

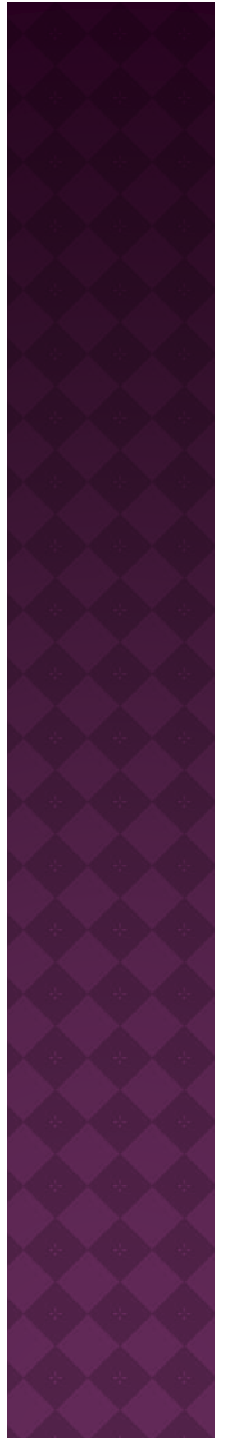
RURAL SUCCESSES RURAL CHALLENGES

Presented at On the Bright Side,
Brandon Man.

E. Dianne Looker
Mt St Vincent U.
Oct 2010

CONTEXT

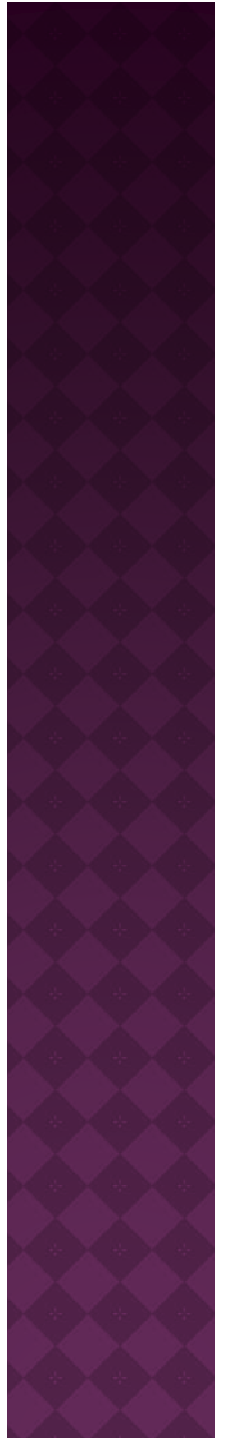
- Rural youth often portrayed as disadvantaged
 - Fewer resources
 - Less social capital
 - Lower educational aspirations and attainments
 - Success = leaving
 - BUT this creates challenges for rural communities



CONTEXT CONTINUED....

HOWEVER

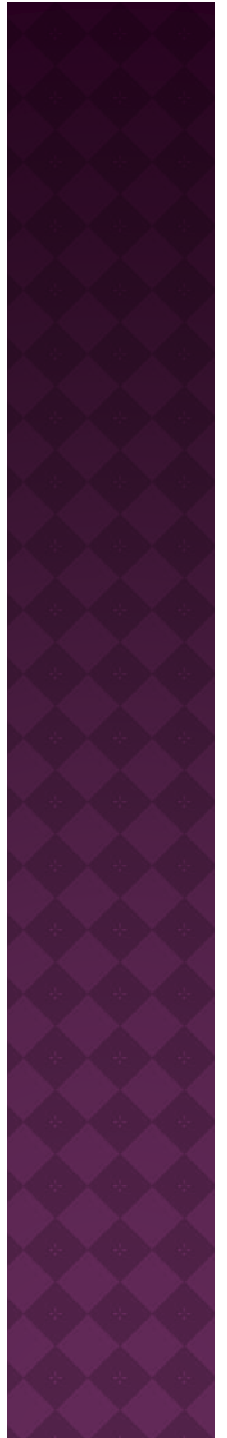
- ◉ Rural youth have close ties to home, family, community
- ◉ Many rural youth opt to stay
- ◉ Those who stay do not necessarily see themselves as failures



RESEARCH LITERATURE

Research literature often reinforces the idea that Rural = disadvantaged

- ◉ I want to challenge this view
- ◉ Explore the complexities of rural youth choices
- ◉ Identify the positive
- ◉ Recognise and document the challenges

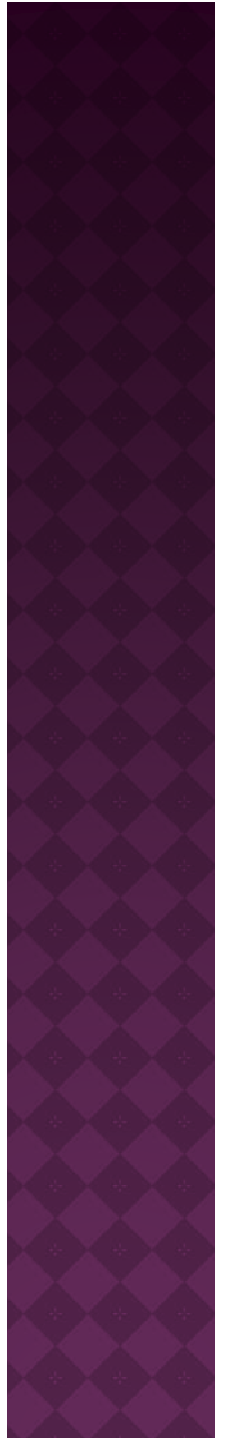


DATA

- ◉ SSHRC funded longitudinal survey in Nova Scotia (and Hamilton) 1989-2001
- ◉ 1989 - Interviews with 803 NS youth (50% rural); questionnaires for parents (Mothers N=601; Fathers N=456)
- ◉ 1992 - Short one page mailed survey to youth (N=711)
- ◉ 1994 - Longer mailed survey (N=586); interview to subset (N=381)
- ◉ 2000-2001 - Mailed survey (N=533 - 216 did short form); In depth unstructured interviews (N=28)
- ◉ Qualitative responses as well as quantitative

