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Susan Pollack and Shelley Pendleton

Nonmetro Unemployment Tied to Major Industry in Regions

Nonmetro unemployment rates have been higher than metro rates since 1979, reversing earlier patterns. Two subsequent national recessions have tended to hurt nonmetro economies more than metro areas, and nonmetro areas have been slower to recover. In 1984, the average annual unemployment rate for nonmetro areas was 8.1 percent, compared with 7.3 percent for metro areas.

Official unemployment statistics tend to underestimate unemployment, especially in nonmetro areas. When rates are adjusted to include those who have given up looking for work, and those who work part-time but want full-time work, metro-nonmetro differences are greater. The 1984 adjusted average annual unemployment rate was 12.2 percent in nonmetro areas compared with 10.4 percent in metro areas. This adjusted rate includes discouraged workers and half of those involuntarily working part-time in addition to those already categorized as unemployed.

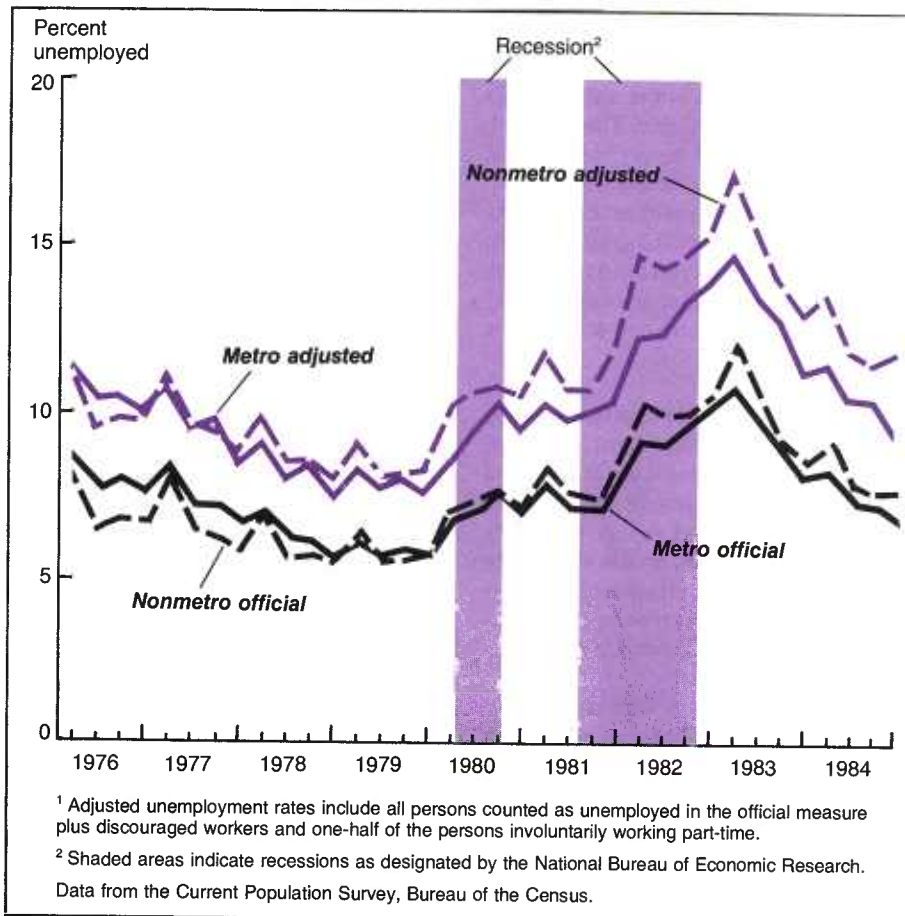
Unemployment rates vary considerably across nonmetro counties. In 1984, a fourth had unemployment rates of 12 percent or more, while a fifth had unemployment rates below 6 percent.

One source of variation in the nonmetro unemployment rates is due to the industrial specialization of nonmetro counties. Lloyd Bender and his associates have categorized nonmetro counties according

to their dependence on agriculture, mining, manufacturing, or other single sources of income. Their county typology helps to explain differences among unemployment rates in nonmetro areas. The map shows 1984 unadjusted unemployment rates of nonmetro counties.

