

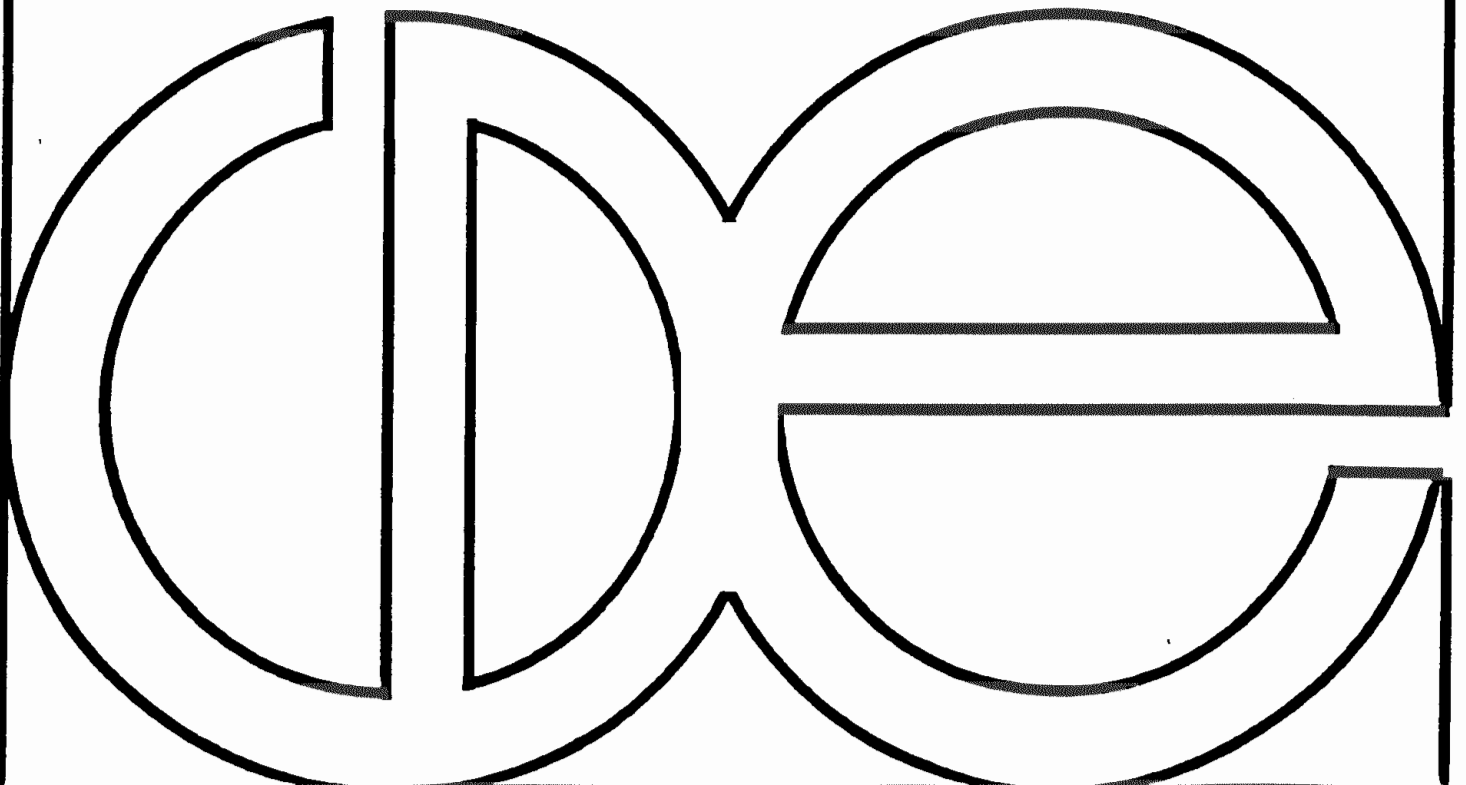
Center for Demography and Ecology

University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Glenn V. Fuguitt

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Glenn V. Fuguitt
Department of Rural Sociology
and
Center for Demography and Ecology
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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POPULATION CHANGE IN NONMETROPOLITAN AMERICA

The United States today is predominantly an urban and metropolitan nation. This was not always true; indeed, as recently as 1910 more than one-half of the population lived in rural areas. This proportion has decreased considerably over the succeeding 70 years; now it is less than 25 percent. In this process, the rural and nonmetropolitan territory has undergone fundamental economic and social change. Fewer and fewer residents depend on farming so that today the number and proportion of farmers is at a very low level. Urban influence has been extended outward from large and small cities, with deconcentration of the population and traditionally urban economic activities. Although important differences in socioeconomic levels remain, the lifestyles and outlook of people in rural and urban America appear to be more and more similar with the modernization of rural communities, easier access to and increased interchange with large urban centers, and common exposure to the mass media (Fuguitt, Brown, and Beale, 1989).

These trends have led some to question the need to give special attention to rural and nonmetropolitan areas today. But differences do remain. And it is precisely because of this continuing transition and the need to better understand its consequences that low density areas continue to deserve our attention.

Rural demographers are concerned about rural or nonmetropolitan as a location or type of residence within the larger settlement structure. They consider and seek to explain the distribution and change in population numbers and composition, and the demographic components of these changes. This must be done with recognition of the ever more extensive ties with urban and metropolitan areas through migration and social and economic integration. After reviewing the concepts

of rural and nonmetropolitan, we will consider metropolitan-nonmetropolitan population distribution and change since 1950, followed by trends in age structure, sex composition and the population by race and Hispanic status.

Three important themes emerge in this review. The first is the increasing complexity of the interrelations between urban and rural, leading to conceptual difficulties in interpreting the results. The second is the significant recent temporal change in population and related economic trends that do not display a unitary direction. The third is the great variability that exists in rural America across regions, subregions, and local areas, which is reflected in population growth experience, age composition and race and ethnic diversity. We will begin with the first.

RURAL AND NONMETROPOLITAN

The rural-urban concept is commonly employed to distinguish differences by residence in demographic (small size and low density), economic (importance of extractive occupations), and sociocultural (traditional ways of life, values and beliefs) elements. Much of the controversy regarding the definition of rural rests on confusion or implicit disagreement about the importance of these three different components. The approach of most demographers is to restrict the definition to more precise and less ambiguous demographic conditions relating to low size and density. Whether or not occupational and sociocultural differences are associated with these demographic conditions is thus an empirical question. According to current census practice, rural includes only residents of places (villages) of less than 2,500 population along with those living in other territory (open country) outside thickly settled nodes

having at least 50,000 people.¹

Concern about properly identifying the increasing interpenetration of rural and urban settlement, particularly around large cities, led to the establishment of a county-based metropolitan concept beginning with the census of 1950. Although the precise definition has been modified several times since then, metropolitan areas may be considered to constitute counties or groups of counties which include large cities and their suburbs.² Other counties are classed as nonmetropolitan. For ease of discourse, the terms metro and nonmetro will be employed here.

Counties adjacent to those having large cities may be included in a metropolitan area if they show sufficient integration, primarily through commuting. The basic metropolitan concept is of a large city and its environs within which people live and work. This can be at least approximated with whole counties as building blocks, and since counties rarely change boundaries, such an approach is very advantageous for considering changes over time.³

Many persons concerned about rural America have restricted attention to nonmetropolitan areas, and some have even used the terms rural and nonmetropolitan interchangeably. There are good reasons to focus on

¹ The current official definitions of urban and metropolitan are found in Appendix A of most any volume of the 1990 Census of Population.

² Townships are used instead of counties in New England in defining metropolitan areas. For consistency I use instead the official delineation of New England county equivalents in this chapter.

³ Serious efforts are now underway to design a substantial revision of the metropolitan definition. So far considerable interest is being shown for the option of employing subcounty geographic areas, and including all parts of the nation in a metropolitan-nonmetropolitan delineation (Fitzsimmons and Forstall, 1993).

nonmetropolitan areas, but the two terms are not synonymous. This is shown for 1990 in Table 1. Almost one-half of the rural population is metropolitan, whereas 11 percent of the urban population is nonmetropolitan. Even if one were to argue that the metropolitan population classed as rural is not "really" rural in terms of other aspects of the definition, it is important to recognize that 37 percent of the nonmetropolitan population is actually urban.

Nevertheless, the greater interest in the territory some distance from large cities, the advantages of measuring change with county units, and the limited data available with cross-classifications of rural-urban by metro-nonmetro status have led me to concentrate on nonmetropolitan areas and metro-nonmetro comparisons in this chapter.⁴

NONMETROPOLITAN POPULATION CHANGE AND COUNTY SHIFTS

Nonmetropolitan population trends parallel those of the rural population, as there has been a continuation of the metropolitanization process since the metro concept was established in 1950. That is, there has been a steady decline in the nonmetro population, from 66 to 56 million, which also dropped proportionally from 44 to 22 percent of the total population (Table 2). This population shift has been due primarily to the spread of metro growth, as the number of metro counties grew from 273 to 726. Both the increased spread around large cities and the establishment of

⁴ The occupational activity of farming is no longer closely identified with the conventional rural farm residence distinction, and so the census-defined rural farm population is not considered separately here (see Fuguitt, Brown and Beale, 1989; Butler, 1993). Since 1960 this population has declined from 13 to less than 4 million in 1990. The lack of fit between nonmetropolitan and rural is further illustrated by the fact that one-third of this small population was found in 1990 metropolitan areas, and it is true that smaller metro areas in particular may include important commercial farming operations, as well as other traditionally rural people.

new metro areas are represented in this shift. The number of different metro areas increased from 168 to more than 300 over the 40-year period, as formerly rural small towns grew up to become metropolitan centers.

