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## **WORKING PAPER #30**

# **Structure and Trends of Rural Employment: Canada in the Context of OECD Countries**

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## **Abstract**

In 1991, 33 percent of Canada's population lived in predominantly rural regions. Employment growth in rural regions averaged 1.3 percent per year over the 1980s, ranking fourth among OECD countries. In 1991, only 11 percent of the rural workforce in Canada were working in agriculture, forestry or fishing.

Within rural regions, employment growth was highest in rural areas adjacent to metropolitan centres. Business services was the fastest growing sector in all types of regions, but rural regions received only a minor boost due to the relatively low share of their workforce in business services. On average, rural areas showed less growth – however, within rural areas, there were regions that showed more growth than urban regions. Rurality does not necessarily imply slow employment growth.

## Structure and Trends of Rural Employment: Canada in the Context of OECD Countries

### 1. Why are we doing this?

The development of policy alternatives for stimulating rural employment requires benchmark information on the structure and trends of rural labour markets. Thus, policy analysts need both:

- a) an appropriate concept/conceptualization of the degrees of rurality; and
- b) the collection and tabulation of relevant data within each degree of rurality class.

The availability of such information at the **international** level, using geographic concepts and rural indicators that facilitate comparisons among countries, will enable each nation to see itself in a broader context. Thus, it will be possible to compare rural Canada with the rest of Canada, but also with the rural areas of other countries.

## 2. What did we already know?

In “Rural Jobs: Trends and Opportunities”, Bollman, Fuller, and Ehrensaft examined data up to 1991 from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, the National Farm Survey, and the Census of Agriculture. They identified the following economic trends, structural changes, and employment trends of importance to rural Canada:

### *Fundamental economic trends*

1. Due to advancing technology, capital is costing less relative to human time. Therefore, substitution of capital for labour will increase; e.g. farms will continue to get bigger.
2. The real prices of resource commodities are decreasing.

As a result of the above trends, employment in resource-based industries will continue to decline, as will resource-dependent communities.

### *Major structural changes*

1. Although Canada's rural population is increasing in absolute terms, its percentage of the total population has been declining. Previous to the 1931 Census, the rural population was in the majority. Since then it has been decreasing steadily, declining to just 23% in 1991.<sup>1</sup>
2. There has been a parallel and even more rapid decline in the farm population as a share of the rural population. This percentage slipped below 50% as of the 1956 Census and was only 13% in 1991.

### *Trends in employment by industry*

1. Agriculture's share of total employment is small relative to many other sectors, even in rural Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> This trend has not only been happening for a long time, but it is not unique to Canada. In 1893, G. B. Longstaff of the U.K. authored a paper entitled “Rural depopulation”, in which he wrote, “The 'alarming depopulation of our rural districts,' has of late been the subject of many articles and even more speeches. Able journalists have discoursed on the causes, and ambitious politicians, anxious to catch the votes of an ignorant electorate, have vied with one another in suggesting remedies, but few persons seem to have had time or inclination to take a comprehensive view of the actual facts. It is the business of the statistician to clear the way by ascertaining and recording the precise state of the case, and so determine the geographical extension and numerical intensity of the phenomenon; when this has been done then, and then only, shall we be in a position to dogmatise as to causes and remedies.” (*Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, vol. LVI, p. 380).

2. The services sector is the biggest employer and is growing in both rural and urban Canada.
3. Rural is sharing in this growth of services.
4. The share for manufacturing is shrinking everywhere but not as fast in rural areas.
5. “Rural-intensive” (resource-based) industries are maintaining their share of national employment in rural areas relative to urban areas.
6. Rural areas' share is increasing relative to that of urban areas in some “urban-intensive” industries, such as manufacturing; finance, insurance and real estate; wholesale and retail trade; and government services.

Most of the references to rural Canada in the above observations are based on Statistics Canada's official definition of “urban” and “rural.” One must be careful concerning the definition of rural when analyzing socioeconomic trends. While the trends identified above are generally robust across various definitions of “rural”, other results are sensitive to conceptual differences. According to Statistics Canada, an urban area is a settlement of at least 1,000 persons with a population density of at least 400 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. All land outside of these urban areas is considered rural (see **Definitions** for more details). Some analysts feel this definition is at odds with common ideas of what constitutes “rural”. For example, this definition defines a village of 1,000 in a largely uninhabited part of northern Ontario as “urban,” while a developing fringe area of a large metropolitan centre would be defined as “rural.” Some results using Statistics Canada's official definition of “rural” are the following:

1. More people move from “urban” to “rural” than from “rural” to “urban”;
2. The average income of “rural” families is higher than that of families in mid-sized towns; and
3. The incidence of poverty among “rural” families is lower than for any other urbanization class.

The following chapters will present a new notion of rural that provides for different “degrees of rurality”, produces more meaningful results, and enables comparison of rural Canada with the rural areas of other countries.

### 3. What is rural?

International data previously compiled by the OECD had been published almost entirely as totals at the national level. In the few cases where international “urban” data were published, a clear interpretation of results was hindered by the multiplicity of definitions of “urban”. This resulted in some strange observations: according to statistics collected by the Urban Affairs Programme in 1988, only 18% of the population of the Netherlands (the most densely populated OECD country) was classed as urban, compared to 50% for Canada (the least densely populated). By contrast, the OECD Social Indicators Project had published data just two years earlier that showed the Netherlands as 66% urban.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, to be able to make meaningful international comparisons at a subnational level, a consistent geographical infrastructure was needed.

In 1991, the OECD initiated its Rural Development Programme, of which the Rural Indicators Project is an important part. The purpose of this project was to develop a set of “quantitative measures that help to describe the demographic, economic, social and environmental dimensions of rural development in a consistent analytical framework.”<sup>3</sup> This “analytical framework” needed, of course, to include a means of delineating rural and urban areas of each member country. The scheme had to be precise, reasonably easy to apply, and capable of producing data that could be compared between countries and within each country. This chapter looks at the basis of this new geography, and how it was developed.

What intuitive notions go along with the word “rural”? The concept is usually associated with such characteristics as a strong sense of community, self-reliance, serenity, autonomy, isolation, less accessibility to services, “countryside, small settlements, greenness, and remoteness.”<sup>4</sup> out-migration of youth, lower crime rates, lower incomes, and fewer recent immigrants.

Whatever set of characteristics comes to mind when one thinks of “rural,” one of them almost surely will relate to the idea of space, “whether measured in terms of low density of people, houses or activities.”<sup>5</sup> And so it should not be surprising that most definitions of rural depend on population density as one of the key criteria. The previous chapter mentioned Statistics Canada’s definition of urban/rural, which used a minimum settlement size as well as a density criterion. The United States Bureau of the Census has a very similar definition.<sup>6</sup> In fact, population density

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<sup>2</sup> OECD, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> OECD, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Fuller et al., p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Fuller et al., p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> “**Urbanized Area (UA)**. An area comprising (a) central place(s) and the adjacent densely settled surrounding territory that together have a minimum population of 50,000 people. The densely settled surrounding



is the basis of most countries' standard definitions of urban/rural (usually in combination with an absolute population size).

The OECD scheme begins with a distinction between two levels of geography: the *local community* and the *region*. A community is defined as a small basic administrative or statistical area, preferably as homogeneous as possible. According to the OECD design, a community is classified as *either rural or urban*. A region is defined as a larger administrative or functional area, providing "the wider context in which rural development takes place."<sup>7</sup> A region can be described only as being *more or less rural*. The purpose of having the two levels was to accurately reflect the complexity of rural problems; "local and regional administrations perceive rural issues and implement rural policies . . . at the local community level," while national, "as well as supra-national administrations . . . deal with rural issues at the more aggregate regional level."<sup>8</sup>

Another way of looking at the two geographic levels is that the community represents an area within which people expect access to most personal services they need or want. For example, to get a haircut or to take their child to music lessons, most persons would not be willing to travel outside their own community. On the other hand, not all persons would expect to be able to find satisfactory employment within their own local community. Rather, some would expect, and be willing, to travel a longer distance to go to work. This "labour market" type of area corresponds to the idea of a region.

For the purpose of classifying the local communities as either rural or urban, OECD decided on **population density** as the best criterion due to the following advantages:

1. *Relevance*. It reflects such characteristics as "settlement, distance and even intensity of communication and land use."<sup>9</sup>
2. *Ease of calculation*. It relies only on population and land area figures, which were readily available for each country.
3. *Neutrality*. It is not automatically associated with any particular positive or negative connotations of "rural."

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territory generally reflects an area of continuous residential development with an overall population density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile. UAs are defined solely by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. "Urban" consists of all territory and population in urbanized areas, and in places (both incorporated places and census designated places) of 2,500 or more persons outside urbanized areas. All other territory is considered rural. There are 396 UAs (which contain 544 central places) in the United States." (Weiss et al., p. 7).

<sup>7</sup> OECD, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> OECD, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> OECD, p. 22.

The next question concerned what density threshold should be used. After examining settlement patterns in the various countries plus any thresholds already in use, the number was set at 150 persons per square kilometre. Thus, all communities having a density of less than this number would be considered as rural, the others as urban.<sup>10</sup>

At the regional level, three possible types were defined: rural regions, intermediate regions, and agglomerated regions, the classification depending upon what proportion of the region's population lived in rural communities. A **rural** region has more than 50% of its population living in rural communities, **intermediate** between 15 and 50%, and **agglomerated** less than 15%.

With this two-level hierarchy available, analysis can be done in three ways:

1. at the community level (urban vs. rural)
2. at the regional level (rural vs. intermediate vs. agglomerated)
3. at a combined level (six types of areas can then be compared: urban communities within rural regions, rural communities within intermediate regions, etc.)

The next task fell to the individual countries to determine what geographic areas to use as local communities and as regions, and then to begin the work of compiling socioeconomic data at these levels. At the level of local community, Canada chose the census consolidated subdivision (CCS), which is a grouping of contiguous municipalities often having one large municipality totally or partially surrounding other municipalities, such as a township surrounding a town or villages (see **Definitions**). There were 2,628 CCSs in Canada as of the 1986 Census.

For the region, Canada chose the census division (CD), a subprovincial level of geography usually corresponding to a county or regional municipality (see **Definitions**). There were 266 CDs in Canada as of the 1986 Census. As mentioned above, the region is associated with the idea of a labour market area. An indication that the CD is an appropriate choice for the region is that, according to the 1991 Census, 82% of employed Canadians work in the same CD in which they live. Since this paper deals with employment data, most of the analysis will take place at the regional level.

In order to take account of the influence exerted on a region by the presence of a very large city, Canada made the following refinement to the OECD classification scheme: "If a region has a CCS whose population is over 300,000, it is classified as agglomerated, regardless of whether it meets the population thresholds established by the OECD."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Japan was the only exception on this point. Because Japan's farm structure, and resultant population distribution patterns in areas that are primarily agricultural, are so different from those of other OECD countries, the 150 persons per km<sup>2</sup> threshold produced "rural" areas very different from what was commonly perceived as rural. For this reason, a different threshold, 500 persons per km<sup>2</sup>, was chosen for Japan.

<sup>11</sup> Government of Canada, p. 3.

How much of Canada's population lives in rural regions? Figure 1 shows that there is a wide variation in "how rural" the various OECD countries are, and that Canada is near the median in this regard. It turned out that a few countries had no predominantly rural regions: Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and surprisingly, New Zealand. The latter can be explained by the fact that, though New Zealand has one of the lower population densities in the OECD, the mountainous, uninhabitable parts of the country are located in large regions which include a number of cities and towns along the coast; thus, even these most remote regions have the bulk of their population living in urban communities (i.e. communities with a population density over 150 persons per square kilometre).

The OECD Rural Indicators Project formulated the following list of subject areas to organize the collection and publication of rural indicators:

1. population and migration
2. economic structure and performance
3. social well-being and equity
4. environment and sustainability

Within each of these subject areas, specific indicators were determined and a set of questionnaires to capture the relevant data for these indicators was distributed to all member countries. In the category of economic structure and performance, the indicators were determined to be labour force participation, employment, sectoral shares, productivity, and investment. The first three are directly relevant to rural employment and the results for each will be examined comparatively for the member countries, then in more detail for Canada.

#### 4. How does rural Canada look compared to other OECD countries?

Before looking at the employment-related data for the OECD member countries, it should be mentioned that, in attempting such an ambitious project as a comparative statistical study of a large number of countries, one is going to encounter a number of complications, besides differences in geography, that tend to limit comparability. These include differences in definitions and in time frames.

