



Rewriting the Rural Narrative

Prepared for Big Stone County

March 7, 2016

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MORRIS

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Outline

Part 1: Rewriting the Rural Narrative

Part 2: Changes in Rural Minnesota



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REWRITING THE RURAL NARRATIVE

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“The kids are all leaving”
“Outmigration is a problem”
“There is a *Brain Drain*”
“Rural areas are dying”

Deficit Approach

Dark Times Ahead?

Rural Minnesota is in trouble. Young people are fleeing the farms and forests of the Gopher State, and the residents left there are aging. And they're dying. While populations decline outstate, the Twin Cities area, especially the suburbs, booms.

Rural Populations Continue to Shrink

Is Rural America Struggling? provides an excellent summary of the economic and population issues facing rural America. Key quote:

... rural America's job growth is stagnant and the population is in decline. In fact, it's the first time such a population decline has been recorded in the nation's rural counties.

People keep leaving rural America. According to U.S. Census figures from 2010, just 16% of the country's population lives in rural areas, down from 20% in 2000, and down dramatically from 72% about a hundred years ago. Behind those statistics, though, is a whole collection of stories, both of the people who left their rural hometowns— and of those who've stayed, that small percentage of Americans who still live in the hollers, backwoods, and ranches of this nation. There are stories, too, of people who've returned, drawn back to the small towns they left for myriad reasons. We want to know those reasons, and the story of rural life that they tell.

Sociologists Patrick Carr and Maria Kefalas spent two years in a small town in Iowa trying to find out why so many young people are leaving rural America. What they found was that many small towns are playing a role in their own demise, by pushing the best and brightest to leave and under-investing in those who stay.

We became kind of the poster child for the war on poverty, and any time somebody wanted to do a story about poor people, we were the first stop.

No More Anecdotal!

anecdotal (noun). *information which is presented as if it is based on serious research but is in fact based on what someone thinks is true*

The rural idyll



"It looks like a ghost town," said Bill Gibson, a 74-year-old farmer, whose grandfather broke ground on the family's land with a team of oxen in the middle of the 19th century. "I sure miss the people."



"Agriculture is no longer the mainstay of the rural economy."

1900-1950

- Mechanization of agriculture
- Roads and transportation
- Educational achievement and population loss

1950-1990

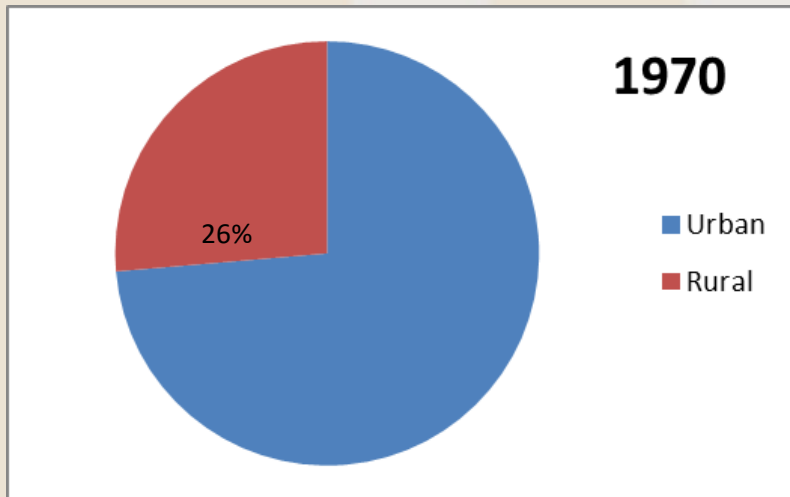
- Main street restructuring
- School consolidations
- Hospitals closings

Rural is Changing, not Dying

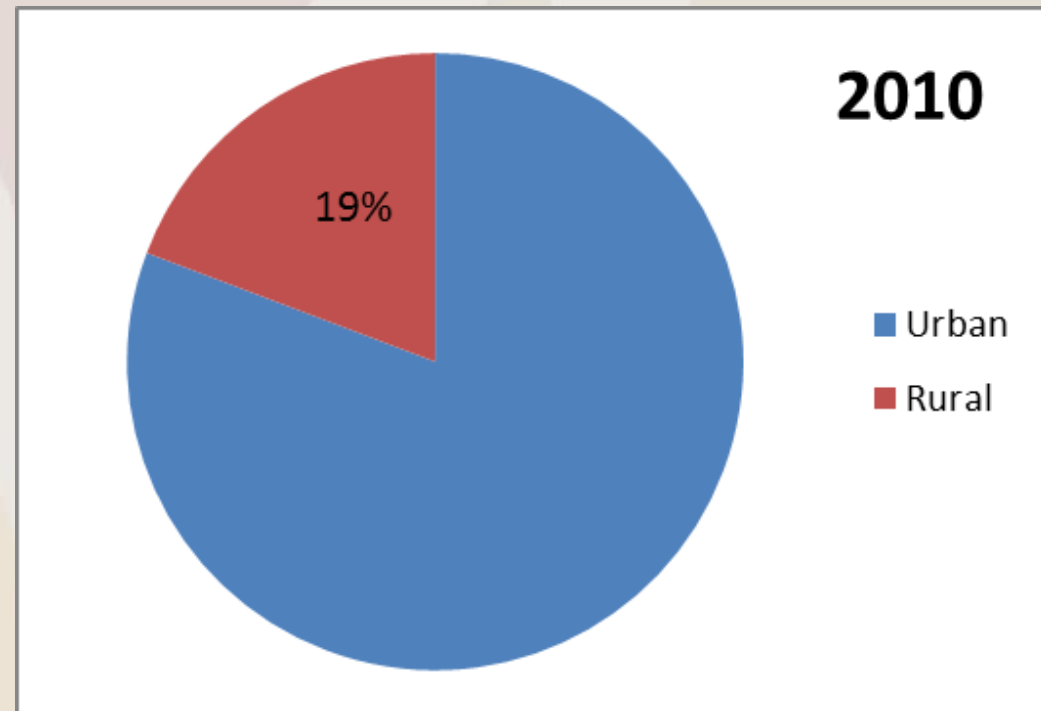
- Yes, things are changing
- These changes impact rural and urban areas alike
 - More apparent in rural places
- Research base does NOT support notion that if XXXX closes, the town dies
 - In Minnesota only 3 towns have dissolved in past 50 years

Rural Rebound

- Since 1970, rural population increased by 11%
 - Relative percentage living rural decreased



203,211,926
(53.6m rural)



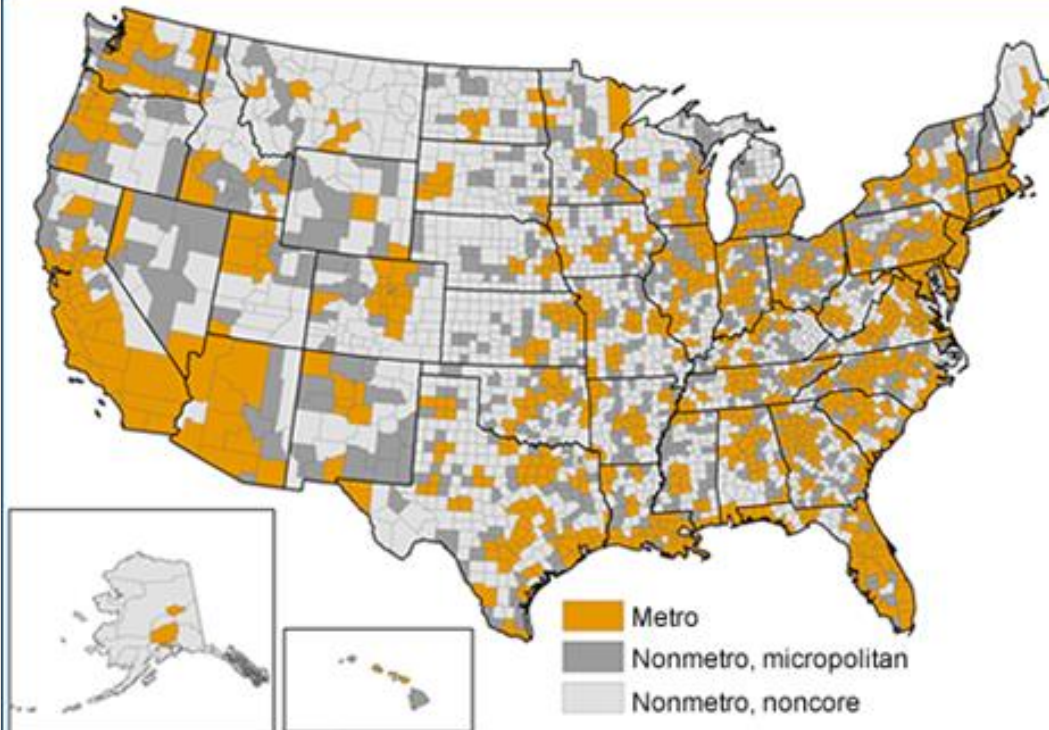
308,745,538
(59.5m rural)

Rural Data

- Population figures reduced by formerly rural places now designated as urban
 - There is a new urbanity across rural areas (Micropolitan definitions)
 - This impacts other statistics such as home values, incomes
- Population figures reduced by formerly rural places now designated as urban (since 1974)
 - Minnesota 352,224 residents now classified urban

Rural “Defined”

Metro, nonmetro micropolitan, and nonmetro noncore counties, 2013

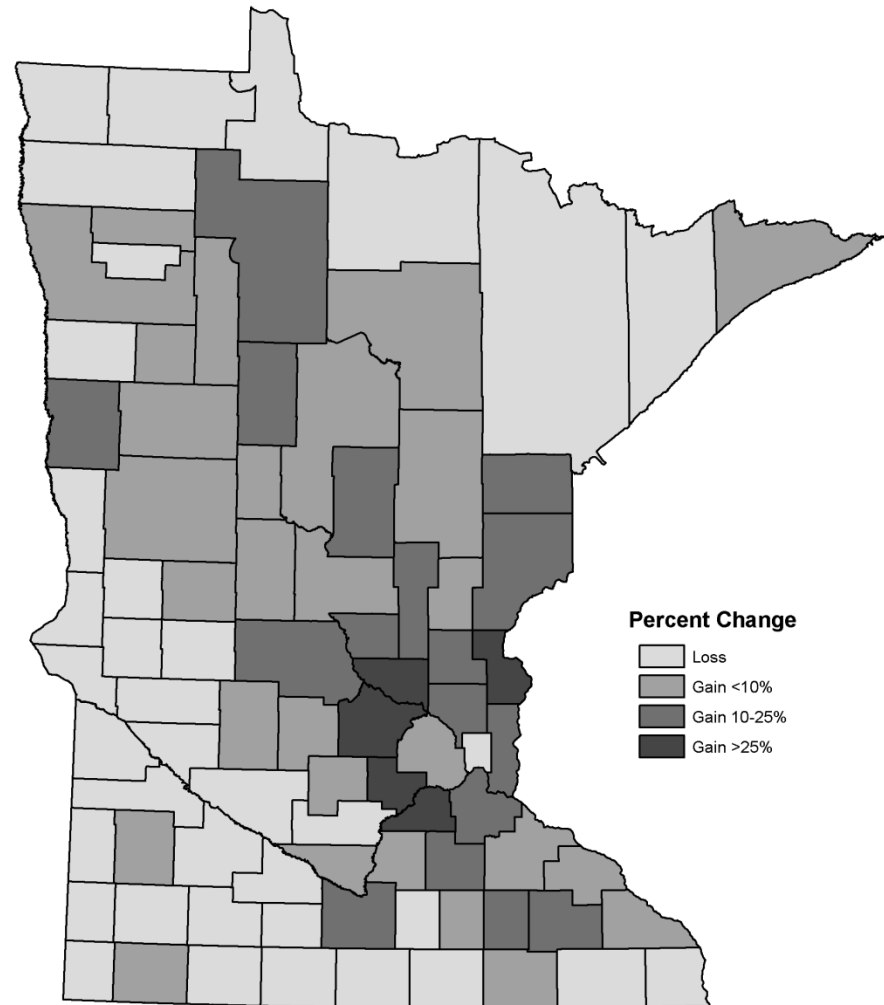
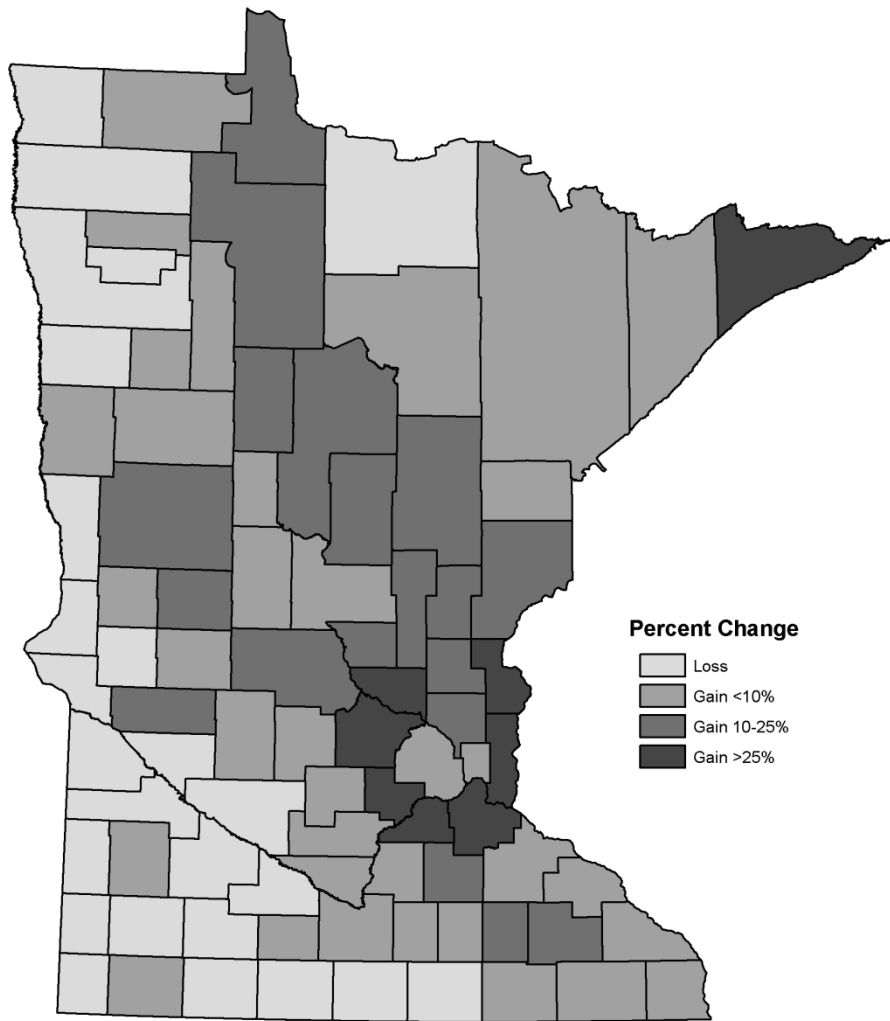


Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Population Change

1990-2000

2000-2010



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Mobility



Between 1995 and 1999,
43% of Minnesota residents moved.
(counties: low=25%, high 49%)

Cohort Lifecycle





Group the population by age



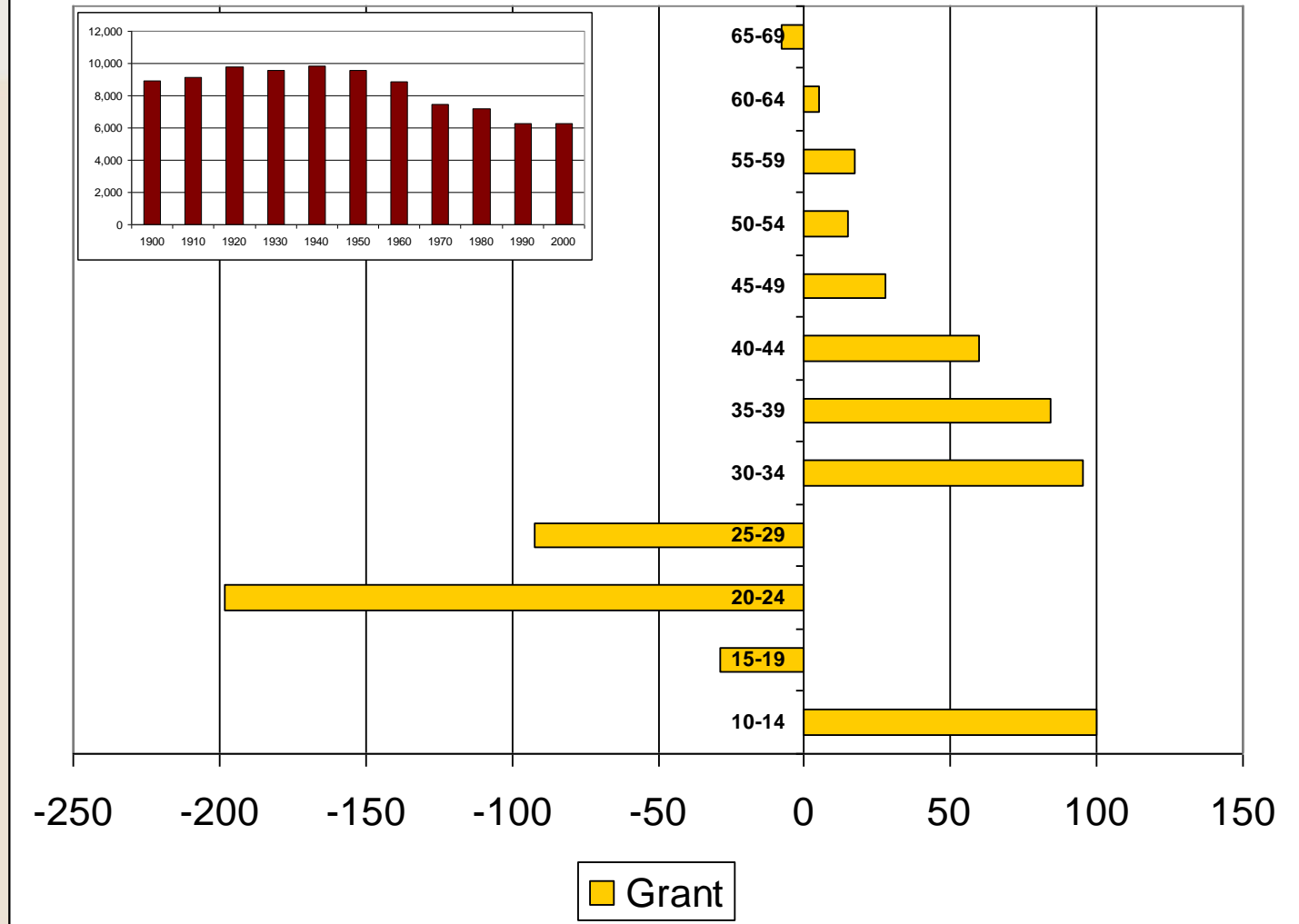
1990



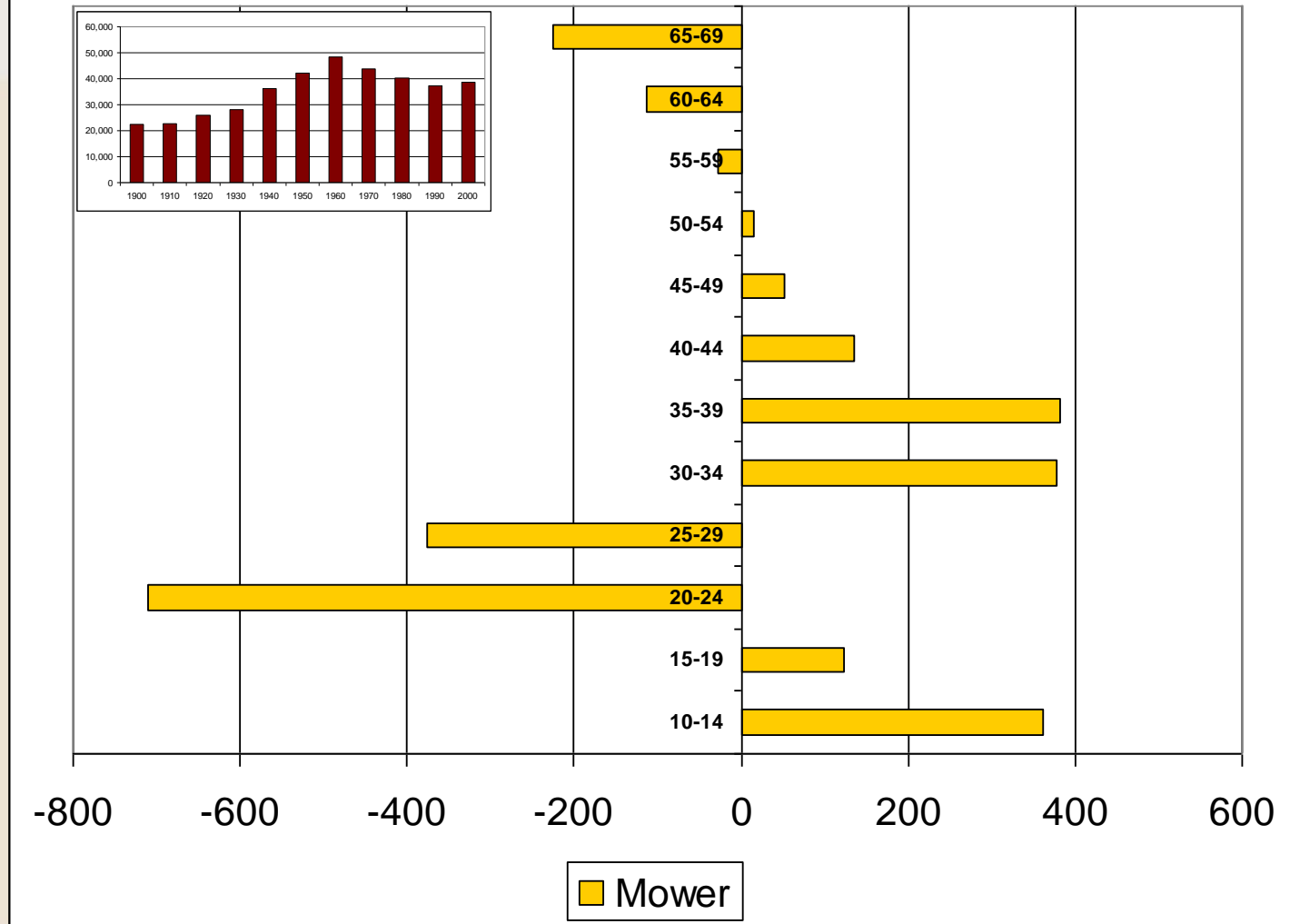
2000

If we have 20 children 10-14 in 1990,
we expect 20 young adults aged 20-24 in 2000.

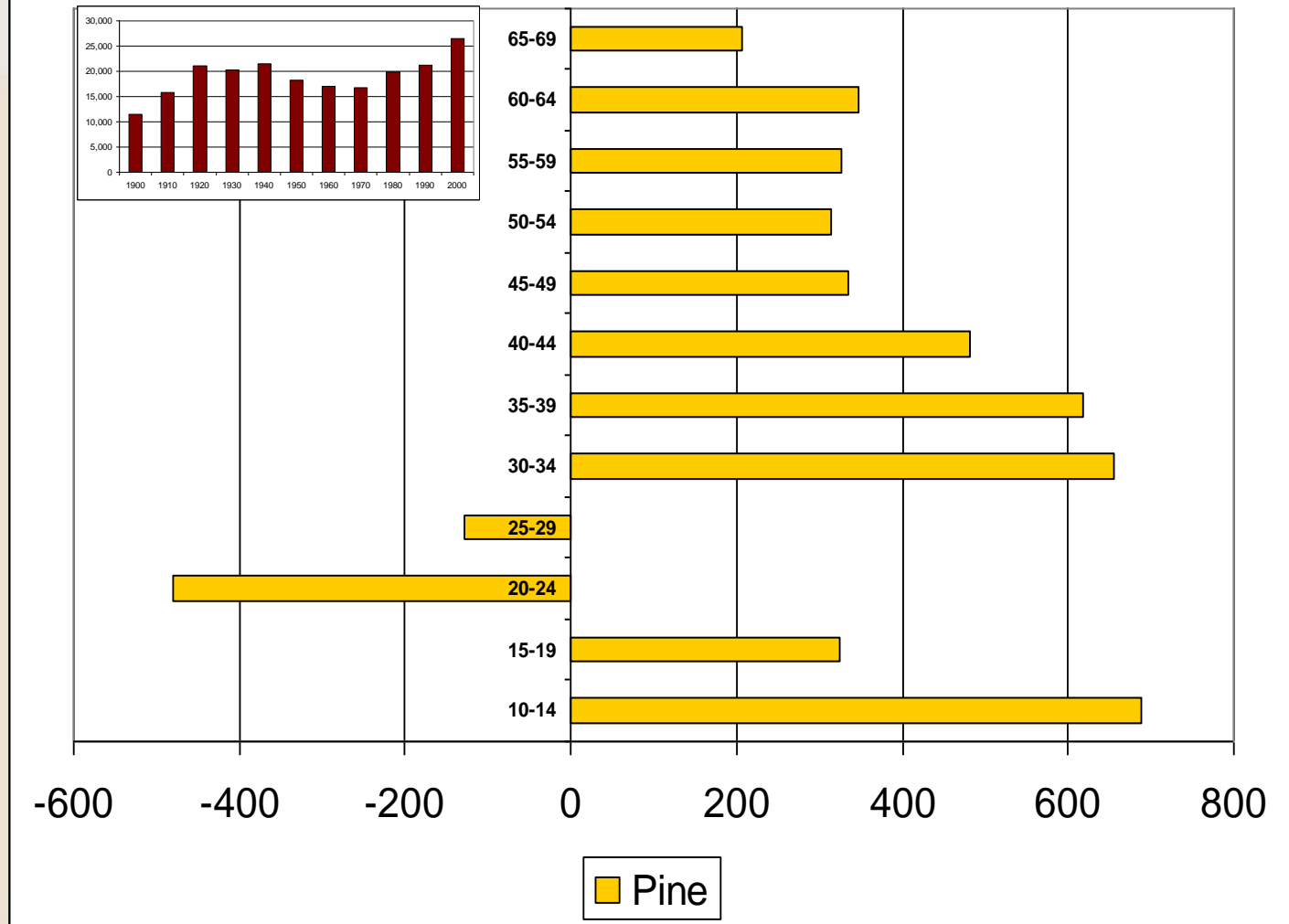
1990-2000, Number of People Difference between the Observed (Actual) and Expected



1990-2000, Number of People Difference between the Observed (Actual) and Expected

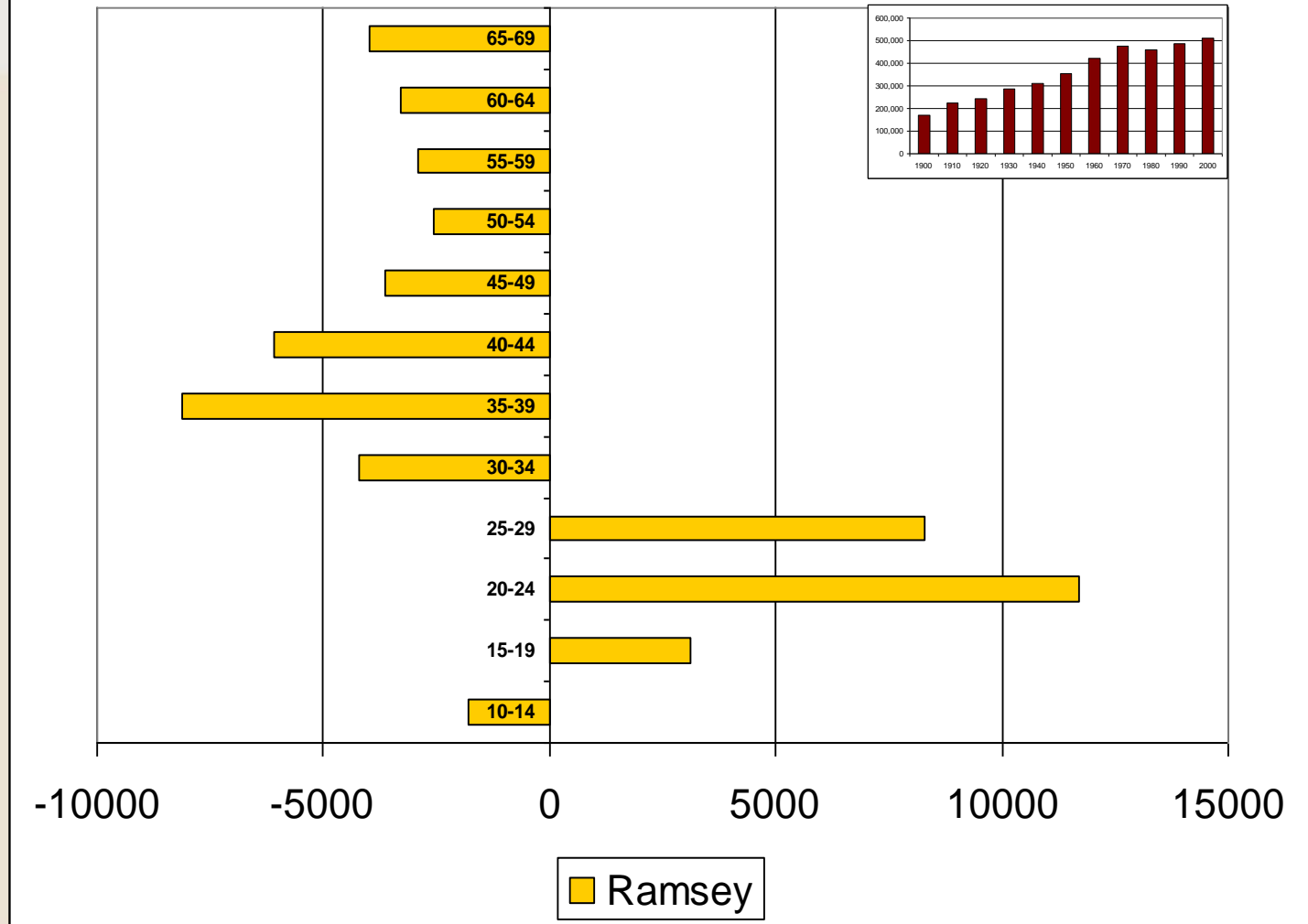


1990-2000, Number of People Difference between the Observed (Actual) and Expected



