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# Research Paper

**Definitions of Northern /  
Rural / Remote / Peripheric  
Communities in a  
Philanthropic Context**

**Research Report**

**François Brouard, Manuel  
Litalien & Natalya Brown**

Ottawa  
February 2023

[philab.uqam.ca](http://philab.uqam.ca)

 PhiLab

## PhiLab Network Description

The Canadian network of partnership-oriented research on philanthropy (PhiLab), previously called the Montreal Research Laboratory on Canadian philanthropy, was thought up in 2014 as part of the conception of a funding request by the SSHRC partnership development project called “Social innovation, social change, and Canadian Grantmaking Foundations”. From its beginning, the Network was a place for research, information exchange and mobilization of Canadian foundations’ knowledge. Research conducted in partnership allows for the co-production of new knowledge dedicated to a diversity of actors: government representatives, university researchers, representatives of the philanthropic sector and their affiliate organizations or partners.

The project’s headquarters are located in downtown Montreal, on the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) campus.

The Network brings together researchers, decision-makers and members of the philanthropic community from around the world in order to share information, resources, and ideas.

## Ontario Hub

The Ontario Hub sees the philanthropic sector as being in perpetual movement, and recognizes the growing need to further understand community foundations’ and social enterprises’ initiatives and challenges. As individuals are directly impacted or relying on services provided by philanthropic actors, comprehending the philanthropic ecosystem is thus beneficial to all. Support funnelled to local journalism or hospitals is notable, and currently under research by our networks. In order to better understand and sustain the philanthropic sector, PhiLab Ontario takes part in the development; sharing and dissemination of knowledge present in the ecosystem. With the continuous support of our partners, research members and students, the Hub helps map the province’s foundations’ projects to further our knowledge on how they operate, the territory they cover and the areas they prioritize.

## Abstract

Philanthropy, and research on philanthropy, in Canada is often concentrated in large urban cities, such as Montréal, Toronto or Ottawa. However, philanthropic needs are not limited to large urban areas. Often, we use terms such as “Northern”, “Rural”, “Remote”, and “Peripheral”, when referring to smaller communities and their unique realities. Unfortunately, the definition of these terms, often based on geography, are less understood in a philanthropic context. The objective of this conceptual report is to define these Northern / Rural / Remote / Peripheral communities in the philanthropic context in order to assist funders, researchers, and policymakers in dealing with that lesser studied realities of these communities.

## Key words

Definition • Northern Rural • Remote • Peripheral • Communities • Philanthropy

## Résumé

La philanthropie et la recherche sur la philanthropie au Canada se concentrent majoritairement dans les grandes villes urbaines comme Montréal, Toronto ou Ottawa. Pourtant, les besoins philanthropiques au Canada ne se limitent pas aux grandes zones urbaines. Cette méconnaissance de la philanthropie rurale se reflète notamment dans l’ambiguïté des termes choisis ce qui porte à confusion. Par exemple, lorsqu’il s’agit de petites communautés et de leurs spécificités, des termes comme « Nord », « Rural », « Éloigné » et « Périphérique » sont fréquemment employés indifféremment l’un de l’autre. Malheureusement, habituellement basée sur la géographie, la définition de ces termes est moins comprise dans un contexte philanthropique. L’objectif de ce rapport conceptuel est non seulement de clarifier le champ sémantique de la terminologie utilisée, mais également les communautés nordiques / rurales / éloignées / périphériques dans un contexte philanthropique, et ce, en vue d’aider les bailleurs de fonds, les chercheurs et les décideurs à mieux comprendre les réalités moins étudiées de ces communautés.

## Mots-clés

Définition • Rural • Nord de l’Ontario • périphérique • communautés • philanthropie



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## Research Report

# Definitions of Northern / Rural / Remote / Peripheral Communities in a Philanthropic Context

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## RÉSUMÉ

La philanthropie et la recherche sur la philanthropie au Canada se concentrent majoritairement dans les grandes villes urbaines comme Montréal, Toronto ou Ottawa. Pourtant, les besoins philanthropiques au Canada ne se limitent pas aux grandes zones urbaines. Cette méconnaissance de la philanthropie rurale se reflète notamment dans l’ambiguïté des termes choisis ce qui porte à confusion. Par exemple, lorsqu’il s’agit de petites communautés et de leurs spécificités, des termes comme « Nord », « Rural », « Éloigné » et « Périphérique » sont fréquemment employés indifféremment l’un de l’autre. Malheureusement, habituellement basée sur la géographie, la définition de ces termes est moins comprise dans un contexte philanthropique. L’objectif de ce rapport conceptuel est non seulement de clarifier le champ sémantique de la terminologie utilisée, mais également les communautés nordiques / rurales / éloignées / périphériques dans un contexte philanthropique, et ce, en vue d’aider les bailleurs de fonds, les chercheurs et les décideurs à mieux comprendre les réalités moins étudiées de ces communautés.

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The Canadian Philanthropy Partnership Research Network (PhiLab) is a Canadian research Network on philanthropy that brings together researchers, decision-makers and members of the philanthropic community from around the world in order to share information, resources, and ideas.



The Consortium of Rural and Northern Philanthropy (CORNPhil) is a network of researchers whose mission is to advance the field of Northern and Rural Philanthropy through knowledge development and knowledge dissemination.

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## INTRODUCTION

“In recent years, the socio-economic performance of small territorial units has increasingly been under scrutiny. There has been increasing recognition that localities have widely different opportunities and constraints which shape their potential path of development and that the policy process should not overlook this diversity of conditions.” (Alasia, 2004, p.2)

“Proximity to centres of economic activity and population agglomerations is an important determinant of regional socioeconomic outcomes and, consequently, a relevant factor in the analysis and delivery of policies and programs.” (Alasia, Bédard, Bélanger, Guimond & Penney, 2017, p.4)

Canada has a dense support infrastructure for philanthropy (Alberg-Seberich 2018). Philanthropy in the country is often concentrated in large urban cities, such as Montréal, Toronto or Ottawa. However, all philanthropic needs are not limited to large urban areas but are also present elsewhere. Grantmaking foundations are not only present in the urban areas, they also originate and cover much larger territories. With decentralization and downloading of some responsibilities from the federal and provincial levels, understanding the smaller territorial units is useful to tailor policies at the local level (Alasia, 2004).

However, little is known on the plan to address the needs of Canada’s smaller (and often “marginalized”) communities, and how this will be developed or if it will be a priority in decades to come. Therefore, there is a need to define and conceptualize those smaller communities in Canada. They have unique needs and challenges. For example, northern communities in Canada are particularly at risk to the detrimental effects of climate change, they are beset with aging transportation infrastructure, and they tend to lie on the disadvantaged side of the digital divide with less access to high-speed internet. Regardless of how we describe the various geographic regions, not all regions are equals; some dominate others (Akwawua, 1997).

A number of terms are used to describe the reality of smaller communities but are not well defined, especially in a philanthropic context. The objective of this conceptual report is to define the smaller communities in the Northern/Rural/Remote/Peripheral communities. As such, our research question is “How do we define Northern/Rural/Remote/Peripheral communities?” Based on a literature review and analysis of archival data, this report will contribute to the small but growing body of research on understanding philanthropy in Canada’s remote areas. Ultimately, philanthropy is inherently geographical, and these definitions determine the boundaries for philanthropic organizations in these communities in terms of “what they fund, how they fund, with whom, and how they view their responsibilities in communities” (Clerkin et al., 2013; Phillips & Scaife, 2017, p.1).

We structure the remainder of the report as follows. The next section describes the context. The third section presents Canada and various geographic areas. The fourth section presents the continuum in defining various concepts, namely Northern (vs Southern), Rural (vs Urban), Remote (vs Closed) and Peripheral / Hinterland (vs Core / Heartland). The fifth section applies the concepts for practical definitions in some communities in Canada. The last section provides some conclusions about philanthropy.

## CONTEXT

By providing some brief element of context, it may help to understand the subsequent definitions of the spatial geography. In particular, small communities are part of a changing external environment along a number of dimensions and they exhibit socio-economic diversity. In addition, it is impossible to talk about northern communities in Canada without recognizing the prominence of Indigenous communities.

### Dimensions of External Environment

A number of dimensions may be used to analyze the external environment and place the definition exercise in a broader context (Alasia, 2004; Commito, 2016; Stadel, 2008; Vodden, Baldacchino and Gibson, 2015), such as demographic, social, societal, sociological, cultural (e.g. French and English-speaking), economic and labour market, housing, political, technological, geographic, environmental/climatic, biological, and logistical. In addition, these dimensions are subject to various transformations.

Table 1 presents six dimensions explaining the differences on the Canadian territory. These dimensions were derived with a factor analysis by Alasia (2004) and the percent of variance explained by each dimension. “Labour forces and economic attributes map a major divide between a lower economic performance in the north and east of Canada and a higher economic performance in the south and west of Canada” (Alasia, 2004, p.1). “The dimension of Remote and agro-rural attributes identifies census divisions with lower housing costs, more children, lower wages, lower educational attainment and lower incomes” (Alasia, 2004, p.1).

Table 1 – Dimensions Explaining Differences on the Canadian Territory

Dimensions / Attributes	Percent of variance explained
Labour force and economic attributes	26.3%
Remote and agro-rural attributes	18.7%
Demographic and labour forces attributes	14.7%
Employment attributes - Complex manufacturing versus non-agricultural primary production	7.4%
Employment attributes - Traditional manufacturing versus government employment	5.8%
Demographic dynamics attributes	5.0%

Source: Alasia (2004, p.4)

### **Socio-economic Diversity of Smaller Communities**

Northern, Rural, Remote and Peripheral areas are smaller communities. Regardless of how communities are labelled or divided, there is a “growing concern over spatial and socio-economic disparities at regional, national, and global scales” (Stadel, 2008, p.13). There are diversities between smaller and larger communities, and within smaller communities themselves.

### **Indigenous Communities**

Even if it is not at the core of the definition objective, Indigenous communities have an historic and contested claim regarding the territory. Indigenous populations and communities are particularly affected, as part of the Northern and remote communities in Canada. Deficiencies take various forms, such as communication technologies (Gratton and O’Donnell, 2011), caregiving for elders in First Nations communities (Habjan, Prince and Kelley, 2012), health care accessibility (Michiel Oosterveer and Kue Young, 2015), mental health care accessibility (Harris and Robinson, 2007), mobility (Kainz, Carson, and Carson, 2012), and food environments (Skinner, Burnett, Williams, Martin, Stothart, LeBlanc, Veeraraghavan and Sheedy, 2016). Due to health concerns (COVID) and increases in the Indigenous population, Canadian social safety nets are bound to be under more pressure in the near future. This report, however, will not address issues and challenges specific to Indigenous communities.

## **CANADA AND GEOGRAPHIC AREAS**

“Canada is the second largest country on earth – 10 million square kilometres. Three oceans line Canada’s frontiers: the Pacific Ocean in the west, the Atlantic Ocean in the east, and the Arctic Ocean to the north. Along the southern edge of Canada lies the Canada-United States boundary.” (Canada, 2022)

As of December 2022, Canada had a total population of 39,292,355 people (Statistics Canada, 2023b). Canada could be divided in many ways, including, provinces and territories, regions, statistical area classifications, geographical classifications, and other classifications.

### **Canadian Provinces/Territories and Regions**

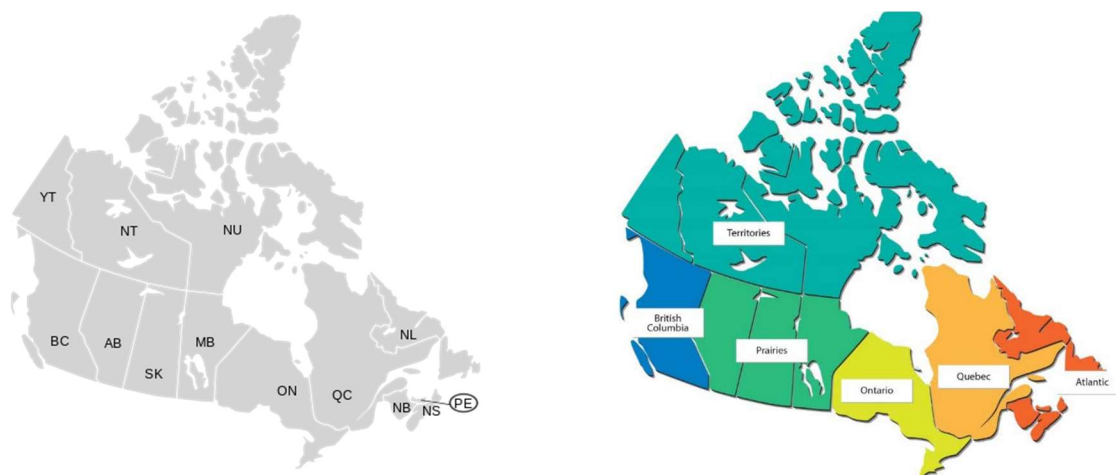
The distinction between provinces and territories lies in the provinces’ ability to exercise constitutional powers in their own right. Territories exercise delegated powers under the authority of the Parliament of Canada (Canada, 2022b). Table 2 presents the 10 provinces, 3 territories, and 6 regions. Figure A presents a map of Canada with provinces and territories, with their designated 2-letter codes (ISO 3166-2) and presents a map of Canada divided by regions. Note that Quebec and Ontario together are often referred to as Central Canada.

Table 2 – Canadian Provinces and Regions

Provinces / Territories		Regions
British Columbia	BC	British Columbia
Alberta	AB	Prairies
Saskatchewan	SK	
Manitoba	MB	
Ontario	ON	Ontario
Québec	QC	Québec
New Brunswick	NB	Atlantic (Maritimes)
Nova Scotia	NS	
Prince Edward Island	PE	
Newfoundland and Labrador	NL	
Yukon	YT	Territories
Northwest Territories	NT	
Nunavut	NU	

Source: Statistics Canada (2022a Glossary, p.40, 43); ISO (2020)

Figure A - Maps of Canada with Provinces/Territories and Regions



Source: Statistics Canada (2022a, p.40)

Those regions may be for simplification and administrative purposes but may not represent the complex reality of each unique geographic unit and dynamism. For example, McKay (2000) has commented on “Atlantic Canada” and some issues about the region. The Lethbridge - Calgary - Red Deer - Edmonton - Ft. Mc Murray Corridor is a major zone expanding from rural regions in the Prairies and other metropolitan regions in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (Stadel, 2008). Appendix A presents a list of variables/indicators regarding regions.

## **Statistics Canada Hierarchy of Standard Geographies**

In addition to provinces, territories and regions, Statistics Canada (2017) has established a hierarchy of standard geographic areas for the Census. Figure B presents a hierarchy of standard geographic areas (Statistics Canada, 2017, 2022c). The hierarchy includes on the right side a number of statistical area classifications used in Canada, namely Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), Census Agglomeration (CA), Census Metropolitan Influenced Zone (MIZ) and Territories. The Population Centre (POPCTR) classification distinguishes between Large urban, Medium, and Small centres, and Rural Area (RA). On the left, there are a number of the geographic classifications used, such as the Standard Geographical Classification (SGC) hierarchy, namely Census Divisions (CD), Census Consolidated Subdivision (CCS) and Census Subdivision (CDS). In addition, there are a number of other geographic areas description used, namely Economic Region (ER), Census Agricultural Region (CAR), postal codes, and ecumene (inhabited). We ignore other elements of hierarchy for this report.

In studying remoteness and accessibility, Alasia et al. (2017) believes that census subdivision (CSD) and population centre (POPCTR) are the most suitable geographic definitions to use.