For example, in some countries, statistics on employment by industry are based on **place of work**, i.e. a person who lives in one area and works in another “belongs” to the area in which (s)he works. Other countries, including Canada, have data based on **place of residence**. As mentioned in the last chapter, 15% of employed Canadians work in a different region (census division) from the one in which they live. A significant number of these will be commuting from one “rurality class” to another, such as from rural to intermediate or from intermediate to agglomerated.

Another problem arises from the fact that various countries' data are based on different years, often due to the years in which they conduct their censuses. For example, the figures regarding employment by industry are generally based on data from 1990; however, the data for Australia, Canada, Portugal, and Switzerland are from 1991, for Austria from 1981, for Belgium and Ireland from 1985, and for Spain from 1987.

While most countries were able to provide the required data by rurality class, some were able to do so only for certain variables, the remainder being available only at the national level. Thus, in the graphs in this chapter showing data for rural regions, the list of countries varies from graph to graph depending on data availability. The actual figures can be found in the OECD publication *Creating rural indicators for shaping territorial policy* (Paris: OECD, 1994).

The statistics for Canada are obtained from the 1991, and in some cases 1981, Census. Rural Canada as defined here is based on 1986 Census boundaries and the 1986 population densities.

##### *1) Employment growth*

Figure 2 shows that Canada had a strong rate of employment growth relative to most other OECD countries. For most countries, the rate for rural regions was slightly lower than the national rate, though this was reversed for two countries: Belgium (which actually had negative growth in intermediate regions and no growth in agglomerated) and Germany. Finland had an apparently very polarised type of situation with the lowest (actually the only negative) rate of rural employment growth among all countries, but the highest rate for agglomerated.

## *II) Share of employment in primary and service industries*

As would be expected, the percentage of the employed in rural regions who are working in primary industry is much higher than the national percentage for every country (see Figure 3). Figure 4 shows the percentages employed in service industries. The share of employment in the primary sector is decreasing in western countries generally, accompanied by a continuing increase in employment in service industries. The primary share in Canada is one of the lowest, while the services share is one of the highest, indicating Canada is well along the road in the transition to a services economy.

## *III) Unemployment rate*

Relatively high unemployment is often associated with rural areas. Figure 5 indicates this is true for most OECD countries. Canada has one of the highest rates in the OECD, at both the national and rural levels. Thus, even though (or because) Canada is ahead of most other countries in its transition to a service economy, there is still a significant shortage of jobs accessible to rural residents.

Comparing Figure 5 with Figure 3, one can detect some relationship between unemployment rate and share of employment in primary industry (i.e. Canada is an exception). However, there is also an inverse relation between employment growth and primary share (and Canada follows this trend), implying that most of the new jobs in rural regions are not primary. This is in line with the observations by Bollman, Fuller, and Ehrensaft in Chapter 2 (above).

Table 1 provides a summary of how Canada compares to the other OECD members for a number of population-related and employment-related indicators. The next chapter will provide a more in-depth analysis of various employment-related indicators for Canada.

## 5. How does rural Canada look to Canadians?

Before examining the employment-related data for Canada in more detail, it is necessary to return briefly to the question of geography. Is the OECD scheme, as described in Chapter 3, good enough for a large, diverse country like Canada? In particular, is it necessary to distinguish between different types of rural regions? Isn't a rural region located near a large metropolitan centre essentially different from a more isolated rural region? And what about northern Canada?

In Chapter 3 it was stated that 33% of Canadians live in rural regions. However, these rural regions represent 79% of all the regions in the country and 95% of the total land area. There is so much variation within this vast area in terms of resources, population distribution patterns, and accessibility, that it is almost meaningless to treat it as if its internal variations were less than the differences between rural, intermediate, and agglomerated regions.<sup>12</sup> Another dimension needs to be introduced to subdivide this area into areas that are "more rural" and "less rural."

Besides population size and population density, the rurality-related variable most commonly mentioned in rural geography literature is the notion of "accessibility" or "remoteness" in regard to large centres of population and services.<sup>13</sup> This notion has been quantified in a variety of ways:

1. Robin Armstrong (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) developed an "accessibility index" for all municipalities in Canada, based on how big a circle you would have to draw, centred at that community, to include 100,000 persons (see **References**).
2. Leon Arundell (Australian Department of Primary Industries and Energy) developed an "index of remoteness" based on distances to various cities weighted according to their populations (see **References**).
3. Calvin Beale (United States Department of Agriculture) developed "Beale Codes" for US counties based on the presence of, or adjacency to, metropolitan areas of various sizes (see Bender et al. in **References**).

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<sup>12</sup> This is, however, how rural Canada has usually been treated. "Rural areas have traditionally been defined with reference to an urban benchmark. This process has tended to give the impression that rural Canada is one residual area largely homogeneous in its demography, employment base, income, culture and social infrastructure." (Bollman, p. 142)

<sup>13</sup> The "requirements of simplicity and temporal continuity have produced, in all the western industrial nations, definitions of rural space based on population and related measures such as population density . . . and proximity to major metropolitan centres" (Fuller, Cook, and Fitzsimons, p. 18-19). These comments were actually framed in a rather negative context, in which the authors said that there are more meaningful ways of defining rurality, but they are not commonly used due to practical considerations.

Ehrensaft has said that “what it means to be rural in late twentieth century OECD economies” consists primarily of “low versus high population densities and distance from metropolitan labour markets.”<sup>14</sup> This is essentially the theory behind the Beale codes. In their work “Distance and diversity in nonmetropolitan economies” (see **References**), Ehrensaft and Beeman assigned Beale codes to the 1986 census divisions in Canada. By combining this information with the OECD geography, it is possible to marry the fundamental notions of population density and accessibility.

Three basic groups of rural regions were identified: those adjacent to metropolitan centres (“metro-adjacent”), those not adjacent to metropolitan centres (“non-adjacent”), and the remote north (“northern”). Using this subdivision, Canada can be classified into five groups of regions, or degrees of rurality, as shown by the map in Figure 6. Note the location of the agglomerated and intermediate regions, a relatively small number of regions having a large proportion of Canada's population. Taking into account the fact that the five groups of **regions** are composed of both urban and rural **communities**, Figure 7 shows how employed Canadians are distributed among the different types of regions.

Employment-related data are examined under three main themes: job growth (expressed as per cent increase in employment), employment structure (described by percentage shares for various industrial sectors), and unemployment. The data shown have been taken from 1991 and 1981 Census data tabulated for the OECD for input into its Rural Indicators Project.

## I. Job growth

Figure 8 indicates the level of job growth between 1981 and 1991 for different degrees of rurality. The highest growth occurred in intermediate regions, with a noticeable decrease with increasing rurality. Note that intermediate regions largely refer to southern Ontario and Quebec: 34 of the 48 intermediate regions are located in those two provinces.

What type of employment is growing? Bollman and Biggs have noted, “Our natural resources are still rural-based, but the employment in resource-based sectors is not growing. In rural Canada, the broadly-defined service sector is growing in relative and absolute terms.”<sup>15</sup> The services sector, however, is huge and diverse, encompassing both very high- and very low-skilled jobs, so specific categories of services have been examined. Table 2 shows employment growth rates by region for 14 industrial sectors.<sup>16</sup> Note the negative growth in all rurality classes for

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<sup>14</sup> Ehrensaft, p. 154.

<sup>15</sup> Bollman and Biggs, p. 41-42.

<sup>16</sup> All industry data in this paper is based on the 1970 Standard Industrial Classification (see Statistics Canada's *1991 Census Dictionary* for more details). Note that all statistics shown refer only to those who were

manufacturing and for primary industries other than agriculture. Although agriculture had positive growth in all classes, this growth was weak in the three areas where it has a significant share of employment: non-adjacent, metro-adjacent, and intermediate.

Figure 9 shows the three industries with the highest employment growth rates. Interestingly, the same industries--business services, health services, and consumer services--ranked first, second, and third in the same order in all rurality classes; i.e. similar changes are happening independent of rurality, although the magnitude of growth is certainly not the same everywhere. Again, the effect of metro-adjacency is evident, with those regions close to large urban centres approaching the rates of the rapidly growing intermediate regions.

The fastest growing sector everywhere is the category known as *business services*,<sup>17</sup> sometimes referred to as *producer services*. This is a very knowledge-intensive sector with great potential for further growth. Though business services have traditionally been tied to urban areas, rural Canada is certainly participating in this growth. While the employment growth for business services nationally is 64%, it is almost as high--61%--for all rural regions. Ehrensaft has said that "it is intermediate-level business services that provide the real possibilities for expansion in nonmetro regions."<sup>18</sup>

In summary, while rural regions had an overall employment growth rate of 14.0%, the national rate was 16.5%, i.e. rural job growth was only  $14.0/16.5 = 85\%$  of the national rate. Another way of looking at the question is to consider rural regions' share of all employment. Rural Canada had 30.8 % of all jobs in 1981; this dropped to 30.2 % in 1991, a decrease of 0.6 percentage points. By either measure, rural Canada is having some trouble keeping up to the rest of Canada.

## II. Employment Structure

Table 3 shows how employment is distributed across industrial sectors for each degree of rurality. For most industries, the share of total employment does not vary significantly with rurality. However, there are five industries where there is noticeable variation: the shares for

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employed at the time of the census, whereas most published census data on employment by industry refers to the experienced labour force, which also includes those not working at census time but who had been employed, if even for a short time, since January of the previous year. An important factor to keep in mind when using data on employment by industry is that the figures are based on the type of business establishment rather than the type of work as such. For example, an accounting job in a manufacturing firm would not be distinguishable from an assembly-line job in the same company.

<sup>17</sup> The category of business services includes employment agencies and personnel suppliers, computer and related services, accounting and bookkeeping, advertising, scientific and technical, lawyers and notaries, management consulting, and other services intended primarily for businesses.

<sup>18</sup> Ehrensaft, p. 146.



agriculture and for other primary industries *increase* with increasing rurality, while the shares for manufacturing, FIRE, and business services *decrease* with increasing rurality.

Figure 10 shows the data from Table 3 in a different way: as employment shares for industries in rural versus “urban” (intermediate and agglomerated) regions, giving an idea not just of absolute importance but also of the relative importance in rural compared to urban Canada. A point located on the dashed diagonal line would indicate that the particular industry is equally important in rural and urban regions; the greater the distance from that line, the greater the difference between the relative importance in rural and urban. Note that agriculture and “other primary” are clearly rural-intensive industries and that construction, defence, and utilities are marginally rural-intensive sectors.

Table 4 shows the *changes in share*, by industry, from 1981 to 1991. Primary and secondary industries, as well as transportation and communication, utilities, and defence all lost share nationally and in rural regions generally; trade (wholesale and retail) lost nationally but not in rural regions generally. Again, a shift away from resource-based industries toward most services is evident.

Figure 11 takes a closer look at agriculture, showing that its importance varies greatly within Canada. Agriculture is obviously most important, as measured by its share of total employment, in the Prairies. In all parts of Canada, the metro-adjacent and non-adjacent regions depend more on agriculture than the other regions.

To summarize the information on employment shares by industry, an *index of dissimilarity* was calculated for the different rurality classes to illustrate the difference in employment structure between each class and Canada as a whole.<sup>19</sup> A minimum value of 0 would indicate an area is completely typical of the country as a whole. Figure 12 shows the dissimilarity indexes for both 1981 and 1991. The index shows a decrease for all degrees of rurality during the ten-year period. This indicates that the areas are becoming more similar to each other in terms of employment structure.

### III. Unemployment

Higher unemployment rates are usually associated with rural areas. Figure 13 shows a very definite relation between unemployment and rurality. Note also that the rate increased in all rurality classes between 1981 and 1991, especially in agglomerated and northern regions. The increases may be due to the fact that the 1981 Census took place during a period of growth preceding the recession of the early 1980s, while at the time of the 1991 Census, Canada was in

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<sup>19</sup> To derive the index of dissimilarity for a particular rurality class, the difference between the shares for each industry at the regional and national levels is calculated, all the differences are squared and averaged before the square root is taken.

the middle of a recession. Since urban and rural unemployment rates tended to diverge during the period of growth in the 1980s and to converge during the recession of the early 1990s, one would expect to see the largest proportional increase in the agglomerated regions between 1981 and 1991, which is indeed the case as shown in Figure 13.

