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AN EVALUATION OF METROPOLITAN AND REGIONAL population growth patterns in the United States through 1980 concluded that the 1970s was a "transition decade" in the recent history of US population redistribution (Frey and Speare, 1988). Similar transitions occurred in other developed countries and have been attributed to emerging new social and economic contexts (Vining, 1982; Frey, 1988; Champion, 1989).

The notable 1970s redistribution patterns in the United States that diverged from earlier decades included: (1) a higher decade-wide rate of growth for the nonmetropolitan population than for the metropolitan population; (2) a reversal of the positive relationship between a metropolitan area's size and its rate of growth—whereby many small metropolitan areas exhibited high rates of growth while the largest metropolises registered low growth or declines; (3) an accelerated growth for the less industrialized South and West regions, particularly for smaller and nonmetropolitan areas (Long and DeAre, 1982; Fuguitt, Brown, and Beale, 1989).

Some of the forces identified with the 1970s redistribution reversals were known to be subject to change. It was not clear, however, which ones would dominate in the 1980s and beyond. In this article we assess metropolitan-area growth patterns in the United States during the 1980s as revealed by 1990 census data. We evaluate these patterns against various explanations that were proposed to account for the altered developed-world redistribution tendencies of the 1970s.

Explanations of the 1970s—Expectations for the 1980s

The redistribution reversals of the 1970s gave rise to a variety of explanations that may be distilled into three broad categories: period explanations, deconcentration explanations, and regional restructuring explanations (Frey, 1988, 1989). While all three are consistent with the 1970s redistribution patterns, each suggests a different scenario for the 1980s.

Period explanations attributed the 1970s metropolitan declines to unique economic and demographic circumstances of that decade. According to this view, metropolitan declines were influenced by the mid-decade oil crisis and the related recession. This led to substantial declines in manufacturing, especially in large Northern metropolises with high energy costs. Nonmetropolitan gains in the South and West accrued from the oil and natural resource exploration stimulated by the energy crisis. Also, the large baby boom cohorts that came of age during this period increased the populations of small community-college towns and were later driven South and West, having failed to enter an oversaturated Northeast urban labor market. In essence, period explanations saw the 1970s as a distortion of long-term urbanization patterns, which would reemerge in the 1980s (see Kasarda, 1980; Fuguitt, 1985; McGeary and Lynn, 1988).

Deconcentration explanations interpreted the 1970s counterurbanization as a more fundamental break from the past. This view saw a technological and economic "loosening of constraints," permitting residents and employers to fulfill longstanding preferences for low-density, high-amenity locations. Also, larger footloose populations emerged whose choice of residence was not dictated by workplace considerations. An example of the latter was the growing number of elderly persons with sufficient economic resources to move to high-amenity locations, either in nonmetropolitan areas or in smaller metropolitan resort-retirement areas, such as those in southern Florida. Deconcentration explanations suggested that these tendencies would continue, leading to a long-term shift away from urban concentration (e.g., Wardwell, 1980; Long, 1981).

Regional restructuring explanations saw the 1970s reversals as part of a broader industrial restructuring of the American economy. The period's deindustrialization-related metropolitan declines were symptomatic of the transformation to a global economy, increasingly dominated by the multinational corporation. Within the United States, traditional heavy industries became less labor intensive as production jobs were eliminated or exported to other countries. In contrast to the period explanation, which attributed the decline of Northern manufacturing areas to largely temporary effects, the regional restructuring explanation viewed the decline of manufacturing as a long-term trend that was merely accelerated by the 1970s recession. Proponents of this view foresaw the reemergence of urbanization but in different locations

than in the past. Growing metropolitan areas would be those that successfully transformed their economies toward advanced services, "FIRE" (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate), high-technology research and development, and new growing industries (see Hanson, 1983; Noyelle and Stanback, 1984).

The review of metropolitan growth that follows examines the 1980s patterns in light of these different views. The 1990 census data permit an assessment of metropolitan-area growth for 1980–90 against the backdrop of the two previous decades. In addition, 1985 population estimates prepared by the US Bureau of the Census are used to compare redistribution patterns between the first and second half of the 1980s.¹ This comparison is important because the decade began with two severe recessions, an overvalued dollar, a worldwide decline in food prices, and, later on, a decline in oil prices. A review of the entire decade and, particularly, of the more tranquil 1985–90 period reveals the direction taken by the 1980s urbanization patterns.

