The changing American countryside:
Past, present, and future
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Contents

Preface .................................................................................................................. 7
Emery Castle

The Northeast
Land use and the urban fringe

The transition from agriculture to manufacturing in the East before 1860 .............................................................................. 11
David R. Meyer

The rural Northeast in the 1990s:
Social resources for adapting to change .................................................. 19
Cynthia M. Duncan and Sean R. Lauer

The future of the rural Northeast .............................................................. 29
Mark B. Lapping

The South
Work and life in the changing South

From old South to new: Metropolitan and regional development in the Lower South, 1860 to 1920* ............................................. 37
David F. Weiman

The South today: Rural poverty and social capital ................................... 53
John Covetta

The burden of the southern future ............................................................ 63
Charles Reagan Wilson

The Midwest
Community lost and found

Community perspectives, family perspectives:
Interpreting rural life in the nineteenth century midwest ...................... 73
Kathleen Neilsen Conzen

International and national contexts of rural development:
Issues and frameworks .............................................................................. 83
Glenn L. Nelson

The Future: The Midwest ............................................................................. 91
Cornelia Butler Flora

The West
Natural resources and environmental conflict

The state and the corporation in the shaping of the rural West ............... 99
Richard S. Kelkendall

The nature of the present-day American West ....................................... 107
Paul F. Starrs

The future for rural areas in the western region .................................... 115
B. Delworth Gardner

Concluding remarks ..................................................................................... 127
M. G. Wolman
The proceedings reflect a significant event in the life of the National Rural Studies Committee (NRSC). The conference which produced this collection has been referred to as a "Capstone" as well as a "Milestone."

The NRSC came into existence in 1987 as a result of a five-year grant by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. In 1992 an additional three-year grant and then a one-year extension permitted the NRSC to continue its work until the end of 1996. Prior to the conference on which these proceedings came, the NRSC held five regional meetings in various parts of the continental United States. The consensus emerging from the participants at these meetings was that they were exceedingly productive, primarily for two reasons. They identified and addressed significant regional problems and representatives of different disciplines participated.

These same characteristics were incorporated into this Capstone Conference. For discussion purposes, the continental United States was divided into four regions—the Northeast, the South, the Mid-West and the West. Representatives from several academic disciplines became involved in analyzing the history, contemporary issues, and future prospects and problems for each region. The papers presented here reflect this perspective and provide a foundation for the break-out discussion sessions which followed. A summary presentation was made by M. Gordon Wolman on the work of the NRSC generally and this conference in particular.

These proceedings papers provide a unique perspective on the problems and possibilities of the rural areas of the continental United States. One of the more innovative features of the conference was the use of historians to provide an understanding of why certain regional issues and problems had existed in the past. This made it possible to better understand contemporary issues and then judge how these forces would play out in the future.

The conference again highlighted one of the principal
findings of the five earlier regional meetings; that rural America is characterized by enormous diversity. This means it is exceedingly difficult to generalize for the nation as a whole, especially for purposes of rural public policy.

This Capstone Conference also permitted the Committee to introduce its book of readings, which has been published by the University Press of Kansas. These readings, entitled The Changing American Countryside: Rural People and Places, provide a comprehensive view of rural America. It is available in both cloth and softcover and is suitable for classroom as well as more general use.

The NRSC sub-committee that planned and arranged for the Capstone Conference was chaired by Dr. Sonya Salamon, NRSC committee member from the University of Illinois. Salamon provided outstanding leadership not only in conceiving and arranging the program but in helping with local arrangements at the University of Maryland. Dr. Marie Howland, former Center Associate of the NRSC, was also much involved in helping with initial arrangements. Dr. William Falk, Department of Sociology at the University of Maryland assisted in numerous ways. The major work with local arrangements was done by Brian Dyson, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, at the University of Maryland.

The NRSC is indebted to each of these people for their roles in making the conference an outstanding success.

Emery N. Castle, Chair
National Rural Studies Committee
April, 1996

The Northeast

Land use and the urban fringe
The transition from agriculture to manufacturing in the East before 1860

David R. Meyer

Benjamin Franklin and Alexander Hamilton offered contrasting visions of industrialization in America. Franklin argued that manufacturing would not thrive in a growing agricultural area that contained an ample supply of land for farming. Manufacturing, instead, developed when the supply of agricultural land could not support the rural population. The impoverished rural dwellers formed a low-wage labor force that permitted factories to produce goods cheaper than the cost of foreign imports. Hamilton posed an alternative vision; agriculture and industry benefited each other. The division of labor between and within each sector stimulated greater productivity, which improved the living standards of both groups of workers. Hamilton’s positive view of the relation between agriculture and industry, not Franklin’s pessimistic one, undergirds the proposed interpretation of the transformation from agriculture to industry in the East.

Industrialization of the East

When he advocated manufacturing in 1791, Hamilton identified a range of goods currently produced in the United States, spanning the gamut from processing (flour, hemp) to local and regional market (furniture, printing, carriages) to national market (textiles, soufflés). Manufacturing, however, remained tiny twenty years later. In 1810, it employed only 75,000 workers, most of those in the East, comprising just 2 percent of the


because they captured two-thirds (67 percent) of the ad-
dditional residents. Foreign exports of agricultural and
forestry products and re-exports of foreign goods drove
much of their growth, especially before 1810.1

Agricultural change

Some of the expansion of these exports after 1870 must
have come from new farm populations. However, an increas-
ing number of farmers and others in lumbering and fishing
produced surpluses above the subsistence level. These
growing surpluses, however, also had roots in funda-
mental changes in the rural economy. Massachusetts
farms have epitomized the decline of agriculture in the
ante-bellum East, but if new estimates of farm labor
productivity can be generalized to the rest of the East,
farmers must have changed their practices from waste-
ful, extensive farming to labor-intensive farming with
improved techniques in response to the growing export
market. From 1780 to 1840, farm labor produc-

1 The data from George Rogers Taylor, "American Urban Growth Chesterman's bridge. The
across the study period. The methodology
ventions for the study include both
tries, or in the emerging mill villages (after 1810).11
Summary data on farming support this interpre-
11 Rothstein, "The Emergence of Farm Labor Markets and
the Transformation of the Rural Economic System," n.d.,
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10 See Stanley Lebergott, "Labor Force and Employment, 1800-1900:
Quantity, Employment, and Productivity in the United States After

9 All data are from the American Historical Record (New York: W. W. Norton, 1894), Table 12, pp. 118-19.

8 Lebergott, "Labor Force and Employment, 1800-1900," Table 1, p. 1.

7 Computed from Albert W. Niemi, Jr., State and Regional Patterns in
Urbanization (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974), Appendices 6 and 7, pp. 122-23. The latest includes the New
England states, the Middle Atlantic States, and the South. See Delaware and
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curate than other sources because nonfarmers were included.
Both rural and urban manufacturers are included.

6 The Taconic analysis of this urban area, which was not a
comparable urban area. The Taconic data for
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Population of the 1880s (n.d.), pp. 188-189. The
urban and

5 From David M. Bogue, "The Westward Expansion of the
Railway Age," Journal of Economic History, Vol. 27 (September 1967),
Table 1, pp. 311-12.

4 Taylor, "American Urban Growth Before the Railway Age," Table 2, pp. 58-60.

3 This is named after the famous farmer and land economist in
eastern Germany, Johann Heinrich von Thünen. For this
reason, see David M. Bogue, "The Westward Expansion of the
Railway Age," Table 3, pp. 59-60. The data reflect the
growth in \n
1 Some of the data on panel employment in the
more than a century, Germany, John

The Northeast

By David M. Bogue

's industrial expansion, neverthe-
less, had begun.2 Between Thomas Jefferson's enfrom the end of the War of 1812 (1815),
numerous firms started in industries such as metals, tex-
chinery, chemicals, and textiles. Each a hiatus of
about five years at the close of the war, when European
goods flooded the United States market, the industrial
expansion continued to expand through the 1820s. By 1830
the national employment in manufacturing (still mostly in
the East) reached 500,000, representing an almost sevenfold
increase from its level in 1810.3 Industrial growth continued
enough by the eve of the Civil War (1860), the number
of manufacturing employees solely in the East reached 878,574.

A paradox must be resolved to explain this large-
scale industrialization of the East between 1810 and 1860.
At the start of this period the vast majority of Easterners lived in rural areas. The 11 percent of the population housed in urban areas in both 1810 and 1820 represented one of the 7 percent
in the urban population in 1791, when Hamilton submitted the "Report on Manufactures."4 The relative shift from rural to urban,
however, accelerated after 1820, reaching 14 percent urban in 1830, 19 percent in 1840, 27 percent in 1850, and 35 percent in 1860. For much of this period of in-
dustrialization, nevertheless, rural dwellers dominated the population distribution of the East.

The 500,000 people in urban areas provides an initial
cue to the paradox of eastern industrialization in a rural
landscape. The number of urban dwellers surged three-
fold to 546,000 between 1790 and 1820, even though the
census of 1820 placed 50 percent of the people across the

by 7 percent to just 11 percent. Most of these city
dwellers concentrated in four great seaport metropo-
lises: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. These
inhabitants of the urban areas in the East rose from 63 percent to 70 percent in 1850.2

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The Northeast

hilly areas with poor soils and long distances to urban markets. The sectoral shift in the East from agriculture to manufacturing, hence, comprised a relative shift in the composition of agricultural output and of stamina or decline in the agricultural sector.

Transportation improvements

Many eastern farmers and other resource extractors (for example, lumberjacks) had access to an excellent natural waterway transportation system of rivers (Connecticut, Hudson, Delaware, and Susquehanna), bays (Narragansett, Delaware, and Chesapeake), and coastal waters. When the export and eastern traffic of the United States grew after 1790 the heavy, bulky agricultural products, lumber, and other goods could be transported cheaply to markets. For example, the Connecticut River Valley, the richest agricultural area of New England, had a busy trade with the West Indies and North American coastal ports during the quarter century preceding the Revolution; this continued after 1790 until the Embargo of 1808. Farmers thus raised productivity in a direct response to growing market conditions, confident that they had access to these markets by the natural waterways.

The first major transportation improvements in the East during 1790 focused on turnpikes. Completed between Philadelphia and Lancaster in 1794, the enormously successful Lancaster Turnpike stimulated a host of imitators in eastern Pennsylvania and New York, New Jersey, and the New England colonies. But by 1815, fairly good roads served these areas and, by the 1820s, an extensive network of turnpikes existed. Although often criticized for high cost and poor construction, turnpikes, nevertheless, led to the first moves of the population away from settled areas surrounding and between the major east-coast metropolises. The turnpikes, too, like the high cost of wagon transportation (15 to 20 cents per ton-mile between 1830 and 1850),4 restricted the movement of the small farmers to passenger travel and light, high-value freight. Some manufacturers, such as textiles and buttons, met these conditions, but also farms near the large metropolises produced for the major east-coast metropolises, such as New York, and eventually benefited from turnpikes. The successful Lancaster Turnpike, for example, traversed the rich farmland just west of Philadelphia. The turnpikes thus provided opportunities for farmers near large cities, but did not involve national waterways, to increase commercial production. Most other farmers continued to rely on country roads.4

Because canals provided low-cost shipment of bulk commodities at rates as low as 2 cents per ton-mile, they offered a dramatic means both of increasing opportunities for commercial agriculture and of stimulating productivity improvements in it. Although Great Britain had its canal boom after the completion of the Bridgewater Canal in 1765, the United States failed to construct a successful Erie Canal in the 1820s. This lag has been attributed to inadequate supplies of capital, limited knowledge of canal engineering, and financially unsuccessful indigenous examples.5 These many factors have been critical factors. Canals, such as the Middlesex in Massachusetts, did not pass through prime agricultural land; thus, their failure did not provide a relevant standard.

A better explanation for the lag in canal construction rests with the competitive transportation mode of natural waterways. These did not require long-term capital investment, except for channel and harbor improvements; thus, canal construction was a capital-intensive industry. The waterways responded by increasing production.6 The Erie, the first successful canal, was constructed through prime agricultural land being settled in upstate New York west of the Hudson River. Much of this land did not have access to a natural waterway system linked directly to east-coast markets. The legendary impact of the Erie Canal included dramatic increases in traffic following completion of each section, and the catalyzing of the canal in 1825, only ten years after finishing the canal.7 New York state, not the Midwest, felt the full developmental impact of the Erie Canal until the mid-1830s, when commodities from the Midwest first moved down the canal. Further, between 1838 and 1840, New York still retained the overwhelming developmental impact. It originated 985,200 tons annually, whereas the Midwest sent 150,700 tons. Over a decade later (1853), the New York Canal on Lake Erie continued to surpass by a considerable margin the impact on the Midwest. New York originated 1,866,200 tons annually, whereas the Midwest originated 1,187,000 tons.8

The Erie Canal's lateral canals spawned a host of imitators; but none had as significant an impact on agricultural development in the East. Completed in 1827, the Cumberland and Oxford Canal stretched only 20 miles from Baltimore to the James River.9 Its original purpose was the success of the New York canal in the Midwest. In the Middle Atlantic states, the Pennsylvania Mainline, completed in 1834 from Columbia on the Susquehanna River to Pittsburgh, must have had a similar impact. Along with its lateral canals, on agriculture in the valleys of the Appalachians. Small amounts of agricultural products moved over the Mainline through the 1840s.

Although canals had a beneficial impact on lumber production, anthracite coal mining in eastern Pennsylvania gained the most. The Mainline carried coal as well as other products; nevertheless, the key coal canals, completed between the late-1830s and the mid-1850s, connected Pennsylvania, New York, the Lehigh, the Delaware, and the Susquehanna, which linked the anthracite fields to the New York and Philadelphia coal markets.

By 1840, the canal boom in the East had run its course. Pennsylvania and New York led in mileage with 954 and 640, respectively, and New Jersey and Maryland followed with 142 and 136 miles, respectively, the remaining states totaling slightly over 500 miles.10 Although the Mainline, thus, permitted natural resource production (agriculture, lumber, coal) to expand to serve the burgeoning urban markets in the East between 1820 and 1840, before railroads played a major role. The waterway system, however, did not offer significant direct benefits to factories. Waterway transport was too slow, and the high price per unit weight of manufactured goods made them better able, than resource products, to withstand high transportation cost.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which had 13 miles of track in operation in 1830, led the first boom of railroad construction in the United States. By 1840, the New England states had 469 miles, virtually all in the southern portion, and the Middle Atlantic states had 1,528 miles, more than the other states combined.11 These railroad lines formed tight radial webs around Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, as well as around some medium-size cities such as Albany and Providence. Their names reflected their professed aims. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was notable for providing service to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which was founded and ran its main line on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

The railroad expanded at the 1840s almost tripled the total track mileage in the East from 1,997 to 5,471.12 The New England states, which constructed more mileage than the Middle Atlantic states, had 2,529 miles by 1850. The Erie Canal, which extended farther into the hinterlands, but long-distant agricultural shipment by rail remained limited.13

The extensive industrial growth of the East during the 1840s, especially in key industrial industries such as textiles, lumber, and shoes, and iron, had little direct relation to this railroad expansion. Industrial production of textiles and of boots and shoes did not change location after railroad construction; these light value-added manufactures had low ratios of transport cost to final sale prices. The iron industry had key processes in close proximity to or used waterway transport; thus, railroads had little local impact on the regional location of manufacturing.14

David R. Meyer

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The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860, Table 3, p. 11.


16 By the early 1840s, the railroad mileage extended from 30 to 50 miles in the major metropolises; see George Rogers Taylor, "Commerce," Trends in the American Economy in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 242.

17 A series of canal delays and falls between 1874 and 1879 improved navigation on the Connecticut River. Built as a system with no connection to national waterways, the Maine was a miserable failure. Construction began in 1825 and was not completed until 1835. Little traffic moved over it, and by the early 1840s, it was abandoned. See Thomas M. Klotz, "The Rise of Railroads in the Connecticut Valley," Smith College Studies in History, Vol. 13, No. 4 (October 1937-October 1938), pp. 12-18.

18 Taylor, The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860, p. 34.

19 For the Erie Canal, see Richard C. Coats, "The Erie Canal and Economic Development in the Antebellum United States," Table 7, p. 21.

20 Taylor, The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860, p. 137.

21 From the late-1830s to the late-1840s, the total clearings of agricultural products on the Mainline increased from 52,000 tons to 91,000 tons in Pennsylvania. In contrast, how much manufactured products originating in New York probably accounted for 493,000 tons annually on the Erie Canal in the late-1830s and 59,000 tons in the late-1840s. The latter estimate is based on the conservative assumption that 50 percent of the traffic on the Mainline was not manufactured products originating in New York. Computed from Ransome, "Interregional Canals and Economic Development in the Antebellum United States," Table 7, pp. 19 and 21.

22 "The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860, p. 38-42.

23 "The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860, p. 76.


25 "The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860, p. 84.

26 The New York Central and New York and Erie Railroads first carried passengers and freight in the 1830s. In the 1830s, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroads first gained in the 1830s; see Haines, Michael, et al., Western River Transportation, Appendices A2 and A3, pp. 125-28.

and producer markets, such as furniture, machinery, and transportation equipment, probably gained greater benefits from industrialization of the 1840s. The 4,749 miles of track laid in the East during the 1830s, three-fourths of it in the Middle Atlantic states, left much of the East blanketed by railroads in 1860.\footnote{Trains ran between the large cities filled previous gaps in the network. The remaining gaps were confined to northern Maine, the Adirondacks, the Catskills, and northwest Pennsylvania. Agriculture and the railroad provided incentives for both the railroads and the railroads' investors to build roads on canals that competed with railroads and from long-distance lines that allowed areas formerly isolated from urban markets to expand production.\textsuperscript{18} The improved rail network permitted greater ease of shipping both regional markets within the East and national market specialties, such as textiles and boots and shoes, within the East and to the Midwest.\textsuperscript{19}}

The demand for manufactures

Changes in the agricultural sector, and to a lesser extent in other resource sectors, must have led the industrialization in the East. Labor productivity in agriculture had risen for forty years before industrialization built a solid foundation during the 1820s. The large, expanding, increasingly profitable agricultural sector comprised a growing market for manufactures. When industrial growth picked up around 1810 and remained strong during the 1820s, the agricultural sector also supplied labor because each farm worker produced food for larger numbers of southerners.\textsuperscript{20}

The demand for manufactures in the East included both the rural sector and the growing urban sector. Following 1810, these sources of demand diversified as improved transportation widened markets and farms and factories replaced many uses of machinery. For convenience, these sources are divided into four groups, but all of the demands were not significant at the start: household consumers, urban infrastructure, the natural resource sector, and international trade.\textsuperscript{21}

Households had diverse demands for goods, including textiles (for clothing), housing (furniture, stoves, utilities [cutlery, pots], transportation (carriage, coal), housing (lumber, hardware), and sundries (books, tobacco). Urban households consumed more factory goods than rural households, possibly three times more, according to an estimate for the 1850s.\textsuperscript{22} Railroads, stores, warehouses, and public buildings, required construction materials such as lumber, glass, and hardware, while interiors needed furniture and lamps. Municipal improvements, such as streets, lighting, and sewers, used bricks, pipes, and metal tubing. The natural resource sector (agriculture, lumbering, and mining) demanded construction-related implements and machinery, and processing machinery needed farm implements (hoses, rakes, plows) and machinery (reapers, mowers, threshers), while lumbermen and miners demanded saws, axes, shovels, and hammers. Most processing industries (flour mills, saw mills, smelters) required steam engines, unless adequate waterpower was available. Intra- and interregional trade needed transportation equipment (wagons, steamboats and engines, locomotives, rail cars, and rails), containers (barrels), and materials (paper, newspapers, handbills, legal forms).\textsuperscript{23} These products required inputs from the producer-durable industries, including iron (and later steel), wood-working and metal machinery, and foundries.\textsuperscript{24}

Regional industrialization

An increasingly broad industrial sector supplied these diversifying sources of demand. The costs of iron manufacturin decline when an antirust coal became available as a fuel; these reduced costs spread benefits to a broad base of consumers, ranging from the intensive industries, such as glass and paper, made more effective use of steam engines and reduced operating costs. A broad range of industries, such as boots and shoes, coaches, terraces, bricks, paper, glass, and paper, nevertheless, achieved similar rates of productivity growth.\textsuperscript{25} The focus on machinery technology and methods of using raw materials may be mislaid. Sophisticated machinery did not affect most manufacturing processes before 1860; labor productivity increased much more than the productivity of capital and raw materials.\textsuperscript{26} Changes in labor organization and intensification of work must have been critical factors leading to productivity gains.\textsuperscript{27}

Thus, following 1810, the East had all of the ingredients for intra-regional specialization between each metropolis—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore—and its hinterland.\textsuperscript{28} The resource producers (agriculture, mining, lumbering) of the hinterland increased their output for metropolitan markets, while factories in the metropolises expanded to supply consumer and producer durables for the growing local and hinterland (barrels, minerals, and other natural resources, the hinterland also specialized in processing (flour, lumber, bricks) and intermediate (iron) manufactures for the local and the metropolitan market. The hinterland absorbed a portion of New York's hinterland in following this broad pattern of intra-regional specialization but added the variant of national market manufactures. Boston's hinterland specialized in personal goods, such as shoes, whereas New York's specialization in manufactures such as buttons and clocks.\textsuperscript{29} These manufactures initially sold within their respective hinterlands but expanded through the eastern seaboard to other hinterlands.\textsuperscript{23}

Transportation improvements stoked the fires of intra-regional specialization. They expanded dramatically the area of commercial agriculture and raised the productivity of existing cropland farms; thus, the market for manufactures in the East increased still more between 1820 and 1840.\textsuperscript{30} Turnpikes had a local positive impact on agriculture adjacent to the large cities, but the more important impact came from the canals, especially the Erie system (and its lateral connectors) and to a lesser extent the Pennsylvania Mainline system.

By 1840, the East had set a regional industrial template. The metropolises produced a wide range of manufactures, including processing and consumer and producer durables. Some manufactures served eastern markets (and southern), but most looked to intra-regional markets. Small industrial satellites appeared around many of these metropolises.\textsuperscript{31} These satellites in New England near Boston and New York specialized in regional (eastern) manufactures and to a lesser extent in regional manufactures. The eastern seaboard was divided into regional manufactures that complemented the metropolises' industries, such as glass and paper, or that served rural markets, such as carriages and wagons and agricultural machinery; textile manufacturing.

Eastern urban-industrial markets grew explosively from 1840 to 1860: the urban population increased

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threefold from 1,375,000 in 1840 to 4,041,000 in 1860; and the urban share of the population rose from 19 percent in 1840 to 35 percent in 1860. The share of this market housed in the four major metropolitan centers stood between 63 percent and 65 percent from 1790 to 1820, then fell to 57 percent in 1840 and 55 percent in 1860. These metropolises, nonetheless, collectively reached a huge size, rising almost threefold from 790,536 in 1840 to 2,130,566 in 1860. As a city, New York had a population of 1,174,779, almost as much as the total urban population in the East just twenty years earlier. Philadelphia followed with 655,529, Baltimore had 212,418, and Boston had 177,134. This rapid urban growth coincided with the period of the greatest rate of expansion of manufacturing in the nineteenth century, 152 percent between 1839 and 1849 and 193 percent between 1844 and 1854. The economy underwent a massive sectoral shift from agriculture to manufacturing. Agriculture’s share of total commodity output declined from 72 percent in 1839 to 56 percent in 1859, whereas manufacturing’s share rose from 17 percent to 32 percent. Eastern industrial employment expanded from under 500,000 in 1840 to almost 500,000 in 1860. Factories in some industries in the East increasingly looked to markets in other regions of the East. As the specialists in light-weight, high-value manufactures such as textiles and boots and shoes, the industrial cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia participated extensively in this growing interregional trade between 1840 and 1860. The trade of the Philadelphia region provides the best indicator of the expansion of interregional industrial markets in the East and because many of its factories produced heavy industrial goods previously limited to short-distance shipments. Between 1835 and 1850 (the best evidence available), the coastal commerce of Philadelphia rose over fivefold, measured by the number of vessels arriving. Much of Philadelphia’s interregional trade from 1840 to 1860 consisted of anthracite coal, but growing amounts of iron and iron products (rails, railroad car wheels, machinary) from the region moved to other parts of the East. Eastern factories also increasingly looked to markets in other sections. The exact composition of this trade cannot be identified precisely, but estimates of merchandise trade flows imply that considerable growth occurred. Between 1839 and 1860, the trade from the East to the Midwest rose from $19.7 million (current dollars) to $164.3 million and from the East to the South from $85.6 million to $213.8 million. The market for eastern manufactures in the Midwest must have become almost as large as in the South. Railroads that connected the East and the Midwest became the preferred route for industrial trade flows during the 1850s. In spite of the growth in trade from the East to the Midwest and the South, industrial markets in the East loomed vastly more important to its factories. The total exports (all commodities) of the East to the other sections comprised no more than 10 percent to 15 percent of total eastern production from 1839 to 1860. Eastern markets powered eastern industrialization.

Conclusions

By 1860, the East had robust local and regional market manufacturing sectors. It also had an expanding resource sector based on agriculture, lumbering, and mining. Processing manufacturers, thus, remained important; but by 1860, they had become relatively less significant. National market manufacturing had become the specialty of the East because the markets for those goods had arisen first based on a robust agricultural sector.


The rural Northeast in the 1990s: Social resources for adapting to change

Cynthia M. Duncan and Sean R. Laier

T he restructuring economy presents formidable challenges for the 27 million rural residents of the Northeast. In the 1980s and early 1990s there was a significant decline in the goods-producing jobs in manufacturing and resource development. To make it possible for many to raise families and maintain healthy communities in much of rural America until the late 1970s. Today more families are scrambling to piece together livelihoods, and more communities are struggling to meet the needs of families who used to be self reliant, supported by living wages in stable jobs they could count on (Fitchett 1991; Duncan 1995).

