

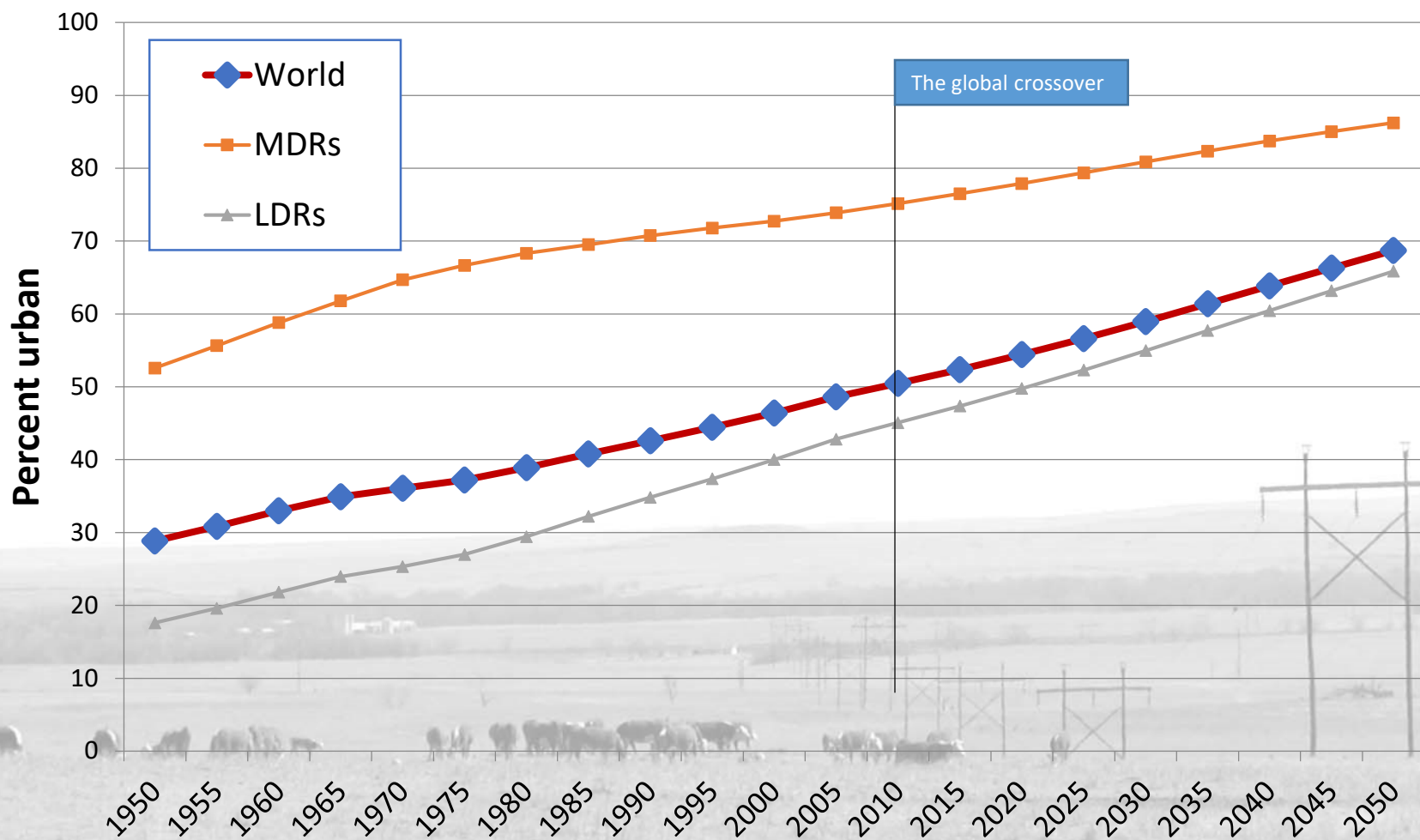
The Demography of Rural America

László J. Kulcsár

The Pennsylvania State University



Global urbanization trends



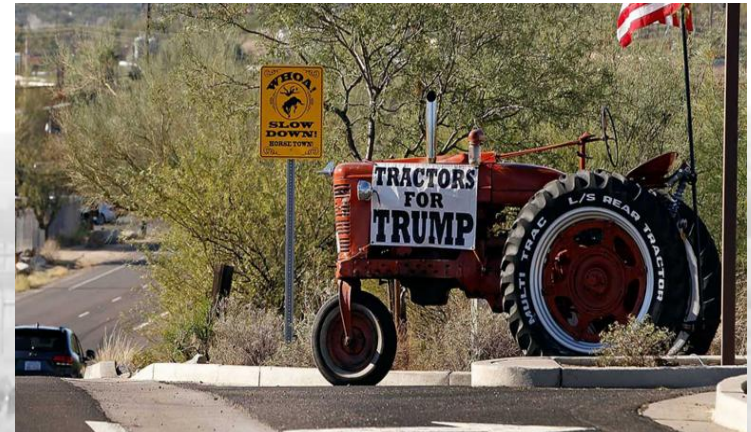
The rural narrative

- Until the 1970s, rural places were population reserves, with persistent outmigration and predictable, high fertility
- The nonmetropolitan turnaround
 - Changes in residential preferences
 - Rural economic diversification
- Demographic fluctuation and diverging pathways since the 1980s
 - Economic prosperity and demographic trends no longer go hand in hand (agricultural dependence)
 - Natural amenities have become more important
 - Proximity to urban is crucial
 - Many narratives