The absolute decline in the nonmetro population over each of the four decades since 1950 (shown in column 2) is due entirely to county reclassification. Groups of counties that were classed as nonmetro at the beginning of the period grew over each decade, and the same is true for counties classed as nonmetro at the end of each decade. Only in 1970-80, however, are these nonmetro growth rates without county shifts greater than the corresponding metro growth rates. From the nonmetro perspective, it is perhaps a paradox that the most "successful" (i.e., most rapidly growing) counties in any decade end up being classified as metro, leaving the others behind.

A methodological implication of this is that growth by reclassification needs to be distinguished from growth in constant areas. Here, in making comparisons, I usually follow the conventional practice of using a metro-nonmetro classification at the beginning of a period, so as to follow the same counties over time. In comparing growth over several decades a single metro-nonmetro designation may be used, or alternatively, change may be compared using the designation at the beginning of each time interval considered (see Fuguitt, Heaton, and Lichter, 1988). The latter approach is usually preferable, since it reflects the situation as it existed at each time interval under consideration.

More important than methodology, this dynamic process means that we need to avoid as much as possible thinking of nonmetropolitan America as a separate, static category. Nonmetro-metro integration does not begin when a county is

reclassified metropolitan, but characterizes all nonmetropolitan and metropolitan areas today. It is a truism to note that improvements in transportation and communication have deepened these ties, and the simple process of spread and multiplication of metropolitan areas means that geographic accessibility has been greatly expanded. The limitations of a metro-nonmetro dichotomy are also revealed in this dynamic process, since smaller new metro areas may have more in common with similar nonmetro areas than with major metropolitan centers. For the "first cut" on available data in a general overview such as this chapter, it may be necessary to focus on the metro-nonmetro dichotomy as of a particular point in time, but we must not lose sight of the dynamic, integral relations between what has been called metropolitan and nonmetropolitan America.

RECENT NONMETROPOLITAN POPULATION TRENDS

The last 30 years have seen two dramatic shifts in the pattern of rural and nonmetropolitan population change. In contrast to previous decades, the 1970s was a period of renewed and widespread nonmetropolitan growth which overall was at a higher level than metropolitan growth. Much of this differential was due to migration, with the number of metro-to-nonmetro migrants exceeding the number going in the opposite direction. This unanticipated trend generated a great deal of interest and research activity (Fuguitt, 1985), but most observers were unprepared for yet another change in the 1980s, during which nonmetropolitan growth slowed considerably and was again outpaced by growth in metropolitan areas (Johnson, 1993). In a further development, which may or may not foreshadow a new trend for the 1990s, late 1980 and the 1991 and 1992 county population estimates show a rebound in nonmetro growth across the country (Beale and Fuguitt, 1990; Johnson

and Beale, 1993).

Trends since 1950 in nonmetropolitan and metropolitan population change for the U.S. as a whole are given in Figure 1. (In calculating change, county shifts are not included and the metro-nonmetro designation at the beginning of each decade is used.) The unique population change pattern of the 1970-80 decade clearly stands out here. Nonmetro growth was one and one-half times that of metro growth in that period, with a strong decrease in metro growth and increase in nonmetro growth in comparison with the preceding 1960-70 decade. In the 1980-90 decade, however, there was a return to the differential favoring metro growth. When the percentage changes were partitioned into two components for natural increase and net migration, there was a nonmetropolitan net migration loss for all decades except 1970-80. With the aging of the baby boom, natural increase has become smaller for both metro and nonmetro areas across these time periods. There has been a further deterioration of nonmetro natural increase relative to metropolitan, however, primarily due to the continued migration losses of young people. Nonmetropolitan net migration rates for young people 15 to 30 were strongly negative during the 1960s and 1980s and even somewhat negative during the rapid growth phase of the 1970s.

County type: A number of generalizations have been made regarding the kinds of nonmetro counties that are associated with growth. Given the metropolitan basis for the structure of most economic opportunities, location with respect to metro centers has generally shown a positive association, with commuting counties, counties in the intermetropolitan corridors and other urban counties growing faster than most other counties. This was true in the 1950s, 1960s and again in the 1980s, but less so in the 1970s when growth was widespread, extending into remote rural areas. The

1970s also was the time of the emergence of recreation-retirement counties as growth magnets, and this tendency has continued into the 1980s, with these counties as a whole growing even faster than metropolitan commuting counties. Throughout this entire period, counties dependent upon agriculture grew slowly or declined, reflecting a steady decline in farm numbers and employment opportunities in farm-related activities. The small number of counties specializing in mining had a resurgence in growth in the 1970s, but tended to decline in other times. Rural manufacturing was an important component of the resurgence of economic activity in the 1960s and 1970s, but the growth of manufacturing counties did not match commuting or retirement counties in any decade.⁵

The widespread nature of the 1970s growth revival is illustrated by the fact that all types of counties had their highest growth in the 1970-80 period. On the other hand, during the 1980s all groups showed considerably reduced levels of growth, and only retirement counties grew faster than all U.S. counties, indicating continued population concentration relative to the remainder of the country.

Place-nonplace comparisons: Within nonmetropolitan areas, another part of the new trend in the 1970s was a pattern of local deconcentration, with the population outside incorporated cities and villages generally growing faster than the population in such places, even if located at some distance from metropolitan areas. In other words, the familiar pattern of deconcentration of residences and activities around large cities appeared to have a counterpart even in the hinterlands of smaller

⁵ The USDA classification of counties based on economic activity is employed here (Bender, et al., 1985). For a more detailed presentation of the results in this section, see Fuguitt, 1992.

remote nonmetro centers, so that the 1970-80 decade could be termed a time of regional, metro-nonmetro and local-level deconcentration across the nation (Long, 1981; Lichter and Fuguitt, 1982). Despite the strong downturn in overall growth in the most recent decade, the population outside cities and villages increased, but overall cities and villages declined slightly in population. The dispersed settlement pattern at the local level is a continuation of the 1970-80 trend, but in this slow growth era many small villages and cities have faced difficult economic and political problems related to population decline.

Individual county trends: Overall, in the 1960s and later in the 1980s, 50 percent of the nonmetropolitan counties lost population and less than one in five gained more than the U.S. as a whole. In the 1970s the pattern was reversed, with one-half of the counties gaining more than the U.S. as a whole, and 19 percent declining. Nonmetro areas as a whole gained population in all three decades because counties with smaller populations were more likely to be decliners. Shifting the focus to the individual, more than four out of ten nonmetropolitan residents in 1980 lived in counties that declined over the succeeding decade, whereas this was true of only one in ten of the nonmetro residents in 1970 and one-third of the nonmetro residents in 1960. Figure 2 is a detailed county map showing the location of nonmetro counties in three growth groups for the most recent decade (metropolitan counties have no shading). Across the center of the map there is a core of declining counties, located primarily in the corn belt and the great plains. This is a region characterized by a high dependence on commercial agriculture and related activities and some of these counties have declined over the past three or four decades (Albrecht, 1993). The "farm crisis" of the 1980s hit particularly hard in this area, affecting farmers and

community businesses alike. Other notable areas of decline include southern Appalachia, which also has a history of decline, but grew in the 1970s in part due to the energy boom. The Mississippi Delta and other parts of the old South also showed declining counties. On the other hand, nonmetro counties around large cities as well as those in rapidly growing parts of the South and Southwest tended to grow faster than the U.S. as a whole, many throughout the 40-year period. The extent of high-growth counties was much greater, however, in the 1970s, particularly in the Pacific Northwest and the Rocky Mountain states where the turndown in energy and timber extraction had a negative effect on growth in the 1980s.

Yet Another Turnaround?: The "turnaround" to widespread nonmetro growth in the 1970s took most observers by surprise, but by the late 1970s many were predicting an extended continuation of the new trend. Then the 1980s presented another surprise, as the growth pattern reverted, by and large, to that before 1970. Now there is limited evidence of a new upturn in nonmetropolitan growth. Figure 3 shows the annual rates of net migration for the years 1970-92. The estimates are centered on July 1 of each year.⁶ Although metropolitan rates have fluctuated over a narrow range, nonmetro rates have varied widely, peaking in 1974-75, and declining steadily to 1985-86. After that year, however, rates have increased, with the two estimates following the 1990 census showing the nonmetro rate above the metro again, using the metro-nonmetro designation of 1983. It is too early to say this is a definitive trend, and the methodology of the 1991 and 1992 estimates differ from

⁶ Net migration is estimated by the residual method, based on annual county population estimates (Federal-State Cooperative Program through the U.S. Bureau of the Census) and recorded births and deaths.

those in earlier years (Johnson and Beale, 1993), but the data show a consistent upward trend since 1985.