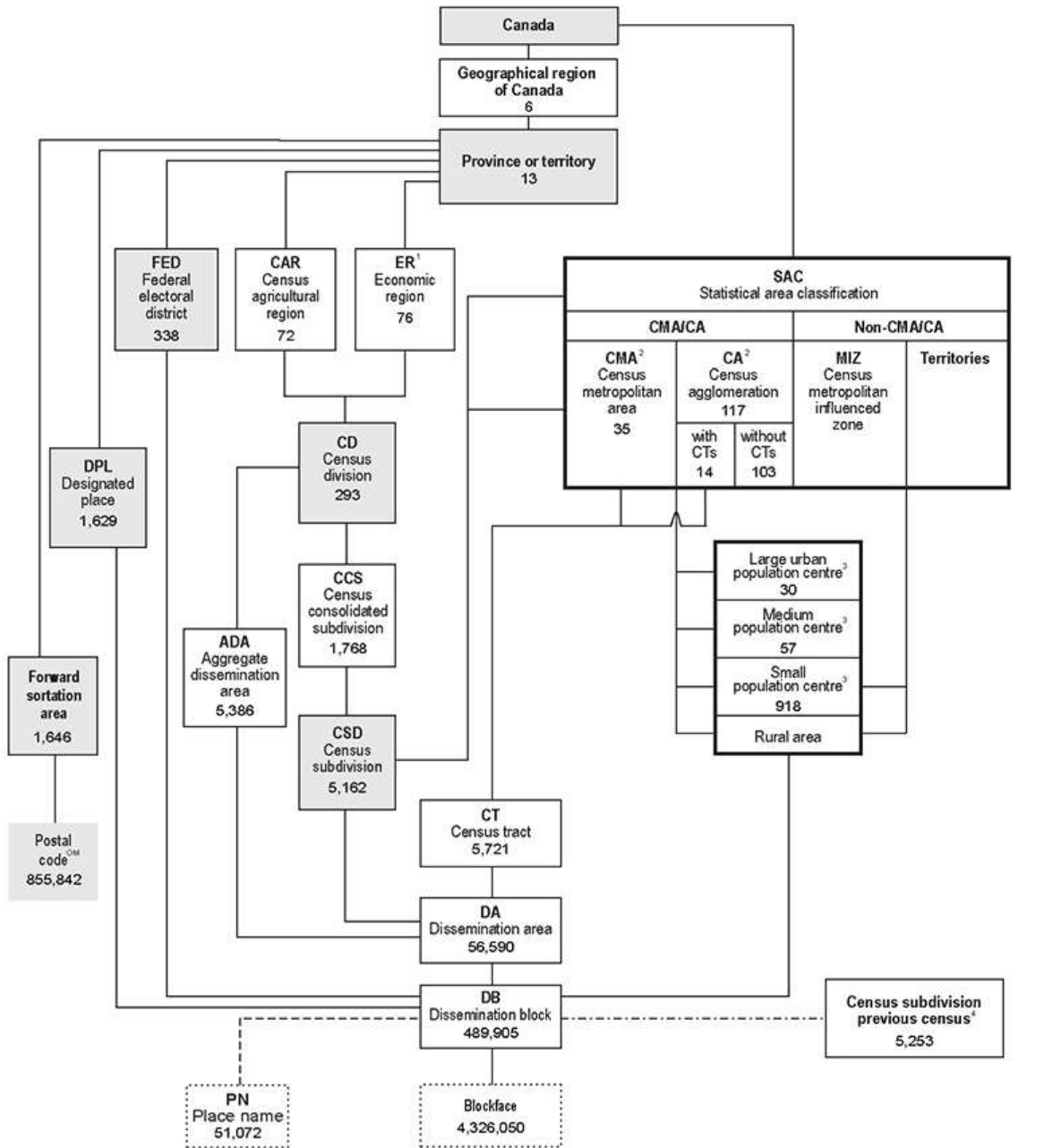
## **Statistics Canada Statistical Area Classification**

As presented in the Figure B, a number of statistical area classifications are used in Canada, namely Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), Census Agglomeration (CA), Census Metropolitan Influenced Zone (MIZ), Territories, Population Centre (POPCTR) (Large Urban / Medium / Small), and Rural Area (RA).

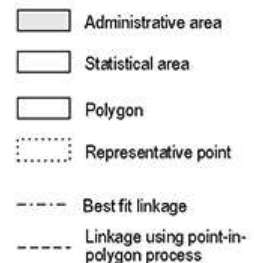
### *Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) and Census Agglomerations (CA)*

“A Census Metropolitan area (CMA) or a Census Agglomeration (CA) is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 based on data from the current Census of Population Program, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core based on adjusted data from the previous Census of Population Program. A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000 also based on data from the previous Census of Population Program. To be included in the CMA or CA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from data on place of work from the previous Census Program.” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.7)

Figure B - Hierarchy of Standard Geographic Areas



1. Economic regions (ER) are composed of complete census divisions (CD) except for one CD in Ontario.
2. Some census metropolitan areas (CMA) and census agglomerations (CA) cross provincial boundaries.
3. Previous census population centres are used in the delineation of the current census CMAs and CAs; some population centres (POPCTR) cross provincial boundaries.
4. A best fit linkage is created between the census subdivisions (CSD) - previous census and the current census dissemination blocks (DB) to facilitate historical data retrieval.



Source: Statistics Canada (2017) (or 2022b Figure for 2021 not available in proper format to import.)

Table 3 presents the number of Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) and Census Agglomerations (CA) by Provinces from the 2021 Census. A CMA or CA is delineated using some rules, such as delineation core, commuting flow rules (forward and reverse), spatial contiguity rule, historical comparability rule, manual adjustments, secondary core rule and adjacent census subdivisions (CSDs) as building blocks (Statistics Canada, 2022a).

Table 3 – Number of CMA and CA by Provinces and Territories

Census 2021	Can total	Provinces										Territories		
		BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU
CMA	41	7	4	2	1	16	7	3	1	0	1	0	0	0
CA	111	21	13	8	5	27	25	4	4	2	3	1	1	0

Source: Statistics Canada (2022d)

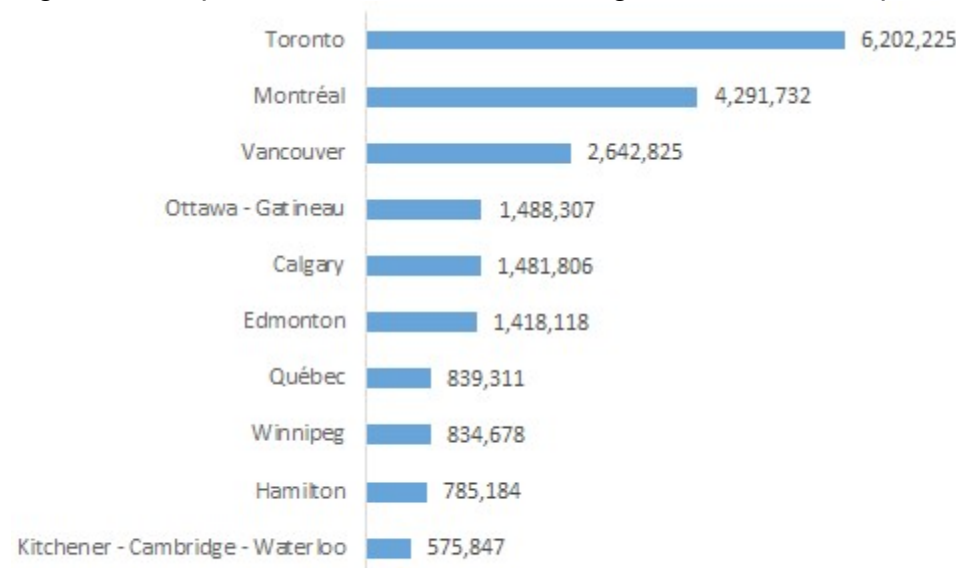
Note: CMA = Census Metropolitan Areas (total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core); CA = Census Agglomerations (core population of at least 10,000)

“According to the 2021 Census, 84% of Canada’s population lives within a CMA or CA. This amounts to over 31 million people. More than half of the population, a bit more than 20.5 million people, lives in the ten largest CMAs.” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.7)

Figure C presents the population of Canada’s ten largest census metropolitan areas (CMA) based on 2021 Census.

Table 4 names the 41 Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) or Census Agglomerations (CA) by provinces. One province, Prince Edward Island, does not have a CMA, but two CAs. Within the Territories Yukon, Northwestern Territories and Nunavut, Yellowknife and Whitehorse are census agglomerations (CA), but there are no Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA).

Figure C - Population of Canada’s Ten Largest Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA)



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

Source: Statistics Canada (2022a, p.8)



Table 4 – Census Metropolitan Areas or Census Agglomerations by Provinces

Provinces	CMA (or CA if no CMA)
British Columbia (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vancouver (CMA)</li> <li>• Victoria (CMA)</li> <li>• Kelowna (CMA)</li> <li>• Abbotsford-Mission (CMA)</li> <li>• Nanaimo (CMA)</li> <li>• Kamloops (CMA)</li> <li>• Chilliwack (CMA)</li> </ul>
Alberta (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary (CMA)</li> <li>• Edmonton (CMA)</li> <li>• Lethbridge (CMA)</li> <li>• Red Deer (CMA)</li> </ul>
Saskatchewan (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saskatoon (CMA)</li> <li>• Regina (CMA)</li> </ul>
Manitoba (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winnipeg (CMA)</li> </ul>
Ontario (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toronto (CMA)</li> <li>• Ottawa–Gatineau (Ontario part) (CMA)</li> <li>• Hamilton (CMA)</li> <li>• Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo (CMA)</li> <li>• London (CMA)</li> <li>• St. Catharines–Niagara (CMA)</li> <li>• Windsor (CMA)</li> <li>• Oshawa (CMA)</li> <li>• Barrie (CMA)</li> <li>• Kingston (CMA)</li> <li>• Greater Sudbury / Grand Sudbury (CMA)</li> <li>• Guelph (CMA)</li> <li>• Brantford (CMA)</li> <li>• Peterborough (CMA)</li> <li>• Thunder Bay (CMA)</li> <li>• Belleville – Quinte West (CMA)</li> </ul>
Québec (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montréal (CMA)</li> <li>• Ottawa–Gatineau (Quebec part) (CMA)</li> <li>• Québec City (CMA)</li> <li>• Sherbrooke (CMA)</li> <li>• Saguenay (CMA)</li> <li>• Trois-Rivières (CMA)</li> <li>• Drummondville (CMA)</li> </ul>
New Brunswick (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moncton (CMA)</li> <li>• Saint John (CMA)</li> <li>• Fredericton (CMA)</li> </ul>
Nova Scotia (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halifax (CMA)</li> </ul>
Prince Edward Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charlottetown (CA)</li> <li>• Summerside (CA)</li> </ul>
Newfoundland and Labrador (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. John's (CMA)</li> </ul>
Yukon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whitehorse (CA)</li> </ul>
Northwest Territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yellowknife (CA)</li> </ul>
Nunavut	No CMA or CA

Source: Statistics Canada (2022e)

### *Non-CMA/CA - Census Metropolitan Influenced Zone (MIZ) and Territories*

Geographers created the Census Metropolitan Influenced Zone (MIZ) classification in recognition of the phenomenon of people working in an urban core while living outside of it and commuting each day to work (Statistics Canada, 2006b). Census Metropolitan Influenced Zones (MIZs) are areas strictly “[o]utside CMAs and CAs” (Statistics Canada, 2021).

“Rural and small town (RST) areas are CSDs which are not part of a CMA or CA. RST areas are further classified into a Metropolitan Influenced Zone (MIZ), as follows:

- Strong Metropolitan Influenced Zone: CSDs in a RST area where 30% or more of the resident workforce commutes to any CMA or CA;
- Moderate Metropolitan Influenced Zone: CSDs in a RST area where 5% to 29% of the resident workforce commutes to any CMA or CA;
- Weak Metropolitan Influenced Zone: CSDs in a RST area where more than zero but less than 5% of the resident workforce commutes to any CMA or CA;
- No Metropolitan Influenced Zone: CSDs in a RST area where none of the workforce commutes to a CMA or CA (or the workforce is less than 40 workers); and
- RST Territories: CSDs in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut which are outside the CAs of Whitehorse and Yellowknife.” (Statistics Canada, 2015)

### *Large Urban / Medium / Small Population Centre (POPCTR)*

Population Centre (POPCTR) is the most common rural-urban classification (Subedi, Roshanafshar and Greenberg, 2020). Per Statistics Canada (2022f): Population centres (POPCTRs) have populations of at least 1,000 persons and a population density of 400 persons or more per square kilometre, based on population counts from the current Census of Population. Rural areas are all the areas outside of population centres. That is, POPCTRs and RAs cover all of Canada. In addition, POPCTRs can be classified further based on the size of their population:

- *Small* population centres, with a population between 1,000 and 29,999 (e.g. Sioux Lookout, Ontario)
- *Medium* population centres, with a population between 30,000 and 99,999 (e.g. North Bay, Ontario)
- *Large Urban* population centres, with a population of 100,000 or more (e.g. St Catharines – Niagara Falls, Ontario).

Note that a POPCTR’s population includes all population living in the cores, secondary cores and fringes of census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and census agglomerations (CAs), as well as the population living in population centres outside CMAs and CAs. We define core and fringe in the next subsection.

Table 5 presents the number of POPCTRs (Large Urban / Medium / Small) by province or territory. From the 2021 census data, most of the 1,026 POPCTRs in Canada are small at 91%, with 6% medium, and 3% large urban.

Table 5 – Number of Population Centre (Large Urban/Medium/Small)

Census 2021	Can	Provinces										Territories		
	total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU
Small	934	94	106	60	52	264	256	28	35	3	26	2	4	6
Medium	58	8	11	3	1	20	12	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Large	34	6	2	2	1	14	7	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	1,026	108	119	65	54	298	275	31	37	4	27	2	4	6

Source: Statistics Canada (2022d)

Note: Small = Small population centre = (1,000 to 29,999);

Medium = Medium population centre = (30,000 to 99,999);

Large = Large urban population centre = (100,000 or more)

Table 6 presents the total population and the total population by POPCTR size groups and rural by province or territory. The population is divided between population centre (82%) and rural (18%). Population is divided between small (15%), medium (10%) and large (75%) population centres. There are some variations between provinces with almost equal allocation in New Brunswick between the three groups, no medium centre in Newfoundland and Labrador and most of the population in large population centres in Ontario (79%) and Québec (75%).

Table 6 – Population Centre Size Groups and Rural by Province/Territory

Province / Territory	Total population	Total population centre size groups	Small population centre (less than 9,999)	Medium population centre (30,000 to 99,999)	Large population centre (100,000 or more)	Total rural population
BC	5,000,879	4,365,903	594,185	453,410	3,318,308	634,976
AB	4,262,635	3,612,608	540,436	614,987	2,457,185	650,027
SK	1,132,505	773,789	202,732	81,424	489,633	358,716
MB	1,342,153	1,003,259	194,212	50,532	758,515	338,894
ON	14,223,942	12,335,284	1,433,410	1,103,136	9,798,738	1,888,658
QC	8,501,833	6,886,955	1,069,231	653,773	5,163,951	1,614,878
NB	775,610	395,120	147,274	128,061	119,785	380,490
NS	969,383	570,607	191,013	30,960	348,634	398,776
PE	154,331	70,981	18,591	52,390	0	83,350
NL	510,550	306,464	120,899	0	185,565	204,086
YT	40,232	25,605	25,605	0	0	14,627
NT	41,070	26,803	26,803	0	0	14,267
NU	36,858	16,621	16,621	0	0	20,237
Canada	36,991,981	30,389,999	4,581,012	3,168,673	22,640,314	6,601,982

Source: Statistics Canada (2022g)

### *Core, Fringe and Rural Area (RA)*

Since the 2011 Census, the terms 'population centre,' 'core,' 'fringe' and 'rural area' replaced the terms 'urban area,' 'urban core,' 'urban fringe' and 'rural fringe' (Statistics Canada, 2022f (Dictionary - Census metropolitan area (CMA) and census agglomeration (CA))). "The terms 'core,' 'fringe' and 'rural area' distinguish between population centres (POPCTR) and rural areas (RA) within a census metropolitan area (CMA) or census agglomeration" (CA) (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.33).

As stated earlier, all areas outside population centres are classified as rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2022f). As of the 2021 census, the total rural population is equal to 6,601,982 (Statistics Canada, 2022g) (see Table 6 for details by province or territory). The definition of rural population has changed over time. Generally, it has been defined as the population living outside settlements of 1,000 or more inhabitants. The current definition adds the population density requirement, stating that the rural population is the population outside settlements with 1,000 or more population with a population density of 400 or more inhabitants per square kilometre (Statistics Canada, 2007).