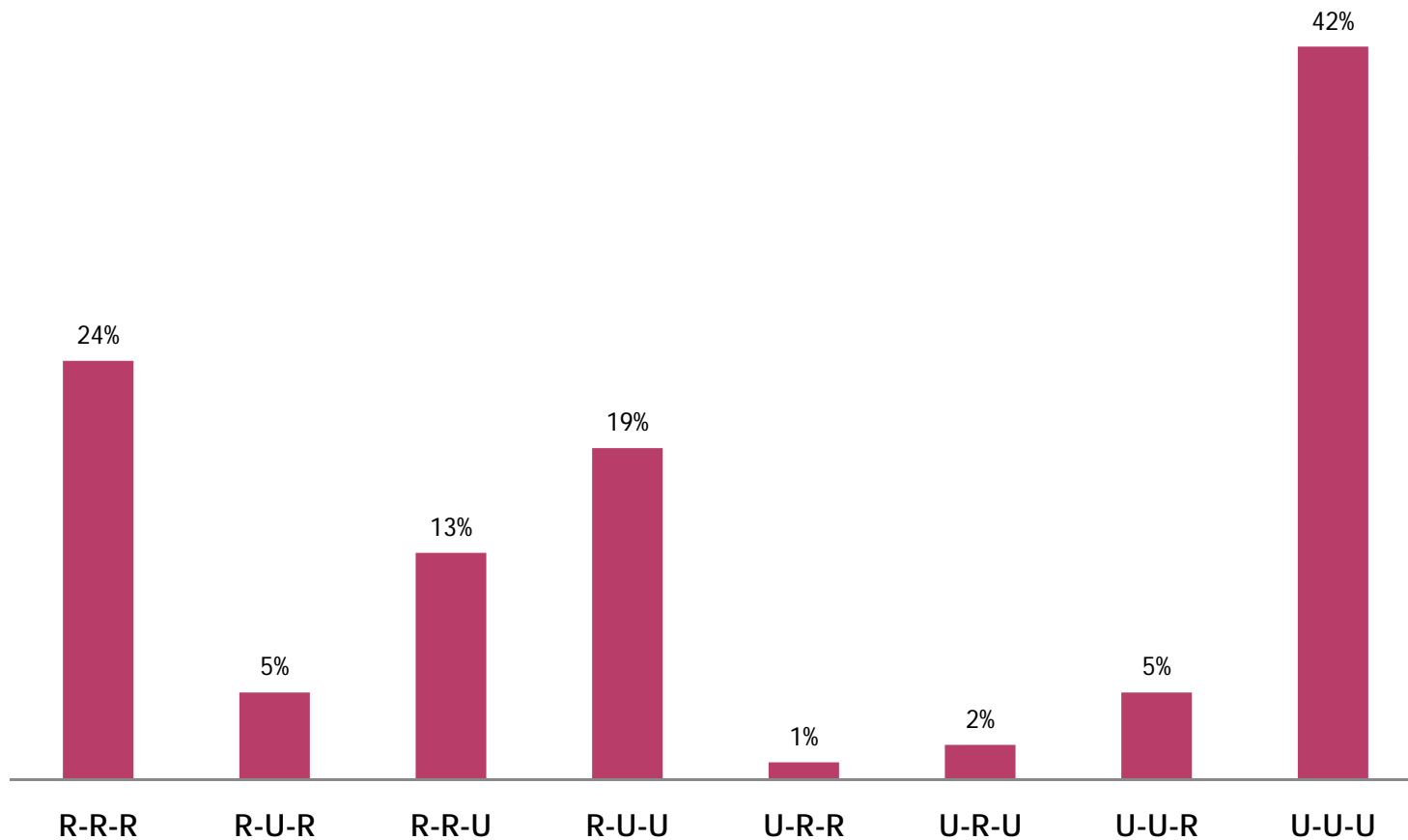
FOCUS OF PRESENTATION

- ◉ Those who were rural in 1989
- ◉ Those who were rural in 2000-2001
- ◉ Relevant gender differences
- ◉ Successes
- ◉ Challenges