Discussion: This review of recent nonmetropolitan population trends has underscored how remarkable the experience of the 1970-80 decade was for nonmetropolitan America. A number of specific reasons have been given for this growth trend, that are reflected in the patterns shown here, including a relatively more prosperous agriculture during the period, increased employment related to mineral extraction brought on by the energy crisis, a continuing deconcentration of manufacturing, an increased prominence of recreation and retirement migration to attractive locations, and a continuing buildup of population and economic activities in nonmetro areas around larger metropolitan centers.

The growth reversal of the 1980s was a return to the pattern of the 1960s or 1950s with growth once more favoring metro areas. Due in part to the decline in fertility, however, aggregate levels of nonmetro growth were often lower in the 1980s than ever before. With the farm crisis of the early 1980s, areas dependent on agriculture were particularly hard-hit economically, as shown in the county map. The energy boom of the 1970s was followed by sharp declines in demand in the 1980s, and manufacturing went into a decline nationally that was felt particularly in nonmetro areas. Recreation and retirement counties continued to grow more rapidly than the metropolitan population as a whole, but at a markedly slower pace than previously, and counties with a high degree of commuting to metro areas showed slower, but at least moderate growth in the 1980s. Finally, by the late 1980s there is evidence of another nonmetro growth upturn, which may be in response to somewhat improved economic conditions.

This brief summary suggests a set of period explanations for both the turnaround and its reversal, particularly as they relate to the ups and downs of extractive industries. Previously, those seeking to explain the turnaround often put much emphasis on noneconomic, quality of life bases, and many were attracted to speculations that we were entering a new era in which work location was less important in an "information society" and people's preferences for desirable places to live had become more important. Preferences may indeed be important, particularly for areas high in amenity values, but the subsequent decade has made it clear that locational constraints have not been repealed, and that economic considerations are fundamental, as nonmetro America suffered an economic slump throughout most of the period that corresponded to the downturn in population, but is now experiencing some recovery.⁷

AGE AND SEX COMPOSITION

A major demographic trend shaping the social and economic structure of local communities and the nation has been the marked change in the age composition since 1950. From the demographic perspective, age and sex composition changes through variations in levels of fertility, mortality, and migration. Over the past 40 years the most important of these elements for the age structure has been fertility. By now we

⁷ For further analysis and interpretation of these trends, see Frey (1993) and Wardwell (1989). Frey concentrates primarily on metropolitan areas and in interpreting recent shifts, emphasizes the reorganization of production as the United States has become more highly integrated with the global economy. Wardwell is most closely identified with the deconcentration perspective, which gives particular attention to advances in transportation, communication and residential preferences as the basis for more diffuse settlement extending into nonmetro areas. Recent population changes, particularly on the nonmetro side, make it very difficult to separate any possible long-term trends from contemporary "period effects."

are perhaps too familiar with accounts of the members of the baby boom as they move through the age distribution of our population. Declines in mortality have led to greater than expected numbers in the higher age groups in recent years, particularly women. Migration is always age-related, and differential migration has been particularly important in influencing the age and sex composition of local populations.

There have been characteristic differences in age structure and sex composition between rural and urban and metro and nonmetro areas. Consistent with earlier findings, the nonmetropolitan population has, in 1990, a somewhat lower proportion of people 15 to 64, and a higher proportion who are younger than 15 and older than 64 (Table 3). The metro-nonmetro difference in the proportion aged less than 15 is only one percentage point, and indeed, other studies show that metro-nonmetro fertility differences are today quite small and by some measures nonexistent (Fuguitt, Beale, and Reibel, 1991).

The metro-nonmetro difference in the proportion 65 and over is more pronounced. In both metro and nonmetro areas, however, there is a higher proportion of elderly in urban areas than in rural areas (data for rural and urban not shown). The fact that nonmetropolitan urban places and villages have attracted retired rural people has long been noted (Nelson, 1961), though more recent metro-origin retirees moving to nonmetro areas have tended to seek rural settings having scenic amenities.

The sex ratio, conventionally males per 100 females, indicates a predominance of women in metropolitan areas, and a higher proportion of men in nonmetro areas. In this case, however, it appears that the small metro-nonmetro difference shown in Table 3 is due to the higher proportion of the nonmetro population living in rural

areas, since the ratio for the urban nonmetro component is only 90.1, lower than 93.9 for the urban metropolitan. Furthermore, both metro and nonmetro rural have sex ratios of about 100. The lower nonmetro urban ratio may well be due at least in part to the fact that the nonmetro segment has a higher proportion of elderly, and the elderly population, given sex differences in survival rates, has a higher proportion of women. Although selective migration of women to urban areas, including short-distance moves to urban nonmetro areas, may well continue to be important as a reason for the higher rural sex ratios, I found no overall metropolitan-nonmetropolitan differences in 1980-90 net migration rates by sex.

Another way to look at residential differences is in terms of the dependency ratio. This ratio shows the number of youth or aged relative to the adult population to be 15 to 64. As the name suggests, it may approximate a measure of those not economically active relative to those who are, although of course some people younger than 15 and older than 64 are economically active and many aged 15-64 are not. These ratios magnify the differences in age distribution by residence. The nonmetro youth dependency ratio is higher than the metro ratio, and this difference is even more pronounced for the elderly dependency ratios. Consequently, the total dependency ratio for nonmetro is close to ten points higher than the metro total ratio.

Trends since 1960: More details on the differences between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan age distributions are given in Figure 4. This figure shows the percentage distribution by age for five-year age groups in the last four censuses, using the metro-nonmetro county designations as of each census year indicated. Each graph clearly reveals the relative deficiency of adults ranging from age 20 through 44 in the nonmetropolitan sector, though this is most pronounced for 1990. There is

a smaller surplus for youth five years and over after 1960, and a corresponding larger surplus of the elderly population 65 and over. The most notable feature of this figure, however, is the shift in the bulge of the baby boom population as it passes through and out of the younger age groups in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. For both residence categories, the largest percentage in the 1960 figure is 0-4, and this shifts forward ten years at each census to 10-14 in 1970, 20-24 in 1980 (here nonmetro is a slight exception with a peak at 15-19) and 30-34 in 1990. Note that in 1960 the nonmetro age groups range from more than 11 percent for 0-4 to six percent for 40-44, yet in 1990 all age groups under 44 range from six to eight percent. This decline in the relative importance of young people has important implications for services and institutions in rural areas, and may presage further declines in population as smaller cohorts reach adulthood.

These age groups are summarized into dependency ratios in Figure 5. In every case, for each census beginning in 1960, nonmetropolitan areas had larger dependency ratios both for young people and the elderly population. Consistent with the graphs in Figure 4, a rather remarkable overriding trend across both residence categories is the decline in the youth dependency ratio with the passing of the baby boom out of the young age groups and the corresponding smaller increase in the elderly dependency ratio. Because of this shift, the overall total dependency ratio declined over time by about fifteen points in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas between 1960 and 1990. The long-term trend in the United States has been a decline in the sex ratio, but the ratio has changed little since 1970 for the total, or metro or nonmetro components. One would perhaps expect a continuing decline in the ratio, given the aging of the population, but this may be compensated for in part

by the international migration of young adults, since undocumented workers particularly are likely to be male.

The Elderly Population: The growing importance of the elderly population is a major demographic trend in the United States and throughout the Western world. This is the fastest growing age group, and continues to increase in relative importance. Today the U.S. percentage over 65 is 12.3, but a recent series of population projections has this rising to 20 percent by the year 2030 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992).

Although metro and nonmetro areas share in this trend, there are notable differences by residence that need to be addressed. Although the number of persons over 65 has grown rapidly in nonmetro areas, growth was slower than in metro areas in 1980-90 and 1960-70, and both residence groups grew at the same rate in 1970-80. This showing for nonmetro areas is due to a lower level of elderly "natural increase," partially compensated by a small net migration gain which was larger in 1970-80 than in other decades. A detailed examination of the data showed that higher rates of elderly natural increase for metro areas were due to a larger proportion reaching 65 over each decade, there being little relative difference by residence in the proportion of elderly persons dying (Fuguitt and Beale, 1993). This no doubt reflects the history of prior migration of persons reaching age 65, with the losses of younger adults in nonmetro areas and gains in metro areas through population movement. Nevertheless, over 1980-90 the number of persons 65 and over increased by more than 20 percent in nonmetro areas, in contrast to a total nonmetro growth of about four percent.

This differential growth by age has led to an increase in the nonmetro proportion 65 and over, from 10.6 to 14.5 percent between 1960 and 1990. At the nonmetro county level there is wide variation in the proportion 65 and over, according to Figure 6. Over 1300 nonmetro counties out of approximately 2400 had more than 15 percent of their populations aged 65 and over, the national nonmetro proportion, and 368 had proportions of 20 percent or more. These high percentage counties are concentrated — particularly those in the highest group — in the Great Plains subregion extending from North Dakota to central Texas.

