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ABSTRACT
                In producing programs and establishing policy
criteria for the institutional church in rural Canada, planners must
deal with community groups or types in order to maximize the
transferability of programs and policies. This paper discusses a
two-dimensional typology (social context and social position) based
on the belief that there is a real interaction between the community,
its institutions, and its environment. When the social context
dimension is applied to rural Canada, five community types are
identified; rural town or village, ex-rural town or village, rural
neighbourhood, ex-rural neighbourhood, and resource development
towns. The three "social positions" are: dominant, subordinate, and
exclusive. Most people experience the church as part of their social
context. They attend, support, benefit from, and are enriched by the
church in that context. But, the acceptance of a given program, its
success across Canada, even within a type of rural community, such as
in rural villages, also depends upon the community's social position.
If a dominant village tries and approves a program, other villages in
the area will accept it readily. Yet, if an exclusive community
accepts a program early in its life other communities nearby will
reject it at once as irrelevant to their situation. Therefore, it is
crucial to describe and define the communities. (NQ)

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The Development of an Analytical Community Typology for Rural Canadian Communities as a Basis for Institutional Program Planning

-- BY --

Peter McKellar

-- FOR --

Seminar #20
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The Development of an Analytical Community Typology
for Rural Canadian Communities as a Basis for
Institutional Program Planning

In producing programs and establishing policy criteria for the
institutional Church in rural Canada there has been a strong inclination
to base one's direction upon the established patterns and trends of the
U.S.A. even when studies have shown that the Church in Canada differs
significantly in its attitudes and outlook from the Church in the U.S.A.,[1]
and moreover, many programs suited for the U.S.A. cannot be applied unchanged
to Canada.[2]

This dependence seems to this writer to be particularly negative
when it is applied to one's understanding of "rural" and of rural population
trends.

In Canada we are aware that a new rural migration pattern has
developed south of our borders in the U.S.A. It appears that after decades
of rural depopulation the tide has turned and turned quite dramatically.
The Census Bureau of the U.S.A. has found that from 1970 to 1973 the
population of the non-metropolitan areas of the U.S.A. grew by 4.3% at a
time when large cities and suburbs picked up only 2.8% of their population.
The farm population seems to be stabilizing around 9.5 million after a
steady decline from 30.5 million in 1940.[3]

Many studies and popular articles have tried to explain these
statistics. Possible causal factors which have been suggested include the
fact that: industry is leaving the urban complexes for rural settings in
order to boost employee morale and improve efficiency; institutions of
higher education are developing in small towns; modern Americans prefer a
simpler life style which they find in smaller communities; Americans move
out to avoid the high living costs, the growing crime rates and the break-
down of services which characterize cities.[4]

Whatever the causes, rural areas in the U.S.A. are gaining
population and programs and policies of institutions there are directed
to that reality.

What is the situation in Canada? Are rural areas gaining
population? Can one transfer the American concept of rural to the
Canadian scene? Can one speak meaningfully of "rural Canada" as if it
were a distinct entity whatever one's definition of "rural" might be?

1. Wills Emphasis Kit, The United Church of Canada, 1975, note - where laws
   vary widely from country to country

2. D.W. Johnson and G.W. Cornell,Punctured Preconceptions, Friendship
   Press, New York, 1972, p.44

3. "Out of Cities, Back to the Country", U.S. News & World Report, quoted in
   Non-Metropolitan Resource Pak, No. 2, The United Church of Canada,
   Toronto, Canada, 1975, p.31

4. Ibid.

The Canadian Census definition used in Canada since 1951 defines rural as that portion of the population residing outside of cities, towns and villages of 1000 persons and over and outside all census metropolitan areas.[5] The rural population is further differentiated by its division into those who live on farms and those who do not.

The Canadian Census definition is helpful only in a very broad and general sense. For example, within the Census metropolitan areas there are often productive farm units but they are excluded from the rural category.[6] So the Census may give a distorted and unreal picture.