Among areas with chronically high unemployment are many mining dependent areas, notably the mining areas of Michigan, Oregon, and some coal-mining counties of West Virginia and Kentucky. Persistent high rates of unemployment also are found in the manufacturing, timber, and resort areas of the Northern Pacific States and Lake States, where many jobs are available for only a few months of the year. Chronically high unemployment rates are also characteristic of the Indian reservations of the Northern Plains and Southwest and areas with predominantly poor Hispanic or black

Figure 1.
Adjusted Rates¹ Show Unemployment Higher than Official Rates, and Nonmetro Above Metro Rates



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populations in the Southeastern and Delta States as well as Texas and Kentucky.

Nonmetro areas in regions depending heavily on manufacturing and mining had moderate unemployment rates in 1984, ranging between 6 and 12 percent. The decline in manufacturing during the 1981-82 recession played a large part in raising unemployment rates in these areas from the low to moderate range. This was especially evident in the Corn Belt (Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina), and parts of the Appalachian areas (especially Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia).

Although the national unemployment rate was higher in 1984 than in 1979, a few nonmetro areas, mostly in the booming upper Northeast, southern Florida, and eastern Arizona, experienced a reduction in their unemployment rates. Employment in many of these areas depends on the fast-growing service industries or high-technology industries.

Many of the nonmetro counties with less than 6 percent unemployment depend mostly on farming and are located largely in the Northern and Southern Plains States of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Many of these same counties, however, have shown little or no employment growth in recent years and considerable population decline. Unadjusted unemployment rates do not fully reflect the economic hardship in these counties.

For Additional Reading...

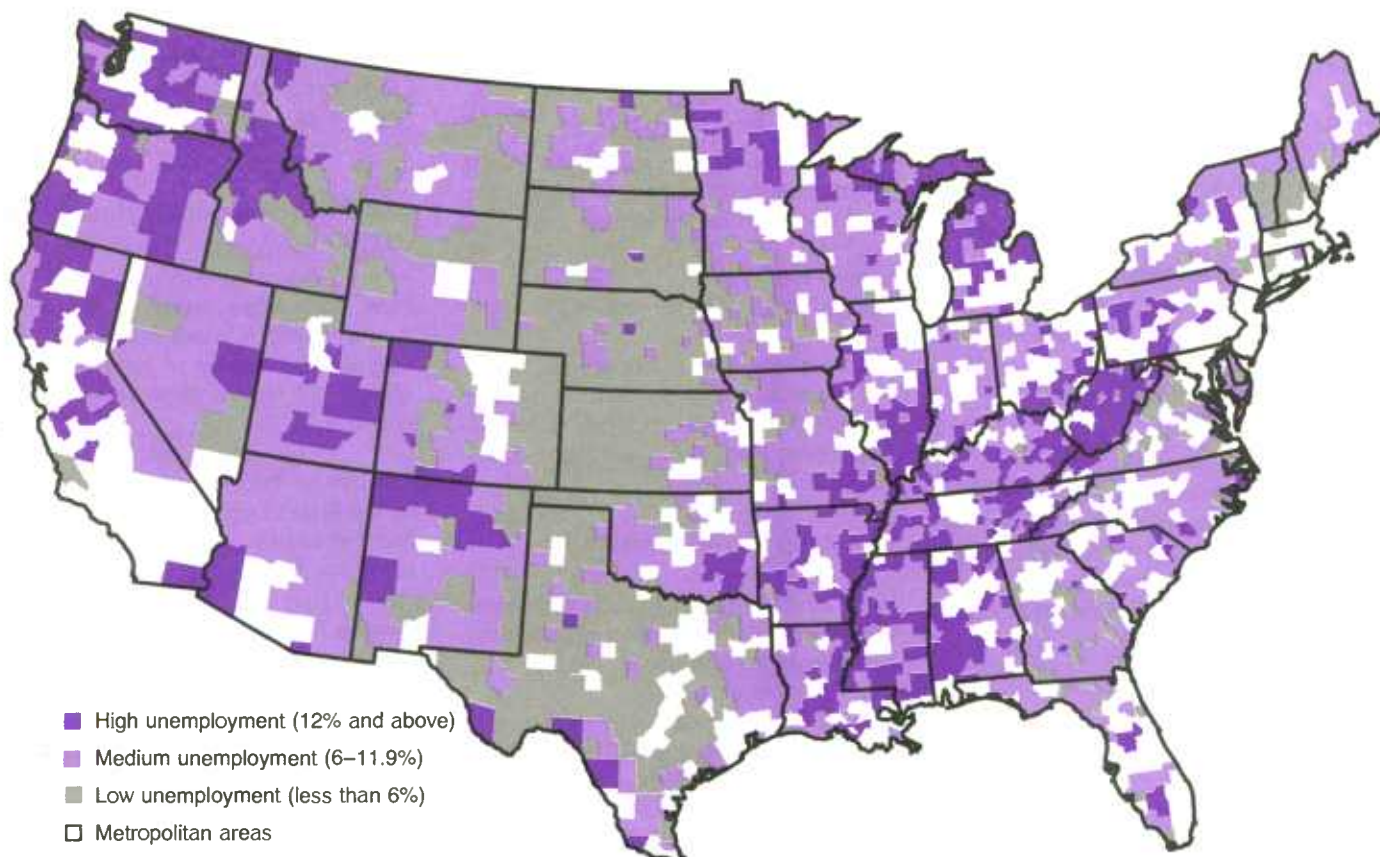
L. Bender, B. Green, T. Hady, J. Kuehn, M. Nelson, L. Perkinson, and P. Ross. *The Diverse Social and Economic Structure of Nonmetropolitan America*, RDRR-49. Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture Oct. 1985.