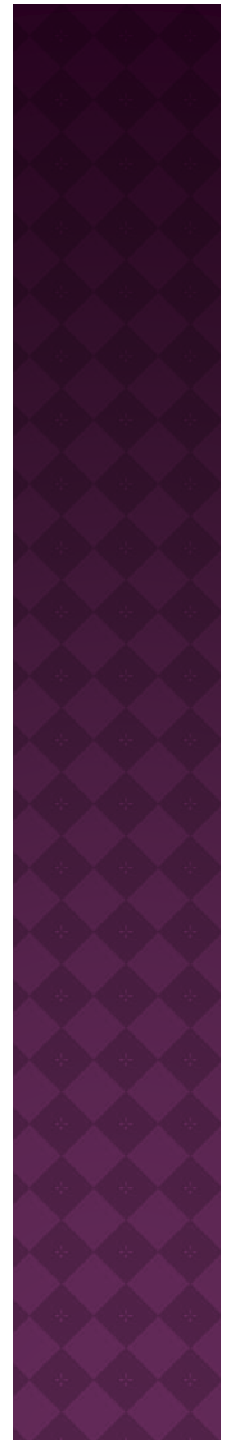
RURAL TO URBAN PATTERNS

Rural to urban patterns, 1989, 1994, 2001



GENERAL PATTERNS, 1989 TO 2001

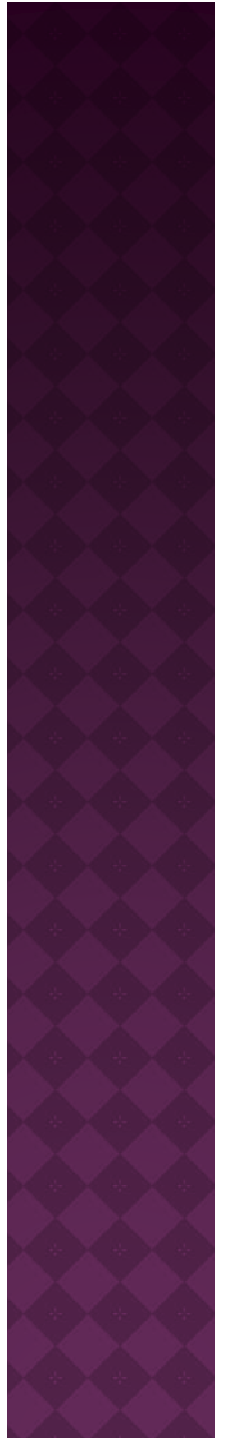
- Overall 29% were rural in both 1989 & 2001 (23% of males and 38% of females)
- 22% rural moved to urban (for both males and females)
- 6% moved from urban to rural (4% of males, 8% of females)
- 46% stayed or returned to urban (51% of males, 32% of females)



EASY TO HIGHLIGHT PROBLEMS

As of 2001 Urban youth more likely to:

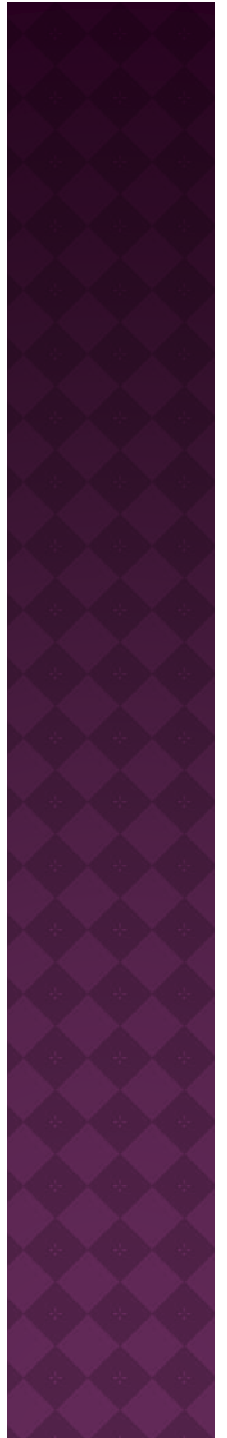
- ◉ Have had a full-time job (98% vs. 90%)
- ◉ Currently have a full-time job (83% vs 62%)
- ◉ Started their own business (25% vs 12%)



