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NONMETRO/METRO MIGRATION: ECONOMIC AND NONECONOMIC OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

Throughout U.S. history, millions of Americans have migrated between nonmetro and metro areas. Both economic and noneconomic factors have been thought to be important in motivating individuals and families to migrate. Economic opportunities have generally been better in metro communities prompting extensive levels of nonmetro to metro migration. At the same time, nonmetro communities have been felt to offer the advantages of safety, being closer to nature, and having more conservative religious and family values. In this analysis, data from recent General Social Surveys were used to compare the economic and noneconomic outcomes for nonmetro and metro migrants compared with those who remained in either metro or nonmetro areas. The analysis showed that persons who migrate from nonmetro to metro areas continue to reap economic benefits. On the other hand, nonmetro residents continue to have more traditional religious and family values. No statistical differences in overall life satisfaction were found. The reasons for these findings and their consequences are discussed.

Each year millions of Americans migrate from one community to another. This movement of people has profound implications for the individuals and families who move, and also for both the community people move to and the community they move from. Historically, among the most significant migration streams in the U.S. has consisted of people moving between nonmetropolitan and metropolitan communities (Johnson 1989; Brown 2002).

Research on nonmetro-metro migration has focused on several major themes. These include, first, research on the magnitude and direction of nonmetro-metro streams (e.g., Beale 1975; Beale and Fuguitt 1978; Fuguitt et al. 1989; Johnson 1989). A second line of research has examined the consequences of migration for both the communities struggling to survive the population losses associated with out-migration, and the communities trying to absorb their new in-migrants (Beale 1993, Fuguitt et al. 1989). A third important line of research has been an attempt to understand the complexities of factors influencing migration decisions (Brown 2002; Goldscheider 1987; Massey 1990; Portes 1995). This line of research explores the question of what motivates people to move. A fourth, and perhaps more limited, line of research focuses on the consequences or outcomes of migration for the individuals and families who move. This line of research would ask the question of to what extent and in what manner have metro/nonmetro migrants benefitted compared with persons who did not migrate? This manuscript attempts to contribute to improving our understanding in this fourth line of research.

In researching migration outcomes, it is first necessary to get guidance from the third line of research on migration motivations. Research exploring migration motivations has focused on both economic and noneconomic factors (Brown 2002). Economic factors have long been recognized as central in migration decisions as people often move seeking better jobs. These economic factors have been considered paramount in explaining the extensive nonmetro to metro migration that has been dominant throughout most of U.S. history. In this regard, metro areas have attracted a net flow of nonmetro residents because in metro areas, income levels have always been and continue to be higher, poverty levels are lower, employment rates are higher, and the employment structure is broader (Albrecht et al. 2000; Brown and Hirschl 1995; Brown and Lee 1999; Fitchen 1981; Lichter and Eggebeen 1992; Lichter and McLaughlin 1995; Tigges and Tootle 1990).

Researchers have also recognized that noneconomic factors often play an important role in migration decisions. In respect to noneconomic factors, nonmetro residents have historically been attracted to metro communities because the move would result in higher quality community services such as medical care and shopping (Rogers 1982; Willits et al. 1982). Further, some considered metro living advantageous because the residents of nonmetro communities were relatively isolated from the current events, activities and the fads of the day (Bealer et al. 1965; Bender 1975). On the other hand, many people have long believed that distinct noneconomic advantages to living in nonmetro areas existed (Nelson 1955). Recent research has found that people consider nonmetro communities to be closer to nature, to have a greater sense of community, and to be a place where traditional religious and family values were strong (Bell 1994). Others have noted that nonmetro areas are perceived as safe, next-to-nature, peaceful and a good place to raise children (Herbers 1986; Salamon 2003).

This research will explore the extent to which migrants and nonmigrants achieve these economic and noneconomic outcomes. Research on migration outcomes is especially relevant at this time because recent societal changes have greatly reduced metro/nonmetro differences. Among the significant changes are rapid developments in communication and transportation and the massive economic restructuring that has occurred in nonmetro communities. Friedland (1982; 2002), in fact, argues that metro/nonmetro differences have largely disappeared, and that there is no "rural" left in the United States. A significant question concerns how the reduced distinctiveness of nonmetro communities affects both the economic and noneconomic outcomes of migration. With nonmetro areas more similar to metro

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areas in many respects, are persons who live in nonmetro areas still able to achieve the noneconomic benefits that such residents have enjoyed in the past? Are nonmetro to metro migrants now able to achieve the economic benefits without the noneconomic costs? The goals of this manuscript will be accomplished by comparing the manner of and extent to which both economic and noneconomic benefits accrue for those who migrate from nonmetro to metro areas and vice-versa with nonmigrants who remain in either nonmetro or metro areas.

