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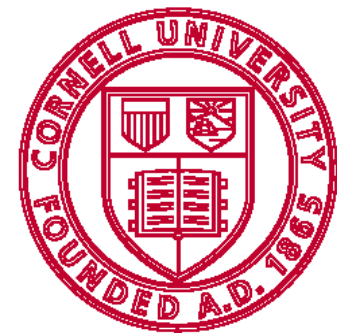
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# Rural Aging in the United States: Challenges and Opportunities

Nina Glasgow  
Cornell University

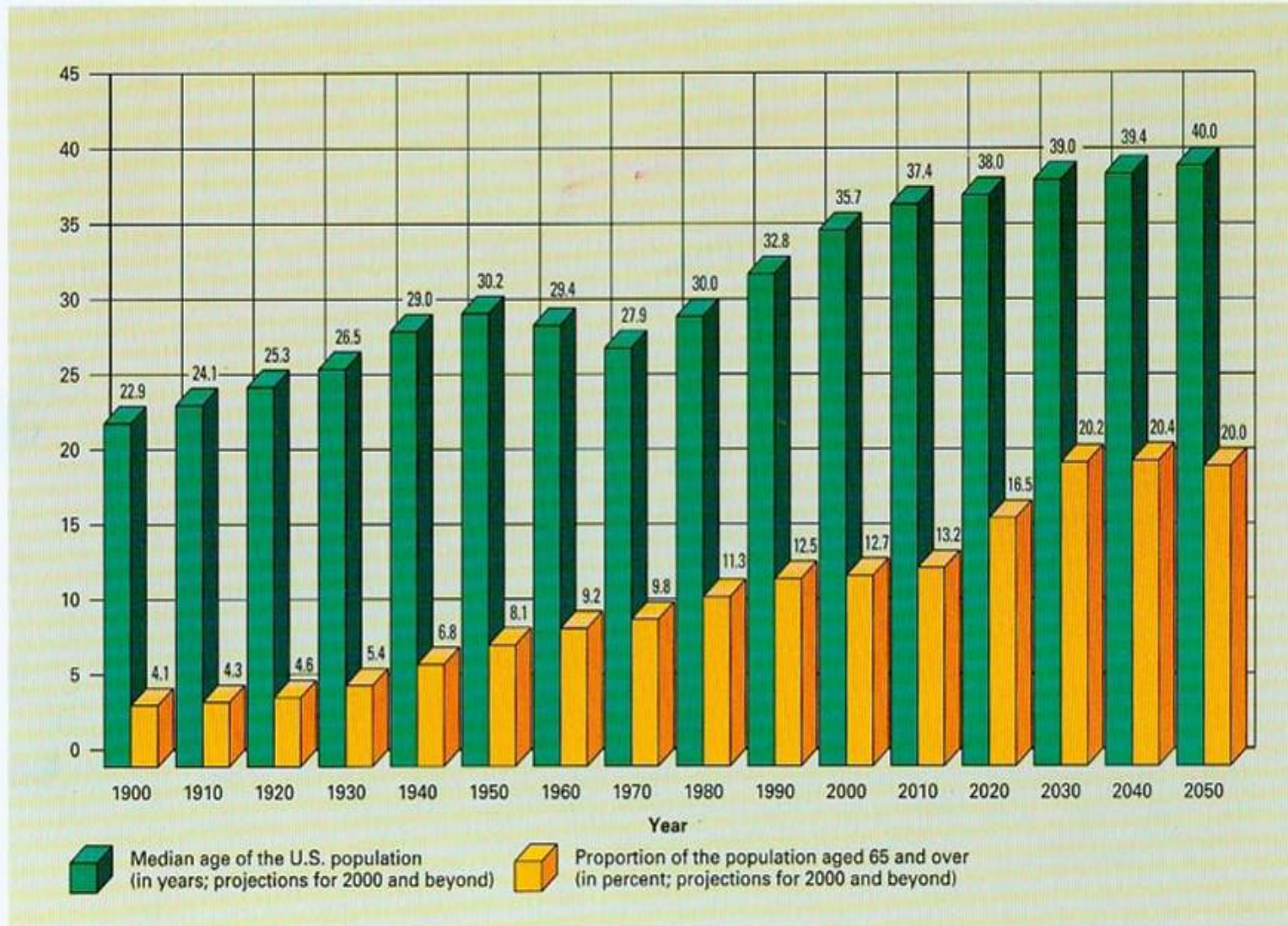
*USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum  
Changing Demography of Rural America  
February 21, 2008*