For a CMA or CA, Statistics Canada (2022a) defines the core as the population centre (POPCTR) with the highest population around which a CMA or CA is delineated. For a CMA, the core must have a population of at least 50,000 persons. In the case of a CA the core must have a population of at least 10,000 persons.

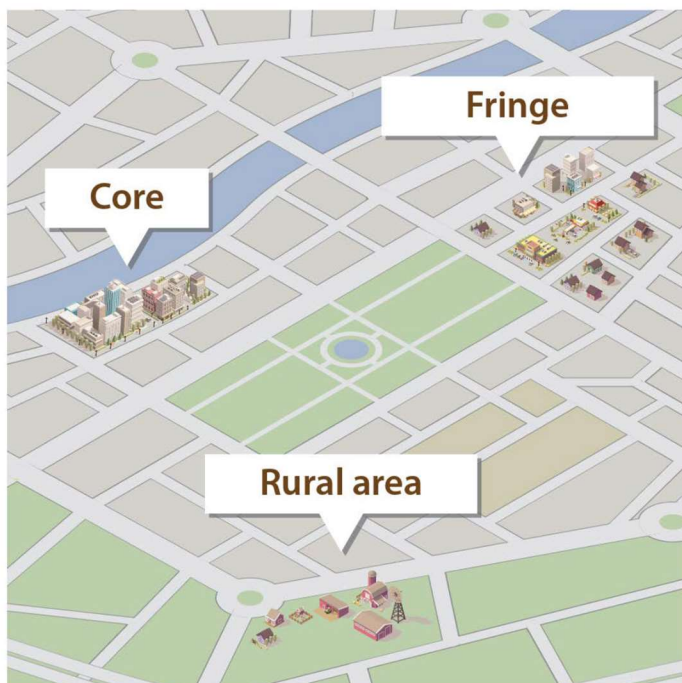
“The secondary core is a population centre with at least 10,000 persons (based on the current census) that is within a CMA or CA but outside the main municipality (census subdivision) that contains the core. The secondary core can also be the core of a CA that has been merged with an adjacent CMA.” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.33). Note that while every CMA and CA will have a core, they may not have a secondary core.

Finally,

“The term ‘fringe’ is applied to all population centres (POPCTRs) within a CMA or CA that have less than 10,000 persons (based on the current census) and are not contiguous to a core or a secondary core. In some circumstances, POPCTRs that have 10,000 or more persons (based on the previous census) are designated ‘fringe’. These are POPCTRs that exist inside census subdivisions (CSDs) that are already contiguous with a core or a secondary core. All territory within a CMA or CA that is not classified as a core or fringe is classified as a ‘rural area’.”  
(Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.33)

The distinction between core, secondary core, and fringe can best be explained using an example. In the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA, the City of Ottawa is the core, Gatineau the largest secondary core. Figure D illustrates the Core, Fringe and Rural area.

Figure D - Core, Fringe and Rural Area

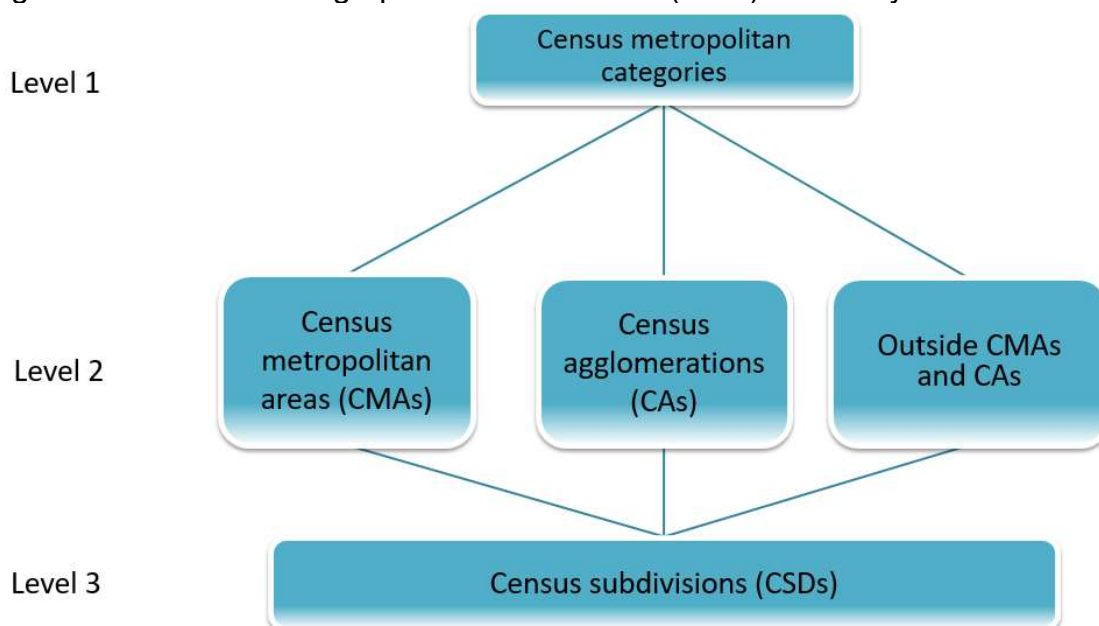


Source: Statistics Canada (2022a, p.33)

### **Statistics Canada Standard Geographical Classification (SGC)**

As presented in the Figure A, a number of geographic areas are used in Canada in the Standard Geographical Classification (SGC) hierarchy, namely Census Divisions (CD), Census Consolidated Subdivision (CCS) or Census Subdivision (CDS). Figure E illustrates three levels and the relationship between the CMA, CA, CSD and those outside of CMA, and CA.

Figure E - Standard Geographical Classification (SGC) Hierarchy



Source: Statistics Canada (2021)

### *Census Divisions (CD), Consolidated Divisions (CCS) and Subdivisions (CSD)*

“Census divisions (CD) have been established in provincial law to facilitate regional planning, as well as the provision of services that can be more effectively delivered on a scale larger than a municipality. In Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, provincial or territorial law does not provide for these administrative geographic areas. Therefore, Statistics Canada, in cooperation with these provinces and territories, has created equivalent areas called census divisions (CDs) for the purpose of disseminating statistical data.” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.16)

“Group of neighboring municipalities joined together for the purposes of regional planning and managing common services (such as police or ambulance services). [...] Census division (CD) is the general term for provincially legislated areas (such as county, *municipalité régionale de comté* (MRC) and regional district) or their equivalents. [...] Census divisions are intermediate geographic areas between the province/territory level and the municipality (census subdivision).” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.16)

“A census consolidated subdivision (CCS) is a group of adjacent census subdivisions within the same census division. Generally, the smaller, more densely-populated census subdivisions (towns, villages, etc.) are combined with the surrounding, larger, more rural census subdivision, in order to create

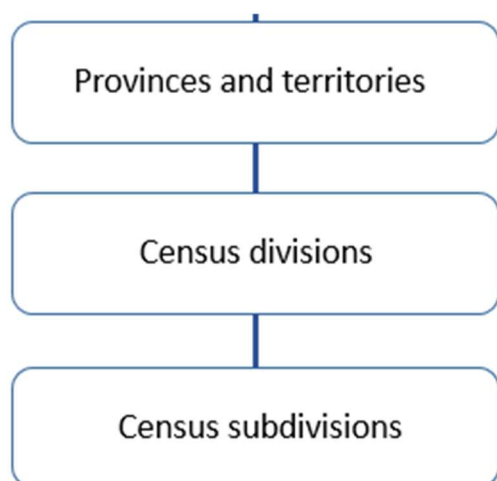
a geographic level between the census subdivision and the census division.” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.33)

“Census subdivision (CSD) is the general term for municipalities (as determined by provincial/territorial legislation) or areas treated as municipal equivalents for statistical purposes (e.g., Indian reserves, Indian settlements and unorganized territories). Municipal status is defined by laws in effect in each province and territory in Canada.” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.27)

Per Statistics Canada (2015), “CSDs can vary tremendously in terms of population size – from a few residents to over 2 million residents in Toronto.” In addition, the geographic spread of a CSD varies widely – “from less than 1 square kilometre for a small rural town to large geographic expanses of so-called “unorganized” territories in northern parts of many provinces” (Statistics Canada, 2015). “CSDs are aggregated into types of areas, [...] according to Statistics Canada's Statistical Area Classification” (Statistics Canada, 2015).

Figure F presents the relationship between provinces/territories, Census Divisions and Census Subdivisions. Figure G provides an illustration of the composition of a typical Census Division and Subdivision.

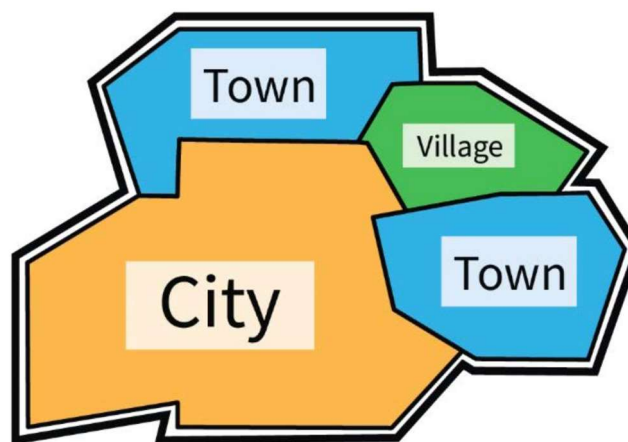
Figure F - Provinces/Territories, Census Divisions and Subdivisions Illustration



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

Source: Statistics Canada (2022c)

Figure G - Census Division and Subdivision Illustration



Source: Statistics Canada (2022a, p.16)

Table 7 presents the number of Census Division (CD), Consolidated Subdivision (CCS) and Subdivision (CD) by province or territory. There are a total of 293 CDs, 1,757 CCSs and 5,161 CSDs.

Table 7 – Census Division, Consolidated Subdivision and Subdivision by Provinces

Census 2021	Can	Provinces										Territories		
	total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU
CD	293	29	19	18	23	49	98	15	18	3	11	1	6	3
CCS	1,757	132	72	297	105	273	688	87	39	34	20	1	6	3
CSD	5,161	751	423	951	239	577	1,282	266	95	98	372	35	41	31

Source: Statistics Canada (2022d)

Note: CD = Census Division; CCS = Census Consolidated Subdivision; CSD = Census Subdivision

### Other Classifications

As presented in the Figure A, there are a number of other classifications used to define geographic areas in Canada, such as Economic Region (ER) and Census Agricultural Region (CAR), postal code, and ecumene.

#### *Economic Region (ER) and Census Agricultural Region (CAR)*

“An economic region (ER) is a grouping of complete census divisions (CDs), with one exception in Ontario, created as a standard geographic unit for analysis of regional economic activity” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.38).

“Census agricultural regions (CARs) are composed of groups of adjacent census divisions” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.15). There are 72 CARs in 2021 Census. In the Prairies region, CARs are often referred to as crop districts. As with other classifications, there are exceptions in the use of this classification. For example, in Prince Edward Island, each of the three CDs are treated as a CAR (Statistics Canada, 2022h). In Saskatchewan, CARs are made up of groups of adjacent census consolidated subdivisions (CCS) and these groupings may not respect census division boundaries. Finally, CARs are not defined in the three territories.

Table 8 presents the total of Economic Region (76) and Census Agricultural Region (72) by provinces. Figure H illustrates a Census Agricultural Region (CAR).

Table 8 – Economic Region and Census Agricultural Region by Provinces

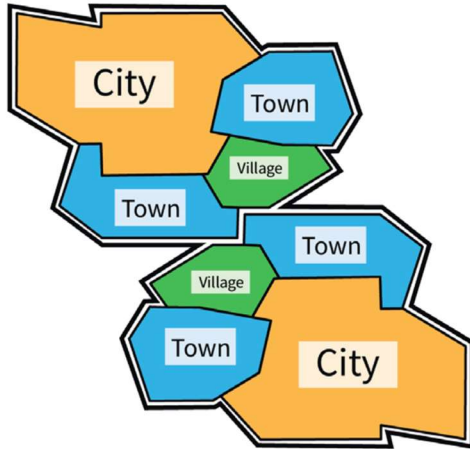
Census 2021	Can	Provinces										Territories		
	total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU
ER	76	8	8	6	8	11	17	5	5	1	4	1	1	1
CAR	72	8	8	7	12	5	14	4	5	3	3	1	1	1

Source: Statistics Canada (2022d)

Note: ER = Economic Region; CAR = Census Agricultural Region



Figure H - Census Agricultural Region (CAR) Illustration

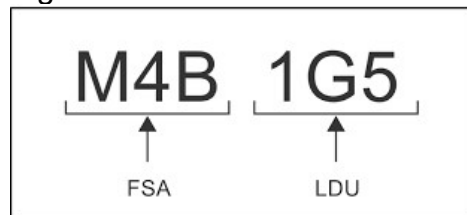


Source: Statistics Canada (2022a, p.15)

### *Postal Code*

Geographic areas may be defined based on postal code (880,864 in 2021 Census) or on forward sortation station (1,669 in 2021 Census). “The postal code is a six-character uniformly structured, alphanumeric code in the form ‘ANA NAN’ where ‘A’ is an alphabetic character and ‘N’ is a numeric character. Two segments make up a postal code: Forward Sortation Area (FSA) and Local Delivery Unit (LDU). (Canada Post, 2021, p.40). Figure I presents the structure of the postal code in Canada.

Figure I - Structure of Postal Code



Source: Canada Post (2021, p.40)

“The FSA is a combination of three characters (alpha-numeric-alpha). It identifies a major geographic area in an urban or a rural location.

The LDU is a combination of three characters (numeric-alpha-numeric). It identifies the smallest delivery unit in an FSA.”

### Forward Sortation Area (FSA)

“The Forward Sortation Area (FSA) is a specific area in a major geographic region or province. The FSA provides the basis for the primary sorting of forward mail” (Canada Post, 2021, p.40).

“The first character of the FSA segment identifies one of the 18 major geographic areas, provinces, or districts” (Canada Post, 2021, p.41). Figure J presents a map of Canada with the first character in the postal code.

“The second character of the FSA is an important part of mail preparation as it identifies either:

- An urban postal code: numerals 1 to 9 (for example, M2T)
- A rural postal code: numeral 0 (zero) (for example, A0A)” (Canada Post, 2021, p.43).

“The third character of the FSA segment, in conjunction with the first two characters, describes an exact area of a: City, Town, Other geographic area” (Canada Post, 2021, p.43).

### Local Delivery Unit (LDU)

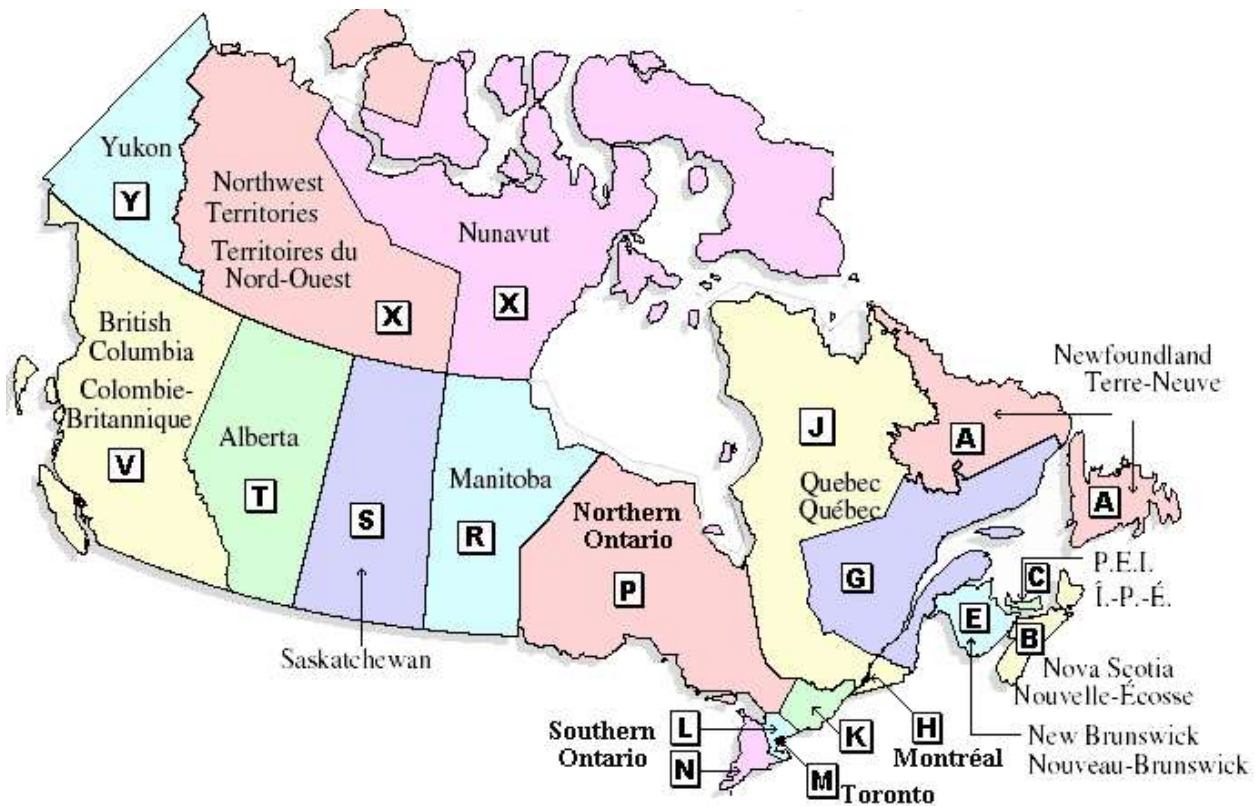
“The Local Delivery Unit (LDU), identified by the last three characters of the postal code, allows for a more final sort in a Forward Sortation Area (FSA).