Typical Recreational County

1990-2000, Number of People Difference between the Observed (Actual) and Expected

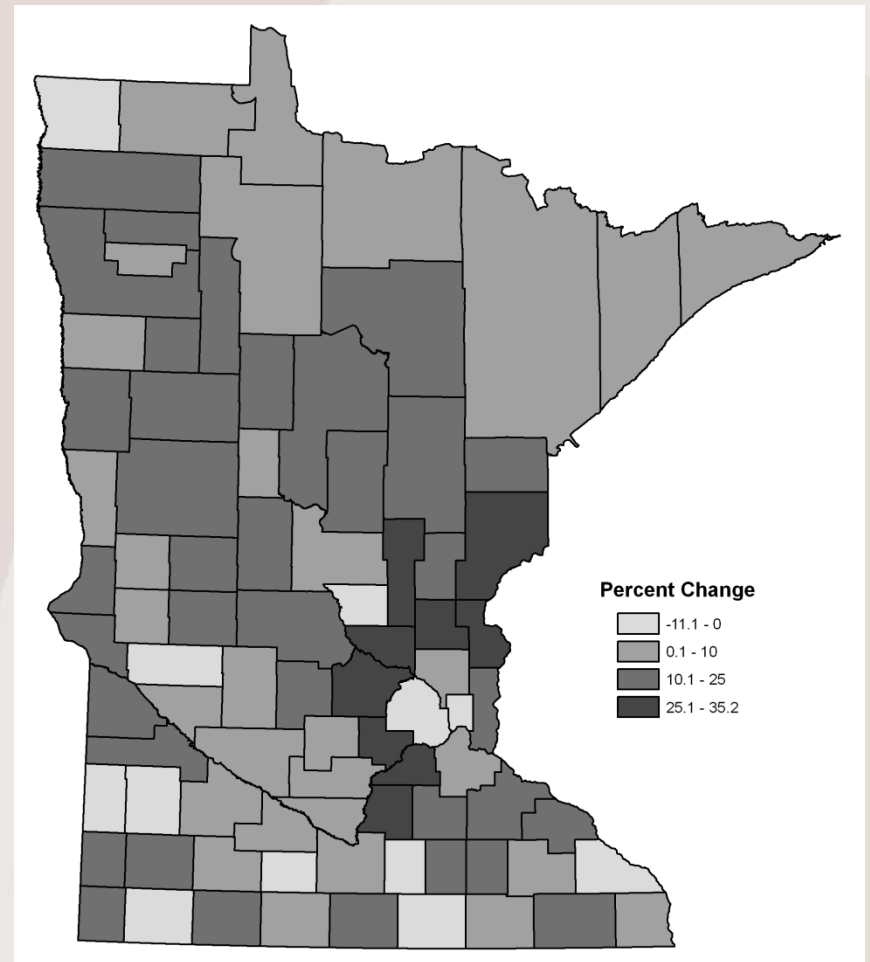
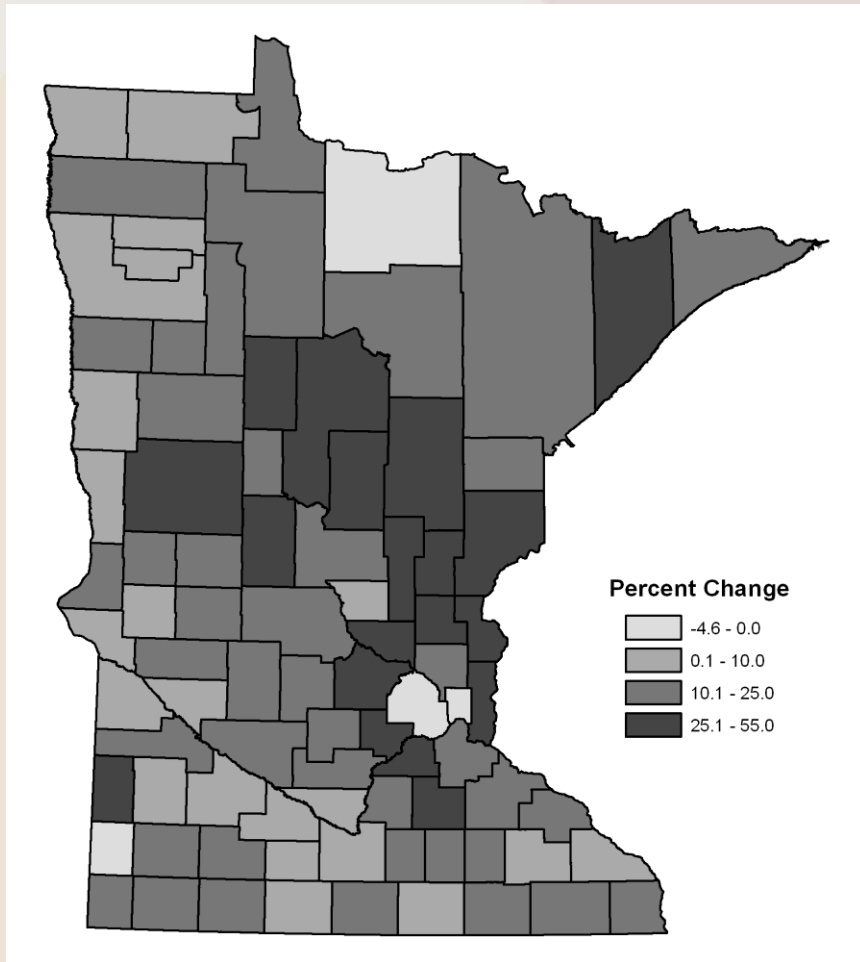