However, earlier in this chapter it was observed that there was significant employment growth during the same period. Figure 14 shows that the employment ratio (also known as the employment/population ratio), which is the number of employed as a proportion of the total working age population, grew almost everywhere between 1981 and 1991. So even though unemployment increased, the percentage of the population with jobs went up.

## 6. Where do we go from here?

Chapter 2 listed six trends in employment by industry based on data to 1991 from various Statistics Canada surveys, using established Statistics Canada definitions of rural/urban. Were these trends confirmed by the current study? The first two, that agriculture is a relatively minor sector even in rural Canada, and that the services sector is dominant and growing in both rural and urban Canada, is clearly true from the data. The third trend was that rural Canada is sharing in this growth of services; this is true but the rate of growth in rural regions not close to a metropolitan centre is decidedly lower than the national rate. The fourth trend, that “the share for manufacturing is shrinking everywhere but not as fast in rural areas”, is also confirmed by the data. Trend number five stated that “rural-intensive” (resource-based) sectors are maintaining their share of national employment in rural areas relative to urban areas (for these industries this statement would mean that they are not *losing* share any faster in rural than in urban areas). This turned out *not* to be true for primary industries based on 1981-91 Census data and the OECD geography, as indicated by Table 5. The last trend was similar to number five but related to certain urban-intensive sectors: manufacturing, FIRE, trade, and government services. This proved to be true for three of the four, the exception being FIRE, for which the share increased by only 0.2 percentage points in rural regions compared with 0.5 in the more urbanized regions of Canada (see Table 5).

What these trends are describing, in summary, is a shift in rural Canada away from employment in resource industries toward employment in service industries. This is in line with the “fundamental economic trends” presented in Chapter 2: that employment in resource industries is declining, and that rural communities, especially single-industry communities, will decline unless they can diversify and become less dependent on resource industries.

Ehrensaft and Beeman talk about the notion of *sectoral dependency*, the dependence of certain areas on certain types of industry. In reference to rural employment, they observed that employment in goods production rises from metropolitan to nonmetropolitan areas. Because of this, the general movement toward services leaves nonmetropolitan areas more vulnerable. In particular, non-adjacent nonmetropolitan areas are the *most* vulnerable since they rely more on *initial* manufacturing (manufacturing that is tied more closely to natural resources). Figure 15 shows how employment in “complex” and “non-complex” manufacturing is distributed, complex manufacturing being associated generally with more technology-intensive and/or knowledge-intensive processing. Complex manufacturing is very much tied to urban regions while non-complex is more evenly distributed.

Another important consideration is that of the interdependency between various sectors. For example, instead of assuming the continuing replacement of manufacturing jobs by service jobs, it is vital to realize that manufacturing will continue to be fundamentally important to the economy but will be increasingly dependent on certain services to support it. Fuller, Cook, and Fitzsimons have said that “services are provided in order to maintain a system of production and

it is around this system of production that social organisation takes place.”<sup>20</sup>

Bollman, Fuller, and Ehrensaft<sup>21</sup> identified three directions that rural Canada needs to follow to have a prosperous future:

- *Macro-diversification*: rural areas need to become less dependent on traditional rural industries.
- *Metro-ization*: the market for rural goods and services will become more and more urban. New rural jobs will be based on innovative goods and services of interest to metropolitan residents.
- *The new economy*: Canada's comparative advantage will be in the “knowledge-intensive” industries.<sup>22</sup>

Rural development policy is ordinarily structured by sector (i.e. putting money into industries that are, or are expected to be, fast-growing). But while employment statistics indicate the direction the country has been going, is that necessarily the direction it *should* be going? Should rural development focus on the sectors that are already growing or the ones that have stopped growing?

Or, rather than be sector-specific, should rural analysis/policy be location-specific, i.e. take place at the regional or community level? Figure 16 shows 1981-1991 employment growth by individual census divisions (regions), according to their proportion of rural population. There is a wide variation in growth among the different regions, independent of their degree of rurality. As the data indicate, there are other factors besides rurality that allow some rural areas to thrive and others to struggle. Any rural development policy, to be effective, needs to consider all these elements, recognizing the diversity and potential that make up rural Canada.

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<sup>20</sup> Fuller et al., p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Bollman, Fuller, and Ehrensaft, p. 619-620.

<sup>22</sup> An area for future analysis would be to classify employment data according to Beck's industrial categories of high, medium, and low knowledge-intensiveness as described in *Shifting Gears*. This would be a labour-intensive exercise, since her scheme cuts across the groupings of Statistics Canada's Standard Industrial Classification. Another approach would be to look at the classification of **occupations** by skill-intensiveness, as described in the paper by Green and Meyer.

**Table 1: How does rural Canada measure up?**

<b>Rural regions*</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>OECD median</b>	<b>OECD minimum</b>	<b>OECD maximum</b>
% share of population	33	35	0 (Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand)	62 (Ireland)
Population density (persons/km <sup>2</sup> )	1	47	1 (Australia, Canada, Iceland)	124 (Japan)
Net population change 1980-90 (per thousand per annum)	5.7	2.9	0.6 (Denmark)	14.8 (Australia)
Population dependency ratio (pop. 0-14 + pop. 65+) / (pop. 15-64)	0.54	0.55	0.50 (Austria, Germany, Japan)	0.59 (Sweden)
Employment growth 1980-90 (% per annum)	1.3	0.8	-0.3 (Finland)	1.5 (Belgium, US)
Ratio of employment growth to population growth 1980-90	2.3	2.2	-3.3 (Finland)	7.1 (Sweden)
Unemployment rate	11.9	6.2	1.0 (Switzerland)	17.0 (Spain)
Sectoral employment share (%):				
- agriculture**	11	15	6 (Sweden, US)	37 (Portugal, Iceland)
- industry***	23	28	18 (Belgium)	45 (Germany)
- services****	66	54	41 (Austria)	71 (Belgium, US)
<p>* Three countries (Luxembourg, Netherlands, and New Zealand) have no rural regions according to OECD definition.  ** agriculture, forestry, fishing  *** mining, manufacturing, construction, utilities  **** all other</p>				

**Table 2: % Employment growth 1981-91**

Industry	Agglomerated	Intermediate	Metro-adjacent	Non-adjacent	Northern	CANADA
Agriculture	<b>21</b>	4	4	3	14	5
Other primary <sup>23</sup>	<b>-3</b>	-16	-4	-8	-20	-9
Manufacturing	-16	-8	<b>-7</b>	-11	-19	-12
Construction	4	<b>30</b>	9	0	5	9
Transportation and communication	2	<b>19</b>	14	-0	-4	6
Utilities	4	<b>44</b>	16	7	16	15
Trade	9	<b>29</b>	21	11	16	16
FIRE <sup>24</sup>	19	<b>48</b>	28	19	3	25
Business services	56	<b>100</b>	72	44	66	64
Consumer services	31	40	<b>42</b>	34	25	35
Education services	23	<b>27</b>	26	16	13	23
Health services	40	<b>50</b>	44	37	39	42
Defence	24	9	9	6	<b>33</b>	14
Government services	14	40	29	21	<b>44</b>	23
TOTAL	14	<b>26</b>	18	10	7	16

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1981 and 1991.

Note that bolded numbers indicate the highest rate for that sector.

<sup>23</sup> Other primary includes forestry, fishing and trapping, mining, quarrying and oil extraction.

<sup>24</sup> Finance, insurance and real estate.

**Table 3: % Share of employment 1991**

Industry	Agglomerated	Intermediate	Metro-adjacent	Non-adjacent	Northern	CANADA
Agriculture	1	3	9	10	1	4
Other primary	1	1	2	6	13	2
Manufacturing	14	16	13	12	10	14
Construction	5	6	6	6	5	6
Transportation and communication	7	6	6	6	7	6
Utilities	1	1	1	1	2	1
Trade	16	17	16	15	13	16
FIRE	7	6	4	3	3	6
Business services	8	5	3	2	2	6
Consumer services	12	12	11	12	11	12
Education services	7	7	7	7	8	7
Health services	9	9	9	9	8	9
Defence	1	1	1	2	1	1
Government services	7	6	6	6	12	7

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991.

**Table 4: Change in share of employment among industries 1981-91 (percentage points)**

Industry	Agglomerated	Intermediate	Metro-adjacent	Non-adjacent	Northern	CANADA
Agriculture	0.1	-0.6	-1.3	-0.7	0.1	-0.4
Other primary	-0.2	-0.6	-0.6	-1.1	-4.5	-0.6
Manufacturing	-4.9	-5.9	-3.7	-3.0	-3.2	-4.6
Construction	-0.5	0.2	-0.6	-0.6	-0.1	-0.4
Transportation and communication	-0.8	-0.3	-0.2	-0.6	-0.8	-0.6
Utilities	-0.1	0.2	0	-0.0	0.1	-0.0
Trade	-0.7	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.9	-0.1
FIRE	0.3	0.9	0.3	0.2	-0.1	0.4
Business services	2.1	1.9	1	0.5	0.8	1.7
Consumer services	1.6	1.2	1.9	2.1	1.5	1.6
Education services	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4
Health services	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.6
Defence	0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	0.2	-0.0
Government services	0	0.6	0.5	0.5	2.9	0.4

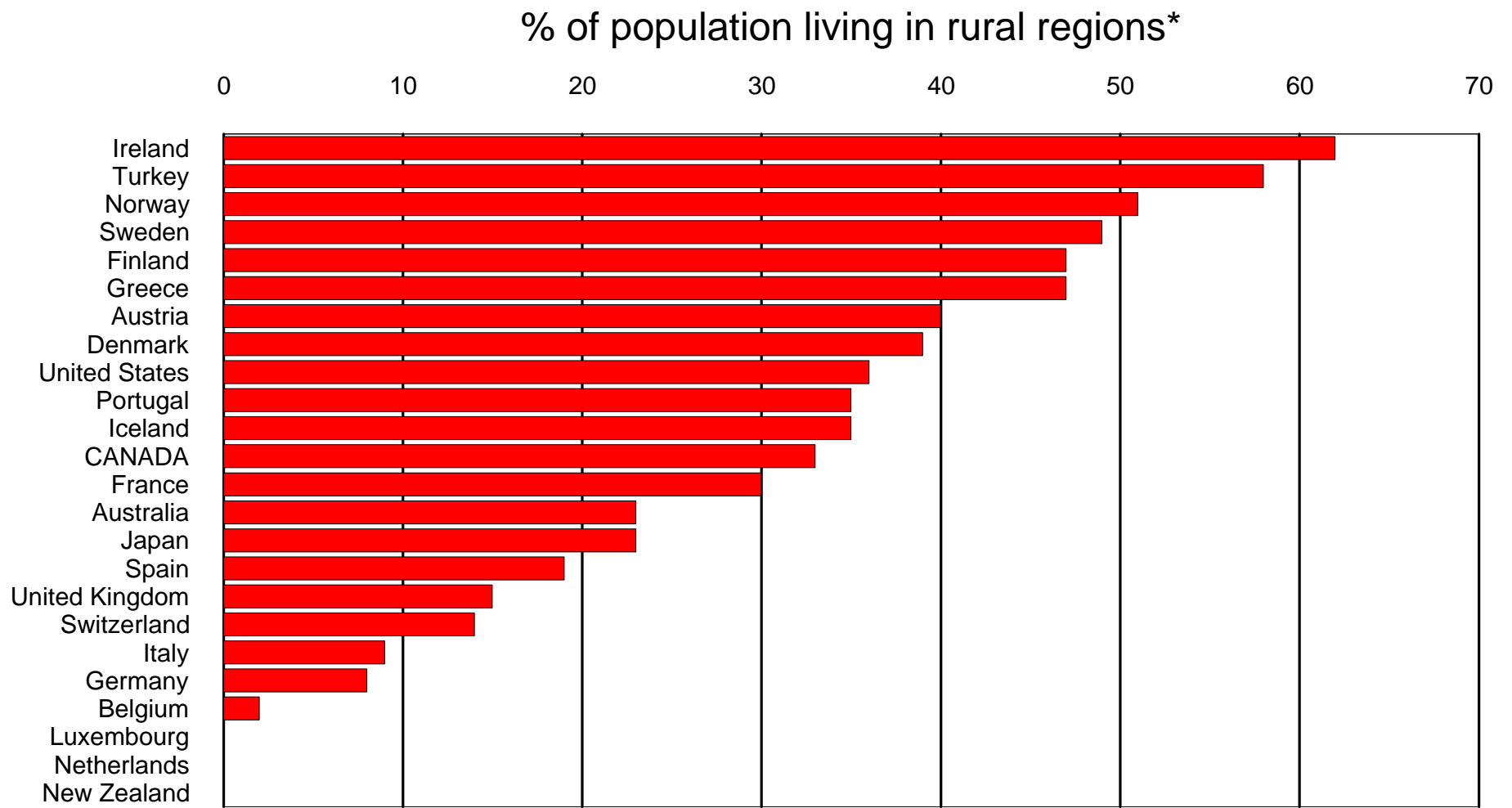
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1981 and 1991.