Like absolute increase discussed above, the growth in the proportion of elderly is due to natural increase and net migration, but in this case, change in the population under 65 may affect the proportion as part of the denominator. In particular, **out**migration of younger people may be more important than **in**migration of the elderly for many nonmetro counties. Great Plains counties that are growing in the proportion elderly do so largely through natural increase and young outmigration. The circumstances facing the elderly in these areas, where long-time residents age in place in a setting with limited economic opportunities, must be quite different from that in growing counties experiencing elderly immigration. As noted in a previous section, "retirement" counties were the fastest growing nonmetro counties, with sustained, albeit slower growth in the 1980s compared with the 1970s. A number of these widely scattered counties are visible on the map in Florida, northern Arkansas and southern Missouri, northern Wisconsin and Michigan, and the Pacific coast. Elderly migrants are younger, more likely to be married, and have higher educational and economic status levels than other older people, so the characteristics of the elderly in retirement counties are overall rather different from

those in declining aging-in-place counties. Indeed, the proportion 65 and over may not even be growing in some retirement counties due to the immigration of young along with older people. In part, this tendency must reflect the increased opportunities in providing goods and services for the expanding elderly populations there. These important differences between areas, associated with the demographic processes of aging, may have significant social and economic implications. In addition, there are possible consequences for nonmetropolitan elderly due to small community size, greater geographic distances, and limited community growth potentials, which may impinge on the capacity and ability to meet the health and other service needs of this growing population group.

RACE AND HISPANIC COMPOSITION⁸

Certainly one of the most significant U.S. demographic trends today is the increased racial and ethnic diversity of the population. By 1990, one-fourth of the population could be considered minority — that is of nonwhite race and/or Hispanic ethnic status. Because of differential growth rates, projections have the nonHispanic white population, by far the predominant group from the nation's inception up to now, dropping from 75 percent to 53 percent of the total by 2050 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992; Pollard, 1993).

The fact of racial and cultural diversity affects virtually every policy issue facing the nation. As a major factor in minority growth, immigration (both legal and illegal) is a matter of great concern. A general issue underlying this trend toward greater diversity is whether the old "melting pot," thought to describe the experience

⁸ A parallel paper which includes detailed maps for many different ethnic groups is Roseman (1993).

of European immigrants, is today a viable metaphor. Are we, on the other hand, becoming a different sort of multicultural society, with continued and perhaps increasing social and economic diversity, and protracted problems in achieving consensus (O'Hare, 1992; Lieberman, 1993)?

As with other major demographic trends, the population of rural and nonmetropolitan America follows the nation in having experienced some increased race and ethnic diversity in recent decades. Yet there are differences that reflect both the nature of these residence groupings and local geographic variation. The population distribution by race and Hispanic status is given for metro and nonmetro residence groupings in Table 4. Overall, nonmetropolitan areas were less diverse than metro areas in 1990. They had lower proportions than metropolitan areas in all groups except whites and American Indians. Indians were almost 50 percent nonmetropolitan in 1990, and most of these persons lived on or near reservations. Rural-urban differences (not shown) parallel metro-nonmetro differences. Within both metro and nonmetro areas, the urban component has higher proportions of each group except nonHispanic whites. This is not the sole reason for the metro-nonmetro differences, however, since both the urban and rural nonmetro components are less diverse than corresponding urban and rural metro components.

Within nonmetropolitan areas the concentrations of minority groups are quite distinct, considerably more so than is true for metropolitan areas. Nonmetropolitan counties with greater than 10 percent black, Indian, or Hispanic are mapped in Figure 7. The regional location of nonmetro black concentration is still essentially what it was just after the Civil War. In 1880, 94 percent of rural blacks lived in the South and in 1990 this had dropped only to 91 percent. Similarly, for the

nonmetropolitan black population, 91 percent lived in the South in 1990, and Figure 7 shows that almost all of the counties with more than 10 percent black are in the Southern areas of long-time rural black settlement, including those traditionally specializing in cotton, peanut, and tobacco farm production.

Hispanics are concentrated in the Southwest and West, with three-fourths found in the western census region and the state of Texas. That is also true for almost all of the counties with more than 10 percent Hispanic shown on the map. Similarly, two-thirds of the nonmetropolitan Indians are found in the western states along with Oklahoma, and this concentration is quite evident in the map as well.

The lack of overlap in the concentration of blacks, Indians, and Hispanics is remarkable. Of the 831 nonmetropolitan counties shaded on this map, only 36 had more than 10 percent in two groups. These were given the shading of the group with the highest percentage in Figure 7. Asians were not mapped, because only four nonmetropolitan counties had more than 10 percent Asian and Pacific Islander, including Kodiak Island, Alaska, and Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui counties in Hawaii. Again, none of these overlap with concentrations of the other three minority groups.

More extensive is the other group not mapped — that is, nonHispanic whites. Two-thirds of the nonmetropolitan counties are unshaded on this map (1533 in all) and more than 9 out of 10 of these were more than 90 percent nonHispanic white. About one-half of the nonmetropolitan counties are more than 95 percent nonHispanic white, and 3 out of 10 are 98 percent or more. The counties with virtually no minorities are mostly located in the country's heartland — in the Middle West and Great Plains.

Minority Population Growth: In common with metropolitan areas, there was an increasing concentration of minorities in nonmetropolitan America between 1980 and 1990 (see Table 5). Asians, with a very small population base, were by far the fastest growing minority, followed by Indians and Hispanics. Nonmetropolitan blacks grew quite slowly, faster than nonHispanic whites but less than the nonmetropolitan category as a whole, so that the proportion black dropped from 8.8 to 8.7 percent. Hispanics increased their share of the nonmetro population from 3.1 to 3.9, Indians increased their share from 1.4 to 1.7 percent, and Asians from 0.5 to 0.8. Through this differential growth the nonHispanic white segment declined from 86.3 to 85.1 percent of the total.

We see that the rather substantial growth rates for Hispanics, Indians and Asians in Table 5 have resulted in only small increases in their proportional importance over the decade. Yet even though overall these minorities remain only about 15 percent of the nonmetropolitan population, they contributed 46 percent of the absolute growth of this residential grouping between 1980 and 1990. About one-half of this absolute growth of minorities came from the Hispanic population.

Because all minority and white population groups grew more rapidly in metro than nonmetro areas according to Table 5, each of these groups also became more metropolitan over the decade, using a constant 1990 metro-nonmetro county designation. The increased metropolitan proportions for the minority groups are even greater if they include the effect of county shifts in metropolitan status over the decade, but in no case is the increase more than three percentage points.⁹

⁹ The effect of county shifts is determined by comparing the 1980 minority and white composition using the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan county designation of 1980 with the 1990 composition using the county designation of 1990.

There are several sources of this rapid growth for the Hispanic, Asian and Indian populations. Because the U.S. census uses a self-identification approach in measuring race and ethnicity, some of the differences between censuses may be due to an increased or decreased tendency to identify with a particular group. Many more persons reported themselves to be Indians, for example, in both 1980 and 1990, than could be attributed to natural increase for the preceding decade. Changes in question wording for the race question also may have had an effect. In terms of demographic factors, higher fertility for minorities than for nonHispanic whites is certainly important. For Hispanics and Asians, international migration also is significant. Although we do not have information on this by residence for specific minority groups, we can identify the total 1990 foreign-born population that came to this country since 1980. For metropolitan areas, this is 40 percent of the absolute population change since 1980, but it is only 19 percent of the change for nonmetropolitan areas. Thus much of the differential metro-nonmetro growth in the 1980s was due to the greater importance of international migration in and around large cities. Without this component metro areas would have grown only 6.8 percent overall instead of 11.6, and nonmetro areas 3.1 percent instead of 3.9.

Within nonmetropolitan areas, there has also been a small change since 1980 in the minority and white population distribution. There was a small contraction in the number of counties with black concentrations, and corresponding expansions in Indian and Hispanic concentrations. For example, if Figure 7 had been made for 1980, there would have been 529 counties more than 10 percent black instead of the 513 shown for 1990, but 70 having more than 10 percent Indian instead of 88, and 183 having more than 10 percent Hispanic instead of 228. Although the numbers of

Asians continues to be small, they also have become somewhat more widely scattered. In 1980, three out of ten nonmetro counties recorded 50 or more Asians, but by 1990 this had risen to 38 percent.

Another way to look at internal distribution is in terms of differences between pairs of race/minority groups. The most common approach here is the index of dissimilarity, based upon comparisons of the percentage distributions of groups among geographic units. The index ranges from 0 for identical distributions to 100 for the situation of no overlap (Shryock et al., 1971). This measure is often used to show the degree of residential segregation among blacks and whites or other groups with small units like blocks within metropolitan areas. Here the units are counties across the United States. With these somewhat larger units, the interpretation must be somewhat different. Counties may describe approximate areas within which people live and work, but a low index here does not mean that people of different races are necessarily living next door to one another. The index of dissimilarity may be interpreted as the proportion of people who would have to move to make the percentage distributions of each group the same.

The indexes for each pair of race/minority groups is given in Table 6 by residence and year. Consistent with the map showing little overlap among the minority groups, nonmetropolitan indexes are all quite large, and all are greater than corresponding metropolitan indices. Comparing 1980 with 1990, in most cases the indexes show, in both metro and nonmetro areas, that the increased numbers and proportions of minorities across the most recent decade has been accompanied by a small decline in residential differentiation across counties. Exceptions are between whites and Hispanics and blacks and Hispanics in nonmetropolitan areas, where the

index increased by less than one point, and between Indians and Hispanics in metropolitan areas, with a less than two point increase.