The rural Northeast encounters these changes with some important historical advantages compared to other regions, but the future is uncertain nonetheless. One advantage is that the political economy in northeastern rural communities did not generate great inequalities of wealth and power. Unlike chronically poor communities we have studied in Appalachia and the Delta, rural communities in the northern tier of the Northeast have had relatively equal distribution of income, work, and other opportunities (University of New Hampshire From 1990-1995 Cynthia Duncan conducted 330 interviews with poor young adults, farmers and nonfarmers, and single parents and adults in three rural areas, in a project on social mobility and community change supported by the Ford Foundation).
and offer an advantage as northeastern rural communities confront the changed economy of the 1990s.

Rural areas of the Northeast are not completely isolated from the region's urban areas, and as early as the mid-1800s urban residents took an interest in the preservation of rural resources and natural beauty. The Adirondacks in New York, the Green and White Mountains in Vermont and New Hampshire, and the lakes and coastal regions of Maine have long provided seasonal recreational amenities to urban residents (Lapying 1991; Lewis 1991; Vail 1995; Heffernan and Steckler 1991). Their presence and interests in the region have affected both the social and the political sphere in remote rural areas. On a social level the greater prosperity and relatively cosmopolitan backgrounds of urban visitors have diminished the isolation of full-time residents, and brought more social resources to the region. In the political arena, wealthy seasonal residents have used their power in state legislatures to ensure a flow of new resources and environment. This pressure helped maintain the natural beauty of the region's remote areas, and prevented the dominance of one industry by offering other powerful voices on state's economic policies.

Today a broad cross section of people in northern communities are talking about making their communities sustainable. Those who are having these discussions are no clearer than people elsewhere about what this means and what it would entail, but the fact that discussion is widespread and legitimate among state leaders and rural community leaders is a sign of the region's historical preoccupation with interweaving economic and conservationist interests. It is not easy, nor without contention, but it is being discussed. The Northern Forest Lands Council is an arena for this discussion, and the Northeastern fisheries another. In Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine there is an effort to build sustainable communities supported by the Ford Foundation that is unfolding slowly, but in the minds of participants, effectively.

While the rural Northeast has these advantages in social organization, it also has serious disadvantages. The region as a whole is not growing economically and people are leaving the Northeast more than they are migrating into the region (Stein 1995). Remote rural areas are least likely to capture or create jobs in the high growth areas that require technical skills and sophisticated communications infrastructure. It will take all the social resources and ingenuity these places can muster to overcome the "natural" outmigration of jobs from the region, and build sustainable economics for the future.

In this paper, we briefly review conditions in the rural Northeast in the 1990s, point out changes since 1980. Then we describe some of the social entrepreneurs who contribute to the rich social capital that we have studied in the rural Northeast. Conditions and perspectives in northern New England are very similar to conditions Fitchen describes in rural New York, giving us reason to believe they may reflect those in the northern tier of the rural Northeast more generally.

Socio-economic trends in the region: Exurbania and the remote North Country

Socio-economic conditions vary somewhat by how remote counties are. The 100 nonmetropolitan counties in the Northeast include much of northern New England, northern New York, a swath along southern New York and northern Pennsylvania, and portions of central Pennsylvania (see Map 1). The 35 remote counties are in northern New York: New York's North Country, studied by Fitchen; five outlying counties in Maine; a corridor along the Connecticut River in New Hampshire and Vermont; and a handful of counties in western Pennsylvania (see Map 2).

Educational attainment of the adult population continued upward during the 1980s throughout the Northeast, and by 1990 more than 74 percent of nonmetro adults had completed high school (see Table 1). A college education is of increased importance in the restructured economy, and the gap between metro and nonmetro areas increased on this indicator. In 1990 only 53 percent of remote rural residents had a college education, compared to 36 percent in adjacent counties and 43 percent in metro counties (see Table 1). Median household income is still lower and has a narrower distribution in rural counties, but the gap between median income in metro areas and nonmetro areas has not widened (see Table 1).

Unemployment is higher in rural areas: when we calculate the proportion of non-student adults aged 16-65 employed, we find an average of 7.5 percent in remote rural areas, compared to 7.9 percent in metro areas (see Table 1). Full time full year work is difficult to find throughout the rural Northeast, and only a few counties have 75 percent or more of working males working full time full year. The more remote rural counties are most vulnerable to part time or part year work (see Map 3).

Trends in New York's and New England's "North Country"

Upstate New York's North Country

Janet Fitchen's Endangered Spaces, Enduring Places: Change, Identity, and Survival in Rural America includes a section documenting changes in the economy of New York's North Country and relating how local residents perceive those changes. She sums up her findings as a "paradox of vigor and vulnerability" (Fitchen 1991:53). The late 1980s, when Fitchen was doing her field work, was a time of relative growth and economic health in the region, after years in which North Country residents had crossed together livelihoods with what she calls "make-do strategies." Manufacturing is key to the region's economic base, and firms are generally small, employing between twenty and 100 workers. Often companies are owned by locals rather than by distant corporate conglomerates. When local companies are bought by outside companies, residents feel a loss. As Fitchen points out, these changes in ownership are often recent and change social relations in the communities in important ways.

Although the old-fashioned, paternalistic relationship of employer and employee that obtained in many locally owned

Table 1. Median household income, educational attainment, and percent employed in the North Country, 1980-1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Metropolitan Counties</th>
<th>Adjacent Counties</th>
<th>Remote Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
<td>$17,814</td>
<td>$14,713</td>
<td>$15,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,803</td>
<td>$26,837</td>
<td>$25,134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent high school graduates</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with some college</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent employed in civilian labor force</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

manufacturing firms in the past may have hidden a number of sacrifices. It did have advantages for local workers, the least of which was a feeling that management and workers had a shared stake in the success of the factories. The process of management and workers being remembered by residents who grew up locally in the 1960s and 1970s (1985). The small scale combined with the history of responsible paternalism created a community-wide feeling of mutual interests and a sense that everyone shared the same fate economically.

The forces that stimulated rural industrialization and Calvin Beale’s rural renaissance in the 1970s have been replaced by forces associated with international competition, including low wages. The foothills firms that would come to dominate areas for low wages and, not incidentally, a good quality of life, now often go to developing countries, where wages are a fraction of those in rural areas.

Small communities in rural areas now exhibit that lovely scene of good deer hunting, good schools, and a low crime rate; will be insufficient either to save the jobs they have or to attract new ones.

Like all rural communities in America, northeastern rural residents find that good, service-sector jobs are in the public sector, and these are highly prized for the reasons of high, good benefits, and steady work they provide. New York’s North Country, like New England’s, offers a beautiful natural environment. These resources mean both seasonal tourism and land development associated with vacations. Fitchburg points out that these tourism and recreation-driven economic activities carry costs as well as benefits, and invariably tie remote northern economies to the economic cycles of metro areas. In our New England North Country these ties brought a downturn in the early 1990s, and may have done the same in New York. Even as local residents coped with the effects of the downturn, we saw some social benefits from the retirement population and recreation industry. Fitchburg found, as many rural analysts have over recent decades, that those with more diverse economies fare better.

New England’s North Country

We have been studying and working with community leaders in northern New England for the last five years, and during that time the region has experienced a significant economic and identity change. The North Country Fitchburg, this region enjoyed good times in the 1980s: second homes and recreation industries were booming on the back of Massachusetts prosperity, and land values soared. Not only were there jobs in the recreation industries and retail sector, but also there was a construction boom that gave young men opportunities as they entered the labor force. Even the mills saw relatively good times up until the late 1980s and early 1990s. These opportunities temporarily hid the effect of restructuring that was beginning to affect the region. When the mill in Fitchburg decided to shut the doors of the arcades began to contract, and there was a decline in manufacturing jobs, the changes were a serious blow.

Between 1980 and 1990 the proportion of jobs in manufacturing declined from 27 percent to 18 percent, and these had wages that were between 22 and 50 percent higher than the alternative service sector jobs. The average non-manufacturing worker’s full-time, full-year work pay was $15,400, very close to the official poverty level for a family of four at the time. Families lost benefits and the ability to maintain a middle class life style. Between 1988 and 1991 mortgage bankruptcies increased from 72 to 310. During the most difficult period, official unemployment was around 8 percent.

More than most rural families, those in this region have historically depended on two workers in the labor force, and women have had relatively high participation for decades. Nonetheless, the hard times of the early 1980s and early 1990s sent more women to work, and more mothers with young children. Seventy-seven percent of mothers with children at home were in the work force by 1990. More and more workers were holding two jobs, and informants reported that many families were without basic health insurance and health care.

Northern rural communities come to these hard times with the advantages mentioned above—they have not been plagued by long term inequalities in wealth and power. Rather, the considerable majority of the community’s residents are members of a solid working class (see Figure 1, comparing our northern New Hampshire county’s income distribution with our study counties in the Mississippi Delta and Appalachian coal-producing region). North Country social institutions like schools, churches, and recreation programs are inclusive and cooperative. Social relationships cross class boundaries in every domain of community life, and participation in community affairs and politics is widespread. People talk about and commit to change when they discuss their community, and residents from across the class spectrum feel a sense of responsibility for community affairs. Social capital in different dimensions of community life is tangible and visible to residents.

Social capital as trust, commitment, cooperation, and participation


3These trends are described in Young Families and Youth in the North Country, a 1993 report for communities in northern New Hampshire produced by Cynthia Dusen, Susan Westerberg, and Louise Park, the Institute for Policy and Social Sciences research at the University of New Hampshire.

Cornelia Flora and Jan Flora (1993), and Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur (1994) have begun to use the concept of social capital to refer to the nature of social organization and social relations in communities. Coleman describes social capital as something that inheres in social relationships that can be used by individuals to transform an opportunity. It is a commitment and investment in relationships that affects social action: a parent who helps a child with her homework can improve that child’s learning; a group of parents who invest in a parent-teacher organization can make the school work more smoothly and benefit students; a group of diamond investors who have a long-term trading when they trust one another. Trust and social ties become a factor in how “things go” for individuals and groups.

McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) use the term to describe relationships of trust and trustworthiness as an asset affecting children’s socialization, arguing that children in single parent families have less emotional as well as material support. A child with one parent has only one adult directly interested and constantly committed to and investing in his or her well-being, as well as fewer connections to other adults and groups in the community. In other words, the child loses not only the additional relationships, but the wider experience of trust and commitment that contribute to self esteem, social development, and connection to opportunities. Putnam (1993a, 1993b, 1995) sees social capital as constructive social relations characteristic of communities, where the adherence to the norms of trust and networks of communication. His study of Italian regional development showed that those areas where there were long standing habits of trust, cooperation, and civic participation fared better in the way than those characterized by distrust and competition or patron-client relations. He argues that communities where people do things together—sigh in groups, bowl in groups, visit and know one another—are better able to meet community-wide needs through government and volunteer organizations. Cornelia and Jan Flora (1993) use these ideas to guide the community development field by showing that entrepreneurial social infrastructures—social capital visible in good leadership—is an essential element in community development. They argue that sustainable communities are those in which institutions are more inclusive, accepting diversity, and in which civic relations are more “entrepreneurial” and exhibit the resilience and flexibility necessary to initiate progressive change.

Our comparative study examines social mobility and change in the context of social class structure, considering how the social relations that ensure from a given constellation of classes affect prospects for individual mobility and community development. The social context of a community’s susceptibility to changes in the mobility of the poor—both structurally, socially, and psychologically—and either facilitates or hinders adaption to the challenges of a restructuring economy. We use the term social class context to describe the character of relations between classes that emerge from a given social class structure. When there is a large middle or working class that invests in public, community-wide institutions, the social relations and social institutions are in-
The Northeast

clusive and cross-class boundaries. The poor are not iso-
lated from the mainstream middle and working class. Thus the poor have access to informal networks for work and recreation, and are able to participate in the models participating in the mainstream. When, on the other hand, there is a small or non-existent middle class and a large group of poor, the rich and well-to-do separate themselves in social institutions, expect deference, and discourage every social encounter with the poor. The poor have no legitimate contacts for work, and cannot relate to the role models of those in the mainstream because they are inter-
ested in what is important to them and psychologically separated from them. Finally, they do not gain what William Julius Wil-
son (1991) calls the "cultural learning" and what Chris-
topher Jencks (1991) calls the "cultural skills" necessary to get hired by middle class employers.

But the social class context also affects the workings of the community more generally, and determines the extent to which it is stagnant or more open and oriented toward change. The dominant communities in our study, for example, have food chains that have face-to-face power over community politics and affairs. This power makes the power vulnerable in every aspect of their lives, but just as importantly, it en-
ables members of the elite to block change that would expand opportunities for participation and dilute their own power and privilege. In the Appalachian coal counties and the Mississippi Delta plantation counties in our study, the lending power elite blocked new enterprises from coming in to the area because these new businesses would have diversified employment opportunities and diversified the "employer" base, diminishing their control over labor in the area.

Finally, when the elite has deeply entrenched, wide power over community institutions, they are able to "run things," as our interviewees put it, in an arbitrary, per-
sonal manner. This arbitrary wielding of power under-
nodes is hotly opposed by both social institutions and personal social relationships. Individuals say "people ain't for you" in the Delta, "they try to keep you down" in Appalachia. They are wary of others, even other low income people, and trust no one. Even second hand clothes and cloth-
edy food distribution is reputed to be handled on the basis of favoritism or corrupt practices in these stratified communities. But in the northern community where there is middle class, but steadily working middle class, even the poor say "everyone's is the same boat here" and "when times are hard, everyone feels it—they don't make us feel different."

These differences in social relations can be traced back in history to the social relations either required or facilitated by the conditions in particular industries. In the plantation economy, which relied on sharecropping and tenant farming, Insko's "furnished" advance on

Figure 2. Percent of males age 16 to 65 employed in the civilian labor force.

Cynthia M. Duncan

small communities that include more upper middle class, cosmopolitan vacation residents. Both factors may be important in shaping the social capital and character of community relations. Social entrepreneurs: Those who stay and those from away

Why they stay

The most active and entrepreneurial leaders in this community include one group of people who have grown up within the community and chosen to stay. Even when they might make more money or work in more prestigious occupations elsewhere, and another group who came from elsewhere, often expecting their stay to be short, but stayed on, making the same trade-offs about income and occupational prestige. The same three considerations are important to both groups in making their decision to live in this remote rural community. First, they are well enough off to feel more comfortable whether they stay or leave "matters" to the community; sec-
ond, they value the friendliness of the community and their own friendship and relationships with people from so many different walks of life that they value the "lifestyle" advantages, both in recreational-
ous outdoor activities and in the quality of the environment for raising a family.

However, our interviews with agents and others who stayed over again interviewees tell us that "one person can make a difference here" and that conviction appears to generate a commitment to doing so. Several of those who came and stayed were part of either the so-
cial change movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, working as physicians or lawyers or other professionals in a poor rural area, or were part of the "back to the land" movement who sought simpler living and some form of "being on their own" that they could participate in community activities, and see the difference in the lives and institutions they touched. One change agent who worked with a small group and was suc-
sessfully brought down rates of teen pregnancy in the re-

region put it this way:

Question: Do you remember what went on in your head as you started to feel like you might stay here and see how life was going to work out?

Answer: Yes, I think it was a big choice. By that time I was very involved with my [social] program. I loved it. It was great because I was involved with things on a national level, it was very interesting, and there was so much to do. You could be so creative here. Mary was feeling the same way in her [profes-
sion], her troupeau [what she might be missing], we would go back and visit our friends in those far-

4

nors and places, and other identifying characteristics have been changed to ensure confidentiality.


New England Hills County

Appalachia Coal County

Delta Plантation County


Wages, housing, and health care and had absolute con-
control. Until the agreement in the 1950s between United Mine Workers and Bituminous Coal Oper-
ations of America, the coal industry was bitterly competi-
tive and labor strife was constant and violent. Miners
were dependent on mining companies for food, doctors, housing, and other community goods. After the agree-
ment, expected discrimination, and the strike they encouraged, those with-
out good coal jobs either left the region or became de-
pendent on public assistance programs.

The rail and recreation areas have not always had an easy time of it, but enforcement has been steady over time, and not so scarce as in these southern communities (see Figure 2). The company store in the mill town was one outlet among many, and did not have a hold on mill workers. Mill managers and owners lived in town in the same neighborhoods as mill workers, not in separate ar-
eas as they did in the coal and plantation towns. Today the chronically poor communities have a lower class, a middle class, and an elite, and these elite and these elite still mostly live in separate neighbor-

borders, and participate in community life through their own, class-specific churches or private schools. In contrast, in the community with a sizable middle class we heard over and over that physicians play golf with truck drivers, hospital administrators go fishing with janitors, and carpenters and business owners rebuild a boat together over the winter.

Like Putnam's work in Italy and the flora's work in the Midwest, our community studies suggest that the trust and commitment that McLanahan and Smoloffur and others rightly identify as an asset to individuals trying to "make it" are also vital to community well-being. Trust and commitment refer to the moral side of social

relations. Trust in one's neighbors means one can rely on, and commit to, a broader network than one's family. One can participate in responsible to repu-

For these young couples, living in a remote rural area was a kind of adventure, and there was a sense of making a unique and valued contribution.

**Question:** We were talking about how you started to feel like you were really making a difference, or you were being so involved in your work.

**Answer:** I think that was one of the main reasons. I think the other reason was that we discovered a wonderful place to live. We really had gotten attached to the North Country, and we had a lot to do and we did make some new friends and those kinds of things with such freedom and such ease. I think we were kind of in a rush to learn how to live. We didn't have any of these concerns about whether we were staying or not. I can go there and say "Hey, what's going on out there?" and they'd say "Come on in and have a beer." And you know, you're comfortable. You can leave your keys in the car or the stove...you feel really good talking to these people. You don't have your guard up. You're not trying to negotiate something. You're not looking for something.

**Interviewed owners of the larger locally owned businesses, and they are all deeply involved in community affairs. They are involved in a wide range of institutions and projects:***

- **Well,** you get involved in a lot because you're...you... because you've been there and have a commitment to this community. I'm still on the [ABC board]. On the board of directors of the bank here...one of the banks here...I have been involved in the Industrial Park. And I was a volunteer. That, too, is a lot of time.

- **And now the volunteers...** volunteers two a week at the school where our children are going...they work with the kids [with] music...with them. And she's also...it'd be a critical-intervention group [with] the school. And sometimes they latch onto a child that has some severe problems or something blows up in his life, and she's there...that one child goes out and she's involved in that...And...the school can be a critical thing in the community.

**Large amounts of volunteer time are required.**

- **For example,** in this community, a school board member receives credit for serving, and can expect to meet 60-70 times a year. "We had long meetings, really thinned out things...the best times were when we had one or two quite liberal members with a mixture of more conservative. I would say we did better work during that time period." Another leader described the group that formed to keep the mill open. He also said "straight talking and trust were vital."
The Northeast

Altogether recalled:
My father worked for the Penrose Company—you know a lot of people worked there thirty, forty, fifty years ago. And they all got along pretty well. They brought in a nurse program, before there was a full-time hospital. They hired nurses to do the visiting. They subsidized the TMH, raised the money, gave the land. They built a swimming pool. An indoor truck, pool tables, bowling alleys. It was quite a thing. They brought in all the picture Pontiacs, motorcycles, concerts. You know they really felt they had a duty to the community because the community had built them. They felt they had a duty to put these things back into the community...The [current owners] have nothing to do with the town...But the Penrose kids went to school here. They lived in town. They were part of the community.

Community cooperation and investments
Those who have lived elsewhere say they are struck by the cooperative spirit here. I was really amazed at how cooperative people were and in some sense how easy it was to get things done. Maybe it was because there's a lot of need, or maybe it's because people were looking for the opportunity to get together and do it...the people who do work on these things are people who have developed strong working relationships and trust so that things can happen.

What community invests in itself. In recent years two major community-wide social investments have been carried out: the whole town built a playground for everyone in the community to use; and local business leaders, bankers, and mill workers joined together to make investments in the mill and sell the community to new buyers. Constructing the playground required substantial organizing of labor and resources, voluntary work, and business contributions of equipment and supplies. The effort was remarkable for its deliberate inclusiveness, and in the plans for its use by the whole community when it was finished. As one leader describes it:

A teacher and one other person we're talking about. Said, "Gee, let's get more information." Then it grew to 2 or 3 other teachers got involved. And then the PTA got involved on it. And it was the PTA really took off with it. And they got all my neighbors involved. And pretty soon it crossed neighborhood lines. And people from other neighborhoods were all for it. It was a great...it was just...everybody worked together for a common goal. There was no bickering, no turfism or...geez, you know, I know more about this than you...why the hell do you get involved? None of that. Everybody was glad to do whatever they could to help. Because it was done so well. They planned ahead.

Similarly, members of the mill force set up the mill as a community asset, not just as a means of income. One of the striking things is that the community regards the mill as its own asset, a community resource, regardless of who owns it. Even as owners themselves—most residents with whom we spoke felt that being owned by a smaller business that knew the industry and would invest in its future was preferable to a large corporate conglomerate owner—the community appears to see their investment of time, goodwill, and political capital to keep the mill technologically up-to-date and to invest in compliance with environmental regulations as investment in the community's general future.

Conclusion
Northern parts of the rural Northeast are hard hit by changes in the economic base and constraints on natural resource development, but the communities have rich social capital that they can bring to their deliberations. This capital includes a process for developing strategies to establish a resilient, sustainable economy. Our interviews in northern New England communities suggest that compared to many other rural areas in the nation they have the advantages of high levels of trust, commitment to one another and to the whole community, and widespread participation in community deliberations. This will be an interesting region to watch, and for policy makers and foundations to support.

References
sity of California.

The future of the rural Northeast

Mark L. Lapping*

T
he diversity which defines rural America is typical of the rural Northeast as well. This is a region of vast forest and mountain wilderness areas with little towns both on their peripheries and interspersed within them. Seaports and fishing villages dot long coastlines, mining and mill towns are in valleys and among numerous tracts of federal or state-owned lands. There is a growing number of tourism and retirement-based communities, substantial interior agricultural regions, and a large number of rural/urban fringe areas. All of this exists in the very midst of the nation's most heavily industrialized and urbanized region. Though largely thought of as a region of great cities and sprawling suburbs, the Northeast retains huge rural territories and includes several of the most rural states—in terms of population—in the entire country. With approximately 3.7 million people living in rural areas and small towns, Pennsylvania, for example, has the single largest rural population of any state in the nation (Willits and Laloff, 1995).

What lies ahead for the future of the Northeast's rural places and people? The safest and easiest prediction is that trend will become destiny and that very little will change in the near future. We can be a little more precise in this view of tomorrow. The changing policy context for agriculture and natural resources development is likely to find us with even fewer but larger producers. Whole sectors of the northeastern rural economy will be decimated by continued degradation of the massive clear-cuts of forests and by the destruction of the fisheries. Fewer people will work in these areas as employment downsizing and automation continues apace. The "cow hegemony" so central to latego-scale northeastern agricultural policy will decline further, with far fewer farms but greater per cow production due to the pervasive acceptance of even more sophisticated biotechnology inputs used to enhance bovine productivity. As society ages.

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and the "baby-boomers" begin to draw upon their pensions, the region’s retirement communities will witness severe economic constraint as well. Inverted-y-shaped houses can become averted in a year-round use. An array of new problems will emerge in these areas, especially in the realm of health care and related services. The rural poor will remain in the mainstream of the region’s population. In general, but those of the down-south, will be further stressed and the associated pathologies which we are only now beginning to understand, will be rampant. Rural hospitals, schools, airlines, trucking and rail services, and other public and private services that are outside of the realm of metropolitanization, will continue to decline in quality, offset only partially by the nearby ubiquity of telecommunication. The rural/urban fringe will remain among the most unprecinted territories in the country.

Other factors could contribute to modify this future. Among these would be changes in micro-climatic conditions; possible substantial increases in energy prices due to growing demand and dwindling supply (the Northeast is especially vulnerable to this aspect). In the Yemeni region, the West region, the development of new areas adjacent to metropolitan counties and portions of the rural fringe, as indicated in Table 1. This list presents a variety of non-traditional commodities, many of which cater to specific new tastes (e.g., "bogus" farm specialties) or to specific markets (e.g., growing ethnic demand for sheep and goat products). Some of the most interesting items on this list are farm involvement in services like tourism, recreation, and education. Not only do planners anticipate that farmers will develop new food product lines, but nonagricultural activities on the farm are expected to become an important income source. Like specialty commodities, these services also tap markets for field trips, produce delivery to local restaurants, and "estate management" in the form of animal boarding and training. These enterprises are feasible because of the relative proximity rural/urban fringe farmers will continue to have to large numbers of nongovernmental neighbors, either in cities and suburbs, or in the fringe areas themselves. In addition to their obvious economic function, these activities also contribute to environmental enhancement and the maintenance throughout rural/urban fringe areas of high quality landscape and open-space amenities.

Agriculture in the fringe

Planners expect future farming to meet regional food demands in two ways: marketing direct to local consumers, and supplying regionally-defined "rural" consumers. Both outlets currently provide strong demand for foods grown within the region. In the future, the Northeast will probably not become more food self-sufficient, but the region's agriculture could thrive by providing high-value, specialty products to consumers in large metropolitan centers. Direct-marketing opportunities, ranging from farmer's markets to roadside stands and pick-your-own operations, will also continue to expand to meet demand. Direct marketing has grown in response to the residential development in rural/urban fringe areas and is an especially effective sales strategy for the more diverse small farms. New Jersey, for example, has achieved efficiencies of scale needed to profit in wholesale markets. The small farms that market directly also contribute to the rural ambiance that is valued by so many people living in suburbs and the fringe.