National metropolitan growth trends

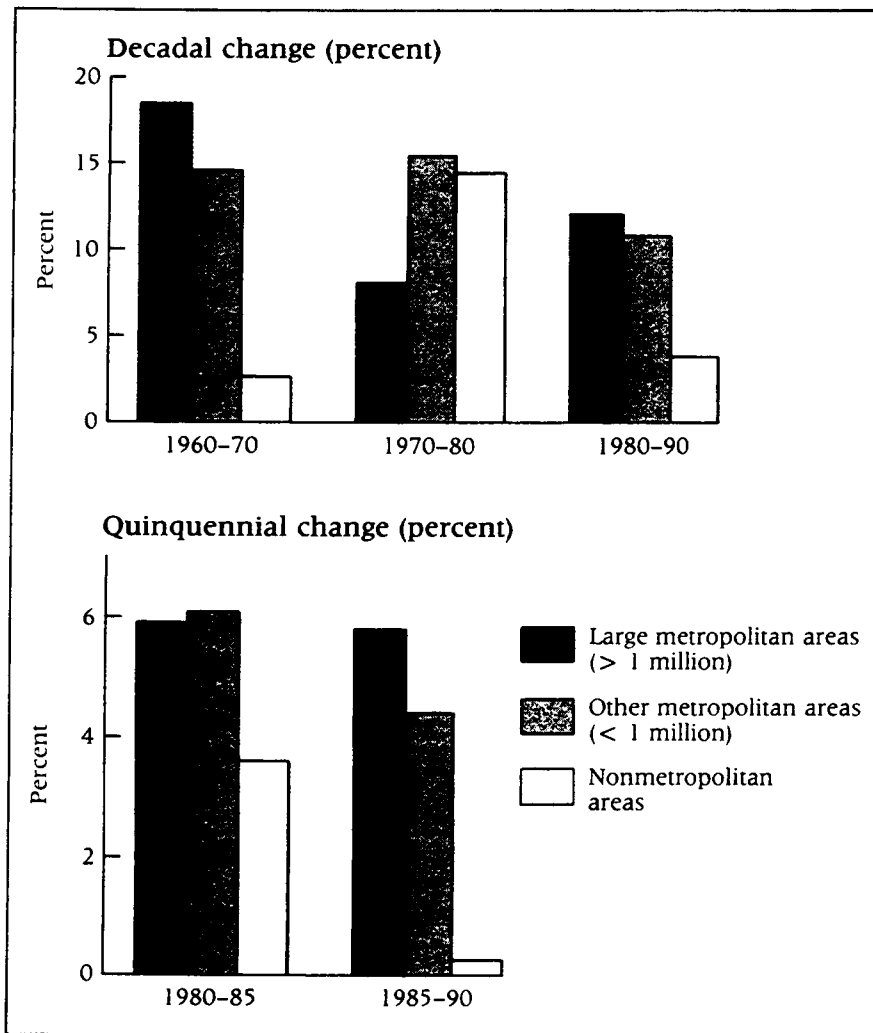
National growth trends, by metropolitan category, for the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s provide an overview of decadal shifts in urbanization patterns. The data in this analysis (except where indicated) are based on constant boundaries for the nation's metropolitan areas as defined by the Office of Management and Budget on 30 June 1990 and used in the 1990 census. The metropolitan population is the sum total of residents located in each of the nation's 284 metropolitan areas (CMSAs and MSAs).²

National metropolitan growth patterns for the 1980s suggest a reemergence of pre-1970s urbanization (see Figure 1). Over 1980–90, large metropolitan areas (exceeding one million population) grew at a faster rate than metropolitan areas as a whole, and significantly faster than the much-reduced growth rate registered for nonmetropolitan territories. These metropolitan category differences become even more accentuated for 1985–90, when nonmetropolitan-area growth is barely positive.

The relatively slow growth of small metropolitan areas is further confirmed by individual patterns of metropolitan population loss. Although only 23 of the 284 metropolitan areas actually lost population between 1970 and 1980, eight of these were among the largest industrial metropolises. The number of losing metropolitan areas increased to 59 over 1980–85 and, again, to 82 over 1985–90. The vast majority of these losing areas, however—36 in 1980–85 and 59 in 1985–90—are small metropolitan areas with 1990 populations of less than 250,000.

This evidence indicates that two major redistribution reversals of the 1970s—the nonmetropolitan growth advantage and the tendency of smaller metropolitan areas to gain population at the expense of large areas—have reverted to more traditional urbanization patterns, particularly in the late

FIGURE 1 Population change in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas of the United States, 1960-90



1980s. These reversals counter earlier forecasts of a continued population dispersal.

Metropolitan changes by region

There was a strong linkage between the national shift toward counter-urbanization in the 1970s and the regional redistribution from the North (Northeast and Midwest regions) into the South and West (see Table 1). Population losses in several large Northern metropolises dominated the national pattern of metropolitan decline, while the bulk of the small metropolitan and nonmetropolitan population gains was concentrated in the South and West.