**Table 5: Change in share of employment among industries 1981-91  
(percentage points)**

Industry	Rural regions	Other regions	CANADA
Agriculture	-0.9	-0.1	-0.4
Other primary	-1.2	-0.3	-0.6
Manufacturing	-3.3	-5.1	-4.6
Construction	-0.5	-0.3	-0.4
Transportation and communication	-0.4	-0.7	-0.6
Utilities	-0.0	-0.0	-0.0
Trade	0.3	-0.3	-0.1
FIRE	0.2	0.5	0.4
Business services	0.8	2.0	1.7
Consumer services	1.9	1.5	1.6
Education services	0.4	0.4	0.4
Health services	1.7	1.6	1.6
Defence	-0.1	0.0	-0.0
Government services	0.7	0.2	0.4

Figure 1  
In 1991, 33% of Canada's population lived in rural regions

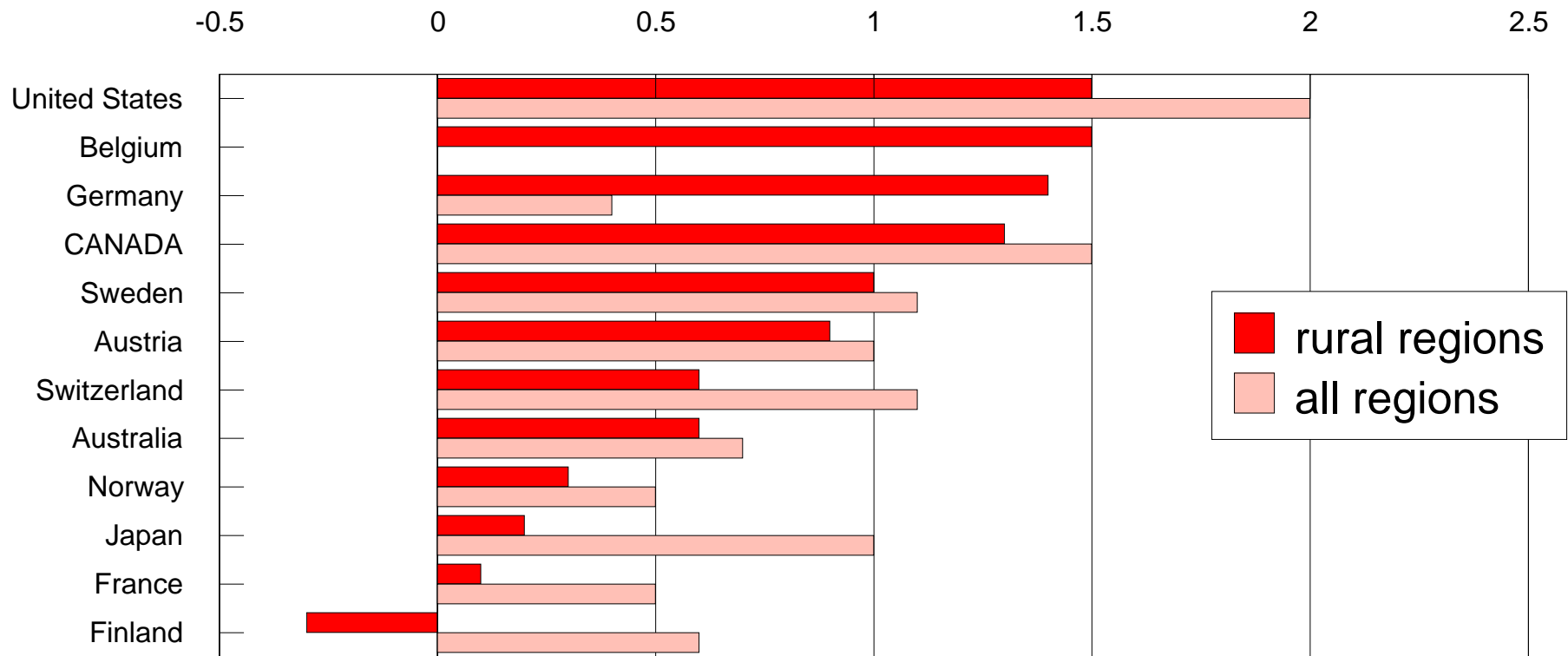


\* calculations based on most recent data available  
Source: OECD (1994). Creating rural indicators for shaping territorial policy

# Figure 2

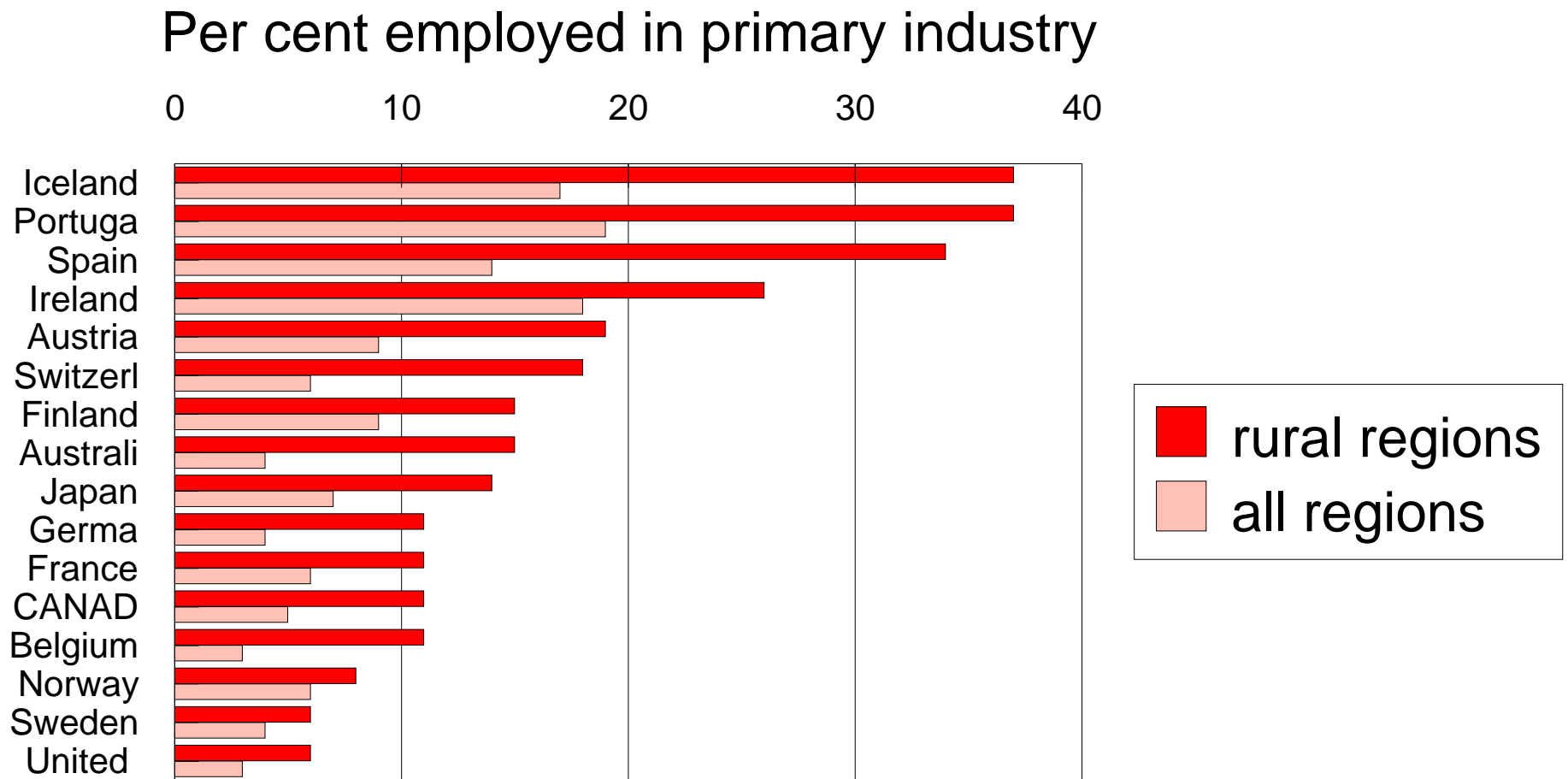
Canada's rural employment growth for 1981-91 was 1.3% per annum

## Annual % increase in rural employment, 1980-1990\*



\* Australia 1981-86; Austria, Canada 1981-91; Belgium 1980-89; Finland 1980-87; France 1982-90; Switzerland 1975-85.  
Source: OECD (1994). Creating rural indicators for shaping territorial policy

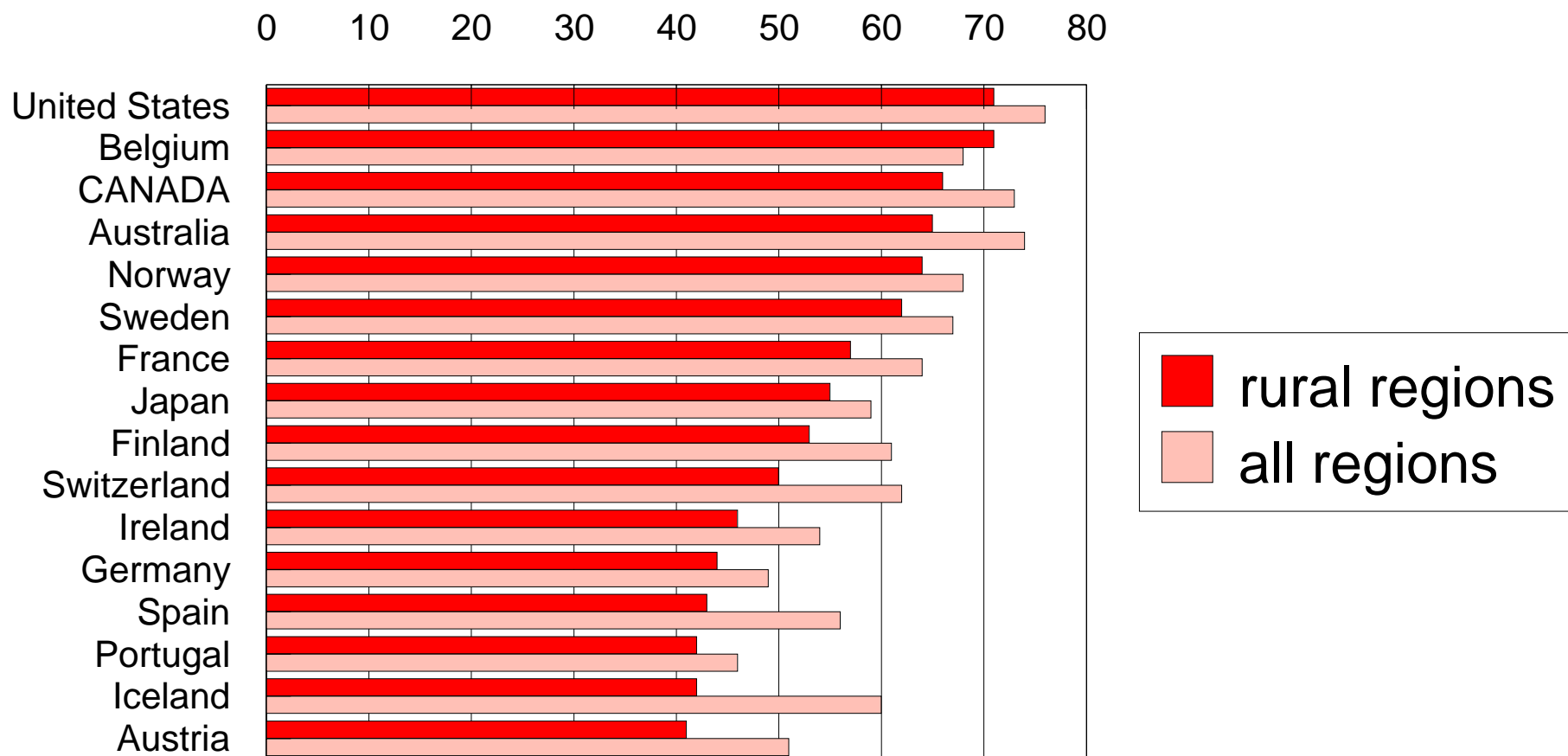
# Figure 3 - In 1991, 11% of working rural residents in Canada were employed in primary industry\*



\* Primary includes agriculture, forestry, and fishing (but excludes mining and oil extraction).  
 Source: OECD (1994). Creating rural indicators for shaping territorial policy.

