouraged to determine if their issue has a local, community or regional focus before searching for the number of rural individuals.

- **Policy issues with a neighbourhood or community focus**

Examples of issues with a local focus might include the availability of day care services, the quality of schools, the availability of fire protection services or the quality of the groundwater¹. For these issues, we suggest that analysts consider “neighbourhood-level” or “community-level” geographical units as the territorial unit of analysis. National and provincial overviews should add these territorial units together.

- **Policy issues with a regional focus**

Today, most labour market issues are considered at a “functional” or regional level because the labour force is relatively mobile within a commuter shed². This includes questions of economic diversification, labour force training and skills upgrading and promoting business starts.

Other issues require a relatively high population concentration in order to achieve economies of scale to provide the service – heart surgery or professional sports teams are two examples.

¹ In each of our examples, other geographical scales may also be appropriate. For example, sometimes the quality of groundwater is a very localised issue but in other cases, the whole aquifer or the whole river system may be the appropriate scale of analysis.

² A commuter shed is the area from which a workforce commutes to a (central) workplace.

For these issues, we suggest that analysts consider larger geographical units such as counties or functional labour markets or sub-provincial health regions. National and provincial analyses should add these territorial units together to present an overview.

3. Alternative Definitions of Rural

Much has been written on the concept of “rural.” The treatises of alternative views are numerous and varied. One longstanding debate is whether “rural” is a *geographical concept*, a location with boundaries on a map, or whether it is a *social representation*, a community of interest, a culture and way of life³.

This paper focuses on geographical classifications of “rural.” Within geographic spheres, there are also numerous debates concerning the meaning of “rural”⁴. Is “rural” a function of “population density,” “population size,” “distance from an urban area” or “distance to an essential service”? To what extent is the “regional context” (*labour market dynamics or settlement patterns*) a determining factor when “rural” boundaries are drawn?

In this section, we first describe the geographic “building blocks” and then compare the distinguishing features of six alternative definitions of “rural.”

3.1 The building blocks for classifying a geographic space as rural⁵

All but one of the definitions summarised below are constructed using building blocks or territorial units from the hierarchy of Census geography. Each territorial unit may be considered a “building block” for classifying geographic space. Since we are focussing on geographical classifications of “rural”, individuals are classified as “rural” if they live in a territorial unit that is classified as rural.

The smallest of these building blocks is the group of households that is enumerated by one census enumerator – an “enumeration area” (EA) (See Box A). EAs may be grouped into census sub-divisions (CSDs) which are incorporated towns and municipalities. CSDs may be grouped into census consolidated subdivisions (CCSs) to provide a broader context for a town or municipality. One important larger building block is the census division (CD) which is, for example, a county in eastern Canada.

As the building blocks become larger, the geographical scale expands from “neighbourhood” to “community” to “region”.

³ See, for example, Halfacree (1993) and Shucksmith (1994) for a summary of this debate and a presentation of the arguments in support of “rural” as a social representation.

⁴ See, for example, Fuller, Cook and Fitzsimons (1992).

⁵ In this paper, our focus is the designation of geographic space as “rural”. The same building blocks may be used for other designations of geographic space – such as tourism-destination communities or environmentally-sensitive areas or manufacturing-dependent regions, etc.

Box A: The geographic building blocks that are available for classifying geographic space as “rural”

Enumeration area: An enumeration area (EA) is the geographic area that is enumerated by one census enumerator. The number of dwellings in an EA ranges from 440 in large urban areas to 125 in other areas. All other geographic categories are built from groupings of EAs. In the 1996 Census of Population, there were 49,362 EAs.

Census subdivision: A census subdivision (CSD) includes municipalities (i.e. incorporated towns, rural municipalities, cities, etc. determined by provincial legislation) or their equivalent such as Indian reserves, Indian settlements and unorganised territories. In the 1996 Census of Population, there were 5,984 census subdivisions.

Census consolidated subdivision: A census consolidated subdivision (CCS) is a grouping of census subdivisions. The general case is where a small town (i.e. a CSD) is surrounded by a rural municipality (i.e. another CSD) and the two CSDs are grouped to form a CCS. In the 1996 Census of Population, there were 2,607 CCSs.