“PROBLEMS” CONTINUED

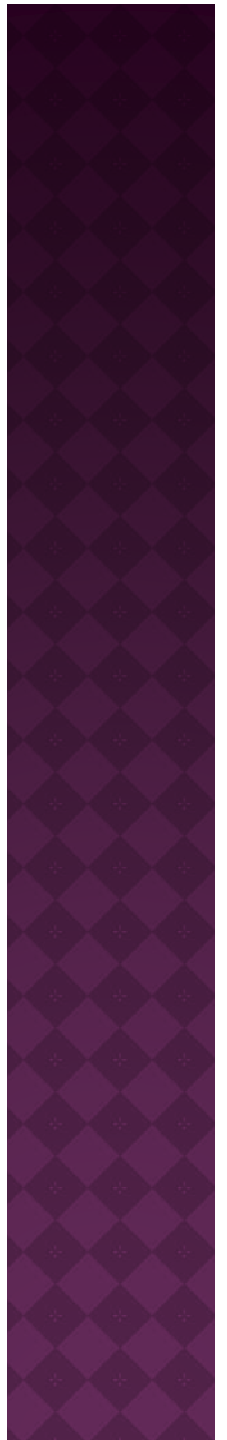
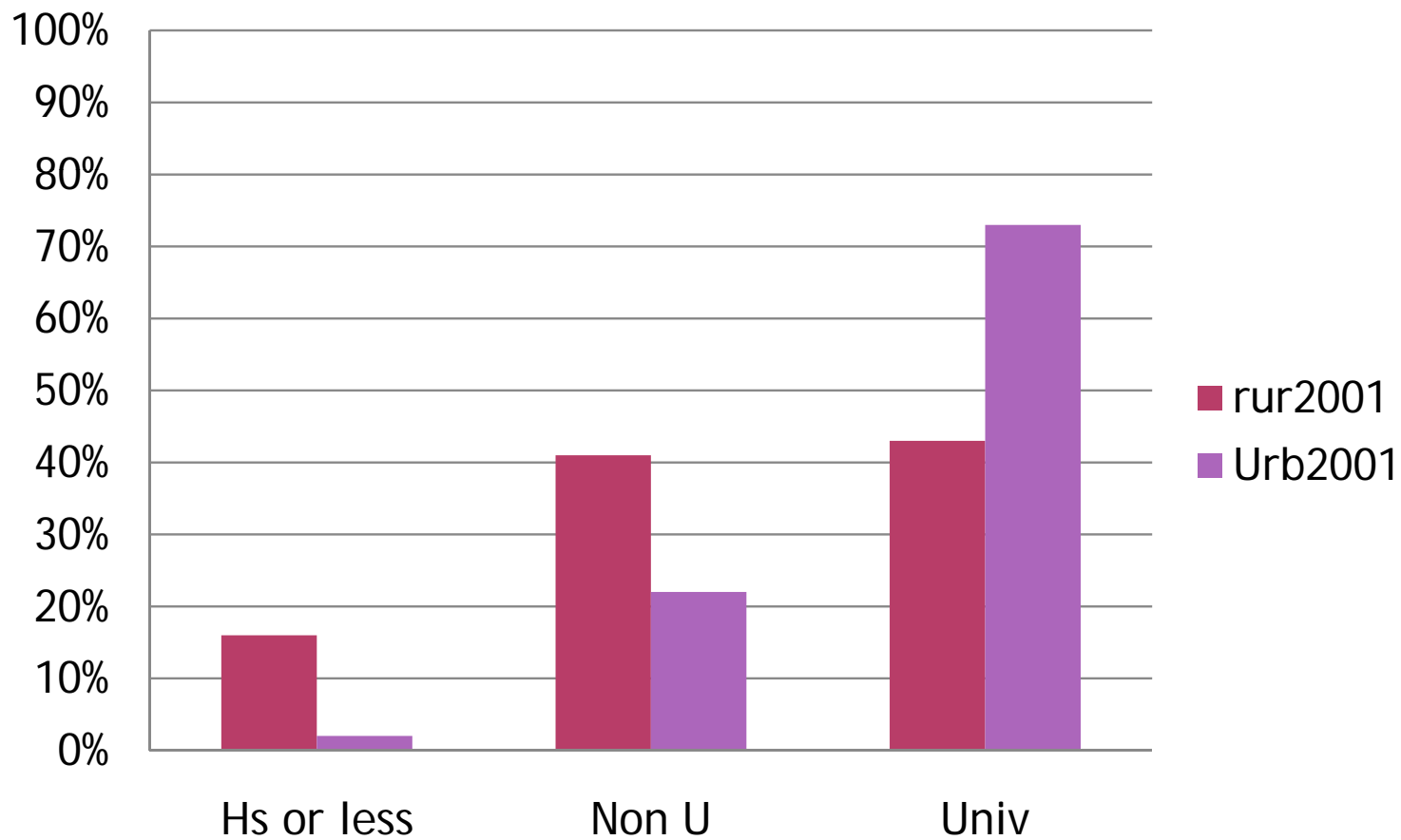
Rural less likely to be very satisfied with their:

- Work or career (23% vs 32%)
- Educational attainments (28% vs 36%)
- Career opportunities (15% vs 24%)
- Educational opportunities (21% vs 40%)