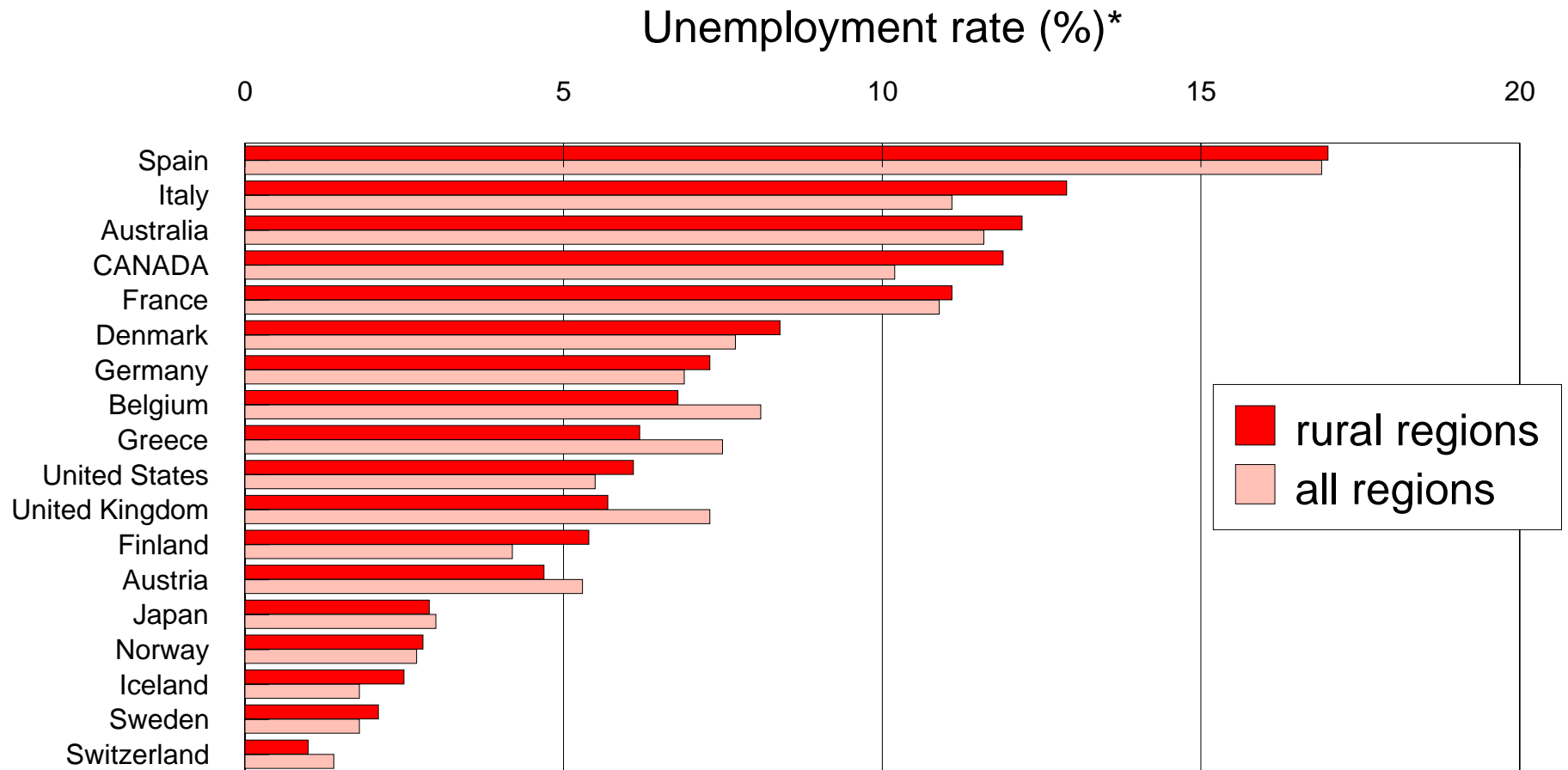
# Figure 4 - In 1991, 66% of working rural residents in Canada were employed in service industries

## Per cent employed in service industries



Source: OECD (1994). Creating rural indicators for shaping territorial policy.

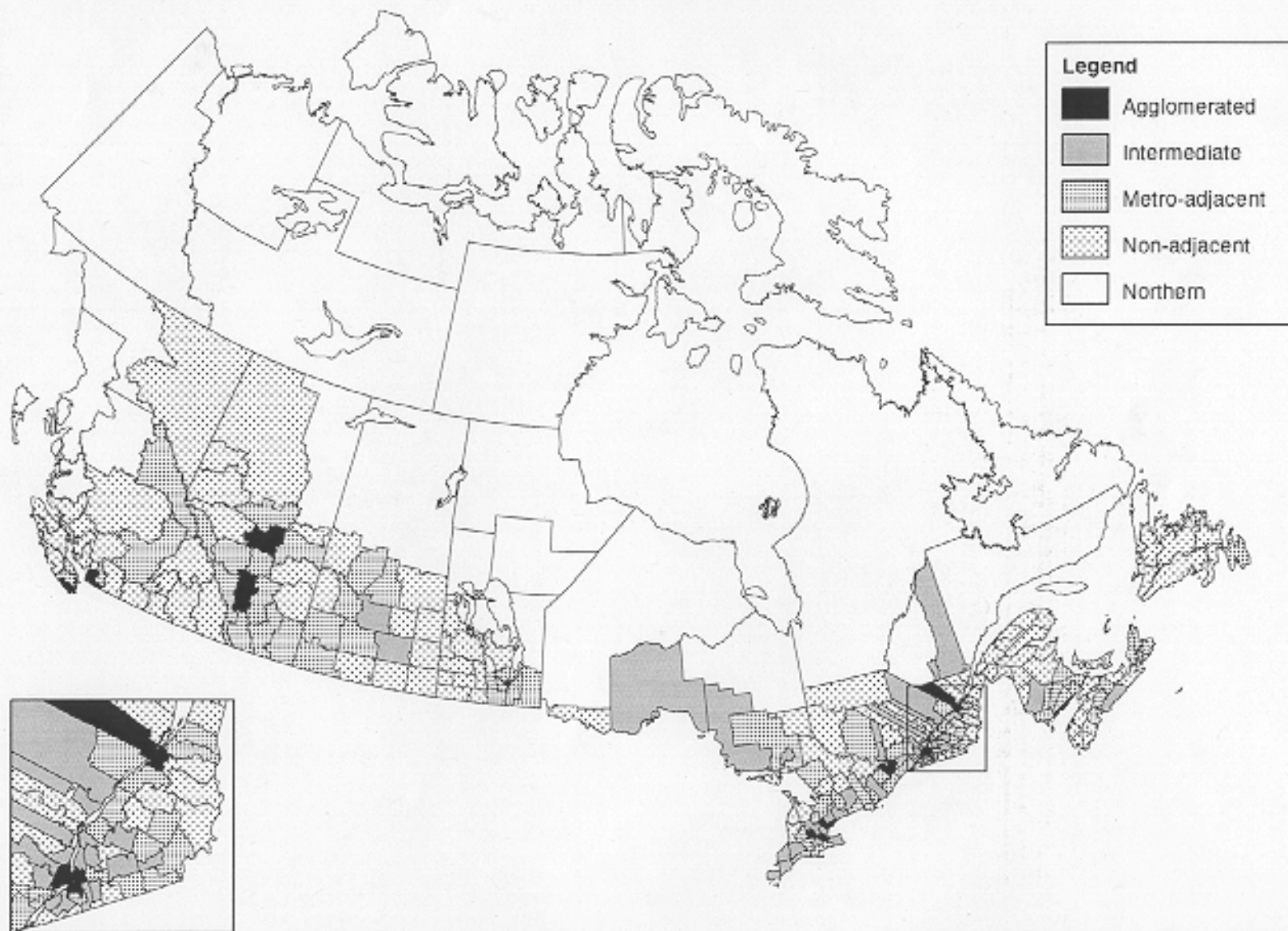
Figure 5 - In Canada, 12% of the labour force in rural regions was unemployed in 1991



\* Based on most recent data available.

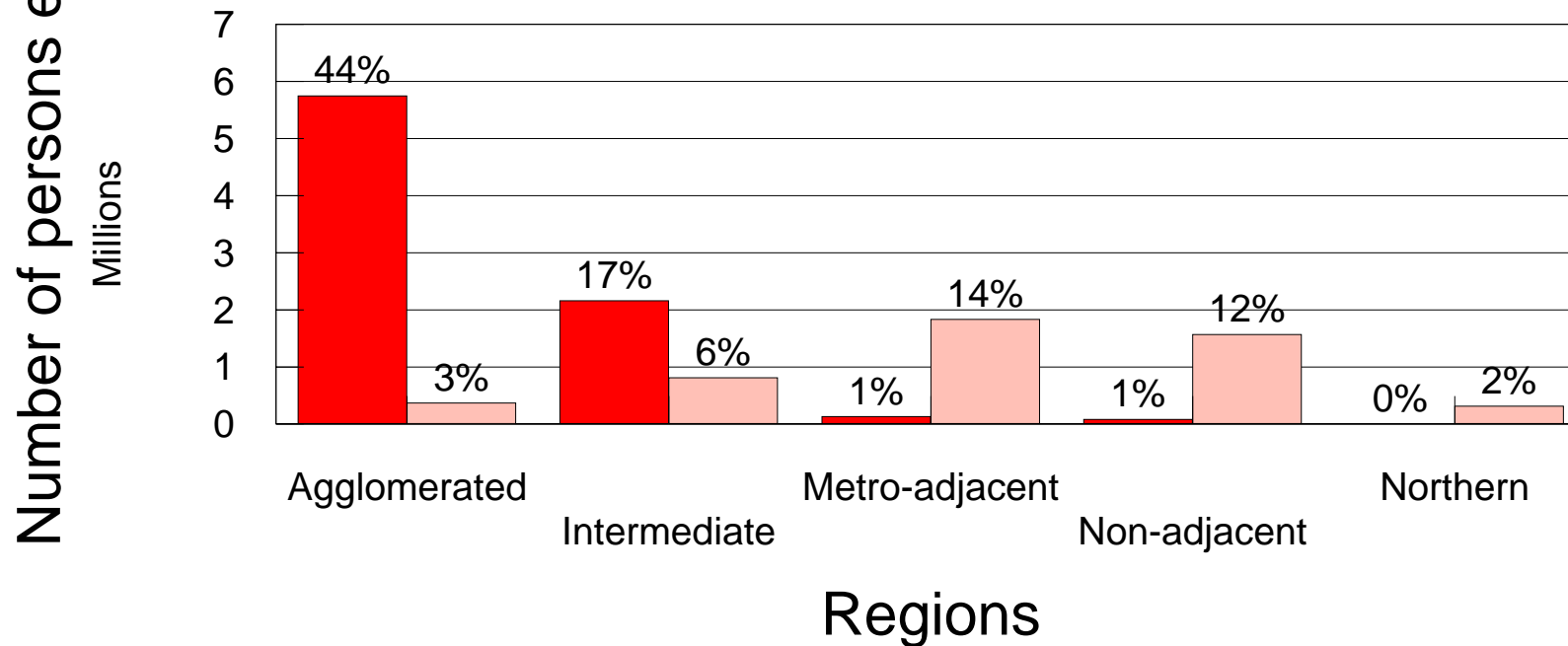
Source: OECD (1994). Creating rural indicators for shaping territorial policy.