Sigurd R. Nilsen. *Assessment of Employment and Unemployment Statistics for Nonmetropolitan Areas*, RDRR-18, Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dec. 1979.

Unemployment Statistics Do Not Fully Reflect Unemployment in Nonmetro Areas.

Nonmetro areas have a greater proportion of discouraged workers, those who have given up looking for work, and involuntary part-time workers, those who work part-time but want full-time work, than metro areas. Some possible explanations for the differences are that nonmetro people have a smaller sized labor market in which to search, and as a result, give up searching or settle for part-time work quicker than metro workers. Formal networks, such as State Job Service Agencies can be too far away to be very useful. Nonmetro workers may also be hesitant to apply for unemployment compensation or ineligible to receive unemployment benefits because they had been self-employed. The number of people receiving unemployment compensation is used with survey data to determine official local and State unemployment rates.

Nonmetro unemployment rates reflect diverse economies



Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. We use the 1983 categorization of metro and nonmetro areas based on the 1980 Census.

How To Attract High-Tech Firms

Researchers asked about 1,500 firms what factors were important in determining their business location. Those that follow were "absolutely essential" or "very important," according to more than 40 percent of the firms surveyed.

- Clean physical environment
- Availability of technical personnel
- Absence of drug and alcohol problems in the community
- Quality public school system
- Low traffic congestion
- Knowledgeable bankers friendly to technology-based firms
- Positive policies and attitudes of local government toward industry
- Medical services and facilities
- 1-day service from United Parcel Service and Federal Express
- Housing for management
- Nearby airport for passenger service
- Opportunities for consultation with university people.

For more information, see Daryl Hobbs, "The New Infrastructure: Creating a Climate for Growth," in *The Changing Business Climate*, proceedings of the Southern Growth Policies Board Annual Meeting, 1985.

Creating Employment Opportunities

That's the number one problem facing rural communities today. Many leaders

contend that creating new enterprises is the best way for rural communities to strengthen their economic viability.

An upcoming symposium will bring together experts from the research and extension communities and other organizations interested in rural development to share information and insights on the current state of knowledge and practice on rural entrepreneurship.

Sponsored by USDA's Economic Research Service and Extension Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Farm Foundation, and Regional Rural Development Centers, the symposium will:

- Determine the status of research on entrepreneurship, especially as applied to rural areas, and identify research and data gaps that inhibit development of effective policies to promote entrepreneurship.
- Identify successful extension and other programs supporting rural entrepreneurship.
- Determine the potential for rural entrepreneurship to help in solving the rural and farm family income crisis.

When? February 10-12, 1987
Where? Knoxville, Tennessee

Make reservations by January 19, 1987. For more info, call the Southern Rural Development Center, Box 5446, Mississippi State, MS 39762; telephone (601) 325-3207.

Changing Rural America

What kind of future can rural communities expect? And what kind of rural policies should be proposed?

In this ERS-produced film, Ken Deavers, a rural development expert with USDA, talks with USDA demographer Calvin Beale and other USDA development specialists and Extension Service officials about changing conditions in rural

America and the prospects for rural growth.