Core Metro County

Age 10-14

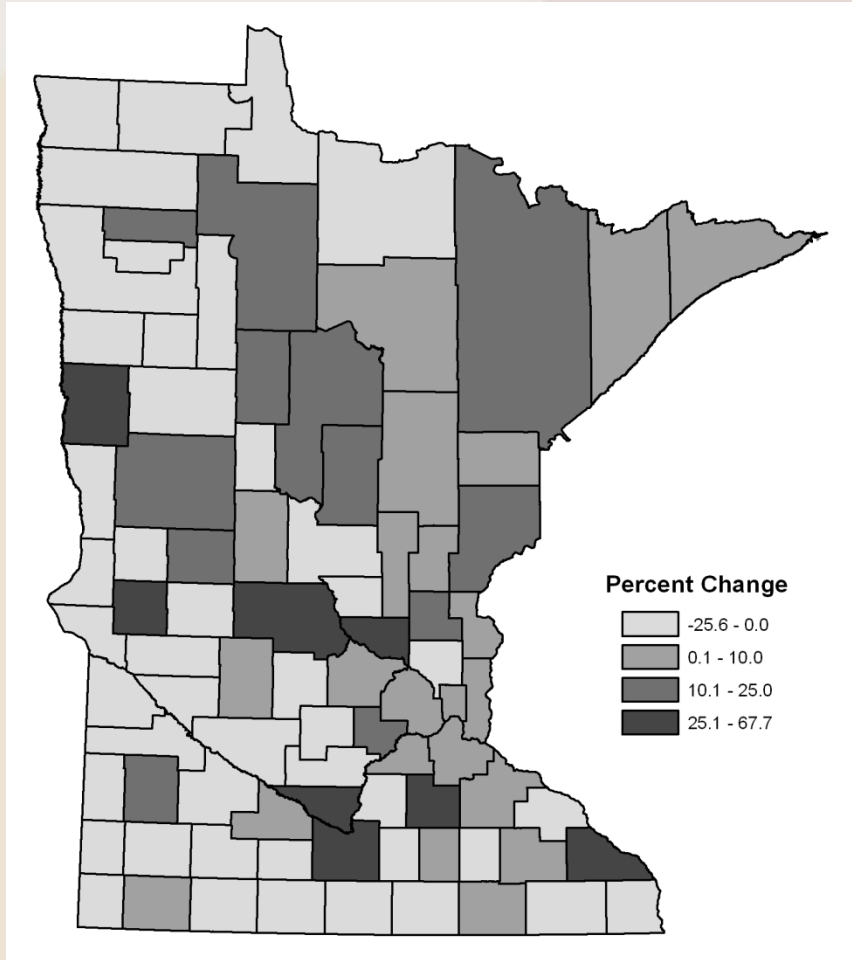
1990-2000

2000-2010

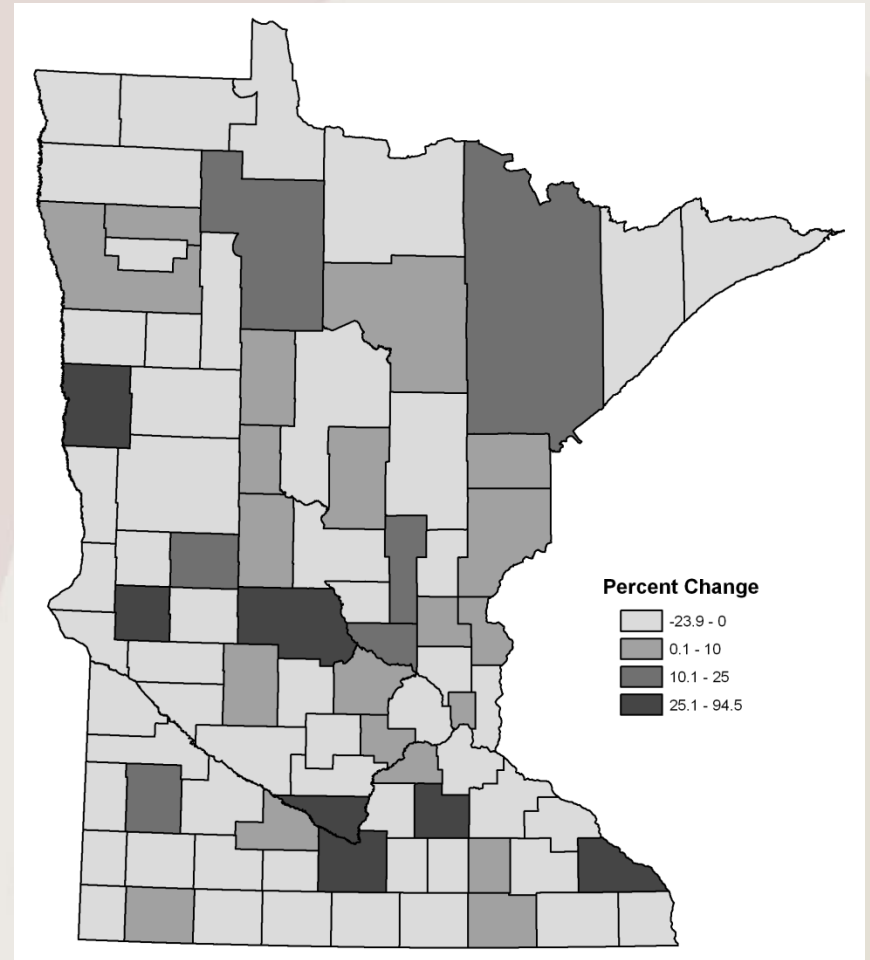


Age 15-19

1990-2000

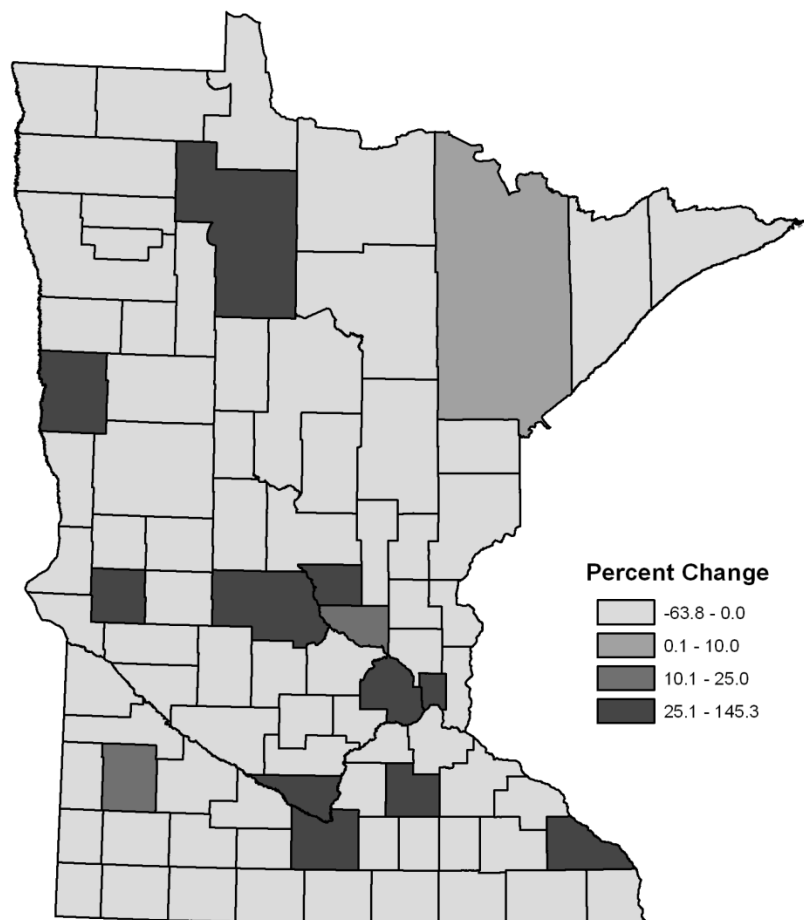


2000-2010

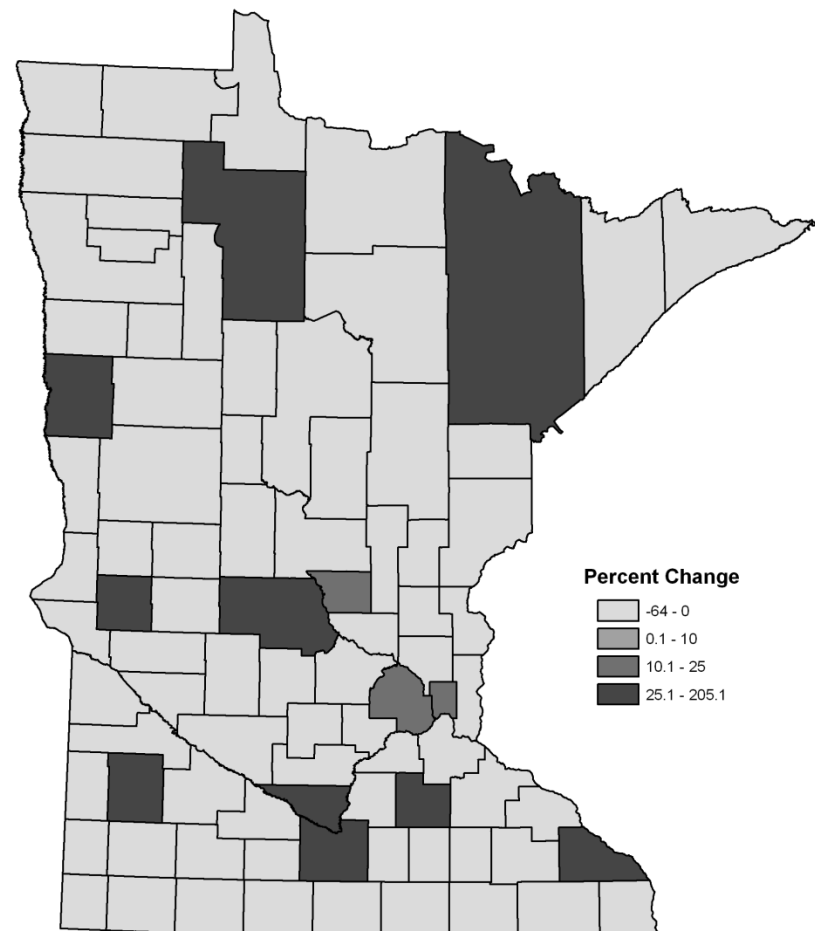


Age 20-24

1990-2000



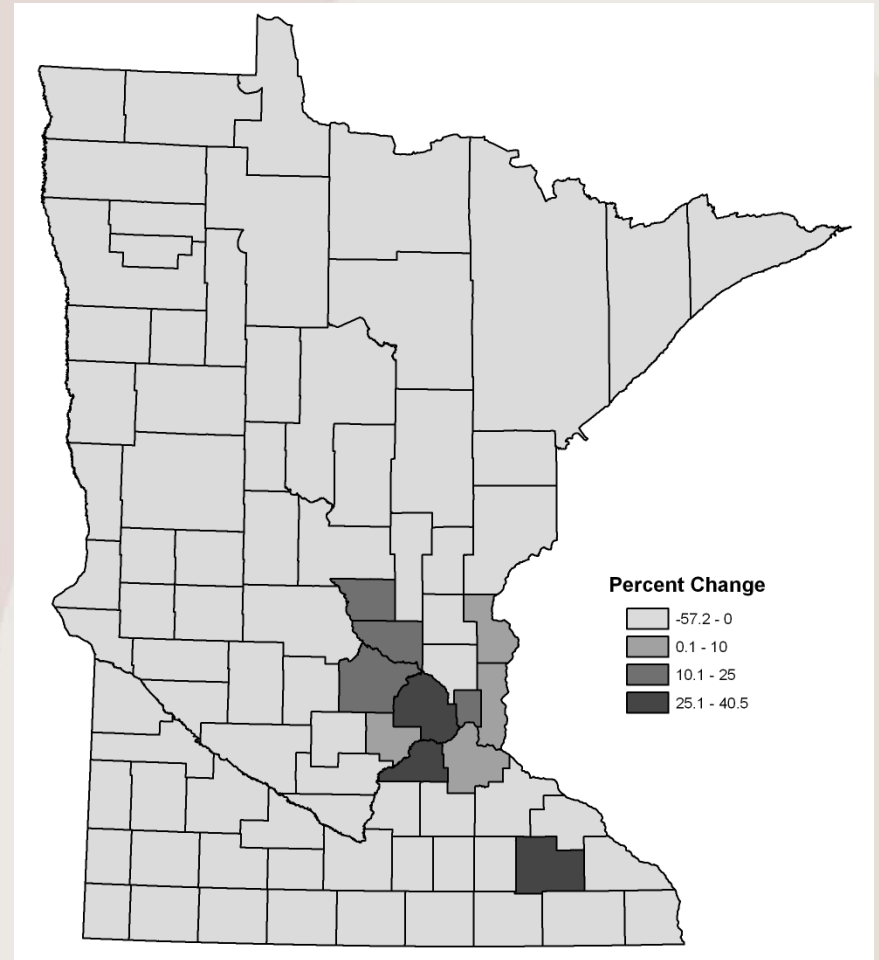
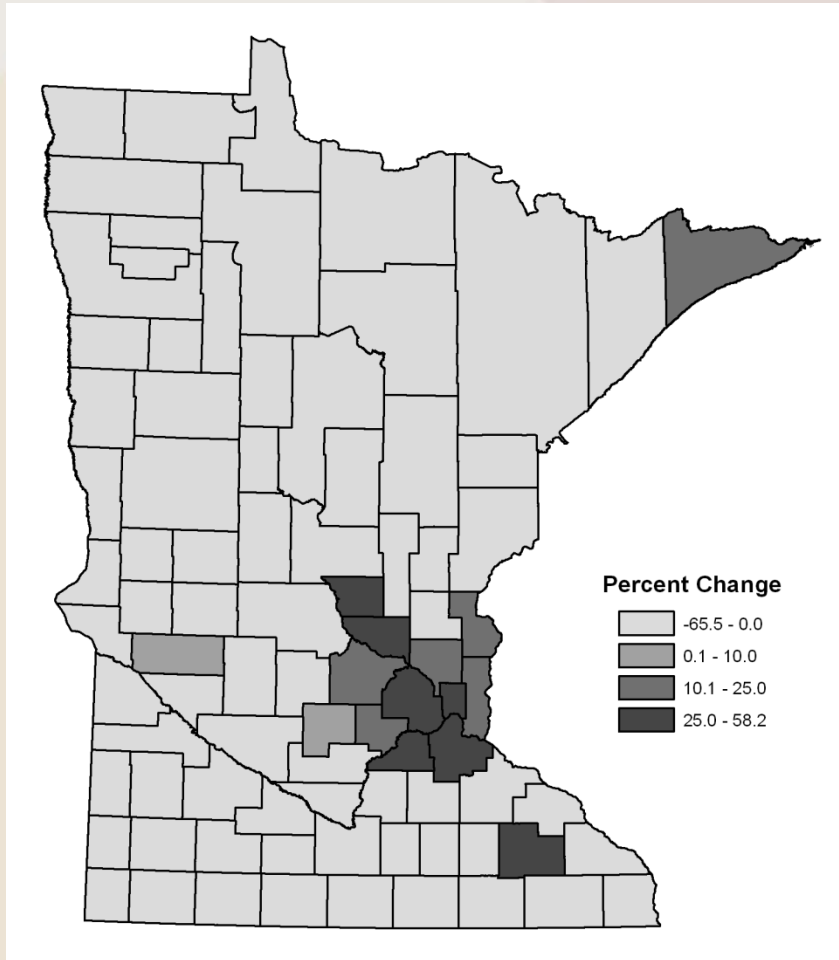
2000-2010