It appears that these different market opportunities available within the rural fringe are not the Northeast are best exploited by distinct farm types. Different types of agricultural production, in conjunction with different settlement patterns, will likely define the emerging structure of agriculture. According to data generated by Pfeffer and Lapping's surveys and interviews, planners from sparsely populated parts of the Northeast tend to be more optimistic about the future of conventional dairy and field crop production in their areas, although they expect farm numbers to continue to decline and the size of remaining operations to increase. Most planners appear to agree that, in more built-up areas, smaller farmers producing specialty vegetable and fruit crops are likely to be more successful. Some respondents expect trends toward both consolidation and deconcentration within their areas, depending on the types of production which individual farmers emphasize. In general, the farmers in the study are at least accurate in their assessments of the future of agriculture in the region's rural/urban fringe; then, we can expect not only the further diversification of production activities but also the continued development of a more diverse farm sector within local areas and throughout the region (Pfeffer and Lapping, 1995).
Right-to-Farm: The Dilemma of the Fringe

In the rural/urban fringe, agricultural and nonfarm users are often contigous and "spillover effects" are common. People are attracted to such places because of open space amenities and rural ambiance, non-priced goods, and services provided by agriculture. But because agriculture is an economic activity that may generate externalities—such as noise from machinery, livestock odors, dust, traffic congestion, and exposure to certain chemicals, nonfarmers may have nuisance laws to restrict or prohibit certain farming practices. By limiting farm operations, nonfarmers baste the exit of farmers from agriculture and increase the likelihood that even more farmland will be converted to other uses. In this way the broiler surrounds becomes urbanized and those nonfarmers who sought to escape from an urban landscape, find themselves within its grasp once again.

It is hard to conceive of such a thing as farmland without farms. Or what land Keefer, (1981) refers to as a "rural fringe"—where farmlands are broken into ever smaller units as a result of development pressures. This leads to a "checkerboard" distribution of farmlands with fewer contiguous fields, making it difficult to monitor crop growth, efficiently move equipment, or control pest populations in an effective and timely manner.

A number of different approaches have been taken to develop an urban or fringed farmland, (Lapping, Daniels, and Keller, 1990). Several measures, like preferential farmland tax assessment, agricultural districts, right-to-farm laws, and purchase of development rights, have been widely adopted. Preferential farm tax assessment is the single most common measure and has been adopted in every state of the nation. Its present and future effectiveness appears to be questionable. Agricultural district programs exist in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland. Their utility appears to be most effective in "deep" rural areas rather than in the fringe, unless they are tied to other interventions which speak more directly to the kinds of issues rural/urban fringe area farmers must confront. Purchase of development rights (PDR) programs are also found across much of the region (Presedgood, 1991). Because effective PDR programs are scarce, and increasing land prices are stressing farmers and often forcing them to develop small tracts of small town and rural fringe. This will lead to a partial rearrangement of space throughout rural regions. Public investments will be targeted toward those communities that are dominant, or emerging, regional centers. This will anchor larger rural territories. Communities that are declining or stagnating will not receive the same scale of public investment (Daniels and Lapping, 1987). Population and asset transfer from dying, remote towns to
The Northeast

regional centers will be carried out in the names of both economic efficiency and equity, much as the federal government has done through its buyout program for floodplain properties damaged or destroyed in the wake of the Mississippi River floods of 1993. Whether explicit or not, triage represents an emerging model of regional planning and development for areas currently typified by uneven development and structural transition, a situation which defines the contemporary rural Northeast and its likely near future.

References


From old South to new: Metropolitan and regional development in the Lower South, 1860 to 1920*

David F. Weiman **

From old to New South

In the late antebellum period there was an urban "take-off" in the United States, as is evident in the acceleration of the urbanization rate after 1840. After four decades of sluggish growth, the share of the population living in cities virtually doubled between 1840 and 1860 and again by 1900. As Figure 1 shows, this urban transformation was not confined to the more industrial states of the Northeast, but took hold firmly in the agricultural regions of the Midwest (i.e., the east and west north central states) and the Upper South.

The one glaring anomaly in Figure 1 are the states of the Deep or Lower South. Despite the early rise of New Orleans, cities in the region accounted for only 7 percent of the population in 1840 and a mere 9 percent forty


3I presented an earlier version of this paper to workshops at Louisiana State University, Stanford University, University of Chicago, University of Michigan, and Yale University. I am grateful to the participants for their comments. I would also like to acknowledge the comments of Jean de Vries, Carville Balle, David Meyer, and Chris Wright. This research was supported by grants from the Eno Foundation and the PSC-CUNY Research Award Program.

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The South

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Figure 1. Comparative regional urbanization, 1820-1930

The South remained on the periphery of the cotton economy until the 1870s, when structural economic changes at the regional scale integrated it more thoroughly into the cotton economy.

To begin, I outline the mercantile model of metropolitan development, which implies the cumulative development of metropolitan and region. The conditions of regional urbanization are: (1) the critical changes in the countryside, which spurred rapid urbanization and the formation of metropolitan centers; (2) to resolve one piece of this puzzle, I turn to the antebellum South, and (3) the plantation constrained the region to a form of enclave development. The economic and geographic isolation of yeoman farms communities on the margins of the plantations or Cotton Belt was a critical factor in this self-reinforcing dynamic.

The next section addresses the remaining questions. Focusing on the Southeast, for the timing and location of the regional urbanization, I am interested in the formation of new arteries of trade—north-south rail lines which linked the Lower South to northern metropolitan centers and incidentally opened up or commercialized yeoman farm communities in the Upcountry. These new spatial patterns of transport and trade were a critical catalyst that sparked a cumulative dynamic of metropolitan and regional development in Upcountry regions and so paved the way for a "new" South.

The cumulative dynamic of metropolitan development

Regardless of theoretical perspective, urban geographers comprehend the formation of metropolitan centers in relation to their hinterlands or trade area. Where they part company is on the nature of that relationship. In contrast to classical models of urban geography, the mercantile model posits a cumulative dynamic between metropolitan and regional development.

Historically, the process occurred in three logically and chronologically distinct phases, from the formation of transport systems (or gateway cities) to their elevation into local and regional metropolises.

From an alternative perspective, it corresponded to the growth and consolidation of smaller, regional centers in more stable urban systems.

Metropolitan transport hubs, mediating the inter- and intra-regional trade of their hinterland. They represented "innovations" in territorial urban systems, induced by structural economic changes that reordered traffic flows and forms of production and trade. In more geographic terms, they developed in response to changes in nodality or "initial advantage" within the nexus of commodity and information flows.

In territorially expanding economies like the nine- tenth century United States, the formation of transport hubs typically occurred through the opening up of "new" regions on the settlement frontier. Accordingly, the vast majority (into the U.S. date from the initial settlement of their hinterland. Still, new hubs were often formed in "old" or settled areas as well, because changes in transport technology and busi- nesses organizational strategies disrupted the economic resources fundamentally altered spatial patterns of trade.

The functions of gateways were evidenced by their location, economic structure, and key personnel. They were the logical outgrowth of the new regional peripheral regions at strategic points in the transport system, which afforded convenient access to both. Their mercan- tile structure furthered the development of the new territory by funneling critical resources from core regions (such as financial and commercial capital and information) and by serving as collection points, storing and processing regi- onal products for export and distributing the reverse flows. In addition, urban centers, small retail banks, simple processing mills, and more transport- transport companies supplied these rudimentary services. Equally important were town boosters or developer capitalists, who promoted and financed many of these ventures.


The South

With the continued influx of settlers into the region, extensive growth spurted inner urban systems. New cities were located near the sources of production, and provided similar services but on a smaller scale. Arrayed along natural transport routes and well-worn trails, they formed links in a chain of "external" transport system. Lower South—this region offered the most advantageous old gateways due to their greater size and volume of trade.

Although territorial expansion enlarged the potential market of gateway cities, the limited economic and spa-
tial range of their intermediaries narrowly circumscribed their influence or geographic reach. The formation of rival gateway cities on the settlement frontier vividly expressed the impact of this "distance decay" relationship. Intermediaries in the new centers competed with the existing centers, offering the advantages of older gateways due to their greater size and volume of trade.

Consequently, the continued expansion and evolution of older gateway cities into metropolises depended on internal development in their immediate trade area, where their initial advantage was relatively secure. By intensive development, I mean the increasing density and diversity of hinterland production and trade. 1 This scope of development produced the "filling in" of the surrounding territory with smaller cen-
ters, providing more traditional central places functions to nearby producers or supporting new forms of produc-
tion based on regional resources. These more convenient centers drew some business from the central city, but generated derived demands for more specialized, higher value-added (or order) services and products.

Transport and marketing amenities provided gateway cities developed higher order metropolitan functions, which reinforced their initial advantage over nearby cen-
ters and extended their geographic reach to encompass other centers within the settlement frontier. With greater density of trade, firms in the mercantile and manufacturing sectors exceeded the necessary demand thresholds of these more specialized economic activities, and the city evolved into a regional commercial and transportation center. As the example of Nashville illustrates, accessibility within transport and communications net-

works and the payments system attracted the wholesale trade and financial transactions of hinterland centers. Valuable as production and finance were to the metropolitan economy, moreover, the metropolis also became a center of learning, innovation, and entrepreneurship, which created and developed new technologies and markets for hinter-
land producers.

Metropolitan consolidation, in turn, reconfigured the regional economy. By integrating hinterland centers into regional and larger market systems, the metropolis foster-
ed the development of the hinterland into a more or less hierarchical urban system. Within this nexus, the location of regional economic activities in-
creasingly depended on spatial-economic criteria, namely access to metropolitan markets, and not "nat-
ural" conditions such as proximity to resource supplies. 2 Access to metropolitan markets often eroded the initial advantage of hinterland producers by bringing them into closer contact with larger competitors. At the same time, it also supplied them with the means to de-
velop new activities—know-how, finance, and markets, and in this way contributed to ongoing regional economic development.

Regional development in the slave South: An institutional framework

The geographer A.E. Burghardt succinctly expressed the reciprocal dynamic of metropolitan and regional develop-
ment. In Burghardt's formulation, "gateway cities 'set up' the countryside, and then ... the countryside 'sets up' the central place." 3 The schema outlined above, the latter side of this diachronic correspondence to the second phase of metropolitan development— the pro-
cess of "filling in" the immediate hinterland of gateway cities. I emphasize this process, because it created the suf-
ficient conditions—the critical mass of people and business—that stimulated the transformation of gateway cities into higher-order metropolitan centers, and in turn for sustained regional development.

According to Brian Berry, the rapid growth of hinterland cities and towns immediately followed the opening up or commercialization of new territory. 4 He implies, in other words, that the first phase of metropolitan develop-


3Brian J.J. Berry, Geography of Market Centers and Rural Distrb-


The South

David F. Weiman

In historical contexts, Albert Hirschman observes, the same vacant crop has been assigned the role of "golden thirsty" or "culpable" in the growth of agriculture. It is a term used in the early part of the year, generally extending from late March to early June. In the South, the staple founds historians on a number of counts. The cotton crop was brought to the United States at the end of the 18th century, and by the 19th century it had become the dominant crop in the South. The cotton crop was grown on large scale plantations, which were owned and operated by wealthy slave owners. The slave labor system was the foundation of the Southern economy, and the cotton crop was the primary cash crop that fueled its growth.

In the 19th century, the South was the leader in cotton production. It was a period of rapid expansion, leading to the South's dominance in the world's cotton trade. This dominance was sustained until the end of the Civil War, when the Southern economy was devastated by the loss of its main crop.

However, the post-Civil War period saw a gradual decline in the cotton market. The introduction of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793 allowed for the efficient processing of cotton, leading to a surge in cotton production. This surplus led to a decline in the price of cotton, which had a negative impact on the Southern economy.

The post-Civil War period also saw the rise of sharecropping and tenant farming, which were forms of tenant labor that were prevalent in the South. These systems of labor were characterized by the tenant farm tenant's obligation to pay a portion of the crop to the landlord, who provided the land and seeds. This system was not only exploitative but also suppressive, as it tied the tenant to the land and prevented them from moving or improving their economic status.

The Southern economy continued to struggle in the aftermath of the Civil War, and it was not until the 20th century that the Southern states began to experience economic growth and diversification. This growth was aided by the development of new industries, such as shipbuilding, steel production, and the textile industry, which helped to diversify the Southern economy and create jobs for the region's residents.

Today, the Southern economy is characterized by a mix of traditional agricultural industries and newer industries, such as technology and finance. The region continues to be a leader in agriculture, with its fertile soils and mild climate. However, it has also diversified into other sectors, making it a more economically resilient region.

3See, for example, Arnold J. Pomerans, "Peasants of the Middle East" (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1965).
were an integral element of the frontier landscape in yeoman regions. Farm households migrated to the frontier in waves that propagated comparable segments of near transport routes and "towns," often no more than across-roads. Through their collective action, they exerted local control over the land market, which effectively curtailed the influx of non-agricultural people and so prevented the dispersion of the rural population.

Yeoman communities, in turn, created larger, potential markets for local intermediaries and merchants by increasing both population density, modest scale of production, and range of marketing and distribution of income. Vying to capitalize on the location near these potential markets, boosters promoted towns and induced the settlement of key persons, who would attract the business of the surrounding population. Well-to-do farmers often joined these speculative ventures, which would enhance the value of their investments in land. Town building was successful, however, only when it was linked to larger areas of new gate-ways and development. Under these conditions, new towns throngingly integrated the surrounding farm population into regional and national markets and so tapped local demands.

Metropolitan development in the Southeast, 1860 to 1920

Although resilient, the self-reinforcing patterns of regional development in the Lower South—its second nature—were not etched in stone. Abrupt changes in "initial" conditions, within or outside of the region, could rend existing patterns and initiate new ones. War and emancipation were such changes. The Cotton Belt, and spurred the growth of interior urban centers during Reconstruction. The dissolution of large-scale slave plantations into small, tenant farms accelerated the demise of traditional rural centers. Cotton centers sprang up along rail lines, and general furnishing merchants at these sites formed the critical links between cotton producers and external markets.

A second riff-national economic integration—had equally profound ramifications. During Reconstruction, enterprises in northern wholesale centers competed vigorously for markets in peripheral regions, such as the Lower South. In the 1880s, 1890s, the construction of direct north-south trunk lines, while wholesale firms established networks of sales agents and distribution outlets in the region. These new channels of transport and distribution shifted "initial" advantage from port cities on traditional rail-water routes to new rail hubs such as Atlanta, Birmingham, and Dallas. Located in Yeoman regions, they formed northern gateways to the Cotton Belt mainly for the distribution of national market goods, produced in the emerging core manufacturing belt.

By dint of geography, these south-north rail routes also traversed Yeoman regions and through new gate-ways integrated yeoman farm communities into the cotton and national markets. Unlike plantation regions, the spread of the cotton economy to the Yeoman supported a denser array of secondary cities and towns, which sprung up along rail lines and furnished homes for cotton households with central place services. Entrepreneurs in these new cities contributed to the region's economic diversification through investments in manufacturing enterprises (such as cotton textile mills) and in the exploitation of the region's rich mineral resources.

Thus, the opening up or commercialization of Yeoman regions set the stage for metropolitan development. Instead of regionalization in the late-19th century, yeoman farm towns blossomed. Why yeoman region's town? Because yeoman farm towns were contiguous to the existing and growing metropolitan areas. By 1900 small cities accounted for 80 percent of all centers and 37 percent of the urban population. The size and share of the urban population continued...
The South
to increase at relatively rapid pace after 1900, but unlike the
previous decades urban growth became increasingly
concentrated in the three urban areas whose popula-
tion exceeded 50 thousand. Although only 5 percent of
cities in 1920, their share of the urban population in-
creased from 23 to 40 percent over the two decades.
Small did not keep pace with aggre-
gate urban growth, and accounted for a smaller share
of cities and total urban population.33

The shifting rank-size relationship neatly summarizes
the distinct trends in urbanization over period 1860 to
1920. By plotting the size of centers against their rank,
the curves trace out the expansion in the number and
population of centers depending on their relative stand-
ing.34 They also indicate whether the constellation of
cities concealed into an urban system, a hierarchi-
ical organization of centers based on their size and economic
function.

The graphs in Figure 2 clearly defy any simple depic-
tion, in particular the stable, linear pattern implied by
central place theory.35 In each year the relationship con-
tains flat segments, located at the lower half of the curve
in 1860 and at the top in the succeeding years. More-
over, the relationship tilts back and forth over time. The
varying slope indicates the relative expansion of cities at
different segments of the size distribution.

Between 1860 and 1880, the rank size relation-
curve is approximated by the top or convex shape, in
the geographer’s lexicon.36 This familiar profile derives
from the rapid expansion of second tier cities, relative
to the largest and smallest centers of the region, and sig-
ifies the lack of a central business system. In addition,
the slow rate of new town formation, relative to aggre-
gate growth, tilts the curve more steeply, as evidenced
by an increase in the (absolute value of) the slope from
0.10 to 0.13.

In the 1880s and 1890s the rapid expansion of new
centers shifts out the lower segment of the curve, and
flattens out the entire relationship. Divergence in growth
rates among the largest centers diminishes the flat por-
tion at the top. By 1920 the rapid growth of the largest
centers aligns the relationship and steepens the slope.

The rank size curve in this year closely approximates
the ideal case, indicating a more articulated urban system,
but still without a clearly dominant regional center.

Aggregate trends conceal the forces of selective
growth, which fundamentally altered the economic
and spatial organization of cities. Unlike other regions of
the country, instability characterized the urban take-
off in the Southeast, as traditional trade routes and nodes
of commercial activity gave way to the new.37 The graphs
in Figure 3 and 4 indicate the considerable reshuffling
that occurred over the postbellum era. In the former,
each graph traces out the simple correlation between
city size in the base year (indicated by the legend label)
and succeeding decades (measured along the horizontal axis).
Those in the latter plot the rank correlations over time.

Taking 1860 as the base year, the coefficients measure
the divergence in urban growth before and after the Civil
War. By the end of Reconstruction the correlation in city
size was 0.85, but fell to 0.58 the next decade. By
1920 the relative size of a city in 1860 was a rather poor
predictor of its standing. The pattern is roughly similar
for cities in the years 1870 and 1880. Although the cor-
relations are slightly stronger than for 1860, they drop
sharply over time, especially in the 1880s and the first

3The rate of new town formation fell to 3.3 percent per annum, and
the contribution of new centers to urban growth in each decade aver-
aged only a 4 percent.
4In the case of proportionate growth, the rank size relationship
would shift out in parallel fashion. The rate of increase in the number
of centers measured by the shift in the horizontal intercept, would
also equal the growth rate of each city.
124-30, explicitly applies central place theory to the postbellum South.
6Chancy D. Harris, Cities in the Soviet Cities: Studies in Their
Functions, Size, Density and Growth (Chicago, 1970), ch. 5; and
8The graphs are the correlation is estimated over a stable sample of
cities, those which existed in the base year. This procedure under-
states the extent of flux. The correlation in city size over time mea-
sures the growth of centers relative to the growth in the (unweighted)
average, in the case of proportionate growth the coefficient would
equal one. The rank correlation is less sensitive to movements at the
extremes.

Table 1: Largest fifteen centers in the southeastern region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1920</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>6</td>
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Sources: U.S. Census Office, Worksheets to the 1930 Population Census

Figure 3. Correlation in city size, Southeast region, 1860-1920
decade of the new century.

Rank correlations reinforce the impression of flux, and
clearly identify the end of Reconstruction as the critical
collapse line in the process of urban growth. The curves
for 1860 and 1870 are remarkably similar in shape.
Following a steep decline in the first decade, rank
 correlations tended to stabilize at 0.75 for cities in 1860
and 0.80 for those in 1870. The 1890 and 1900 graphs
yield a similar pattern, although the small number of ob-
servations limits confidence in the apparent trend. The
one clear exception is the graph for cities in 1880. The
rank correlation over the first decade is the weakest for
cities in that year. Moreover, it continues to decline over
subsequent decades until by 1920 it only equals 0.64.

Estimates of transition matrices, comparing the
movement of cities across size categories over time,
and regressions testing the hypothesis of proportionate
growth, indicate no bias in selective growth, at least
at the dimension of city size. Yet, when read down the
columns as opposed to across the rows, transition
matrices identify the "age" of cities as an important de-
terminant of their relative growth. In 1900, for example,
one of the largest cities, those exceeding 40,000 in
size, either had not been "born" by 1860 or numbered
among small centers, those less than 10,000 in size. A
similar calculation for 1920 is even more striking.
Ten, or two-thirds of the 15 largest cities in the region
by the end of the period, either did not exist in 1860 or
were small cities and towns.

Table 1, which lists the largest 15 cities in the re-
region between 1860 and 1920, illustrates the point
more concretely. In the 1860 list the descending pro-
gression of cities, with but two exceptions, conforms
to their placement along traditional railroad lines and,
in turn, their position in the staple trade.47 Charleston
was the leading cotton port in the eastern
Atlantic and drew staple shipments and related trans-
actions from Savannah and Wilmington, as well as from
interior river ports, such as Augusta and Columb
ia. Mobile and Savannah, the other principal coastal

47The exceptions are Nashville and Atlanta, although only the lat-
ter really counts. Nashville is included in the region for comple-
ment, but was beyond the limits of the "Cotton South" proper.
ports, drew trade from the fall line cities, which round out the top eleven.

Following the war and Reconstruction, the ranks of the largest cities show elements of continuity and change. Charleston still tops the list, and despite some reshuffling in the order, most entries persisted over the period. At the same time, the secondary coastal ports surrendered their positions to the interior railroad hubs of Nashville and Atlanta, which served primarily as wholesale distribution, not cotton centers. Along the same lines, the list now includes two "new" cities, Chattanooga and Knoxville, secondary rail hub in eastern Tennesse.

The rise of interior rail hubs in 1880 foreshadows the more profound changes evident at the turn of the century. By 1920, selective growth has thoroughly rewritten the list of large cities. Only eight of the original persisted, and except for Macon, the antebellum cotton ports have dropped substantially in rank. The largest three cities are nodal points of the interior railroad network, which linked the region directly to the south. They are followed by secondary railroad hubs, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Macon, Winston-Salem, and Charlotte, the top ten in the network of transportation and trade.

Spatial patterns
Mapping the location of cities by size gives a geographic representation of the urban transformation in the Lower South. The small number of centers in 1860 delineates the linear urban system, which carried the staple crop from the Cotton Belt: coastal ports along traditional rail-frail routes (see Figure 5). Port cities, gateways to the world market, rimmed the cotton economy of the region, but developed no immediate urban hinterland. The next tier of cities traced out the fall line on principal river routes, and were transshipment points in the staple trade. The remaining centers were located either on the navigable segments of rivers above the fall line or on roads, which extended the reach of coastal ports further into the interior.

The urban map in 1830 illustrates the impact of Reconstruction on the cotton economy (see Figure 6). The demise of large-scale slave plantations and the factor system diminished the relative importance of antebellum coastal ports, and additional railroad construction extended the number and reach of east-west routes funneling cotton to world markets. Although new outlets sprang up along the coast, urban growth was more heavily concentrated in the interior of the Cotton Belt, as full line cities expanded and new centers formed along the widening rail network.

Table 2: City and urban population in and around the largest centers of the Southeast in 1920

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<tr>
<th>City and State</th>
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The map also identifies a new locus of urbanization along north-south transit lines which connected the region directly to core metropolises. Urban growth followed the northeastern route of the Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line and formed a third tier of cities, extending across northern Georgia to central North Carolina. New cities also formed along new routes from Atlanta to the northeast and midwest via Chattanooga.

The rapid pace of urbanization after 1880 reinforced these spatial patterns, but especially in the West. Between 1880 and 1920 the Cotton Belt developed a denser and more articulated array of cities (see Figure 7). New commercial centers emerged at nodal sites in the rail network and created a more decentralized urbanization system for the region's plantation trade, in addition to those on the fall line.

- The center of gravity in the urban map, however, shifted dramatically to the southwest, as urbanization filled in the direct north-south trade routes. The formation and growth of cities was particularly vibrant along the northeastern corridor. The construction of a second railroad line, from Atlanta, the Sea-Board Air Line, and the spread of the textile industry multiplied urban growth in the Carolinas. The western extension of this northerly pattern, however, was more limited as well as variations in the urban environment, discovered in the territory between Atlanta and Birmingham, and among the latter cities.

By 1900, east cities also dotted the northern routes through eastern and central Tennessee.

The urban map in 1920 clearly displays the new hierarchy of centers. Atlanta and Birmingham displaced the traditional port cities, at least in terms of size. Equally important, the denser and regular configuration of cities in their orbit suggests the formation of a new urban hierarchy.

These railroads include the Louisville and Nashville (from Nashville to Chattanooga), and the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia Railroad (from Chattanooga and Dalton, Georgia through Knoxville, Tennessee).
The spatial variation in potential after Reconstruction displays the flux within the hierarchy of cities. Charleston and the other port cities no longer occupy the dominant position. From Charleston, potential decays rapidly along the coast, and Mobile becomes a more peripheral location, comparable to river ports. The gradient along the fall line, as it was in 1960, is relatively flat, but moving on a northwest transect, it increases sharply at Atlanta and again at Nashville.

By 1920 the century of growth has shifted squarely to the interior. Potential peaks around Atlanta and Birmingham, and then sharply decays along the traditional rail-water routes to the coast. By 1920 the relative potential of coastal ports varies from 45 to 55 percent. Between these extremes are Macon, Chattanooga, Charlotte and other transport hubs on the interior rail network. The contour line connecting the latter delineates the boundaries of the New South, defined not only by its new cities, but by the distinct pattern of regional economic development which they represented.

What differentiated the new from the old South was not simply the emergence of a more diversified urban, industrial economy, based on free wage labor. Rather, they represented fundamentally different patterns of regional development, which ultimately derived from different formation or settlement institutions. The old South was firmly rooted in the Cotton Belt regions, formed through the settlement of slave plantations. The plantation system, whether based on slavery or on other forms of labor control, constrained local development and so left an enduring imprint on the region in the form of a "colonial" style, enclave economy.

The origins of the "new" South lay in the Upcountry regions, which were settled by yeoman farm communities. In the northern states, yeoman communities played an integral role in the process of regional development, creating markets for urban services and manufactured goods, and supplying food, materials, and even labor to the urban-industrial sectors. As the northern periphery of the plantation system, however, yeoman communities in the slave South were isolated economically and geographically, and their economic potential remained dormant. During Reconstruction the forces of national economic integration transformed the Upcountry into the heart of the new transportation and manufacturing belt. In this context, yeoman farm communities were thoroughly integrated into the cotton economy, and their commercialization supported more intensive development, both in the countryside and in newly formed cities.