They review recent population and economic trends in rural areas and identify types of rural counties that will have very different futures if the trends continue. Their discussions make it clear that the growing competitiveness of the international marketplace is putting strong pressures on rural communities. Those that can adapt to changing economic fortunes can capitalize on the new opportunities. Those that fail to adapt may face futures of stagnation or decline.

The half-hour film is suitable for providing background briefings to policy officials, for presentation in public meetings and conferences, and for classroom use.

Cost is \$25. Make check payable to ERS. Send payment to J. Norman Reid, Rm 324, 1301 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20005-4788; telephone (202) 786-1542. Specify VHS, Beta, or 3/4-inch format.

Rural Development, Empire State Style

New York State enacted into law in August 1986 a broad range of bills to upgrade the quality of rural life there, affecting 3 million New Yorkers in 44 counties.

The bills are the first legislative proposals by the State's Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, which has been in existence for 3 years.

Among the list of accomplishments are creation of:

- An Office of Rural Affairs to coordinate programs and efforts of State agencies to remedy rural problems.
- A Rural Public Transportation Coordination Program to assure minimal levels

of transportation in rural areas. The program will provide financial assistance for new start-ups and expansion of existing systems in rural areas.

- A Local Roads Classification Task Force to develop standards and a classification system for the State's rural roads, based on a road's needs and uses.
- A Health Care Delivery System to promote innovative approaches in delivering quality health care in rural areas.
- Distance Learning in Small Rural Schools to facilitate electronic hookups of interactive two-way computers to bring a wider range of teaching subjects to small schools that could not otherwise afford additional teachers.

For more information, call Ronald C. Brach, executive director of the Commission, at (518) 455-2544.

New Dimensions in Rural Policy

That's the title of a new book by the U.S. Congress. The 580-page book ought to be especially pertinent to our subscribers since the 65 papers cover many of the issues treated in *Rural Development Perspectives*. Topics like employment, agriculture, rural communities, businesses, education, health, the elderly, rural families, infrastructure, local governments, banking, health care, and all the major topics of concern in rural areas today. Most of the papers are fairly short, 7-10 pages.

The book is a product of an ongoing initiative called The Economic Evolution of Rural America, headed by Sen. James Abdnor, vice chairman of the Joint Economic Committee.

Cost is \$16 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402; telephone (202) 783-3238. Stock number 052-070-06151-1.

Library on Rural Business

The Employment/Economic Development Connection: New Tools, New Roles,

New Directions--A Guidebook is designed to help communities develop effective ways of solving employment and economic development problems by forging public-private sector partnerships and linking employment and economic development activities. The guidebook is directed to practitioners at both the policy and program levels. Includes step-by-step suggestions for developing and implementing a linkage strategy illustrated by brief case studies showing different ways communities have used the strategy to deal with plant closings, to link employment to downtown development, to attract industrial development, or to create jobs by promoting new and small businesses. Written by the National Alliance of Business and SRI International, the guidebook costs \$15 from NAB Clearinghouse, 1015 15th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20005.

Great Downtown Events: How to Build Crowds and Boost Business describes examples of successful events conducted in downtowns. From sidewalk sales and block parties to ethnic festivals and new construction celebrations, the guidebook provides how-to information on staging a variety of programs. Cost: \$39.50 plus \$3.50 postage and handling. Send to Downtown Research and Development Center, 1133 Broadway, Suite 1407, New York, NY 10010.

Guide to Innovation Resources and Planning for the Smaller Businesses identifies a wide range of resources, (Federal, State, private) available to assist smaller business in areas such as financing, information gathering, and management. The capabilities of these resources are summarized and phone numbers and addresses given. Intended for individual companies as well as State and local government economic development planners, the book is available from Oklahoma Extension Technology Transfer Center, 1515 W. Main. P.O. Box 1713, Durant OK 74702-1713, (405) 920-0132.

Fundamentals of Business is an instructor's guide, designed especially for rural communities, that provides business management training for operators of small independent firms. The manual is divided into 10 workshops that can be conducted with retail merchants in small communities. It provides teaching outlines, overheads, handout materials,

lecture notes, resource lists, slide sets, and discussion material for 10 topics essential to good business management. Topics include customer relations, developing a business plan, forecasting profits and cash flow, time management, visual merchandising, computer use in business, financing a business, analyzing a market, personnel management, and starting a new business. The manual can be purchased with or without the slide sets. Price for both manual and slides is \$40; for manual alone, \$20. Write to Southern Rural Development Center, Box 5406, Mississippi State, MS 39762; telephone (601) 325-3207.