Census division: A census division refers to areas established by provincial law, which are intermediate geographic areas between the municipality (i.e. a CSD) and the province. Census divisions represent counties, regional districts, regional municipalities and other types of provincially legislated areas. In Newfoundland, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, provincial law does not provide for these administrative geographic areas. In these provinces, census divisions have been created by Statistics Canada in co-operation with these provinces to facilitate the dissemination of statistical data. In the Yukon Territory, the census division is equivalent to the entire territory. In the 1996 Census of Population, there were 288 census divisions.

Source: Statistics Canada (1999a).

3.2 Six ways of defining “rural” for national level analysis in Canada

For national level analysis in Canada, at least six alternative definitions of “rural” are available (see Box B):

- **Census rural** refers to individuals living in the countryside outside centres of 1,000 or more population;

- **Rural and small town** refers to individuals in towns or municipalities outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres (with 10,000 or more population). These individuals may be disaggregated into zones according to the degree of influence of a larger urban centre (called census metropolitan area and census agglomeration influenced zones (MIZ));
- **OECD (Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development) rural communities** refers to individuals in communities with less than 150 persons per square kilometre. This includes the individuals living in the countryside, towns and small cities (inside and outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres);
- **OECD predominantly rural regions** refers to individuals living in census divisions with more than 50 percent of the population living in OECD rural communities. This includes all census divisions without a major city;
- **Beale non-metropolitan regions** refers to individuals living outside metropolitan regions with urban centres of 50,000 or more population;
- **Rural postal codes** refers to individuals with a “0” as the second character in their postal code. These individuals live in areas where there are no letter carriers (i.e. residents go to a post office or corner postal box to pick-up their mail)⁶.

Each of these definitions emphasises different geographic criteria such as population size, population density, labour market context or settlement context (see Box B). In the case of the “rural and small town” definition and the disaggregation into metropolitan influenced zones, function is one criteria (in the sense of the way space is used – the degree of social and economic integration with a larger urban centre). The “rural” postal code definition stands alone – being based solely on Canada Post delivery mode.

A map for each definition is presented in du Plessis *et al.* (forthcoming).

⁶ Our discussion relates specifically to the situation existing at the time of the enumeration of the 1996 Census of Population. Since that time, Canada Post has changed all the rural postal codes in New Brunswick and most of the rural postal codes in Quebec. Thus, using the second character of the postal code as an indicator of a “rural” area will not be possible in all provinces in the future. We include the postal code option in this paper because it may remain a useful classification in some provinces. In addition, this classification has been used in recent research and thus our discussion tries to put this research into perspective. Statistics Canada (1999b) maintains a “Postal Code Conversion File” to convert postal code geography to the standard Statistics Canada geographic hierarchy of census subdivisions, census divisions and provinces.

Box B: Alternative Definitions of Rural

| Definition | Main Criteria, Thresholds and Building Blocks |
|---|--|
| Census “Rural Area” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population Size: Population living <i>outside</i> places of 1,000 people or more; <i>OR</i> • Population Density: Population living <i>outside</i> places with densities of 400 or more people per square kilometre. • Building Blocks: EAs |
| <p>“Rural and Small Town” (RST)</p> <p>Census <u>M</u>etropolitan Area and Census <u>A</u>gglomeration <u>I</u>nfluenced <u>Z</u>ones (MIZ)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Market Context: Population living <i>outside</i> the main commuting zone of larger urban centres (of 10,000 or more). <p>[Specifically, RST refers to the non-CMA/CA population, where a CMA is a census metropolitan area and a CA is a census agglomeration. A CMA has an urban core population of 100,000 and over (and a CA has an urban core population of 10,000 to 99,999) and CMAs and CAs include all neighbouring municipalities where 50 percent or more of the workforce commutes to the urban core (see Statistics Canada (1999a) for details)].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Market Context: MIZ disaggregates the RST population into four sub-groups based on the size of commuting flows to any larger urban centre (of 10,000 or more) • Building Blocks: CSDs (for RST and MIZ) |
| OECD “Rural Communities” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population Density: Population in communities with densities less than 150 people per square kilometre. • Building Blocks: CCSs |
| OECD “Predominantly Rural Regions” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement Context: Population in regions where more than 50 percent of the people live in an OECD “rural community.” • Building Blocks: CDs |
| “Non-Metropolitan Regions” (Beale Code Approach) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement Context: Population living outside of regions with major urban settlements of 50,000 or more people. Non-metropolitan regions are subdivided into three groups based on settlement type and a fourth based on location in the North. The groups based on settlement type are further divided into “metropolitan adjacent” and “not adjacent” categories. • Population Size: Non-metropolitan regions include urban settlements with populations of less than 50,000 people and regions with no urban settlements (where “urban settlements” are defined as places with populations of 2,500 or more) • Building Blocks: CDs |
| “Rural” Postal Codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Route Delivery Area: Areas serviced by rural route delivery from a post office or postal station. “0” in second position of a postal code denotes a “rural” postal code (also referred to as “rural” forward sortation area (“rural” FSA)). In 1996, there were 1,467 FSAs in Canada of which 192 were rural FSAs. • Building Blocks: Canada Post Geography. |