CONCLUSION

Demographic factors are the basis of many distinguishing aspects of low density areas in the United States. Population growth and decline, more diffuse settlement, and more interdependence have helped to make the conceptualization of settlement types difficult. Rural and urban are not synonymous with metropolitan and nonmetropolitan; a simple dichotomy may disguise important detail, and most important, the spread of metropolitan areas means that rural and nonmetro America is not a firm location "out there," but a shrinking target.

Trends in population growth and decline have been quite variable across the last three decades. The 1970-80 turnaround decade stands out as a time of widespread renewed growth. What is still unanswered is whether this period is an anomaly along the continuing road of slow growth and decline for most low density areas, or a harbinger of further fluctuations in the metro-nonmetro growth balance due to the special social and economic circumstances of the time.

The age structure of both metro and nonmetro areas has been affected most by changes in fertility, particularly the aging of the baby boom generation. But across recent decades there continues to be an effect due to the migration of young adults from nonmetro to metro areas. This extended loss of more able young people seeking better opportunities must have an important impact on many nonmetro communities, notably in the most recent decade of widespread population decline (Lichter, McLaughlin, and Cornwell, 1992). The growing importance of the elderly population is an issue that transcends residence, but nonmetro areas stand out as

having a higher proportion of the elderly. Local areas increasing in numbers of elderly through aging in place, with the proportion increasing also through young outmigration, are quite different from those gaining retirement migrants attracted to areas having natural amenities. These types of areas may face somewhat different challenges in meeting the special needs of their elderly populations.

Cities in both metro and nonmetro counties have lower ratios of men to women than do rural areas. This long-standing situation has changed little in recent decades, and the overall ratio has been stable since 1970. Although there has been a recent increase in research concerned with gender, the demographic aspects, as they relate to residence, deserve more detailed scrutiny. For example, the sex selectivity of metro-nonmetro or rural-urban migration streams has received relatively little attention recently, and its relation to employment and family structure needs to be further addressed. Unfortunately, space did not permit a consideration of family and household composition in this chapter, but the higher ratio of men to women in rural areas is associated with a greater proportion of husband-wife families there (Fuguitt, Brown, and Beale, 1989).

Nonmetro America is less diverse ethnically than metro America, and there is much less overlap in the location of various minority groups. Although minority groups other than blacks are growing rapidly, this situation of ethnic diversity is changing slowly, due in part to the small population base of minorities there. Nonmetropolitan America continues to be the bastion of the white nonHispanic population.

Finally, this overview has underscored the high degree of variability across nonmetropolitan regions and subregions. Despite advances in transportation and

communication, and greatly increased interdependence and social interpenetration across residence groups, nonmetro American is far from homogeneous geographically. Standing out in Figures 2, 6, and 7, for example, is the heartland of the nation, as a rather contiguous area of recent and often long-term population decline, elderly population concentration, and ethnic homogeneity. Such subregional and local variability has important implications beyond demography, as differences in population growth or decline, elderly concentration, or ethnic composition are associated with economic activities, community structure and change, and political processes.

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TABLE 1
Population Rural and Urban by Metropolitan-Nonmetropolitan Status 1990 (a)

	Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan	Total
Urban	166,337	20,715	187,052
Percent	88.9	11.1	100.0
Rural	26,791	34,867	61,658
Percent	43.5	56.5	100.0
Total	193,128	55,582	248,710
Percent	77.7	22.3	100.0
Percent Population			
Urban	86.1	37.3	75.2

TABLE 2
Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Trends 1950-1990 (a)

Year	Population		Percent Distribution		No. of Counties	
	Metro	Nonmetro	Metro	Nonmetro	Metro	Nonmetro
1990	193,128	55,582	77.7	22.3	726	2,362
1980	170,493	56,053	75.3	24.7	704	2,384
1970	140,759	62,542	69.2	30.8	461	2,627
1960	114,180	65,146	63.7	36.3	347	2,741
1950	85,421	65,904	56.4	43.6	273	2,815

(a) Metropolitan-nonmetropolitan designation as of the year indicated.

TABLE 3
Age-Sex Composition by Metropolitan-Nonmetropolitan Residence, 1990

	Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan	Total
Percent aged			
Less than 15	21.3	22.3	21.5
15-64	66.7	63.0	65.9
65+	12.0	14.7	12.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Dependency Ratios: ^a			
Youth	31.9	35.4	32.6
Elderly	18.0	23.3	19.1
Total	49.9	58.7	51.7
Sex Ratio ^b	94.9	96.0	95.1

^a Youth: (number less than 15/number 15-64)x100
Elderly: (number 65 up/number 15-64)x100
Total: Youth + Elderly

^b Males per 100 females x 100

TABLE 4
Race and Spanish Origin of Population, 1990

Race or Spanish Origin	Metropolitan ^a	Nonmetropolitan	Total
Population (000s)			
Total	192,726	55,984	248,710
White	150,863	48,823	199,686
Black	25,122	4,864	29,986
Indian, Eskimo, Aluet	1,003	956	1,959
Asian and Pacific			
Islander	6,824	450	7,274
Other ^b	<u>8,914</u>	<u>891</u>	<u>9,805</u>
Hispanic ^c	20,205	2,149	22,354
White, nonhispanic	<u>141,005</u>	<u>47,420</u>	<u>188,425</u>
Percentage of Total			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
White	78.3	87.2	80.3
Black	13.0	8.7	12.1
Indian, Eskimo, Aluet	.5	1.7	.8
Asian and Pacific			
Islander	3.6	.8	2.9
Other ^b	<u>4.6</u>	<u>1.6</u>	<u>3.9</u>
Hispanic ^c	10.5	3.8	9.0
White, nonhispanic	73.2	84.7	75.8

^a Metropolitan-nonmetropolitan designation of 1990.

^b Predominantly persons who wrote in Hispanic entries in the race item.

^c Hispanics may be of any race.

TABLE 5
Percentage Change by Race and Hispanic Origin by Residence 1980-90

Groups	Metropolitan ^a	Nonmetropolitan	TOTAL
Total	11.6	3.9	9.8
White	7.1	2.9	6.0
Black	15.4	3.1	13.2
Indian, Eskimo, Aluet	44.3	31.7	37.9
Asian and Pacific Islander	112.2	56.6	107.7
Other ^b	47.2	26.7	45.1
Hispanic ^c	56.2	28.5	53.0
White, nonhispanic	5.0	2.4	4.3

^a Metropolitan-nonmetropolitan designation of 1990.

^b Predominantly persons who wrote in Hispanic entries in the race item.

^c Hispanics may be of any race.

TABLE 6
Indexes of Dissimilarity Between Race/Hispanic
Groups by Residence, 1980, 1990^a

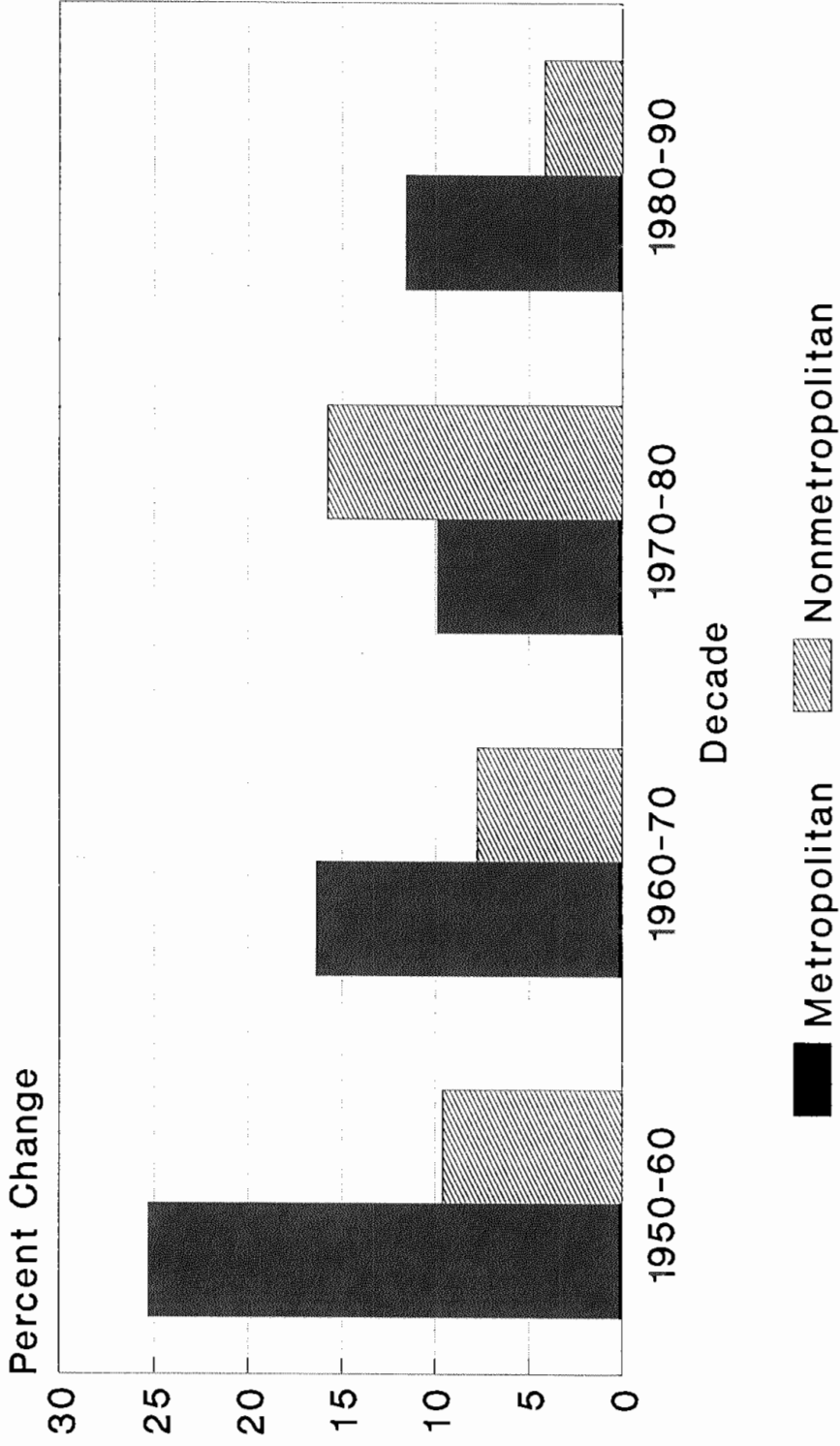
Comparisons ^b	Metropolitan ^c	Nonmetropolitan
White vs All Other		
1990	44	54
1980	44	57
White vs Indian		
1990	40	71
1980	44	74
White vs Black		
1990	43	65
1980	44	67
White vs Hispanic		
1990	56	65
1980	57	64
Black vs Hispanic		
1990	54	81
1980	55	80
Indian vs Hispanic		
1990	50	72
1980	49	74
Indian vs Black		
1990	56	86
1980	60	89