Planning a Community Center contains guidelines for organizing a community center, including how to attract extensive citizen participation, maximize the facility's use, and keep costs to a minimum. Available for \$1.40 from Publications Distribution, Iowa State University, Ames IA 50011.

Rural Poverty and Nutrition

The most recent count shows more than 13.5 million poor people in rural America. That's more than in urban areas, and, according to a troubling new book, the rural poor are far more nutritionally at risk.

Rising Poverty, Declining Health: The Nutritional Status of the Rural Poor, the result of a year-long study supported by the Ford Foundation, finds the rural poor underfed, malnourished, and in poor health. The rural poor have inadequate intake of calcium, iron, vitamins A and C, and zinc, and tend to have stunted growth, low birthweights, and high levels of infant mortality. The book claims that the rural poor show these nutritional inadequacies far more than do urban poor.

Some of the nutritional inadequacies among the rural poor vary by region and race. Southern rural poor had the highest prevalence of abnormally low nutrient levels, for example, and nonwhites had higher rates of obesity than whites.

Cost is \$10 from Public Voice for Food and Health Policy, Suite 522, 1001 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036; telephone (202) 659-5930.

THE IMPACT OF POPULATION CHANGE ON BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN RURAL AMERICA

Kenneth M. Johnson. Boulder, Col., Westview Press, 1985. 180 pages, \$29.50.

Reviewed by Linda L. Swanson

Rural America's population revival of the 1970's now appears to be over in many areas. But the author of this book claims that its effects will continue because more young adults are now living in rural (or nonmetro) areas than before, and their children will add further to the nonmetro population. Businesses have already responded to the expanded nonmetro market, and businesses tend to resist contracting even when population declines. Johnson, therefore, makes a convincing case that nonmetro business activity will not necessarily fall off in step with a population slowdown.

Though sponsored by the Rural Sociological Society, a primarily academic organization, this book (at least the second half) has a sharper "business survival" perspective than is usually found in academic publications. Johnson, who is both a professor and a demographic consultant for large corporations, opens with an explanation of how his research differs from others': he treats population change as a primary cause of shifts in the business structure of rural nonmetro areas, rather than as a result of this and other factors.

The discussion of historical population trends (chapter 2) suffers from its reliance on an eight-category grouping of counties according to their pattern of population gain or loss from 1930-70. The categories' lack of intuitive appeal makes it difficult for anyone but a dedicated demographer to read about their median size and decade-by-decade change.

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The categorization persists throughout the book, but only in this chapter does it seem to weigh down the discussion. The rest of the chapter provides a good historical background, with interesting interpretations of the historical role of the black population and the changing relative roles of net migration and natural increase in nonmetro population shifts.

Johnson makes a crucial point about the relationship between population change and business activity. His analysis of 1930-70 data shows that increases in retail sales and services were highest in nonmetro counties with population gains and the effect was intensified the longer the period of gain. In declining counties, particularly where a period of growth preceded decline in the 40-year period, sales and receipts did not decline as one might have expected, but simply increased at a slower pace than in the consistently growing counties. Although income rose in nonmetro areas, that fact alone could not account for the health of business in the face of population decline. Johnson reasons that the anomaly is consistent with the ecological theory stating that system change is irreversible; if a growing unit contracts, it does so through a different process. The idea that business activity is in some way self-perpetuating is an important consideration when forecasting the stability of nonmetro communities.

Johnson enhances his analysis by dividing business activity into specific parts and examining the direct and indirect effects of population change on retail sales and service receipts, number of establishments, and employment. He shows that population shifts affect retail sales and service receipts directly; the number of establishments directly, as well as indirectly through sales; and employment only indirectly, through sales and the number of establishments. This kind of domino effect is important to keep in mind in considering the nature of business activity inertia in response to population shifts. The diagrams and text

discussion make the results clear even for those unfamiliar with the statistical technique of path analysis.