Sources: Ehrensaft, Philip (1990); Ehrensaft, Philip and Jennifer Beeman (1992); McNiven, Chuck, Henry Puderer and Darryl Janes (2000); Mendelson, Robert and Bollman, Ray D. (1998); OECD (1994); Statistics Canada (1999a); and Statistics Canada (1999b).

The level at which geographic space is classified as “rural” has implications for the application of each definition.

- *Census “Rural Areas”* are built from **EAs** (enumeration areas), which makes this definition particularly useful for considering very localised issues.
- *“Rural and Small Town” (RST)* and *MIZ* are built from **CSDs** (towns and municipalities). With these building blocks, they are useful for considering community-level issues, such as school location and municipal services.

RST (and MIZ) also provide an aggregation of individuals in a similar type of labour market in the sense that all RST residents live in the countryside or in small towns outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres.

- *OECD “Rural Communities”* are built from **CCSs** (groups of municipalities), which makes them relevant for issues that require broader definitions of community.
- *OECD “Predominantly Rural Regions”* and *Beale “Non-Metropolitan Regions”* are applied at the level of the **CD** (region). They are likely to be most useful for understanding regional level issues, such as economic development and labour market issues⁷.
- The *“Rural” Postal Code* definition is useful for analysing databases with postal code designations where comparisons need to be made to other information that has been tabulated by postal codes.

3.3 Other options

Assigning “degrees of rurality”

Rather than using one of the existing definitions, another option is to assign one (or more) “degrees of rurality” to each territorial unit. Analysts may make an assignment that is specific to a policy debate or a sub-national development issue.

Cross-classifying two definitions⁸

Du Plessis *et al.* (forthcoming) show that by cross-tabulating any two rural definitions, analysts can focus on a certain subgroup of a rural definition and the characteristics of

⁷ If analysts prefer a metro versus non-metro disaggregation, one option would be to classify Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) as “metro” and to classify non-CMA areas as “non-metro”. CMAs are centres with an urban core over 100,000 persons population plus all the neighbouring municipalities where 50 percent or more of the workforce commutes to the urban core (for details of the delineation, see Statistics Canada (1999a)). CMAs use CSDs as building blocks.

⁸ See Mendelson (2001) for a discussion of the advantages of cross-classifying geographies in socio-economic analysis, including examples of the cross-classification of census “rural areas” and MIZ.

individuals in each sub-group. For example, when we cross-classify census rural by RST, we obtain 3 distinct groups of rural individuals:

- Individuals living in the countryside outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres (LUC) (i.e. census rural and RST);
- Individuals living in small towns (1,000 to 9,999) outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres (i.e. census urban and RST); and
- Individuals living in the countryside within the commuting zone of larger urban centres (i.e. census rural and LUC).