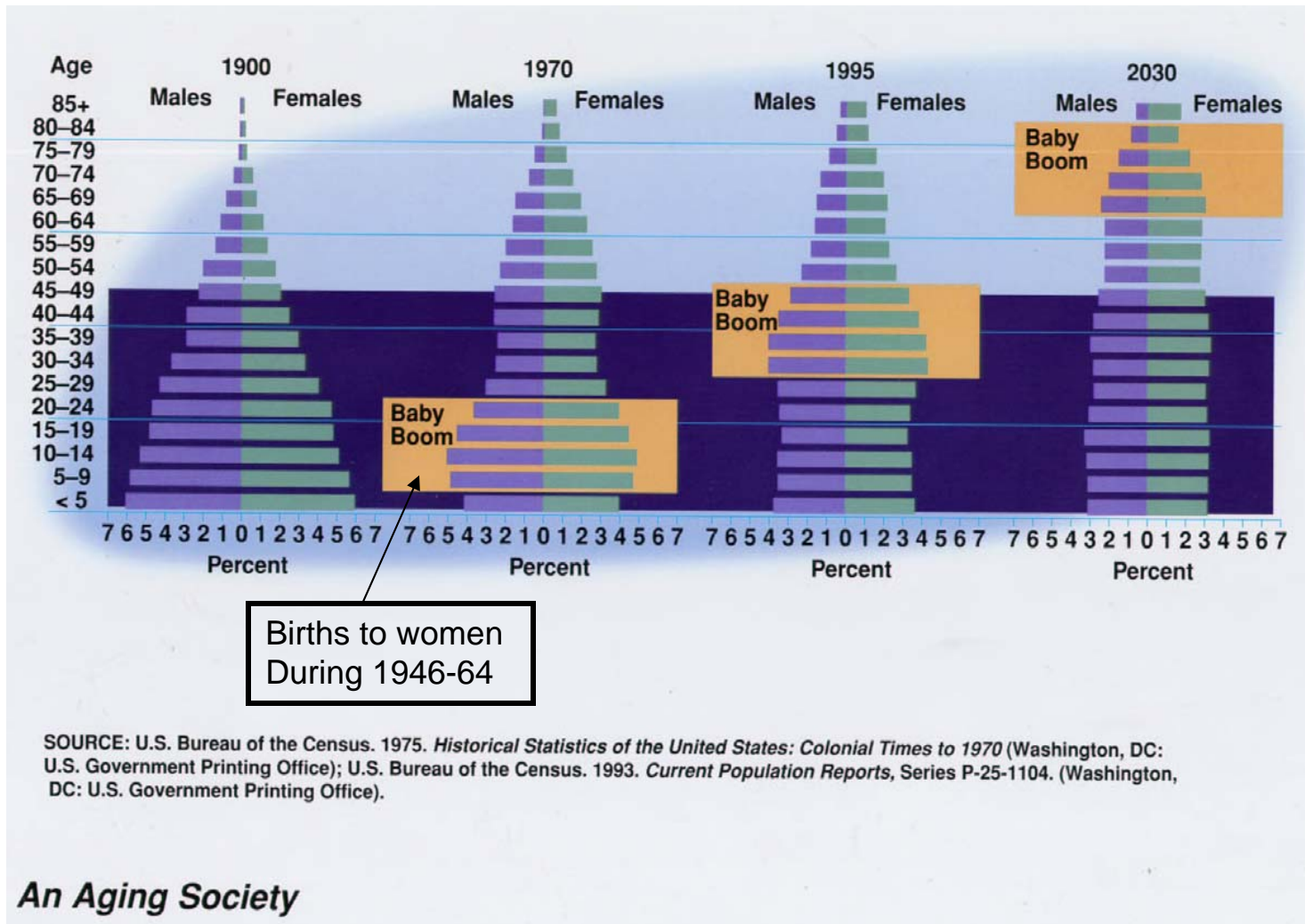
# What I Plan To Do Today

- Describe population aging in the US
- Compare population aging in rural vs urban areas
- Compare the geographic situations of older rural persons
  - retirement destination communities
  - natural decrease communities
- Identify challenges and opportunities associated with rural ageing