In urban areas, the last three digits may indicate a:

- Specific city block (one side of a street between two intersecting streets)
- Single building
- Large-volume mail receiver (sometimes)

In rural areas, the last three digits, together with the FSA, identify a specific rural community” (Canada Post, 2021, p.44).

Figure J - Map of Canada with the First Character of the Postal Code



Source: adapted from Canada Post (2021, p.41)

## *Ecumene*

“Ecumene is a term used by geographers to mean inhabited land” (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p.58). “It generally refers to land where people have made their permanent home, and to all work areas that are considered occupied and used for agricultural or any other economic purpose. Thus, there can be various types of ecumenes, each having its own unique characteristics (population ecumene, agricultural ecumene, industrial ecumene, etc.)” (Statistics Canada, 2023c).

## **CONTINUUM IN DEFINING SOME CONCEPTS**

In this section, a few different continua (i.e., dichotomies) in defining some concepts are presented, namely Northern (vs Southern), Rural (vs Urban), Remote (vs Close) and Peripheric / Hinterland (vs Core/Heartland). These concepts are relative to other concepts. Davis (1985, p.109) cautions about the “fallacy of dichotomous questions” and a risk of oversimplification with duality. Those concepts also evolve over time in a dynamic environment and should not be considered static. “[T]here are no universally accepted definitions of urban and rural, and there is no universally accepted urban, rural and remote classification” (Subedi, Roshanafshar and Greenberg, 2020, p.7).

### **Northern vs Southern**

North is a relative concept and is contrasted with the South. North-South could be understood in a global context with a division between the Global South (regions within Asia, Africa and Latin America) and the Global North (developed countries in Northern hemisphere) or in the context of Nordicity and hibernity, which is the focus of this report (Hamelin, 2000).

### *North - Nordicity*

The concept of North and Nordicity is dynamic and is evolving over time. An example is the impacts from climate change. Hamelin (1995, p.65) discussed the ‘nordicity’ concept and “Québec’s contribution to language usage outside Québec, the double role of words (common language) and of terms (specialized language)”. Nordicity is also relevant to temperate zone with seasonal nordicity (3 -5 months per year) and light hibernity (series of cold days) (Hamelin, 2000).

“North is more than an abstract concept, since any definition has social, economic, environmental and political impacts” (Statistics Canada, 2006a). “For Montrealers, Val-d’Or, or Rouyn-Noranda are considered north, despite being a drive of just a few hundred kilometres. Many consider Chibougamau to be ‘up north.’ Yet, at 50° it is at about the same latitude as Kelowna, British Columbia” (Statistics Canada, 2006a). Therefore, there is a need to think and decide about where south ends and north begins.

Many definitions are used in Canada to define North (or Nordicity). Definitions of the North could be distinguished between single-factor and multiple-factor definitions (Graham, 1990; Hamelin, 2000). Appendix B presents a list of some definitions for the North. “A simple one is anything north of the 60th parallel”; North may also be associated with Canada’s Arctic region (Statistics Canada, 2006a). However, a simple definition does not provide an accurate representation of the complexity. Per Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies (OACAS, 2022b), “[i]t’s important to recognize that Northern communities are not homogenous”.

Multiple factors help in broadening the definition and adding nuances. A number of elements could be scored and weighted. Per Graham (1990, p.25), “Hamelin identified ten fundamental elements (latitude, summer heat, annual cold, types of ice, total precipitation, natural vegetation cover, accessibility by means other than air, air service, population, and degree of economic activity) as ‘the raw material for a specific index of nordicity’”. Appendix C presents the elements of the Global Nordicity Index. Statistics Canada (2006a) defined nordicity by using “16 characteristics, which include: the southern limits of the boreal forest, the presence of discontinuous permafrost, the requirements for home heating, the community’s isolation, the cost of living, and Revenue Canada’s formula for tax benefits based on remoteness”.

Considering the multiple factors, Hamelin (2000) suggests that the delineating line doesn’t correspond to a straight line. Figure K presents a map delineating northern and southern Canada. The red line indicates the boundary between the North and South according to each province. Note the significantly lower latitude for the boundary in Ontario.

#### *Northern and Southern Transition Lines*

Figure L presents three smoothed North-South transition lines, namely Smoothed South transition line, Smoothed North-South transition line, and Smoothed North transition line (Statistics Canada, 2006a).

“This redefinition of north in January 2000 produced a boundary that cuts through the middle of Canada, and is bordered by transition zones. The northern transition line reaches south to nearly the middle of Manitoba and Ontario. The southern line cuts as far south as Calgary, Lake Winnipeg, Thunder Bay and the Gaspé Peninsula.” (Statistics Canada, 2006a)

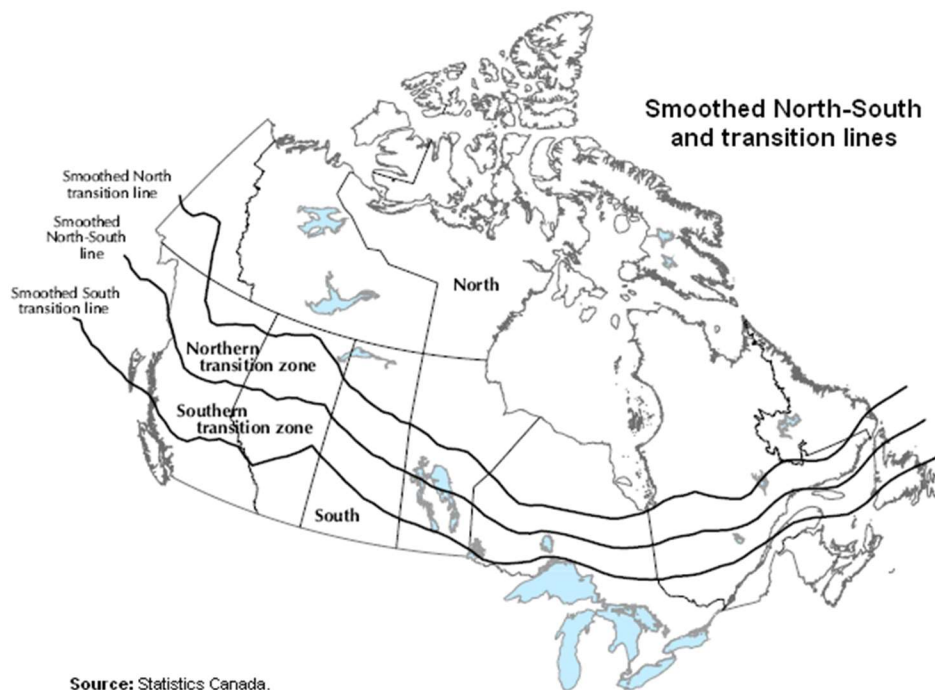
Comparing the previous two maps, a difference is notable. In Figure L, the transition lines are more northern. In Figure K, there are inclusion of North of Lake Superior, Lake Huron and most Georgian Bay in Ontario and Abitibi-Témiscamingue region in Québec in the unique line. If we compare Ontario and Québec administrative distinction of the Northern part of those provinces, the delineating line is preferable to the transition lines.

Figure K - Map Delineating Northern and Southern Canada



Source: Statistics Canada (2019)

Figure L - North-South Transition Lines in Canada



Source: Statistics Canada (2006a)

*Near North / Middle North / Far North / Extreme North / True North*

Hamelin (2000) distinguishes three main zones in the North, namely: Extreme North (“Extrême Nord”), Far North (“Grand Nord”) and Middle North (“Moyen Nord”). Hamelin (2000) delineates the zones with the calculations of VAPO (“valeurs polaires” / polar value). Appendix C provides the details of the VAPO calculations in the Global Nordicity Index. Extreme North equals to 800-1,000 VAPO; Far North equals to 500 and 799 VAPO; Middle North equals to 200-499 VAPO; South is determined at 200 VAPO. Another zone is Near North, which is not the North. Near North is for region below 200 VAPO, but with close economic ties with other Northern regions; an example is Northern Ontario (Hamelin, 2000). Statistics Canada (2006a) only refers to two North zones: Near North and Far North. Examples of calculations for some cities are presented in Table 9 with the corresponding zones.

Statistics Canada (2006a) considers “that traditional descriptions of the North have sometimes ignored the northern regions of some provinces, even though these areas may share a climate, physical attributes and settlement patterns with communities in the Far North.” True North could be defined as the Geographic (True) North Pole or the Magnetic Pole. The Geographic (True) North Pole is “where lines of longitude (meridians) converge in the north” and “is in the middle of the Arctic Ocean”; while the Magnetic Pole (or North Dip Pole) is “a point on Ellesmere Island in Northern Canada where the northern lines of attraction enter the Earth” (GIS Geography, 2022).

Table 9 – Examples of VAPO Calculations for Some Locations

Location	Polar Value (VAPO)	Year	Zone
North Pole	1,000	2015	North Pole
Alert (Nunavut)	838	2000	Extreme North
Resolute (Nunavut)	775	2000	Far North
Inuvik (Northwest territories)	n/a	2000	Far North
Cambridge (Nunavut)	n/a	2000	Far North
Iqaluit (Nunavut)	n/a	2000	Far North
Kuujuuaq (Québec)	459	2000	Middle North
Dawson (Yukon)	n/a	2000	Middle North
Labrador sea (lat 51, long 54 in Atlantic Ocean)	297	2000	Middle North
Shefferville (Québec)	n/a	2000	Middle North
Moosonee (Ontario)	227	2015	Middle North
Yellowknife (Northwest territories)	n/a	2000	Middle North
Whitehorse (Yukon)	n/a	2000	Middle North
Churchill (Manitoba)	n/a	2000	Middle North
Uranium City (Saskatchewan)	n/a	2000	Middle North
Red Lake (Ontario)	n/a	2015	Middle North
Anchorage (US)	204	2000	Middle North
Kenora (Ontario)	78	2015	Near North
Timmins (Ontario)	60	2015	Near North
Sault Ste. Marie (Ontario)	32	2015	Near North

Source: Comito (2016, p.7); Hamelin (2000, p.13-14) n/a = not available

Historically, the North may be divided into “dual economies”: the “resource economy as the dominant commercial force produces the primary products for export to world markets” and the “Native economy, in contrast, evolved from a subsistence hunting and fishing economy to one in which wage employment and transfer payments from the Canadian government play a major role” (Stadel, 2008, p.21).

### **Rural vs Urban**

Similar to North, which is defined in comparison to South, Rural is often defined in opposition to Urban. Rural (and remote) may be defined “in terms of geographic accessibility and population density” (Subedi, Roshanafshar and Greenberg, 2020, p.7).

Per Statistics Canada (2006b), Canada’s people “are unevenly distributed over 9 million square kilometres. Most live on about 15% of the land that stretches along our southern border. We are one of the world's most sparsely populated countries, with about three people per square kilometre. The United States, with a slightly smaller land area, has a population density almost 10 times greater.”

“Canada's demographic landscape looked quite different in 1901. Most people lived on farms and only 37% in urban areas. By 1951, as Canada industrialized, 57% of the population lived in an urban area (minimum population 1,000 with a density of at least 400 people per square kilometre). By 2001, even more Canadians had left the farm: four out of five lived in an urban area and nearly two out of three lived in a census metropolitan area—an area consisting of one or more adjacent municipalities situated around a major urban core (Statistics Canada, 2006b). The urbanization of Canada’s population has continued with nearly three in four Canadians (73.7%) living in one of Canada’s large urban centres in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023d).

### *Rural*

Subedi, Roshanafshar and Greenberg (2020, p.7) defines the concept of rural “as communities defined by geography that have unique demographic structures and settlement patterns, isolated populations, long communities' distances, limited supplies of goods and services, and mostly agriculture-based economies”.

Over the years, many definitions of rural exist (see Appendix D). Today, rural may be “defined as everything outside urban areas. But since many rural residents commute to jobs in cities and have access to urban amenities, it can be difficult to draw a line” (Statistics Canada, 2006b). In one definition, Statistics Canada (2006b) “defined rural and small town as outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres, outside census metropolitan areas and outside other urban areas with a core population of 10,000 or more” (Statistics Canada, 2006b).

More recently, Statistics Canada (2022f) defined rural areas as “[a]ll areas outside population centres”. For the federal government’s Climate Action Incentive payments, the small and rural communities are those whose primary residence is outside a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). So, even at the federal level, rural is not defined with consistency.

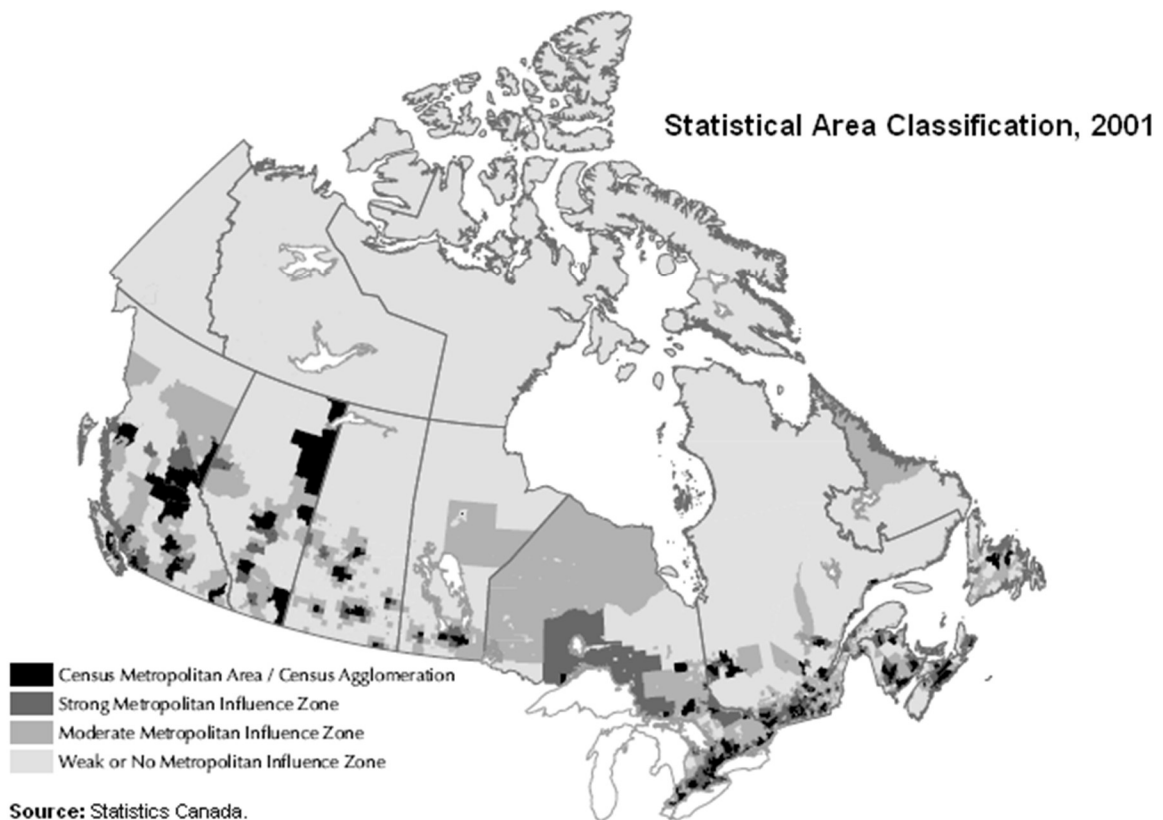
Moreover, “[t]he concept of rural diversity is today well established” (Alasia, 2004, p.27). The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) (2018, p.5) concurs and specifies that rural should be defined “in terms of population size, density and degree of remoteness or proximity to urban centres,” and calls on policymakers to avoid a “one-size-fits-all approach to rural policy”.