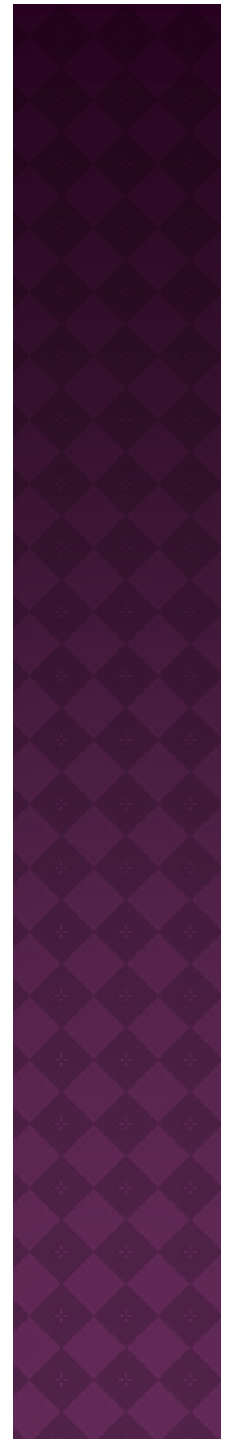
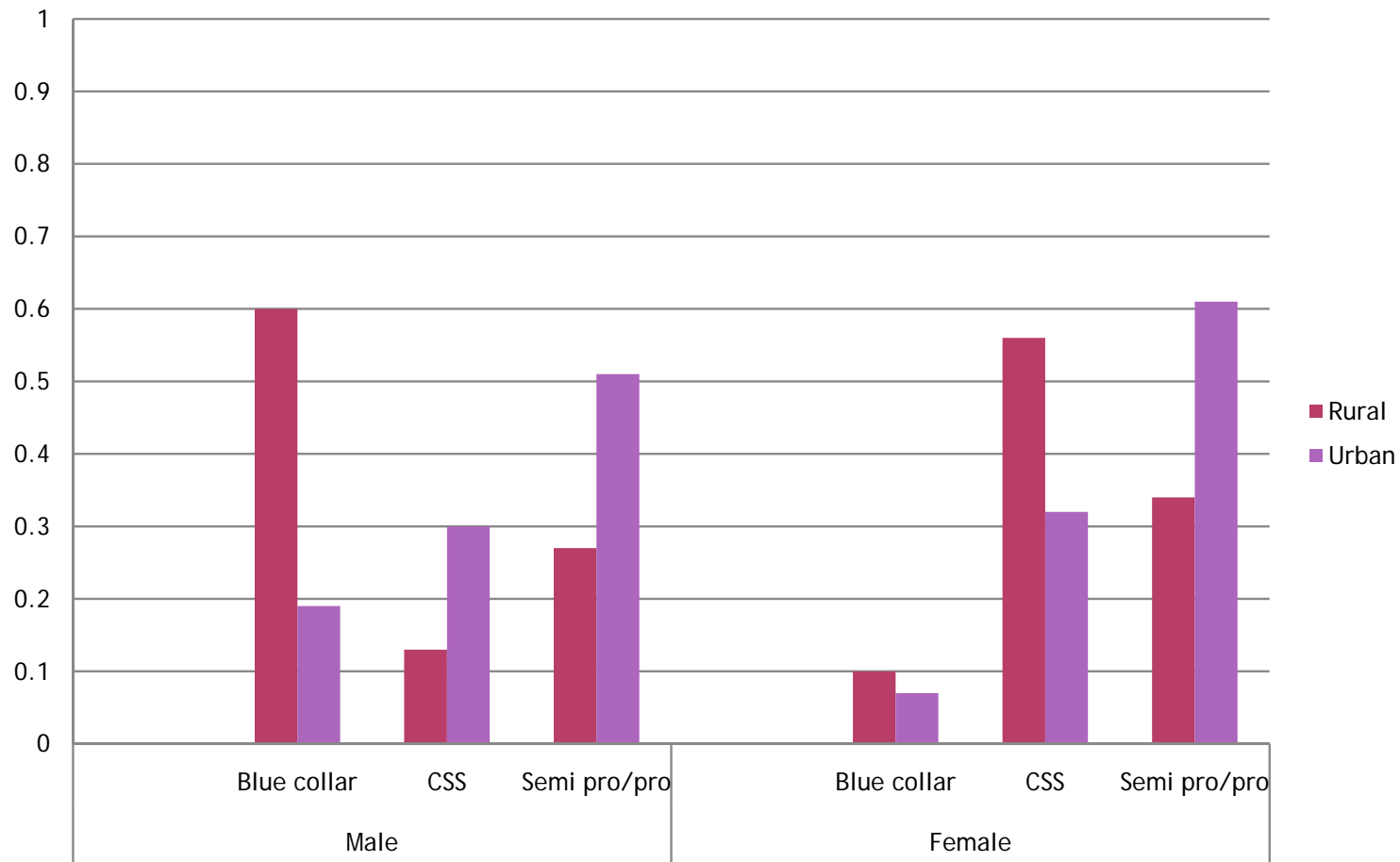
URBAN HAD HIGHER EDUCATION

Education as of 2001



URBAN HIGHER JOB STATUS

Job Status 2001



JOBS...

Even with controls on job status and gender, Rural jobs are more likely to be reported as:

- ⦿ Dangerous
- ⦿ Boring
- ⦿ Dirty
- ⦿ Routine

Rural have lower incomes, but this reflects job status and education.

Urban jobs more directly related to their studies.

BUT THIS IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY

- Almost a third (28%) of rural youth in 1989 say they'll stay; that proportion DID stay
- Rural youth more likely to strongly agree "this is home" (51% vs. 36% urban in 1989); (51% rural vs 34% urban in 2001)
- Plan to stay in same community as of 2001 (68% rural, 48% urban)



AS OF 2001

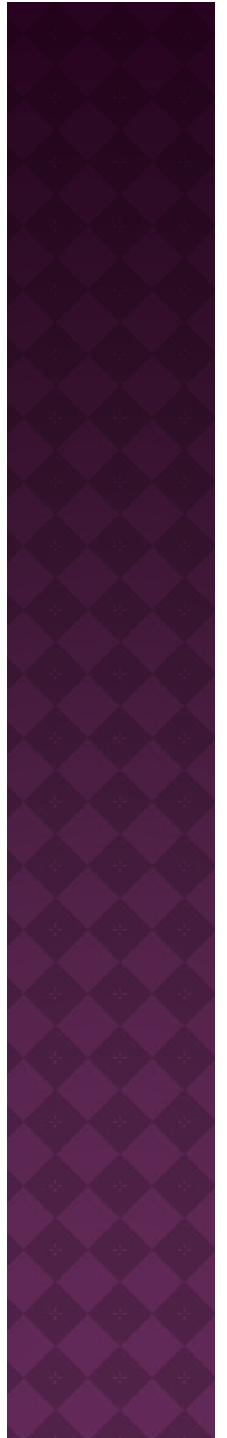
Rural youth more likely to:

- Be married (85% vs 75%) (and at a younger age)
- Had children (76% vs 41%) (and younger)
- Own their own house (60% vs 42%) (and younger)

Satisfaction:

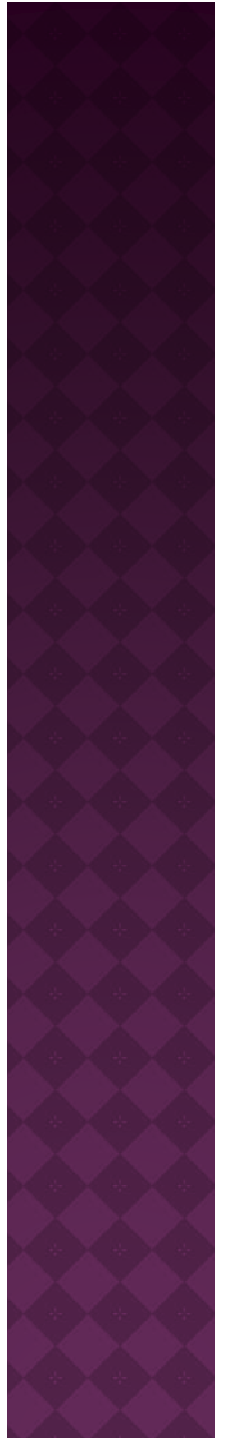
Rural as satisfied as urban with their:

- Personal life
- Family life
- Where they live



SOCIAL NETWORKS

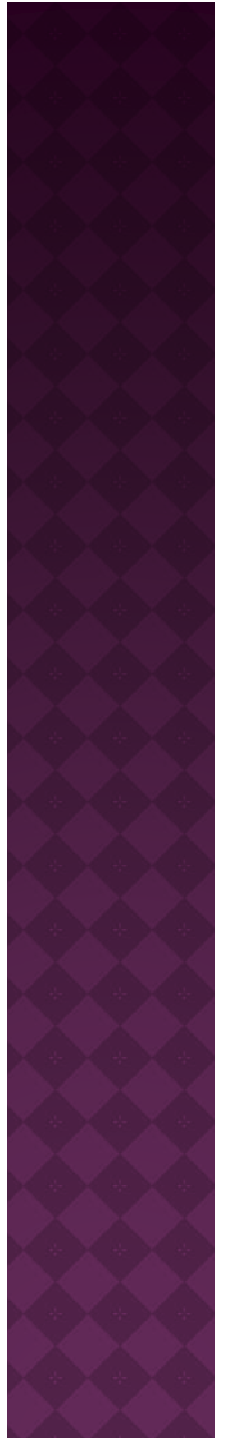
- Rural more likely to have a parent or grandparent living nearby (in the same county, community or household).
- Rural more likely to be in contact with these family members 1ce a day or more (mother 43% vs 22%; father 27% vs 17%; grandparent 8% vs 4%)



NO RURAL-URBAN DIFFERENCES

Reports of:

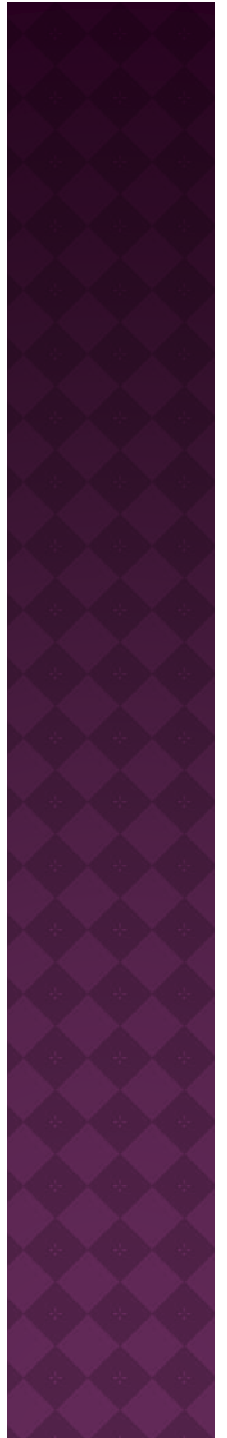
- ◉ Depression
- ◉ Being relaxed
- ◉ Feeling lonely
- ◉ In control
- ◉ Losing one's temper
- ◉ Physical or mental health
- ◉ Last few years as difficult



RURAL MORE LIKELY TO REPORT THEIR 2001 RURAL COMMUNITY AS

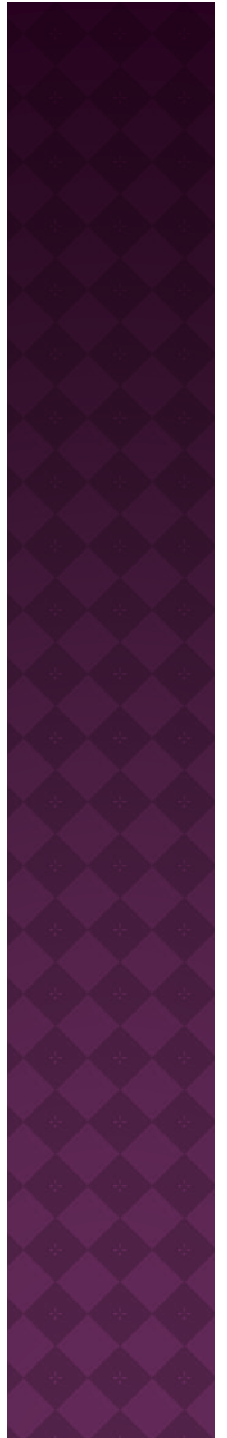
- ◉ Good place to raise children
- ◉ Good place for the elderly
- ◉ Where neighbours care about you
- ◉ Where they are recognised by others
- ◉ Where they expect to stay
- ◉ “This place is like home”
- ◉ (Also more isolated)

Urban more diversity & government support



WHY PLAN TO STAY, RURAL 1989?