^a The index of dissimilarity ranges from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating identical percentage distributions for the two groups across counties and 100 indicating no overlap in the distribution (see text).

^b The white category in this table is nonhispanic white.

^c Metropolitan-nonmetropolitan designation of 1990.

Figure 1
**POPULATION CHANGE METROPOLITAN
 NONMETROPOLITAN US 1950-1990**



Metro-nonmetro county designation
 as of the beginning of each decade

Figure 2

NONMETROPOLITAN POPULATION CHANGE 1980-90

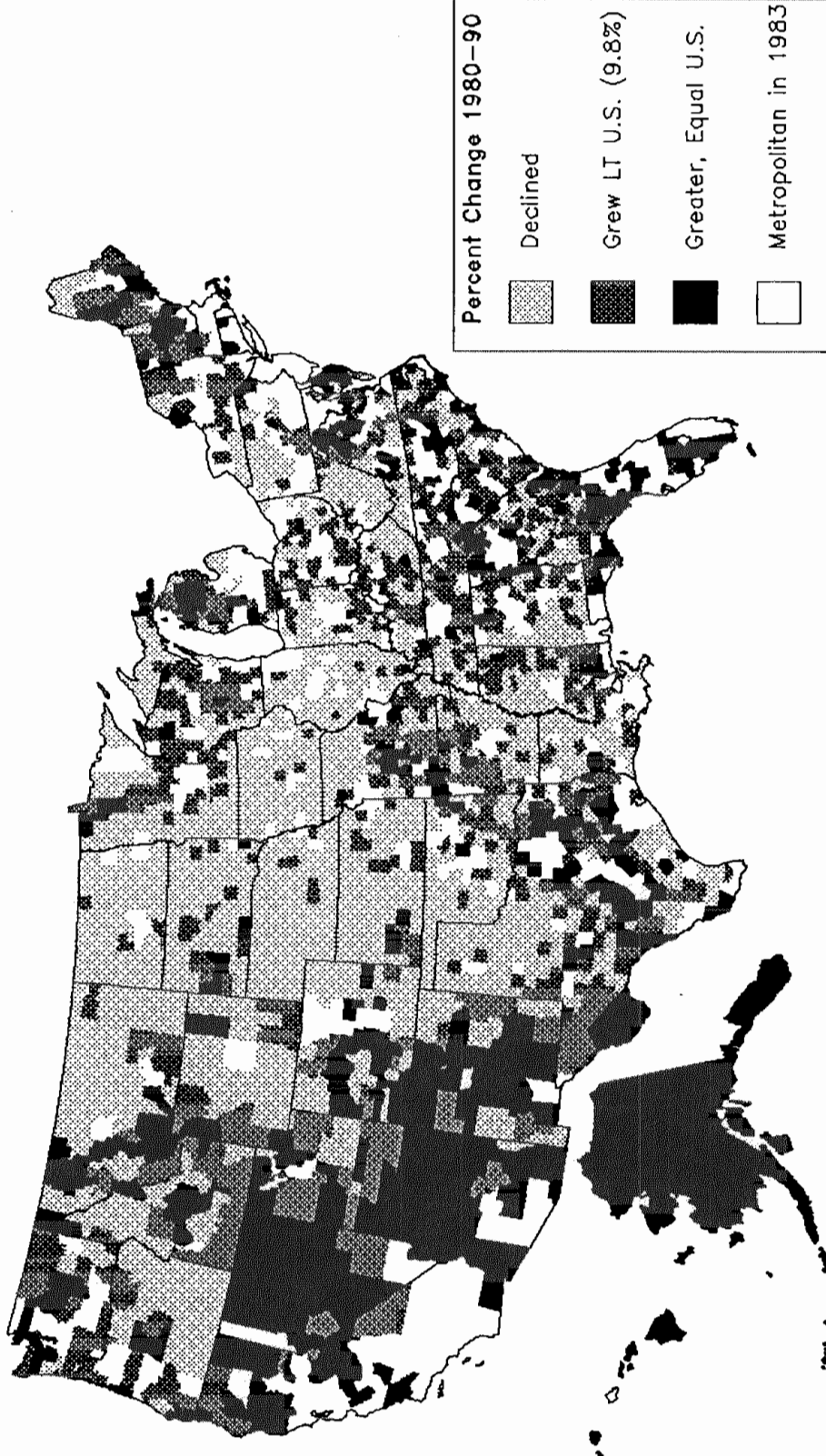
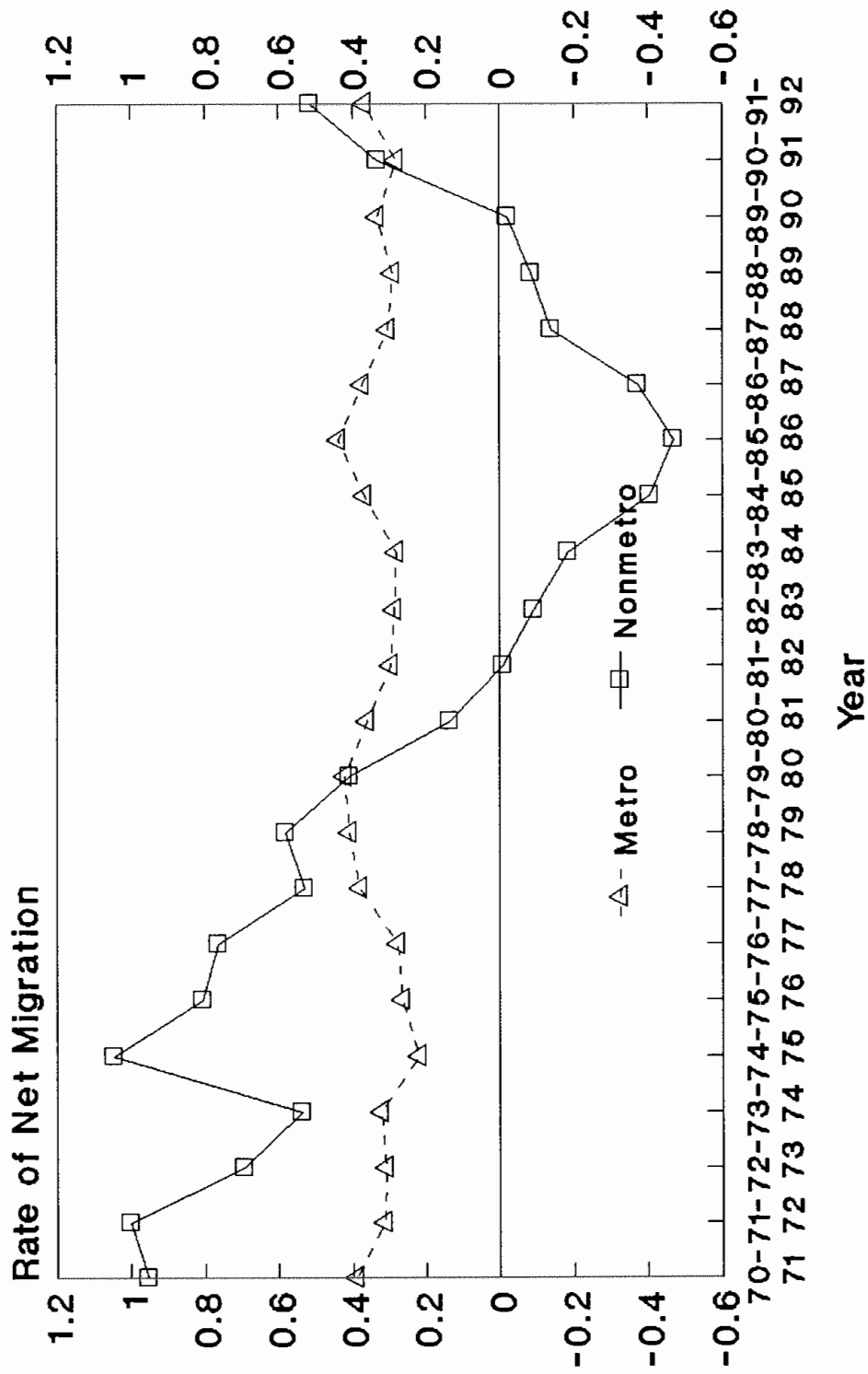