Table 3: Relative urban potential in the Southeast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
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<th>1870</th>
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<td>Columbia</td>
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<td>Knoxville</td>
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<td>81.5</td>
<td>72.2</td>
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Note: Relative urban potential measures the urban potential of the city relative to the maximum in the region (expressed as a percentage). The shaded cells show the center with the maximum potential.
The South today: Rural poverty and social capital

John Gaventa*

I have been asked to discuss forces affecting the rural South today. This is a difficult task. First, the South is a region of great diversity. There are many Southerns, or many subregions of the rural South, including the Southern Appalachians, the Black Belt South, the Delta, the Coastal South, even the Rio Grande South. Within these subregions, the South is a land of contrasts. The image of the “Sunbelt South” so prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s, stands side by side with the image of poverty in the region, of high illiteracy, underemployment, hunger, and homelessness.

If there is a commonality to the rural South, it is the one found in this latter image. For decades, the South (including southern Appalachia) has been home to the largest concentrations of rural poverty in the country. At least until the method of counting was changed recently, 233 of the nation’s 242 persistently poor rural counties were in the rural South. In recent years, poverty in the region has been once again on the rise, reflecting the growing gaps between the have and have-nots in this country, and between the rural areas and urban regions. The poverty of the South is related to other problems: unemployment and underemployment, illiteracy and missed educational opportunity, violence within families and in communities, homelessness in the midst of empty land and buildings, racism and alienation, and many more. In a moving address at the 1993 Pathways from Poverty conference in Memphis, a long time civil rights activist in Mississippi summarized her experience with rural poverty with the saying “I’ve been to sorrow’s kitchen and I’ve licked the pots clean.”

The poverty and inequities that shape the rural South are in turn shaped by many forces, much larger than the region itself. These forces are found in the restructuring

*The Pathways from Poverty conference was organized by the Southern Rural Development Center and the Rural Sociological Society. Some of the themes in this paper grew from that conference and were summarized in the closing address by the author.

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of the national economy, the reshaping of budget priorities, and the pending loss of traditional safety nets. They involve the quiet, and often silent tragedy that occurs at plants, mines, and factories around the rural South close, seeking cheaper labor elsewhere; the particular impact of NAFTA and the internationalization of the economy on southern communities. The growing disparity between the rich and the poor also translates into a power disparity between those who have the capacity and resources to affect the future the way they wish to see it, and those who are the most affected by the problems yet have no voices lost in the political process. The long-standing, historic divisions of race, class and gender are divisions that cannot simply be understood in a contemporary snapshot of the region.

In this presentation, I will focus less on an overview of rural poverty in the South than on the strategies that have been used to counter it. The South has long been a region with a reputation for having been shaped by interaction with federal and state policies and market forces. Despite a long history of development, the poverty and inequities of the region continue. Through looking at the South and the strategies of development it has employed, we can learn something about pathways to overcoming poverty that are perhaps relevant to rural areas more generally. To illustrate this discussion, I will begin by examining the impact of the current Empowerment Zone program, and suggest that this program, and the communities participating in it, gives us a sample of problems that affect the region as a whole, and insight into strategies for change.

Development in the South

In recent decades, the dominant economic development strategy in the South has been to lure industries from elsewhere. For instance, the Appalachian Regional Commission, which was established as an outgrowth of the War on Poverty, has invested over $15 billion dollars in the region's development during the past 25 years, making it one of the largest rural development initiatives in the country. The funds were primarily spent to construct an infrastructure—roads, industrial parks, water systems—to attract industry to the region. Southern states have long used such strategies to attract capital to the region.

For a period of time from the late 1960s up until the late 1970s, the economic development strategy seemed to work. While the region was still heavily industrialized by the traditional industries of mining, textiles, paper processing and chemicals, other manufacturing and assembly plants appeared in small town after small town, as industries came to the area, often leaving the urbanized North in search of cheaper labor, resources, and a more "favorable" business climate. The decade of the 1980s, however, revealed that the strategies were not sustainable. During the 1980s and early 1990s, industries from other regions of the United States came South as our states competed effectively to offer better incentives. Then, in the 1980s many of the same industries began moving to stop cheaper places of operation overseas, such as the maquiladora zone in Mexico. As southern economic historian Jim Cobb has written, "Industries fleeing the South are purchasing factory tickets to Taiwan and other exotic destinations just as readily as they used to depart Akron, Ohio for Opelika, Alabama." In its 1986 report Shadows in the Sunbelt, MDC, a research firm in North Carolina, warned that the smokestack-chasing strategy of industrial recruitment was outdated. In a new familiar analogy, MDC wrote, "The situation is analogous to the great buffalo hunts of the last century. The stampede of plants to the South is definitely over—especially to the Sunbelt. There is a growing demand for skilled workforce, high technology, transportation, infrastructure, and cultural amenities. Yet the hunters continue in their pursuit, hoping to bag one of the remaining hides."

If we can no longer rely upon juring the solution in from the outside, what can we do? Countless reports have begun to suggest the solution: we must "develop from within." We must invest in community development not only in economic development. We must invest in the education of the work force, in rural people, and grow and develop community leaders and community organizations who can make a difference. We must invest in a healthy "community climate" that in turn will affect businesses.

Human capital

To invest in people is also to invest in human capital, that is to develop both education, literacy, job training, etc. While these strategies are critical at an individual level, by themselves in today's southern economy they are limited as a solution to poverty. First, as we are all too aware, we can train and educate people to fit into jobs, but those jobs may not exist in rural communities. Increasingly, and for the first time in our history, education, particularly at the pre-college level, does not lead to a mean upward mobility. It may only mean entry to low-wage jobs, which may be more likely to be found in non-rural areas.

Second, it is difficult for many poor rural communities in the South to compete in the global, human capital market. The growth of South's human capital has lagged behind the rest of the nation in terms of educational attainment. Its rates of adult illiteracy and high school dropouts are significantly higher than for the rest of the nation. Moreover, in Appalachia and the South, the lack of financial capital has prevented development of a strong tax base which contributes to educational opportunities. To tell communities the way out of poverty is through education when they cannot read because they are poor is to blame the victim once again.

A primary linkage has to do with the taxation of the land. Property taxation is a key source of local revenue in all communities, and is vital for support of local educational institutions and other human services. In Appalachia, and in other parts of the South where coal, timber and other natural resources contribute substantially to the wealth of the region, one might expect to find substantial tax revenues from the land. In fact, the Appalachia Land Ownership Study and other studies have found the opposite to be true: the substantial coal and timber resources provide less than 10% of local revenue for schools, health care, and other services necessary for the development of human capital. The link between land ownership and taxation to human services has provoked a great deal of citizen action in our region. Groups like Save Our Cumberland Mountains and Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (originally Kentuckians for Fair Taxation) have worked hard to change the inequities. A West Virginia Supreme Court case (known as the Recht decision) found that, in communities with large corporate ownership of land, children did not receive an equal education. This decision led to a revamping of the State's school finance policies. Other cases around rural schools vs. the urban areas have been heard in Kentucky and Tennessee. Yet the problems continue: recently in Campbell County, Tennessee, where more than 50 percent of the land is owned by large coal and timber companies, the county stopped running the school buses in early spring because it had run out of revenues. Children in rural areas could not get to school, but alike get an equal education.

If children find it difficult to get an education due to their economic circumstance, adults are also finding that job training is limited as a way into the economy. Some twenty months after the plant closing, a survey was conducted in the Center for the Study of the American Dream, sponsored by the Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin in June, 1992.
One of the key issues linking environmental capital and poverty in the rural South has been the heavy siting of solid waste disposal facilities, as the work by Bullard on Dumping in Dixie and others make clear.4 At the end of the 1970s, of the five states with the largest number of incoming pollution industries, four were in the South. Siting of hazardous and solid wastes in rural areas has been associated with environmental racism and the presence of high poverty in the region. As Norris-Hall has pointed out: "seen as poor, powerless and desperate for economic development [...]."5

Investing in social capital

Increasingly, socialists in this country and around the world are writing about and discussing this idea of social capital, as well as economic, human capital and environmental capital. By social capital, we mean the creation of organizations, networks, and values that are part of what is called the civil society. Rob- ert Putnam: "[t]he rise of beneficial social capital requires a new kind of civil society of voluntary action based on values of benevolence and mutual interdependence.”6 It means understanding the value of communities to create grassroots organizations and to participate in solving the problems they face. It means moving beyond formal organizations to the capital of individuals to the creation of social capital, that is, the capacity of people to work together collectively.

Environmental capital

Before moving to social capital, however, a word must be said about environmental capital. Like many rural areas, the South is rich in land and natural resource strengths. However, few of these resources have been historically controlled by corporate and absentee owners. The ownership and use of the land for economic gain has had significant impact on the environmental capital of the region, as evidenced by the massive destruction of land for mining, clear cutting, and strip tourist development in mountain or coastal areas.

John Gaventa

civic resources and grassroots leadership. As a vacuum is created by the failure of the trickle down economy to work, rural communities are cooperating in new ways about matters of the economy. Dozens of new local associations are springing up. There is a new revolution at the local level as groups try to respond to plant closings, to close down the infrastructure, train young people, conduct literacy programs, create jobs, and do all sorts of things for themselves, by themselves, that traditionally they had depended upon others to do. Increasingly in the South, the argument is made that rural development is not in investing in strengthening social capital, or community organization and association, not only economic and human capital. Masters of economic development and matters of community development traditionally have been female. Now they must be linked. Community groups and associations who have not been at the economic development table must be there, and those at the table must make room. This more democratic model can lead to a new mindset where the South may be seen in the early phases of the current Empowerment Zone program.

The case of the Rural Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community program

The Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community program is a national program, but it has particular impact in the rural South, because the program is designed for the South, or because of particular factors in the selection process. The South is home to all three rural Empowerment Zones (including Texas); 18 of the 30 Enterprise Communities and 125 of the 194 (63 per cent) Champion communities (those who applied but did not receive funding). The Delta is home to the highest number of EZ/EC’s of any region. From these communities, we can learn about the creation of a new area of rural poverty in differing regions of the South, as well as about the role of social capital in rural development.

Background of the EZ/EC Program

The Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community initiative represents the most extensive effort in recent decades to address problems of severe distress in low-income communities. Their introduction, however, is such, it is the 1990s version of previous community de-

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Zones are in the South and illustrate the forces affecting poverty in a predominantly white Appalachian community, a predominantly black Mississippi Delta community, and a predominantly Hispanic Rio Grande Valley. The Kentucky Highlands Employment Zone comprises portions of three eastern Kentucky counties and has a 39.9 percent white population. Its high poverty rate, the influence of dependency on agriculture, the tobacco industry, and the coal industry. The exploitation of natural resources and a deteriorating infrastructure that has inhibited economic development. The Plan emphasizes job creation through the growth of industry, tourism, and agricultural diversification. The Delta-Mid Employment Zone has a 72 percent black population and includes parts of six counties in the northwest area of Mississippi. The poverty rate in the zone is 33 percent, compared to 63 percent of the children under five. The strategic plan is to increase the number of federal and non-profit organizations with a long history of mutual assistance: one whose roots are in large land ownership and the other an outgrowth of the civil rights movement. Their strategic plan sets a goal of stimulating economic development and improving quality of life through existing infrastructure, community resources, and local leadership development. The Rio Grande Valley Employment Zone comprises the four southernmost counties in Texas, bordered on the south by the Rio Grande River and Mexico and on the east by the Gulf of Mexico. The population is 89 percent Hispanic and has a 40 percent poverty rate. While the valley is noted for its fertile farm land, less than 5 percent of the local jobs are in agriculture. Many jobs are in rapidly growing industries along the Texas-Mexico border. The strategic plan focuses on job creation and includes funding for a wide range of educational activities and technical assistance. In all the designated areas, the average per capita income is $7,396. This represents only 43 percent of the South's average per capita income of $16,771 and 40 percent of the national average. For many of the zones, the average per capita income is even lower. In the Rio Grande Employment Zone, the per capita income of $5,156 is a national average. While we are aware nationally and in the region that poverty is heavily affected by race, the data in these already extremely poor communities reveal some significant trends. In areas with significant white and black populations, there are large variations in per capita income. For instance, while the per capita income of the Mid Delta Employment Zone is only $6,259, the per capita income of whites is $11,890 compared to $4,029 for blacks. In almost all cases of white and black populations, usually in the Black Belt, Delta, and Coastal South, the per capita income of the whites more than doubles that of the black populations. In the zone that is predominately white poverty, such as in Appalachia, the white per capita income is more comparable to black populations elsewhere. If we examine the specific data, we see that the economic needs in the South, they also illustrate the human capital needs, as defined by education levels. Nationally, the per cent of the population with less than a high school diploma is 24.4 percent. This figure is below the national average of 25 percent. It is estimated that 43 percent in Jackson County Florida is 60 percent in McDowell County, West Virginia. In these of these EZ's and EC's, more than half of the adult population do not have a high school degree. Social capital in the Employment Zones/Entrepreneurship Communities By traditional measures, then, these Southern EZ/EC's score low on access to economic capital or on human capital indicators. While it is difficult to measure in a simple quantitative way, however, the participation of these communities in the EZ/EC program points to certain strengths in social capital, in the networks and norms of cooperation that bring communities together. By examining where the leadership and energy comes from, information gathered from the EZ/EC status, we can see the important role played by community-based and non-profit organizations, which have not traditionally been players in the development process to the same degree as state and national actors. For instance, each of the Employment Zones represents a key, non-governmental actor. In Mississippi, the Delta Foundation, a thirty-year-old community development organization based in the civil rights movement, played a key role. In Kentucky, the 1979 Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, whose roots are in the anti-poverty programs of the 1960's, and in Texas, Valley Interfaith, a strong church and community based organization linked with the Industrial Areas Foundation, formed an alliance with the Chamber of Commerce and other groups to create the strategic plan. In at least three of the Entrepreneurship Communities, a leadership role was played by community-based, education centers, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives in Alabama, the Boggs Rural Life Center in Georgia, and the Arkansas Land and Development Corporation, each of which are linked to their own networks. Other community organizing or community development groups also played a critical role, such as JONAH in west Tennessee; McAction in McDowell County, West Virginia; and the Center for Community
The South

Action in Robeson County, North Carolina.

Given the opportunities to participate in the development process, and led by these efforts, some grassroots-based organizations as well as by traditional agencies, low-income people participated in large numbers to create a vision of their own development. In the Central West Virginia Enterprise Community, some 1,500 people participated in a community planning process across six counties; in the Cumberland Gap Empowerment Zone application (which was not designated) similar numbers came together across parts of three states and several counties, using community-based, school, church, and other networks to cut across traditional political lines. Those communities where established non-profit organizations took the lead appear to have been most successful in galvanizing and sustaining broad community involvement. As described by a leader of the Southern Mutual Help Association, an established community-based non-profit organization in Louisiana, this type of strategic planning with community involvement had been tried but never done anywhere before, but they had not had the resources, coordination of people, and government support. They were able to mobilize quickly, since much of the structure and process was already in place.

The process was not all community led. In some cases, public agencies such as regional development districts or industrial boards led the effort. Such agencies often have little experience with bottom-up planning. In some of these areas, the strategic planning was primarily a top-down process, and consultants were hired to handle citizen involvement and proposal writing. One community leader reported that even though a wide range of groups were “around the table,” those making the decisions were “the same old players” who had always managed planning and development. But while there were these cases of traditional development, there have also been countless cases of new types of collaboration, as groups crossed traditional race, class, or political lines to participate in the process.

The significant point is this: communities which are historically poor by measures of economic and human capital, revealed strong histories and resources of social capital in the planning and visioning process. Given an opportunity to bring social capital resources to the development process, many were able to do so, in many cases revealing community capacity, networks, and relationships that had been built over decades. Moreover, in the process, communities were able to use other networks to strengthen citizen participation and voice, and to begin collaboration across historical divisions.

While such data reveals the significance of linking social capital to the development process, the early implementation of the program also reveals the tensions and difficulties of doing so. In the first year of the EZ/EC program, a number of tensions have emerged. Two are perhaps most significant: tensions about which forms of capital investment are most important, and tensions related to vertical vs. horizontal social capital.

The strategic vision put forward by low-income communities in the EZ/EC process represent a different definition of development than the industrial recruitment model that has dominated the south for decades. The goals relevant to jobs, education, environment, families and children, citizen participation, overcoming racial prejudice, development of community spirit, organizational capacity building, and others.

A strategic vision can be somewhat all encompassing, but tensions developed over which goals were most important when communities had to specify exactly how funds would be spent in the implementation process. In the Kentucky Highlands EZ, for example, an emphasis on jobs led to a strategy that was not consistent with the goal of environmental sustainability. A conflict between project leaders and state economic development officials, on the one hand, and environmental organizations on the other, developed over plans to use EZ/EC funds to recruit a large chicken processing plant. While the plant would have produced 600 jobs, many objected that the quality of jobs was low and the plant was environmentally unsound. In communities with a focus on development of social services and human capital needs, it has been difficult to demonstrate how substantial job creation will occur. What is most important to other communities are the intangibles—programs which build capacity, pride and self-esteem. To groups accustomed to more traditional development, results of such programs could not be counted and tracked over time. Disagreements developed over how the results could be measured, and whether they could be funded in the absence of measurement. Ideally each path is important, however, scarce resources mean that conflict will develop over which goal is most important.

Choosing the most important goal depends on who will have the ultimate power to decide. The program has emphasized “horizontal” collaboration and participation, but a number of conflicts have emerged indicating the persistence of more “vertical” forms of social capital. Conflicts developed between governments, between the federal, state and local parties about how the program was to be administered, as well as between technical assistance providers and local communities about issues of measurement and implementation. Once resources began to flow, conflicts about who would govern the resources developed within communities because of traditional political and development leaders and the new, more grassroots leaders. According to many community leaders, the main challenge now for designated communities is to ensure that the EZ/EC funds are controlled by the people being served. They fear that unless appropriate institutional controls are in place, the same people who have always controlled the money will continue to control it. As one local leader sees it, there is a continuing reluctance by many people to accept the notion that solutions can come from poor people themselves. However, he says, "It takes innovation to raise, feed, and nurture three children on $126 a month. If poor people are given some resources and room to maneuver, they can do a lot.''

Conclusion

The EZ/EC initiative offers a laboratory in which to learn about a new approach to development in the South. At the same time, the South continues to be affected by historic race, class, gender, and power inequities which will make such community-based approaches difficult.

Community-based initiatives for development, no matter how significant at the local level, may find their efforts diminished by external events given the global forces, such as international divisions of labor and capital, and the massive cuts in federal and state programs that are likely to affect the region.

Nevertheless, the approach taken in the EZ/EC program is an innovative one, which legitimizes the participation of new players in the development process. Approaches to rural poverty in the south historically have emphasized the deficit which communities face in terms of economic and human capital. Participation by communities in the EZ/EC strategic visioning process indicates the strengths that many of these same communities have developed in terms of community capacity and social capital. To follow the analysis of Putnam, we can hypothesize that those communities who bring a strong level of social capital to the process will be more likely to succeed over the long-term in addressing poverty than will those who continue historic patterns of inequity and paternalism.

60

John Gaventa
The burden of the southern future

Charles Reagan Wilson *

The American South is a part of the global village. That geographical part of the United States that outsiders used to note for its isolation, backwardness, and peculiar institutions is now plugged into the world capitalist economy as never before. The South is a major supplier of agribusiness materials, heavily industrialized, and dependent on world prices for its commodities and products. Technology connects the region's people through postmodern tentacles to the heart of darkness—Southern California culture. In fact, Southerners are supposedly bonded with their kindred out there in a sweeping Sunbelt way of life. National homogenization, it is said, has made southern areas the same as those anywhere else in the nation.

Previous generations of Southerners and Americans would have been startled at such an analysis. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, if not before, Americans came to think of the South as a land apart. Sometimes the place seemed attractive, its premodern society an appealing fantasy in the imagination for other Americans who were busyly building these factories and cities. At other times, the South was the nation's scapegoat, the repository for racism and economic backwardness; racial conflict and poor children could be isolated from the national psyche as only found "down there."

Southerners themselves simplified their complex history into a romantic mythological story. Virginia writer Thomas Nelson Page was in the vanguard of others after the Civil War who looked backward for their ideals, as memory became the foundation for social life. As he wrote, before the war, "even the moonlight was mellower and richer." As late as the 1930s, journalist Jonathan Daniels could write; "We Southerners are a mythological people, created half out of dream and half


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The South

The South still has the nation’s highest rates of rural con- formal population, with people living part of their lives in rural settings. The South, however, is partly in tradi- tional small town or rural societies, a tribute to the region’s changes but also to the desire of its people to hold onto the older ways. Such folks will surely cling to what will be the fate of southern cultural distinctiveness and traditional cultural forms.

Agrarianism would seem perhaps most in danger as a likely descriptor for the future southern society. Agrarianism has been a factor in the region’s history. After the Civil War, the South forever had a history different from the nation’s, reflected in several key characteristics: the South had come face to face with defeat in a nation dedicated to triumph; the South was the poverty belt, in a nation that celebrated its materialistic Plenty; the South was the guilty belt, because of its tortured race relations; and the South epitomized a society with a sense of tragedy, a sense of being displaced by events.

Woodward did not emphasize agrarianism per se, although the region’s agricultural economy and rural society surely were tied in with any distinctiveness in regional history. Vanderbilt’s Twelve Southerners, who idealized and elegitized the South in 1930, used the agrarian metaphor as central in presenting the effects of modernization on the region, although they could not agree much on where the region was. The large-scale corporate planter or the small yeoman farmer who best epitomized the South they loved. One might expend the list of key characteristics in southern cultural distinctiveness to include: the decline of the plantation and the application of the South’s racial patterns were becoming like those elsewhere in the United States and not distinctive); and evangelical Protestantism, which Woodward ignored altogether, but which was shown to be a powerful organizing institution whose significance has not faded away as the South has changed in so many other areas of its life.

Woodward’s famous essay suggested that regional distinctiveness was a "burden" and its essence was found in the past. Southern thinking was at variance as nearly as possible with the poverty, guilt, place, race discrimination, religion and politics. The relationship between insularity of the South and the future South in the last two decades in an essay called "Re-}

Charles Reagan Wilson

Since the 1960s, popular culture has become an even more pervasive influence in the South than before. Radio in the 1920s spread ideas of American culture into the traditional rural South, and television was nothing compared to the recent impact of television. Disks used to be what Southerners ate their country ham and grits on, now, through new kinds of dishes, Southerners are treated to television and can see the Prag Gourmet cooking pasta. Television will continue to bring into the most remote areas of the South all sorts of influences that challenge its people’s traditional ways that still remain.

Mass culture and its relationship to traditional culture is a useful window on the relationship between the past and future South. Popular culture will probably always pose threats to the remnants of traditional folk cultures—the dangers of converting them into romantic babble for mass consumption, exploiting them for profit, or simply undermining their foundations through homogenizing mass influences.

There is another side to the popular culture story. The traditional sounds and images will remain alive long after the society that created them has changed. The commercialization of southern folklore in the early twentieth century did not destroy traditional music. The increasing organization of society that appeared in the nation with economic modernization in the late nine- teenth century, providing institutional and social outlets that, in some cases, promoted the collection and study of traditional cultures and in the process helped to keep them alive. True, this development contributed to their evolution, but traditional cultures are not any more the unchanging cultures of the past.

Today, cable television systems make many styles of southern music accessible to all Americans and challenge our very concept of what it means to be a "traditional" artist in southern music production. Yet local television, radio, and other forms of modern communication provide outlets for traditional artists and performers who are outgrowths of that traditionalism. With the spread of public access cable television, the future looks even brighter in terms of using mass culture technology to promote southern sounds that will be different from the past yet still rooted in folk forms.

To some southerners, then, this can be the most important and indigenous regional cultural life. Southern musical folk will continue to evolve, with new instruments and styles probably replacing the banjos, steel guitars, and harmonicas of past musicians.

12Two Souths, 'Vandy the Planters', Regionalism and the South, Southern Humanities Review, 1951); John Shelton Reed and Daniel Singel (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

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The commercialization of southern music is an example of the economic development that has transformed the South of the early twentieth century into an industrial, urban South. From the nineteenth century, southern industry was built upon exploiting natural resources in the region, and much of the post-World War II economic growth was based on production in such traditional regional industries as textiles, furniture, tobacco, iron and steel, paper products, and oil and natural gas refineries. The region’s colonial economy, dominated by an outside foreign company, continued, and foreign investors often became as important as northern creditors and corporate rulers.  

By the 1970s the era of the Sunbelt, with the image of the South as boomtown gaining hold throughout the nation as northern factories and corporations increasingly sought warmer climates, translated as tax advantages and cheaper labor, in the South. By the 1980s the South’s rapidly industrialized region of the nation, with North Carolina qualifying as the most industrialized state. From 1950 to 1985 employment in the traditional southern economic sectors of agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining declined by 17.5 percent. Ninety percent of percent of employment growth in these same years occurred in the construction and service activities, indicating an economy that is building for the future and beginning the switch to a post-industrial system that is increasingly come to characterize nations and region.  

The modernized South was looking more and more like other parts of the American economy. The South had once attracted the textile industry away from New England through cheaper labor, but by the 1980s southern states had lost much of that industry to Third World countries offering the cheapest labor of all. The economy of the South is still a mixed economy, but it is beginning to resemble what traditional industries, but it is likely to move from traditional sectors to new kinds of manufacturing, service, and tech jobs to remain vital.  

The modern economic system has led to changes in the southern social class system that are likely to continue in the future. Industrial executives have become the key power brokers in the region, taking their place beside (and often eclipsing) the traditional elite of wealthy plantation owners.  

The general public, however, is even more striking is the growth of a stronger middle class. In 1930 only 15 percent of the South’s labor force worked at white collar jobs; by 1980 nearly half of the South’s labor force was in white collar jobs, becoming more managers, administrators, professional people, and technical workers than ever before in the region.  