Another distortion within the Canadian Census definition is the 'instant town' or 'resource town'. Because Canada is a developing, young country with well-defined geographical frontier areas and with major undeveloped natural resources, new communities based upon resource extraction (i.e. forestry, energy production or mining) are constantly springing up in areas that are socially and physically isolated. Generally they tend to stabilize at a relatively small size, 2000 to 15000 people; often they are as small as 500 and occasionally as large as 20000. They are pre-planned town sites often carved out of the bush and constructed entirely within a few months. They look like new city suburbs in the wilderness but they are in fact neither true frontier towns nor part of a city. They are marked by a low average age (i.e. Mackenzie, B.C., has 65% of its population under 35 years of age and 90% of its adult males are under 45 years.[7]) These instant towns have a high level of employment and the average income is higher than normal. Commercial facilities in these towns are in short supply.

From a sociological point of view the typical 'instant town' has from its very inception a 'Gesellschaft' type of relational structure with rapid population turnover, a predominance of single males at least in its early construction stages and a high level of social stratification. Therefore many writers would classify it as urban from its birth.[8] But, Statistics Canada would classify it as a rural community until its population reached 1000 people at which point it would be termed urban.

Very different sociologically are the established rural villages of more settled parts of Canada presently undergoing rapid growth due to an influx of urban commuters. Such villages begin with the majority of the population farmers and move rapidly through new building to that point where the rural non-farm population is the majority. There are a high proportion of senior citizens (over 65 years of age) since many people retire to the small village on the urban fringe. The employment pattern becomes more

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5. Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-709, Vol 1, Part 1, February, 1973 (definitions)

6. Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, Catalogue 95-739, June, 1974, p.21

7. M. Fowler, Ministry to Instant Frontier Towns, unpublished paper, presented to the Consultation on New Church Development, Bolton, Ontario, 1975, p. 1

8. Ibid.

diverse as the population in such communities expands.[9] The new growth
in such an area is often unplanned strip development along the area side-
roads and haphazard village enlargement. The original village may have
a history rooted in a particular ethnic migration to that part of the
country. The newcomers are not part of that history and neither know nor
understand its importance. So a real and identifiable social disunity
develops to create real social tension and pressure. Such a village is
very different from stable rural villages away from the urban fringe and
also very different from an instant town, yet each is rural according to
Statistics Canada until it reaches 1000 people.

Size is obviously not an adequate criterion for classifying non-
metropolitan communities into groups for program planning or policy decisions.

Ideally, planners would like to consider each individual community
as a unique sociological unit and some authorities feel this is the only
sound method. In fact, planners must deal with community groups or types
in order to maximize the transferability of programs and policies. This is
particularly necessary in smaller communities where the cost of individual
programming is prohibitive or in rapidly changing communities where
individual programming is wasteful.

It becomes necessary then for planners to develop a useable typology
to apply to Canada's rural communities as a tool to apply programs and
policies in an effective fashion. Within the Canadian Census definition of
rural there are many different types of community and a blanket label "rural"
in hiding the very real distinctions leads to a wastefully high failure of
programs and policies.

This writer has found the work of Walrath[10] useful in developing
a possible typology which is two dimensional: social context and social
position.

Walrath employed socio-ecological criteria to classify community.
He based this use on the belief that there is a real interaction between the
institutions in a community, the environment of the community, and the
community itself. He has, of course, built on the work of other scholars in
the field of social and human ecology and social stratification.[11]

How does this belief assert itself in a rural community?

If agricultural workers living on farms or in a stable agricultural
village which functions almost as an extended family to its members are faced
with an invasion of professional and mercantile workers, they will reject
them because acceptance would involve traversing a wide social and educational

9. D. Blackburn, Rural Canadian Trends and Changes as Indicated by Selected
   Data from 1971 and Earlier Stastics Canada Reports, University of Guelp..,
   unpublished paper, 1976, Table B-4, p.12

10. D.A. Walrath, Types of Small Congregations and Their Implications For
    Planning, Synod of Albany, Reformed Church in America, unpublished paper,
    presented to the Non-Metropolitan Issues Group, Toronto, October, 1975

11. Ibid., p.4

gulf. If the strangers came one at a time, gradually, acceptance might be possible at least to a functional degree. Although often only second generation acceptance or acceptance via inter-marriage is possible. When the strangers come thick and fast, acceptance is not generally possible except in the case of particularly flexible individuals who tend to fall naturally into the position of interpreters and move back and forth in each direction.

