What People Say:

Application of Rural Definitions and Descriptors of Community in Ingersoll, Ontario

Neil Stoop
University of Guelph
Back Drop to Research

• How we define and describe communities impacts the individuals who live there.

• A definition of rural, and what constitutes a rural community has been the focus of academic and political debate.

• While the academic debate exists, it is often not reconciled with the lay discourse.
Key Research Questions

• How do residents of Ingersoll Ontario describe their community?
• How does the lay discourse of rural differ from the academic and political discourse, as found in Ingersoll Ontario?
How is rural defined?

• Descriptive definitions
  • Rural is defined by their socio-spatial characteristics

• Socio-cultural definitions
  • Rural is defined by the way people act and behave in rural areas

• Rural as a locality
  • Rural is defined by the existence of structures operating at a local level

• Social Representations of rural
  • Rural is defined with input from the lay discourse, and how people view and describe rural
How is rural defined?

- **OMAFRA RED Program**
  - <100,000 people and < 100 people/km²

- **Northern Rural Remote Recruitment and Retention Program**
  - an index scoring a communities population, density, health services and travel times to referral centers

- **Census Rural**
  - < 1000 people, or < 400 people/km²
Ingersoll, Ontario
Ingersoll, Ontario
Ingersoll, Ontario

- Population: 12,757 (5% increase from 2011 to 2016)
- Population Density: 1,000 people per km²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Industries (NAICS)</th>
<th>Number Employed (2011)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>1,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are people in Ingersoll saying?
Is Ingersoll rural?

- Yes: 16
- No: 2
What are the implications for rural Ontario?

• Who is and is not included in rural Ontario?
• The way communities are described and classified impacts the way they are viewed by both residents, and outsiders.
• Altering definitions and description affect how communities are impacted by policy and programs.
Moving Forward

• The way individuals and organizations describe communities differs and it is necessary to be aware of these differences.

• When using a term such as ‘rural’ it is important to define what it means in the particular context.

• Academics and policy makers alike need to be aware of the ‘lay discourse’ that surrounds communities.
Contact Information

Neil Stoop
nstoop@uoguelph.ca
Thank-you