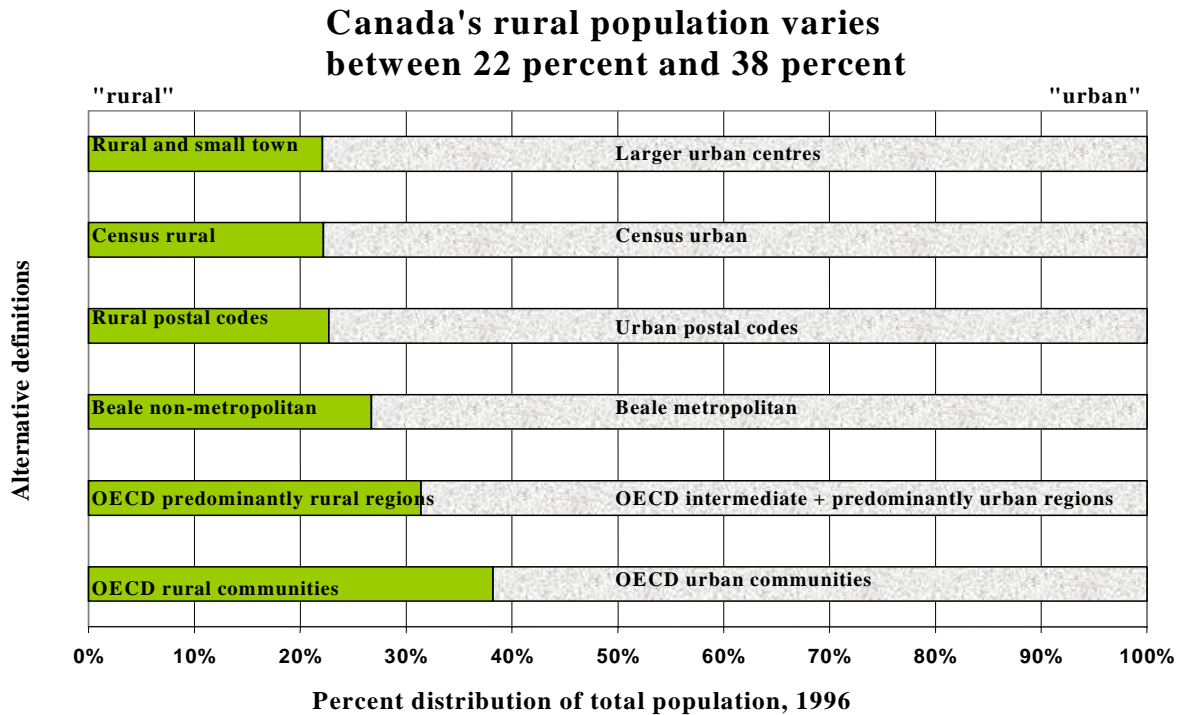
4. Definition matters

Here we ask the question, “Does definition matter?” How do these differences impact the results of “rural” research? What are the implications for “rural” policy analysis?

Definition matters for three reasons:

- 1. The size of Canada’s “rural” population differs** according to the rural definition that is chosen. Depending upon the definition chosen, Canada’s rural population may vary between 22 percent and 38 percent of Canada’s total population (Figure 1). Among the provinces and the territories, the share of the population that is rural ranges from 15 percent (RST in Ontario, Beale non-metropolitan in Ontario, and rural postal codes in British Columbia) to 100 percent (various definitions in Yukon, the Northwest Territories and in Nunavut) (Appendix Table A1).

Figure 1



Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1996. See text for explanation of each definition of rural.

2. Different people are classified “rural” with different definitions of rural. For example, 22 percent of Canada’s population (about 6 million persons) are classified as “census rural” and 22 percent are classified as “rural and small town” (Figure 1). However, only 4 million persons (68 percent) are included in both definitions. In Table 1, in the “census rural” row, we see that 68 percent of “census rural” are also “rural and small town” and in the “rural and small town” row, we see that 68 percent are also “census rural”. In some cases, only about one-half of the rural population in one definition is “rural” in another definition. For example, for (the row of) predominantly rural regions, we see that only 51 percent of the predominantly rural population lives in “census rural” areas (i.e. outside centres of 1,000 or more) and thus 49 percent live in centres of 1,000 or more.

Table 1. Degree of overlap of alternative definitions of rural, Canada, 1996.

| | Census rural | Rural and small town | OECD rural communities | OECD predominantly rural regions | Non-metropolitan regions (Beale) | Rural postal codes |
|---|--------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Reading across: for all individuals with this "row" definition of "rural", what percent also has the column definition of "rural"? | | | | | | |
| Census rural | 100 | 68 | 92 | 72 | 64 | 74 |
| Rural and small town | 68 | 100 | 99.6 | 86 | 80 | 80 |
| OECD rural communities | 54 | 58 | 100 | 78 | 65 | n/a |
| OECD predominantly rural regions | 51 | 60 | 95 | 100 | 79 | n/a |
| Non-metropolitan regions (Beale) | 53 | 66 | 92 | 92 | 100 | n/a |
| Rural postal codes | 72 | 78 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 100 |

Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1996.