**Figure 6: The OECD Regional Geography Applied to Canada**



# Figure 7

## Where are the employed located?

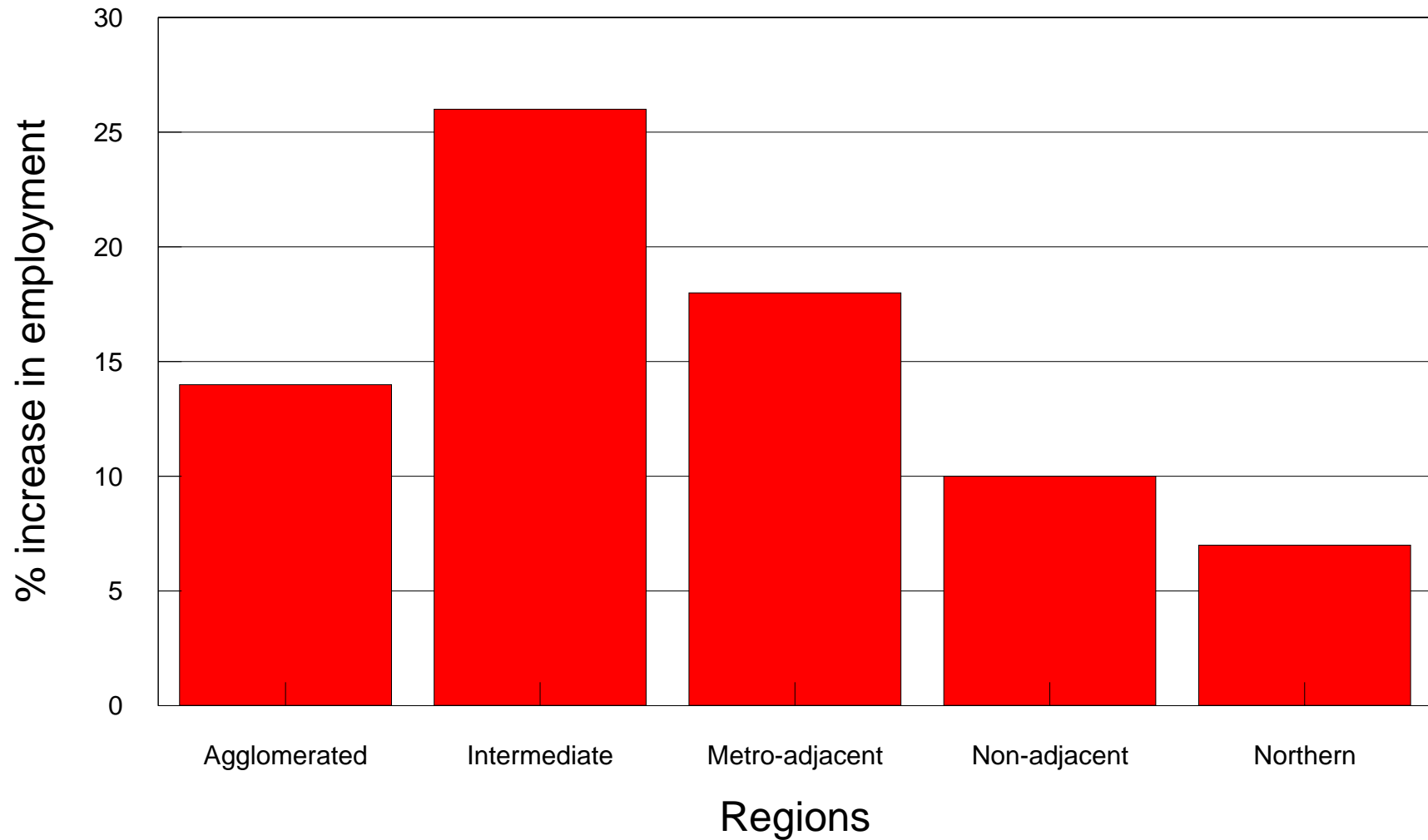


■ Urban communities  
■ Rural communities

Source: Statistics Canada.  
Census of Population, 1991.

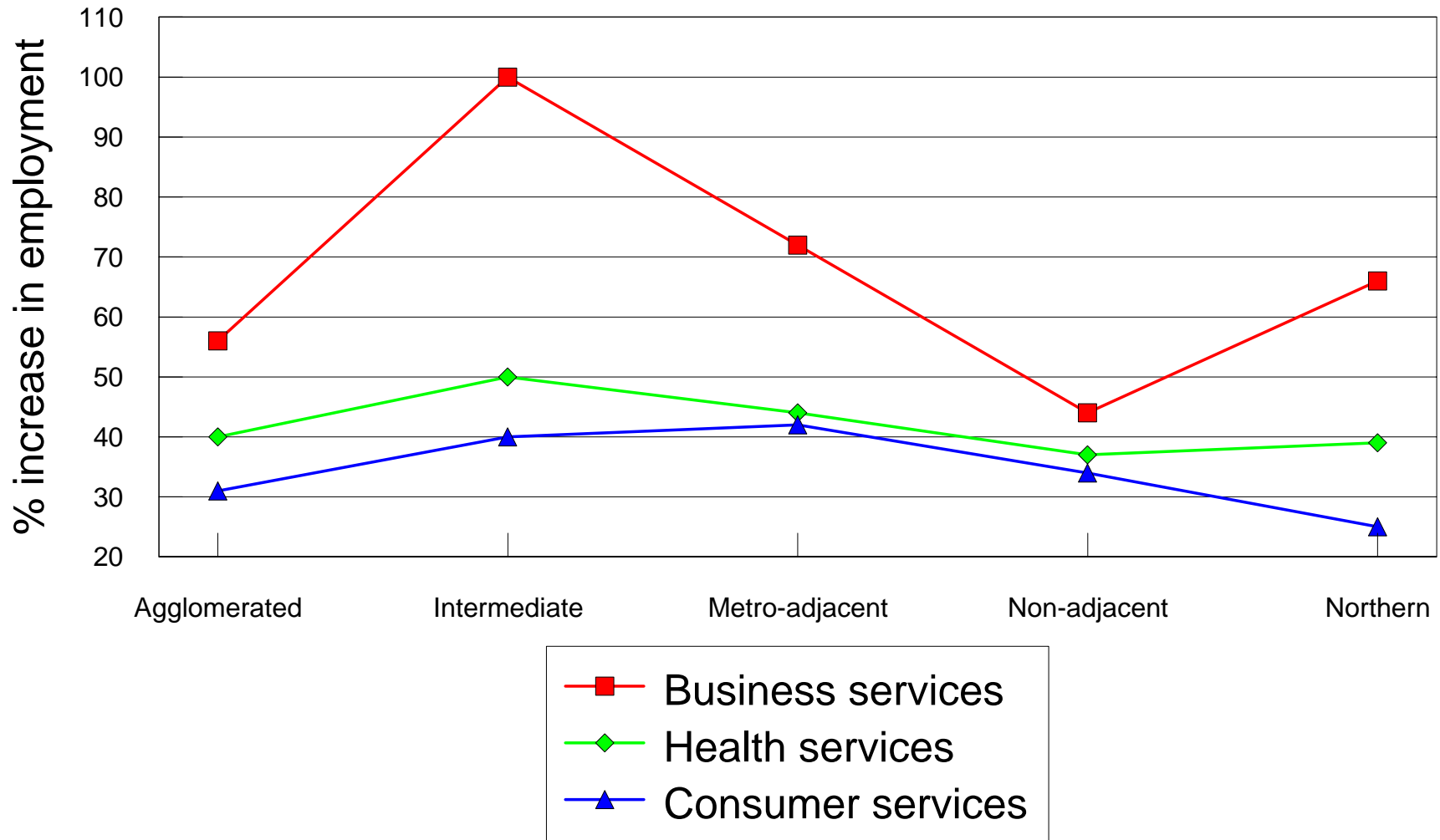


Figure 8 - Employment growth was highest in intermediate and metro-adjacent regions, Canada, 1981 to 1991



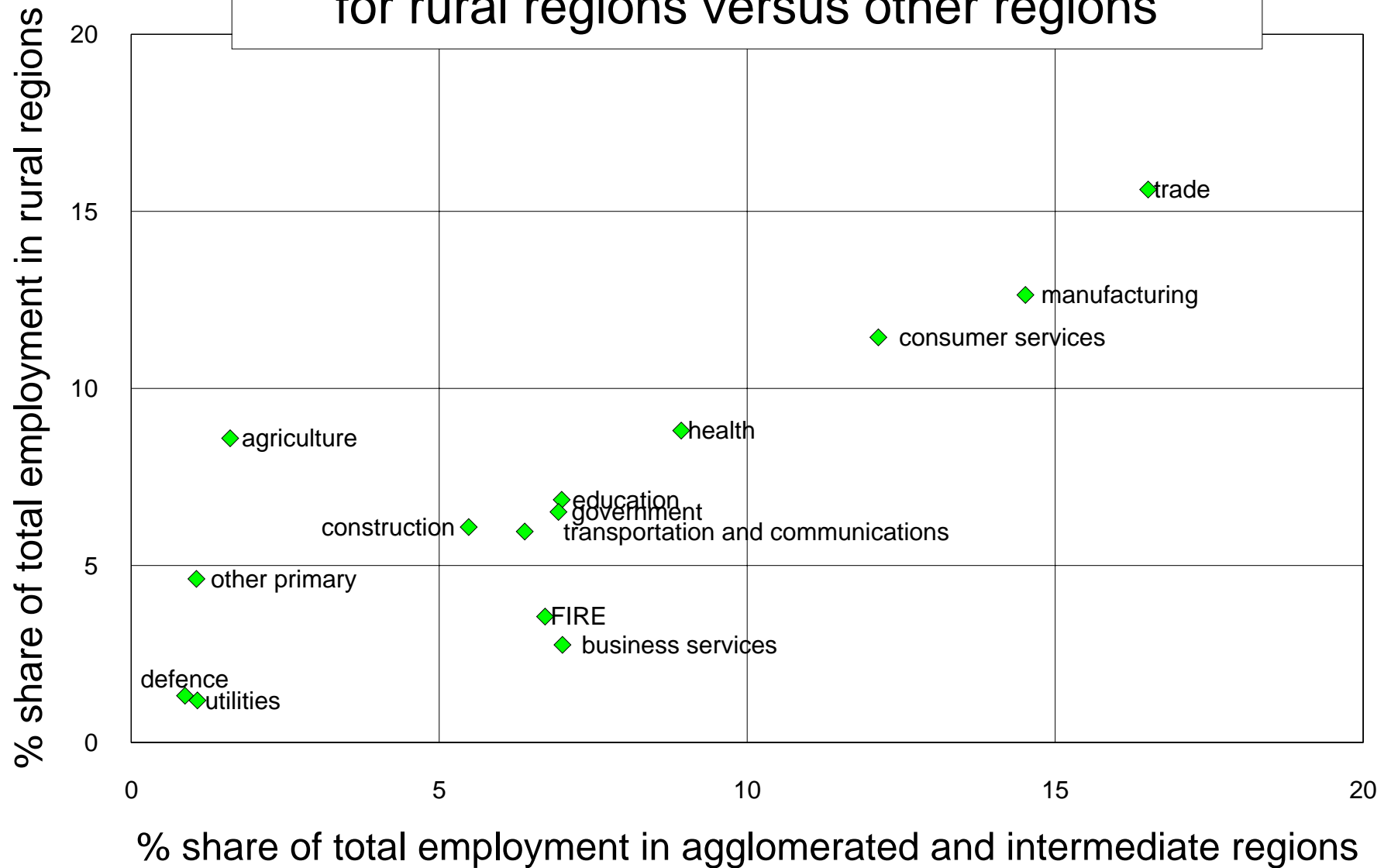
Source: Statistics Canada  
Census of Population, 1981 and 1991

Figure 9 - The 3 fastest growing industries:  
Growth was highest in intermediate and metro-adjacent regions



Source: Statistics Canada.  
Census of Population, 1981 and 1991.