"So, social context or social ecology is an important first dimension in the process of developing a meaningful typology. Those of similar social status tend to choose, or are forced, to locate in the same type of neighbourhood or community. Likewise, persons who are demographically similar (same marital status, age, etc.) tend to group together in regular patterns of residence and living space. Hence, social groups, as differentiated by socio-economic indicators (education, occupation and income), by demographic similarities and/or by common life ways or life styles tend to appear in regular patterns geographically." [12]

When this dimension is applied to rural Canada, this writer can identify the following five types.

TYPE I: Rural Town or Village

This is a community that has existed for 75 years or more. It is the traditional business, commercial and social hub of a surrounding agricultural area. Because the number of people involved in agriculture in Canada has declined in the last twenty or more years so that many of the younger people have emigrated, this community will have stayed the same size or declined. [13]

TYPE II: Ex-Rural Town or Village

This community was originally a "rural town or village" but it has come under the influence of a metropolitan area. This is a common phenomena in many towns and villages within approximately one hour's travel time (i.e. 50 to 60 miles) of a major city or conurbation. "There is no sharp dividing line, but as you near the city you suddenly sense the innundation of a traditional rural community life-style by the approaching city."[14] This is the ex-rural community, home of Lyle Schaller's ex-rural church.[15] It is a distinct and definable community type.

What are its characteristics? Increasingly the housing has been purchased by younger-middle aged couples with children who are seeking a quiet country home, but who are oriented toward the conurbation and the world beyond the rural town or village. There is in this type of community a

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12. Ibid.

13. Ibid. p.10

14. W.W. Stokes, From Rural to Ex-Rural, unpublished paper, presented to the Consultation on New Church Development, Bolton, Ontario, 1975 p. 10

15. Lyle Schaller, Hey, That's Our Church!, Abingdon Press, New York, 1975, pp. 69 - 77

combination of long-term residents, many of whom are middle-aged or older, and these new arrivals. Most of the new arrivals commute daily to the city to work. Many of them depend upon the city for recreational and cultural outlets. Often their close friends live in other ex-rural towns but work in the same plant or office. So, they are independent of the social system of the ex-rural town and detached from the life of the community.

TYPE III: Rural Neighbourhood

This is a small area or neighbourhood with an identifiable core consisting of a few homes, often a small church building, sometimes a store and a gas station. Often the community identity lingers from a time in the past when it had more facilities: school, mill, post office, etc. Now, because of improved roads and automobiles, school centralization and the competition from nearby larger centres there is little left but a shadow of its former self. The people may be farm or non-farm. They may work locally or be commuters. They are held together by their feeling of community.

TYPE IV: Ex-Rural Neighbourhood

Neighbourhoods within commuting distance of conurbations are often less distinct than villages. Zoning and planning regulations are often poor so that concentrated strip development has proliferated suburban type housing along all roads. Often trailers and trailer parks have been permitted. Lots are large without sewers or water mains. Some pockets of agriculture and such things as golf courses are part of the mix. Many of the residents commute to the city for employment. These are the ex-rural neighbourhoods

TYPE V: Resource Development Towns

Towns which have been planned and built within the last twenty years specifically for resource extraction purposes are distinctly different from other rural settlements. They are based on one industry such as iron mining or pulp and paper production. Their facilities are pre-planned, modern and mass produced. The population is abnormally young, affluent and mobile (see page 2).

So, five types of settlement according to social ecology emerge. But, is there another dimension which can be used to define communities more closely with a view to increasingly effective program and policy implementation?