3. The characteristics of individuals are different for each classification of rural. In general, however, each definition of rural provides a similar conclusion (e.g. rural people have lower employment rates and lower incomes than the Canadian average but the level of each characteristic differs for each definition of rural (Appendix Table A2)).

5. Some recommendations

We have compared several alternative definitions of “rural” and illustrated that each definition is different. The challenge for the policy analyst is to determine which definition to use. To figure this out, the first step is to return to the question, “*Why are you asking about “rural”?*” and to decide the size of territorial unit that has the “best fit” with the issue at hand.

- **Rural policy issues with a neighbourhood or community focus**

For these issues, we suggest that analysts consider small geographical units as the territorial units of analysis. For example, groupings of EAs may be appropriate and thus, at the national level, the “census rural” designation (see Box A) may be appropriate.

Alternatively, towns or municipalities may be appropriate and, at the national level, groupings of CSDs would be appropriate. Thus, the “rural and small town” definition and the OECD “rural community” definitions would be appropriate aggregations.

- **Rural policy issues with a regional focus**

For these issues, we suggest that analysts consider larger geographical units:

- One option is using counties (i.e. CDs) as the building block and thus groupings of similar CDs would provide national level information for individuals in similar types of labour markets. Thus, the OECD “predominantly rural regions” or the Beale “non-metropolitan” regions may be appropriate for rural policy analysis.
- Another option is represented by the “rural and small town” (RST) definition, which refers to all individuals outside the commuting zone of centres of 10,000 or more population. In this sense, all members of the RST population live in a “similar” type of labour market (for details of the delineation, see Statistics Canada (1999a), pp. 183 – 195). Thus, groupings of individuals within RST areas would provide national level information on individuals in a similar type of labour market.

The OECD Territorial Database uses “regions” within each member country as the unit of analysis (OECD, 1994). The OECD is clearly focussed on economic development – thus, “regions” are the appropriate unit of analysis. For analyses of rural economic development, the OECD adds together all “predominantly rural” regions.

6. Summary and conclusions

For each rural issue, analysts should consider whether it is a local, community or a regional issue. This will influence the type of territorial unit upon which to focus the analysis and the appropriate definition to use.

Definition matters. Different definitions generate a different number of “rural” people. Even if the number of “rural” people is the same for two definitions, different people may be classified “rural” with the two definitions. Though the characteristics of “rural” people are different for each definition of “rural,” in general, each definition provides a similar analytical conclusion.

Rather than using one of the existing definitions, one option available to an analyst is to assign one (or more) “degrees of rurality” to each territorial unit. This may be specific to a policy debate or a sub-national development issue.

By cross-classifying two definitions of rural, an analyst can focus on a specific sub-sector of the rural population.

Our recommendation

A number of reviewers requested that we recommend a benchmark terminology for research purposes. They argued that if most analysts used one generally accepted or commonly understood benchmark, this would facilitate the comparison of results among research reports. In addition, each analyst would be encouraged to supplement their research with a definition specifically applicable to the issue being addressed.

We strongly suggest that the appropriate definition should be determined by the question being addressed; however, if we were to recommend one definition as a starting point or benchmark for understanding Canada's rural population, it would be the **"rural and small town"** definition. This is the population living in towns and municipalities (CSDs) outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres (i.e. the non-CMA/CA population).

We prefer this definition for three reasons:

- 1) each building block (i.e. each CSD) is relatively small – it approximates a "community" and many rural issues are community-level issues;
- 2) each building block is assigned according to a "functional" criteria – specifically, the degree of integration with a larger urban centre – that is a suitable proxy for many rural issues such as the access to health care, the access to education facilities, the access to government services, etc. (Government of Canada, 1998). Commuting flows are used as the measure of integration – and commuting flows are highly, although not perfectly, correlated with the other measures of integration (such as shopping patterns or access to major health facilities, etc.); and
- 3) Statistics Canada has proposed a "statistical area classification" (SAC) that disaggregates "rural and small town" according to "metropolitan influenced zones" (see Box B and Appendix Table A3). SAC fine tunes the degree of integration and access of rural populations to larger urban centres.