To provide a framework for this study, a model developed by Bealer et al. (1965) four decades ago is used to distinguish basic nonmetro/metro differences. In discussing these differences, an effort will be made to outline changes that have occurred concerning these differences over time. This exercise will provide the basis for determining how these changes have influenced economic and noneconomic outcomes for both migrants and nonmigrants. The manuscript continues with a discussion of the Bealer et al. model and the changes occurring in nonmetro society. The projected outcomes in the lives of migrants and nonmigrants will then be discussed. The methods used in this study are then described, the findings discussed, and conclusions drawn.

Metro/Nonmetro Residential Distinctions

In examining the extent to which metro/nonmetro living has changed, and how these changes affect residents, a model developed by Bealer et al. (1965) may be helpful. Bealer and his colleagues argued that three sets of variables effectively differentiated rural or nonmetro from urban or metro. These three variables were occupational, cultural, and ecological. Since the Bealer et al. manuscript was written, major changes have occurred with each of these variables. Each variable and some changes that have occurred will be briefly discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

Historically, occupational differences between nonmetro and metro areas were extensive as nonmetro America was heavily dependent on agricultural employment while metro employment was much more diverse. The nonmetro dependence on agricultural employment was significant because agriculture is unique as to the nature of the work, family involvement, and typical family incomes when compared with other occupations (Albrecht and Murdock 1990; Paarlberg 1980). In agriculture, the entire family works together as a production unit beyond being a unit of consumption, while the nonfarm family is typically a unit of consumption only. Further, for the farm family, children are generally an economic asset as they can become farm workers, while children are usually an economic liability for the

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nonfarm family (Weeks 1989). Finally, farm incomes have always been lower, on average, than nonfarm incomes (Albrecht and Murdock 1990).

From the middle decades of the 20th century, the mechanization of agriculture resulted in a rapid decline in the number of farms, a reduction in farm employment and a vast out-migration of farm people. The decline in agricultural employment was offset by increased employment in manufacturing and the service sector. Consequently, by the turn of the century, only about one in twenty nonmetro workers was employed in agriculture, and employment in both manufacturing and services far exceeded agricultural employment (Albrecht 1998). The result is that the occupational uniqueness of nonmetro America has largely vanished and the employment structure of nonmetro and metro counties are similar in many respects.

Reduced occupational variation would be expected to result in greater metro/nonmetro similarity. Economically, this industrial transformation should result in more similar education and income patterns for metro and nonmetro residents. For the most part, the educational requirements for attaining many nonagricultural jobs in nonmetro areas are similar to the requirements for attaining these same types of jobs in metro areas. Further, the loss of the generally low paying agricultural jobs should help close the metro/nonmetro income gap. However, despite greater occupational similarity, many metro/nonmetro economic differences are expected to remain. Because of their advantaged access to markets and consumers, income levels remain higher and poverty rates lower in metro areas (Albrecht et al. 2000; Brown and Lee 1999). Further, many higher level positions in the job structure are largely absent in nonmetro areas (Tigges and Tootle 1990) which keeps incomes and educational requirements lower for workers in the same industries.

This increased occupational similarity should also result in fewer noneconomic differences between metro and nonmetro areas as well. Since nonmetro residents generally have the same occupations as metro residents, they now have many similar problems and life experiences as metro residents. Consequently, values and attitudes should become more similar. In addition, since many family structure differences between metro and nonmetro areas were a result of occupational differences (Albrecht and Albrecht 1996) these differences should also diminish. Research, in fact, shows that many family structure differences such as birth rates and family size have largely disappeared in recent years (Beale 1978; Zuiches and

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Brown 1978; Conger and Elder 1994; Beale and Fuguitt 1990; Fuguitt et al. 1991; Johnson and Beale 1992).

The second category of metro/nonmetro differences mentioned by Bealer et al. (1965) was cultural. At one time, inefficient transportation and communication meant that nonmetro residents were isolated from information about current events and the trends and fads of the day. Researchers have argued that this isolation was a factor in the emergence of a unique rural culture. Classical sociological theories were developed to help understand the resulting cultural differences between more simple rural and nonindustrial societies and those urban and industrial societies considered more complex (i.e., Tonnies 1957; Durkheim 1964). Some major differences described by these theorists included evidence that rural residents were more morally and politically conservative (Glenn and Hill 1977; Larson 1978; Wirth 1939), and placed greater emphasis on traditional religious and family values (Albrecht and Albrecht 2004; Conger and Elder 1994; Duncan and Reiss 1956; Hathaway et al. 1968; Smith and Coward 1981).