The last part of the book, dealing with the effect of the 1970's population turnaround, provides a good discussion of the changing nonmetro business climate. The market has become more favorable to retail and service enterprises in sparsely populated areas, Johnson says, because of the increasing proportion of nonagricultural people, the rising influence of the media on consumption attitudes, improvements in transportation, and the willingness of nonmetro people to travel greater distances than metro people to buy particular goods. For these reasons, as well as because of the saturation of the metro market, more large chains are now catering to the nonmetro market and finding it profitable. Nonmetro areas have become viable new markets that no longer need to live in the shadow of a metro area to survive.

BEYOND OIL: THE THREAT TO FOOD AND FUEL IN THE COMING DECADES

by John Gever, Robert Kaufman, David Skole, and Charles Vorsmarty. A Project of Carrying Capacity, Inc. Ballinger Publishing Co., Cambridge, MA 1985. 304 pages. \$34.95, hardcover; \$14.95, paperback.

Reviewed by Thomas A. Stucker

One danger in publishing a textbook about a single commodity is that the lead time for research, writing, and publishing will cause a book to appear after the peak in its topic's interest. That may have happened here. Although this book is interesting, it captures perfectly the thinking popular in the 1970's. But, as it came off press, we were already in the midst of a

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relative oil glut with oil prices at their lowest levels in a decade.

The authors attempted to add some objectivity (and therefore credibility) to their conclusions by using a computer model to generate their results. But those who have worked with computer-generated simulation models know the frailty of engineering-estimated inputs and relationships on which model results are based. In this case, the model structure also may be faulted for not realistically simulating action of the price mechanism and market. However, these shortcomings are at least partly offset by the presentation of some interesting ideas about energy and resource use in a well-organized presentation.

The publishers describe *Beyond Oil* as an attempt to "...use computer models to examine our declining resource base and the dynamics of energy efficiency, past, present, and future, to the year 2025." The declining resource base (at a pre-1973 pace) is certainly examined, but the book falls short of accurately assessing the dynamics of energy efficiency, past, present, and future. Some revealing statements show this to be true.

For example, one of the primary findings of the study, the authors claim, is that "...around the turn of the new century we will use more energy exploring for oil than we gain from it" (p. xxvii). But if oil exploration entails using oil and gasoline to locate oil sources of less total value, then, barring any subsidies of oil exploration, simple economics will prevent this from happening. A freely functioning market system will ensure that no firm spends more than it earns in the search for oil.

Another result is that, "by the second decade [of the 21st century]...U.S. farmers...could find energy so unaffordable that we would cease being a net exporter of agricultural products" (p. xxvii). But U.S. farmers will be no more affected by high fuel prices than farmers elsewhere. If U.S. farmers face high fuel costs, so will other producers. Differences in production costs will still be closely linked to other inputs, such as land and marketing infrastructure.

The authors also foresee the decline of agriculture as we know it. "Modern industrial agriculture is inextricably tied to oil; it has flourished and it will decline in step

with oil production" (p. xxx). However, they redeem themselves with the observation that, "technology seems to help us take resources from the past and future to increase present consumption" (p. xxx). That will no doubt hold in the future as well as now.

The view that oil will become increasingly scarce without any replacement technologies is an extremely narrow one. Some futurists hold that as much technological progress will be made in the remainder of this century as was made in the century up to this time. If actual progress falls somewhere between the extremes of no progress or great progress, the model results based on no progress expounded in this book will be drastically off the mark.

While the text goes into great detail regarding carrying capacity (number of individuals of a species that can be supported in a sustainable way in a particular region), technological advance, and population growth, the authors sum up their case early on: "Over the last fifty years, we have made serious inroads into the supply of many of our high-quality fuels and other natural resources. As a result, perhaps the most important hypothesis of this book is that: The supply of fuels and other natural resources is becoming the limiting factor constraining the rate of economic growth" (p. 9).

But then they lapse back into a more questionable rationale for socioeconomic events. "The technology exists for putting moving sidewalks in cities or building extremely lightweight cars from exotic alloys, but society has decided that the energy and material needed to implement this technical knowhow are needed elsewhere. We simply don't have the resources to do everything we know how to do or would like to do" (p. 9).

Society as a group "decides" what activities to pursue through the market, or price, system (in combination with political constraints). This should be noted explicitly, not left for the reader to infer—the reader might misunderstand or misinterpret how this "decision" takes place. The method is as important as the result because the same concept applies to the search for and development of alternative technologies to fossil fuels. The market system offers the incentive for development of different fuels or even entirely new technologies.