Figure 3
**ANNUAL RATE OF NET MIGRATION/100,
 METROPOLITAN NONMETROPOLITAN US, 1970-92**

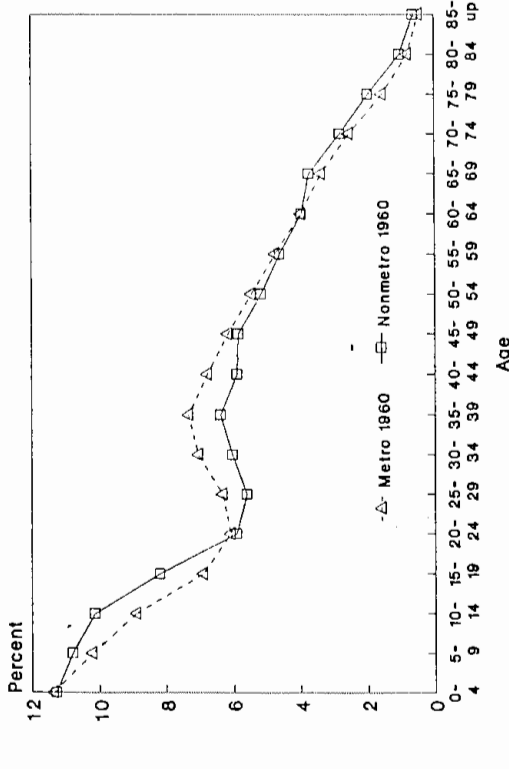


Metro-nonmetro designation of 1990

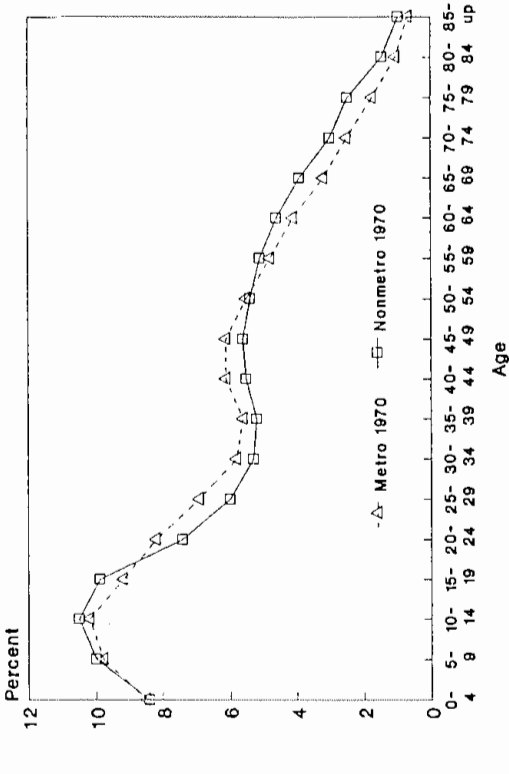
Figure 4

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE, METRO-NONMETRO U.S., 1960-1990

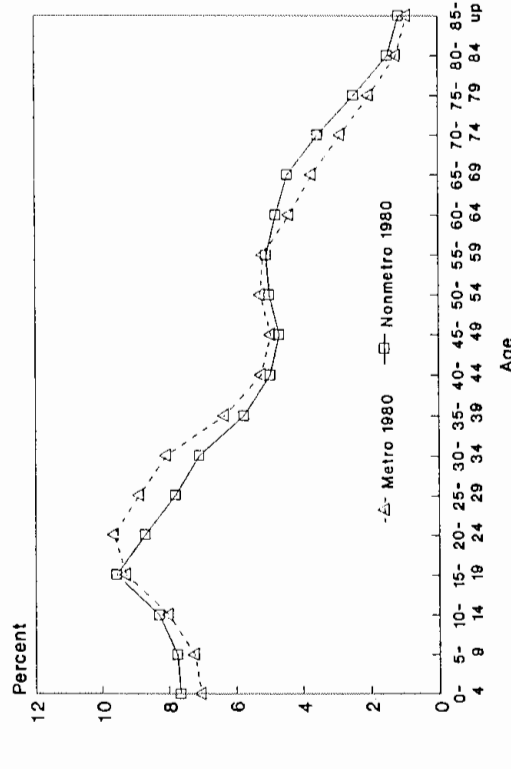
1960



1970



1980



1990

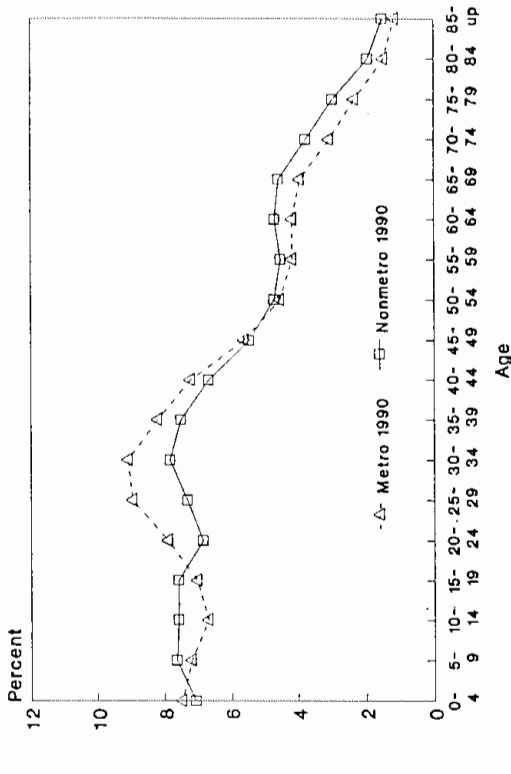
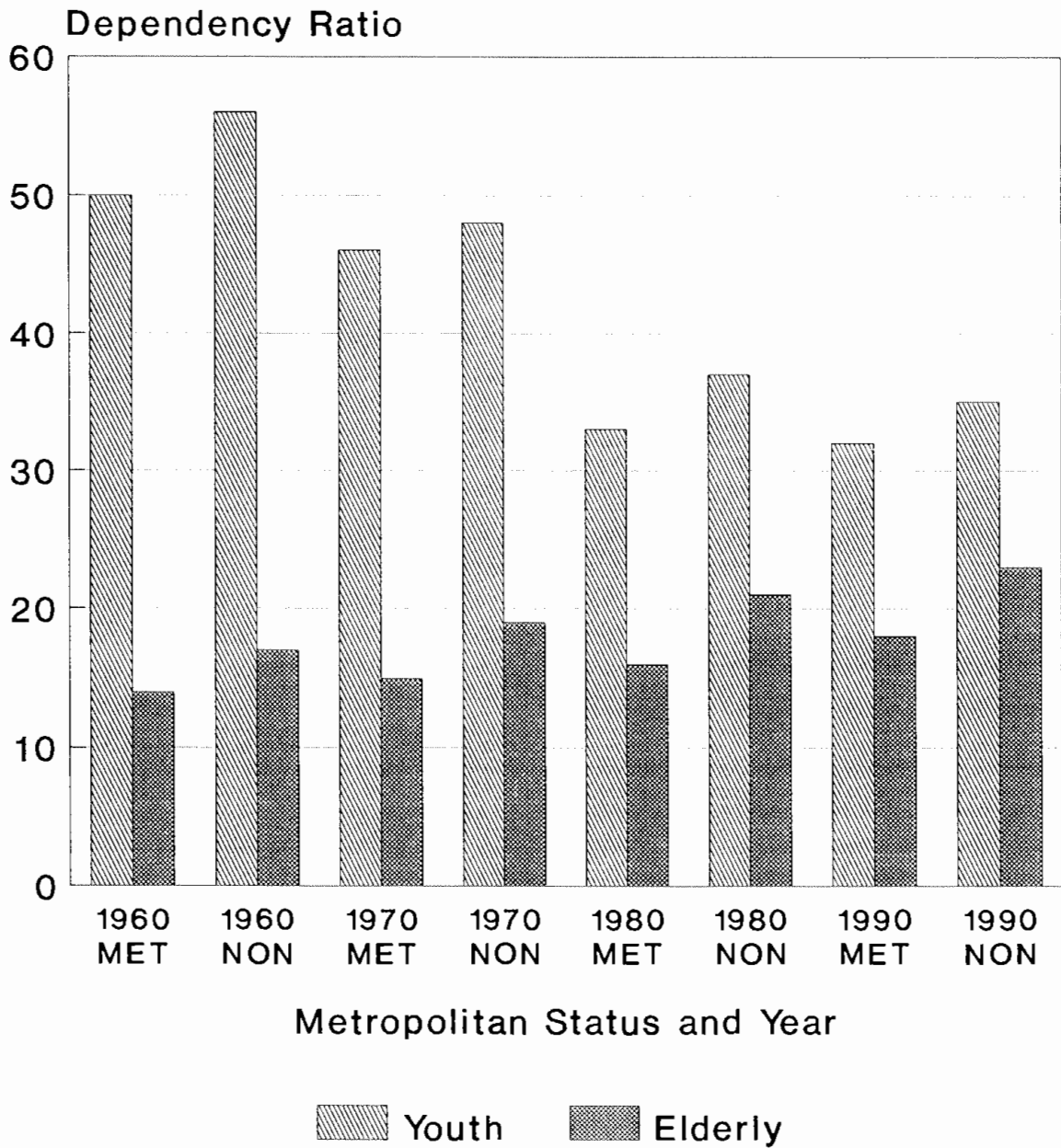


Figure 5

DEPENDENCY RATIOS METROPOLITAN NONMETROPOLITAN US, 1960-1990



Metro designation of year indicated.