Since these theories were developed, improved communication and transportation have greatly reduced the cultural isolation of nonmetro areas. Nonmetro residents now read the same newspapers and magazines, watch the same television shows and movies, and are connected to the same World Wide Web as metro residents. With improved transportation, residents of even the most remote hinterland can reach a major metropolitan area in a relatively short amount of time (Bender 1975; Ewen and Ewen 1982). It has been argued that these changing conditions have resulted in substantial reductions in the cultural differences that once existed (Friedland 1982). As Thomas Friedman (2002 p. A23) stated "Change the context of how people live and you change everything." With these differences reduced, it is not surprising that some recent studies have found metro and nonmetro residents to have more similar views and attitudes on some issues (Smith and Coward 1981).

The third set of differences was ecological. On this issue, Bealer et al. (1965) were referring to the fact that population size and density is much lower in nonmetro areas. Reduced population size and density allow community members opportunities to become acquainted with many community residents; it reduces the total number of social contacts, and allows community residents to know each other on a more personal level. Consequently, nonmetro communities were believed to have many primary relationships and fewer of the categorical and secondary relationships that dominate metro communities (Wirth 1939). Certainly primary relationships exist in metro communities, but many daily interactions tend to be

categorical or secondary. Theorists such as Wirth (1939) felt that the nature of interactions in nonmetro life would result in greater levels of consensus on important values and morals. It was further expected that higher levels of consensus would result in more conservative attitudes, values and behaviors, and lower levels of deviance from community norms (Struthers and Bokemeier 2000; Winkler 1994).

Despite all of the changes that have occurred in nonmetro areas, these areas, by definition, have fewer residents and lower population densities. Thus, ecological differences between metro and nonmetro areas remain prominent. Sociological theory would argue that the implications of this fact may be that important differences between metro and nonmetro remain because interaction patterns are different. Recent research evidence suggests that this may be the case. In a recent analysis, Barnett and Mencken (2002) maintained that the level of social integration in nonmetropolitan counties created a system of social control that holds behavior in check. The result is lower crime rates in nonmetro compared with metro counties. Albrecht and Albrecht (2004) found that nonmetro residents were more conservative relative to family formation patterns. Thus, many nonmetro conceptions occurred within marriage, and when nonmarital conceptions occurred, they were more likely to result in marriage before the birth of the child and in a live birth.

Expected Migration Outcomes

In this manuscript, an examination of the economic and noneconomic outcomes for persons who migrate from nonmetro to metro areas and vice-versa compared with persons who remain in either nonmetro or metro areas will be explored. Initially, an attempt will be made to examine the economic outcomes of migration. The specific economic indicators to be examined include education, occupational prestige and income. While economic restructuring in nonmetro areas has reduced occupational differences between metro and nonmetro areas, not all economic differences have been eliminated. Consequently, it is expected that those who migrate from nonmetro to metro areas will benefit economically compared with those who did not migrate. In addition, persons who migrate from metro to nonmetro areas are unlikely to achieve these same economic benefits. Further, an attempt will be made to examine the noneconomic outcomes of migration. Because ecological differences between metro and nonmetro areas remain, we expect noneconomic differences also to remain. Thus, residents of nonmetro areas are expected to exhibit more conservative religious and family values. We also expect

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those nonmetro residents who migrate to metro areas to become more like their new metro neighbors relative to their religious and family values, and vice-versa. Finally, in an attempt to determine the overall outcomes of migration, an examination will be made of resident's perceptions of their quality of life. For this issue, both economic and noneconomic factors will be considered.

In examining how well migrants fare compared with nonmigrants considering the selectivity of persons who migrate is important. Obviously, persons who come from advantaged economic circumstances tend to do better economically than persons who come from less advantaged circumstances. Consequently, if the more economically advantaged nonmetro residents are more likely to migrate, their subsequent economic advantages may largely be a result of their advantaged beginnings rather than the fact that they migrated. Thus, in this paper, the respondent's parent's economic situation will be considered and intergenerational social mobility will be studied.