# The Graying of U.S. Society



# Aging of the Baby Boom



# Aging of the Baby Boom

Year	Millions age 60-64	% change since 2000	Year When Born	Baby Boom
2000	10.8m	NA	1936-40	No
2005	12.8m	19%	1941-45	No
2010	16.3m	51%	1946-50	YES
2015	18.5m	71%	1951-55	YES
2020	20.7m	92%	1956-60	YES
2025	20.8m	93%	1961-65	YES

U.S. Census

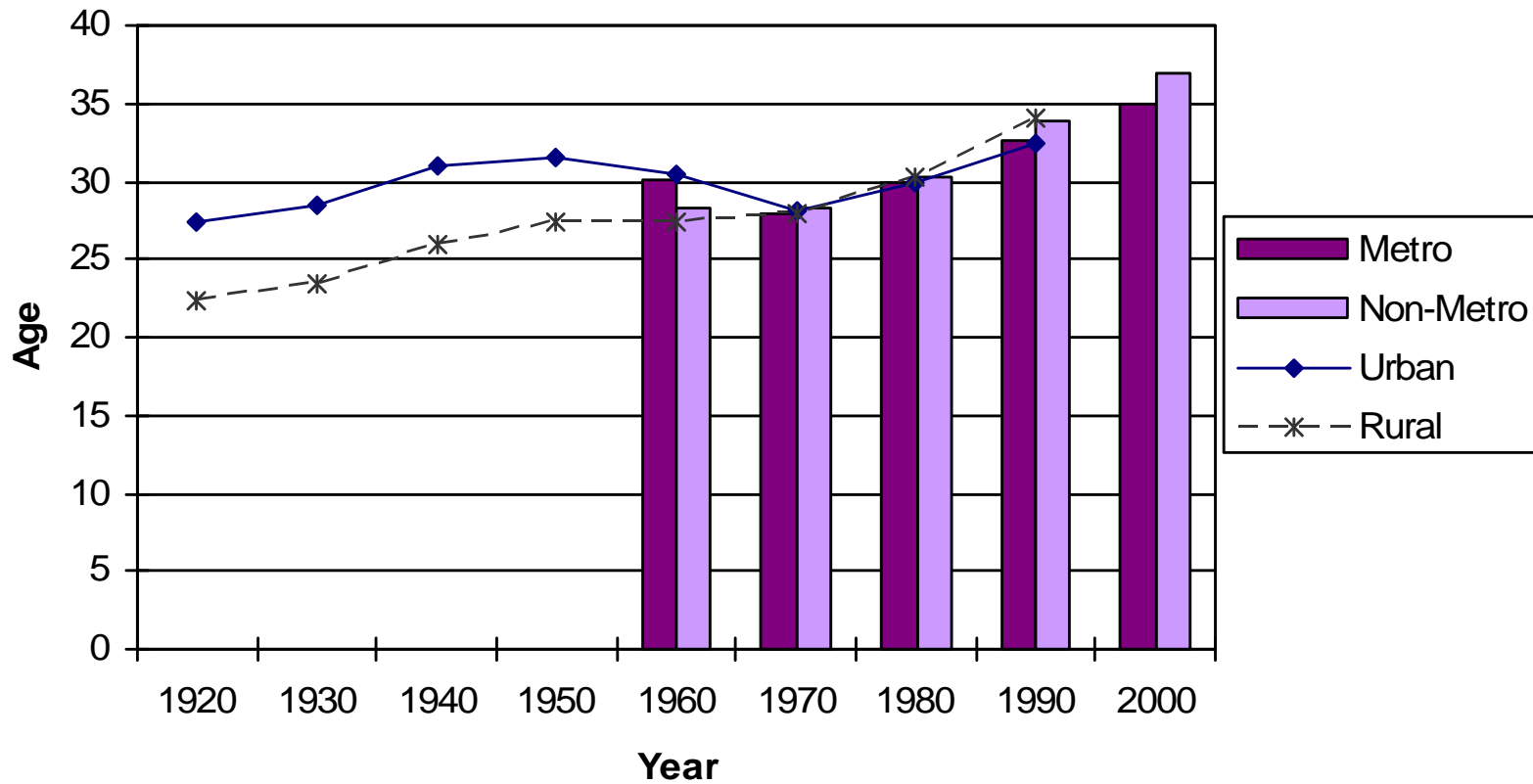
# Rural Aging, 2000

	Metro	Nonmetro
Shares of nation's population	78	22
Shares of nation's aged population	74	26
Pct 65+	12	15