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Appendix Table A1. Distribution of the "rural" population under alternative definitions, Canada and Provinces, 1996

| | Total private household population | Private household population under alternative definitions of rural | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| | | Census rural | Rural and small town | OECD rural communities | OECD predominantly rural regions | Non-metropolitan regions (Beale) | Rural postal codes |
| | | | | | | | |
| **** number of individuals **** | | | | | | | |
| Newfoundland | 545,825 | 236,215 | 304,245 | 374,400 | 297,845 | 297,845 | 317,550 |
| Prince Edward Island | 131,800 | 74,200 | 60,425 | 82,990 | 131,800 | 63,210 | 72,060 |
| Nova Scotia | 896,595 | 408,155 | 346,540 | 667,650 | 558,295 | 442,030 | 378,250 |
| New Brunswick | 727,365 | 374,400 | 353,120 | 584,670 | 564,775 | 331,210 | 342,670 |
| Québec | 7,008,125 | 1,524,555 | 1,565,335 | 2,141,935 | 1,702,245 | 2,123,770 | 1,671,765 |
| Ontario | 10,605,055 | 1,777,580 | 1,573,650 | 3,064,270 | 2,117,165 | 1,566,295 | 1,753,305 |
| Manitoba | 1,087,145 | 303,615 | 358,845 | 479,295 | 477,720 | 477,720 | 320,320 |
| Saskatchewan | 970,175 | 354,555 | 418,055 | 601,435 | 524,280 | 524,275 | 428,755 |
| Alberta | 2,647,110 | 535,410 | 669,340 | 1,278,675 | 887,935 | 576,500 | 568,835 |
| British Columbia | 3,677,890 | 661,310 | 569,825 | 1,476,520 | 1,555,760 | 1,085,505 | 536,175 |
| Yukon | 30,000 | 11,835 | 8,485 | 30,000 | 30,000 | 30,000 | 8,480 |
| Northwest Territories | 38,835 | 18,890 | 21,685 | 38,835 | 38,835 | 38,840 | 21,500 |
| Nunavut | 24,760 | 17,630 | 24,755 | 24,755 | 24,755 | 24,755 | 24,760 |
| CANADA | 28,390,685 | 6,298,350 | 6,274,320 | 10,845,435 | 8,911,415 | 7,581,970 | 6,444,475 |
| *** rural population as percent of total population in each province ("row percent") *** | | | | | | | |
| Newfoundland | 100.0 | 43.3 | 55.7 | 68.6 | 54.6 | 54.6 | 58.2 |
| Prince Edward Island | 100.0 | 56.3 | 45.8 | 63.0 | 100.0 | 48.0 | 54.7 |
| Nova Scotia | 100.0 | 45.5 | 38.7 | 74.5 | 62.3 | 49.3 | 42.2 |
| New Brunswick | 100.0 | 51.5 | 48.5 | 80.4 | 77.6 | 45.5 | 47.1 |
| Québec | 100.0 | 21.8 | 22.3 | 30.6 | 24.3 | 30.3 | 23.9 |
| Ontario | 100.0 | 16.8 | 14.8 | 28.9 | 20.0 | 14.8 | 16.5 |
| Manitoba | 100.0 | 27.9 | 33.0 | 44.1 | 43.9 | 43.9 | 29.5 |
| Saskatchewan | 100.0 | 36.5 | 43.1 | 62.0 | 54.0 | 54.0 | 44.2 |
| Alberta | 100.0 | 20.2 | 25.3 | 48.3 | 33.5 | 21.8 | 21.5 |
| British Columbia | 100.0 | 18.0 | 15.5 | 40.1 | 42.3 | 29.5 | 14.6 |
| Yukon | 100.0 | 39.5 | 28.3 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 28.3 |
| Northwest Territories | 100.0 | 48.6 | 55.8 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 55.4 |
| Nunavut | 100.0 | 71.2 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| CANADA | 100.0 | 22.2 | 22.1 | 38.2 | 31.4 | 26.7 | 22.7 |
| *** rural population in each province as a percent of the total Canadian rural population ("column percent") *** | | | | | | | |
| Newfoundland | 1.9 | 3.8 | 4.8 | 3.5 | 3.3 | 3.9 | 4.9 |
| Prince Edward Island | 0.5 | 1.2 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 1.5 | 0.8 | 1.1 |
| Nova Scotia | 3.2 | 6.5 | 5.5 | 6.2 | 6.3 | 5.8 | 5.9 |
| New Brunswick | 2.6 | 5.9 | 5.6 | 5.4 | 6.3 | 4.4 | 5.3 |
| Québec | 24.7 | 24.2 | 24.9 | 19.7 | 19.1 | 28.0 | 25.9 |
| Ontario | 37.4 | 28.2 | 25.1 | 28.3 | 23.8 | 20.7 | 27.2 |
| Manitoba | 3.8 | 4.8 | 5.7 | 4.4 | 5.4 | 6.3 | 5.0 |
| Saskatchewan | 3.4 | 5.6 | 6.7 | 5.5 | 5.9 | 6.9 | 6.7 |
| Alberta | 9.3 | 8.5 | 10.7 | 11.8 | 10.0 | 7.6 | 8.8 |
| British Columbia | 13.0 | 10.5 | 9.1 | 13.6 | 17.5 | 14.3 | 8.3 |
| Yukon | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.1 |
| Northwest Territories | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| Nunavut | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| CANADA | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1996.