Age 25-29

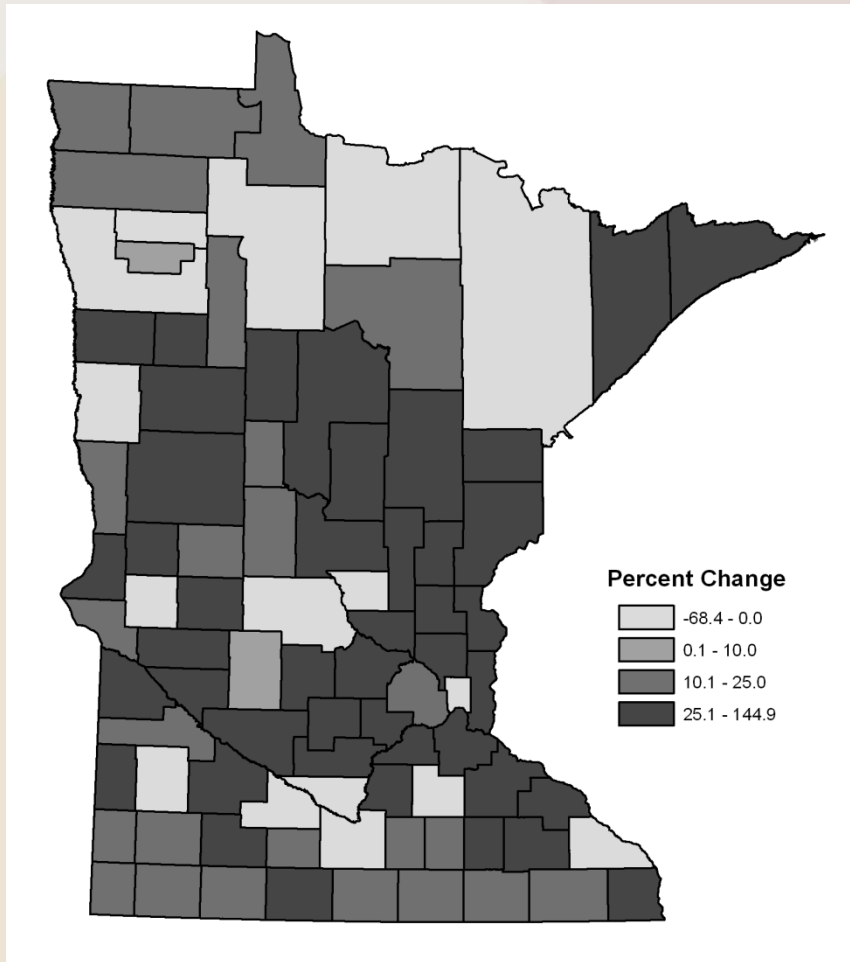
1990-2000

2000-2010

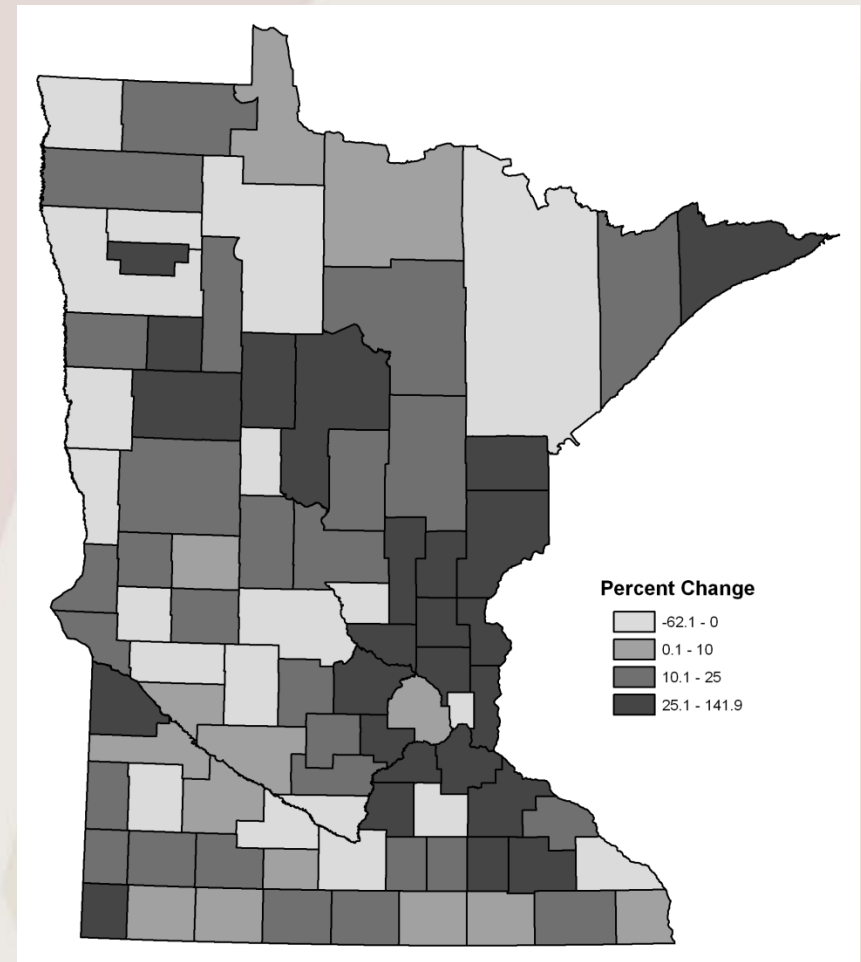


Age 30-34

1990-2000

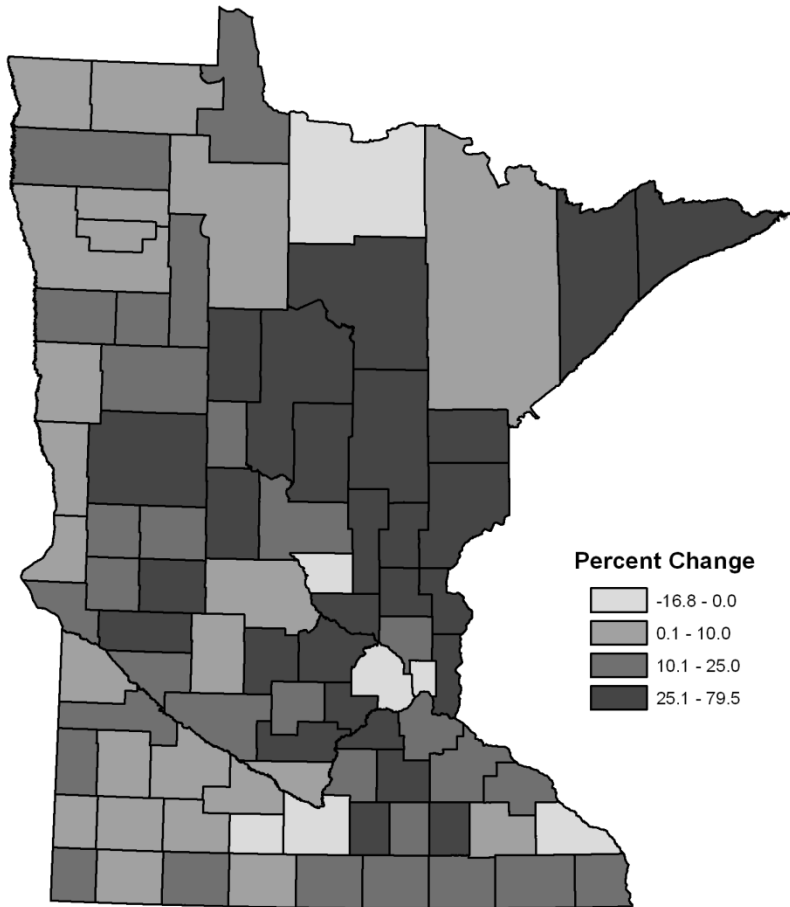


2000-2010

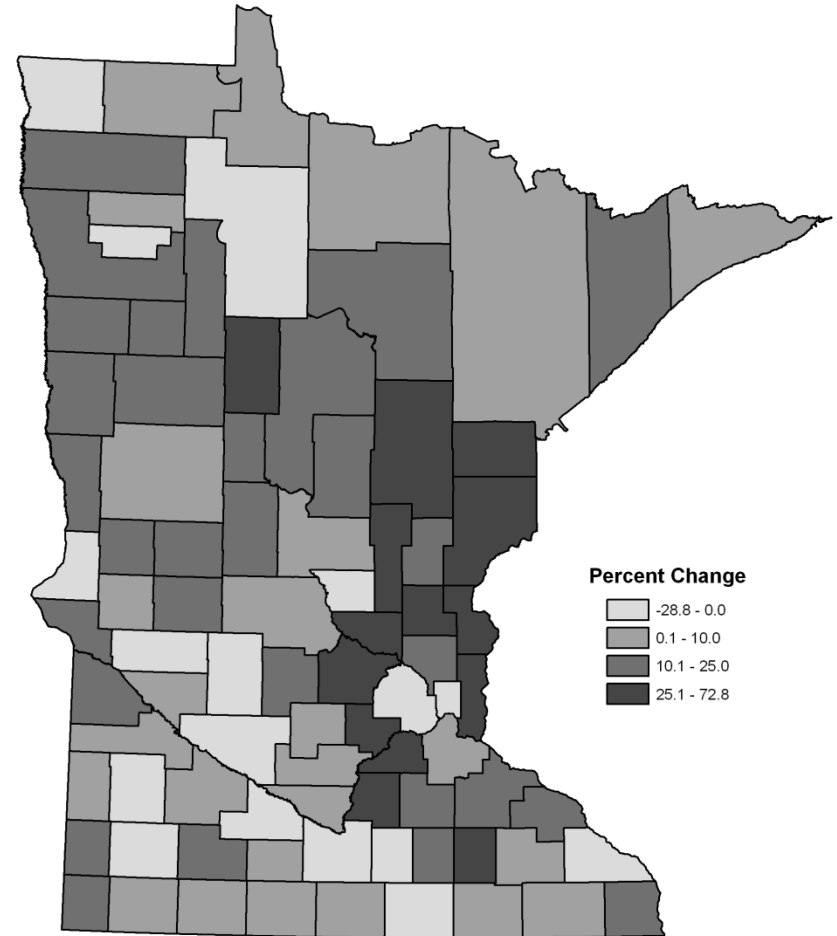


Age 35-39

1990-2000

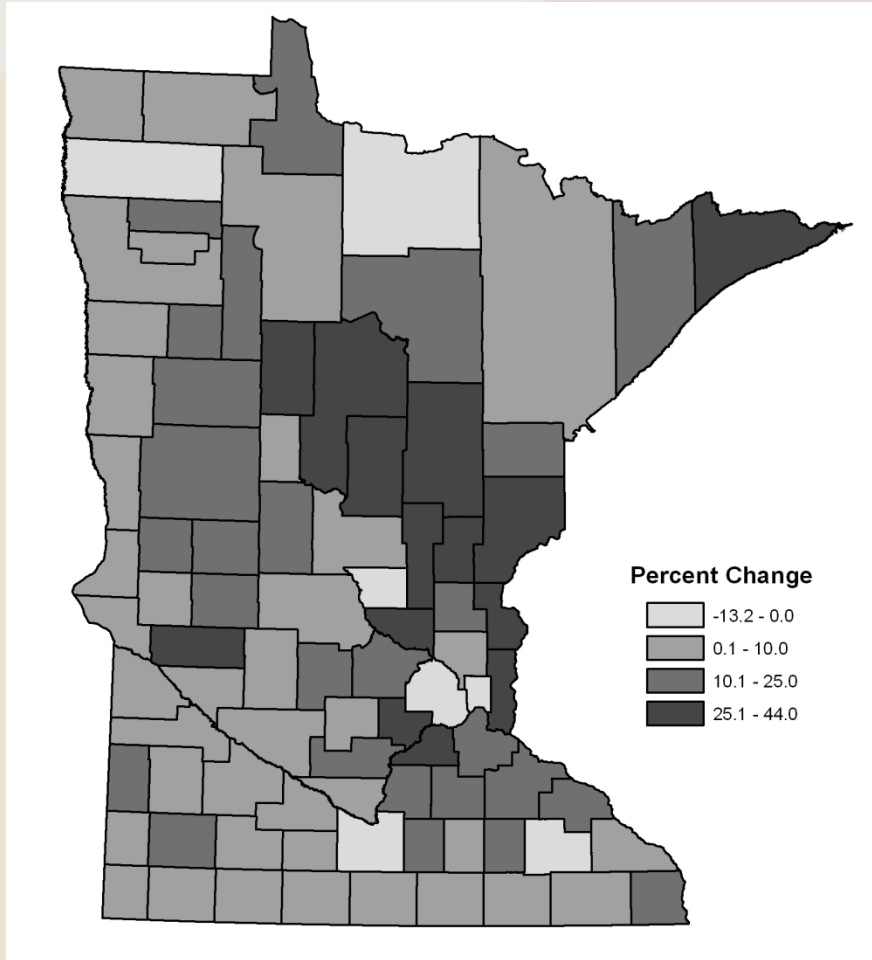


2000-2010

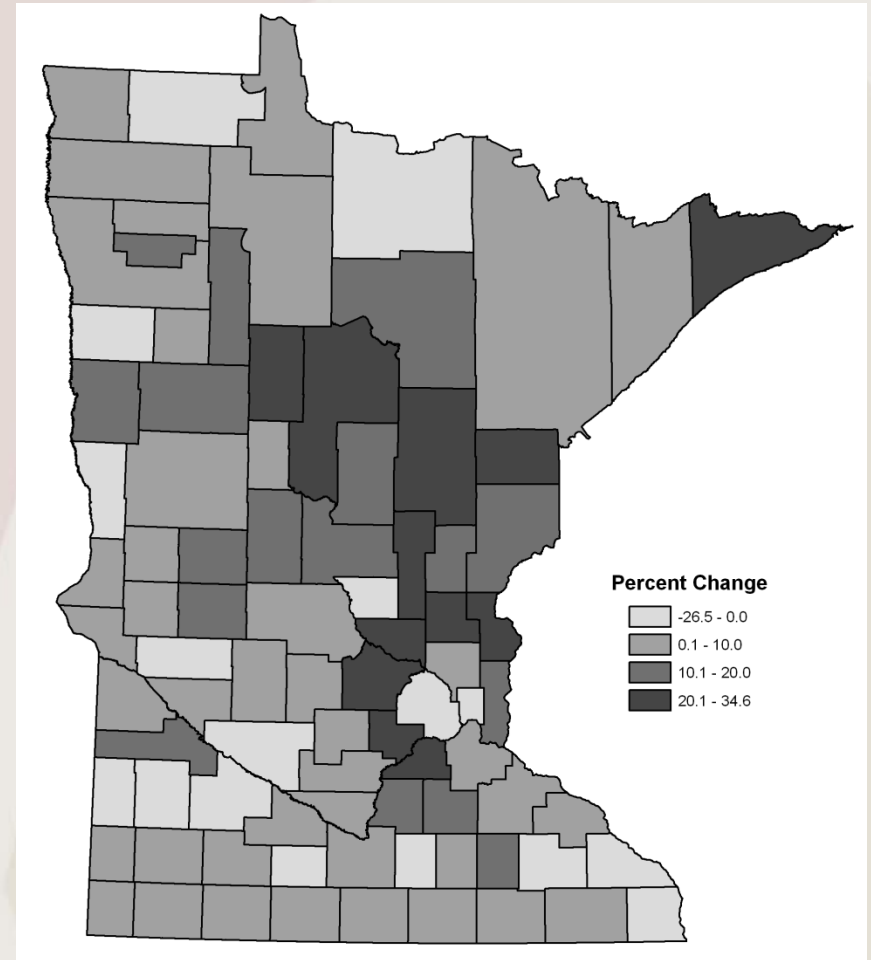


Age 40-44

1990-2000



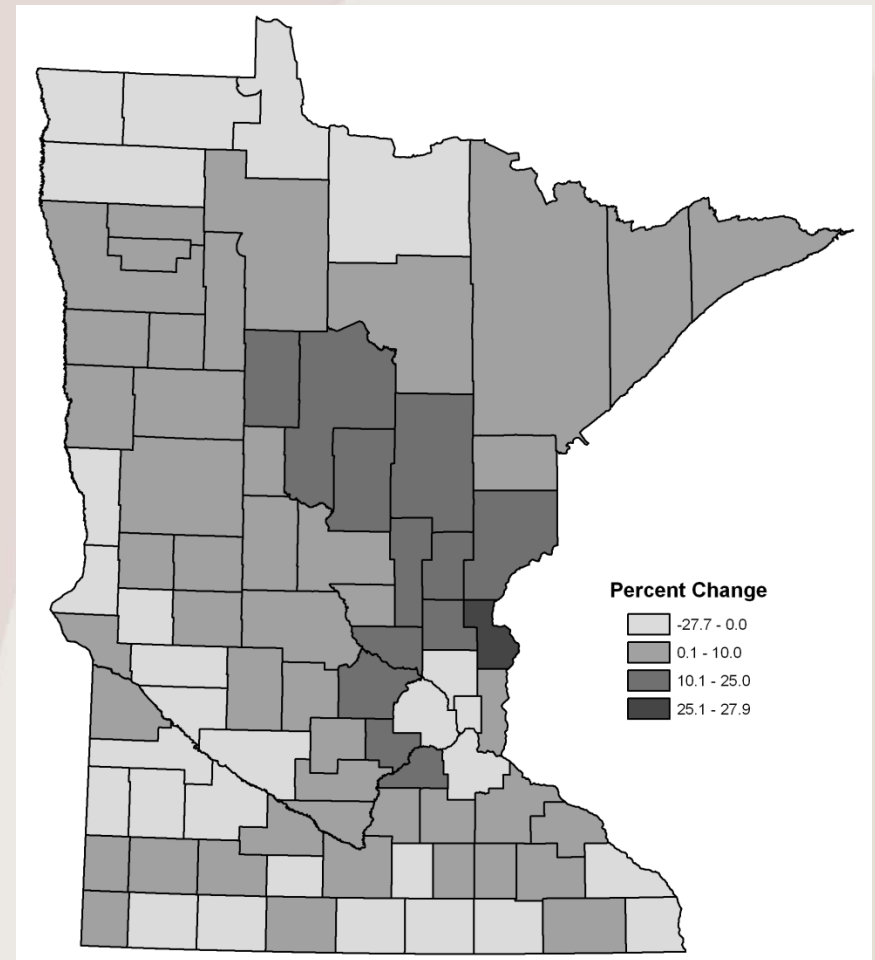
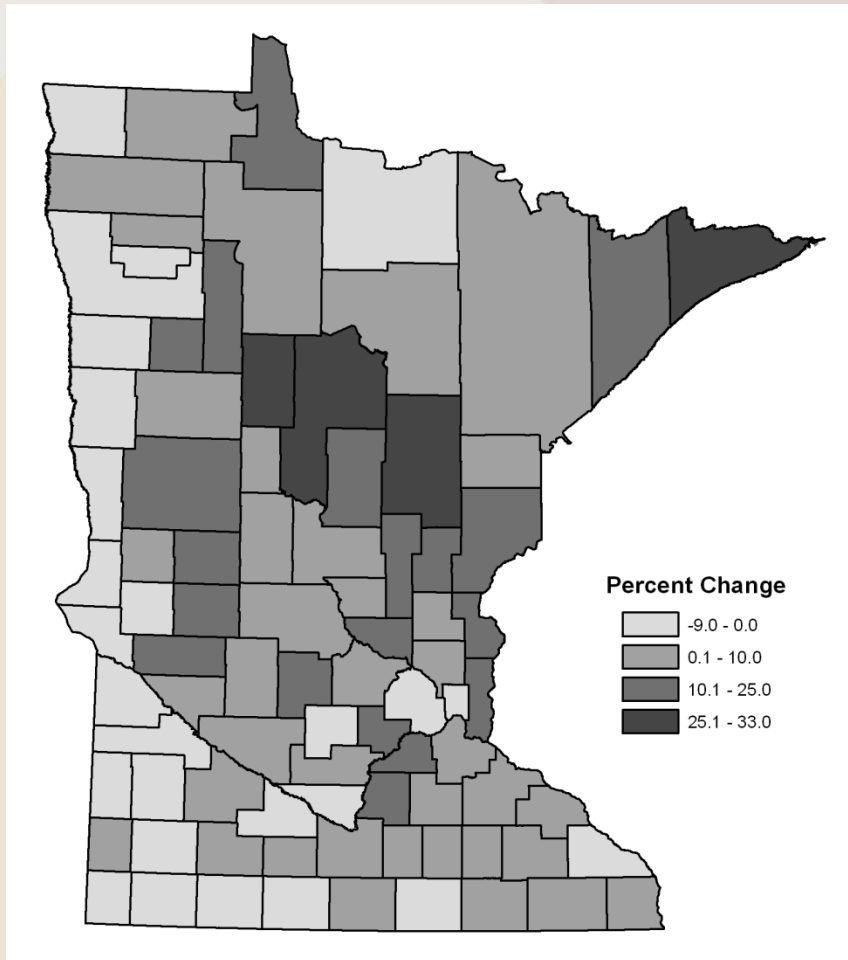
2000-2010