Pct 85+	1	2

# MEDIAN AGE, 1920 TO 2000

Figure 2. Median Age 1920 and 2000

Rural Median Age	
1970	2000
28.1	37.0





# Contrasting Geographic Situations of Rural Older Populations

- Rural Retirement Destinations
  - Opportunities
  - Challenges
- Natural Decrease Areas
  - Challenges

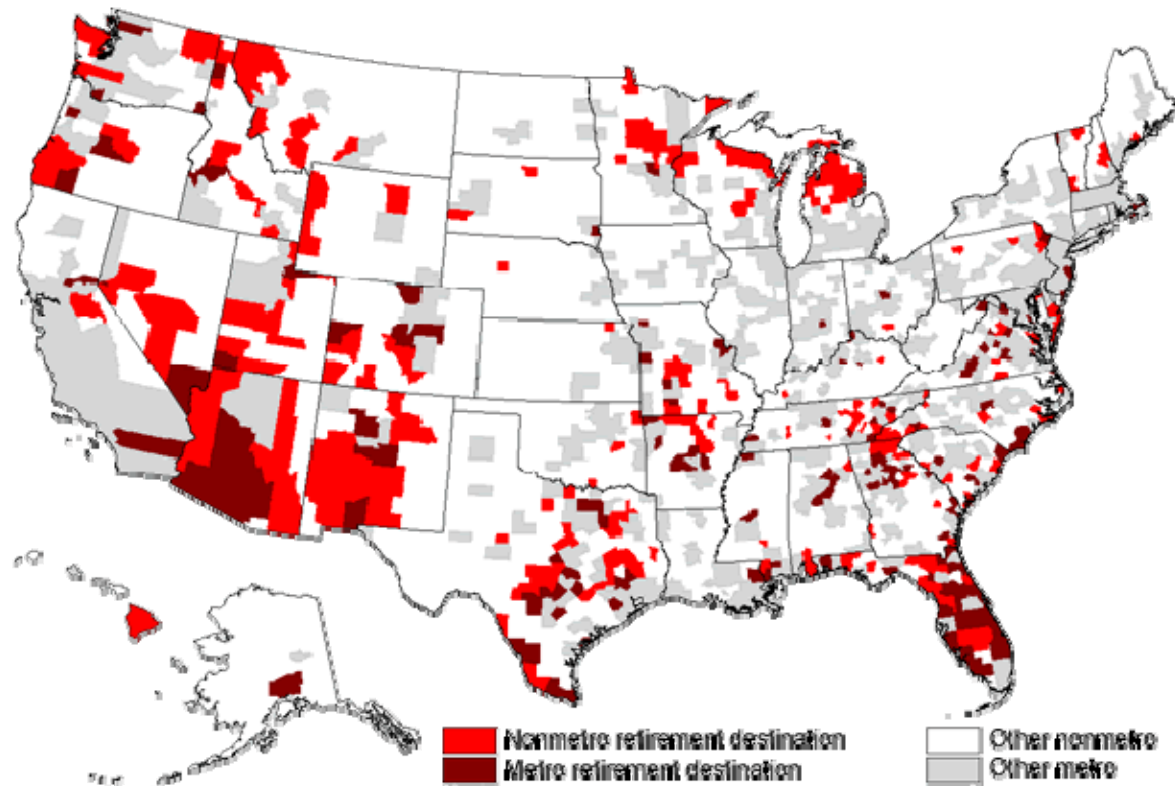
# RURAL RETIREMENT DESTINATIONS

# Retirement Destinations Are Not All in the South and Southwest

Retirement destination counties, 2000

Where will baby boom retirees live?