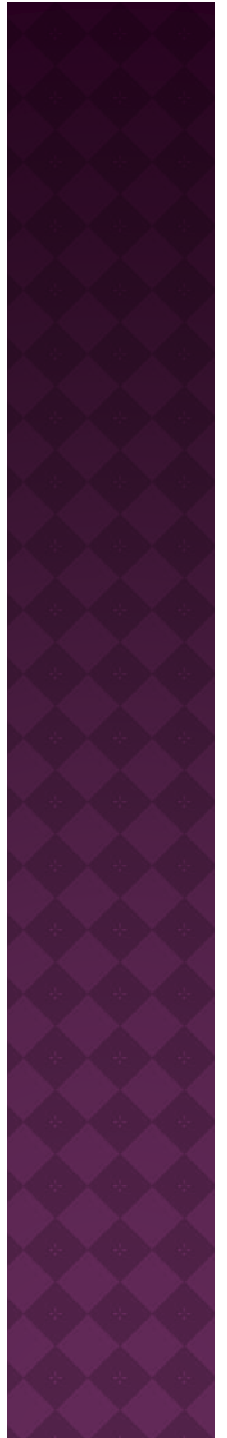
- ⊙ Ties to family
- ⊙ Likes living in the country
- ⊙ “Homebody”
- ⊙ “I’m happy here”
- ⊙ “All my friends are here”
- ⊙ Don’t like big cities
- ⊙ Good place to raise kids



WHY PLAN TO LEAVE, RURAL 1989?

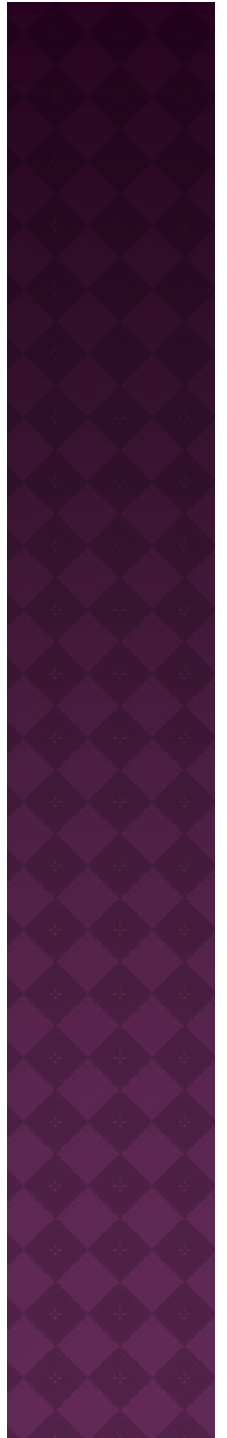
- ⊙ JOBS!!!!
- ⊙ Education
- ⊙ Social and entertainment options of urban areas
- ⊙ Desire to travel

Urban CAN stay because of options



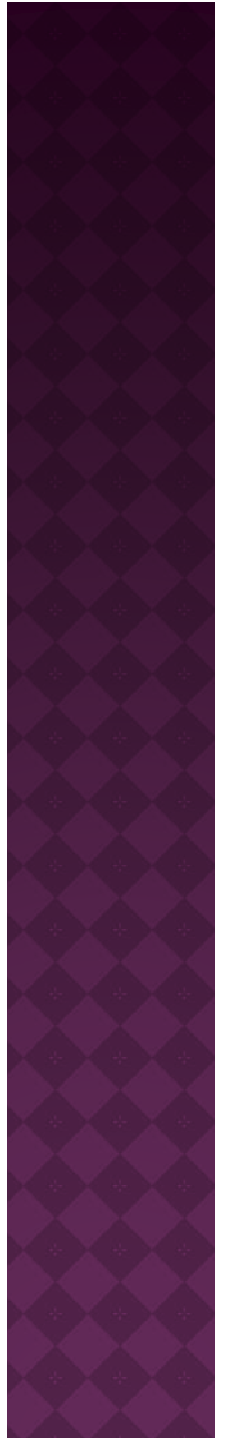
WHAT LIKE MOST ABOUT RURAL 2001?

- Small
- Friendly
- Clean
- Quiet
- Safe
- Natural beauty
- Know people
- Near family



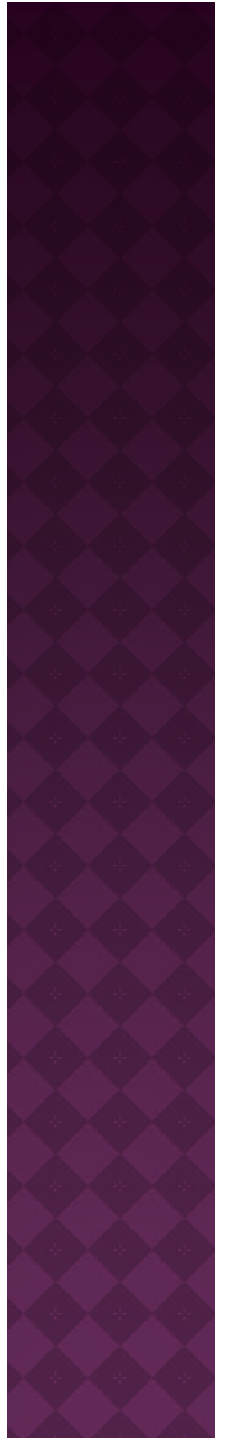
WHAT LIKE LEAST ABOUT RURAL 2001?