Data and Methods

Data for this study are obtained from the General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center. This is a nationwide survey using full probability sampling methods conducted 24 times between 1972 and 2002. Each survey is an independently drawn sample of English-speaking persons 18 years of age or over, living in non-institutional arrangements in the United States. The bias inherent from the omission of non-English speakers is obvious. The median length of the interviews was about one and one-half hours. This data set was chosen because it provides information on both economic circumstances and also information on some noneconomic issues such as values, attitudes and quality of life assessments. Since the concern of this paper is with the recent outcomes of migration, those surveys conducted during 1998, 2000 and 2002 will be used. A total of 2,190 respondents are included in this study.

The primary independent variable is migration status. Survey respondents were asked where they lived when they were 16 years old. Responses to this question were then coded as in either a metropolitan county or a nonmetropolitan county. Respondents were then asked about their current residence. Again, responses were coded to metro or nonmetro. Persons who lived in a nonmetro county when 16, and were living in a nonmetro county at the time of the survey were labeled as "consistent nonmetro." Persons who lived in a nonmetro county when age 16, and were living in a metro county at the time of the study were labeled "nonmetro to metro migrants." Persons living in metro counties at age 16 and living in nonmetro

counties at the time of the survey were labeled “metro to nonmetro migrants,” and persons living in metro counties at both age 16 and at the time of the interview were labeled “consistent metro.” Of course, this classification system is not without problems. For example, some people classified as “consistent nonmetro” may have lived in metro areas for extended periods, but just happened to live in nonmetro areas at age 16 and at the time of the interview. However, these data are the best available and should provide a good approximation and help accomplish the objectives of this study.

The dependent variables to be utilized include both economic and noneconomic variables. The economic indicators include education, occupational prestige, and income. Education is operationalized as the number of years of formal education completed. For married couples, the years of education for the spouse with the highest level of education is used since the education of either spouse significantly affects family income. Occupational prestige is determined by a scale that ranges from 10 to 89 where more prestigious occupations receive higher scores. Again, for married respondents, the spouse with the highest score is used. Income is determined by respondents self reporting their family income into one of 23 categories that range from less than \$1,000 to \$110,000 or more. To determine intergenerational social mobility, questions are also utilized exploring the respondent’s parent’s education, occupational prestige, and income. For these items, education and occupational prestige are measured in the same manner as they were for the respondents. For income, respondents were asked if their family income as a child was below average, average, or above average.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) techniques will be used to compare mean scores for education, occupational prestige and income of respondents in the various migration status categories. For the ANOVA, the continuous measure for the dependent variables will be used. That is, education for both the respondent and parent will be the number of years completed. Occupational prestige will be the score ranging from 10 to 89. For income, the respondent scores range from 1 to 23, depending on which category their family income was in. Parent income scores range from 1 (below average) to 3 (above average). In addition, crosstabulations will be made of the respondent’s education, occupational prestige and income with those of their parents while controlling for migration status. This will allow an assessment of the extent to which economic changes are related to the parent’s circumstances. In conducting the crosstabulations, categorizing the dependent variables is necessary. Education is categorized into four groups that include less

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than high school, high school graduates, some college, and college graduates. The occupational prestige scale is categorized into four groups that include 35 or less, 36 to 45, 46 to 55, and 56 or more. Income is broken into three categories that include less than \$20,000, \$20,000 to \$59,999, and \$60,000 or more.

In analyzing the noneconomic factors, crosstabulations will be made of the respondents' residential migration status and their views about several religious and family value issues. Five religious value issues will be used including (1) belief in God. For this item, responses will be categorized into three groups that include "no doubt," a belief with reservations, and those who are either atheist or agnostic. (2) Respondent's belief in heaven (yes, definitely; yes, probably; no, probably, and no, definitely). (3) Their belief in hell (same response categories as number 2). (4) Their belief in religious miracles (same response categories as number 2), and (5) their feelings about the Bible (literal word of God; inspired but shouldn't be taken as literal; a collection of fables, legends and history). These five items will also be summed to create a religiosity index. Potential scores on this index range from 5 to 18, with low scores representing traditional religious views. ANOVA will be used to determine if differences on index scores between the migrant status groups are significant.

Two items will be used to assess traditional family values including (1) respondent's views about premarital sex (always wrong; almost always wrong; wrong only sometimes; and not at all wrong), and (2) views about couples living together. For this item, respondents were asked to either strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, or strongly disagree with the statement "It is alright for a couple to live together without intending to get married." These two items were also summed to create a family values index where possible scores ranged from 2 to 9, with low scores representing more traditional family values. Again, ANOVA will be used to examine the differences on index scores between the various migrant status groups.