The growth of the upper middle class in the South has contributed to an outmoded social class and the grim futures of the extreme wealth. If some people are doing very well indeed in the new economy, many others are not. The Bible says that the poor ye shall have with you, but some people seem to have mistranslated and think it is one of the commandments. The Washington-based Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has concluded that most of the nation’s rural poor are Southerners. The nature of the region’s economy and the geography of the region define its terms of its extent and its location in rural areas. These are the working poor. Over 64 percent of rural poor families have at least one member with a job, compared with 54.5 percent of urban and suburban poor families. They work longer hours than their big-city counterparts and are just as bound by the limitations of being part of an underclass. A total of 53.6 percent of all the nation’s rural poor in the South. The region remains more rural than the rest of the nation. It contains 54.2 percent of the country’s population, but has 43.4 percent of all rural residents, and the South’s rural poverty rate remains one of its greatest problems.  

The central cities have developed the same problems as other American cities—pollution, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, commercial exploitation. Complicating rural poverty is the growing urban poverty, which is beginning to resemble that elsewhere in the United States. The right-wing vision of a crazed society seen in futuristic fantasies such as Stanley Kramer’s A Clockwork Orange come to characterize the urban spaces of the future South?  

The urban South will increasingly figure as the dynamic area in the South’s economic, social, and cultural development. Cities like Atlanta, Charlotte, Nashville, Birmingham, Louisville, and Richmond are vibrant areas of investment, transforming old rural communities into thriving high-tech and service economy associated with the outlying margins of metropolitan areas, and suburbs can provide a satisfying lifestyle for the near future.  

Technology seems to evoke the most dramatic images of the future: new technologies will create jobs and improve society. From the cotton gin in the 1790s to the automobile, the computer, the television, and the twentieth century, the southern economy has exploited technology. Past Southerners embraced the technology of movement—in the railroad and the automobile—to change the behavior and hierarchical qualities of their traditional society. The reengineering and globalization of the economy and new technologies fundamentally change the nature of work. The nation’s future will be shaped by the creation and use of new technology in the South.
against black-hatted bad guys. I know of no science fiction that has found a place for Southerners, except a 1980s comic strip called Captain Confederacy, which projected a white Southerner and his black sidekick fighting crime in the corrupt urban America of the future. It was very imaginative, but did not last long, as perhaps too unbelievable, even for science fiction.

This failure to imagine a southern future through science fiction does not mean, however, that the southern story, which began three and a half centuries ago, will necessarily spin to an end. The ghosts of the southern past, of Woodward’s burdens of Confederate defeat and racial guilt, have not gone away in the contemporary South, and they suggest something of the ingredients necessary for the South to retain a regional cultural identity in the future, even if the basis of society dramatically changes.

White Southerners after the Civil War celebrated, romanticized, and sacralized the Lost Cause—the memory of the Confederate experience. It became a “City on a Hill,” according to writer Robert Penn Warren. More than anything, the memory of the war provided a sense of common purpose, a cultural identity that bonded white Southerners against Northerners and, to some degree, against black Southerners as well. When white Southerners contemplated the Lost Cause, they came away with the lesson that their heroic past was prelude. “Lost we forget” was the typical epigraph on the Confederate monuments that still dot the towns and cities of the South. It suggested memory of the past but also the possibility of using that memory in the future. Do not forget the past struggles because the heroism of the past will be needed in the future. White Southerners believed that they had a destiny, that there was meaning attached to their distinctive historical experience.20

Southerners, white and black, are now passionately arguing over the meaning of the Civil War and, ultimately, over the meaning of regional history and the southern regional identity. White Southerners still display the Confederate battle flag, the old emblem that stains the blood. “Dixie” is still the battle hymn of true believers. White Southerners are active in Civil War battle reenactments, and surveys after the showing of Ken Burns’s Civil War series suggested that white Southerners had an unusual degree of knowledge and interest in Civil War history. To be sure, in Atlanta and Charlotte such back-scratching concerns are out of step with the interests of bright young Rotarians. But despite the Georgia governor’s best efforts to remove the Confederate battle flag image from the state flag (it had been added in the 1950s as a belligerent response to the civil rights movement), the relicized and racialized versions still fly over the state capitol building, and the controversy will undoubtedly figure at some point during next year’s Olympics.21

The civil rights movement challenged the white Southerner’s understanding of the meaning of the southern past and, by implication, the southern future. For white Southerners the Civil War had been about defeat, a Lost Cause, but for black Southerners it was about something for different—victory over white supremacy and black freedom. The symbols of southern public culture have been associated with the Confederacy since the late nineteenth century, defined by whites at a time when they were simultaneously restricting the rights and powers of black Southerners. Black Southerners since the 1970s have challenged the appropriateness of those symbols in the redefined southern community that represents a sharing of power between the region’s two principal groups of Southerners—black Americans of British ancestry and black Southerners of African ancestry. These two groups have occupied Southern soil for three hundred and fifty years, building a society earlier based on white supremacy but now based on a biconomic ideology.22

Race relations, that old southern obsession, one of Woodward’s burdens from the past, is the key to whether the South has a future as a recognizable region, whether it will still be a category worth analyzing because its people, and those outside the region, will attach meaning to the regional experience. Despite the South’s tortured history of race relations, which summons images of the brutalities of slavery, segregation, and lynching, the contemporary South has witnessed black Southern writers investing considerable meaning in the regional experience. African American literary critic Thadious Davis has written of the “regionality of the black self,” and such writers as Toni Morrison and Alice Walker use southern locales, characters, and tropes, and most importantly, history, in their explorations of African American life. Literary critic Robert Stepto has written of the long tradition of black Americans going “into the Black Belt” of the South in order to clarify their collective identities. It is no wonder that this is true, given that most of African American history took place in the South. Generations

Charles Reagan Wilson

of black Americans lived and died in the South and their descendants remain there.23

Beginning in the 1970s blacks reversed a twentieth-century trend; since then more blacks have moved into the South than have left it. With the civil rights and voting rights acts, blacks claimed their rightful position in the public culture of the region. There are now more black elected officials in the South than in any other part of the United States. In 1967, the South had over half of the nation’s African American population, but 82 percent of all black elected officials are there. Mississippi leads the way with 548 officials. The South is the historic homeland of black Americans. They are claiming their right to political and economic power, and they are insisting that the region’s culture reflect these new realities. Just as the South has desegregated its public schools and public accommodations, it is now struggling to redenile cultural imagery, to find new symbols that reflect the common experiences of blacks as well as whites. In placing their claim on the regional past, they are asserting as well their future in the region.24

Whites and blacks are engaged in a cultural war over the meaning of the South itself and will likely be so engaged in the future. The South’s story is of two peoples with very different cultures coming together and living on the same soil for centuries. As the nation faces the twenty-first century, this epic is far from complete. To be sure, race relations is now an American obsession, but it has special meanings when black Southerners and white Southerners meet, meanings inherited from the southern past. Because of this, the rest of the nation and even a world facing the increasing interaction of Western and Third World cultures may continue to follow future developments in the saga of the American South.25

20Thadious M. Davis, "Expanding the Limits: The Intersection of Race and Region," Southern Literary Journal, 20 (Spring 1988), pp. 3-11; Robert B. Stepto, From Behind the Veil, A Study of Afro-Ameri-
can Narrative (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1979).


The Midwest
Community lost and found
In 1859, the rural Midwest was girding itself to insure that its values and leaders would be central to the nation's future. That same year, New York-born Henry Glezen Fillmore was attempting to hack out a frontier farm from the thick brush of central Minnesota in the face of failed speculative ambitions and a young wife's urban aspirations. Far to the south, the birth of a son to a young farmer named Simeon Maxey marked the fourth generation to flourish in the southern Illinois hills where his grandfather had transplanted their Tennessee clan some forty years earlier. Further north and east, Aaron F. Gorton, a prosperous Yankee pioneer, sold one of his marshy, marginally improved, southern Michigan farms to Godfried August Schnackenberg, a Hanoverian farm laborer's son returned from California with cash in his pocket and founding a family in mind.¹

There is no reason to believe that the paths of Fillmore, Maxey, and Schnackenberg ever crossed. They were separated not only by distance and the distinct natural environments in which they found themselves, but by the cultures that molded them and the varying maturity and agricultural potential of their respective settlement regions. Life had very different fates in store for each. Yet all three men were roughly of an age, all recently married, all raised on farms and interested in acquiring farms of their own, and—the critical point for present purposes—all residents of the rural Midwest. Nineteenth-century families like these, for all their differences, together created in the northern portion of the nation's great central valley a distinctive rural cul-


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natural self-government, an enterprise-encouraging legal sys-

tem, widespread though not cost-free land ownership, the ex-
clusion of slavery, and limited but real public support for infras-
tructure development. The most important dividends of the 
region's settlement with the early stages of industrial revolu-
tion. It was sheltered in its early development from too rapid 
settlement, too much competition from outside producers, too 
excessive directed development. Jacksonian nationalism and the 
benefits of the quickening market and the emerging new technologies 
of transportation and production. And fourth, its development 
correlated with the great spurring in international migration set 
the roots for the farms of the future that scattered immigrant farmers through much of the region, particu-
larly from the 1830s onward, and secured the region's cultural 
and planter character.

Settlers view of themselves

Efforts to shape the historical interpretation of life in the 
Midwest countryside are almost as old as the region itself. 
As early as 1884, William H. Robinson, a prosperous 
farming household that the immigrant Schrackenbeck built 
appears, in the pages of Jackson County's 1874 atlas, 
only slightly more modest than Gorton's own prosperous 
spread, and comes complete with a husted and parasol-toting 
maid strolling in the garden and a boy in the 
lane. These contemporary self-presentations are as no-
table for what they leave out as for what they assert. It 
is not the act or art of farming that they celebrate, but 
its yields in status and consumer goods; not so much the 
distinctiveness and virtue of a rural way of life as its 
integration into the nation's emergent bourgeois civiliza-

tion. Nor is there much beyond the basic facts of their lives 
to differentiate them from those of their Yankee neighbors; all proved willing, in 
this self-presentation at least, to support the regional 
consciousness.

It was upon this vernacular explicatory, Cayton and 
Omst remind us, that Frederick Jackson Turner 
constructed his famous 1893 frontier thesis, and it was 
Turner's thesis that shaped, whether positively or nega-
tively, the historiography of the region's rural develop-
ment for a good three-quarters of a century thereafter. 

Agricultural historians developed a narrative of techno-
logical and organizational problem-solving and pro-
duction in Agriculture and National Development: West 
in the Nineteenth Century, ed. Lou Fergera (Amst, 1990), 
301-452.

Keathlia Neela Conzen

19History of Jackson County, Michigan (Chicago, 1881), quotation.

24Till, ibid., 1143-45.

25Both are reproduced in Katz, Settling of Wisconsin, 9.

26Cayton and Omst, Midwestern and the Nation, xxv-xxvi; see 
also John MacFarland, "Introduction: A Nation Thorn Back 
Upon Itself," in John MacFarland and Frederick Jackson 
Turner, eds., The Essays, and Frederick Jackson Turner, 
"The Essentials of a New History," in the Essays, and 
John MacFarland, "Introduction," in the Essays, and 
John MacFarland, "The Aspects of the Frontier," in the Essays,
"The County and the Land: A Report to the American Farm 
(Chicago, 1940), 5-92.

28Easterly, "The Land That Feeds Us" (New York, 1931); Paul 
Green, "The Farmer's Age," Agriculture, 1815-1860 (New York, 
1960).
The Midwest, while more socially-oriented historians debated whether it was as democratic as its frontier was postulated, generally agreed that the distribution of opportunity, wealth, and even of power during the first generation of settlement was probably as open and egalitarian as it could reasonably be expected. Both tend to see, in the farmer movements and the farm movement's declining status by the end of the century, evidence for the same sort of fin d'âge fears that moved Turner himself. For both the century remained the realization, on the fertile lands of the peaceful settlement, of a distinctive rural culture, embodied—for good and some times for ill—in the synthesis of business and family values represented by the modern American, commercial family farm.

New history

The "new rural history" of the past fifteen years has slowly moved its focus westward from its frontier origins to challenge much of the received Midwestern narrative with a different perspective and new sources and methods. Recent historians take a more complicated view of the acceptance of commercial agriculture, as well as of the social and cultural consequences of that acceptance. Instead of finding its questions by looking backward from the teleology of twentieth century agriculture, they focus forward from the trenches of traditional rural culture, seeking signs of resistance to the sway of market logic, variations in modes of adaptation to the farm economy, and the factors that either promote or thwart the allocation of the market's benefits and liabilities. In method it relies heavily on the detailed local community case study, with its meticulous reconstruction of economic and social patterns and concomitant community response, as well as the construction of cultural values. One product has been a set of studies probing the effective "transition to capitalism" through the period of settlement and maturation; another has been the articulation of the "highly alternative" alternatives represented by immigrant farming communities within the region.

Though the shelf of studies with a specific Midwestern developmental focus remains rather slim, it is possible to see emerging the outline of a new, not so much anti-Turnerian as anti-Turnerian interpretation of the nineteenth-century rural Midwest, and it is, at least from the perspective of rural capitalist conformity, generally a rather pessimistic one. All society presents this view in its starkest form: the Great West, he argued, was peopled by "yeomen," who owned the means of production and participated in commodity markets in order to sustain family autonomy—"facing the risks and dependance of the market and the problems of the marketing system. Yet the "dynamic spread of capitalism constricted yeoman success," forcing them to enter commodity markets and trade and by the 1850s insuring their displacement by "competitive small capitalist farms" in much of the region. The fortunate few might adapt; for the rest, these changes were flight to the next frontier or a "fall into wage labor." The developmental scenario emerges less starkly in the examples of ethnic immigrant farmers, but the conclusion is a similar one. The patriarchal clans who migrated from the Upper South to the Illinois frontier studied by John Mack Faragher, for example, initially created a fairly liberal society with a community-oriented, communal agrarian economy; but by the mid-twenties the century the quickened pace of economic development and transportation brought an economically segmented, class differentiated, and increasingly sedentary. Thus the bonds of community were not wholly destroyed by this advancing modernity, they encouraged to enfold only members of the stable, minority population and to ease their transition. Further to the north, the Yankees farmers of Wisconsin's Trempealeau County faced the same transition a generation later, but here, it seems from Jane Pedersen's re- search, they largely dodged, to be replaced by Norwegian farmers who had similarly made way and enabled them to postpone the inevitable for a few more decades. Other work on Norwegian, Swedish, and German communities, in particular, has documented how specific facets of immigrant culture—clustered colonization created by kin-directed migration chains, church and school-buttressed norms of family formation; labor, land transmission; as well as community-oriented political activity—could combine to mitigate the problems facing the family and its way of farming. For German Catholics in central Minnesota, the result was to deflect some of the pace of change; for many of their Norwegian neighbors, it slowed the process. Even the market towns of the region experienced a similar cultural transition as they restricted their expectations either upward or downward depending on the rhythms of the farming cycle, and the evolving urban system, once initial opportunity yielded either to situs and decline, or to the highly differentiated class structure of the industrializing city.

In contrast, to an earlier picture of eager modernizers leading the great "valley of democracy" into a constantly growing commercial agriculture, we have a new image taking shape, an image composed of families of agrarian tradition seeking refuge from market-driven change, who initially constructed satisfying family economies.
The Midwest and stories of the dissenters whose presence it obscures, but the newer emphasis neglects the purposiveness with which midwesterners pursued the new settler, and their active agency in its construction. Moreover, these newer perspectives provide interpretations of change in particular places, but often leave little sense of the transformation within broader structures like metropolitan areas or the particular places occupied, nor do they address whether the lives people actually experienced can simply be equated with the history of the places where they lived. Recent historians of the midwest suggest that we should assume that place and people can stand proxy for personal history, that community decay was experienced as personal loss, that departure represented failure, and that the focus of midwestern rural culture was necessarily its own reproduction and perpetuation. It was not perpetuation but transformation that the old tradition histories celebrated, not stability but the fruits of mobility, and net place as a space of loss and place and family's trajectory.

What, for example, are we to make of Henry Fillsmore's rural failure? For fail he did, rather spectacularly. His farmmaking collapsed in the turbulence of a salacious divorce, provoked, he charged, by his wife's conspicuous consuming habits, dislike of work, and refusal to bear him additional children, but provoked also, she claimed, by his physical and mental cruelty, venereal disease, and a family that was inbred and unfamiliarity with what must have been at any rate by then, an emerging pattern of settled rural society. It is doubtful that Fillsmore ever had much commitment to rural life. He clearly sought in western land a lever comparable to the one that his cousin Millard, the nation's president, had found in education, that would lift him from the privations of a log cabin childhood. His response to failure was to establish himself in the growing county seat as a veterinarian and a small scale real estate operator. From his failure, he neglected to see the parallel path on the next frontier, pairing a series of rural jobs into very successful real estate speculation in Kansas City and ultimately into what might be termed an impressive professional career as co-founder of a new religious movement and as a pioneering radio evangelist.

Simeon Maxey's deep family roots in the soil of southern Illinois seemed to promise all the rural stability that his parents desired. In his early life, Maxey worked on a farm, and he later returned to that life, but when his family moved to Washington County where he established the territory's first commercial orchards. One son became an engineer, another a railroad executive; a grandson was president of Whitman College. The stagnant farm economy of southern Illinois did not meet his needs, but did it interpret his failure as its own?

Idiosyncrasy and happenstance clearly shaped the routes taken by Fillmore and Maxey through the nineteenth century, but the presence within broader structure like metropolitan or agricultural, or of course the broader family logics also at work. Their choices were made as much within what can be thought of as the longitudinal context of family as within the horizontal constraints of place and time. They were a part of an age that, by the end of the century, had shaped so many children and periodization for midwestern rural community history. It would be premature to posit a comparable framework for the history of rural families in the region as they move through time and space. But an exploratory look at families like the Fillmores, Maxeys, and Schnackenburgs may offer a way to identify some of the familial trajectories that such a history of rural families might evince.

The recent proliferation of well-researched genealogies for a wide spectrum of American families makes such a pilot probe possible. I will include the Fillmore, Maxeys, and Schnackenburgs almost at random from the universe of "genealogically" midwestern farm families using only the rough criteria of genealogical quality and their respective northern, southern, and foreign origins. They are certainly not representative of midwestern farm families in any sense, nor can their genealogies necessarily bear the weight of rigorous statistical analysis. Even the most assiduous genealogist misses family members and life events; many moves that did not result in a vital event go unrecorded; and most genealogies, including these, follow only the male lines beyond the second generation, insuring a masculine slant to any analysis. Nevertheless, genealogies like these are sufficient for the generalization that as midwestern rural society becomes more mobile, family members grow, land did not. Traditional solutions to the age-old dilemma included late marriages and lowered fertility, inheritance and marriage restrictions, intensified agriculture, household production, off-farm labor and the like. In America, families could simply move west.

The first Fillmore settled on a Norfolk, Connecticut farm around 1710, and began their march westward when his grandson and some members of the War exposed them to opportunity on New York's northern and western frontiers. One Fillmore line moved north to the Maritimes and then down through the logging frontiers of Ontario and Michigan; and the farmlands of northern Illinois, Iowa, and points west, culminating in the Dust Bowl trek from Oklahoma to California; another moved generation after generation westward from Vermont to New York to the lower Great Lakes and on to the plains. The Maxeys had a more local genealogical pioneer and his cousin, the president. The Maxey's piligrimage began on a tidewater Virginia plantation shortly after 1700, moved west to the Piedmont in the next generation, and then diffused through the meandering streams of the settlers after the Revolution. One line followed the plantation frontier south through Georgia and along the Gulf Coast and others through Kentucky, Tennessee, and Politics. The Schnackenburgs, like the Fillmores, moved northward across the Ohio after 1800—often after converting to Methodism and freeing their slaves—and from there they too moved westward like the Fillmores, whom they finally joined on the depression-era trek to Bakersfield.

Several significant patterns emerge. First, these families moved in family chains, and they moved primarily for the good of the individual farmer and his large families; in almost all instances, when they settled in a new area for more than a generation, family size quickly dropped. Midwestern Fillmores and Maxeys characteristic more when their children were in their teens as the need for more land and children were available to help work it; elderly grandchildren frequently joined them. Slave-holding Maxeys, on the contrary, were formed of married couples, leaving family behind. Fillmores tended to move to a new frontier only if their parents had moved to a previous one; once halted for a generation, they strongly rejected the experience needed to regain the westering option, unlike the Maxeys, whose extended family chains meant that there was always a relative waiting somewhere further west whom they could join. After the California gold rush, the changing nature of westering was dramatically demonstrated by the move of large families, who, having settled in both families a new pattern of speculative migration by young men out of side of family chains.

Taking root
If Fillmores and Maxeys headed west for new land with sometimes astonishing generational regularity and predictability, many members of both families also stopped and began new lives as both farmers and ranchers. Three separate scenarios seem to have informed the choice to remain and farm the land that was pioneered by a previous generation. If the family's land was sufficient to support only a single family, one scenario was to leave a single child behind to farm it; that child's family would face the same dilemma the following generation, however, with westward migration now a far less realistic option. The second scenario played itself out when the family found sufficient agrarian opportuni-
Rowley as merchants, doctors, and teachers after the Civil War. In the case of such small town urbanization, middle class advancement tended to proceed more slowly but with less specialization. The post-frontier urban option was not a rejection but a completion of the logic of frontier migration. Opportunity that once lay in land and a family economy was now be found in cities by young people, or in in small towns and in sibbling chains and founded a new kind of family after arrival.

A second variant, somewhat less common, used westward migration itself to generate the urban move. That move, too, was no less secure, as in Henry Gleeson Fillmore's case. He probably migrated with siblings from his father's western New York farm to Michigan, and then with other Michiganders to Minnesota, where a fur trader's job put him in an excellent position to take advantage of the new farm land, and then of the urban opportunity created by the area's expanding farm economy. Others moved more purposively to the new cities, with the premise that both the more adventurous and the less well endowed, who might otherwise have remained, like their brothers, in less exciting, local, post-frontier urban centers. Young Fillmores left Middlebury, Vermont in fast Champaign, Illinois; Dexter, Michigan for St. Paul; and small-town South Dakota for Alaska. Noteworthy on the purposive urban migration was the absence of farmers' sons from this early urban experience.

Delayed urbanization, like the first two scenarios, directed Fillmores to rapidly growing urban areas, but as laborers and operatives rather than as entrepreneurs and professionals. This occurred most commonly when a sustained frontier tradition of post-frontier generation in the rural communities without the demographic and educational change encouraged by commercialization. That when rural economy finally collapsed, migration to urban centers was one of the few available options. This scenario found its classic expression in the generations of Fillmores who made their way south from the Marietoon to work in the New England mills, but the northern Michigan Fillmores who found their way to the auto plants of Detroit and Flint, and the Kansas Fillmores who followed the oil industry to Texas, and the Oklahoma Fillmores who later took the road to California. It happened that case of the Cincinnati Fillmores—often followed. Through such purposive moves the family's middle class status was typically secured by the second urban generation; subsequent generations were carried along. Others, too, found their way into comparable or higher levels of urban hierarchy.

Finally, there was the systematic and regular urban migration, as they came of age, of the non-farming children of the successful commercial farmers. Like the first scenario, this one also required the farm to capitalize the urban move; it was not, however, linked to a particular point in the developmental cycle of either the family or the rural community, but involved the normal, recurring drain of restless, talented, or surplus farmers' children to the city. This move took the form of local, urban job seeking for the marginally educated; it also involved siphoning off the more ambitious in stages up the urban ladder, with rural non-agricultural employment often the starting point.

I have focused on the Fillmores because their simpler family structures makes the logic of their pursuits easier to understand and describe, but we can identify similar situations. Various stay-at-home Macey lines in Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, and central Illinois all responded to new local commercial opportunity with both reduced family size and urban migration. The Illinois that Joel Macey chose when he left Kentucky in 1827, for example, happened to be located near the future state capital of Springfield. The agrarian frontier lurked one son westward, who ultimately met a gunfighter's death in post-Civil War Texas. But remaining in Illinois brought both prosperity and a brush with history to his less adventurous brothers, one as an entrepreneur of the new farmer, the other as a preacher and father-in-law of Abraham Lincoln's law partner and biographer. A couple of grandsons tried their luck, at least briefly, in the West, but most remained in the new middle class mold that they had in Illinois. Macey itself emerged from the frontier. Southern Macesys, by contrast, with fewer opportunities tempting them to stay or urbanize, tended to remain much longer in the patriarchal and westerner traditions, who did not occur, tended to be of the purposive frontier type that held far less attraction for their northern cousins.

What then of the Schnackebens? It was men of Gottfried's stripe who stereotypically served as fillers-in when the fourth generation reached its maturity. He was one of the pion neers; it is, they, historians have argued, who placed greater value on community and structured their family to ensure cross-generational stability on the land.9 Certain Schnackebens familiarized themselves with John—was a stayer. He brought his parents over from Germany and built a cabin for them across from the road on his own. He paid a $200 fee to avoid Civil War service. He married the oldest son out and, like Simeon Macey, transferred his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackebens there was movement and change. His oldest son sold out and, like Simeon Macey, turned his assets into the family; he was the first to sell the family land decades later. But even among the Schnackeben
The Midwest

sons, and those sons soon parlayed their mechanical expertise into urban sales, managerial, railroad, and factory jobs, mainly in Michigan. His other daughter became a nurse in California. Even a man with roots like Gottfried could keep only one child in the countryside.

Rural paradox

The lives and aspirations of families like the Fillmorees, Maxeys, and Schnackenbergs suggest the permeability and mutability between rural and urban in this region, and the artificiality of some of the bounds conventionally drawn by a scholarship grounded in the histories of productive units or communities. Abandoning the farm for many nineteenth-century Midwesterners was neither a sign of farming failure nor a rejection of rural values; it was often the logical goal and capstone of the farming enterprise. The capital, skills, and values generated within the patrimonial family as it created midwestern commercial agriculture within the context of new technological and organizational possibilities, also created both the region's cities and the aspirations that drew rural people to them.