Rural Canada is also at the centre of demographic challenges with the “growing number of retired Canadians”, concerns about “youth retention”, but also of economic challenges, such as “limited financial and human resources”, “lack of capacity” (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2018, p.6, 9).

Gibson and Vodden (2011) summarize some characteristics of smaller rural communities as being aging with a declining population, with out-migration of youth, and large distances to urban areas.

Figure M presents a map of statistical area classification with localization of Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), Census Agglomeration (CA), Metropolitan Influence Zone (MIZ) (Strong, Moderate, Weak).

Figure M - Map of Statistical Area Classification





### *Urban*

As previously mentioned, population centres are the classification of the population distinguishing urban and rural. Per Statistics Canada (2022f): “A population centre (POPCTR) has a population of at least 1,000 and a population density of 400 persons or more per square kilometre, based on population counts from the current Census of Population”.

Davis (1985) mentions the debate between historians and urban studies over metropolitanism. Concepts such as urban, metropolitanism, urbanization (versus counterurbanization) are used to describe the reality. Akwawua (1997, p.2) defines the concept of counterurbanization as “a process of population deconcentration from urban to rural areas”. Davis (1985, p.102) refer to “the development of a basic urban function: namely commerce, industry, transportation, and finance”.

A definition of metropolitanism could be: “emergence of a city of outstanding size to dominate not only its surrounding countryside but other cities and their countrysides, the whole area being organized by the metropolis [...] into one economic and social unit that is focused on the metropolitan ‘centre of dominance’ and through it trades with the world” (Davis, 1985, p.102).

### **Remote/Isolated vs Close/Near**

“Geographic proximity to service centres and population centres is an important determinant of socio-economic and health outcomes. Consequently, it is a relevant dimension in the analysis and delivery of policies and programs” (Statistics Canada, 2023e). There are a “diversity of conceptual and methodological approaches” for the concepts of remoteness and accessibility; and there is “no single and predominantly accepted definition in the literature” (Alasia, Bédard, Bélanger, Guimond & Penney, 2017, p.5). Bocco (2016, p.178) shares that “two dimensions of remoteness must be recognized. One is the absolute, geometric dimension, related to distances as measured on parallels, meridians and over altitudes. The other is a relative, geographic dimension, subject to scale, and to connectivity rather than distance”.

### *Remote/Isolated*

Remoteness “is defined in terms of geographic distance separating a spatial unit (community, census tract, etc.) from nodes of activity. The major focus is on how distance restricts opportunities for interaction” (Alasia et al., 2017, p.6). Hence, the concept of “remoteness” is generally associated with the physical isolation of a community or region; however, the term could also refer to “other dimensions that are intended to capture economic, social and cultural barriers or distances” (Alasia et al., 2017, p.8).

Federal and provincial/territorial governments have used various measures of remoteness and accessibility for years. The Index of Remoteness for a community is determined by its distance to all the population centres, defined by Statistics Canada in a given travel radius, as well as their population size (Alasia et al., 2017).

“The method used to compute the index is based on the principle of a gravity model, in which both the proximity to and size of population centres are used in the estimates. The distances used in the estimates are determined by the road network travel distances within a given radius that permits for daily interaction” (Statistics Canada, 2023e).

The population size of the population centre is used as a proxy for agglomeration (i.e., the clustering and concentration of population and economic activities) and general measure of service availability.

Table 10 presents the classification of type of remoteness index, population and number of census subdivisions (CSDs). “The concept of accessibility is always qualified as access to something; thus, the concept of accessibility is used to capture the possibility of access as determined by geographic proximity” (Alasia et al., 2017, p.6). Other measures of remoteness exist, for example from Australia: Rural Remote and Metropolitan Areas classification (RRMA), the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA), and the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) (Alasia et al., 2017; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2004); McGrail & Humphrey, 2009).

Table 10 - Classification of Type of Remoteness Area and Population by CSD

Remoteness area	RI score	Population	CSD	Average population/CSD
Easily accessible area	<0.1500	68.14%	15.10%	30,974
Accessible area	0.15500 to 0.2888	19.34%	21.48%	6,180
Less accessible area	0.2889 to 0.3898	7.90%	27.51%	1,972
Remote area	0.3899 to 0.5532	3.84%	23.98%	1,098
Very remote area	>0.5532	0.78%	11.92%	449

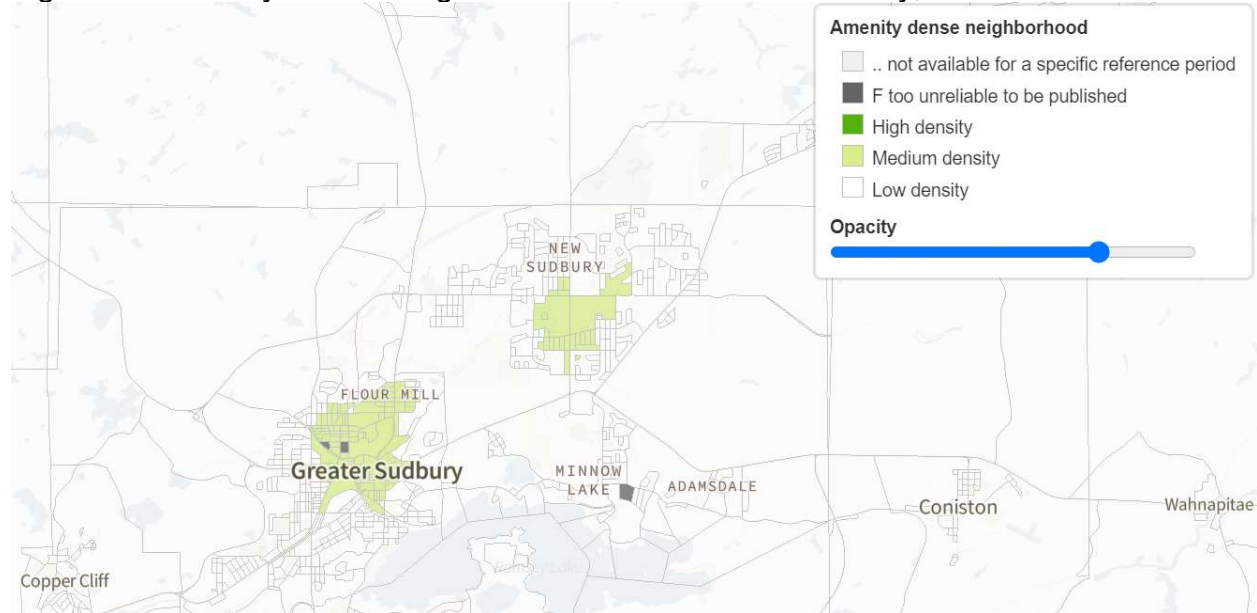
Source: Alasia et al (2017, p.11)

In 2020, Statistics Canada and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation collaborated to develop a set of proximity measures to services and amenities. The result is the nation-wide Proximity Measures Database (PMD) (Statistics Canada, 2023f). The PMD consists of ten measures of proximity that are then combined in a composite indicator. Included are measures of proximity to employment, grocery stores, pharmacies, health care, childcare, primary education, secondary education, public transit, neighbourhood parks, and libraries (Statistics Canada, 2023f). For example, proximity to public transit measures the closeness of a dissemination block (a block in urban areas or an area bounded by roads in rural areas) to any source of public transportation within a 1km walking distance (Statistics Canada, 2023f).

The composite measure is used to indicate neighbourhoods with high or low access to basic needs for families with children. The amenity dense neighbourhood designation is given to dissemination blocks with access to a grocery store, pharmacy, health care facility, childcare facility, primary school, library, public transit stops, and source of employment. The PMD was used during the COVID-19 crisis to assist federal government departments and other stakeholders enabling them to make informed

decision at different geographic levels (Statistics Canada, 2023f). Figure N shows the amenity dense neighbourhoods for Greater Sudbury and surrounding communities as an example.

Figure N - Amenity Dense Neighbourhoods for Greater Sudbury, Ontario



Source: Statistics Canada

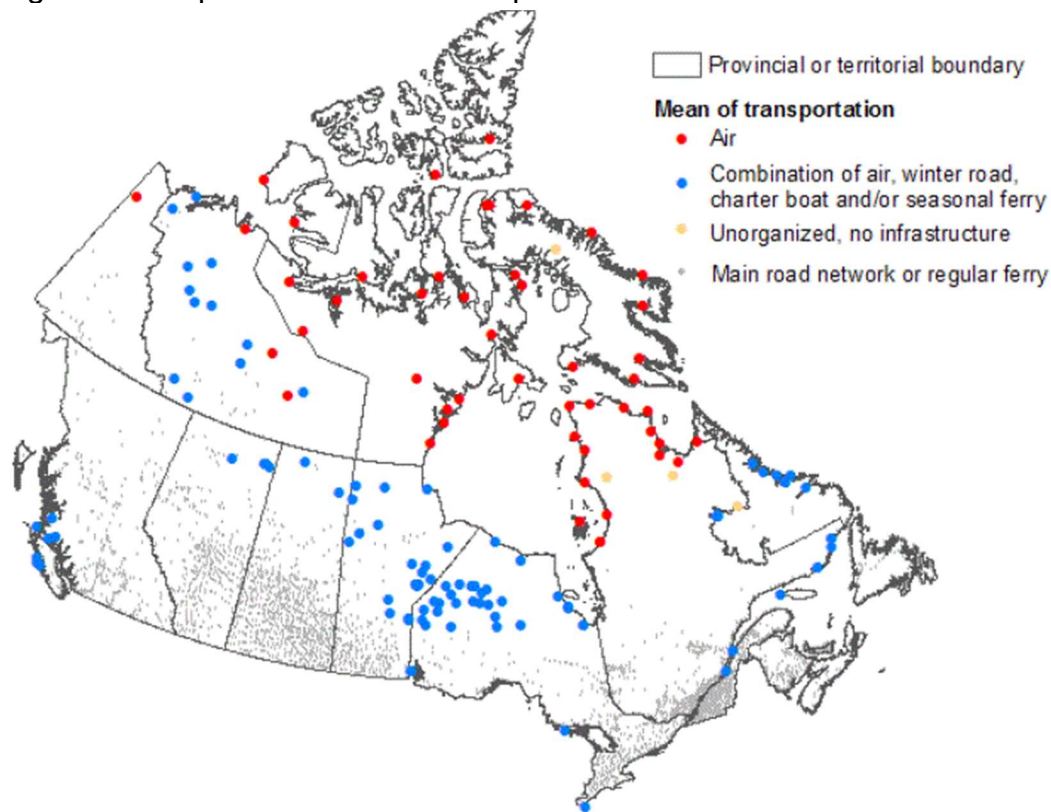
Remoteness has been defined at other levels of government and in other contexts. For example, Ontario (2021) describes remoteness in the context of tourism following three levels:

- Remote tourism: “not accessible by road”, “access is only gained through air, water or rail”;
- Semi-remote tourism: “road access is limited and may be controlled through artificial means or the use may be limited to protect the resources, opportunity or value”;
- Drive-in tourism: “includes unencumbered road access”.

### *Close/Near*

The relative concept Close/Near refers to remoteness in terms of transportation. Figure O presents a map with means of transportation (air, winter road, chartered boat, seasonal ferry, main road network, regular ferry). This dichotomy is key given the impact of transportation on access to goods, services and programs.

Figure O - Map with Means of Transportation



**Note:** Each dot is a CSD representative point.  
**Source:** authors' computations.

Source: Alasia, Bédard, Bélanger, Guimond and Penny (2017, p.10)

### Peripheral/Hinterland vs Core/Heartland

In addition to core-periphery, other related expression/concepts that could be used inter-changeably are “heartland-hinterland, metropolis-hinterland, centre-periphery, centre-margin” (Akwawua, 1997, p.5). Similar to the North-South dichotomy, core-periphery could also be viewed in a global context considering the lack of equity in wealth across the globe. Stieff (2020) suggests a division between Core (top 20 countries ranked by the United Nations Human Development Index), Semi-periphery and Periphery. It could also be within the core of a province versus its own periphery. The concept could also be associated with counterurbanization (Akwawua, 1997). The concept is also relative and “not an absolute term as no urban centre has ever established complete dominance over its hinterland” (Davis 1985, p.107).

Development of periphery and the regional inequality is part of the dynamic environment changing over time between the periphery and the core (Minns and Roses, 2018). Stadel (2008, p.13) cites major historical contributing factors in contrasting periphery and core, such as “the large territorial size, the different physical environments, and the uneven access to resources, as well as the spatial discrepancies of population distribution, of secondary and tertiary employment opportunities, and of the

transportation infrastructure”. The objective of the report is not to examine thoroughly the historical development, but only to situate the definitions in a context.

The core-periphery continuum may be applied in terms of historic migration between provinces; as seen in Table 1 with the six regions, Ontario and Québec regions are the core and the periphery is subdivided between the Atlantic, Prairies, British Columbia and Territories (Akwawua, 1997; Vining and Pallone, 1982). However, the “rich agricultural resources”, “the massive European immigration” and “the boom of oil and natural gas” resources have seen “the emergence of a new core of national significance, the Calgary-Edmonton-Ft. Mc Murray Corridor” (Stadel, 2008, p.14). The Vancouver Metropolitan Area should not be ignored, especially with the Pacific Ocean trade route (Stadel, 2008). Anderson, Jack and McAuley (2001) mention that periphery does not have only negative aspects, but it could also present some competitive advantages.

### *Core/Heartland*

Akwawua (1997, p.6) notes that a “useful distinction between heartland and hinterland can be made by identifying the central Canadian industrialized core as the heartland and the rest of the country as the hinterland”. Historic factors giving a competitive advantage to the existing core were “geographic situation, large local markets, the nexus of transportation routes, and political power” (Stadel, 2008, p.15).

Based on Vining and Pallone (1982) (in Akwawua (1997, p.2)), “the core regions of a country are those regions which are economically and politically dominant; they contain the principal cities of the country and have traditionally experienced high rates of net immigration from other less urbanized, peripheral regions”. Characteristics of the Canadian Heartland are “high population densities, above average growth rates and young populations segments” (Stadel, 2008, p.15).

“The core region of Canada has thus been traditionally defined as comprising the two provinces of Quebec and Ontario.” (Akwawua, 1997, p.6) The historic core is essentially the corridor between Québec City and Windsor and includes along the St. Lawrence River, Greater Montréal area (as well as St. Lawrence lowlands) and Greater Toronto area (as well as Greater Golden Horseshoe). Toronto and Montréal are the census metropolitan areas (CMA) with the largest population. Figure P presents a map of the Canadian Heartland zone in the corridor between Québec City and Windsor.

The growing parts of the core are more the results of “fast expanding suburbs and ‘exurbs’ of the sprawling ‘urban field’” than the growth around downtown Toronto or Montréal (Stadel, 2008, p.16). We could see a close periphery development.

Figure P - The Canadian Heartland



Source: IvyPanda (2019)

### *Peripheral/Hinterland*

Akwawua (1997, p.6) refers to a definition of hinterland “as regional sub-systems that stand in a relationship of economic, political and cultural dependency to a heartland”. Historically, Hinterland “acts as resource pools for the manufacturing centers of the heartland, or for export” (Stadel, 2008, p.20).