Finally, five items were used to measure respondent's overall life satisfaction. These items were (1) Overall happiness (not too happy, pretty happy, or very happy). (2) In general, how is your health (poor, fair, good, or excellent)? (3) In general, do you find life (dull, routine, or exciting)? (4) Respondent's satisfaction with their job (very dissatisfied, a little dissatisfied, moderately satisfied, or very satisfied). (5) Respondent's satisfaction with their financial situation (not at all satisfied, more or less satisfied or pretty well satisfied). These five items were combined to create a total life satisfaction index. Possible scale scores ranged from

5 to 17, with high scores indicating more life satisfaction. As with the previous items, ANOVA will be used to compare differences between the different migrant status groups. For both the religion, family values and life satisfaction index an attempt was made to create a simple index, rather than a statistically sound scale. The data were simply not available to do more, and the indexes should accomplish the purposes of this study.

Findings

Table 1 presents survey results showing the relationship between migration status and education. The results of the ANOVA indicate that, as expected, persons who migrated from nonmetro to metro areas had significantly higher education achievements (average 13.72 years) than persons who remained living in nonmetro areas (12.98 years). The consistent nonmetro group had education levels that were significantly lower than all of the other migrant status groups. Nonmetro to metro migrants were not significantly different from metro to nonmetro migrants, but they did have significantly less education than persons who were consistent metro. When considering the education levels of parents, those who grew up in nonmetro areas, whether they migrated or not, had parents with education levels consistently below those who grew up in metro areas. Finally, the cross tabulations show that a very strong relationship exists between parent's education and the respondent's subsequent education. Apparently, nonmetro to metro migrants had educational achievements that substantially exceed those of the consistent nonmetro group when parent's education is controlled. For each level of parent's education, respondents who migrated had higher educational achievements than respondents who remained in nonmetro areas. Overall, 27.5 percent of the nonmetro to metro migrants were college graduates compared with 18.7 percent of consistent nonmetro residents. In sum, as expected, nonmetro to metro migration resulted in significantly improved educational achievements.

Table 2 explores the relationship between migration and occupational prestige. Most important is the fact that nonmetro to metro migrants have occupational prestige scores that are significantly higher than consistent nonmetro residents. The parents of consistent nonmetro residents also had prestige scores that were consistently lower than the prestige scores of the parents of persons who migrated, but the gap became larger indicating that migration played a significant role in increasing occupational prestige. The nonmetro to metro migrants still had prestige scores that were lower than respondents who grew up in metro areas.

Table 1. CROSSTABULATIONS AND ANOVA SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIGRATION STATUS, EDUCATION, AND EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY, 1998-2002 (N=2,190).

RESPONDENT'S EDUCATION	RESPONDENT'S PARENTS EDUCATION					ANOVA FOR AVERAGE NO. OF YEARS COMPLETED	
	< High school	High school	Some college	College graduate	Total	Respondents	Parents
Consistent Nonmetro ($\chi^2 = 184.3^*$)							
< High school . . .	39.9	26.5	20.1	18.7	33.0	12.98 ^{bcd}	11.35 ^{cd}
High school grad	28.7	28.0	17.7	8.7	25.4		
Some college	18.7	29.6	32.9	23.3	22.9		
College graduate	12.7	15.9	29.3	49.3	18.7		
Nonmetro-Metro ($\chi^2 = 263.6^*$)							
< High school . . .	36.5	26.2	15.3	17.5	29.8	13.72 ^{ad}	11.76 ^{cd}
High school grad	21.9	24.4	12.0	7.9	19.4		
Some college	21.6	26.0	30.2	20.7	23.3		
College graduate	20.0	23.4	42.5	53.9	27.5		
Metro-Nonmetro ($\chi^2 = 55.8^*$)							
< High school . . .	31.2	28.6	24.0	18.8	27.6	14.22 ^a	13.09 ^{ab}
High school grad	21.4	17.1	0.0	7.3	15.2		
Some college	28.6	37.1	36.0	17.4	29.1		
College graduate	18.8	17.2	40.0	56.5	28.1		

Table 1–Continued

RESPONDENT'S EDUCATION	RESPONDENT'S PARENTS EDUCATION					ANOVA FOR AVERAGE NO. OF YEARS COMPLETED	
	< High school	High school	Some college	College graduate	Total	Respondents	Parents
Consistent Metro ($\chi^2 = 202.8^*$)							
< High school . .	26.5	19.1	16.4	18.7	22.2	14.30 ^{ab}	13.03 ^{ab}
High school grad	19.8	25.1	12.7	7.3	17.3		
Some college	27.1	30.1	35.6	21.8	27.7		
College graduate	26.6	25.7	35.3	52.2	32.8		

*Statistically significant at the .01 level

^aSignificantly different from consistent nonmetro

^bSignificantly different from nonmetro-metro

^cSignificantly different from metro-nonmetro

^dSignificantly different from consistent metro

Table 2. CROSSTABULATIONS AND ANOVA SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIGRATION STATUS, OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE, AND OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY, 1998-2002 (N=2,190).