Each of the three explanations discussed above accounted for some of

TABLE 1 Population change by region and metropolitan category, 1960–90

Region and metropolitan category	Population size in 1990 (millions)	Percent decadal change			Percent quinquennial change	
		1960–70	1970–80	1980–90	1980–85	1985–90
North						
Large metropolitan	62.9	12.0	– 0.9	2.8	1.3	1.5
Other metropolitan	25.6	11.1	5.2	3.3	0.9	2.4
Nonmetropolitan	22.6	2.6	8.0	0.1	0.7	– 0.6
South						
Large metropolitan	28.2	30.9	23.4	22.3	12.3	8.9
Other metropolitan	31.9	15.5	20.9	13.4	8.8	4.2
Nonmetropolitan	24.9	1.1	16.3	4.6	4.9	– 0.3
West						
Large metropolitan	33.8	29.1	20.0	24.2	10.9	11.9
Other metropolitan	10.8	24.8	32.2	22.8	11.4	10.2
Nonmetropolitan	8.1	9.0	30.6	14.1	9.1	4.6
Region total						
North	111.0	9.8	2.2	2.4	1.1	1.2
South	84.9	14.2	20.1	13.3	8.6	4.3
West	52.8	24.6	24.0	22.2	10.7	10.3
US total						
Large metropolitan	124.8	18.5	8.1	12.1	6.0	5.8
Other metropolitan	67.9	14.6	15.5	10.8	6.1	4.4
Nonmetropolitan	56.0	2.7	14.3	3.9	3.6	0.3

NOTE: The definition of regions corresponds to the standard census definitions, where the North represents the combined Northeast and Midwest census regions. When an individual metropolitan area overlaps regions, its statistics are assigned to the region in which its principal central city is located.

Large metropolitan areas are defined as metropolitan areas with a population in 1990 exceeding 1 million.

SOURCE: US Bureau of the Census, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 decennial censuses and 1985 estimates prepared by the Bureau's Population Division.

this 1970s metropolitan and regional change. Nonmetropolitan gains in the Sunbelt (South and West regions) resulted, in part, from the relocation of low-wage manufacturing activities into the Southeast (a regional restructuring effect), the growth of extractive industries in the Southwest and the mountain West (responses to period forces), and recreation- and retirement-related growth in Florida, Arizona, and other scattered areas (a deconcentration effect). Large Northern metropolitan-area declines were attributed by some observers to short-term recession-related effects of the mid-1970s, and by others to a longer-term restructuring of the economy (Morrison and Wheeler, 1976; Frey, 1990).

The reurbanization of the 1980s stands in contrast to the 1970s pattern. The revived urbanization is linked to a slight deceleration of redistribution to the Sunbelt regions when examined from a 30-year perspective (Table 1). While South and West regional growth in the 1980s continued to outpace

Northern growth by a wide margin, the differential has been reduced—particularly for the South and particularly for 1985–90. The greatest 1970s-to-1980s reductions in Sunbelt growth levels are seen for smaller and non-metropolitan areas, which contributed most substantially to South and West regional gains in the 1970s. At the same time, large Northern metropolitan areas have rebounded somewhat from their 1970s declines, leading to a slight increase in that region's decade-wide growth.

These shifts suggest that some of the strong period-related attractions of small Southern places have diminished over the 1980s and that several large Northern metropolises have benefited from restructuring or better economic times. The shifts were most pronounced during 1985–90 and are characteristic of particular locations within each region.

Coastal–interior contrasts

An additional geographic distinction that became significant for recent urbanization patterns separates the “interior” portion of each region from its “coastal” portion. (These are approximated by combinations of Census Divisions, listed in the note to Table 2.) This distinction makes plain that the recent growth declines in the South and West were concentrated in their interior divisions. The growth slowdowns were most severe for the interior South, where small metropolitan areas grew negligibly and nonmetropolitan areas declined in the latter part of the 1980s. Small metropolitan and non-metropolitan growth slowdowns in the Sunbelt's coastal divisions were far less severe than in the interior divisions (see Table 2). Indeed, smaller metropolitan areas in the South and West coastal divisions show fairly consistent levels of growth over the three decades.

Within the North, also, small metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas displayed disparate patterns for interior and coastal divisions. While these areas showed lower levels of 1970s growth than their counterparts in the Sunbelt, Northern interior small areas fared even worse in the 1980s. Non-metropolitan areas in this section registered negligible—then negative—growth as the decade wore on. In contrast, coastal small metropolitan areas showed increased growth during 1980–90. This category of Northern coastal areas grew faster than the large metropolises of the region.³

The interior growth slowdowns of small metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas in the 1980s were strongly linked to economic period influences. Worldwide and cyclical forces, which stimulated the sharp 1970s growth in the smaller interior areas of the United States, reversed. The weak early-1970s dollar, encouraging labor-intensive manufacturing in many small Southern and Northern Rustbelt areas, grew stronger in the early 1980s. This, combined with new recessions, led to reduced demand in these areas. Worldwide agricultural shortages, which stemmed population declines in farming areas during the 1970s, turned into an agricultural surplus in the