Davis (1985, p.104) sees “the metropolis-hinterland relationship as essentially exploitative and leading to the impoverishment of the hinterland”. Per Davis (1985, p.108), the simple dichotomy in Canada of metropolis and hinterland is no longer valid”. The concept of place may be more appropriate (Baldacchino, 2015; Daniels, Baldacchino & Vodden, 2015; Vodden, Baldacchino & Gibson, 2015).

### **Combinations**

Table 11 presents Alasia (2004) classification of five regional types combining multiple classifications, namely urban / rural / northern. Another classification of communities is presented in Table 12.

Table 11 – Classification of Regional Types

Regions
Predominantly urban regions
Intermediate regions
Rural metro-adjacent regions
Rural non-metro-adjacent regions
Rural northern regions

Source: Alasia (2004, p.1)

Table 12 – Classification of Communities

Regions	
Northern communities	(collectivités du Nord / communautés nordiques)
Rural and Northern communities	(collectivités Rurales et du Nord)
Remote Northern communities	(collectivités isolées du Nord)

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS IN CANADIAN REGIONS

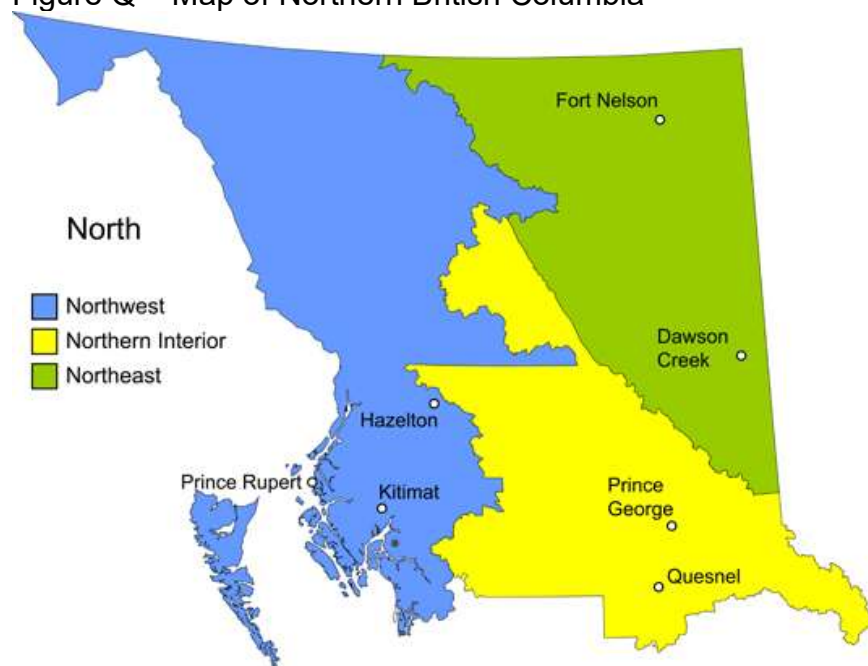
In this section, practical applications in Canadian regions are described for two concepts, namely Northern and Rural.

### Northern

#### *Northern in British Columbia*

Northern British Columbia “is surrounded by Alaska, and the Yukon Territory to the North; the Pacific Ocean to the West; and Alberta and the Rockies to the East” (Travel British Columbia, 2022). The six regions of Northern British Columbia for tourism purpose are: Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands), Prince George, Prince Rupert, Northern BC Circle Tour, Inside Passage Circle Tour, Native heritage Circle Tour (British Columbia, 2022). Five main highways give access to Northern British Columbia: Alaska Highway 97, Atlin Highway 7, Haida Gwaii, Stewart Cassiar Highway 37, and Yellowhead Highway 16 (Travel British Columbia, 2022). Figure Q presents a map of Northern British Columbia with three Northern zones, namely Northwest, Northern Interior and Northeast.

Figure Q – Map of Northern British Columbia



### *Northern in the Prairies*

In Alberta, the North is considered above Edmonton, almost half of the province.

In Saskatchewan, the North is considered above Prince Albert, almost half of the province.

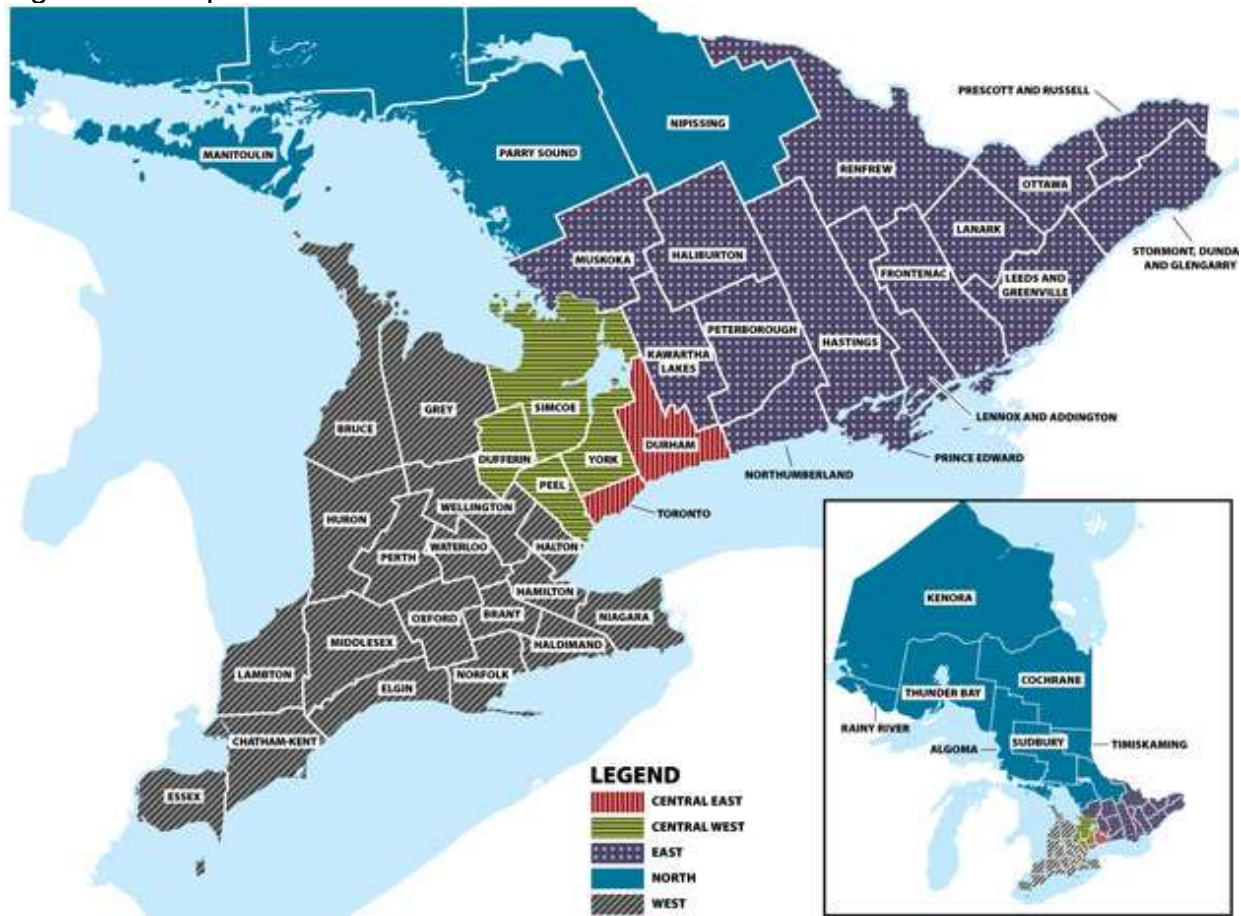
In Manitoba, the North is considered to be at the north of Lake Winnipeg.

### *Northern in Ontario*

Per Canada Post (2021), if the first character of the postal code is P, it is in the Northern Ontario zone. Per the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies (OACAS, 2022a), “[n]orthern communities in Ontario are those within the 10 territorial districts of the region of Northern Ontario (Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, and Timiskaming)”. Figure R presents a map of Ontario with the various administrative zones and the five main regions, including one for the North.



Figure R – Map of Ontario



Source: Ontario (2022)

“The Northern Region covers almost 90% of the province’s land mass and is the ministry’s largest region. It includes 144 municipalities, 10 territorial districts, 106 First Nations, and over 150 unincorporated communities, including 46 local services boards. Northern Ontario borders Quebec, Manitoba, Minnesota, Michigan, Hudson Bay and James Bay. Its vast area creates many unique challenges, including large distances between workplaces and urban centres and many remote worksites. The North is characterized by extreme temperatures: extremely cold in the winter and hot in the summer” (Ontario, 2022).

“The region’s economy is primarily resource based, including: mining, forestry, fishing and oil and gas industries. In 2016, these resource industries accounted for close to 6.2% of the North’s total employment compared to 0.8% for the province as a whole. Mining, a relatively small and highly organized industry, is the most complex and diverse in terms of occupational health and safety. Northern Ontario is also more reliant than other regions on public sector employment, including public administration, education and health care. In 2016, these sectors accounted for 31.75% of the North’s total employment compared to 25.47% for the province as a whole. The two

largest hospitals in the North (Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and Health Sciences North Sudbury) each employ nearly 4,000 workers” (Ontario, 2022).

Table 13 presents a summary of the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) replaced by the Ontario Health centralized organizations and reduction of regions from 14 to 5. The North was in two of the 14 LHIN (North East and North West) and is now one of the five regions in Ontario Health. Appendix E presents the health regions under the LHIN structure and Appendix F presents the transitional health regions under Ontario Health’s new structure.

Table 13 - Summary of Northern LHIN and Ontario Health regions

<i>LHINs</i> (2 of 14)		<i>Ontario Health</i> (1 of 5)	
North East (Greater Sudbury, North Bay, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie)	NE (13)	N	North
North West (Thunder Bay, Kenora)	NW (14)		

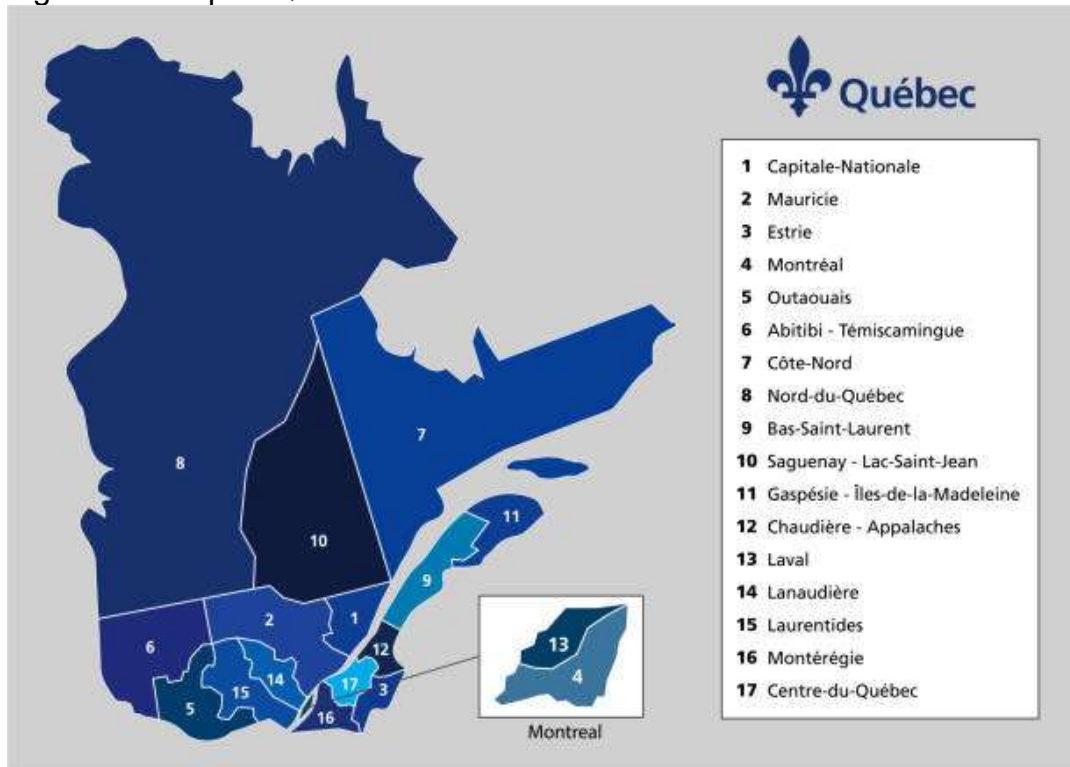
Source: full table of 14 LHIN regions and 5 Ontario Health regions in Pilon & Brouard (2020, p.5)

### *Northern in Québec*

Québec is divided into 17 administrative regions; Figure S presents a map of Québec with them. The administrative regions are a division of the territory useful for ministries and governmental agencies (Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2022a; 2022b). Nord-du-Québec, Côte-Nord, and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean are the main regions in the North, but it may also include part of Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Mauricie.

Nord-du-Québec (Northern Quebec) is the largest (747,192 km<sup>2</sup>), but the least populous (46,673 in 2021), of the seventeen administrative regions. Three subdivisions of the Nord-du-Québec region are Jamésie, Administration régionale Kativik and Eeyou Istchee. Another region is Côte-Nord (North Coast) (300,281 km<sup>2</sup>, 90,543 persons in 2021) with six subdivisions: Haute Côte-Nord, Manicouagan, Sept-Rivières, Minganie, Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent and Caniapiscau. Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean (95,542 km<sup>2</sup>, 279,949 persons in 2021) has five subdivisions of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region are Le Domaine-du-Roy, Maria-Chapdelaine, Le Fjord-du-Saguenay, Lac-Saint-Jean-Est, and Saguenay. Another region is Abitibi-Témiscamingue (57,325 km<sup>2</sup>, 148,242 persons in 2021) with five subdivisions: Abitibi-Ouest, Abitibi, Rouyn-Noranda, la Vallée-de-l’Or, and Témiscamingue. Another region is Mauricie (35,475 km<sup>2</sup>, 277,384 persons in 2021) with six subdivisions: La Tuque, Mékinac, Shawinigan, Maskinongé, Les Chenaux and Trois-Rivières.

Figure S – Map of Québec



Source: Getty Images/iStockphoto | Créatrice: Julie Deshaies

### *Northern in Atlantic*

The entire Atlantic region apart from Labrador is part of the South.

### *Northern in Territories*

All the territories are part of the North.

## **Rural**

Per Canada Post (2021), if the second character of the postal code is 0 (zero), it is rural (for example, A0A). The rural communities are spread all over the provinces and territories (Rich, Hall and Nelson, 2021).

### *Rural in British Columbia*

The Rural Coordination Centre of BC (RCCBC) (2022) proposes a map of the more than 200 communities in British Columbia.

### *Rural in the Prairies*

The Government of Alberta (2022a, p.8) defined rural in the Alberta context: “Defining rural is difficult. It is sometimes defined by population size, density, or distance to other communities and services. However, in the context of economic development, rural refers to a community’s capacity to sustain itself and grow, the quality of life for residents and the industries that contribute to its economy. During the engagement sessions, participants suggested the most common characteristics of rural communities include:

- a population of less than 20,000 people,
- limited geographic proximity to population centres over 25,000 that could provide employment and services,
- communities may be remote or have in them, or around them, a significant amount of nature, natural resources, agricultural land and wilderness areas, and
- a workforce largely focused on primary economic activity, including oil and gas, agriculture and forestry.

While not all of the characteristics listed apply to every rural and Indigenous community, many rural Albertans will see aspects of themselves, and their communities represented.”

In Saskatchewan, the province counts on 295 rural municipalities in six divisions across the province (SARM, 2022).

In Manitoba, a “rural municipality may be formed for an area with at least 1,000 residents and a population density of less than 400 residents per square kilometre.” (Government of Manitoba, 2022, section 4(3)). Manitoba has 98 rural municipalities (Manitoba, 2022).

### *Rural in Ontario*

Per the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies (OACAS, 2022a), “[r]ural communities in Ontario are those with a population of less than 30,000 that are greater than 30 minutes away in travel times from a community with a population of more than 30,000”.