I submit that community social position is that dimension. A community develops a social position in relation to its neighbouring communities. Some writers call this its "posture" or "position of influence".[16]

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16. D. Walrath, Op. Cit., p. 14

Three such "social positions" are:

A. Dominant: This community has always been first, always in the prestige position in its geographic area. This town or village has always been able to influence the total area and gets its own way whether it is in building new facilities or redirecting industrial growth. It is always able to project the image of "the leader, the outstanding one, the winner." [17]

B. Subordinate: This community has always been second. It has always been in the shadow of a dominant community. It invariably lets the dominant community act first and it takes what is left.

C. Exclusive: This community relates only to one specific group. It is exclusive in that it only deals with the "founding families" who are linked by some particular common factor (i.e. language, religion, average income, etc.). Its exclusiveness may be either overt and intentional or implied and not appreciated by the community members. An example of an overtly exclusive community is a Hutterite settlement while an implied exclusive community might well be a university situated in a rural area.

TABLE I
Social Position Type

	A	B	C	
Type I				Rural Town or Village
II				Ex-Rural Town or Village
III				Rural Neighbourhood
IV				Ex-Rural Neighbourhood
V				Resource Dev't. Town
	Dominant	Subordinate	Exclusive	

Social Context Type

The interactions between social context and social position types are immediately apparent. An ex-rural village or neighbourhood that is in a subordinate social position is much more likely to adapt to and to adjust socially to the pressures of becoming an ex-rural community. A dominant community affected by a growing metropolitan area will be less likely to move easily from rural town or village to ex-rural town or village. All planners of programs and policies need to be aware of these differences if they wish to be effective.

Now, keeping this typology in mind, consider what is actually happening to Canada's population.

The total Canadian rural population has continuously declined over the past one hundred years. It is the farm segment of the rural population which has shown the greater proportional loss.

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17. Ibid.

TABLE II[18]

YEAR	TOTAL CAN. POP.	URBAN	RURAL
		(% of total Canadian population by designated year)	
1871	3,689,257	19.6	80.4
1911	7,206,643	45.4	54.6
1951	14,009,429	56.7	43.3
1971	21,568,315	76.1	23.9

The rural non-farm population has stayed relatively stable from 1951 (18.2% of the total Canadian population) to 17.3% in 1971. The rural farm population has fallen from 20.2% in 1951 to 6.6% in 1971. This means that the number of rural non-farm people has increased over one hundred thousand 1951 to 1971 while the number of farm people has decreased over one million in the same time.[19]

However, these statistics take no account of the variations from area to area across Canada.

TABLE III [20]
Changes in Rural-Urban Distribution of the Canadian
Population in Selected Areas 1966 - 1971

1966

Census Division	Total	Urban %	Rural %	Rural Non-farm %	Farm %
Renfrew Co., Ont.	89,453	61	39	26	13
Huron Co., Ont.	54,446	41	59	23	36
Halton Co., Ont.	151,924	--	--	--	-- (not available)
Division 12, Sask.	26,842	27	73	29	44

1971

Census Division	Total	Urban %	Rural %	Rural Non-farm %	Farm %
Renfrew Co., Ont.	90,875	62	38	29	9
Huron Co., Ont.	52,950	37	63	31	32
Halton Co., Ont.	190,470	94	6	5	1
Division 12, Sask.	25,320	28	72	3	69

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18. D. Blackburn, Op. Cit., Table A-1, p.1

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., Table A-2, p.2

Renfrew County of Ontario is a county of rural towns and villages. The population is slowly increasing but is relatively stable. The only real change lies in the rapid decline of rural farm population. During this time (1966 - 1971) the number of occupied farms in the county declined from 2,437 to 1,992 [21] which suggests that farmers are increasing the acreage which they farm.

Compare this with Huron County of Ontario for the same period. There is absolute depopulation in the county and the decrease is in the towns. The rural population shows a percentage increase with the greatest increase in rural non-farm. The size of farms has increased during this period and the number of occupied farms has slightly decreased. [22]

Halton County of Ontario is a predominantly urban county caught between the sprawling conurbations around Toronto and Hamilton. The population is rapidly increasing and the population is almost entirely urban. Yet, in 1971 there were still over 1000 occupied farms in the county although they averaged only 114 acres each. [23]

By contrast, Division 12, Saskatchewan, had almost 4000 farms in 1971 and they averaged 920 acres each. [24] There was an absolute decline in the population from 1966 to 1971 but the rural farm population has dramatically increased in the same period.