TABLE 2 Decadal population change (percent) by region and metropolitan category separately for interior and coastal divisions of regions, 1960-90

Region and metropolitan category	Interior			Coastal		
	1960-70	1970-80	1980-90	1960-70	1970-80	1980-90
North						
Large metropolitan	13.3	1.2	3.1	11.0	- 2.6	2.6
Other metropolitan	12.9	5.6	2.1	8.5	4.8	5.2
Nonmetropolitan	1.7	7.4	- 1.8	5.8	10.2	5.6
South						
Large metropolitan	31.0	28.4	21.3	30.9	20.7	22.8
Other metropolitan	12.8	19.4	9.3	19.7	22.9	19.2
Nonmetropolitan	0.4	15.1	1.3	2.1	18.0	9.1
West						
Large metropolitan	34.2	39.6	24.9	28.4	17.1	24.0
Other metropolitan	32.4	42.8	24.7	21.0	26.6	21.6
Nonmetropolitan	4.5	30.7	11.5	15.4	30.4	17.4
Region total						
North	9.6	4.0	1.4	9.9	0.2	3.5
South	10.9	19.7	9.0	17.9	20.6	17.9
West	20.9	37.2	20.1	25.8	19.9	23.0
US total						
Large metropolitan	17.6	9.1	9.2	19.1	7.5	13.7
Other metropolitan	14.2	14.8	7.8	15.1	16.2	14.5
Nonmetropolitan	1.4	12.6	0.9	5.0	17.3	9.4

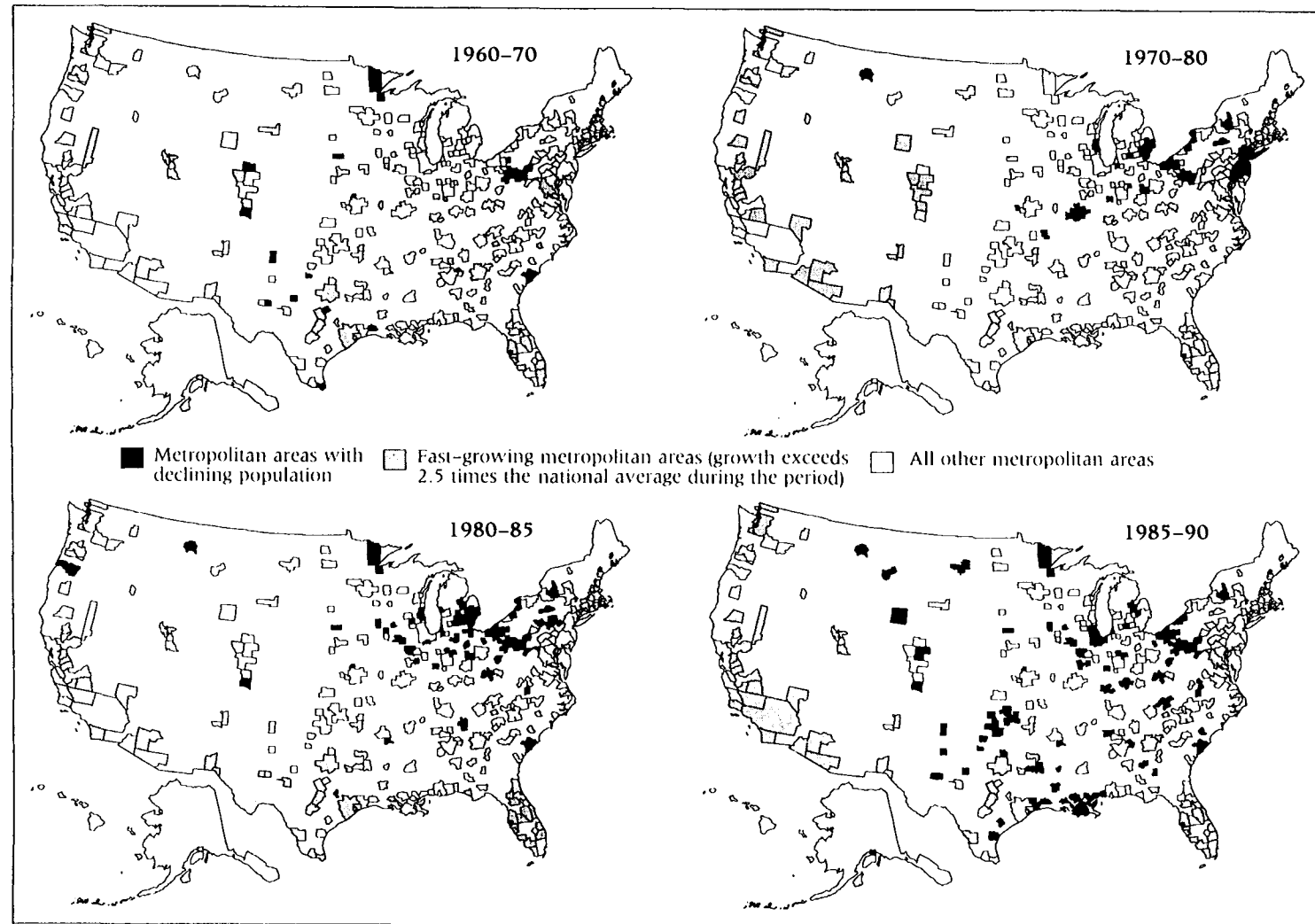
NOTE: Interior and coastal portions of regions are defined in terms of census divisions, as follows. North Coastal: New England and Middle Atlantic divisions; North Interior: East North Central and West North Central divisions; South Coastal: South Atlantic division; South Interior: East South Central and West South Central divisions; West Coastal: Pacific division; West Interior: Mountain division.