Per the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies (OACAS, 2022a), “[r]emote communities in Ontario are those without year-round road access or which rely on a third party (e.g., train, airplane, ferry) for transportation to a larger population centre”. There are approximately 30 to 40 remote communities in Ontario.

As an alternative to the rural-urban duality, the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI, 2023) proposes a rural continuum from very rural to very urban, with the two key dimensions of the continuum being the population of a community and how far a community is from an urban area. ROI designates a municipality as rural if it lies outside of a Census Metropolitan area (CMA). According to ROI (2023), there are 469 (81%) rural municipalities in Ontario covering over 800,000 square km (86%).

### *Rural in Québec*

Coop Carbone (2018, p.7) categorizes the Québec into two main territories: Rural and Urban; the 17 administrative regions categorizing them between three regions (resources regions, central regions, Montréal regions) and using the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). Appendix G and Appendix H present the definitions of rural and urban and the three categories of rural regions in Québec.

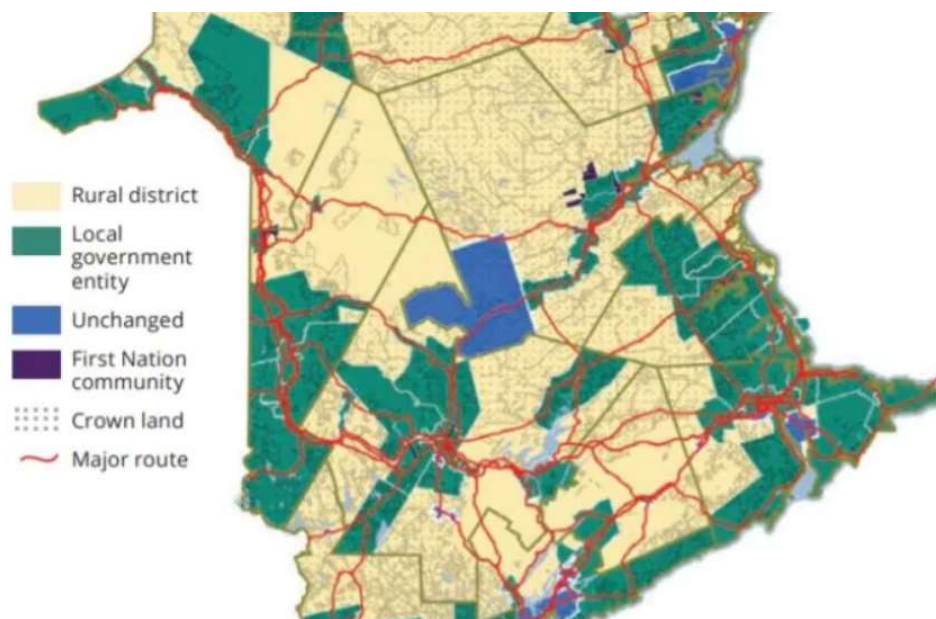
### *Rural in Atlantic*

The Atlantic region has the highest share of people living in rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2023g).

In New Brunswick in recent years, the ratio of rural to urban residents has hovered between 40% and 50% and distinctions between rural and urban places are much less pronounced relative to many other Canadian provinces (Beckley, 2021). “Within rural New Brunswick, citizens live in towns, villages, unincorporated areas, or the relatively new jurisdictions of Rural Communities (of which there are 8), or Regional Municipalities (of which there is one). Only 3% of the New Brunswick population resides within the eight Rural Communities. By contrast, 30% of New Brunswickers live in unincorporated areas with no formal local government representation. An additional 70,855 residents live in Villages, but this designation is not all that useful for determining urban and rural. For example, some villages are quite small, and relatively remote, such as Millville (population 273), Riverside-Albert (population 350), and Nigadoo (population 963), while other villages, like New Maryland (population 4,174) are quite large and adjacent to urban areas such as Fredericton” (Beckley, 2021). “As a result of Local Governance Reform (LGR), as of January 1st, 2023, rural districts have been established to ensure that residents living outside local governments continue to receive important services, such as emergency measures, police, fire, land use planning, animal control, management of dangerous or unsightly premises, and solid waste management” (Government of New Brunswick, 2023). Figure T shows the twelve rural districts in addition to 77 local governments created as part of the reforms.

For most Nova Scotians, rural Nova Scotia means “almost everything outside Halifax Regional Municipality” (Foster et al., 2021). Between 2016 and 2021, the rural population in Nova Scotia grew by 1.2% and accounts for approximately two-fifths of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2023g). “Outside of the Halifax Regional Municipality, the rest of the province is made up of small population centres (1,000 to 29,999 people) and rural areas. In total, 23% of Nova Scotians live in one of its 36 small population centres, while 43% reside in rural areas outside of these centres” (Foster et al., 2021).

Figure T – Rural Districts and Local Government Entities in New Brunswick



Source: Government of New Brunswick

In Prince Edward Island, the rural population increased by 6.2% between 2016 and 2021, and constitutes more than half of the total population of the province (Statistics Canada, 2023g).

“What constitutes ‘rural’ in Prince Edward Island (PEI) is not straightforward at the best of times, and can be a political hot potato... Any discussion of rural—and urban—on PEI must acknowledge and take place in the context of Mi’kmaq Aboriginal and treaty rights” (Brinklow, Lévêque and Sark, 2021).

The province defines a rural municipality as one with a population of fewer than 4,000 persons and a total property assessment value of less than \$200 million (Municipal Governments Act, 2016). In practice, the criteria is applied with some flexibility and the classification of rural municipality excludes a significant portion of the rural population that lives in rural communities without a local government (Brinklow, Lévêque and Sark, 2021). For most residents of PEI, “rural is anything outside of the Charlottetown Region...” however, by “the standards of many other Canadian jurisdictions, all of PEI would be considered rural” (Brinklow, Lévêque and Sark, 2021).

“The Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency defines ‘urban Newfoundland and Labrador’ as those communities within the Census Metropolitan Area (St. John’s), the four Census Agglomerations (Bay Roberts, Corner Brook, Gander and Grand Falls-Windsor), or a community with a population of 5,000 or more not already a part of the CMA or the CAs (Clarenville, Deer Lake, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador City, Marystown and Stephenville)” (Government of New Foundland and Labrador, 2019). The Public Engagement and Planning Division of the provincial government defined rural Newfoundland and Labrador as anything outside St. John’s census metropolitan area (Government of New Foundland and Labrador, 2019). Of all the provinces and

territories, the rural population of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) experienced the largest percentage decline (6.4%) between 2016 and 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023g). According to Statistics Canada (2023g) definition of rural, approximately 40% of the population in the province lives in rural areas. However, a much larger percentage of the population lives outside the Avalon Peninsula census division (Reid et al., 2021; RFRC 2022).

### *Rural in Territories*

The proportion of the population living in rural areas in each of the three territories exceeds the national average; however, just like the rest of Canada, the territories are becoming more urbanized (Statistics Canada, 2023g). “The proportion of the population living in rural areas has remained relatively stable in Yukon and Nunavut since 2011. However, there has been a decrease in the rural population of the Northwest Territories since 2011, caused by migration losses to Yellowknife and other provinces and territories” (Statistics Canada, 2023g). “From 2016 to 2021, the rural population increased at the fastest pace in Nunavut (+10.3%)” (Statistics Canada, 2023g).

“Nunavut as a region does not fit easily into the traditional discussion of rural-urban differences [...] Based on the definition of rural being communities of less than 1000, 75% of the population of Nunavut can be categorized as being urban. Yet, as many studies have shown, the existence of all communities in Nunavut are still heavily dependent economically and culturally on harvesting the benefits of the land and as such can be seen as rural” (Southcott, 2023).

Yukon is predominantly urban with over 70% of the population living in Whitehorse in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023g).

“Whitehorse dominates the territory, economically, socially, and politically. A network of small communities and mine sites overlies the southern two-thirds of the territory, with centres located along the Alaska, Campbell, and Klondike highways. These are tiny communities, with all but two under 1,500 people, many with substantial First Nations populations, basic (and sub-basic) services (e.g., highways, health centres, elementary schools), and little in the way of non-highway/tourist-related business activity” (Coates and Graham, 2023).

Approximately 35% of the Yukon population lives in rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2023g).

“The entire population of [Northwest Territories] could count as a small city, and Yellowknife, the capital [...] would be a town relative to the other provincial capitals. This tiny population lives in a land mass that is approximately 1.3 million square kilometers characterized by rugged terrain consisting of exposed rocks, tundra, and boreal forest scattered with many lakes including two of the largest lakes in the world, Great Bear and Great Slave. Thirty-three communities are the homeland of this sparse population. Another quarter of the citizens live in four regional centres in other parts of the territory. The rest of the communities, ranging in size from 100-1000 people, are dispersed across the vast land mass” (Moffitt and Mercer, 2023).

## CONCLUSION

In defining the smaller communities and terms used in the philanthropic context, namely Northern, Rural, Remote, and Peripheral communities, we have found both variety and commonality. The variety is not surprising given the socio-economic, demographic, cultural, and geographic diversity of smaller communities. For the most part, we have found a wide range of classifications focusing on population size and density, invariably used as a proxy for economic vitality, access to resources, and capacity. For example, across federal agencies, rural is not defined with consistency and north is not really North in the latitude sense of it but depends and could be defined based on multiple factors.

A common dimension that seems to unite all the classifications is that of distance and transportation. In fact, the accessibility of transportation or the quality of transportation infrastructure has been used as a delineating factor (e.g., Northern British Columbia, Remote Ontario). Once again, this is not surprising given that distance and transportation impacts access to goods, services and programs.

In determining the appropriate definition for these concepts, policymakers, analysts, and researchers must consider the purpose (e.g., food security, healthcare) and the level of comparison (provincial, national, or international). We know that proximity to economic activity and population centres is a key determinant for socio-economic outcomes. The ultimate message is that relying on one classification paints an incomplete picture of the realities for small communities and that the fallacy of dichotomy increases the risk of oversimplification which may in turn limit philanthropic efforts for these communities. Assessing the need and impact of programs and philanthropic efforts will require a multi-factor approach and funding must reflect the realities of these communities in terms of resources and capacity. Although multi-factor indexes exist, the availability and currency of data varies by community. As such, foundations and other philanthropic organizations will continue to rely on a variety of geographic boundaries (e.g., CMA, CAs, district, km radius) to determine eligibility.

Summarizing the definitions of the terms examined may help organizations, researchers and policy makers in dealing with the lesser known realities in smaller communities. It may contribute to the apparent relative absence of research on philanthropy in marginalized communities in Canada. Certainly, philanthropic interest is present for Northern communities (Elson, Fontan, Lefèvre and Stauch, 2018), rural communities (Gibson, Barrett and Vodden, 2014; Reid, Butters & Vodden, 2021) and for regional development (Gibson, Barrett and Parmiter, 2013). After all, the philanthropic landscape in smaller communities has distinct challenges and pressures, such as geographical distance to main funders, low population densities, small size and number of charities to receive philanthropic dollars and some lack of connections with local actors focusing on similar needs. However, more can be done as the task of identifying the relevant dimensions for classifying small communities in the philanthropic context illustrates. Clearly more research is needed.



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## APPENDIX A – LIST OF VARIABLES / INDICATORS ABOUT REGIONS

Headings	Indicators
Demographic	Percent population change (1991 to 1996)
	Percent of population less than 20 years of age
	Percent of population 65 years of age and over
	Senior in-migration rate (Percent of persons 55 to 74 years of age living in different CSD 5 years ago)
	Fertility rate
Social	Average years of schooling for population 25 to 54 years of age
	Percent of persons in low-income economic families
	Social transfer income as a percent of total income
	Total unemployment rate
Housing	Percent of households with gross rent equal to or greater than 30 percent of household income
	Percent of households with owner's gross housing costs equal to or greater than 30 percent of household income
	Percent of households owning their house
Economic and labour market	Agricultural employment (percent)
	Other primary employment (percent)
	Traditional manufacturing employment (percent)
	Complex manufacturing employment (percent)
	Dynamic services employment (percent)
	Non-market services employment (percent)
	Participation rate (total labour rate)
	Male participation rate over female participation rate
	Percent of families (married and common-law couples)
	Percent with non-agricultural self-employment activity
	Percent with part-time employment
	Average income per person
	Percent earning less than \$10 per hour
	Off-farm earnings of census-farm operator families as a percent of total family income
	Average income growth (between 1991 and 1996)

Source: Alasia (2004, p.32-33)

**APPENDIX B – ALTERNATIVE DEFINITIONS OF NORTH**

Name	Definition and thresholds
<b>Single-Factor Definitions</b>	
Statistics Canada (2006a) latitude	“anything north of the 60th parallel” Levels (2): South and North (Near North and Far North)
Statistics Canada (2006a) Arctic	Canada’s Arctic region Levels (2): South and North
Physical geographers	Based on latitudes for regions above above 55° North and South 55° to 60° North and South = subarctic and subantarctic 60° to 75° North and South = arctic and antartic zones 75° to 90° North and South = polar zones Levels (3): Subarctic and subantarctic; Arctic and antartic zones, Polar zones
Hydrology	Six physical boundaries “Polar circles, temperature, snow and ice cover, frozen ground, vegetation, and run-off direction”
Climatic	“presence or absence of trees” “tree line roughly follows the isotherm joining locations with a mean July temperature of 10°C” Levels (2): South and North
Biological	“low level of solar energy which supports few individual faunal species and only the hardier floral species” Levels (2): South and North
<b>Multiple-Factor Definitions</b>	
Hamelin Global Nordic Index	“scoring system using units or measure known as valeurs polaires, or VAPO” for ten fundamental elements (latitude, summer heat, annual cold, types of ice, total precipitation, natural vegetation cover, accessibility by means other than air, air service, population, and degree of economic activity) North Pole = 1,000 VAPO; Extreme North = 800-1,000 VAPO; Far North = 500 and 799 VAPO; Middle North = 200-499 VAPO; Near North = below 200 VAPO but close to other Northern regions; South = 200 VAPO (see Appendix C – Global Nordicity Index for details) Levels (4): Extreme North, Far North, Middle North, Near North
Climatic harshness (Burkhanov)	“distribution of minimum temperatures, wind speed, humidity, and solar radiation (from March to October) and, in mountain areas, also barometric pressure”
Burns, Richardson and Hall index	“formulae derived by weighting eleven numerical parameters: latitude, mean annual number of heating degree-days, mean annual number of growing degree-days, mean annual number of reezing degree-days, mean length of the ice season, man length of the sno grund cover, mean annual precipitation, the number of major reads, railways, and aircrafts movement”

Source: Comito (2016, p.5); Graham (1990, p.22-34); Statistics Canada (2006a)

**APPENDIX C – GLOBAL NORDICITY INDEX**

Criteria	Classification system	Polar Units	North Pole	
<b>Latitude</b> (Degree north)	Up to 90	100	100	
	80	77		
	70	55		
	50	33		
	45	0		
<b>Summer heat</b> (Days above 6°C)	0	100	100	
	40	80		
	60	70		
	80	60		
	100	45		
	120	30		
	135	20		
	>150	0		
<b>Annual cold</b> (Degree days below 0°C)	6,650	100	100	
	5,550	85		
	4,700	75		
	3,900	65		
	2,900	45		
	1,950	30		
	1,250	15		
	550	0		
<b>Types of Ice</b>	Frozen ground	Continuous permafrost 450 m	100	100
		Continuous permafrost > 450 m	80	
		Discontinuous permafrost	60	
		Ground frozen for 9 months	50	
		Ground frozen for 4 months	20	
		Ground frozen for < 1 month	0	
	Floating ice	Permanent pack ice	100	
		Pack ice on per-Arctic seas	90	
		Pack ice for 9 months	64	
		Pack ice for 6 months	36	
		Pack ice for 4 months	20	
		Pack ice for < 1 month	0	
	Glaciers and snow cover	Ice sheet 1,500 m thick or more	100	
		Ice sheet 700 m	96	
		Icecap about 300 m	60	
		Neve	20	
		Snow cover of less than 2.5 cm	0	
<b>Total precipitation</b> (millimetres)	100 mm	100	100	
	200 mm	80		
	300 mm	60		
	400 mm	30		
	500 mm	0		
<b>Natural vegetation cover</b>	Rocky desert	100	100	
	Tundra clumps 50%	90		
	Sparse tundra: almost continuous	80		
	Dense tundra and shrubs: humid steppe	60		
	Open woodland	40		
	Dense forest	0		