Age 45-49

1990-2000

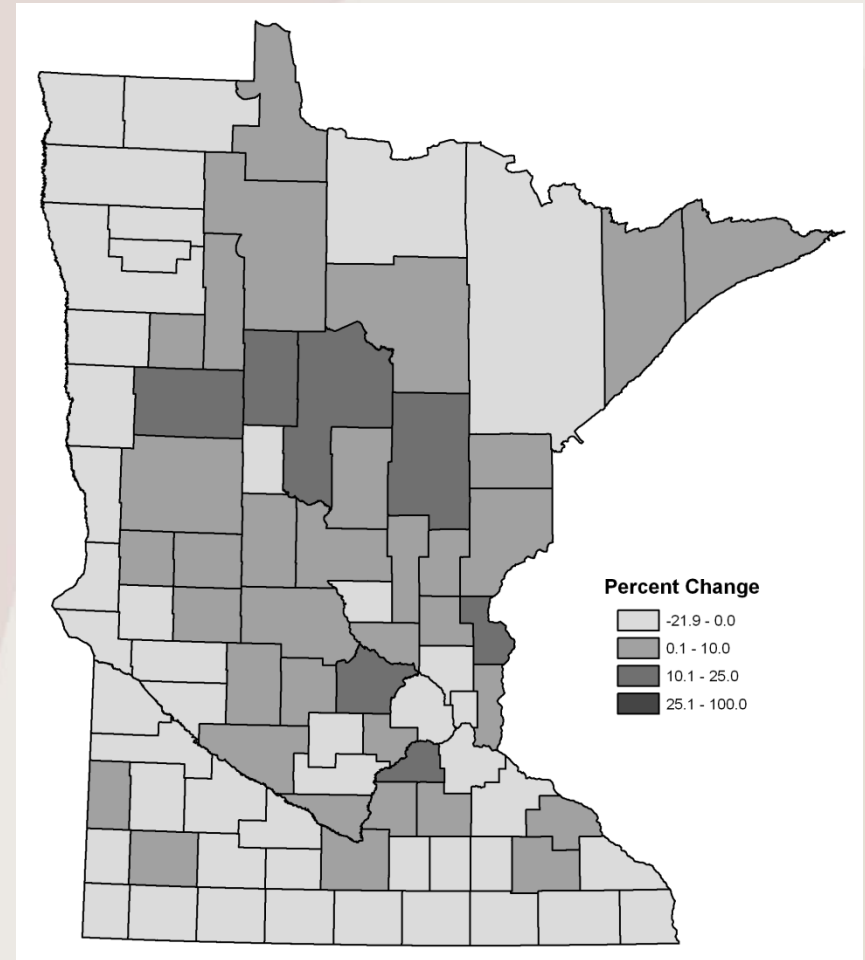
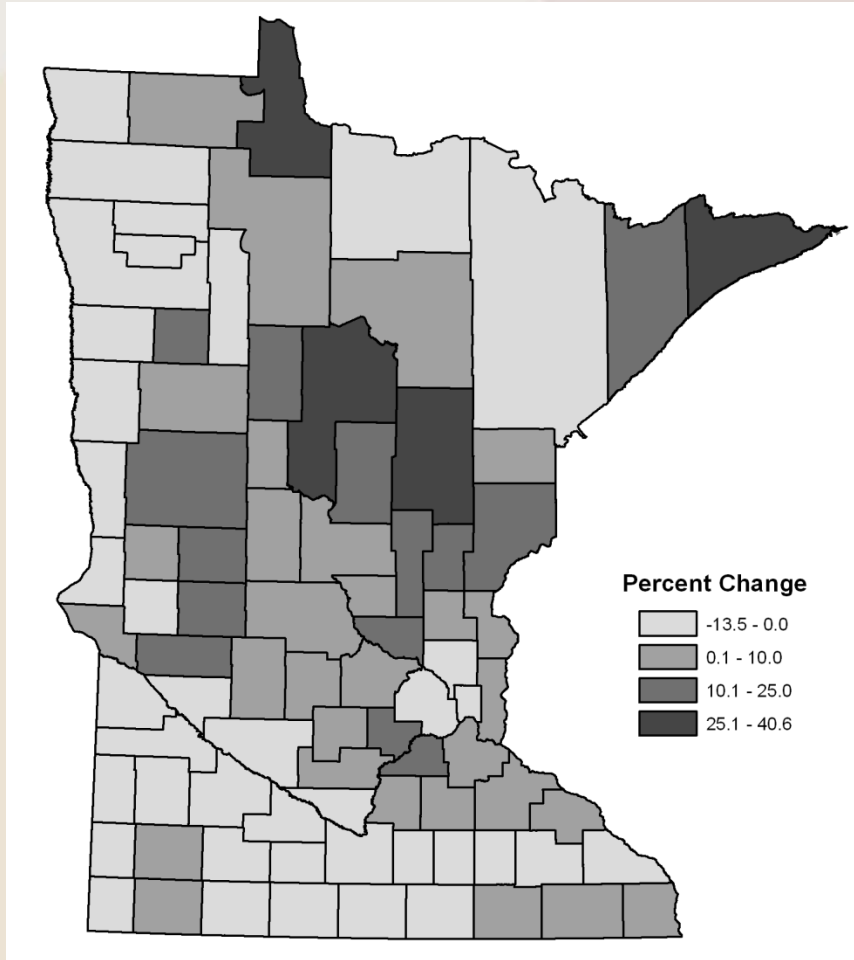
2000-2010