For other definitions see Note to Table 1.

1980s—effecting widespread declines in the rural and small-town Midwest and in parts of the South. The changing fortunes of the mining and petroleum industries had a severe impact on communities of all sizes—in Appalachia, the mountain West, and the Southwest. Many of these areas grew at exceptionally high rates in the 1970s and early 1980s, but, with the fall of worldwide petroleum prices toward mid-decade, boom turned to bust fairly quickly (Beale, 1988).

The generally higher level of growth for areas in the coastal sections of their respective regions results in part from particular economic specialties such as the recreation and retirement industry in Florida, in Las Vegas and Reno in Nevada, and in Atlantic City, New Jersey. It is also explained by the more diversified economies that these areas possess owing to their strong links to the broad urban networks in their coastal regions. In particular, small metropolitan areas that lie at arm's length from major metropolises are able

FIGURE 2 Geographic pattern of population change in metropolitan areas of the United States over four intervals between 1960 and 1990



to attract both employers and residents in search of somewhat lower labor and housing costs. The growth prospects for large coastal metropolises in all three regions improved considerably throughout the 1980s. Explanations for their changed fortunes are taken up below.

Decline and growth of individual areas

The 1980s growth of individual metropolitan areas, like the broader patterns just discussed, reflects trends toward reurbanization, somewhat slower Sunbelt growth, and greater coastal growth within regions. These trends became accentuated in 1985–90 after the economic shocks of the early 1980s had subsided. (See the four maps in Figure 2.)

Declining areas

Although the number of declining metropolitan areas has increased from 21 in the 1960s to 82 in the late 1980s, their characteristics seem to have come full circle over this period (see Table 3). In both the 1960s and late 1980s, the majority of declining areas were located in the South and West, in the interior part of the country, and had populations of less than 250,000. Of the four periods shown, the 1970s was the most distinct—the majority of declining areas were medium or large sized and located in the North. These size and geographic characteristics reflect the variety of period, deconcentration, and restructuring influences that operated during the 1970s. The composition of declining areas in 1980–85 represents a spreading of Northern deindustrialization to smaller-sized areas and the period-induced manufacturing declines in small Sunbelt areas.

The changing composition of declining areas between the early and late 1980s is more complex. It reflects both the late-1980s adaptations of the Northern interior Rustbelt areas to the early-1980s economic shocks, and the responses of many Southwest and mountain areas to the petroleum-price declines of mid-decade. The shift in geography of metropolitan declines is dramatic. The number of declining metropolitan areas located in the North decreased from 47 in 1980–85 to 34 in 1985–90, while the number of declining areas in the South and West increased from 12 to 48. The majority of the latter decliners were located in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

The early-1980s-to-late-1980s shifts in declining metropolitan areas represent, in large measure, the vulnerability of small single-economy areas to shifting economic circumstances. This is consistent with longer-term urbanization patterns but is a departure from the “metropolis decline” pattern of the 1970s.

TABLE 3 Number of declining and fast-growing metropolitan areas classified by region and size category, 1960-90

Region and metropolitan category	Declining areas ^a				Fast-growing areas ^b				All metropolitan areas
	1960-70	1970-80	1980-85	1985-90	1960-70	1970-80	1980-85	1985-90	
North									
Large metropolitan	1	8	5	3	0	0	0	0	18
Medium metropolitan	2	5	14	9	0	0	0	0	35
Small metropolitan	6	9	28	22	3	1	0	2	65
South and West									
Large metropolitan	0	0	0	1	6	7	8	12	21
Medium metropolitan	1	0	4	10	6	14	17	19	60
Small metropolitan	11	1	8	37	21	37	22	16	85
North									
Coastal	5	10	13	8	0	0	0	0	43
Interior	4	12	34	26	3	1	0	2	75
South and West									
Coastal	2	0	8	11	20	29	28	34	82
Interior	10	1	4	37	13	29	19	13	84
Total	21	23	59	82	36	59	47	49	284

NOTE: Large metropolitan areas have end-of-period populations exceeding 1 million; medium metropolitan areas have end-of-period populations between 250,000 and 1 million; and small metropolitan areas have end-of-period populations under 250,000.