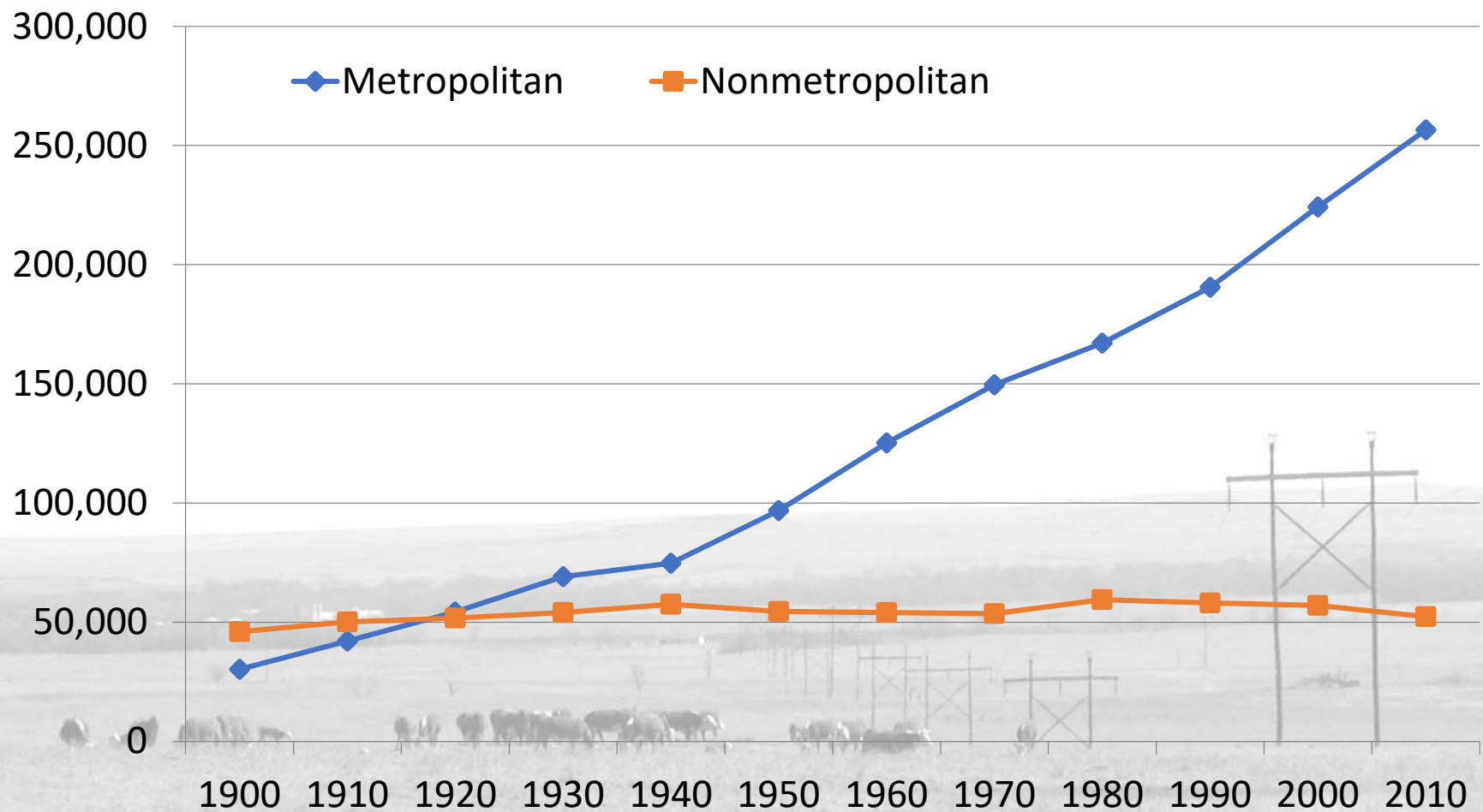


The rural narrative

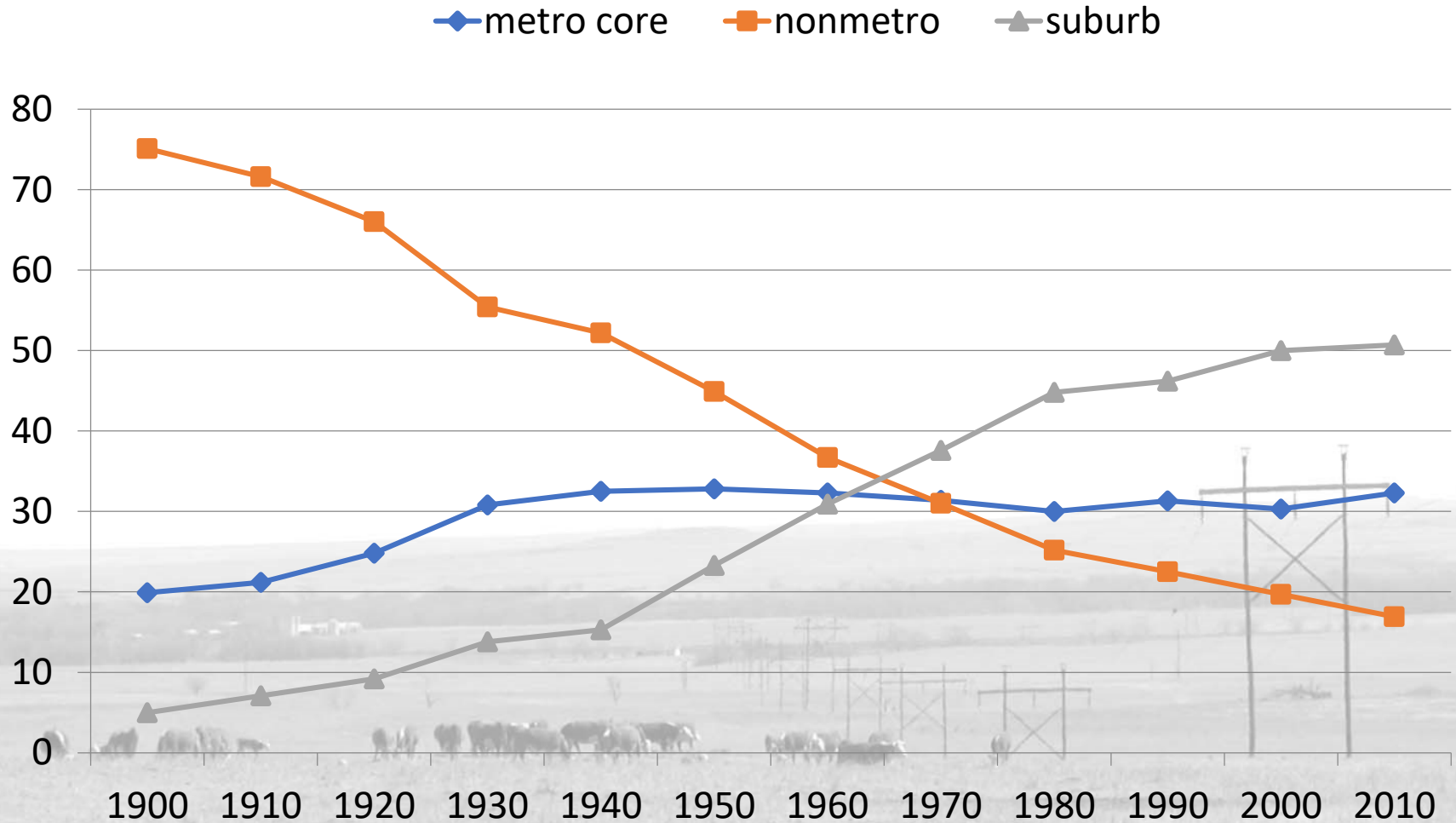
- Rural as a social construct (mostly from an urban perspective)
 - From production to consumption
 - The rural mystique
 - Rural is not a place anymore, but a lifestyle (for better or for worse)