Age 50-54

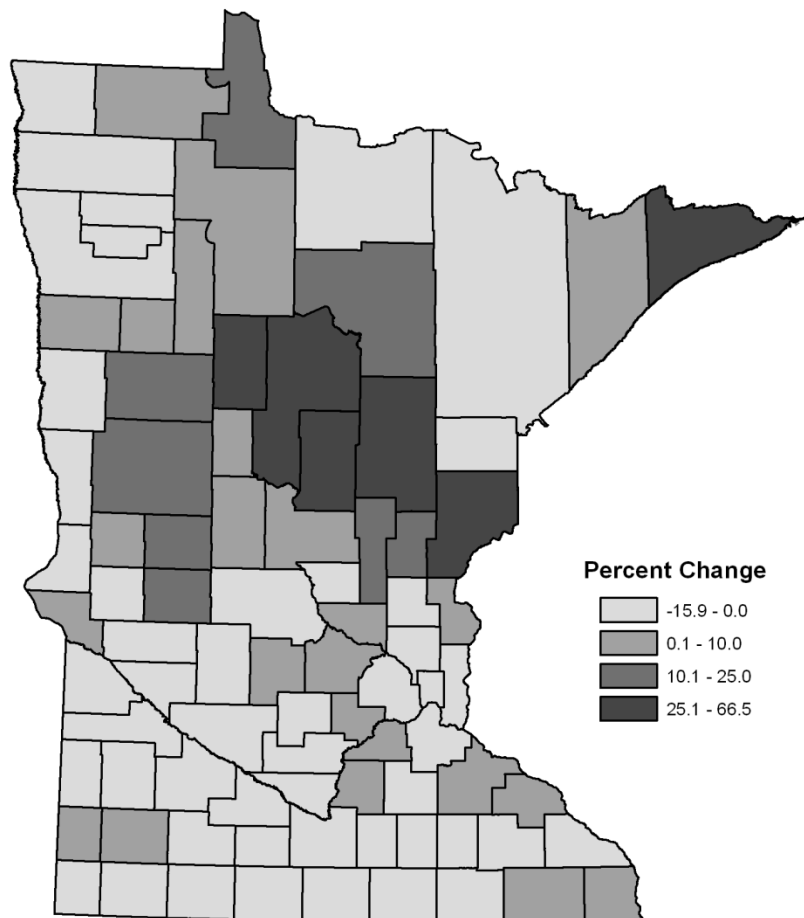
1990-2000

2000-2010

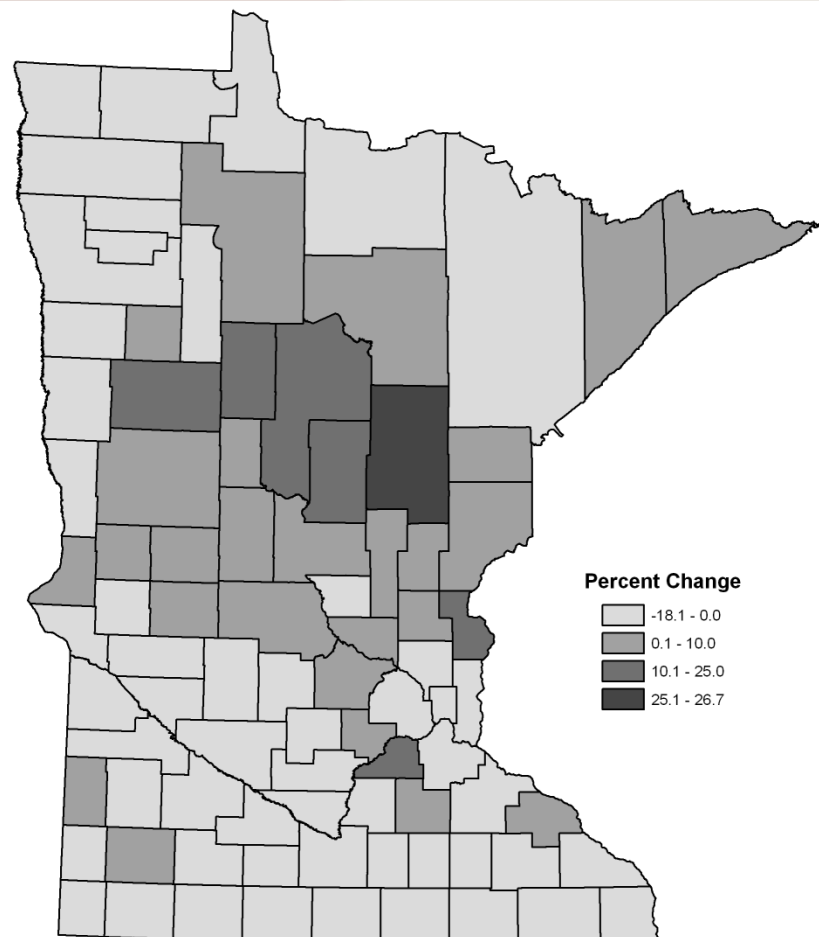


Age 55-59

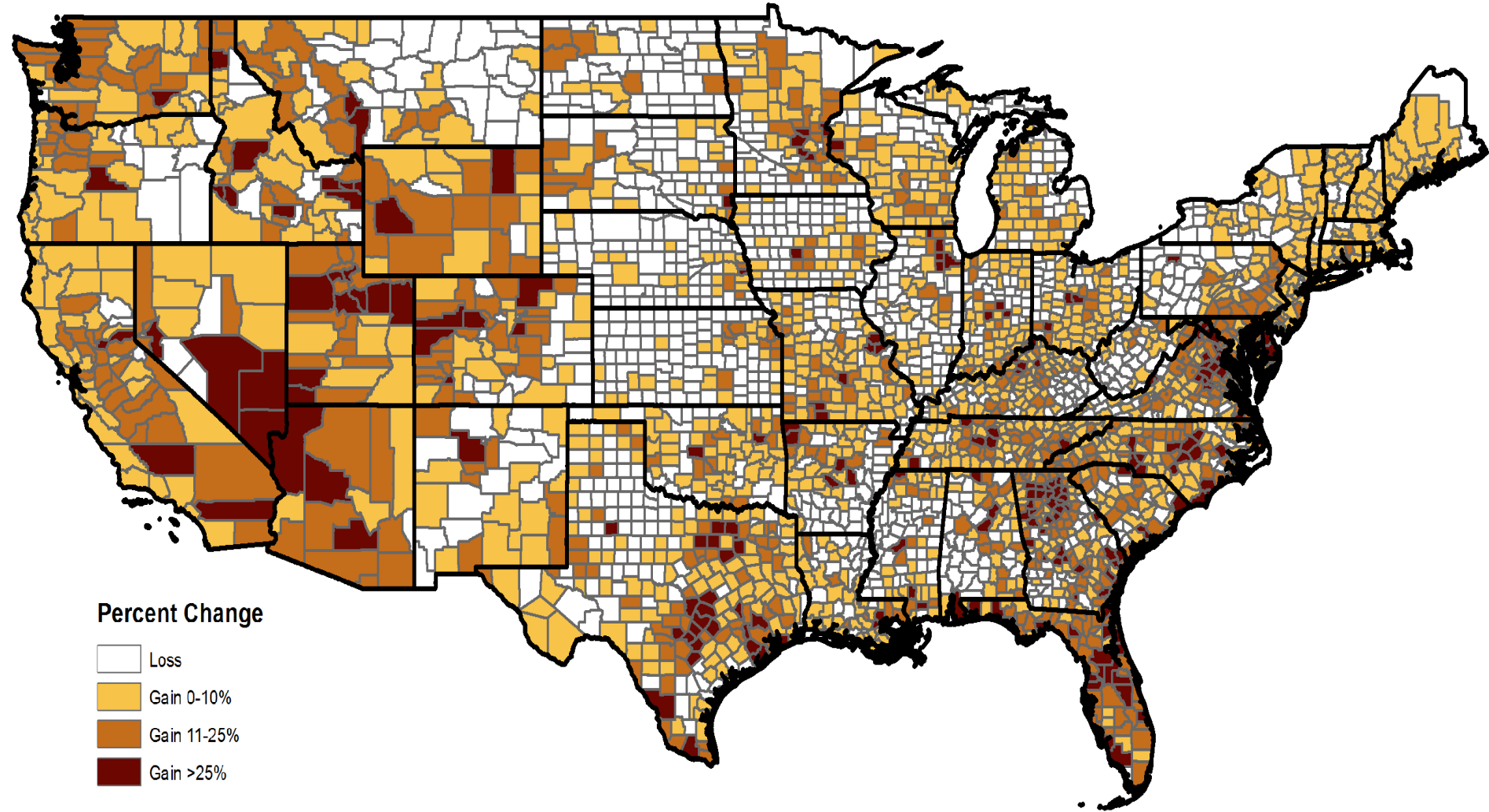
1990-2000



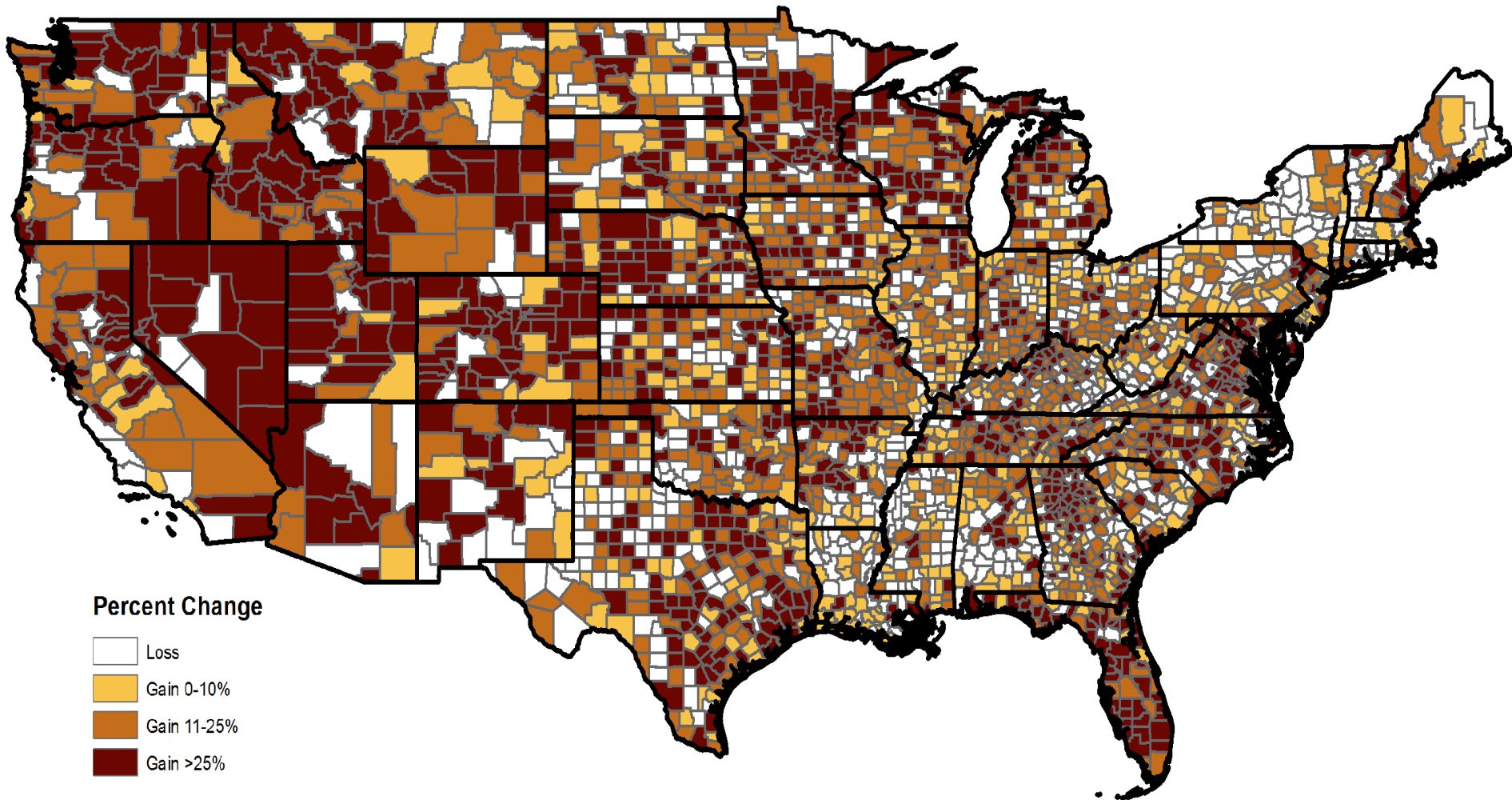
2000-2010



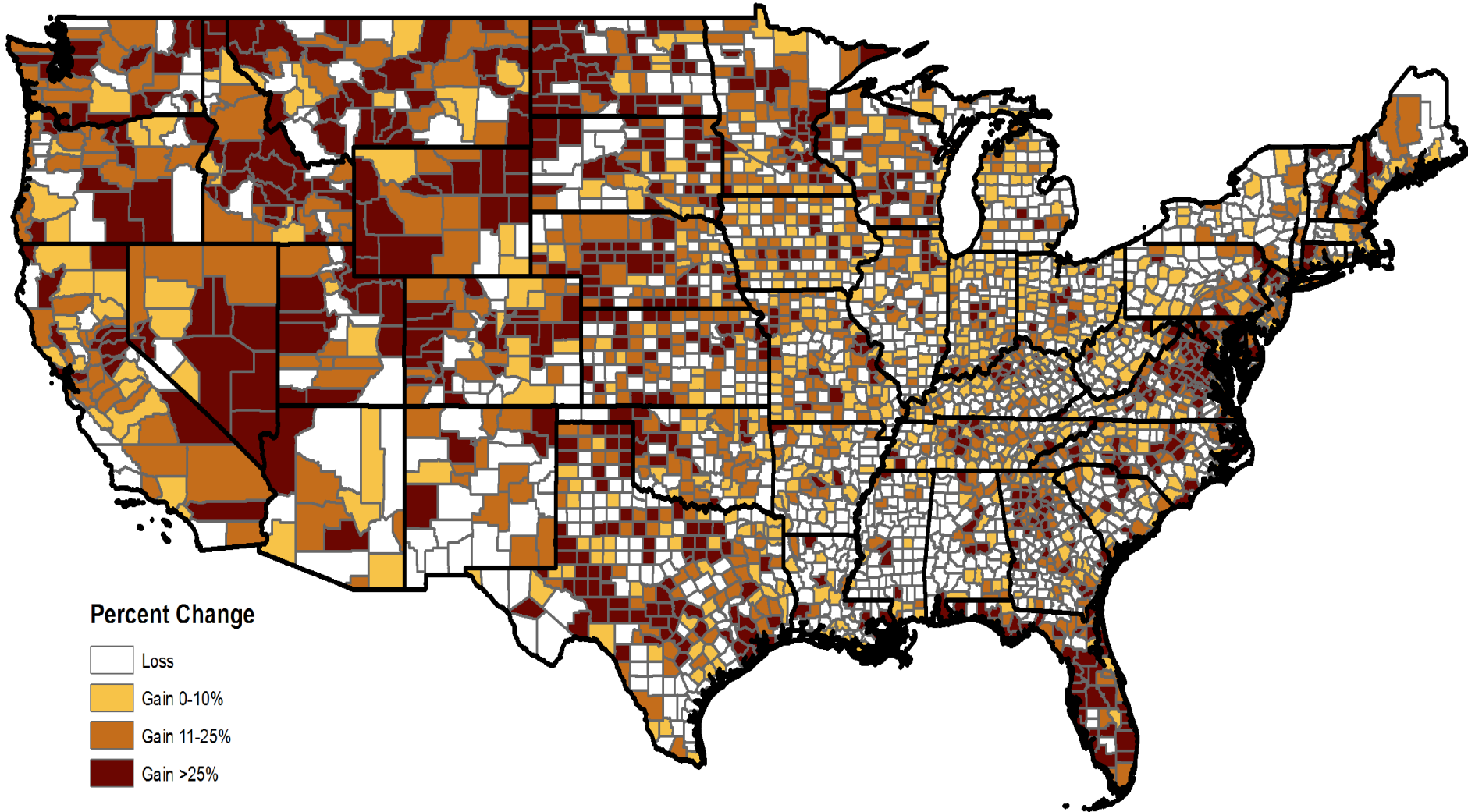
Population Change 2000-2010



Cohort Age 30-34, Percent Change 1990-2000



Cohort Age 30-34, Percent Change 2000-2010



Just because you lose people doesn't mean you lose people of all ages!

The Newcomer Trend

- The growth is primarily in the 30 to 49 age group — this in-migration into rural communities can be just about equal to that of the out-migration of youth — the “Brain Drain”.
- These people are bringing children aged 10-17 with them.
- There is an interchange between core urban, suburban, and rural places.

Newcomers: Why?



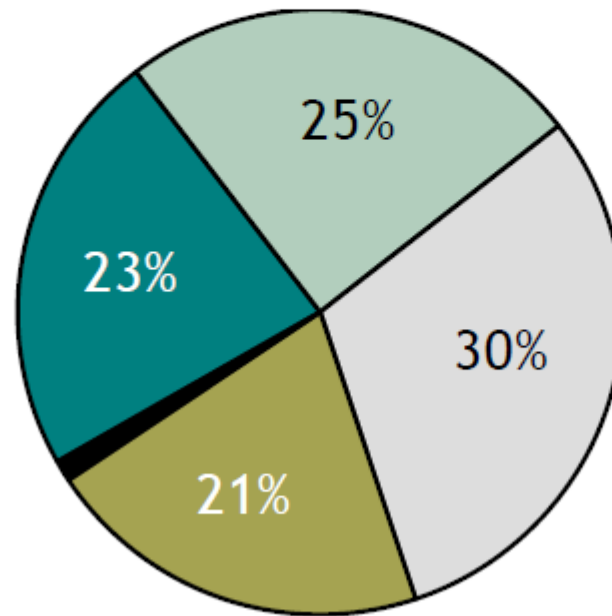
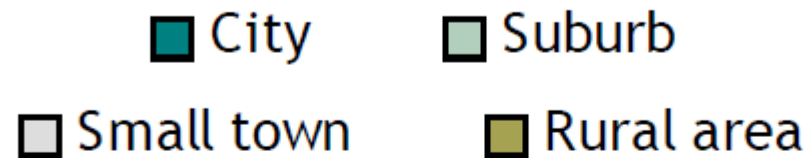


Newcomers: Who?

- 36% lived there previously
- 68% attain bachelors degree
- 67% household incomes over \$50k
- 51% have children in household
- They are generally leaving their career
- Underemployed in current situation
- Yet, Quality of Life is the trump card

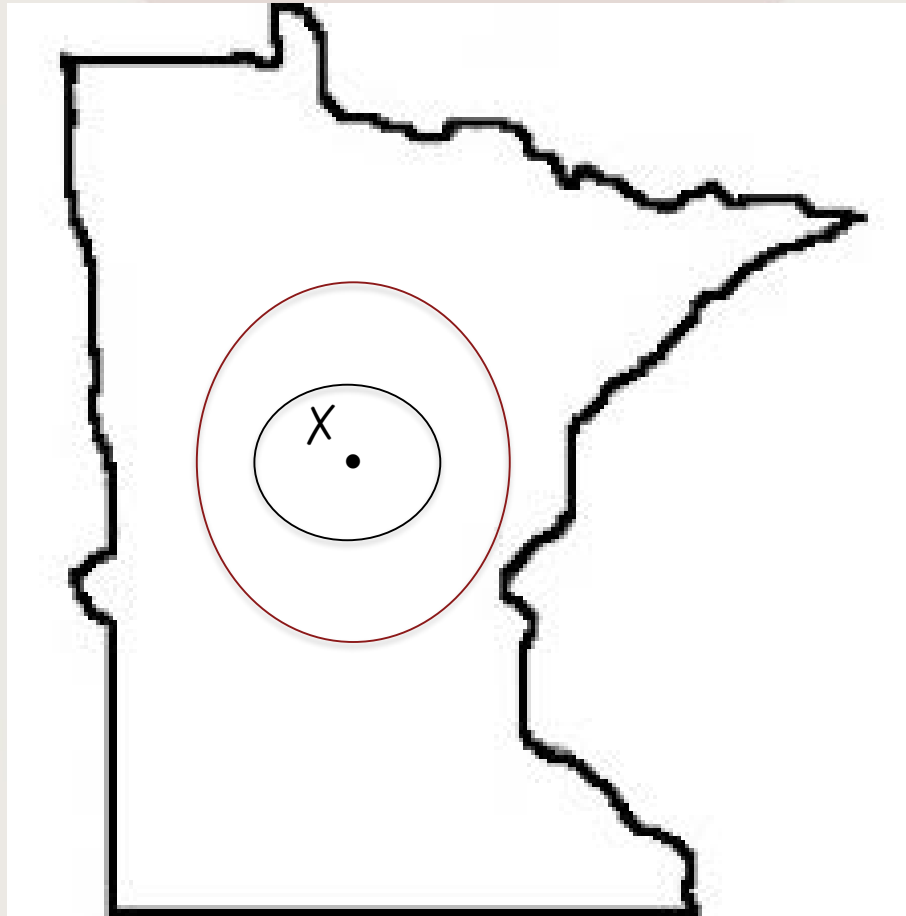
Where We Live and Where We'd Like to Live

by community type



PewResearchCenter

People Recruitment



Rewrite, Not Just Update

- Leads to framing problems by the rural industry, media, and leaders

Rural Populations Continue to Shrink

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- Lack of non-agricultural rural media voice

Mixed Messages

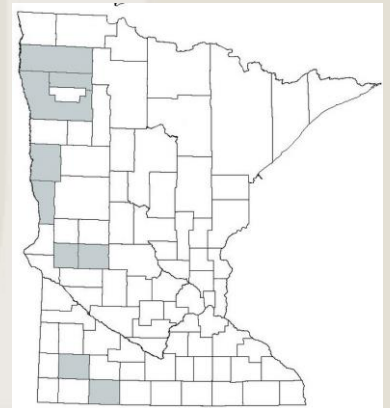


STATE+LOCAL

Urban-rural split in Minnesota grows deeper, wider

“People in the “L” tend to be older per capita than in more populated areas and make less money. More still make their living farming the land or in agriculture-linked activities. Homes and businesses are scattered widely across the landscape and property values are lower, yielding a weaker tax base.”