^a Declining metropolitan areas registered negative population growth for period.

^b Fast-growing metropolitan areas registered period population growth exceeding 2.5 times the national growth rate.

For other definitions see Note to Table 1.

Fast-growing areas

The changing composition of fast-growing metropolitan areas over the 30-year period is almost a mirror image of the declining areas. (Fast-growing areas are defined as those with growth rates exceeding 2.5 times the national growth rate.⁴) Over the 1970s, declining areas were less likely to be small or to be located in interior divisions of the country—the opposite of the case for fast-growing metropolitan areas. Between the 1960s and the 1970s, the number of small areas classified as fast-growing increased from 24 to 38, and the number of interior areas increased from 16 to 30. These small-area gains reflected the period attractions associated with manufacturing, extractive industries, and large cohorts of baby boom and elderly movers. As the 1980s wore on, the growth of many small boom areas declined. The number of small areas classified as fast-growing was reduced to 22 in 1980–85 and to 18 in 1985–90, with most of this decline located in the interior South and West.

Twenty-seven areas classified as fast-growing during both halves of the 1980s are located primarily in the coastal divisions of the Sunbelt. Eleven are located in Florida and seven in California. There is also a fair representation of large (million population and over) metropolitan areas among this group, which includes Orlando, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Diego, Dallas–Fort Worth, Atlanta, and Tampa–St. Petersburg.

Large metropolitan areas

The changing fortunes of large metropolitan areas in the United States contributed significantly to the redistribution reversals of the 1970s and to the reurbanization of the 1980s. The heavy disinvestment in manufacturing by many Northern areas during the earlier decade led to high rates of unemployment and unprecedented population declines and growth slowdowns. Seven of the North's 12 largest metropolitan areas lost population during the 1970s (see Table 4).

The regional restructuring perspective holds that a metropolitan area's recovery prospects depend on its ability to survive in an increasingly global economy. Cities that hold niches as corporate headquarters, advanced service centers, or centers of "knowledge-based" industries should benefit from agglomeration economies in the same way that centers of production and trade attracted population in the past.

The 1980s growth and decline patterns for large Northern metropolitan areas tend to support this view. New York, the country's premier corporate headquarters center, reversed its 1970s decline to a 1980s decade-wide gain that can be linked to the growth in its financial services industry. Similar gains were registered for Philadelphia and Boston, areas with strong knowl-

TABLE 4 Population change in the 25 largest metropolitan areas, 1970–80 and 1980–90

Region and metropolitan area	Population size in 1990 (millions)	Percent change	
		1970–80	1980–90
North			
New York	18.1	- 3.6	3.1
Chicago	8.1	2.0	1.6
Philadelphia	5.9	- 1.2	3.9
Detroit	4.7	- 0.7	- 1.8
Boston	4.2	0.8	5.0
Cleveland	2.8	- 5.5	- 2.6
Minneapolis–St. Paul	2.5	7.8	15.3
St. Louis	2.4	- 2.2	2.8
Pittsburgh	2.2	- 5.2	- 7.5
Cincinnati	1.7	2.9	5.1
Milwaukee	1.6	- 0.3	2.4
Kansas City	1.6	4.4	9.3
South			
Washington, D.C.	3.9	6.9	20.7
Dallas–Fort Worth	3.9	24.6	32.6
Houston	3.7	43.0	19.7
Miami	3.2	40.1	20.8
Atlanta	2.8	27.0	32.5
Baltimore	2.4	5.3	8.3
Tampa–St. Petersburg	2.1	46.0	28.2
West			
Los Angeles	14.5	15.2	26.4
San Francisco–Oakland	6.3	12.9	16.5
Seattle	2.6	14.0	22.3
San Diego	2.5	37.1	34.2
Phoenix	2.1	55.4	40.6
Denver	1.8	30.7	14.2

NOTE: Metropolitan areas are designated by their CMSA or MSA names (see note 2).

edge-based industries. Minneapolis–St. Paul and Kansas City did not lose population in the 1970s but, as strong service centers for their regions, experienced healthy 1980s growth. In contrast, Detroit, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh—areas with historically high concentrations of heavy industry—continued to register population declines in the 1980s.