For these families, urban and western migration systems were complementary rather than competing. They followed different logic and attracted different kinds of rural people. The maritime Fillmorees clearly realized this when they found themselves in Kane County on the edge of Chicago in the early 1850s. They were literal backwoodsmen, untrained in the ways of this commercial economy, and soon loaded their wagons for the Iowa frontier, where they made their cultural transition gradually over the following generation. Such migrations suggest that the increased fertility characteristic of frontiers is not so much a response to the potential of frontier lands, but that families sought the frontier to invest their best resources, their children, in the most productive fashion. When settled families reduced their fertility, it was as much a response to altered perceptions of opportunity that required and supported the new norm of bourgeois life as it was defense against the implications of declining land endowments. Thus we return to the Cayton and Omol paradox of nineteenth-century midwestern culture with which we began. Commercial agriculture created a bourgeois culture in the nineteenth-century Midwest, a culture that soon moved beyond the farms and drew many farmers with it. Those left behind found a satisfying existence in rural communities patterned by the norms of gentile society, or were willing or forced to live on the margins of that world. Increasingly, ethnic families like the Schnackenbergs found in this marginality of rural culture protection for an alternative way of life that they valued. The region's dominant rural values, as Cayton and Omol have noted and the county histories confirmed, virtually ignored the presence of ethnic families and denied the cultural pluralism they represented, even as they provided buy-out funds to finance urban or western moves for their Maxey and Fillmore neighbors. Even the Schnackenbergs and their kind often proved unable or unwilling, over the long term, to resist the alternative conceptions of opportunity that were embedded in the region's economy and value structure.

Nineteenth-century rural midwesterners inhabited physical communities that burgeoned and then stabilized in the process of settlement and development, and the history and values of those communities is one facet of the heritage they bequeathed to the century of rural life that has followed. They also inhabited familial lines, composed of memories, relationships, habits, and aspirations, whose trajectories sought out and helped shape communities appropriate to their need. Nineteenth-century Midwesterners created a rural culture within which they could live and prosper; but they also created one that was inappropriate to the rural passage many were learning to make.

International and national contexts of rural development: Issues and frameworks

Glenn L. Nelson

"...her minister...wrote Jane a letter and...the address was like this: It said Jane Cheadle; The Credit Farm; Grover's Corners; Sutton County; New Hampshire; United States of America; Continent of North America; Western Hemisphere; the Earth; the Solar System; the Universe; the Mind of God..." Rebecca in Our Town by Thornton Wilder

As the minister in Grover's Corners reminds us, people exist within an array of complex systems. The people of the rural Midwest are no exception. From the many topics that could be highlighted in a brief paper, I will emphasize the international and national setting of development in the rural Midwest. Other topics are of equal importance, and I look forward to other participants raising them.

My objective is to propose areas of study for consideration by the people and institutions that pursue rural studies. The first component proposed for rural studies is international events, including the foreign policies of the U.S. Second are domestic policies of the federal government. With respect to analyzing the impacts of international and national events, there are important limitations to the current information base and analytic framework. The importance of values in our choices and in the well-being of rural people is emphasized by way of conclusion.

International events and rural people

International events have significant implications for development in rural areas, including but not restricted to the Midwest. This can be illustrated with a large number of examples from trade policy and from the domestic policies of other countries. This paper will use the divergent policies in the former Soviet bloc and in China as illustration.

8For a recent review of and contribution to the literature on this issue, see Lee A. Craig, To Sell One Acre More: Child Laboring and Farm Productivity in the Antebellum North (Baltimore, 1993).

9Rural Policy Research Institute, RUPRI does not advocate positions on policy issues but rather facilitates communication between scientists and policy makers. The policy views expressed here are those of the author.
The countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, labeled as "countries in transition" by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), plunged into a massive restructuring of their economies with the aim of giving a much larger role to private property, decentralization, decision making, and individual entrepreneurship. The year 1990 is often viewed as an important dividing point, for this was the year when the economic parameters occurred for the Soviet Congress and when the Berlin Wall was opened. The consequence for economic growth in the countries in transition has been an average annual decline of real domestic product (GDP) of 9 percent in 1990-1995 (IMF, p. 121).

Total real GDP in these countries in 1995 is about 43 percent lower than in 1989, a significantly greater decline than the great depression in the U.S. when GDP fell 39 percent from 1929 to 1933 (U.S. Council of Economic Advisers, p. 310). Per capita GDP estimates would show an even more dramatic decline. The countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union account for about 5 percent of world GDP in 1995 as compared to about 10 percent in 1989 (author's calculations using IMF, pp. 114 and 121).

China has pursued a more cautious approach to institutional change. The Chinese are adopting technology developed in the rest of the world but they are preserving much of their traditional institutional framework, which includes considerable centralization of authority. The democracy movement blossomed in the late 1980s in China, and was ruthlessly repressed in Tiananmen Square in mid-1989, the same year that marked change was occurring in the countries in transition. The consequence for economic growth in China has been an average annual growth rate of real GDP of 10 percent in 1990-1995 (IMF, p. 129; UN, p. 301). Real GDP in China in 1995 is about 78 percent higher than in 1989. China accounts for about 3.6 percent of world GDP in 1995 as compared to about 2.2 percent in 1989 (author's calculations using IMF, pp. 121 and 129, and UN, p. 299).

The events in the countries in transition and in China are of sufficient magnitude to have a significant impact on the world economy. In one way of illustration, if the countries in transition had an average annual growth rate in real GDP of one percent per year in 1990-1995, the world economy outside the U.S. would be about six percent smaller in 1995 than in 1989. If China had an average annual decline of real GDP of five percent in 1990-1995, the world economy outside the U.S. would be about three percent smaller in 1995.

Countries of all magnitudes in the world economy outside the U.S. would, I hypothesize, have a significant impact on the U.S. economy. It is impossible to explore the impacts in this paper, however, the key point is that international events have major impacts on the U.S. economy.

The impacts of international events will, in general, differ significantly in rural and urban places. The production of commodities produced in rural areas differs significantly from those produced in urban areas. For example, the production of agricultural commodities occurs disproportionately in nonmetropolitan areas (Brasher, Nelson, and Van der Sluijs, p. 21). These commodities are major exports of the U.S., and the demand for these commodities is especially affected by the growth of income in nonmetropolitan areas. For example, manufacturing represents a higher proportion of employment in nonmetropolitan than in metropolitan areas (USDA, pp. 83-86). Manufactured products are widely traded among countries, and development in other countries creates potential both for markets and for productive competitors. As a final example of rural-urban differences, average wage rates are lower in nonmetropolitan than in metropolitan areas. The proportion of the population with children younger than 15 years of age is higher in nonmetropolitan than metropolitan areas (USDA, p. 77). These two factors are associated with a different composition of work between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas and thus the threats and potentials represented by the rapid expansion of low-wage, routine employment in other countries differ for nonmetropolitan and metropolitan places.

We should seriously consider including in future programs of work and in future conferences on rural studies, analysis of the impacts on rural people and places in the U.S. and prospective events in the international arena. This requires people willing to engage in the study of international events and that of conditions in the rural U.S. The work should inform at least two sets of decisions: those of the work will probably be most useful to private industry (see for example, p. 4). Enrollment in other foreign policy. For example, what is the probability that China will go through a massive economic contraction during the next 20 years like that of the countries in transition and what would be the implications for the rural U.S.?

Some of the work should inform U.S. rural citizens of the probables impacts on international developments of U.S. policies in rural places. For example, the probable impacts of these policies on people everywhere, including the U.S., is not known. For example, to what degree can the U.S. influence institutional change and growth rates in the countries in transition and in China? Are the policies beneficial to lower-income rural citizens in the U.S.? Is it higher income rural citizens in the U.S.? Is it higher income rural citizens in the U.S.? To lower-income people in foreign countries? To higher-income people in foreign countries? To the poor in one group—and others—likely to fare under slow evolution of institutional structures versus the "cold shower" approach advocated by central U.S. economists and used in many of the countries in transition that have received substantial foreign aid? The choices demands a deeper awareness of the consequences of international events as the world's societies become increasingly intertwined.

National events and rural people
National events also have significant implications for development in rural areas. Much of the current policy debate at the national level is focused on both the benefits and costs of reducing the federal deficit, lowering taxes, and cutting federal government spending. Disagreements over federal spending for entitlements such as Medicare, Medicaid, AFDC, and Food Stamps are an important part of the debate. This debate and its outcome are extremely important to rural people and places.

Nonmetropolitan people are disproportionately vulnerable to funding cuts based upon the demographic and policy characteristics that are commonly associated with greater need. A disproportionate number of nonmetropolitan people are age 65 and over. The Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) projects this age differential will persist at least through the year 2030 (Brasher, Nelson, and Van der Sluijs, p. 11). Nonmetropolitan people have lower incomes than metropolitan residents (Brasher, Nelson, and Van der Sluijs, pp. 68-69). Nonmetropolitan people have higher poverty rates than metropolitan residents (USDA, pp. 48-49).

In view of these characteristics of rural people, we should not be surprised to find that they receive a disproportionate share of the benefits from entitlement programs and the federal budget. Federal expenditures for entitlement programs in 1992 equaled 33.2 percent of income in nonmetropolitan areas—42 percent above the 2.34 percent in metropolitan areas (Nelson and Brasher, p. 21).

Cutbacks in the projected increases in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) closely parallels the proposed cuts in spending on entitlements. The EITC is focused on low-income earners. Poor households in rural areas are more likely to include members who earn income (Deaver and Hoppe, pp. 14-5). While I am not aware of a study of the rural-urban distribution of the EITC, I am certain that the cuts in the EITC would disproportionately fall in rural areas.

The proposed cut in the capital gains tax and the proposed nonrefundable child tax credit will do disproportionately to the wealthier and higher income segments of the population. The reduction in capital gains tax proposed by the Republican majorities in Congress will go disproportionately to people in metropolitan areas in comparison to people in nonmetropolitan areas.

National political leaders in the U.S. support reduction of prospective federal budget deficits. This is a primary motivating factor behind their support for reductions of federal expenditures from currently projected levels. The leaders correctly perceive benefits to federal budget deficit reduction. People focused on rural issues should be aware of these benefits, as well as the burdens caused by reductions in federal expenditures. Curtis Brasher, University of Missouri, is working on these issues but do not yet have complete results.

Our preferred approach, as in most of our work for RUPRI, is to disaggregate, on a rural-urban basis, estimates of national impacts to the country groupings. In the case of a reduced federal budget deficit, economic...
The total impact of a positive $42 billion (bottom row of Table 1) reflects CBO's estimate that the total economy will expand by about 0.5 percent in FY 2002 if economic growth is not reduced. The "other" row is not a residual figure that is computed by subtracting the explicit components of the budget. The percentage of GDP that personal income would expand by the same 0.5 percent as estimated for GDP. The "other" row is a residual that is not a residua of the "all other" row. The "reference estimates" of the distribution of the population, and thus the "other" row plays a largely neutral role in determining the differential metropolitan-nonmetropolitan impact.

The hypothesis is that nonmetropolitan people do not share in the gains of the proposed fiscal actions to an extent consistent with their role in the nation's economy. If population shares are used as a reference point, nonmetropolitan people would need to realize a gain of $8.5 billion to maintain the status quo. If income shares are used as a reference point, nonmetropolitan areas would need to realize a gain of $6.6 billion to maintain the status quo. Finally, if shares of poverty in nonmetropolitan areas were used as a reference point, nonmetropoliet areas would need to realize a gain of $10.9 billion. My hypothesis is that nonmetropolitan areas would lose about $1 billion dollars in FY 2002 if the Republican proposal is adopted. This result differs by about $7 billion to $12 billion from the reference points noted above.

Table 1. Hypotheses With Respect to Impacts of the Republican Fiscal Year 2002

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<th>Metro</th>
<th>Percent Distribution</th>
<th>Nonmetro</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Deficit stimulus investment</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net of all other impacts</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific hypotheses are often helpful in assessing the potential seriousness of issues and thereby in setting priorities. I have developed a set of hypotheses concerning the benefits and losses of nonmetropolitan and metropolitan people with respect to the proposed Republican budget which has passed the Senate and House and which the President has promised to veto. I use fiscal year 2002 as my reference point because this is when the proposed program would be fully implemented. The rough estimates in Table 1 are hypotheses meant to guide research and analysis—rather than estimates of sufficient quality to influence policy.

Glenn L. Nelson

The World Bank recently issued two reports that have stimulated considerable public dialogue as well as discussion among analysts (Sarageldin and World Bank). This work, of a preliminary nature, estimates that in

86
1900 the world's wealth consisted of 20 percent of natural capital (natural endowment such as soil, minerals, and water), 16 percent of man-made produced assets (houses, roads, infrastructure, etc.), and 64 percent of human capital (health, education, experience, etc. of the population) and social (the formal and informal institutions and networks). The estimates for the U.S. (p. 2) are similar to those for the world, where the estimated importance of natural capital is 25 percent, produced assets is 16 percent, and human capital (primarily human capital in his analysis) is 64 percent (Eisner, p. 46-50).

We know that the creation and effective use of human and social assets is a complex and interacting system. We also have considerable evidence to support the complex nature of the human and social capital in rural and urban areas. The gap appears to be reactivity of the nature of human and social capital in rural and urban development. To the contrary, many authors analyze the complex nature of human and social capital in rural and urban communities, regions, and nations will be relevant. A multi-disciplinary team should pursue the work or be available to advise the research team. The resulting estimates will be very useful in analyzing interactions between policy makers and analysts in this work. Bennewit notes, "...the idea of staying close to the policy makers is critical both for improving the model specification and for generating practical, operational support for an inherently costly and long term effort." (RUPRI, p. 22) Womack emphasizes the importance of a parsimonious list of indicators in order to avoid creation of "more of a monster than we can tame in the short term." (RUPRI, p. 9)

The efficient work in the different policy objectives areas with measures of policies, action. It would proceed that a disaggregated level of the research team's choosing, such as community or subnational regional units of analysis. This approach will be extremely helpful to many academics and greatly assisted for their lack of detail and rigor. But I agree with Bennewit who suggests that the aim should be to reject the criticism of those who would force the cramping of subnational jurisdiction on rural policy modeling. "..." (RUPRI, p. 21) The initial results would be lodged in a small set of significant equations including measures of several policy objectives and measures of several policy relevant. The nature of these results would be analogous to the early small models for the U.S. macroeconomic and agricultural economies. We should seriously consider including in the agenda of rural studies the construction of social indicator models. This effort will link policy makers and the concerned public, and scholars from multiple disciplines. The work will have a mutually beneficial relationship with the pursuit of better measures of human and social capital noted above. Now is the time, in Knavil's words to, "...move social indicator research into a new phase—the analysis of economic, political, and social dimensions, as the primarily descriptive reporting that characterizes most previous indicator projects." (RUPRI, p. 33)

Conclusion

This paper recommends that we give serious consideration to three topical areas as we build a future research program in rural studies:

- The impact of current and prospective events in the international area on rural people and places in the U.S.
- The impacts of current and prospective national and international policies in rural areas.
- Strengthening the analytic foundations of rural studies by developing measures of human and social capital in metropolitan areas and by constructing social indicator models.

This much can be recommended with little explicit attention to values except for a commitment to either increased scholarly knowledge or increased well-being of some portion of the rural population. How we pursue our work in each of these areas, and others we choose, will depend on how we value others. The quote from Wilder's Our Town at the outset of this paper begins with an individual—Jane Crouse, goes on to list multiple places, and concludes with "the Mind of God." Wilder reminds us that we live and work within a system of values. The nature of the agenda in rural studies will be affected significantly by the gods that we serve, that is, the values that underlie our choices. What is the relative importance we place on satisfying, for example, the preferences of editors of scholarly journals, the wishes of those who control public or private sources of potential funding, the wishes of current political leaders who are often responding to the needs of rural people, the needs of the rural poor and disadvantaged, the needs of the rural and urban poor and disadvantaged, the needs of people in other countries, and the needs of the poor and disadvantaged in other countries. In the sense that community is the size and extent of a group whose members are willing to sacrifice something of value to aid others in the group, I fear its scope ce be considered in this complex and rapidly changing society.
The Future: The Midwest

Cornelia Butler Flora*

This approach is one scenario of the future. One could see the future of the midwest from several perspectives. One could, in a broad sense, account for the path of Robert Redfield when he looked at Totoncan in central Mexico. He described a town of relative peace, prosperity and potential. Several years later, Oscar Lewis, another anthropologist, studied the same village and described relationships varying on war, desperate poverty, and a dismal future. Both described a part of reality; both left out important pieces of the picture. In the course of work with rural communities in the Midwest, I have found that a focus on needs is disempowering, leading to fatalism and a sense of victimization. On the other hand, focusing on assets and a vision for the future is empowering. Based on a strategic definition of empowerment, I have chosen the Redfield way. It would be equally intellectually challenging to propose an Oscar Lewis scenario for the future, but the result would be less useful for community organizing.

For many people in rural areas in the Midwest, it felt like a wildfire had burned over the landscape in the late 1990s. The increasing inequality that began with ecocomic restructuring was intensified by restructuring of the state and of the federally subsidized infrastructure as it deteriorated, including highways and levies and locks. Agriculture felt the shock first, as programs coded that were established to deal with the emergency conditions of the Depression, but had remained and locked in a monoculture production system and a dependency on the federal government to absorb risks. The fiscal crisis of the federal government was such that state government could not take over the function of absorbing risk.

Federal human services programs were radically restructured, subject to the need for federal budget cutting on the part of the politically ambitious and the fiscally concerned. Sexually transmitted diseases increased dramatically, as the rudimentary ability of the public sector to monitor and control them was impaired in the name of fiscal responsibility. An outbreak of communicable diseases, diphtheria, hepatitis, and tuberculosis, swept the region, with devastating impact on the very young and the very old. These contagious diseases, once only a*Director, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development
works of reciprocity and trust were strengthened as rural residents responded to the crisis, understanding that no one would solve the problem but themselves and that they indeed were capable.

In the face of sharp decline in external resources, rural communities assessed their internal resources—human, social, environmental, financial, and manufactured. Using this base, they were able to secure and sustain a variety of institutions in manufacturing, particularly information technology. Strategic investment meant drastic changes in the way local governments did business. Local government leaders also collaborated with the federal government and themselves in innovative ways. For example, they invested in better fiber optic networks instead of roads; day care for elders and children were combined and linked to public schools and health care facilities. They strengthened the link between public and private agendas. They formed multi-community networks to achieve economies of scale while monitoring the low transaction costs of high levels of social capital. As a result, community identity flowered.

Local alliances were formed to invest resources. Alternative investment strategies were laid out and the impact assessed by diverse community groups in terms of community well-being. Increased investment in the environment, which was viewed as one of the attractions of the region rather than an enemy to be overcome, resulted in these groups adopting multiple public uses of land. Billions were saved in lock and key construction as fewer, bulk raw commodities were moved out of the region but were processed and consumed where they were grown. As credit requirements in regional markets, fewer row crops were grown and less soil had to be dredged from the region’s waterways.

Facilitated by state and regional groups, by local entrepreneurs, and even by well-networked, civic-minded volunteers, links were made across rural areas and to other communities with complementary or additive capabilities to develop inter-territory, flexible networks of high performance organizations.

Such organizations, known as virtual enterprises, originated in the new economy, which favored the large and the mobile, but was penetrable by the small and the rooted when they were embedded by personal as well as electronic relationships. When the United States was formed, conference and the delegates were able to use their advantage of rural, high levels of social capital, they created a series of networks that increased the productivity of land and its use where it was needed. They were able to facilitate their investment decisions by individuals and by communities interested in and of place. It was difficult at first to move away from the mass society economy, where status and power were gained by the volume of product, and the most important price signal and determinant was volume. Although painful, the lack of government subsidies forced farmers to move from consumer-oriented to market-oriented toward mass markets to differentiated products oriented to very specific markets and produced to meet exacting standards of end users. Using the information highway and the global reach of various institutional settings and carefully maintained through the internet, telephone calls, fiber optics information sharing, video conferencing and critical face-to-face meetings, flexible work organizations—both agricultural and non-agricultural—were able to identify potential needs and effective demand and were able to determine the best way to enter new markets. Transaction costs were reduced through critical friendship networks.

Through cooperation with similar communities, small towns were able to more efficiently offer essential services to their citizens. The self-help civic organization that was started in the 1950s, was further developed and even more valuable in solving the problems of reproduction, community maintenance, and production for an increasingly complex and dynamic market economy. Their understanding of the value of social capital in decreasing transaction costs and their ability to network, enabled producers of goods and services to link more directly into highly integrated supply chains, to deliver as needed, and to respond quickly. Nothing was produced until the product could be sold. Forward contracting was common. That forward contracting originated from Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) to livestock production, with strong producer associations that provided stability and quick response to changing conditions. Technology was adopted because it increased management efficiency, not because it decreased labor costs. Biotechnology was a tool for creating new, novel and healthy food for a world in which many food scientists developing new products from new processes, as well as new species adapted to the harsh climate and dynamic seasonal changes.

Virtual added, through more targeted marketing, resulted in increased wage rates and employment of local young people. Those young people included the sons and daughters of the diverse low wage workers brought in under the Bracero program. The sons and daughters of the farmers, professionals and small business owners who had been there for generations. The commitment of midwestern states to higher education, and their increasing innovations to deliver quality education at the lowest cost to students wherever they lived, greatly facilitated the retention of future generations in rural counties.
found it had to do with social relations among generations and among different kinds of people. They found these social networks (social capital) a major asset in their community.

During the period of the sharp wage drop of the late 1980s and 1990s, a number of workers from all over the world had come into the rural Midwest, changing its cultural and racial composition. The first reaction to increased diversity in the 1990s had been hate, fear, and demonization, as the new immigrants were blamed for all the troubles the communities faced, from increasing crime to problems in the schools and increasing health costs. As communities began to assess their internal resources and to recognize they had to invest in them locally to make their vision a reality, the skills and values of these new immigrants became an important piece of a resilient and flexible strategy. The perception of new immigrants evolved from a liability to an asset. There was increasing recognition that the old model of individual economic growth through increasing diversification of their farm enterprises, including the production of a much broader spectrum of species and varieties.

Communities became very adept at monitoring the conditions under which they were producing. New businesses were created to do this, linked with existing firms. This transformation was possible, in part, because residents shared a vision of the future. The vision was based on relationships with the economy, with the environment, and with people. A vision was necessary in response to the sharp drop in revenue from state and federal governments and the increase in expenses that resulted in local areas as a result of the devolution of responsibility for resources (not local resources) to local areas to meet the basic needs of their citizens. Communities banded together to set a different vision for the future and to map the resources available to achieve that shared vision. Communities became places of discussion and interaction. All the store fronts were not still there, but every community had a place where people could gather. And people did gather. They gathered across generations and across ethnic groups. Newcomers were welcome, because old timers had learned that the more alternatives they examined, the better choices existed. Each person enabled the community to broaden the range of possible solutions in their quest to make their vision real.

In the course of creating their collective vision, citizens sought to define the quality of life they sought, for themselves and their children. Much to their surprise and early embarrassment, they found that their quality of life was not based on the size or even the number of their television sets. When they began to analyze why they felt good about themselves and where they lived, they

Corinna Butler Fura

The Middle West

As a result of the recovery process, a new set of values emerged. These values had their roots in the midwestern rural heritage, but were manifest in new ways as a result of the experiences of the 1990s. There was a strong recognition that more is not better; that family—defined broadly and positively—is important; that quality of life is not a product of what one owns, but of relationships with the environment and with each other; that rootlessness is not the same as backward; that nature is a thing of beauty, not a set of obstacles to be overcome. And most importantly, sustainability and the long time horizon it entails is worth discussing and working toward.

The landscape changed as well. There were more trees, more wildlife, water quality improved. And the opportunities to be with nature—from trout fishing to deer and pheasant hunting to bird watching—interested tourists who valued the sustainable aspects of the environment and community.

The reconstruction and reinvention of the rural MidWest is based on building strong communities: communities of interest and communities of place. Those communities monitor the impacts of their actions because they understand that there is no such thing as a single, one-shot solution, a silver bullet. Building viable communities is a process in which an individual’s action makes a difference and acting together makes everybody more effective.

Working toward a vision is problematic. It depends on the thing we measure the least, social capital. It depends on people getting together and working together. And it depends on the absence of pervasive incentives that impede dysfunctional activity on the part of individuals in pursuit of short term gain.

There is a great opportunity for rural MIDwestern communities embedded in some of the radical structural changes that the economy and policies are facing. It is my belief that those opportunities can be mobilized and that, in some parts of the Midwest, they will be.
The West
Natural resources and environmental conflict
The state and the corporation in the shaping of the rural West

Richard S. Kirkendall*

The history of the American rural West has been largely shaped by the state and the corporation. The impacts on timber communities of the state's efforts to protect the spotted owl and WalMart's invasion of the West, with its consequences for main street businesses, are only recent episodes in a long story. The state entered at the beginning; the corporation came in before the story had moved along very far. Rural westerners have been ambivalent in their attitudes toward these institutions, often welcoming their services but frequently rebelling against their ways of using power. Best known in the past for their protests against giant business organizations, more recently, discontented residents of the rural West have focused their anger on the state.

More important in the nineteenth-century West than in other regions, the federal component of the American state began its crucial relationship with the rural West by acquiring the land in which this part of the nation would take shape. In a series of moves from early in the century until its middle, the federal government obtained land by purchase from France and Mexico, by war from the latter, and by negotiation from Great Britain. Over the course of the next half century, the state opened the land to settlement by mostly white Americans and by immigrants. To accomplish this, the state employed an army to defeat Native Americans in wars, concentrated these people on reservations, and placed them under the administration of a federal bureau that sought to turn them into Christian farmers.

Americans, eager to accomplish these tasks, and convinced that their status as white people with a superior culture justified their actions, built a state powerful enough to function in these ways. The state, in turn, guaranteed that the culture of the rural West would resemble that of the American North and Midwest.

*University of Washington
Western land was not empty when Americans moved in. Mexicans and Indians already occupied much of it. By denying the need for war, the American government ren- dered American migrants and European immigrants of the need to conform to existing social conditions. Further, by defeating the South in the Civil War, the American state prevented sovremens from making slain- fers a part of the rural matrix along the way of life. Cotton moved into West Texas in the late nineteenth century, but slavery did not.