A further indication of the variations which affect the nature of non-metropolitan Canadian communities is the population density. In Table IV the population density of the four areas mentioned above is shown. Obviously the rural areas of Halton County are facing rapid growth and urbanization as compared with those of Division 12, Saskatchewan.

TABLE IV [25]
Area and Density of Population for Canada and Selected
Census Subdivisions - 1971

Area	Population	Land Area in Sq. Miles	Population Density
Renfrew Co., Ont.	90,875	2,952.00	30.78
Huron Co., Ont.	52,951	1,313.80	40.30
Halton Co., Ont.	190,469	380.46	500.63
Division 12, Sask.	25,322	5,802.38	4.36
Canada	21,568,311	3,560,238.00	6.06

This is supported by Table V - Rural Farm Population as a percentage of total population. Farmers in Division 12, Saskatchewan are a force to be reckoned with. They do not face opposition or pressure.

21. Ibid., Table 6-3, p.31
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., Table A-5, p.5

TABLE V [26]

Total Number of Rural Farm Population as % of
Population in Selected Census Areas - 1971

Area	Rural Farm Population	Percentage Rural-Farm of Total
Canada	1,419,795	6.6%
Renfrew Co., Ont.	8,225	9.0
Huron Co., Ont.	16,755	32.0
Halton Co., Ont.	2,145	1.0
Division 12, Sask.	10,360	69.0

But, in Halton Co., Ontario, to be a farmer is to be in a very small minority.
The pressure upon them is unrelenting. Change is the rule rather than the
exception. In 1971, 36% of the population were migrants - newcomers to the
county. That is almost double the rate for Division 12, Saskatchewan, for
the same year; 19% only were migrants. [27]

    · Canada as a whole is definitely not experiencing the gain in
rural population which is obvious in the U.S.A. The Canadian rural farm
population is decreasing rapidly and the rural non-farm population is
staying relatively stable. However, even more important for planners of
rural institutional programs and policies is the fact that there are wide
variations between areas of rural Canada as to the extent and speed of
population change, the extent and intensity of urban sprawl pressure, and
the extent and speed of the decline in farm population as a social and
political force.

    What are some of the implications of this study for the institution
of the rural church, its programs and its policies?

    Most people experience the church as part of their social context
or social ecology. They attend and support the church in that context; they
benefit from the church and are enriched by the church in that context.
Therefore, the church planner must become aware of that dimension in the
particular community where he hopes to work or in the type of community he
hopes to influence. Congregations are woven into the social fabric of
their communities; so, to describe and to define those communities is crucial.

    But, the acceptance of a given program, its success across Canada
even within a type of rural community, such as in rural villages, also depends
upon the consideration of the other dimension, social position. If a dominant
village tries and approves a program, other villages in the area will accept
it readily. If an exclusive community accepts a program early in its life,
other communities nearby will reject it at once as irrelevant to their
situation. Flying "trial balloons" is pointless unless the sites for such
operations are carefully chosen.

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26. _Ibid._, Table A-7, p.7

27. _Ibid._, Table B-4, p.12

Moreover, the planners within the institutional rural church must remember that success or failure are meaningless terms in rural areas unless reference is constantly made to the realities of the population within each specific area. For example, if a church fails to support a viable senior citizens' ministry in a town of 500, the planners must ask themselves whether this is a resource development town which has very few seniors or a rural town with many. There is little point in lamenting over the lack of a Sunday School class for 8 year olds when there are no 8 year olds in the village. Yet, local church workers, blinded by a history of years when the Sunday School flourished, often forget the current population realities.

In some rural areas, several rural church communities may exist side by side. These may be distinct congregations within one denomination or various denominations. The community typology may be applied to them with useful results too.