\*\* More rural retirement destinations?



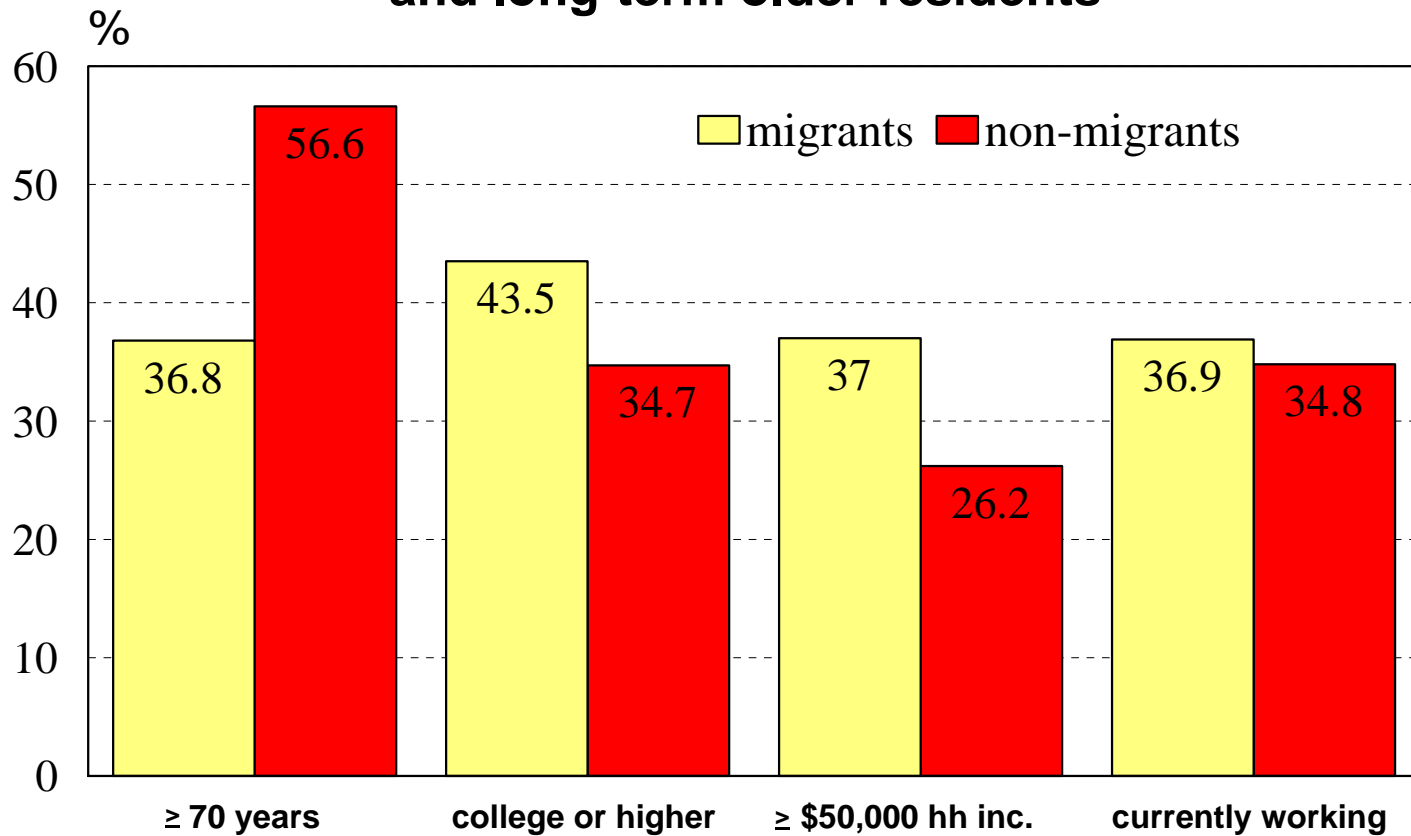
Retirement destination counties—number of residents 60 and older grew by 15 percent or more between 1990 and 2000 due to immigration.