Rural counties in Minnesota leading economic recovery



The Rural Choice

The bottom line is people WANT to live and move here for **what you are today and will be tomorrow**, not what may have been!



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PART 2: CHANGES IN RURAL MINNESOTA

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Employment

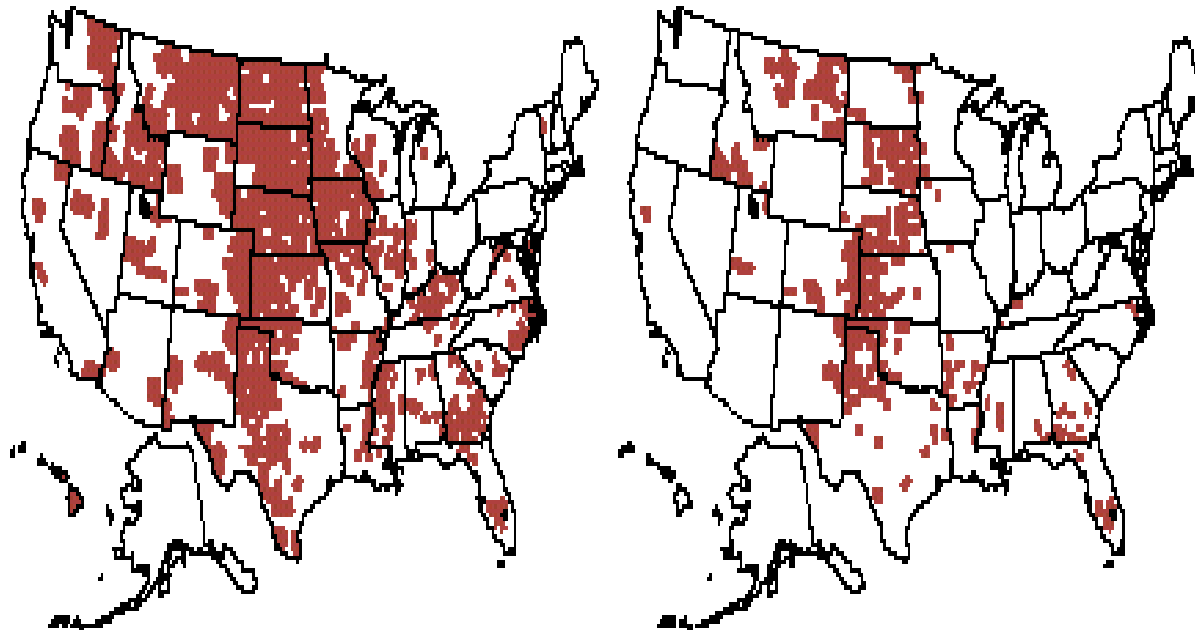
Diversified Rural Economy

Figure 21

Farm Earnings Less Important in Local Economies Now Than 30 Years Ago

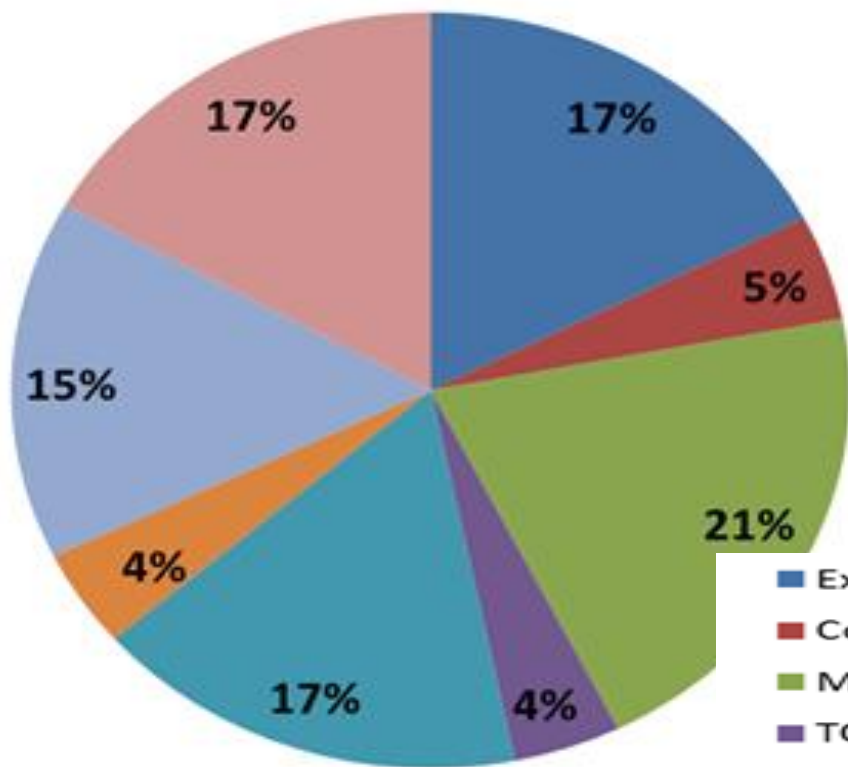
Farming accounted for 20 percent or more of earnings in 877 nonmetro counties in 1969.

By 1999, farming accounted for 20 percent or more of earnings in only 258 nonmetro counties.

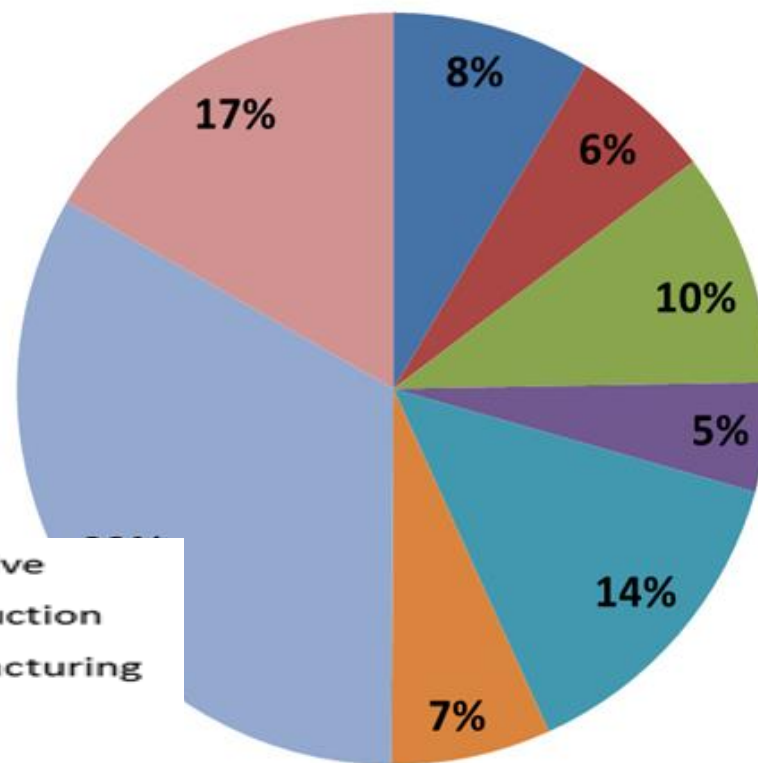


Employment

1969



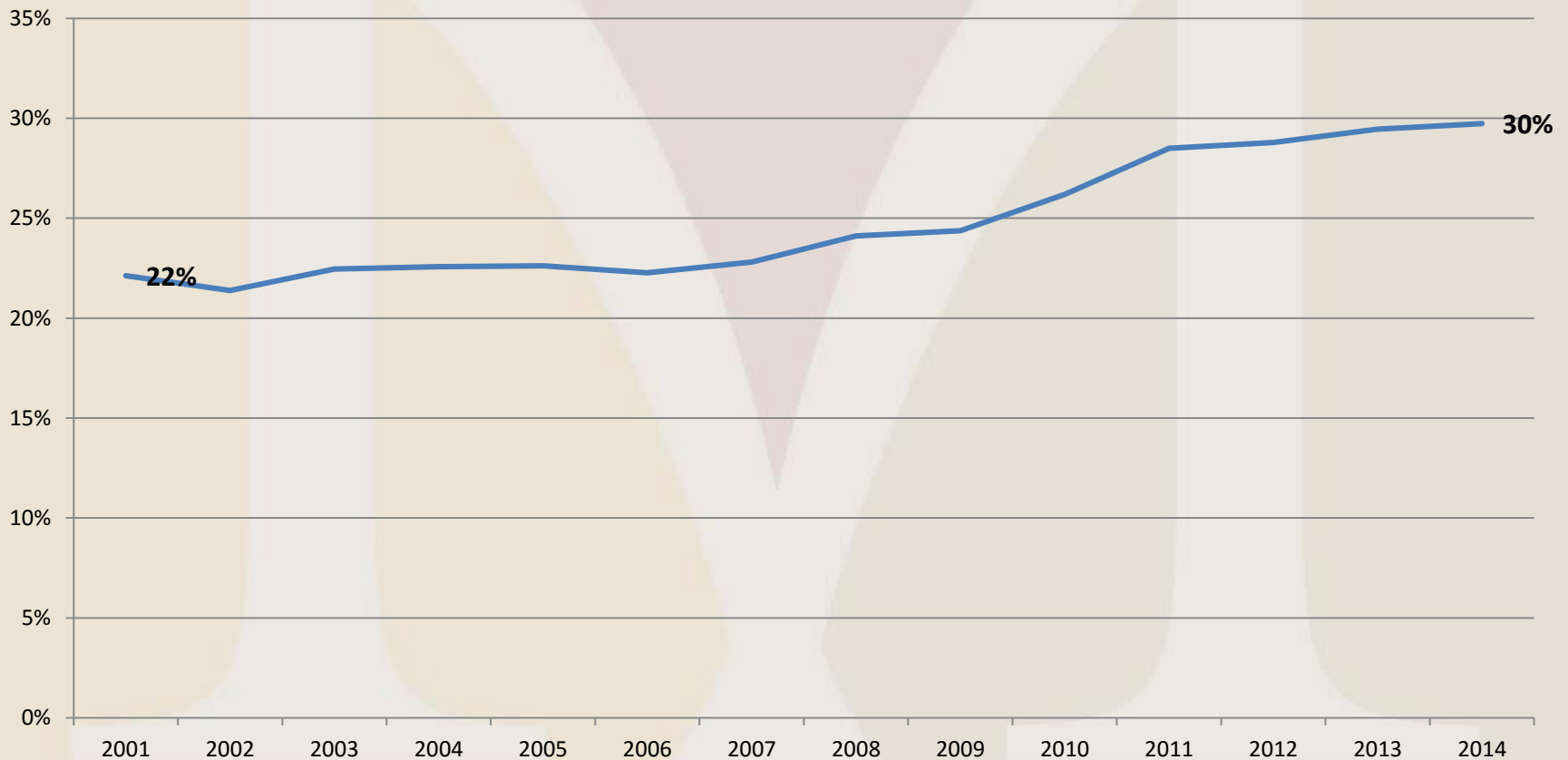
2009



- Extractive
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- TCPU
- Trade
- FIRE
- Services
- Government

Non-farm Proprietors – Big Stone County

Nonfarm Proprietor / Total Employment



% Working from Home

Rank	County	% Workers 16+
1	Rice	13
2	Lincoln	11.8
3	Lac qui Parle	10.9
4	Kittson	10.6
5	Traverse	10
6	Murray	9.4
7	Yellow Medicine	9.2
8	Big Stone	9
9	Nicollet	9
10	Norman	9

Diversified Rural Economy

- High number of proprietors
- 1099 Economy
- Entrepreneurial

Dynamics of the Rural Housing Supply

*Prepare for one of the largest
demographic changes to rural
America since 1930*

% of Owner-Occupied Homes, by Age of Homeowner (2010)

	% Age 45-54	% Age 55-64	% Age 65+	Total Boomer+
1 (urban)	24.5%	21.3%	24.2%	70.1%
2	22.8%	21.8%	27.1%	71.8%
3	22.0%	22.0%	28.5%	72.6%
4	22.2%	22.5%	29.4%	74.1%
5	22.1%	22.7%	28.0%	72.8%
6	21.6%	22.4%	30.7%	74.7%
7	21.5%	22.6%	30.8%	74.9%
8	21.4%	23.0%	32.3%	76.7%
9 (rural)	21.0%	22.9%	33.3%	77.2%
Total	23.4%	21.7%	26.3%	71.5%

Continuum of Residential Dynamics

Supply

Age 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s

Single-Family
Rent

Single-Family
Own

Smaller
Own

Recreation,
Townhouse
Own/rent

Assisted Living

Demand Preferences

Life-Cycle “Stretched Out”

Previous Generations 65+

- Retire
- Selling home
- Moving
- Downsizing

Baby Boomer Generation 70+?

- Retire
- Selling home
- Moving
- Downsizing

Baby Boomer Preferences/Trends

- Most Common Preferences
 1. Age in place
 2. Single-story living
 3. Owning
 4. Working or volunteering

Big Stone County Housing

	2000	2010	% Change
Total housing units	3,171	3,115	-2%
Occupied housing units	2,377	2,293	-4%
Owner-Occupied	2,022	1,848	-9%
Renter-Occupied	355	445	25%
Vacant housing units	794	822	4%
For rent	91	83	-9%
For sale only	114	58	-49%
Rented or sold, not occupied	44	38	-14%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	433	452	4%
Other vacant	112	190	70%

Symposium Theme

Rural Housing: Moving In, Moving Out, and Moving Forward

June 7 – 9th, 2016

University of Minnesota Morris



2016 Big Stone County

LEADERSHIP AND NON-PROFITS

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Per-Capita Leadership Requirements



- Population Over 10,000

6% run for or accepted appointment to public office or lead voluntary organizations

- Population Under 1,000

27% run for or accepted appointment to public office or lead voluntary organizations

(Nebraska Rural Poll, 2004)

Social Life is **Not Dying**

Nonprofit Growth: 2000-2010

- Minnesota gained 7.8% in population and 19.4% in the number of nonprofits.
- Minnesota: The most rural counties experienced a loss of 4.6% in population, yet the number of nonprofits increased 13.8%.

National Center for Charitable Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau

Changing Types of Involvement - The Social Organization (historical)

- Place-based
- Broadly focused
- Word of mouth
- Agricultural base of interests

Green & Haines. 2007. *Asset Building and Community Development*

Changing Types of Involvement - The Social Organization (present)

- Cover wide geographic area
- Narrowly focused goals/
self-interest
- Diverse social interests
- Technological – social media

The people today are challenged in “connecting” with the existing social infrastructure.

Green & Haines. 2007. *Asset Building and Community Development*

Thank you

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