For example, South-west Norfolk County in Ontario has four congregations, two Hungarian and two English. Of the Hungarian congregations, St. Ladislaus' is dominant and rural while St. George's is subordinate and rural. Of the English congregations, Courtland United is dominant and ex-rural while Courtland Baptist is exclusive and ex-rural. Whenever ecumenical programs are planned for the total Christian community and such programs are accepted by St. Ladislaus' and by Courtland United, St. George's supports them fully. Courtland Baptist rejects them utterly. However, programs suggested by St. Ladislaus' or by Courtland United are much more likely to be tried than are those suggested by St. George's. Courtland Baptist would never suggest a cooperative program. [28]

In 1925, in the village of Aberfoyle, Ontario, the Methodist church which had a membership of 25, voted to join the United Church of Canada. At that time, Aberfoyle was a stable rural village dominated by three families: the Ords, the Lewises and the Maltbys. The elders of the church all belonged to one of the three families either directly or by marriage. The church then was rural and implied exclusive.

However, in the next fifty years, the village of Aberfo le which is five miles from the centre of the city of Guelph, changed radically. From a rural village it gradually progressed to a rural neighbourhood and then to an ex-rural neighbourhood. The population from almost exclusively farm became almost exclusively non-farm commuters to Guelph. Neither the Ords, the Lewises nor the Maltbys were prolific except in girls who generally moved away from the community to work and subsequently to marry.

Moreover, as a congregation of the United Church of Canada having a membership of 25, the Aberfoyle church was treated as subordinate in all policy and program decisions of the Presbytery. Without reference to the Ords, the Lewises and the Maltbys, decisions as to pastoral care, financial goals, etc., were made on the assumption that this little group would accept readily the direction given.

It did not.

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28. P. McKellar, The Concept of Rural Community, a special problem paper presented to the Dept. of Extension Education, University of Guelph, Guelph, Canada, 1970, pp. 54-56

Indeed, the founding families consistently and persistently refused to accept direction from the denomination and refused to accept the changed population of the village. Consistently for fifty years those who disagreed with the founding families were forced to leave. Consistently for fifty years the small "in group" proudly maintained their exclusive leadership and maintained the building. They did not realize that they had long since been found to be useless and irrelevant by the village.

In 1975, the Aberfoyle church was to all intents and purposes buried. It was forced by the age of the 25 members and by their reduced financial circumstances in retirement situations to merge with a neighbouring congregation. [29]

This is a case where program and policy planners, had they been aware of the type of community they were dealing with, could have saved untold frustration and outright institutional failure.

A neighbouring congregation to Aberfoyle is that at Morriston, Ontario. Morriston was founded as a rural village approximately 150 years ago by a group of German immigrants. The village has remained stable and rural until relatively recently when it has begun to feel pressure from the city of Guelph. Many of the services such as the stores and the school have gone. In 1975 the village lost its bank. But it still has garages and businesses, post office and church.

Moreover, since 1970 many homes which had been occupied by single elderly persons or by retired farm couples have come on the market and are now occupied by young families who commute to the city to work. Strip settlement along the main roads has begun to enlarge the population which is now very largely Anglo-Saxon.

The church, when it was founded, was then rural and implied exclusive (the German church). The denomination to which it belonged was small and also implied exclusive.

However, leaders within the denomination and within the congregation recognized that the changing community necessitated a change in style. So, the small exclusive denomination proceeded to merge with the United Church of Canada, trading an exclusive style for a subordinate one. The German leaders of the congregation studied to adapt to the newcomers in the village and have been so successful in integrating them that only the very old refer to the church as German at all. [30]

So, from rural implied exclusive, Morriston is rapidly becoming ex-rural subordinate. As a result, the church is growing with the village and is a vital institution within its social fabric.

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29. Minutes of Aberfoyle Session 1925 - 1975, original document, Aberfoyle, Ont.

30. O. McKellar, pastor, Mount Carmel-Zion United Church, Morriston, interviewing May - June, 1976

From these varied examples it is clear that an analytical community typology such as that developed above and specific population data together can be useful tools for persons who must plan programs and policies for rural Canadian institutions such as the rural church.

PETER McKELLAR
July, 1976

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