RESPONDENT'S OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE SCORE	RESPONDENT'S PARENTS OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE SCORE					ANOVA FOR AVERAGE PRESTIGE SCORE	
	Less than 35	36-45	46-55	56 or more	Total	Respondents	Parents
Consistent Nonmetro ($\chi^2 = 71.4^*$)							
Less than 35	35.7	37.1	24.0	20.0	32.3	44.93 ^{bcd}	42.54 ^{bcd}
36-45	24.0	25.6	20.5	17.8	23.2		
46-55	24.0	22.9	30.4	25.5	24.9		
56 or more	16.3	14.4	25.1	36.7	19.6		
Nonmetro-Metro ($\chi^2 = 141.2^*$)							
Less than 35	35.4	31.1	20.2	15.5	28.1	47.23 ^{acd}	43.95 ^{acd}
36-45	22.0	23.8	20.4	13.0	20.9		
46-55	24.3	22.5	29.9	30.8	25.8		
56 or more	18.3	22.6	29.5	40.7	25.2		
Metro-Nonmetro ($\chi^2 = 29.8^*$)							
Less than 35	31.4	21.1	13.0	14.0	20.7	49.72 ^{ab}	47.10 ^{ab}
36-45	21.8	26.8	21.0	12.8	20.5		
46-55	25.0	22.5	38.0	27.9	28.6		
56 or more	21.8	29.6	28.0	45.3	30.2		

Table 2-Continued

RESPONDENT'S OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE SCORE	RESPONDENT'S PARENTS OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE SCORE					ANOVA FOR AVERAGE PRESTIGE SCORE	
	Less than 35	36-45	46-55	56 or more	Total	Respondents	Parents
Consistent Metro ($\chi^2 = 135.7^*$)							
Less than 35	35.5	28.2	19.8	16.1	25.6	48.41 ^{ab}	47.03 ^{ab}
36-45	18.8	22.5	17.3	16.1	18.6		
46-55	25.8	23.5	30.5	30.0	27.5		
56 or more	19.9	25.8	32.4	37.8	28.3		

*Statistically significant at the .01 level

^aSignificantly different from consistent nonmetro

^bSignificantly different from nonmetro-metro

^cSignificantly different from metro-nonmetro

^dSignificantly different from consistent metro

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Again, the relationship between parent's occupational prestige and the respondent's occupational prestige was strong. For all levels of parent's prestige, however, nonmetro to metro migrants had higher prestige levels than their consistent nonmetro counterparts. Again, in sum, migration apparently played a prominent role in increasing occupational prestige for nonmetro residents.

The relationship between migration and income is examined in Table 3. Although there were no significant differences on parent's income between nonmetro respondents who migrated and those who remained in nonmetro areas, it was found that migrants had significantly higher incomes than nonmigrants. Again, however, nonmetro to metro migrants had income levels significantly below respondents who grew up in metro areas. The crosstabulations show that migrants did better as to income than nonmigrants despite what the parent's income level was. Again migration from nonmetro areas apparently resulted in income advantages compared with those who remained in nonmetro areas.

The relationship between migration status and attitudes toward religion and family are shown in Table 4. The first five variables in Table 4 deal with attitudes toward religion. So important from this table is the fact that there is a statistically significant relationship between migration status and religious attitudes, and as expected, consistent nonmetro residents express the most conservative views. Compared with other respondents, the consistent nonmetro residents were most likely to state that they had no doubt that there was a God, that yes, definitely, there was heaven, hell, and religious miracles, and that the Bible was the literal word of God. Their total religiosity scale score was significantly different from respondents in each of the other migration status categories. On the religiosity index, the differences between nonmetro-metro migrants and metro-nonmetro migrants were not significant, while consistent metro residents expressed consistently less traditional religious views than any of the other groups.

The findings for attitudes about family issues were similar. Consistent nonmetro residents were most likely to state that premarital sex was always wrong, and they were most likely to strongly disagree with the statement that it is all right for a couple to live together without intending to get married. On the family values index, the consistent nonmetro residents scored significantly more traditional than all other migrant status group. Consistent metro residents had nontraditional family views that were significantly different from each of the other migrant groups, while the differences between nonmetro-metro and metro-nonmetro migrants were not statistically significant.