Source: Economic Research Service, USDA.

# Comparative Profile of Rural Retirement Destinations & Other Rural Areas

	Retirement counties (n=274)		Non-retirement counties (n=2115)		
	1990	2000	1990	2000	
Percent of Population	Under 20	27.4	25.9	30.2	28.5
	20-64	54.8	56.3	54.1	56.1
	65+	17.9	17.2	15.7	15.8
Median per capita income, 1999 (USD)	11,266	17,263	10,187	16,008	
Median household income, 1999 (USD)	22,569	33,203	21,643	31,838	
Percent below poverty level	16.1	13.9	18	15.2	
Percent of population 5+ years lived in a different county in 1985; 1995	27.1	22.9	18.2	17.1	
Percent of population change 1990-2000	25.2		4.7		

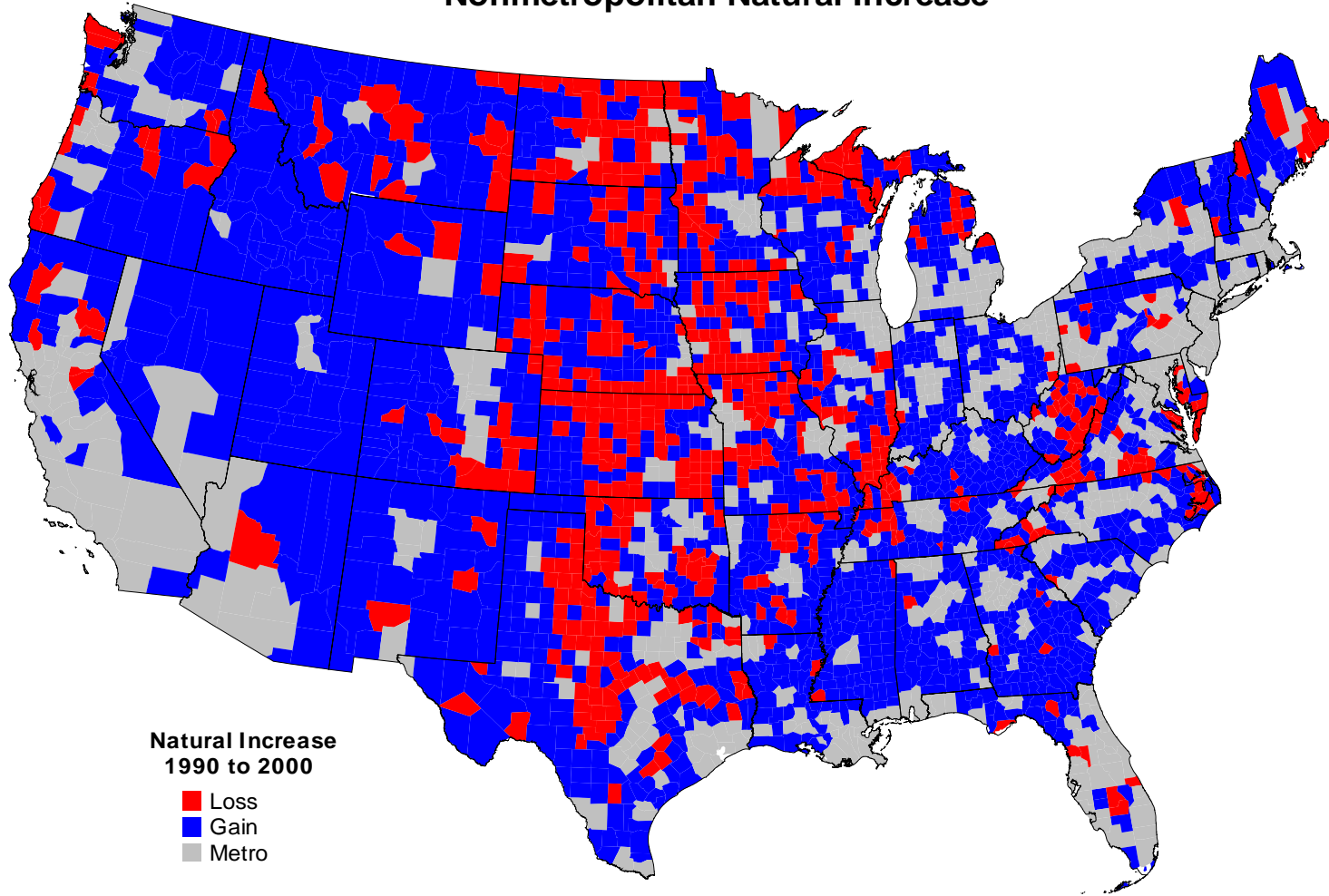
**Figure 2a. Comparative profile of migrants and long-term older residents**