US population, 1900-2010 (1000s)

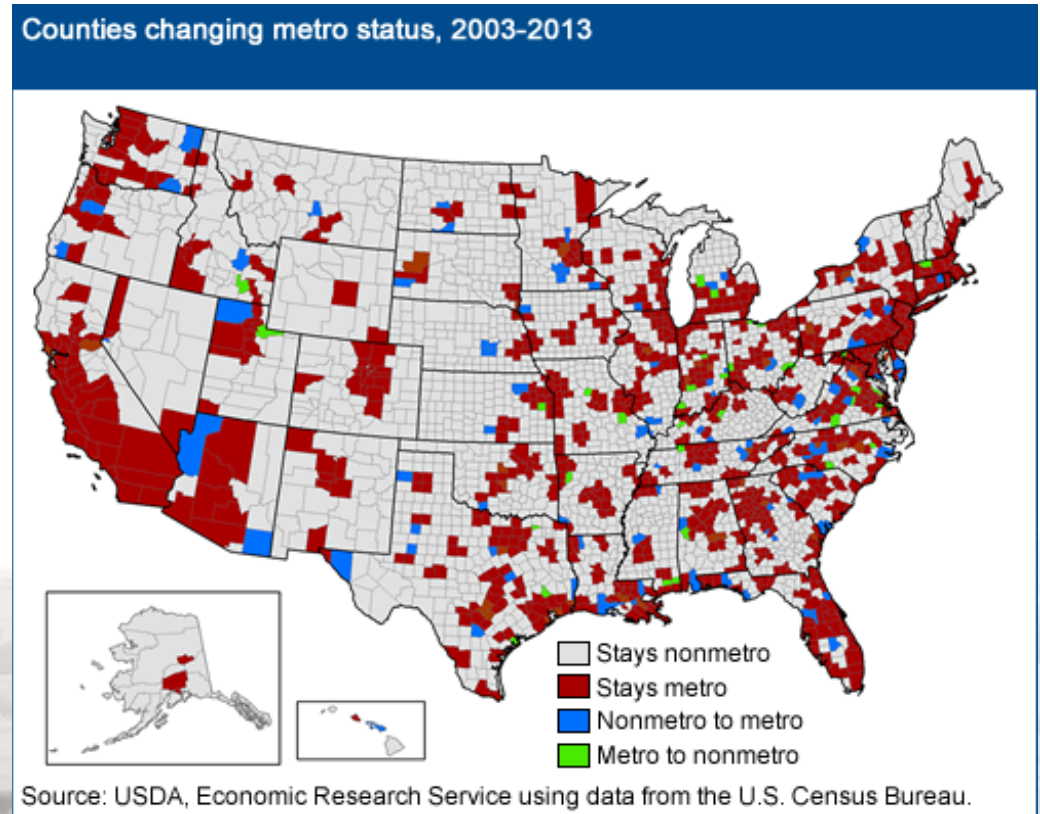


US population distribution, 1900-2010, %

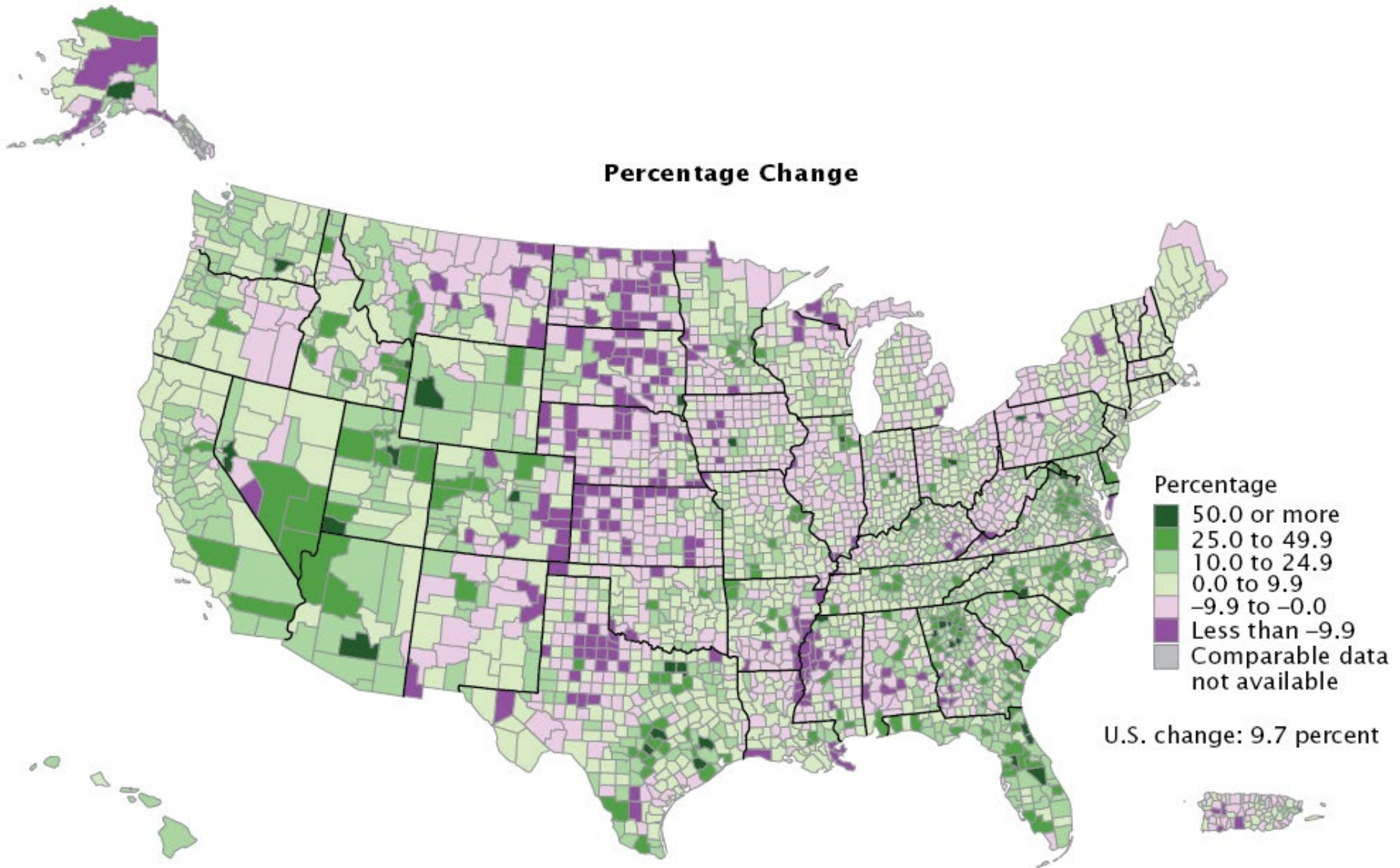


Urban reclassification

- Nonmetropolitan population was 46 million in 2016, an all-time low
- A lot of this erosion is due to reclassification
- A net loss of 4.9 million people in 2013