Table 3. CROSSTABULATIONS AND ANOVA SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIGRATION STATUS, INCOME, AND INCOME MOBILITY, 1998-2002 (N=2,190).

RESPONDENT'S FAMILY INCOME	RESPONDENT'S PARENTS INCOME				ANOVA FOR AVERAGE INCOME SCORE	
	Below average	Average	Above average	Total	Respondents	Parents
Consistent Nonmetro ($\chi^2 = 9.6$)						
Less than \$20,000	23.9	16.5	13.6	19.0	15.58 ^{bcd}	2.64 ^d
\$20,000-\$59,999 .	44.2	50.6	34.1	46.1		
\$60,000 or more .	31.9	32.9	52.3	34.9		
Nonmetro-Metro ($\chi^2 = 23.9^*$)						
Less than \$20,000	24.5	13.5	4.6	16.1	16.43 ^{acd}	2.70 ^d
\$20,000-\$59,999 .	43.4	45.7	41.9	44.2		
\$60,000 or more .	32.1	40.8	53.5	39.7		
Metro-Nonmetro ($\chi^2 = 2.7$)						
Less than \$20,000	6.9	7.1	10.0	7.7	16.87 ^{ab}	2.84
\$20,000-\$59,999 .	58.6	50.0	35.0	49.4		
\$60,000 or more .	34.5	42.9	55.0	42.9		
Consistent Metro ($\chi^2 = 12.6$)						
Less than \$20,000	18.7	14.2	13.1	15.1	16.87 ^{ab}	2.97 ^{ab}
\$20,000-\$59,999 .	49.4	42.6	37.2	42.9		
\$60,000 or more .	31.9	43.2	49.7	42.0		

*Statistically significant at the .01 level

^aSignificantly different from consistent nonmetro

^bSignificantly different from nonmetro-metro

^cSignificantly different from metro-nonmetro

^dSignificantly different from consistent metro

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Table 4. CROSSTABULATIONS AND ANOVA SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIGRATION STATUS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD RELIGION AND FAMILY, 1998-2002 (N=2,190).

RELIGIOUS VARIABLES	CONSISTENT	NONMETRO-	METRO-	CONSISTENT
	NONMETRO	METRO	NONMETRO	METRO
Belief in God ($\chi^2 = 26.0^*$)				
No doubt	70.8	67.4	65.0	59.9
Belief with reservation . . .	23.8	27.0	29.0	29.7
Atheist or agnostic	5.4	5.6	6.0	10.4
Belief in Heaven ($\chi^2 = 52.4^*$)				
Yes, definitely	79.7	67.3	72.1	57.5
Yes, probably	14.0	21.6	18.6	20.1
No, probably not	3.9	7.4	7.0	10.5
No, definitely not	2.4	3.7	2.3	11.9
Belief in Hell ($\chi^2 = 49.8^*$)				
Yes, definitely	70.5	57.4	56.1	44.7
Yes, probably	15.0	19.5	14.6	21.1
No, probably not	8.5	14.1	19.5	15.3
No, definitely not	6.0	9.0	9.8	18.9
Belief in Religious Miracles ($\chi^2 = 28.2^*$)				
Yes, definitely	61.5	54.7	47.7	44.6
Yes, probably	25.0	25.3	29.5	28.1
No, probably not	9.5	11.8	18.2	13.5
No, definitely not	4.0	8.2	4.6	13.8
Feelings about the Bible ($\chi^2 = 138.1^*$)				
Literal word of God	43.6	33.2	30.8	26.3
Inspired by, but not literal	47.2	52.7	53.8	52.8
Fables, legends, history . . .	9.2	14.1	15.4	20.9
Total Religiosity Index				
(ANOVA)	7.26 ^{bed}	7.93 ^{ad}	8.10 ^{ad}	9.19 ^{abc}

Table 4.—Continued

FAMILY VARIABLES	CONSISTENT	NONMETRO-	METRO-	CONSISTENT
	NONMETRO	METRO	NONMETRO	METRO
Views about Premarital Sex ($\chi^2 = 120.5^*$)				
Always wrong	39.6	29.1	29.8	20.7
Almost always wrong	10.1	9.4	9.4	8.0
Wrong only sometime	19.4	20.2	21.6	22.0
Not at all wrong	30.9	41.3	39.2	49.3
It is alright for a couple to live together without intending to get married ($\chi^2 = 57.5^*$)				
Strongly disagree	27.2	19.1	13.7	16.1
Disagree	20.6	19.3	19.3	15.9
Neither agree or disagree	20.4	19.5	20.2	18.7
Agree	23.6	27.9	32.1	28.8
Strongly agree	8.2	14.2	14.7	20.3
Total Family Index				
(ANOVA)	5.19 ^{bcd}	5.63 ^{ad}	5.59 ^{ad}	6.34 ^{abc}