Figure 6

ELDERLY CONCENTRATION IN NONMETROPOLITAN COUNTIES, 1990

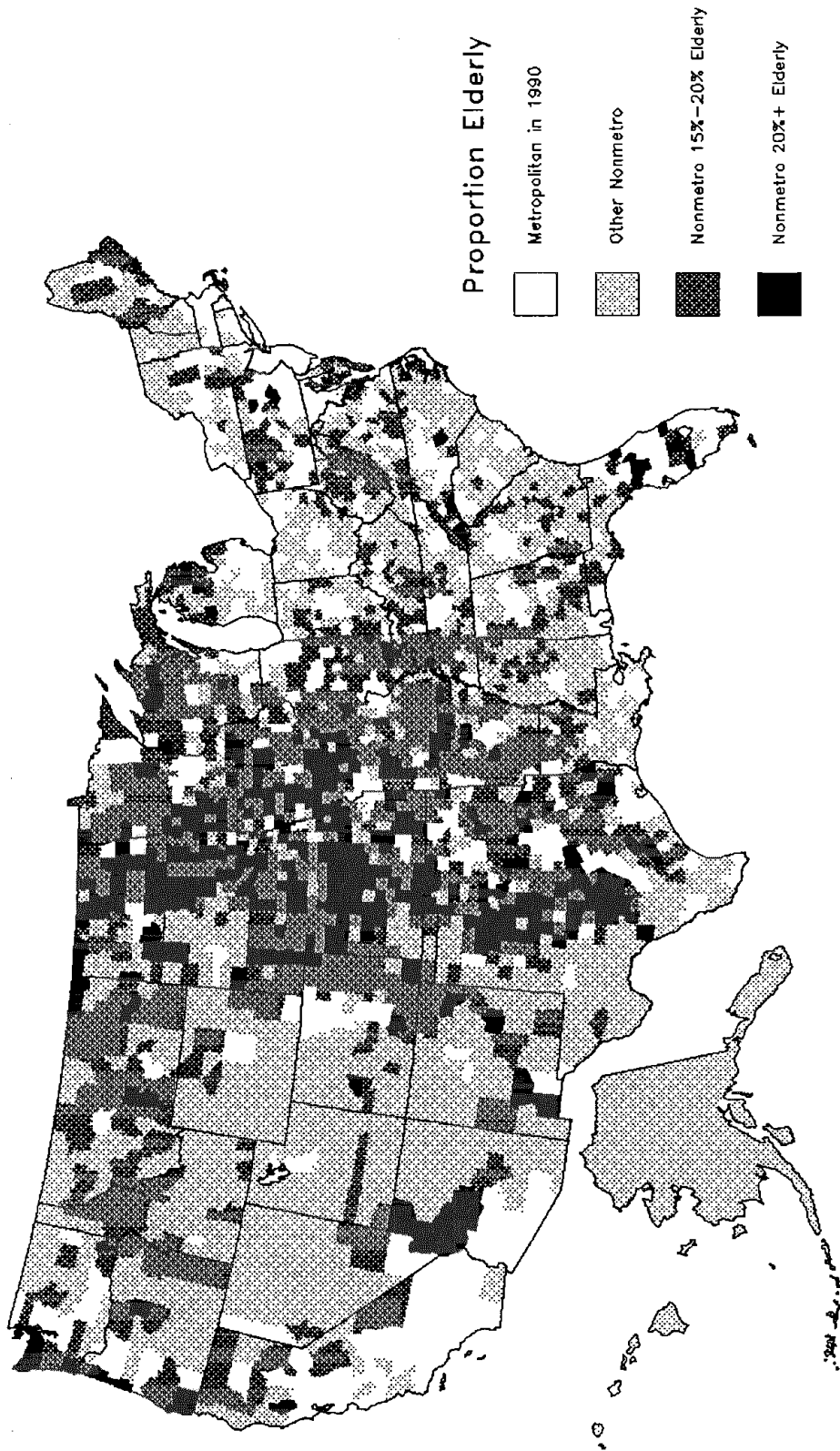
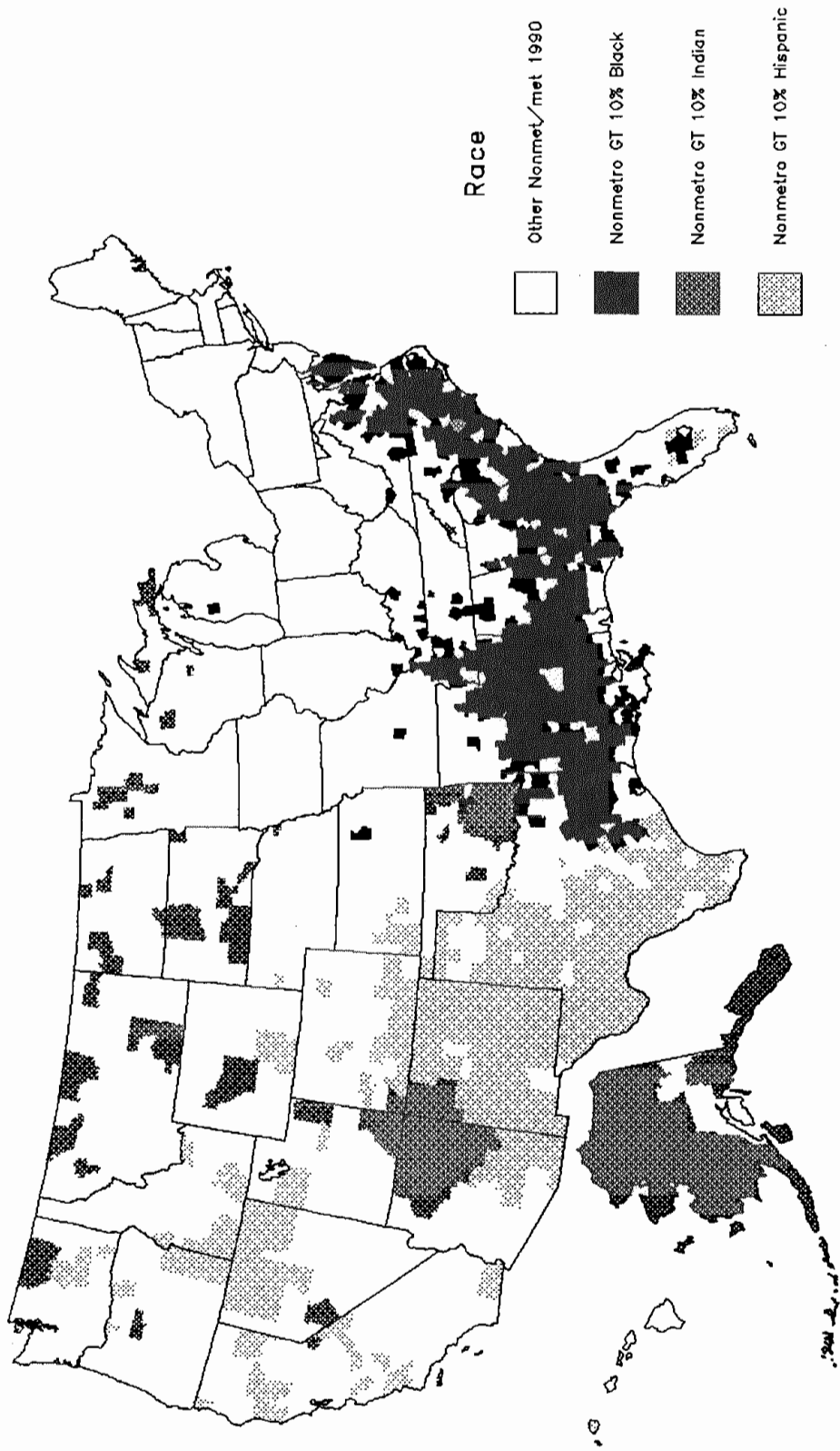


Figure 7

MINORITY NONMETROPOLITAN COUNTIES, 1990



**Center for Demography & Ecology
University of Wisconsin
1180 Observatory Drive, Rm. 4412
Madison WI 53706-1393
U.S.A.
608/262-2182
FAX 608/262-8400**