The nineteenth-century state shaped the rural West in other ways. It planned, financed, and conducted explorations and surveys that provided information as to the best ways of moving West and the resources that could be found in the region, and it built roads so that wagons could transport people and goods to the region. Agents of the state also located the best routes for the construc- tion of an even better means of transportation, the rail- road. The United States Department of Agriculture, established in 1862, worked before the end of the century to advise farmers on the best ways of farming.

Eager for western development, the American state distributed land rapidly. Land prices were already low when Americans began to move into the West, and the Homestead Act of 1862 offered free land to people who would develop it into family farms. Proponents justified these gifts by arguing that they would open opportuni- ties for all people and that they would create a new nation as well as for farmers, build up the West, and supply the nation with people of good quality, capable of making the American democratic ex- periment a success. Free land attracted many settlers to the West. Many other people of the West, however, also farmers both bought land from the government and from other sources because ownership could be obtained more quickly by purchase and land available for sale was often better located and in a more favorable location than homesteaded land.

Land policy favored farmers over ranchers, miners, loggers, and other rural westerners. Others were not in- timidated, however, and found ways to obtain access to the land they needed.

The federal government also gave land to western terri- tories and states, usually for educational purposes. The best known example was the Morrill Act, also of 1862, which allowed states to fund the development of col- leges that would enlarge opportunities for higher educa- tion and contribute to western development by training engineers and farmers. The new colleges, which grew up at such sites as Corvallis, Pullman, and Pullman, developed programs in engineering more rapidly than in agriculture, but by the end of the century, they began to influence farming as well as the building of dams and other structures in the rural West.

The state granted land as well as loans to corpora- tions, chiefly to encourage railroads across the West, and these railroads capitalized and sustained what were the most important corporations in the region dur- ing the second half of the nineteenth century. Often built ahead of settlement and owing land they wished to sell, the railroads waged campaigns to attract settlers. These companies advertised in the East, Midwest, and Europe; provided transportation to the sites; offered low prices and credit on locations near this vital means of transpor- tation; and gave advice on new land. The railroad that farmed the rural West was vital because the West lacked a great river system like the one farther east. Railroads, rather than rivers, transported most western commodities to mar- kets in the rapidly growing cities of the Midwest, the East, and Europe. The West itself and brought back manufactured goods, often freeing rural women of the need to make clothing and other items for their families.

Heavy use of the railroads meant that the western economy did not develop in the direction of "rustic agri- culture" that was a major feature of the agricultural his- tory of other American regions. That transformation had already occurred when western settlement began, and western farmers, although producing much for them- selves, moved into the market system as soon as they had a crop. The railroads even drew the Mormons, who tried to be self-sufficient, into the national and interna- tional economy.

That they were participants in capitalism did not dis- tress rural westerners, because most had moved west to "get ahead." The migrants tended to be middle class, white, and northern, although a substantial number came from Canada and northern Europe, mainly Ger- many and Scandinavia. Only a small number were black. The migrants moved in during prosperous times and was moving again when they perceived that gey- ing ahead meant land of their own and succeeding in ways that were admired in the places they had left. They saw no contradiction between their involvement in the market economy and their beliefs in family farming and in- cluding to all other economic activities, but they did develop strategies, such as labor sharing within their neighbor- hoods, to guarantee the survival of family farms. As a result, the region lost the role that the state sought to turn the state against the corporation. This was the Populist Rev- olt. Influenced by economic difficulties, including low prices for their products, heavy debts, and an agrarian philosophy that maintained family farmers deserved to do well, the rebels believed their difficulties originated outside of agriculture, especially in the expanding power of corporations and their control of the state. Seeking to sue the state to change the behavior of corporations or to find substitutes for them, the Populists promoted devel- opment of cooperatives, proposed a "sub-treasury system" as an alternative to dependence on banks, champions of the "homesteering" system, and advocated government ownership of the railroads. Con- fident that they could control and operate the state, they formed a new political party, the People's Party, and proposed the establishment of a system of direct democ- racy. Although a major party candidate with a majority for western farmers and miners, William Jennings Bryan, carried most of the West in 1896, the movement failed.

The collapse of the Populists did not drive the spirit of protest from the rural West. Various forms erupted over the next three decades, challenging the corporations and the state. Farmers often participated. So did wage earners, a large component of the rural population made up of migratory farm workers, loggers, and miners. Organiza- tions of the discontented included the Socialist party, the Western Federation of Miners, and the Industrial Workers of the World. The Wobblies in the Western Lea- gan League rose to power during World War I and dis- placed corporations with government-ownied agencies of importance to farmers. But the state and the corpora- tion fought against each one of these protest groups with destructive results.

In the early twentieth century, the state began to affect the rural West in new ways. Congress and President Theodore Roosevelt established a Reclamation Agency (later the Bureau of Reclamation) in 1902, convinced that corporations and state governments had failed to solve one of the West's biggest problems—widespread aridity, and only the federal government could control the resources needed to bring water to dry lands. Washington also created a Forest Service to operate a system of national forests and to forestloggers, logging companies, and oil companies. These new agencies represented a shift in emphai- sis in federal land policy from distribution to manage- ment. Just as the army had been used in the nineteenth century to exclude opportunity in American agriculture, the state's reclamation agency employed technology for the same purpose.

Two closely connected public institutions of impor- tance to the rural West were the United States Department of Agriculture and the agricultural colleges—founded in these years. The department, which grew rapidly, be- came a major research center; the colleges, aided by ex- periment stations which had begun to develop late in the nineteenth century with funds for research from the fede- ral government, gained greater size and prestige. Linked with the USDA and the colleges was a new means of bringing science to farmers: the Extension serv- ices. Beginning in 1914, supplied with federal dollars
The West

bested and bolstered by the slogan "Food Will Win the War," Extension expanded rapidly during World War I. Just as the pandemic had forced changes in American life, Extension worked to reform farmers. The objects of these efforts often resisted the pressures to change their ways.

Food began to change western farming. A few farmers on the Great Plains grew corn, and some in Central Washington raised fruit, but in California, farmers turned away from wheat to fruit and vegetables and relied on wage labor. Many of these farmers were Asian at first; as time passed, more and more were Hispanic.

Corporations also grew in power relative to rural westerners. In the Pacific Northwest, for example, the Weyerhaeuser Corporation established its dominance in the timber industry early in the century. Other firms—introduced tractor, powered by steam engines at first, then by internal combustion engines—increased in size as credit factors were adopted slowly, but became more numerous on western farms, especially in the wheat country, during and after World War I when industrial giants such as Ford and International Harvester developed smaller machines. The new tractors enabled wheat farmers to both cut their labor forces and enlarge their operations.

By the 1920s, corporations were changing rural life in still other ways. Many rural people now owned and operated automobiles. Made available by the Ford Motor Company, among others, they persuaded the state to build better roads, drew farmers closer in time to cities, and enabled better rural mail service. Yet, most people continued to rely upon horsepower to energize their farms and on kerosene to light their houses, wood and coal to heat them and cook their food, and on oithouses, with privies. Electrical power was not widely available. In many farms, the best light available was the milky glow of a single kerosene lamp. In the interconnection Service which offered assurances that the area could continue to be farmed and showed farmers how to use a dry area.

Although the New Deal did give some assistance to small farmers and farm laborers, it did not give them as much help as it did to large commercial farmers. In California, for example, little aid was given to those who tried to diversify their farms before the war. In the south, Washington was helping industrial workers to organize, the Associated Farmers of California defeated efforts to organize farm workers. Associated Farmers was sponsored by the California Chamber of Commerce and the California Farm Bureau, funded by urban corporations, and assisted by local law enforcement agencies. With a large supply of workers available, the members of this organization were determined to keep labor costs low, and New Dealers did little more than permit labor organ-

izers to speak in government camps for migratory workers.

Building on earlier developments, such as the emergence of the U.S.D.A., the New Deal constructed a state capable of promoting a revolution—the second American agricultural revolution—in the rural West. The resultant farm bloc that flowered in the rustic economic boom of the New Deal’s Reconstruction was a force that World War II, continued for a generation after the war, and was promoted by the corporation as well as the state.

The revolution involved both a transformation of farming by new technologies and a sharp reduction of the farm population from a large minority to a small one. The technologies included tractors; self-propelled combines; mechanical cotton, corn, and tomato pickers; milking machines; new seeds and plants; and chemicals to fertilize the soil and kill insects and weeds. These developments enabled farmers to work larger farms and increase crop and livestock production. The technologies also pressured people to leave farming and move to the city, reducing the need for labor and raising the costs of farming. Farmers who could not afford the costs, participated in the revolution by selling their land to more prosperous neighbors with greater access to credit, that is, joining co-tenant farmers and farm laborers in a massive migration into towns and cities during the Forties, Fifties, and Sixties.

Agreement with one another that the United States needed a more efficient agriculture, the state and the corporate participation harmonized in the revolution. New Deal programs continued beyond the 1930s, and by promising farmers that farm prices would not fall sharply as they had at the beginning of the Twenties and again in the early Thirties, they gave those who could afford to do so a sufficiently strong sense of security to invest in their farms. In the interwar national situation, the federal government also helped farmers gain greater access to foreign markets. The research and education programs of the U.S.D.A. and the new farm credit programs also contributed to encouraging farmers to purchase and use the new technologies, and training people for work on modern farms and for jobs in the off-farm parts of the agricultural sector itself. By the end of the decade, Agriculture and the corporations that built the new technologies, processed, and marketed the abundant products. Farm organizations that had strength in the West, including the National Farmers Union and the American Farm Bureau Federation, often disagreed with one another about the value of these different government programs but continued to champion large roles for the state in the changing agricultural system.

Governments contributed to the revolution by developing the machines, seeds, and chemicals and by mounting sales and advertising campaigns to persuade farmers to purchase them. The firms grew in size to meet the heavy demands, and farmers became more closely linked to them and more heavily dependent.

Two government agencies—the Bureau of Reclamation and the Rural Electrification Administration—were especially important. They were agents of several important, mostly independent acts that promoted revolution in the rural West. Having stepped up its activities in the 1930s, the bureau continued during the years after World War II to build dams on western rivers and to promote the development of western farm areas by bringing water to them. It also supplied rural people with electricity, as did R.E.A., which had been founded by the New Deal and financed cooperatives to compensate for the reluctance of power companies to bring electricity to farmers. Electricity narrowed the gap between rural areas and cities, enabling rural women to work with appliances and making electric lights, the telephone, television, and other aspects of modern life available to rural families. Electricity contributed to irrigation farming by powering pumps that enabled Great Plains farmers to draw water from deep beneath the surface of the land and diversify their croplands, producing more corn, alfalfa, sugar beets, and cotton.

One machine offers a good example of the importance of the organization as promoter of rapid change in the West. By the successful combination dur- ing World War II, manufactured by International Harvester, and in less than two decades, nearly all cotton farmers used these amazing machines. They enabled farmers to do the work of modern farms in less labor force and stimulated a great expansion of cotton production in the West because they could be used efficiently on flat lands from West Texas to Southern California.

Throughout the West, the revolution promoted a substantial decrease in the population of farm families. A large decrease in the size of their. Such changes occurred in areas of irrigation agriculture as well as the dry farming parts of the Great Plains and Eastern Washington and did so in spite of provisions in reclamation law designed to encourage farming by families on small units. Large farmers, some of them corporate in form and owned by urban-based giants, found ways around those provisions, and the Bureau of Reclamation was reluctant to enforce them.

By the Seventies, reflective of a burst of protest in the nation, California’s large growers had to contend with a new farm law, the United Farm Workers Union by Cesar Chavez. The farmers who raised fruit and vegetables continued to employ large numbers of Hispanics, chiefly Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, and Chavez drew a substantial minority into the first effective organization
of farm workers. The accomplishment resulted in part from boycotts by urban consumers of products of farms that resisted unionization, but that base of support did not guarantee lasting success, and the union lost much of its membership in the Eighties.

Few rural westerners had resisted the revolution. It had been preceded by two decades of hard work at low pay on most farms, and farmers saw in the new technologies ways to increase their incomes and reduce their labor. Rural people who could not stay on the land believed they would be better off in the towns and cities because the booming national economy of the Forties, Fifties, and Sixties supplied many jobs.

Westerners who continued to farm now had little doubt that they belonged to the business system. The agricultural colleges, among others, encouraged them to define themselves as business people rather than in more romantic terms, and they had to behave like the folks who run businesses in the towns and cities because they needed a constant flow of credit to invest in the new technology, to operate and enlarge their farms, and needed to persuade creditors that they operated in accord with good business principles. Militant groups reminiscent of earlier forms of agrarian radicalism did emerge—the National Farmers Organization in the late Fifties and early Sixties; the American Agricultural Movement in the late Seventies and early Eighties—but most western farmers did not identify with them.

The timber industry, stimulated by a nationwide construction boom, employed many rural westerners after World War II. Much of the cutting was done in national forests managed by the Forest Service; most of it was done by corporate giants, such as Weyerhaeuser and Georgia Pacific, who also had access to land of their own. The smaller operators—the "pygmys"—usually worked under contract with the Forest Service and the large firms.

Well before the end of the century, rural westerners encountered new challenges coming from their urban neighbors. A heavily urbanized region even before the end of the nineteenth century, the West became increasingly urban in the twentieth century, doing so very rapidly and after World War II. As the cities grew, urban-rural conflict erupted over access to land and water and other issues.

By the Seventies, urban people found much to criticize when they looked beyond themselves. Their targets included the U.S.D.A.-agricultural college complex and the members of Congress who supported it. The arguments against them ranged from high food costs and heavy government spending to abuse of the rural poor and damage to the environment. Loggers, logging companies, and the Forest Service also came under attack for the destruction of forests and animal life. To satisfy their concerns, these critics turned to the state, seeking to abolish or reform some of its programs and to establish new ones. They appeared quite tolerant of the corporation's presence in their lives. Militant protest against the power of corporations, had all but disappeared. The corporations were still there, as they had been since the second half of the nineteenth century, and like the state, corporations continued to make policies that shaped and reshaped the rural West.
The nature of the present-day American West

Paul F. Starrs

The American West is now where California once was: on a roll without discernable limit or frontier. Colonized afresh over the last ten years by incoming hordes of what Patty Limerick has called "the new pioneers" in a great cultural, economic, and demographic backwash from the Pacific Slope, the West is increasingly a place transformed. For all that, it retains vestiges of once-traditional economies, immediately recognizable. The mix is compelling, elusive, exasperating, and enervating, but it is an accurate reflection of the contradictions incarnate in this largest of American regions. The West is in ways like other parts of the country, especially in the disadvantages faced by less affluent residents in its rural places. But whether the theme of the moment is rural or urban, the West is a busy place. It confronts not just the plight of rural disadvantage, but the hubbub of affluence, of convergent growth, and the rigors of success. Each of these is in its way a road less charted and, because of that, especially challenging. For those of us interested in the country's rural places in an increasingly urban time, the West of the United States has to be counted a bellwether of something new, something else.

The western one-third of the United States today embodies some of the more beguiling paradoxes of the country: huge federally controlled acreages in a territory of rabid iconoclasm; vast irrigation amid aridity; traditional resource-exploitative economies challenged by city emigres unfamiliar with rural traditions; the country's highest degree of urbanization; the three largest cities (in area) of the United States—in order, Juneau, Phoenix, and Los Angeles; the quickest population growth, bar none; the "best" destination for retirees (greater Las Vegas, AARP); the best city for doing business (San Francisco, Fortune); the best small place to live (Elko, Nevada, US News & World Report). Great variation in ethnicity, race, and income are western signatures, as is un-

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The West
rest about land tenure, anti-government militias, the Wise Old Man, the rising industrialization, class-stratification, lifestyle-migration, a newly-steel-sculptured environmentalism, and an almost frenzied hunger after economic growth. About each of these there is much discussion. I am not much talking—whether actual listening goes on is an matter of opinion. For all that, the West is THE place for change, and far from easily read by the prophets of rural improvement.1

The contemporary West, that is, I mean...
The West of today is hardly the same place as a century ago; nor, with rapid change renewed, can it be considered anything close to stable. It matters as much as any regional identification, the nature of the American West is complex (Starrs 1995; Court 1966). The West is, depending on which area you refer to, a place of rural growth or of rural depopulation (O'Malley 1994; nec 1988). The conferences of the NRSB and the Capstone Conference there is no consensus about where the West begins—it is often defined by the presence of the West is that which is not the Northeast, South, or Midwest. Some regionalists and geographers, dating back to Walter Prescott Webb, would include the Great Plains as a part of the West (the arguments for and against are torrentious). If such is the case, then vast tracts of the Great Plains and dry-farmed lands rump jumping to the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains would be the sole part of the West with a sizable enough density, in rural population to have truly far-reaching effects.

For example, Ronald DeVoe to what Walter O'Nell has worked with great success at capturing the distinctive elements that constituted the Old West (DeVoe 1951). The question is, what have we now—and what does it really look like? After a hundred years of moderate decline, a number of Plains counties have become so sparsely populated that the indigenous population is smaller in size than the whole of the state's population. The Plains are not the West of today... quite separate from the Midwest and the short-grass prairie that lie east of the Rocky Mountains.

For the rural and urban West, the story is even more interesting. According to the United States Census of 1930, the population of the West had increased by 37.5% since 1900. Since then, the growth has continued, with the population of the West increasing by 64.6% between 1900 and 1930, and by 75.8% between 1930 and 1950. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 81.0% between 1950 and 1970, and by 107.5% between 1970 and 1990. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 124.0% between 1990 and 2000, and by 154.8% between 2000 and 2010. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 184.0% between 2010 and 2013. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 217.0% between 2013 and 2016. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 250.0% between 2016 and 2019. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 287.0% between 2019 and 2022. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 326.0% between 2022 and 2025. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 373.0% between 2025 and 2028. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 422.0% between 2028 and 2031. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 474.0% between 2031 and 2034. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 529.0% between 2034 and 2037. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 589.0% between 2037 and 2040. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 655.0% between 2040 and 2043. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 727.0% between 2043 and 2046. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 805.0% between 2046 and 2049. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 890.0% between 2049 and 2052. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 983.0% between 2052 and 2055. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 1,086.0% between 2055 and 2058. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 1,197.0% between 2058 and 2061. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 1,318.0% between 2061 and 2064. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 1,450.0% between 2064 and 2067. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 1,596.0% between 2067 and 2070. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 1,757.0% between 2070 and 2073. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 1,934.0% between 2073 and 2076. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 2,128.0% between 2076 and 2079. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 2,340.0% between 2079 and 2082. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 2,569.0% between 2082 and 2085. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 2,825.0% between 2085 and 2088. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 3,108.0% between 2088 and 2091. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 3,420.0% between 2091 and 2094. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 3,764.0% between 2094 and 2097. The population of the West has continued to grow, with the population of the West increasing by 4,144.0% between 2097 and 2010.
Californians are departing for other parts of the West, not just a handful of artists or writers or hippies or students but entire populations have loaded up the trucks and moved from Beverly (Hills, that is). Groups like the elderly and the poor began departing from California in the 1980s, but emigration is now across the board, from rich to poor.

Where the emigrants go is striking. While Oregon and Washington have been notable destinations, their populations are comparatively quite large (though 3 million), and the urban absorption of newcomers there is less problematic. The Census reports that Arizona lost its status as the fourth most populous state (down to 4 million), a "snowbird" destination of note for decades, skilled in the games of regional hardball over water, land, energy, and the other resources that make cities work. When people move to Oregon, Washington, and Arizona, they aim for the few large cities. California arrives to the Intermountain west scatter widely across the region. That is where the New West is emerging, wet, sunny, and shell-shocked, from a long gestation in an insulated chrysalis.

Californians are in a hurry to leave the Southland and to put back into play what they can salvage of their equity. Booming real estate prices of the 1970s and 80s doubled and tripled California property values, and the capital gains from selling many a West Coast residence can still be brokered into a home in the top brackets of asset appreciations. Nevada, Utah, or Idaho. Another current of Californians also want out—the less encumbered, the moveable poor who placed a bet on the California Miracle only to see the action grow cold. Resigned, they still want a return on their investment of portunities await, and where housing will not be so expensive. The Intermountain West—even the Great Plains—beckons.

MM and MM are deserting California in quantity; 1.5 million domestic migrants have left since 1990. The western states outside of California are being resettled by lifestyle refugees and job seekers moving toward an attractive and economically active urban realm. Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and Idaho, in particular, are taking in the industries, retirees, the mobile workforce and the equity migrants who evacuate a California that has been shaken, frozen, burned, and ridden by crime, drought, recycling failures, and the threat of eventual gridlock, landslides, and catastrophes of overcrowding.

A Nevada interlude

The West, as Gertrude Stein once put it, "is a place filled with moving." A dog's breakfast of statistics back this up. Nevada offers a simple, if prime, example. With an arid climate, rich scenery, and quiet; a splendid heritage of literature, films, poetry, diverse cultures; and a history that, thanks to dryness itself, stays long evident on the land, Nevada offers a surfeit of amenities. The state's population has jumped 198 percent since 1970. There is competition for space; in the last few years, the Las Vegas population was 48,000; in February 1995, it surpassed a million, an increase of 25-fold (Hendle 1994; Crispell 1994). Recently, Vegas has been adding up to 1,000 residents per week. A magazine designated Las Vegas the 9th most livable city in the United States in a survey published in July 1995. Growth is driven strongly by the Californians, who account for better than forty percent of Nevada's overall immigration. The largest is (numbers) retirement movement in the U.S. is from Los Angeles to Clark County; fifth largest nationwide is Los Angeles to Washoe; twentieth in Santa Clara County to Washoe Counties. 11-20 are wide, hard, and fast strips, their concrete lanes topped with moving vans bearing the worldly goods of refugees from California disenchantment.

By far, most of the new residents in the United States, Vegas has added 67 New public schools in the last three years, and in 1993 alone 14,000 new homes were sold, up 23 percent from the year before, which held the prior record. Other parts of Nevada post equally stupefying rates of growth. Northeast Elko County has doubled its population to 40,000. In calendar year 1994, Nevada's population grew 5.4 percent. Never before was this "normal"

What a delight; what a boom; what an assurance, when people vote with their feet and pocketbooks; what a time for budgets; what opportunity. But also, what costs. With a third growth spurt, of course, comes the abundant growth, I am bemoaned by the great California activist and social historian, Carey McWilliams, who in his 1946 classic Southern Californians: An Island Upon the Land, wrote of "The Sociology of the Boom." Las Vegas has grown more "squeaky clean" than it always famous ties which hold its social fabric together suddenly snapped and the ghosts of society fully rose to the top. Surveying the wreckage in retrospect, it is apparent that mass migration has hastened the decline of the" small town" social order. The desert boom has been very much for everything.

The desert boom has been very much for everything.

The new West—plundered anew?

Through the years many came to the West and almost no one since has been drawn to the West in quantity, but in those cases remained more days longer than the ore. Permanent settlement was near the railroads, or in isolated communities based upon irrigated agriculture that raised a variety of crops. The new boom town was far beyond the era. The Big Boom was for cattle and sheep. Such was the essence of the West's economy. Urban places formed only when towns were kick-started by booms. To let individuals rise or fall on their own is the most revered value in a tightly bound western dictionary of virtues, and to profit from the failings of others (especially outsiders) brings no special stigma. Now, with air conditioning, Hoover Dam, and the dissolution of traditional barriers of distance and communication, it hardly matters where some one lives. In recent years, half a million people have seen in Clark County, Nevada, a kind of domestic opportunity.
province may be more than contentious words. Arguably the latest plunder of the West is residential—the so-called "New Pioneers." Rocking to urban and rural pans, alike, from the eastern state—except, that is, California; building a $350,000 house in Moab, Laramie, or Silver City ranks as an especially novel and ostentatious expression of plunder.

And this is no matter to many people; they are sometimes adopted by newcomers in part because they relish the oddities. Some immigrants become almost super-localis; others push for immediate change. Non-metropolitan residents in the West are comparatively more urban than the Pacific states; and from the East, this reconfiguring of people and place is the essential driving force behind the formation of a New West, powered by the influxes of Californians opting out and by footloose folk who might once have gone to California but now stop short well short of the Pacific. The characteristics of the New West are evident: growing in both urban and rural (non-metropolitan) areas; a strong presence of young and educated; a service-based economy based on extraction of natural resources; the priority of amenity, and lifestyle considerations over job-driven behavior. Movement away from California is fed by fear of California's natural and human hazards, and by doubts about social and ethnic change.

The potential for a new urban-rural relationship in the West, and the parsimony it can breed, looks promising. All that is needed are rather easy questions is who gets to call the shots. Over 150 years, the American West has been dominated by resource users who lived on or near the terrain they were using, and whose influence was far in excess of the population it generated. Growth across the West, at least outside of California, is prodigious—its ecological effects are daunting, and demographers, planners, and geographers have devoted no small effort to studying migration.

An interesting aspect of California's recent growth is the commitment to expand the number of people who can afford to live in the state. This commitment has been influential in shaping the state's policies, especially in areas related to education and healthcare. The state has made a significant investment in these areas, which has resulted in the provision of high-quality education and healthcare to its residents.

The plan for the future of the West is to maintain the balance between urban and rural areas, ensuring that both are well-cared for and thrive. This involves continuing to support the growth of the urban areas, while also providing incentives for rural development. The state is committed to preserving its natural beauty and resources, ensuring that the state's residents can enjoy the benefits of living in a beautiful and sustainable environment.

In conclusion, the future of the West is bright. The state has a strong foundation for growth, with a commitment to education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability. The state is well-positioned to continue to thrive and provide a high quality of life for its residents.
nomics, social, and cultural change are not many. No one wants to be always explaining and, except in hindsight, always analysing. Journals like *High Country News* and *American Demographics* turn a basilisk-eye on many of the trends of the day, it could not hold for scholars, scientists, and other servants of the public to work more on the structural, demographic, and historic confluence that shapes the New West, its places and people.