## Definitions of Northern/Rural/Remote/Peripheric Communities in a Philanthropic Context

<b>Accessibility other than air</b> Seasonal service	No service	100	100	
	Once per year	80		
	For two months	60		
	For three months	55		
	For six months or two seasons	40		
	Year round	By one means	20	
		By two means	15	
		By more than two means	0	
<b>Air services</b>	Charter flights, 1,500 km	100	100	
	Charter flights, 500 km	80		
	Charter flights, 150 km	65		
	Charter flights, 50 km	60		
	Regular service, twice per month	40		
	Regular service, weekly / 4 per month	25		
	Regular service, twice weekly / 8 per month	15		
	Regular service, daily / > 30 per month	0		
<b>Resident or wintering population</b>	Inhabitants	None	100	
		About 25	90	
		About 100	85	
		About 500	75	
		About 1,000	60	
		About 2,000	40	
		About 3,000	20	
		> 5,000	0	
	Population density	Uninhabited	100	100
		0.005 per km <sup>2</sup>	90	
		0.5 per km <sup>2</sup>	70	
		1 per km <sup>2</sup>	50	
		2 per km <sup>2</sup>	25	
		5 per km <sup>2</sup>	0	
<b>Degree of economic activity</b>	No production, none foreseen	100	100	
	Exploration, no exploitation	80		
	20 persons living off the land; airstrip	75		
	Low level of commercial sea fisheries	60		
	Gathering, extraction, or handicrafts	50		
	Mineral concentration, storage, terminal	30		
	Major 'secondary' enterprises	15		
	Interregional centre with multiple services	0		
<b>Total</b>			1,000	

Source: adapted from Comitto (2016, p.8-12) and Hamelin (2000, p.21-22) based on Hamelin (1979)

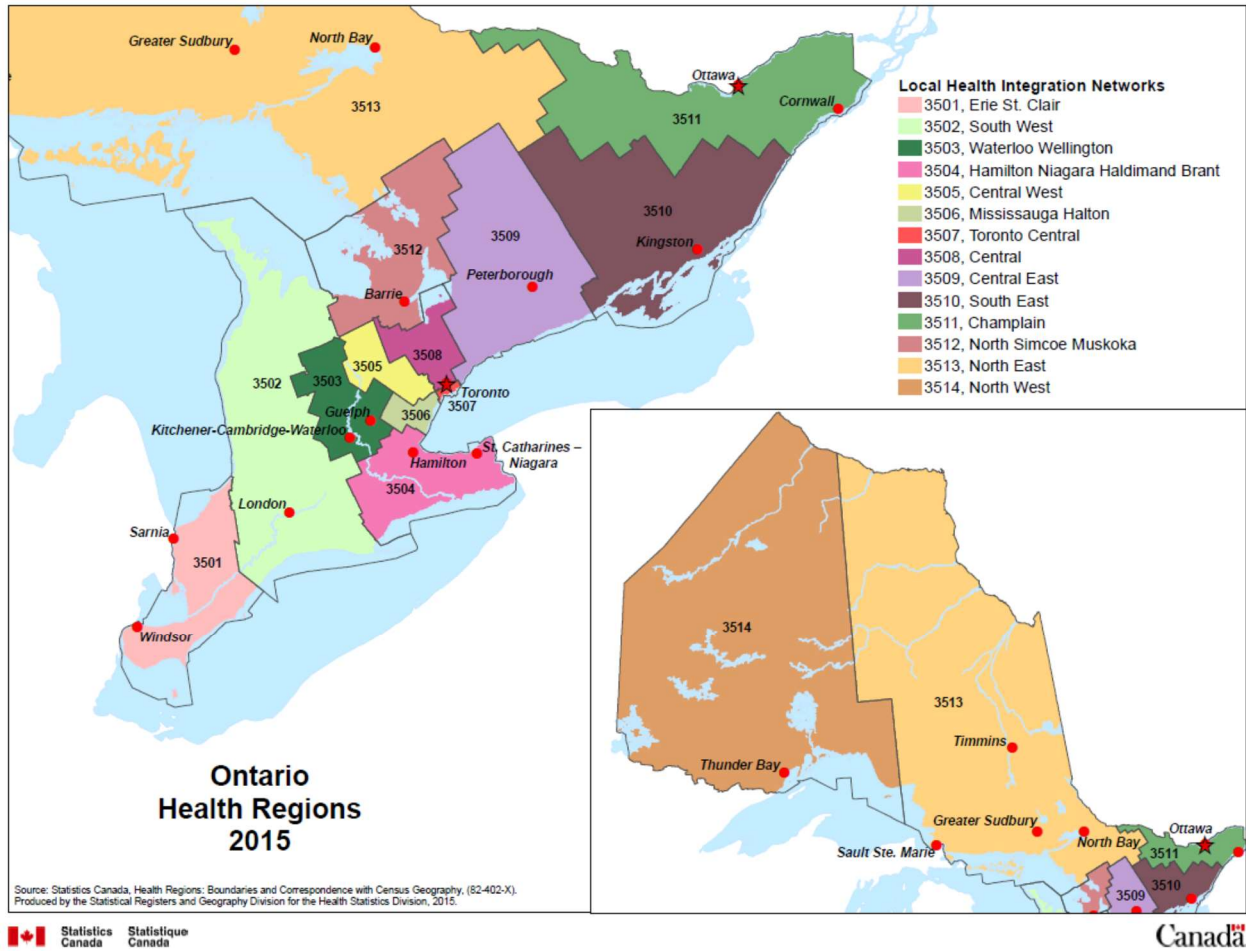
Note: Comitto (2016) gives examples of application in Northern Ontario and Hamelin (2000) provide some examples in 4 different countries.

## APPENDIX D – ALTERNATIVE DEFINITIONS OF RURAL

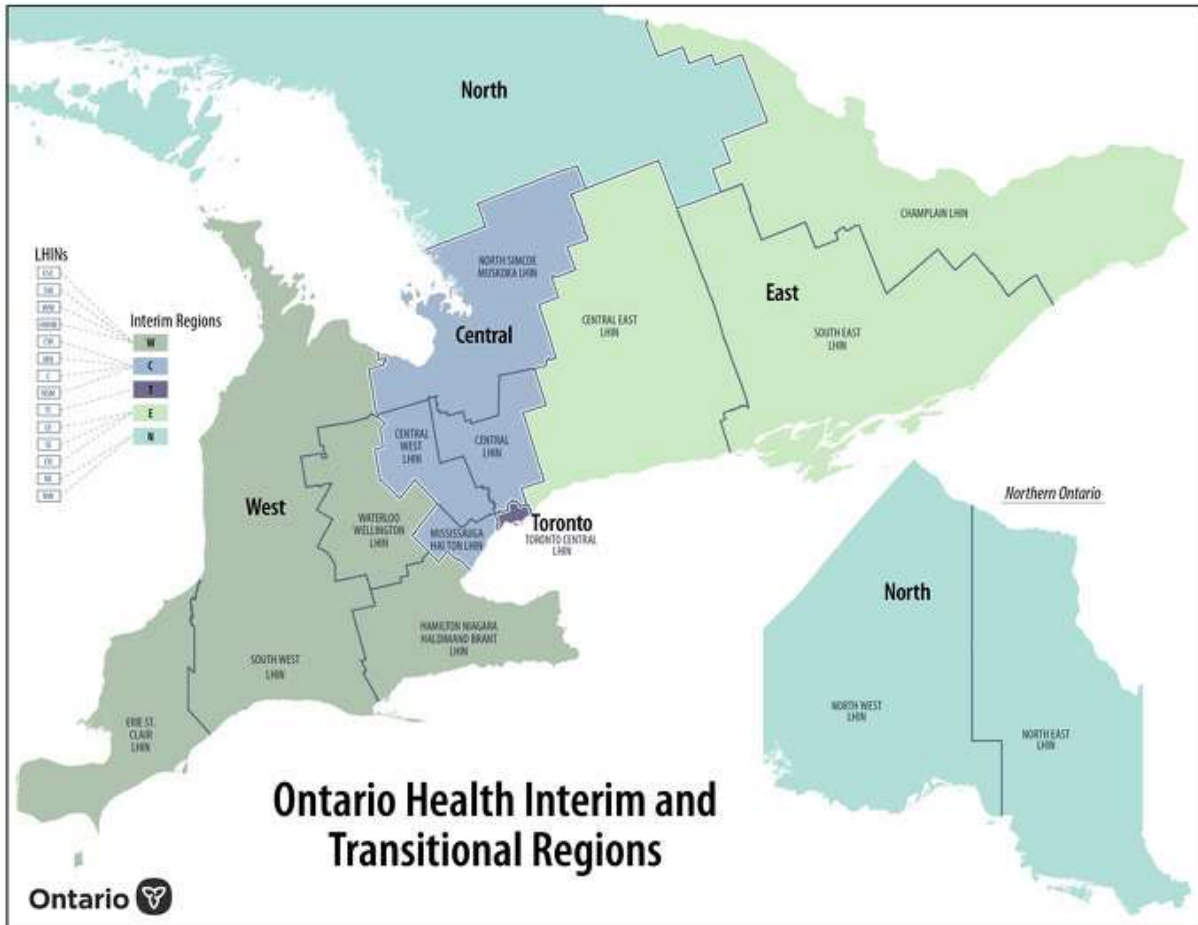
Definition	Main criteria and thresholds
Census “rural areas”	<p><b>Population size:</b> Population living <i>outside</i> places of 1,000 people or more;</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p><b>Population density:</b> Population living <i>outside</i> places with densities of 400 or more people per square kilometre”</p>
“Rural and small town” (RST)	<p><b>Labour market context:</b> Population living <i>outside</i> the commuting zone of larger urban centres (or 10,000 or more)”</p> <p><b>Population size/density:</b> Urban areas with population less than 10,000 are included in RST together with rural areas if they are outside the main commuting zones of larger urban centres”</p>
Metropolitan area and census agglomeration Influenced Zones (MIZ)	<p><b>Labour market context:</b> MIZ disaggregates the RST population into four sub-groups based on the size of commuting flows to <i>any</i> larger urban centre (or 10,000 or more)”</p>
OECD “rural communities”	<p><b>Population density:</b> Population in communities with densities less than 150 people per square kilometre”</p>
OECD “predominantly rural regions”	<p><b>Settlement context:</b> Population in regions where more than 50 percent of the people live in an OECD ‘rural community’ ”</p>
“Non-metropolitan regions” (Ehrensaft’s ‘Beale codes’)	<p><b>Settlement context:</b> 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”</p> <p><b>Population size:</b> Non-metropolitan regions include urban settlements with population of less than 50,000 people and areas with no urban settlements (where ‘urban settlements’ are defined as places with a population of 2,500 or more)”</p>
“Rural” postal codes	<p><b>Rural route delivery area:</b> Areas serviced by rural route mail delivery from a post office or postan station. ‘0’ in the second position of a postal code denotes a ‘rural’ postal code (also referred to as a ‘rural’ forward sorting area (rural FSA))”</p>

Source: du Plessis, Beshari, Bollman and Clemenson (2002, p.17)

**APPENDIX E – HEALTH REGIONS UNDER LHIN**



**APPENDIX F – TRANSITIONAL HEALTH REGIONS UNDER ONTARIO HEALTH**



## APPENDIX G – DEFINITIONS OF RURAL AND URBAN CONTEXT IN QUÉBEC

Source: Coop Carbone (2018, p.27)  
based on Institut National de Santé publique du Québec

### DÉFINITION DES DIVERS CONTEXTES RURAUX ET URBAINS

« Les contextes ruraux correspondent aux portions du territoire desservies seulement par des ressources médicales de base (installations de première ligne et hôpitaux de première instance) qui dépendent de ressources situées à plus de 30 minutes de trajet routier pour les services spécialisés.

Quatre catégories de communautés rurales ont été déterminées :

- Les communautés rurales périphériques sont situées à 2,5 heures ou moins d'un noyau urbain de plus de 500 000 habitants;
- Les communautés rurales intermédiaires sont situées à plus de 2,5 heures d'un noyau urbain de plus de 500 000 et à moins de 1,5 h d'un hôpital de deuxième ou de troisième ligne;
- Les communautés rurales éloignées sont situées à plus de 2,5 heures d'un noyau urbain de plus de 500 000 et entre 1,5 heure et 3,5 heures d'un hôpital de deuxième ou de troisième ligne;
- Les communautés rurales isolées sont situées à plus de 3,5 heures d'un noyau urbain de plus de 500 000 et d'un hôpital de deuxième ou de troisième ligne.

Les contextes urbains correspondent aux portions du territoire dotées localement de ressources associées à la prestation de services spécialisés. Ainsi, chaque municipalité où on trouve au moins un hôpital de deuxième ou de troisième ligne correspond à un centre de services.

Quatre catégories de contextes urbains ont été déterminées :

- Les grands Centres correspondent aux noyaux urbains de plus de 500 000 habitants;
- Les Centres surspécialisés disposent d'au moins un hôpital de troisième ligne;
- Les Centres périphériques disposent d'au moins un hôpital de deuxième ligne et sont situés à 2,5 heures ou moins d'un noyau urbain de plus de 500 000 habitants;
- Les Centres régionaux disposent d'au moins un hôpital de deuxième ligne, mais ils sont situés à plus de 2,5 heures d'un noyau urbain de plus de 500 000 habitants. »



## APPENDIX H – CATEGORIES OF RURAL REGIONS IN QUÉBEC

Source: Coop Carbone (2018, p.2-3)

« Dans ce rapport, trois grands types de regroupements territoriaux sont utilisés pour dresser le portrait des milieux ruraux du Québec. Cette diversité de regroupement permet d'utiliser des sources qui présentent leurs données selon des territoires différents.

Un premier regroupement est basé sur les municipalités régionales de comté (MRC) et comprend quatre types de territoire rural et deux types de territoire urbain (Jean, 2014) :

- Territoires ruraux :

- Les MRC essentiellement rurales des régions ressources (Gaspésie/Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Bas-Saint-Laurent, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Mauricie, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Nord-du-Québec et Côte-Nord). Les MRC des Laurentides et d'Antoine-Labelle de la région des Laurentides sont incluses dans ce groupe.
- Les MRC essentiellement rurales des régions centrales (Chaudière-Appalaches, Capitale-Nationale, Estrie, Centre-du-Québec, Montérégie, Outaouais, Lanaudière et Laurentides, sauf les MRC des Laurentides et d'Antoine-Labelle).
- Le territoire des municipalités rurales faisant partie d'une MRC ayant une agglomération de recensement<sup>1</sup> (MRC rurales avec agglomération).
- Le territoire des municipalités rurales faisant partie d'une MRC mixte incluse dans une région métropolitaine de recensement<sup>2</sup> (MRC rurales dans une RMR).

- Territoires urbains :

- Le territoire des municipalités urbaines faisant partie d'une MRC ayant une agglomération de recensement et de la partie urbaine de Richelieu dans la MRC de Rouville (population urbaine d'agglomération).
- Le territoire des municipalités urbaines partie d'une région métropolitaine de recensement (population urbaine métropolitaine).

Un second regroupement est basé sur les régions administratives de la province et comprend trois groupes :

- Les régions ressources : Gaspésie-Iles-de-la-Madeleine, Bas-Saint-Laurent, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Mauricie, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Côte-Nord et Nord-du-Québec;
- Les régions centrales : Capitale-Nationale, Chaudière-Appalaches, Centre-du-Québec, Estrie et Outaouais;
- Les régions montréalaises : Montréal, Laval, Lanaudière, Laurentides et Montérégie. »

Enfin, un dernier regroupement est basé sur les régions métropolitaines de recensement (RMR) et présente des données pour deux groupes de territoire : d'une part, les zones situées à l'intérieur des RMR et celles situées à l'extérieur. Les RMR sont considérées comme les zones les plus urbanisées de la province et sont au nombre de six : Montréal, Québec, Sherbrooke, Trois-Rivières, Gatineau et Saguenay. »