The book, then, is an entertaining grab-bag of ideas and history. Its major weak point, alas, appears to be its purpose for being: The projections of energy availability (to agriculture) over the next 40 years and the impending threat (if any) to food and fuel.

RESOURCE COMMUNITIES: A DECADE OF DISRUPTION

D. Detomasi and John W. Gartrell, eds. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984. 193 pages. \$22.50.

Reviewed by Mike D. Woods

The current glut in the international oil market has put many energy developments, like those described in the book, on hold. This fortuitous pause may give researchers and practitioners an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned concerning the impact of such projects on rural communities. For if supply and demand factors behave as many expect, we will have many future opportunities to grapple with the issues addressed here.

The 11 papers that make up this book are the result of the Second International Conference on Energy Resource Communities held in Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, in 1982. The papers survey the state of the art regarding impact assessment and review current literature regarding problems, issues, and opportunities confronting communities with large-scale energy projects. The papers represent the experiences and points of view of scholars from four nations: Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The articles address topics like: public facility and service provision; changes in economic structure and employment opportunities; income distribution effects; social consequences of rapid growth; impacts on indigenous people; offshore oil activity and community impacts; the systems approach to impact management; and phasing and timing of projects.

Ira M. Robinson presents an excellent overview of resource towns, using Canadian frontier towns as examples. Special problems confronting these resource

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towns include instability (and impermanence), unbalanced demographic structures, isolation of workers and their families from other people, provision of adequate housing, and planning and providing community services such as water and sewer systems. There are no easy solutions to these problems but the paper provides a good starting point for the discussion to come.

Branch, Hooper, and Moore continue this line of thought in a discussion of decision-making under uncertainty. If community expectations are too high regarding anticipated growth, too many public works may be undertaken. On the other hand, if expectations are too low, the community will be continually playing "catch-up" in providing services. This is a problem almost all communities face but one greatly magnified with the rapid growth of resource communities. Branch, Hooper, and Moore note local decisionmakers often experienced problems in collecting, developing, and using information regarding the impact in question. The forecasts and analyses were often inaccessible because of cost, complexity, or sponsorship of the study.

Pulver, Selvik, and Shaffer, reviewing the impact of major economic developments on community income distribution, find that total personal and per capita income generally increase. There are fewer

studies concerned with the question of income distribution (who gains and who loses). A general finding is that the in-migrants experience much of the income gain, especially during the construction phase of the project. Some local residents gain, others are worse off. "The elderly, female heads of households, and those who remain unemployed are most commonly affected adversely" (page 82).

Gartrell, Krahn, and Trytten review the literature concerned with the social consequences of rapid growth. Several Canadian examples emphasize the problems cited in the literature: family breakdown, conflict of lifelong residents with in-migrants, crime, stress, and other impacts on quality of life. Noting a tendency in the literature to criticize the absence of sociological analysis while contributing none (page 93), Gartrell, Krahn, and Trytten offer a research agenda concerned with occupation, status level, and changes in class structure in impacted communities. For research to be meaningful, the authors note, changes over time should be emphasized.

Hobart reviews the impact of resource development projects on the native people where the project occurs, specifically the Eskimo population in northern Canada. The primary concern addressed is allowing the native residents to participate in economic gains from the project while

minimizing cultural shock or clash. Three alternatives are reviewed: have the work site in the home community, relocate the work site (for example, move the native people to a company town to be employed by the industry), and finally, rotate employment (allow workers to alternate between home and work site). The rotation alternative was found to be most desirable for short periods (less than 3 weeks). Rotation allowed the native people to maintain their traditional community and culture while enjoying some economic gain from the development. An interesting topic, but the lessons learned seem not to be transferrable to situations in other countries.

The book includes discussions of many issues facing resource communities undergoing rapid change. The authors have done a good job reviewing and reporting the relevant literature. The book lists over 300 citations from the various papers. This list alone will help the researcher or practitioner interested in the topic. A limitation that detracts from the book is that several citations listed in individual papers are not included in the bibliographies (example, House, 1981, p. 175). This, however, is a minor flaw in an excellent book reviewing special issues facing resource communities. For the reader interested in energy resource development and impact analysis, the issues are well summarized and documented.

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