- ⦿ Lack of facilities
- ⦿ Isolated
- ⦿ Not enough work
- ⦿ Distance to various events
- ⦿ Few young people
- ⦿ Poor roads, especially in winter



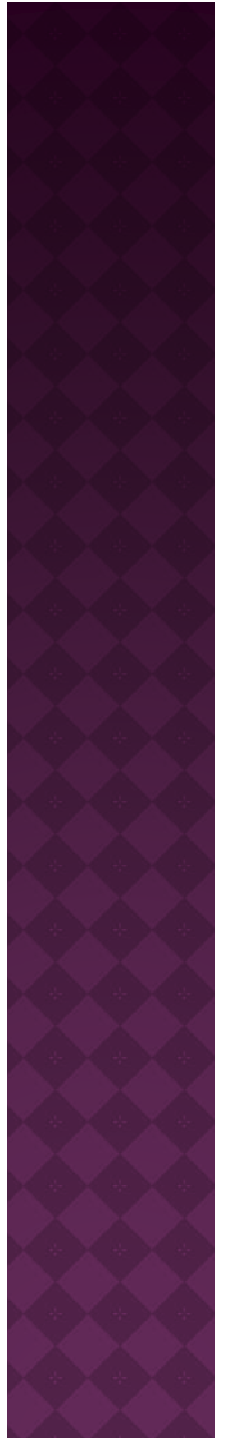
WHAT LIKE MOST ABOUT URBAN 2001?

- ◉ Work opportunities
- ◉ Diverse
- ◉ Amenities
- ◉ Cultural events
- ◉ Strong economy
- ◉ Cosmopolitan
- ◉ Close to family and friends



WHAT LIKE LEAST ABOUT URBAN 2001?

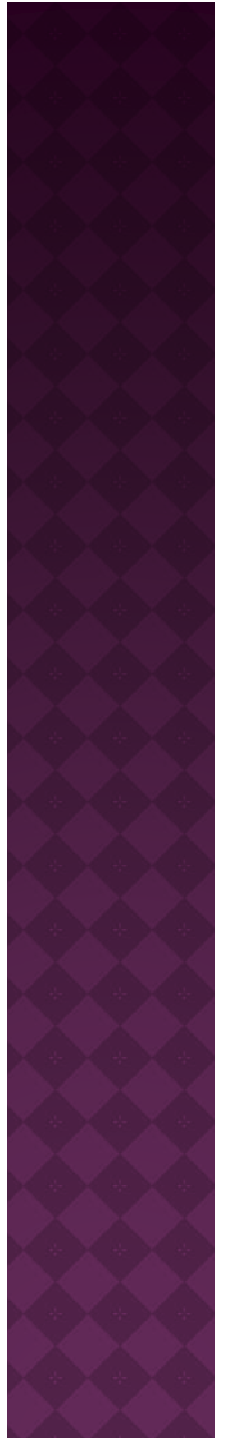
- ◉ No family nearby
- ◉ Cost
- ◉ Traffic
- ◉ Noisy
- ◉ Crime
- ◉ Pollution
- ◉ Hard to meet people
- ◉ Distances to everything



Gender and educational level predict whether or not rural youth “stay” rural

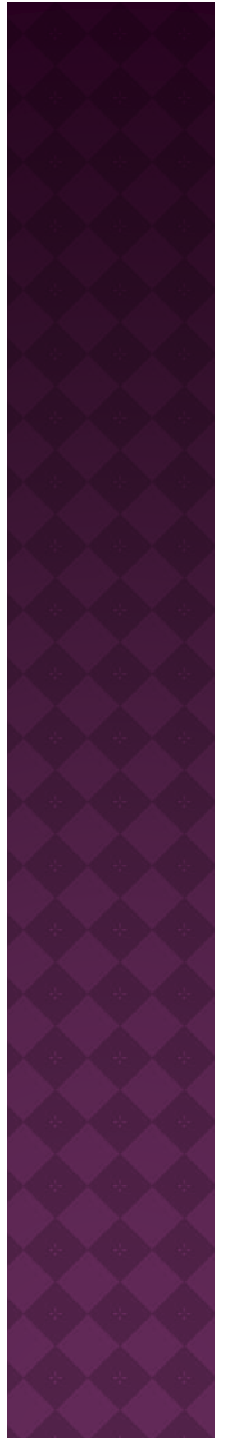
- ⦿ Females more rural
- ⦿ Higher education less rural

Starting in rural obviously also affects 2001 location.



SO...?

- ◉ Exclusive focus on education and job status exaggerates rural disadvantage
- ◉ Rural are satisfied - need to recognise and build on this
- ◉ Rural challenges in terms of jobs and work options
- ◉ Rural supports in terms of kin.



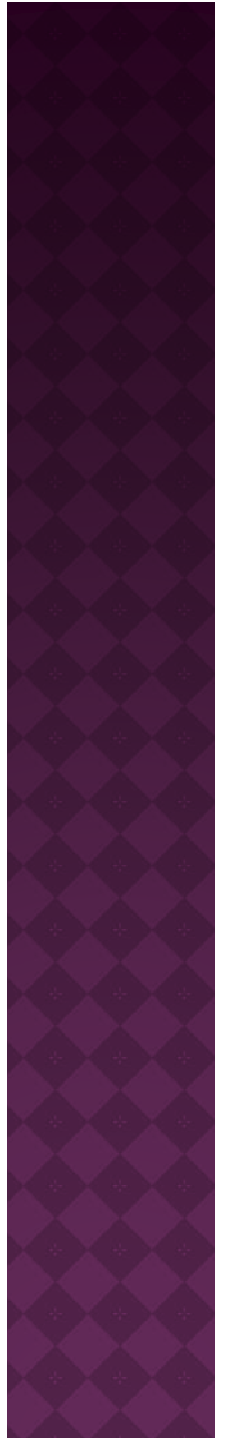
THEORETICAL SHIFT NEEDED

“Rural” not inherently disadvantaged any more than “female”

Solution is not to move youth - i.e. make them urban

Provide opportunities for rural youth

Recognise their coping skills and ties to place



COMMENTS?

Contact
dianne.looker@msvu.ca