Within the South and West, the most consistent 1980s population growth revivals occurred in large diversified service areas. These include areas with international trading and financial service concentrations such as Los Angeles and San Francisco–Oakland and those that serve as regional

and national advanced-service centers such as Atlanta, Dallas–Fort Worth, and Seattle. Many of these areas bore the brunt of recession-related growth slowdowns in the 1970s and then followed steady growth trajectories over the 1980s.

Some large Sunbelt areas that experienced high 1970s growth levels encountered sharp slowdowns in the 1980s. Two such areas, Houston and Denver, benefited from 1970s and early-1980s gains in oil and extractive industries, but, like many smaller specialized metropolitan areas in the nation's interior, saw growth levels plummet in the latter part of the 1980s. Other areas with high growth levels that are tied to particular specialties—such as Tampa–St. Petersburg in recreation, or San Diego in defense-related production—show considerable year-to-year fluctuation in those levels. For historical reasons, many of the areas that serve as knowledge-based or advanced-service centers are located in the coastal divisions.⁵ Other specialized metropolitan areas with spectacular but fluctuating growth levels (such as Miami, Tampa–St. Petersburg, and San Diego) are also located on coasts. These areas have contributed to the higher growth levels for the coastal divisions.

Determinants of metropolitan growth

Differences in growth across metropolitan areas of all sizes are influenced by change in the country's industrial and employment structure. Since 1960, the proportion of the labor force employed in manufacturing has decreased significantly, a decline offset by a corresponding increase in producer services—especially finance, insurance, real estate, and business and professional services. Areas specializing in such services were better poised in the 1980s to attract new businesses and population growth than those that remained specialized in old-line manufacturing.

This observation is supported by growth trends for metropolitan populations classified by the area's dominant industrial function⁶ (see Table 5). Population growth in manufacturing areas stood well below the national average in all three major regions for both the 1970s and 1980s. Because more of these metropolitan areas are located in the North than in other regions, the slowdown in manufacturing areas had a more significant effect on this region's overall growth. While the South benefited in the 1970s from the relocation of manufacturing from high-wage areas of the North, this growth proved to be short-lived as increased international competition in the 1980s made it difficult for US manufacturing to compete.

In contrast to the experience of manufacturing areas, areas specializing in financial and business services grew at about the national average in the 1970s and somewhat more rapidly than average in the 1980s. Areas with other industrial specialties explain further variations in metropolitan-area

TABLE 5 Population change (percent) in metropolitan areas classified by dominant industrial function, by region, 1970-80 and 1980-90

Dominant industrial function	North		South		West		Total		Number of areas	1990 population (millions)
	1970-80	1980-90	1970-80	1980-90	1970-80	1980-90	1970-80	1980-90		
Manufacturing	0.9	0.6	13.5	5.7	—	—	2.9	1.5	86	39.6
Financial/business services	- 0.2	4.4	26.1	22.9	20.4	23.3	10.9	14.5	48	107.6
Government/military	8.2	6.9	16.1	16.4	28.1	20.0	20.0	17.5	22	6.6
Medical/education	8.3	7.1	24.1	17.4	43.1	22.9	16.6	12.2	38	8.0
Resort/retirement	17.8	15.6	60.9	48.5	66.5	51.7	57.6	46.6	14	5.6
Mining/oil	0.6	- 9.4	19.4	2.9	40.2	- 14.8	12.6	- 2.4	10	1.4
Mixed	1.9	3.7	16.2	9.6	29.0	26.7	14.1	10.6	62	24.4
Total	0.8	3.0	22.0	17.4	22.7	23.9	10.0	11.6	280	193.2

NOTE: Metropolitan areas are categorized by dominant industrial function on the basis of employment in 1980, where: Manufacturing = 25 percent or greater in manufacturing; Financial/business services = 15 percent or greater in finance, insurance, real estate, business services, and other professional services; Government/military = 20 percent or greater in public administration or armed forces; Medical/education = 20 percent or greater in medical or education; Resort/retirement = 6 percent or greater in personal or entertainment services; Mining/oil = 7 percent or greater in mining or oil extraction; Mixed = all other areas.

In this table, metropolitan areas in the six New England states are defined on the basis of New England County Metropolitan Areas, leading to a smaller total number of areas than in Table 3.

For definition of regions see Note to Table 1.

and regional growth. Both government centers and medical/education centers responded to period forces of the 1970s and 1980s. About one-half of the government centers are small metropolitan areas with military bases, which experienced the effects of slower military growth in the 1980s than in the previous decade. The medical/education centers are also mostly small metropolitan areas with state universities. Growth in these areas was rapid in the 1970s as the baby boom cohorts completed college but slowed in the 1980s when enrollments stabilized. The greatest growth in both decades was observed for resort/retirement areas, such as Las Vegas and the smaller areas of southern Florida, although they accounted for a relatively small part of the total metropolitan population.