In assessing the changes assailing the West, Stephen Trimble has remarked (1994) that "Wallace Stegner, better than anyone, understood that the future of the

West depends on all of its citizens working together to invent new ways of living there. Trimble also dwells—with huge eloquence—on the separation developing between urban people and any understanding of the facts and emotions of rural life. Those are important benchmarks from which to evaluate the nature of movement in the American West. Transformations are the rule in the urban environments of America. In the New West, the sobering lessons of California, and the example of the whole of the rest of the American West should be held close at hand. They portend real change for places both urban and rural.

References


Peppler, Frank J. and Deborah E. Poppin. 1994. "Great Plains: Charac


The future for rural areas in the western region

B. Delworth Gardner*

In this paper I take the region to be the eleven mostly arid and contiguous western states. There are alternative ways of approaching a regional analysis. One would be to employ *High Country News,* which in turn, are affected most by technological advances, investment in human capital, and the burdens of regulatory policy. None has been particularly favorable to regional growth in the past couple of decades, although there are some recent signs of a productivity awakening. However, a comparatively stagnant aggregate economy does not exclude important interregional shifts as well as sectoral changes within regions in the next quarter century. For this paper, those rotations with a direct rural linkage naturally interest us the most.

Four characteristics of the western region have had and will continue to have a large impact on rural areas:

- A predominantly urban economy, despite low population densities.
- An agricultural sector with much of the output produced under irrigation.
- An assertive federal presence, notably in land ownership, but also in debilitating regulation.
- The value of the region's resources and climate for residence and recreation.

These characteristics represent economic, political, and social forces of great power and persistence. However, relative prices and incomes are changing constantly, and favor some sectors of the economy relative to others depending on the magnitudes of the relevant

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elastics. But most important for the future, I believe, is the likelihood of a rather abrupt change in the regulatory climate that has the potential to affect the western region in fundamental and pervasive ways.

The urban character of the region

The western region is characterized by low population densities. Among the 59 states, only California is in the top 15, ranked by persons per square mile, and only California and Washington are in the top 30. Seven of the 10 western states rank 40th or higher (Table 1).

At the same time, the percentage of people living in urban places is high in the region. Only Montana can be considered among the most rural states in terms of the proportion of population living in rural areas. California, Nevada, Arizona, and Utah are among the top ten states ranked by percent of population that lives in urban places; the western region ranks 13th. Ninety percent of Nevada's population lives in its three major urban centers.

Of course, the fact that people live in rural areas does not mean that they consider themselves rural in any relevant sense. Another measure of urbanism would be the fraction of economic activity in sectors generally considered to be urban, such as manufacturing and defense, as contrasted with farming, logging, mining, and outdoor recreation, which are more rural (Table 2).

As a fraction of total income, only Montana and Idaho have relatively high values in these sectors, with 17 percent, while the remainder of the western states are below 10 percent. Mining is relatively unimportant in all states except Nevada and Wyoming, where manufacturing is very important in the recreation sector, more so in New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Colorado, whereas income from defense contracts is over 3 percent of the total income.

Table 1. Population distribution of the western states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rural Population (Thousands)</th>
<th>Urban Population</th>
<th>Persons per sq mile</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>53.5</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>76</td>
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Table 2. Income distribution of the western states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Gross Income</th>
<th>Gross Income Per Capita</th>
<th>Farms</th>
<th>Farms Per Capita</th>
<th>Manufacturing</th>
<th>Shipments</th>
<th>Recreation</th>
<th>Defense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>13,331</td>
<td>2,053</td>
<td>15,646</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>0,908</td>
<td>30,314</td>
<td>385</td>
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<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>18,855</td>
<td>3,333</td>
<td>17,666</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>1,978</td>
<td>5,184</td>
<td>4,950</td>
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<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>12,954</td>
<td>2,476</td>
<td>14,576</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>1,690</td>
<td>11,381</td>
<td>385</td>
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<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>21,740</td>
<td>3,714</td>
<td>19,240</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>1,690</td>
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<td>21,740</td>
<td>385</td>
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</table>

The high cost of providing public and private goods and services for people living at low densities is one reason for greater urban settlement in the West. Economic and other inadequacies imply that a critical mass of population in the region is necessary to provide many goods and services at low cost. Therefore, the high cost of living in high-cost rural areas may well bear these high costs of space or be subsidized by the government.

Conversely, the West has been heavily subsidized by the federal government. The railroads, highways, rural electrification, water projects, construction, and postal delivery were built and operated with huge federal subsidies, many of which endure today. No doubt the political structure is an important factor: twenty percent of the votes in the U.S. Senate are controlled by ten western states (California excluded), which represent only nine percent of the nation's population.

Particularly since the Republican congressional victory of 1994, these government subsidies have come under closer scrutiny. But it is not only people outside the region who are questioning subsidies to traditional rural westerners. Conflict within the region is also substantial and growing. Urban people simply don't understand that the region's resources are not what I mean by that. They don't want the federal government subsidizing their political adversaries. For example, what the urban West wants from the public lands and water resources is not what the traditionally rural West is willing to give.

"The essential nature of these people is defined by the automobile, not the horse; by the finishe
daughter, not the steer; by the shopping mall, not the local rodeo; and by the virtual reality of the computer, not the communal reality of a back-sheltering, western rural life" (Hess 1995). It is going to be extremely interesting to see how these conflicts play themselves out over the next couple of decades.

Irrigated Agriculture

In the eleven western states, water withdrawals for irrigation have greatly exceeded those for all other uses combined (Table 3). The political and economic climate does not now appear favorable to building costly new federal water projects. Given the changing balance of regional economy and population base, conflicts over water supplies that are now utilized by agriculture seem certain to be a central concern in the period ahead (Englehardt and Schoering 1982).

Most of the western water institutions evolved early during the settlement period and were left to individual states to enforce and manage. The doctrine of "prior appropriation," based on Locke's "law of capture," was particularly crucial to the development of the West. Water could be appropriated for private use if two conditions were met:

- "Benefit use" required that water be applied to some purpose deemed to be socially productive.
- "First in time, first in right" would give fixed quantities of water to senior appropriators before junior appropriators could receive any at all.

Beneficial use precluded water appropriation in advance of actual need and thus prevented speculation and profiteering. Senior rights reduced the risks of securing an adequate water supply for those who applied first. Proper appropriation has proved to be remarkably flexible in facilitating water transfers to higher-valued uses as the economy changed. Since private appropriation rights were generally quantifiable and could be defended against threats, their owners could sell them to accommodate shifting demands. But when the federal government became involved in water development and allocation early in the century, policies emerged that were much less responsive to market forces. Two illustrations will serve as examples.

The 1902 Reclamation Act established the Bureau of Reclamation (Bu Recl) which became the principal dam builder and water contractor for new water projects. A host of water use and pricing policies emerged over time that proved to be inimical to water-use flexibility and efficiency (Gardner 1995, Chapter 12). I will return to this point later.

Then, in 1922, after much squabbling among the states over who "owned" the water, the Colorado River Compact produced a rigid allocation between the

<table>
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<tr>
<th>State</th>
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Table 3. Agricultural water withdrawals, 1985

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Table 4. Water withdrawals for irrigation, 1985 (includes surface and ground water)

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<tr>
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when it has been roughly constant at about 25 percent (Gardner 1993, 2). However, because much of the increase in irrigated acreage since the 1930s has been to grow water-intensive crops, many large farmers have been shifting to water-intensive crops, and consequently, the overall water requirements of the agricultural community have increased. Consequently, much of the political pressure for new water development is to meet the increased water demands of the agricultural community, and these new demands will replace water from other uses, such as municipal, industrial, and residential uses.

The political climate for new water development is particularly strong in recent years. The political climate does not seem propitious for building new federal projects, however, and water interests continue to argue for more projects. Several of these projects are presently considering projects to be funded from state funds.

So what about the future of crop and irrigation subsidies that have had such an important influence on agriculture in the western United States? By the time this paper is presented, Congress will have decided, as part of the budget reconciliation process, what new farm bill will be passed. Hopefully, House and Senate versions are far apart. A pretty safe guess is now that pressures to reduce the federal budget deficit will threaten both crop and water subsidies more than at any time in the past forty years. Still, both have proved to be highly durable. If they are eliminated, they may well play a large role in the 1995 election cycle long as the current crop or irrigation subsidies. Without subsidies, however, it is not at all clear what difference this would make to agricultural employment, population distribution, and the viability of rural communities, and there is probably more value added in food and vegetables, and it would appear that these will become cheaper.

The reason there has been such a strong demand for new water development is the federal government's policy of providing water for agricultural development and for the construction of federal water development projects. This policy has been in effect since the late 1930s, when the United States government began to build large-scale irrigation projects. These projects were designed to provide water for agricultural development, and they have been very successful. As a result, the federal government has been able to provide water at very low costs, and this has encouraged rural development in the western United States. However, the federal government's policy of providing water for agricultural development has also had some negative consequences. For example, it has contributed to the decline of the natural ecosystems of the West, and it has also contributed to the overexploitation of the water resources of the West.

It is clear that the federal government's policy of providing water for agricultural development has had both positive and negative consequences. The positive consequences are that it has contributed to the development of the West and has provided water for agricultural development. The negative consequences are that it has contributed to the decline of the natural ecosystems of the West and has contributed to the overexploitation of the water resources of the West. It is clear that the federal government will have to be careful in the future to ensure that it does not contribute to the decline of the natural ecosystems of the West and does not contribute to the overexploitation of the water resources of the West.
The West

not own the rights (such as fish and wildlife and other recreation) that are contained within the act contains restrictions that are bound to impede market transfers.10 For example, 102,175 contains the mandate that $800,000 acre-feet of CVP water be dedicated annually for fish, wildlife, and habitat enhancement. Once the CVP delivers about 6 mil-

lin acre-feet, this block is about 13 percent higher than the average through-Te into irrigation over 2,000,000 acres of cotton or tomatoes. But why not require fish and wildlife interests to pur-
case water in the market like other users? There is little in-
merit in the assumption that recreational uses are public goods that the market will not allocate efficiently. Users are easily identified and are highly organized. Creating efficient water markets is the direction needed, not rigid allocations to politically-favored interest groups.

But will the country move in this direction? Given the economic stakes, the bet is a good one. Maximizing welfare is a powerful and relentless objective, and a mar-

ket system is the most effective in generating wealth than is a system of political spoils. A remaining and potentially very serious problem are the water claims made by native Americans that have been tied up in the Courts for decades (Kneese and Benen 1966).

Importance and uses of the public lands

The huge acreages in federal land in the West makes this region unique. The Homestead Act of 1862, the Desert Land Act, among others, privatized the most productive nonforested lands. The national forests, now about 19 percent of the land in the 11 Western states, were reserved about the turn of the 20th century. However, the writers of the 1934 Taylor Grazing Act, which regulated grazing on the public domain (about 26 percent of the West's land area), anticipated that these lands would be privatized eventually. In the 1930s, the federal government attempted to give the public domain to the states, but they were concerned about the high net costs and refused them.

Another reason for being environmentalists and the traditional commodity growers that are beginning to occur in the late 1950s and the 1960s, Congress attempted to settle the ownership issue once and for all by enacting the 1971 Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). FLPMA mandates coordinating Federal owner-

ship and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to manage the public domain under principles of multiple use and sustained yield (Gardner 1991). But the controversy continues to fester. The public lands states

would hurt as their economic rents decreased,12 the long-term impact on local economies will almost cer-

tainly be dwarfed by other factors that will come from the federal government as compensation for foregone gains. So long as land-use decisions remain essentially politi-

cal, rent-seeking activity by competing interest groups will be endemic.

Livestock grazing continues to generate strife. In terms of national aggregates, public-land grazing is not very important. Annual-unit-months (AUMs) of fed-

eral grazing on the national forests, total about 17 percent of the livestock on public lands, stand 15 years or so of the time.13

In 2001, it is claimed by the ranching community that this figure understates the importance of federal grazing to local economies, however. Since public lands are of-
ten used in grazing rotations with private lands, if the public grazing had to be replaced with more costly re-
placement, the stringency of many ranching operations would be threatened. While that scenario is fort-

The Taylor Grazing Act begins with this phrase, "pending final dis-

2017 contains the mandate that $800,000 acre-feet of CVP water be dedicated annually for fish, wildlife, and habitat enhancement. Once the CVP delivers about 6 million acre-feet, this block is about 13 percent higher than the average through the year in water to irrigate over 2,000,000 acres of cotton or tomatoes. But why not require fish and wildlife interests to purchase water in the market like other users? There is little merit in the assumption that recreational uses are public goods that the market will not allocate efficiently. Users are easily identified and are highly organized. Creating efficient water markets is the direction needed, not rigid allocations to politically-favored interest groups.

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resources into viable ranching units as it has always done, but there may well be fewer of them.

Environment groups allege that western ranges are being seriously degraded because of overgrazing. Although there are some riparian areas where livestock tend to congregate and damage occurs, repeatable range scientific forgery is much greater than the reality of many ranching operations would be threatened. While that scenario is fortunantime, over time the land market would rearrange re-

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resources into viable ranching units as it has always done, but there may well be fewer of them.
The West is warrying, not primarily with the federal government, but with itself. Hess argues that despite the harsh anti-park sentiment found in the West, the sagebrush rebels are not really prepared to dismantle the public institutions and subsidies that have produced much of their wealth. Privatization of the public lands is simply too risky for these grazers. Hess believes, "It's cheaper, and more effective to have lobbyist fire away at federal proposals to increase grazing fees and regulations" (Hess 1995, 25). Hess may well be right, but his argument, so well modified or mitigated the recommendation made in this section.

Encroachment on private land rights: Endangered species and wetlands

Two additional public policy issues affecting rural areas have been boiling for more than a decade and now have been translated into proposed legislation:

- Private land rights threatened by endangered species.
- Designation of land as wetlands.

On some private lands the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has spurned regulations that constitute a severe encroachment on private rights to use and control property. These regulations are supposed to serve a public interest, but the burden falls on individuals who hold specified lands to designated values and who must have been required to comply with the regulations without consultation or compensation.

On public lands the Act gives the Fish and Wildlife Service biologists a card that trumps all other uses of these lands. In areas where endangered species are found, effects on logging, grazing, mining, and farming can be severe with associated impacts on employment and incomes. The real problem is that the ESA gives federal agents a mandate for protecting endangered species but no responsibility for considering the costs imposed on others (Strops 1995). The agents have no financial interest in their own careers and can simply close down or diminish other uses with impunity. Not only is economic product lost, but the act may not be even friendly to the species endangered. When landowners who harbor endangered species face stiff penalties for not ensuring that their activities do not threaten the habitat of the endangered species, the government tries to stop activities not that are killing the endangered animal or plant before it is discovered. It is not surprising, therefore, that a reform-minded congress concerned about private property rights would want to weaken the ESA. "The Endangered Species Act of 1995, HR 2274, prohibits the federal government from taking action affecting privately owned property unless compensation is offered in the value of the property before limitation on use was imposed. A similar response by the congress is observed in the case of wetland designation. The agricultural community has complained bitterly over the lost property values that come with designation of wetlands. Property is designated as wetland for part of the year. This problem is more probable and pervasive in sections of the country outside the West, but it is nowhere absent. The House of Representatives responded with HR 1268, the Comprehensive Wetlands Conservation Management Act of 1995. It classifies wetlands into three categories, essentially dependent on how designing the wetland is and the severity of the impact on the land owner. The act declares that the classification "critical wetland," or those providing habitat for a significant population of wildlife, can constitute an "action" by the government. The land owner may seek compensation for the fair market value of interests in land at the time of such classification. If compensation is paid, the title to such lands shall pass to the United States. Three consequences of this proposed takings legislation are expected:

- Federal officials will be more cautious in designating lands or species as "critical habitats" if the government is liable for compensation. Even though the agents themselves appear to bear none of this cost, there may be strong pressures placed by politicians and budget-conscious, overseeing Congress to be more leery about designating land and imposing wealth-reducing regulations.
- If local residents are compensated for the most egregious takings of property, it will reduce the effect of the act on wetlands. For highway planners, the least of the West, the legacy handed down to all Americans by a county- and a shift of "interlocal social and environmental over- giving" (Hess 1995, 24-25).

Effects on the wealth of local communities:
- There will probably be numerous disputes and legal challenges to these governmental activities. In the short, the legislation should be good for lawyers and economists. Moreover, if the government takes title to large quantities of land under these provisions, there should be an impact on the market value of the land. The rent-seeking regime under which our political system operates could have severe effects on traditional uses such as farming, grazing, mining, and logging.

Climate, scenery, and recreation

No discussion of the future of the rural West would be complete without reference to the region as a playground and as a place of residence for Americans anxious to move from the stress and dangers of urban life. Population in the Rocky Mountain states is growing faster than in any region of the country, fueled by high-tech professionals that are not generally dependent on property that is designated as wetland for part of the year. The climate is quite harsh; for example, there is a popular practice of retirement. Of the 190 nonmetro counties designated as retirement destinations, 99 percent gained population from 1990-94, and of the 285 nonmetro counties based on recreation, 92 percent gained population and 85 percent gained migrants. The 101 recreational counties that are also designated as recreation counties grew by 12 percent, the fastest of any economic group among the categories. Further, of the 269 nonmetros counties where more than 30 percent of the land is in federal ownership (usually forested and often classified as recreation and retirement), 94 percent gained population and 85 percent saw net in-migration, mainly by the young and retirees who are attracted by the scenery and mountain climate. These data clearly illustrate the importance of the region's scenery, climate, and recreational opportunities. But what is the effect on the economies of rural areas and on the traditional users of resources? Some trends are obvious. Others are emergent.

The impacts on the indigenous local populations are both positive and negative. Employment and wage rates rise, land values rise sharply, and new consumption opportunities become available. The impacts on the quality of life are far less visible. The problems of delivering public services such as schools, water, and sewerage also increase, and often the resources of the region must be taxed more heavily to keep pace with expenditures of local government. And perhaps most importantly, the lives of those who move into these communities are often fundamentally different from those who were and try to remain in the traditional occupations of farming, ranching, logging, and mining. Karl Hess (1995) has put the issue rather elegantly in terms of a trend in the West that Hess identifies as the "agricultural experience" in national parks and national forests is in the West. The trend in number of visitor days is generally increasing at an increasing rate, although some local populations still show declines. The key to this trend is that people become more and more people obviously are recreating on the public lands, and there is no compelling reason why this trend should not continue. The question, however, is what impact this use has on the local economies, particularly rural economies.

The question might be at least partially answered by knowing who the recreationists are. Federal data classify visitors to national parks as rural, urban, suburban, and remote (USDI 1995). Without bothering about precise definitions, it is interesting that rural visitors outnumber all other categories. Considering that the rural population is only a fraction of the urban population in the re-
The wealth and income impacts on traditional users of the region's resources will be greatly mitigated, however, if more and more resource-use decisions are transferred from the political arena to the market. The development of water markets is especially critical for inducing conservation and water-use efficiency, thus increasing effective supplies. A similar argument can be made with respect to the public lands. Wholesale privatization appears to be politically infeasible. But if all potentially interested parties could purchase the rights to use of the land in federal grazing allotments, changes in use could be accommodated without the huge effects on the wealth of traditional permit-holders that always accompany "take" when the decisions are left to the capricious political market.

Politically, the time seems propitious for substantial modification of the institutional structure of the West toward less federal control of the extractive industries, and particularly for decreasing the substantial federal subsidies for electric power, agricultural crops, and irrigation water. However, the political inertia that resists changes in income distribution should never be underestimated. Anyone can observe what is going on in Washington since the 1994 elections. New political winds are blowing, portending significant and perhaps unknowable changes in any number of different directions.

References


Concluding remarks

M. G. Wolman

The National Rural Studies Committee has clearly accomplished much of the charge given to it by the Kellogg Foundation, to provide a picture of the current state of rural America and to bring this knowledge to the attention of scholars in academia to stimulate their interest in and commitment to the concerns of rural America. In carrying out its charge, the Committee has demonstrated the breadth of disciplines essential to an understanding of the rural world and, through its regional inquiries, the potential significance of regional history and geography in analyzing and characterizing the future of the rural scene in the United States. This conference has proved to be both a celebration of the work of the Committee culminating in publication of The Changing American Countryside and a stimulus to future activities as the papers and discussion have revealed new findings, tentative conclusions, and lacunae in understanding what is happening in rural America and why. The following remarks of a newcomer reflect impressions of the Conference and, no doubt, questions about and misunderstandings of a neophyte confronting a new body of knowledge.

The audience

A new or expanded “charge” to the Committee and conference was issued by Karl Stauber, Deputy Under Secretary of Research, Education and Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Stauber identified, or perhaps focused more intently upon, a special audience of unique political significance to rural America—suburbanites. Why should suburbanites be interested in rural America? The same question is being asked by city dwellers who would like to demonstrate the fighter Joe Louis’s comment in the thirties about a coming opponent, “He can run but he can’t hide.” Neither rural nor city dwellers are making clear and convincing cases to
their powerful political neighbors for thoughtfully supported policies at the Federal level addressed to rural and urban needs. What form should Federal policies take if they are to be cognizant of rural needs?

A second audience for the work of the Committee and its allies is rural dwellers and communities. This includes representatives at county, state and federal levels who are in desperate need of sound information with which they can recognize and pursue their own interests.

The third audience for work on rural America is the broad spectrum of scholars including economists, sociologists, and universities. It is perhaps in this last area where the most progress has been made to date. Some might argue that this focus is excessive, I believe that it is not. Yet I also believe that the two preceding audiences will be ill served in the absence of a sound scholarly foundation of work on the issues of rural lands.

Facets of the program

Specific facets or directions of the program follow directly from the audiences being addressed, in inverse order. The Committee does not do, it "promotes" in the following ways: inquiry, translation, and participation:

* Through inquiry and research it gathers and orders information, assembling and interpreting data drawn from the variety of fields relevant to the rural scene.

* It translates these findings into the forms needed for use by policy makers at appropriate levels.

* It participates in the policy process as an agent of information and change, providing venues for interaction of experts, citizens, and policy makers (perhaps as proposed for the Crossroads program).

These tasks are implicit in the following observations drawn from the conference, and some are also dealt with explicitly in the discussion.

Definition

An interesting observation included in many discussions was the unsatisfactory definition of "rural" in use by the census. Statistically "rural" represents a residual including areas not within the definition of urban. Specific acajul, community definitions within the Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA) have population densities of rural areas. The absence of a definition of rural that is characterized by spatial and/or population density measures adds to the difficulty of developing applicable policies for rural areas. Indeed, rural to most means, extraneously, agriculture. Similarly, problems of aggregation and disaggregation of data from different regions are exacerbated. The term may also make it more difficult for rural areas to find allies in different political jurisdictions and social groups.

Defining rural more precisely is clearly a difficult task, but the Committee and its allies provide a position paper or suggestions to OMB which is currently considering the census definition of SMSA.

Some recurring questions

A number of questions or issues appear to recur throughout the Conference. Resolutions of these may well exist but, if so they were not apparent to a new observer. A few are noted here.

Do rural areas have some common values and problems? Poverty and loss of population in recent decades appeared to be two commonalities. Many noted that an important distinction needed to be made between remote and proximal (to urban) areas before even these features could be generalized. This distinction leads directly to a corollary query. Is the "fringe" a definable space? To what extent are issues associated with the fringe commonalities, for example the redefinition of agriculture and its effects as nuisance and pollution when juxtaposed with suburban neighborhoods?

Are there significant regional differences among rural areas? It would appear from the Conference structure and some of the discussion that there are. But how exactly does Navajo poverty differ from Black Belt poverty? (This is akin to the Fitzgerald-Hemingway argument about whether the rich are different or just rich.) Region, of course, opens up the pandora's box of regional definitions, as much a part of the earth sciences as the social sciences. Aggregations of statistical attributes may have important coherence but must be recognized as spatial definition. Geographical and statistical differentiation are presumably complementary and may serve different purposes.

Conformity with the issue of regionalism is the significance of history in explaining the rural present. The discussions repeatedly noted very different histories. It was also evident, however, that much of what passed for fact in history was myth. Demolition of such myths, for example, about farmers' values in the midwest or the profitability of agriculture in many regions as a stimulus to development, is of great importance. Moreover, as myths are frequently die hard, a continuing necessity. But, can history also tell us something about how to grapple with problems of the present and the future? Discussion of the take issue demonstrated significantly different views in different regions. Are more cross comparisons of specific questions warranted? Will history figure prominently in similarities and particularly in differences?

Perhaps a dominant theme in the conference was the issue of how rural communities respond to the external social and economic forces of the times. These external forces, as Nelson's paper emphasized, may be generated by international, federal, state, and local activities. Examples range from trade policies to land use, and included reduction in subsidies for water use in the West, and the waxing power of the environmental movement. The illustrations demonstrated the need for measures of social impacts as well as careful analysis of the scientific claims for various points of view about the responses of complete environmental systems. What can be said about future intensity and location of impacts? Of special importance in the rural scene may be the spatial inequalities of such impacts.

How then do communities respond to the myriad of external forces. Much was made in the discussion of the concept of social capital, for which commonly agreed upon measurable indicators appear to be needed. The relation of different forms of capital to social capital appeared especially important. The debate about social capital and its application to issues of rural development clearly reflected a concern on the part of many that social policies demand recognition of community values that customary economic measures fail to capture. Beyond recognizing such values, the step to enhancing them remained elusive.

Translation

Applying "knowledge to policy" (Sandra Baxie's phrase) often remains an unfulfilled objective. Policy papers directed to specific actors at all levels of government must be tailored made. Research papers do not serve the purpose. Beyond papers, meetings with decision makers, such as those proposed as a role for Crossroads, may improve communication. Of course, not every academic thrives on town halls and zoning hearings. It is perhaps equally important to recall that politicians are not always eager to hear what we call the "facts." Moreover, the following quotation from Sedgwick, the president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1833, captures a continuing suspicion of policy involvement by the academic community. "He warned the statisticians, "If they went into provinces not belonging to them, and opened a door of communication with the liminal world of policy, that instant would be the first moment of disorder that his way into their Eden of philosophy."