*Statistically significant at the .01 level

^aSignificantly different from consistent nonmetro

^bSignificantly different from nonmetro-metro

^cSignificantly different from metro-nonmetro

^dSignificantly different from consistent metro

Finally, Table 5 examines the views of the different migrant status groups on several life satisfaction variables. For overall happiness, the differences were small, but statistically significant, and nonmetro residents exhibited the greatest happiness. While 12.4 percent of consistent metro residents stated that they were not too happy, only 9.7 percent of the consistent nonmetro and 8.7 percent of metro-nonmetro migrants stated this view. Also, consistent nonmetro residents and both groups of migrants were more likely than consistent metro residents to state that they were very happy. The next two items provided some negative views about nonmetro life as consistent nonmetro residents were less likely than other respondents to state that their health was excellent and that their life was exciting. Results for the satisfaction with job question were not statistically significant.

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Table 5. CROSSTABULATIONS AND ANOVA SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIGRATION STATUS AND LIFE SATISFACTION, 1998-2002 (N=2,190).

	CONSISTENT NONMETRO	NONMETRO- METRO	METRO- NONMETRO	CONSISTENT METRO
Overall Happiness ($\chi^2 = 15.1^*$)				
Not too happy	9.7	11.3	8.7	12.4
Pretty happy	55.4	55.7	58.3	57.5
Very happy	34.9	33.0	33.0	30.1
In general, how is your health? ($\chi^2 = 31.7^*$)				
Poor	7.1	6.3	4.8	4.5
Fair	19.4	18.1	16.8	15.2
Good	46.5	46.8	47.1	48.4
Excellent	27.0	28.8	31.3	31.9
In general, do you find life? ($\chi^2 = 21.0^*$)				
Dull	4.9	5.1	2.8	4.7
Routine	54.6	47.4	48.6	45.8
Exciting	40.5	47.5	48.6	49.5
Satisfaction with job ($\chi^2 = 16.5^*$)				
Very dissatisfied	2.3	3.2	4.4	4.0
A little dissatisfied	9.0	7.8	10.1	9.6
Moderately satisfied	37.6	38.4	37.9	40.2
Very satisfied	51.1	50.6	47.6	46.2
Satisfied with Financial Situation ($\chi^2 = 21.1^*$)				
Not at all satisfied	23.0	24.4	26.6	27.9
More or less satisfied	45.5	43.1	46.0	44.3
Pretty well satisfied	31.5	32.5	30.4	27.8
Total Life Satisfaction				
Index (ANOVA)	8.84	8.77	8.66	8.91

*Statistically significant at the .01 level

Although nonmetro people are objectively in worse shape financially, they were more likely than metro residents to state that they were pretty well satisfied with their financial situation. Overall, on the total life satisfaction index no differences among the various migration status groups were discovered.

Conclusions

For generations, millions of residents of nonmetropolitan counties in the United States have migrated to metropolitan counties. It was generally thought that the primary reason for this migration was the economic advantages that could be attained in metro areas. The data presented in this study show that people who migrate from nonmetro to metro areas continue to reap economic benefits from this move. Even when controlling for parent's circumstances, persons who migrate from nonmetro to metro areas, compared with persons who remain in nonmetro areas, have higher levels of educational achievement, more prestigious occupations, and higher incomes.

However, despite the potential economic advantages of migration, millions of Americans have chosen to remain in nonmetro areas and many metro residents choose to migrate to nonmetro areas. Researchers have long felt that the advantages of nonmetro life included safety, being closer to nature, and living in communities with more traditional and conservative religious and family values. Despite massive changes that have greatly influenced nonmetro life, the data presented in this study showed that nonmetro residents still have more traditional and conservative religious and family values. Consequently, despite the economic disadvantages, nonmetro residents were slightly more likely than metro residents to state that they were "very happy."

These results have important implications for community development efforts. Even in modern postindustrial society, it seems that nonmetro communities offer a unique way of life. Despite communication and transportation developments, nonmetro values and norms continue to vary extensively from metro values and norms, and community development efforts to preserve this way of life seem justified. A theoretical understanding of why these differences remain is an important social science question. It seems likely that the different interaction patterns that result because of lower population numbers and density are an important factor, and such ecological differences will always be present in nonmetro communities.

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