Finally, areas that specialized in oil exploration and mining activities contributed to the 1970s growth and subsequent 1980s decline in the interior South and West. The 1970s growth rates for these areas stood well above the average for the West and above the average for the country as a whole. These growth rates plummeted during the 1980s, reflecting the fall in oil prices.

Conclusion

This overview of US metropolitan growth in the 1980s suggests some return to traditional urbanization patterns, replacing patterns of growth heavily shaped by the industrial declines of the 1970s. Nonmetropolitan growth levels dropped considerably while metropolitan growth increased. As a group, large metropolitan areas registered higher gains than smaller areas. Growth in the Sunbelt region slowed somewhat, particularly in small interior areas and in the South. However, this interior growth slowdown was countered by a continued strong growth of large and moderate-sized metropolitan areas in the coastal divisions of the Sunbelt.

These new patterns stand in sharp contrast to the redistribution reversals of the 1970s observed also in many other industrialized countries. In retrospect, these US reversals constituted less of a "rural renaissance" than a response to short-term economic developments related to the energy crisis, lower labor costs, and the entry into the labor force of large baby boom cohorts. The early 1980s, with its recessions and high energy costs, retained some elements of the 1970s redistribution reversals. At that time, the population declines filtered down to small Northern industrial areas, while resource-based gains in small interior Sunbelt areas continued apace.

The US trends of the late 1980s are reminiscent of traditional metropolitan growth. They also tend to confirm that both the period and the regional restructuring explanations of the past two decades' redistribution patterns hold more validity than deconcentration explanations that forecast a continued dispersal of the national population. Clearly, period-specific

economic cycles and worldwide shifts in the demand for raw materials and natural resources have explained much of the "boom-and-bust" experience of small interior communities over the past 20 years. However, renewed population growth has also accrued to large metropolitan areas that hold certain economic niches in today's global postindustrial economy.

Consistent with the regional restructuring explanation of redistribution patterns, those areas that served as national and regional centers of finance, corporate headquarters, and advanced services were able to overcome 1970s manufacturing-related declines and the early-1980s recessions to display fairly consistent population growth. Other areas specializing in information, high technology, or knowledge-based industries have also shown gains. These observations, consistent with the experiences of some European metropolitan areas in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Frey, 1988; Champion, 1989), suggest that renewed, sustained metropolitan growth will occur in and around those developed-country cities that can capitalize on the new economic advantages of agglomeration.

On the other hand, growth prospects are less predictable in specialized areas, built around one or two main industries, that can give rise to boom-and-bust experiences such as those shown by Houston, Denver, and several resort and retirement areas over the past two decades. Moreover, poor growth prospects may be expected for small and large areas that are heavily tied to declining industries, unable to adapt to rising ones, and whose economic fortunes are tied to external decisions made in larger corporate headquarters or government centers. These characterizations apply to many smaller metropolitan areas and nonmetropolitan communities in the interior portions of the United States, as well as to some of the broad industrial regions in Europe, such as the Ruhr industrial region in Germany.

There is no doubt that cyclical shifts in the economy will continue to alter the geographic patterns of metropolitan growth for short periods. This was apparent during the recessions of the mid-1970s and early 1980s for areas that specialized in manufacturing and agriculture. And the economic downturns of the early 1990s are adversely affecting selected service-dependent areas. Yet the return to urbanization patterns that became evident in the last half of the 1980s indicates a continued preference among residents to live and work within large metropolitan areas. It also suggests the continued viability of areas that can achieve certain niches in today's post-industrial, global economy.

Notes

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1 These data were taken from revised 1985 annual county population estimates distributed by the US Bureau of the Census (1988) in a machine-readable data file.

2 The most common type of metropolitan area includes one or more central cities with combined populations greater than 50,000 along with surrounding counties (or towns in New England) that have strong commuting links. The metropolitan areas recognized as of 30 June 1990 include 264 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) and 20 additional Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (CMSAs). Newly defined in 1983, the CMSA is a large metropolitan complex, with at least one million population, that contains component areas known as Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas. For precise definitions, see Starsinic and Forstall (1989: 29).

3 Growth in these Northern coastal small

areas was higher in 1985–90 (3.6 percent) than in 1980–85 (1.6 percent).

4 Growth rates for fast-growing areas exceeded 33.6 percent for 1960–70, 28.6 percent for 1970–80, 13.6 percent for 1980–85, and 10.3 percent for 1985–90.

5 Many areas with these specialties originated as port cities and international trade centers, or were early locations for federal defense-related research and development activities (see Markusen and Carlson, 1989).

6 This classification system is broadly consistent with those used in Noyelle and Stanback (1984) and Frey and Speare (1988).

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