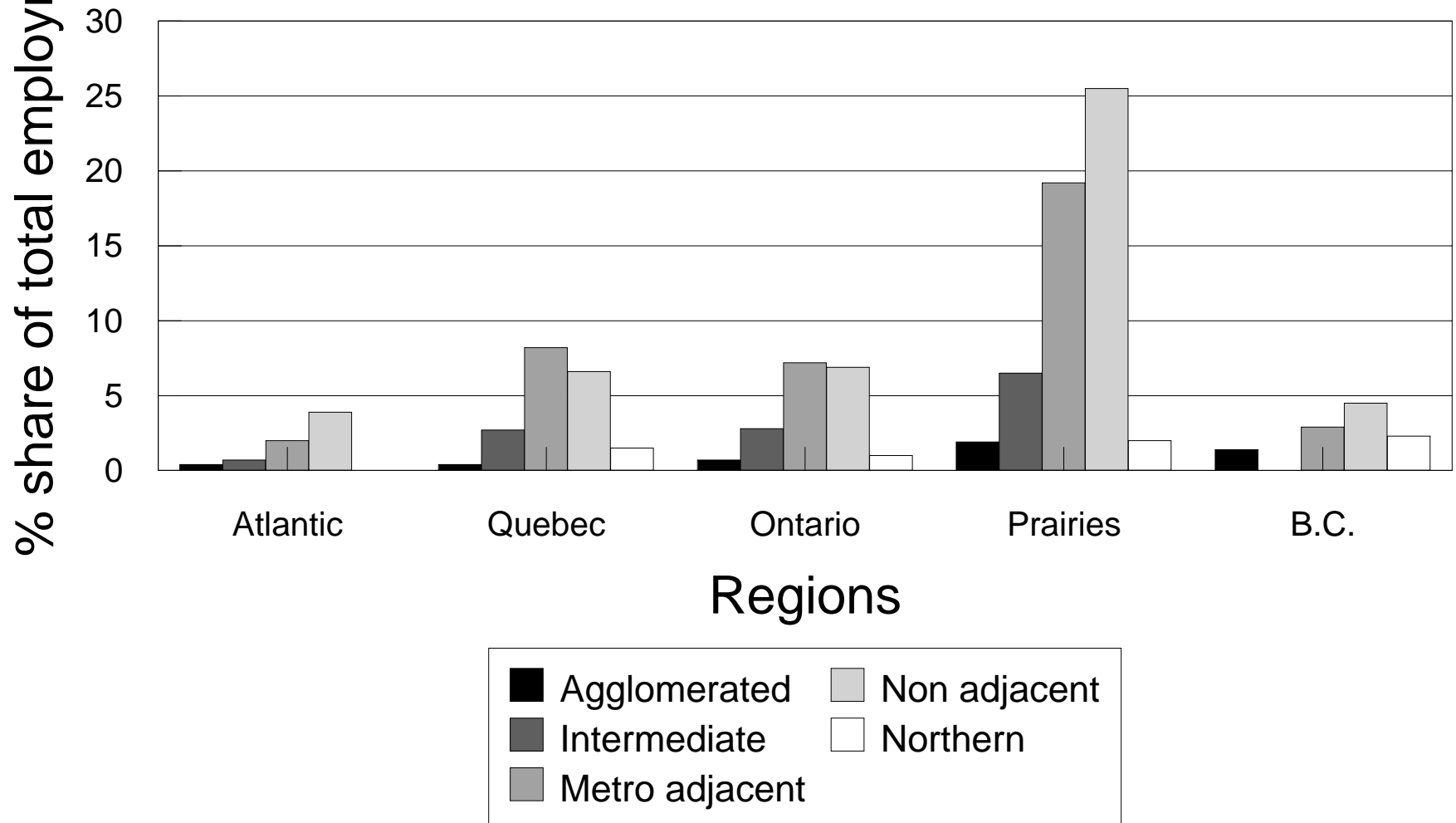
Figure 10: Share of employment by industry for rural regions versus other regions



Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1991.

# Figure 11

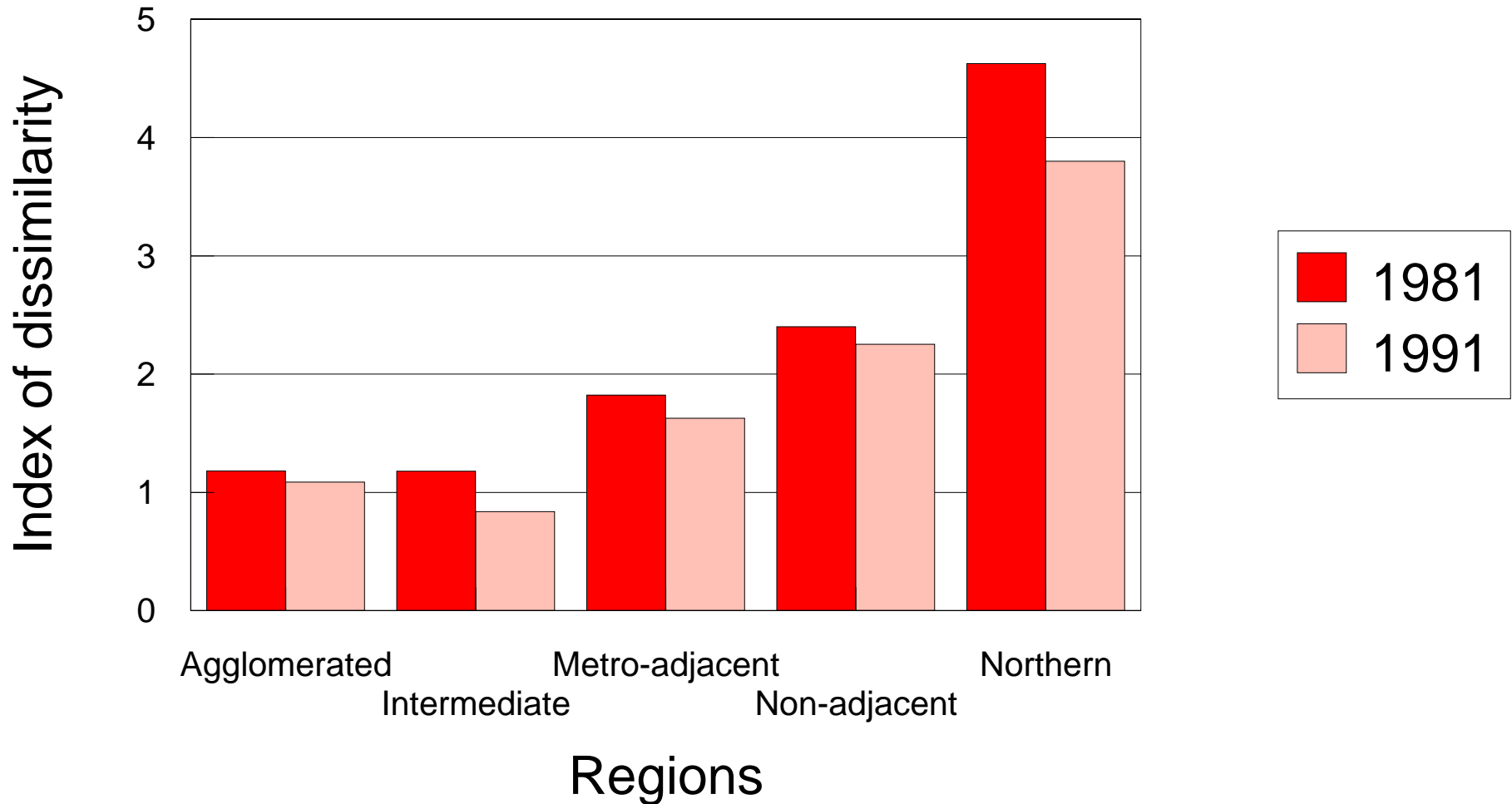
## Where is agriculture important?



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991.

# Figure 12

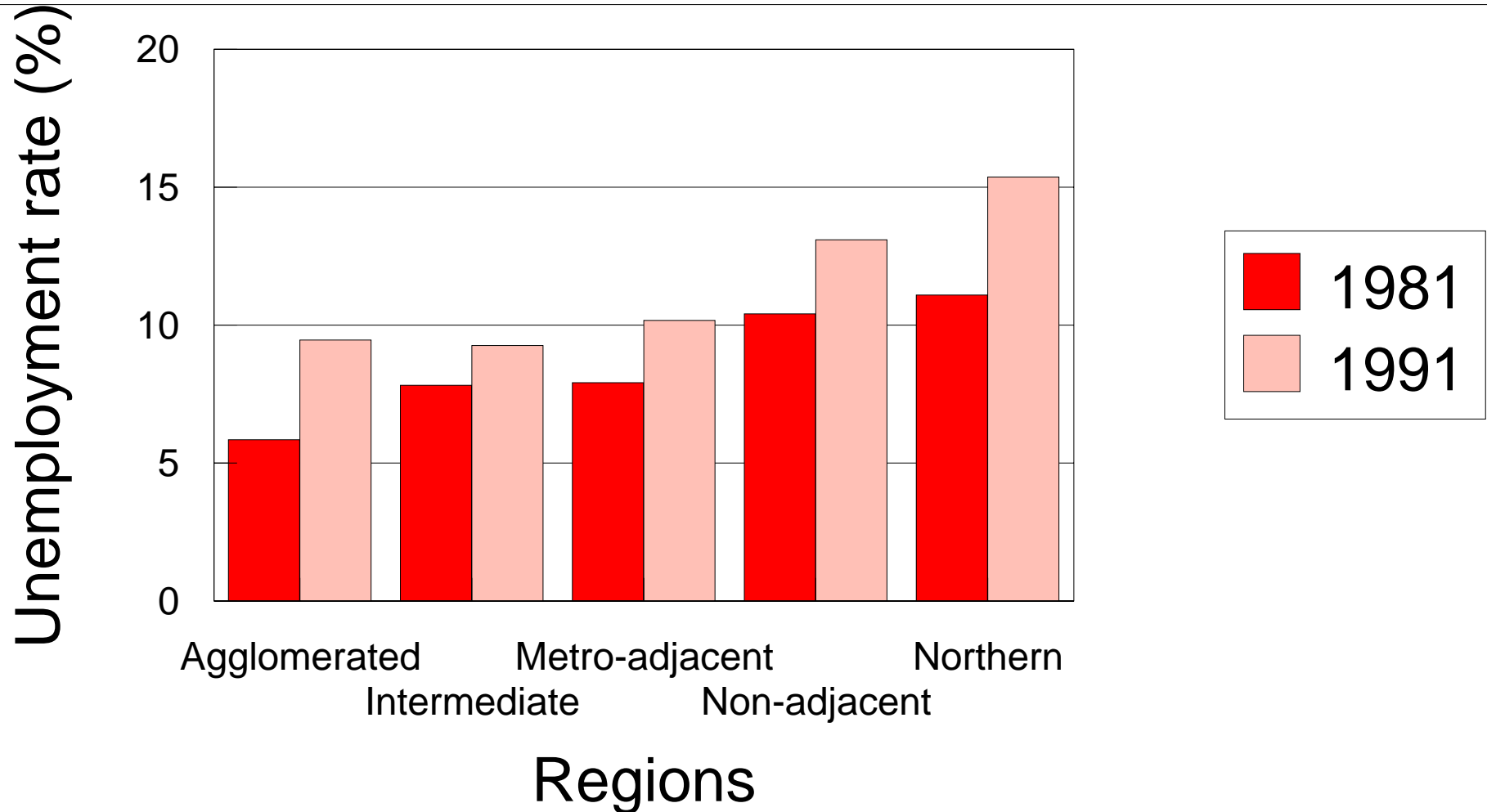
## Regions are converging toward similar employment profiles



Source: Statistics Canada.  
Census of Population, 1981 and 1991.