See Box B in the text for a description of each definition of rural.

Appendix Table A2. Indicator levels by definition of "rural" for Canada's private household population, 1996

| List of indicators | Census "Rural Areas" | "Rural and Small Town" | OECD "Rural Communities" | OECD "Predominantly Rural Regions" | Non-Metropolitan Regions (Beale) | Postal Code "Rural" | Canada Total |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Private household population | 6,298,350 | 6,274,320 | 10,845,435 | 8,911,415 | 7,581,970 | 6,444,475 | 28,390,685 |
| Percent male | 51.1 | 50.4 | 50.1 | 50.0 | 50.1 | 50.6 | 49.2 |
| Percent female | 48.9 | 49.6 | 49.9 | 50.0 | 49.9 | 49.4 | 50.8 |
| Total "rural population" as a percent of Canada total | 22.2 | 22.1 | 38.2 | 31.4 | 26.7 | 22.7 | |
| Employment rate, ages 25-54 (percent) | 74.9 | 73.7 | 75.7 | 74.8 | 74.2 | 73.9 | 76.7 |
| Average income of economic families (dollars) | 50,424 | 47,002 | 50,889 | 48,879 | 47,989 | 48,130 | 55,986 |
| Incidence of low income (percent) | 13.1 | 15.7 | 15.1 | 16.3 | 16.5 | 15.1 | 19.7 |
| Old age dependency ratio (population 65+ years of age as percent of population 15 to 64 years of age) | 16.2 | 19.3 | 17.8 | 18.8 | 18.7 | 18.2 | 16.9 |
| Child dependency ratio (population under 15 years of age as percent of population 15 to 64 years of age) | 34.4 | 34.4 | 34.0 | 33.7 | 33.5 | 34.6 | 30.6 |
| Place of work of employed persons, ages 25-54 | | | | | | | |
| percent working at home | 14.8 | 13.4 | 10.6 | 10.5 | 10.8 | 13.2 | 7.4 |
| percent residing and working in a different CSD | 56.2 | 45.4 | 45.5 | 39.6 | 40.7 | 50.8 | 43.9 |
| percent residing and working in a different CD | 18.7 | 15.5 | 15.1 | 15.2 | 15.4 | 18.5 | 16.8 |
| Percent of persons, ages 25-54, with some post-secondary education | 52.8 | 51.1 | 55.2 | 54.4 | 52.6 | 51.8 | 61.8 |
| Percent of experienced labour force in manufacturing industries | 13.7 | 14.3 | 13.7 | 13.3 | 14.3 | 14.1 | 14.3 |

Source : Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1996

| Statistical Area Classification | Total population (1996 Census) | Percent of total |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) | 17,864,646 | 61.9 |
| Census Agglomerations | 4,585,209 | 15.9 |
| "Rural and small town" (subtotal) | 6,396,906 | 22.2 |
| Strong Metropolitan Influenced Zone (Strong MIZ) | 1,564,700 | 5.4 |
| Moderate Metropolitan Influenced Zone (Moderate MIZ) | 2,365,175 | 8.2 |
| Weak Metropolitan Influenced Zone (Weak MIZ) | 2,078,342 | 7.2 |
| No Metropolitan Influenced Zone (No MIZ) | 332,604 | 1.2 |
| Territories (Note: this excludes the CAs of Whitehorse and Yellowknife) | 56,085 | 0.2 |
| Canada total | 28,846,761 | 100.0 |

Source: Statistics Canada. Customs tabulations, Geography Division, 2001

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