Source: Cornell Retirement Migration Survey, 2003

# NATURAL DECREASE AREAS

## Nonmetropolitan Natural Increase



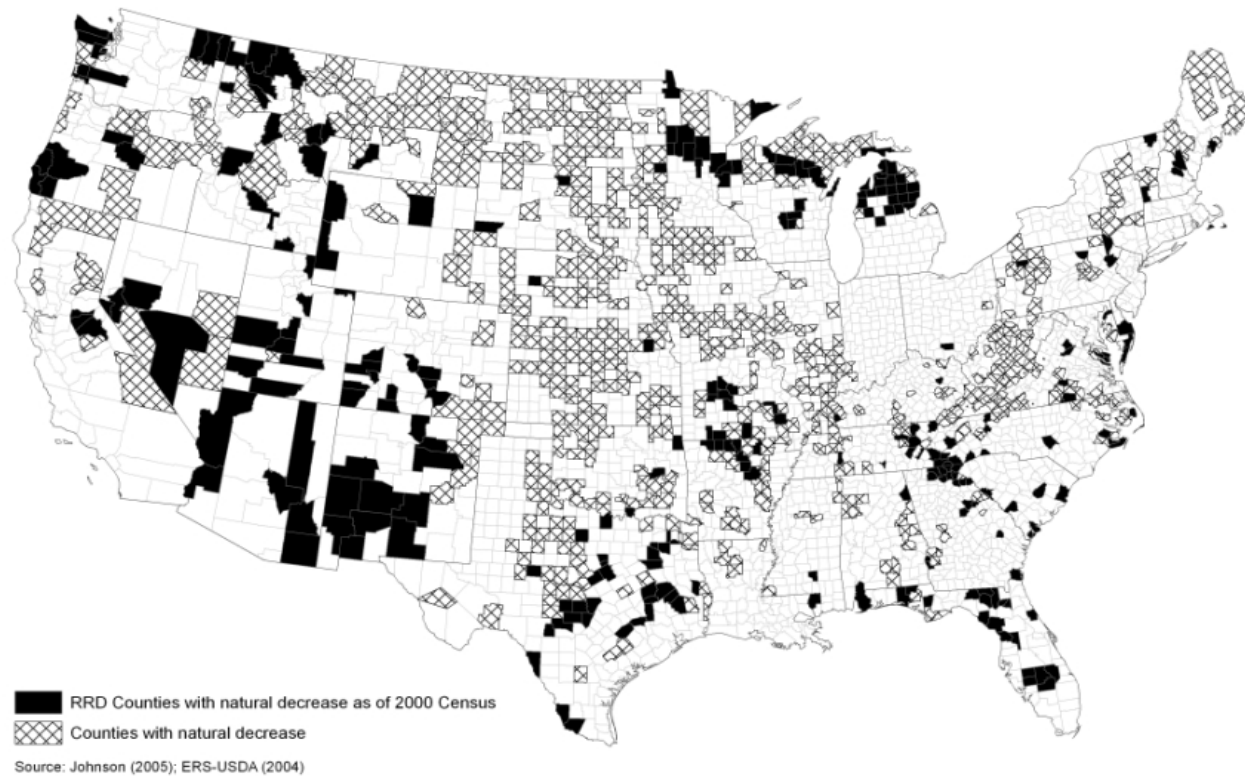
**Natural Increase  
1990 to 2000**

- Loss
- Gain
- Metro

K.M. Johnson, Loyola Univ-Chicago

Data from FSCPE Estimates

# Overlap of Retirement Migration and Natural Decrease Counties





# Challenges and Opportunities of Rural Aging

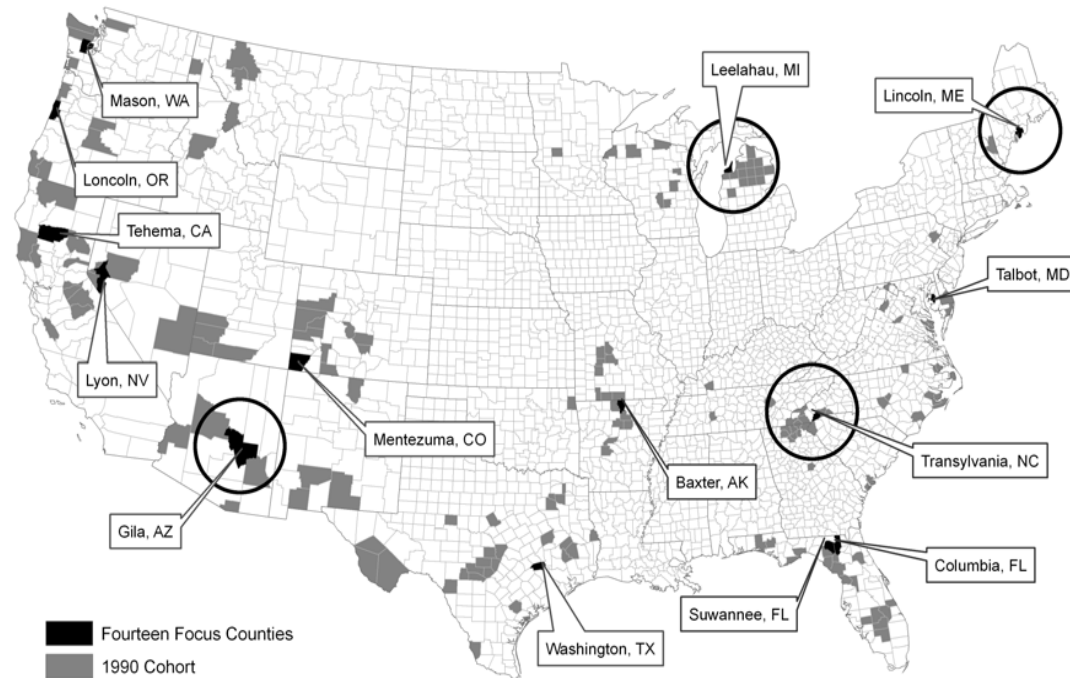
- Challenges
  - Compared with their urban counter parts, rural older people have
    - Lower incomes
    - Somewhat poorer health
    - Fewer housing and transport options
    - Less access to health care and other services
    - Fewer adult children nearby to provide assistance
  - But these challenges are contingent on the type of community in which they live

# Opportunities

- Throughout the US
  - Healthy aging
  - Contributions to the voluntary sector
- In retirement destinations
  - Generate demand for new jobs
  - Attract working age persons to community
  - Contribute to public tax revenue

# Rural Retirement Destinations

Fig. 6.1: Counties Where Community Case Studies Were Conducted, 2006



Source: Cornell Retirement Migration Project

# Overall Observation from interviews with local leaders

- Retirement In-Migration Presents *Both Opportunities and Challenges* for RRDs
  - Whether older in-migration is seen as positive or negative *depends on one's position* in the local social structure
  - Longer-term residents of RRDs are ambivalent about older in-migration

# Opportunities Presented by Older In-Migration

- Economic research generally shows that older in-migration promotes employment & income
- Benefits identified by 64 officials & leaders in 4 communities
  - Real estate market & construction
  - Volunteerism
  - Arts & cultural organizations
  - Financial support of community organizations
  - Commercial and retail sector?
    - Only where in-migrants are mostly yr round residents
  - Enhanced medical care services and facilities
    - More in some places than others

# Challenges Presented by Older In-Migration

- Displacement
  - Housing [especially re: service providers and first responders]
  - Cultural [insensitivity to traditional ways of doing things]
    - Old timers have nicknames for newcomers
  - Political [competition, different agendas]
- Aging in Place
  - Transportation, health care, informal care giving

# Thank You!

Rural Retirement  
Migration

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