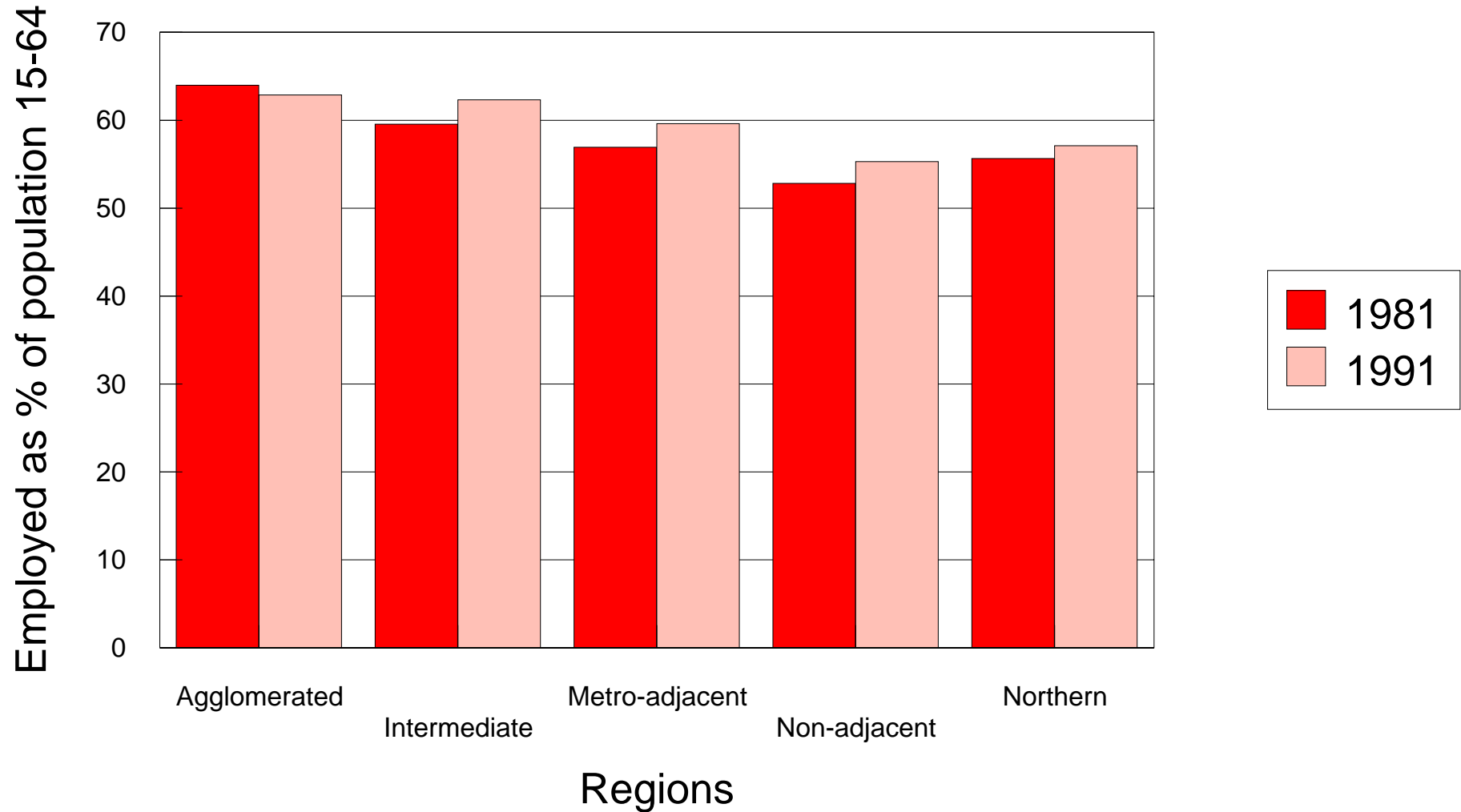
# Figure 13

## Unemployment grew most in agglomerated and northern regions



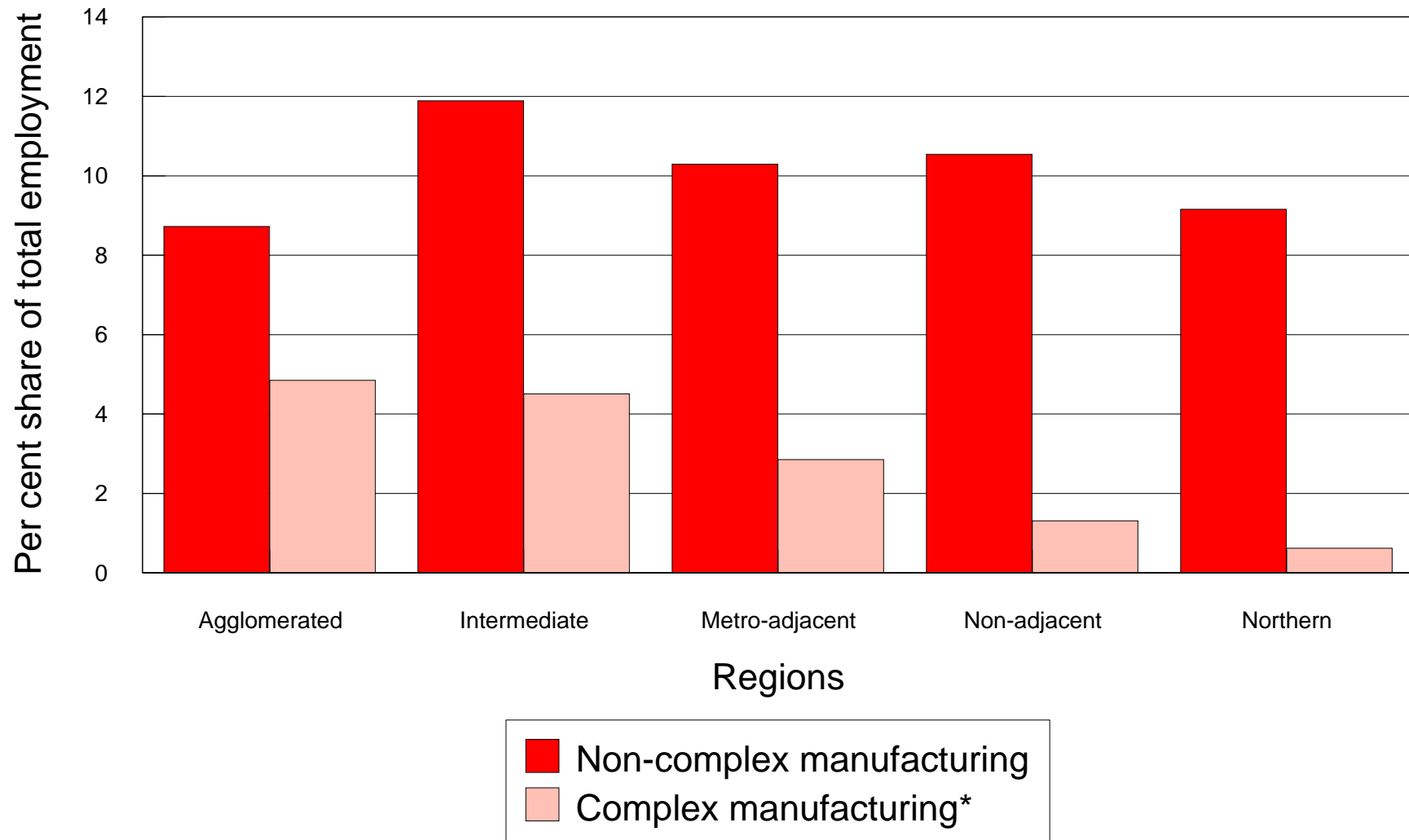
Source: Statistics Canada.  
Census of Population, 1981 and 1991.

Figure 14  
Employment ratio rose in all but agglomerated regions



Source: Statistics Canada.  
Census of Population 1981 and 1991.

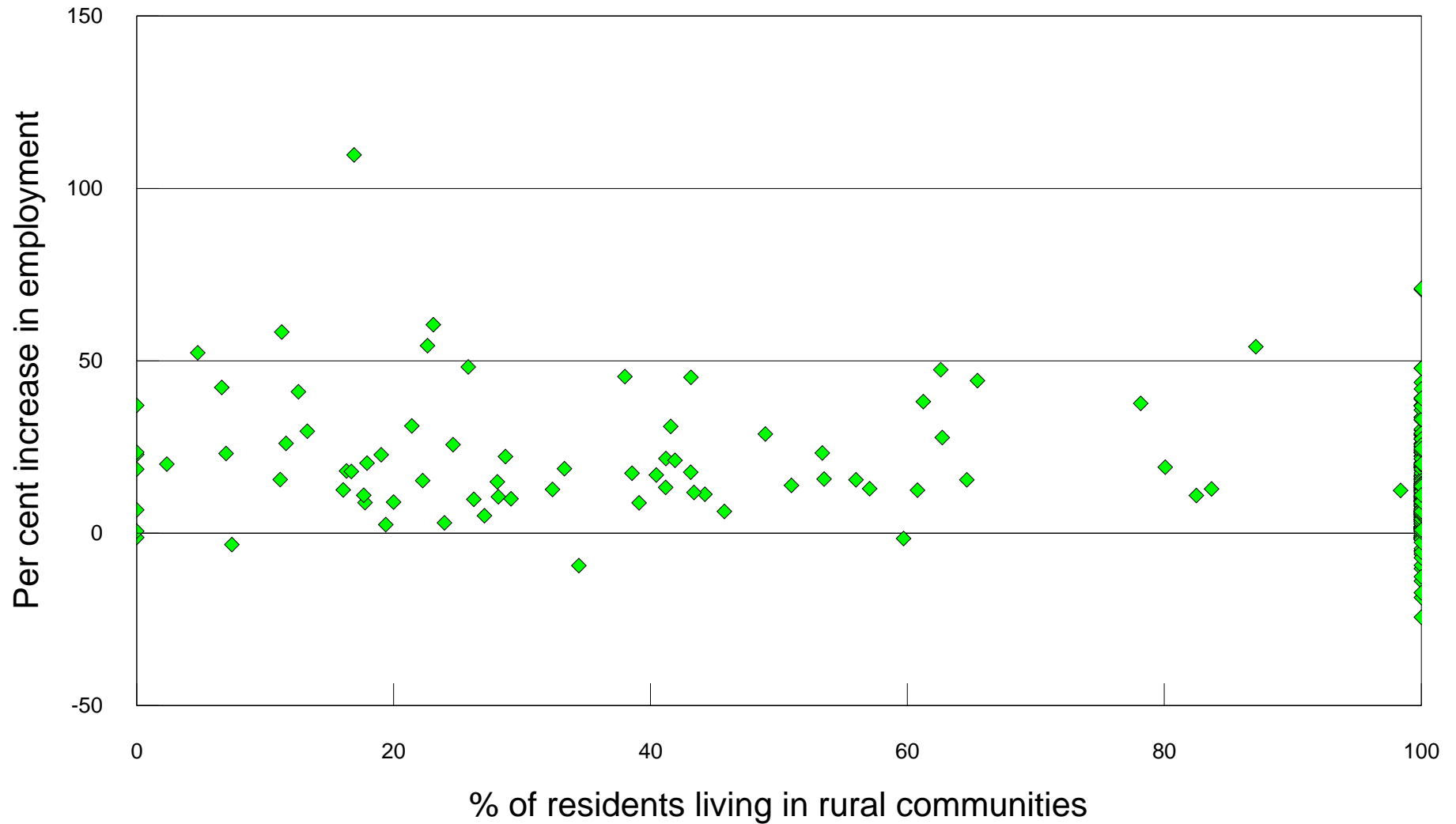
Figure 15 - Complex manufacturing is concentrated in agglomerated and intermediate regions



\* includes printing/publishing, machinery, aircraft, electrical products, petroleum and coal products, chemicals, scientific/professional equipment. (Source: Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 1991)



Figure 16: Employment growth by degree of rurality, by census divisions, 1981-1991



Source: Statistics Canada.  
Census of Population, 1981 and 1991.

## Definitions

**Census consolidated subdivision (CCS)** - a grouping of small census subdivisions within a containing census subdivision, created for the convenience and ease of geographic referencing.

**Census division (CD)** - the general term applying to geographic areas established by provincial law, which are intermediate geographic areas between the census subdivision and the province (e.g. divisions, counties, regional districts, regional municipalities and seven other types of geographic areas made up of groups of census subdivisions). In Newfoundland, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, provincial law does not provide for these administrative geographic areas. Therefore, census divisions have been created by Statistics Canada in co-operation with these provinces.

**Census subdivision (CSD)** - the general term applying to municipalities (as determined by provincial legislation) or their equivalent, e.g. Indian reserves, Indian settlements and unorganized territories. In Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and British Columbia, the term also describes geographic areas that have been created by Statistics Canada in co-operation with the provinces as equivalents for municipalities.

**Industry** - refers to the general nature of the business carried out in the establishment where the person worked, as indicated by the name of the employer and the kind of business, industry or service. Persons with two or more jobs were to report the information for the job at which they worked the most hours.

**Labour force participation rate** - refers to the total labour force (employed plus unemployed) expressed as a percentage of the population 15 years of age and over, excluding institutional residents.

**Unemployment rate** - refers to the unemployed labour force expressed as a percentage of the total labour force (employed plus unemployed).

**Urban area (UA)** - an area which has attained a population concentration of at least 1,000, and a population density of at least 400 per square kilometre, at the previous census. All territory lying outside urban areas is considered rural. Taken together, urban and rural areas cover all of Canada. Urban areas separated by gaps of less than two kilometres are combined to form a single urban area.

For further information on these and other statistical concepts, consult Statistics Canada's *1991 Census Dictionary*.

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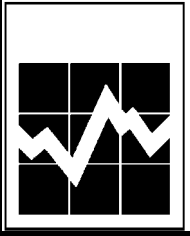
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