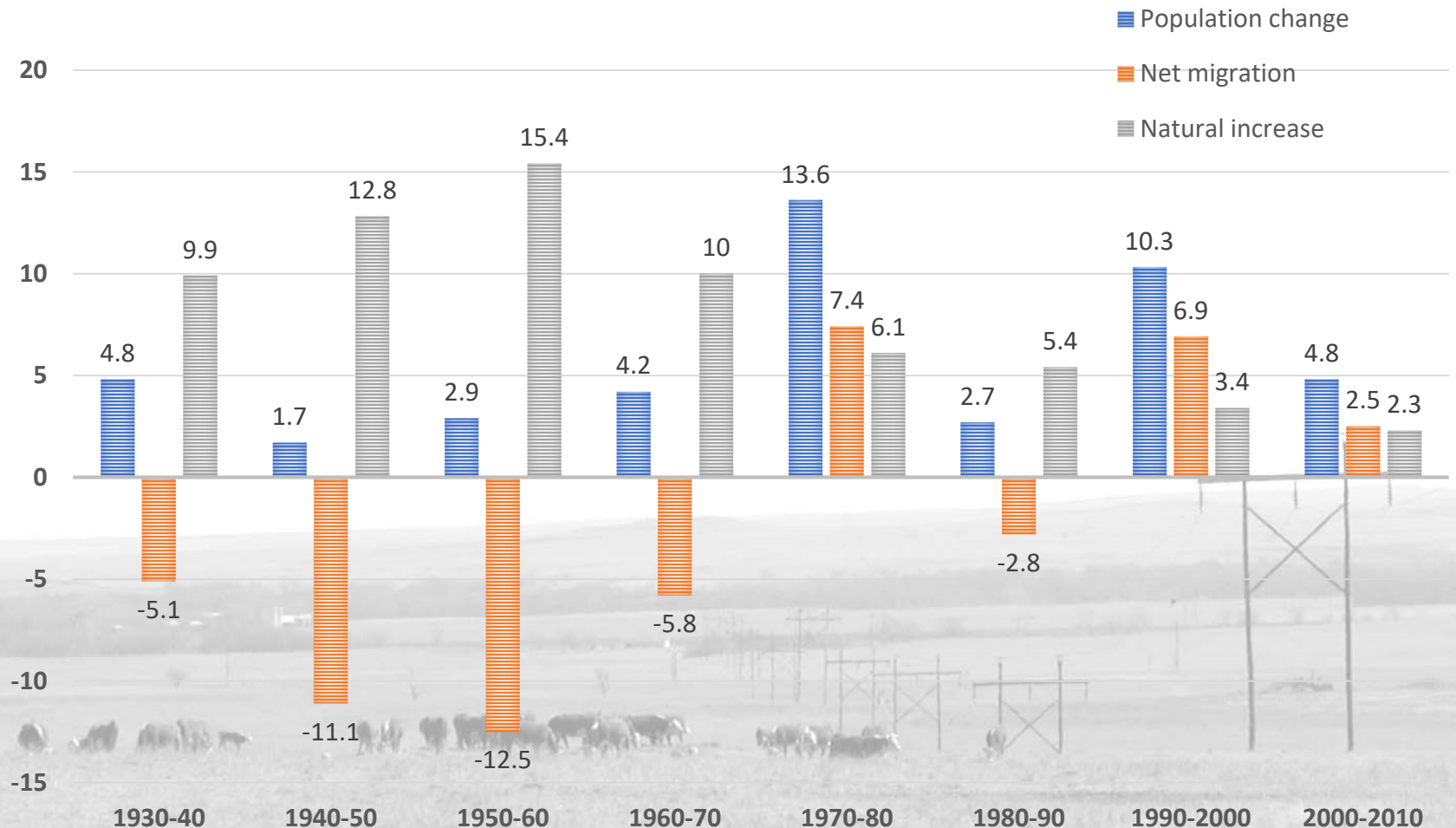


Population change, 2000-2010

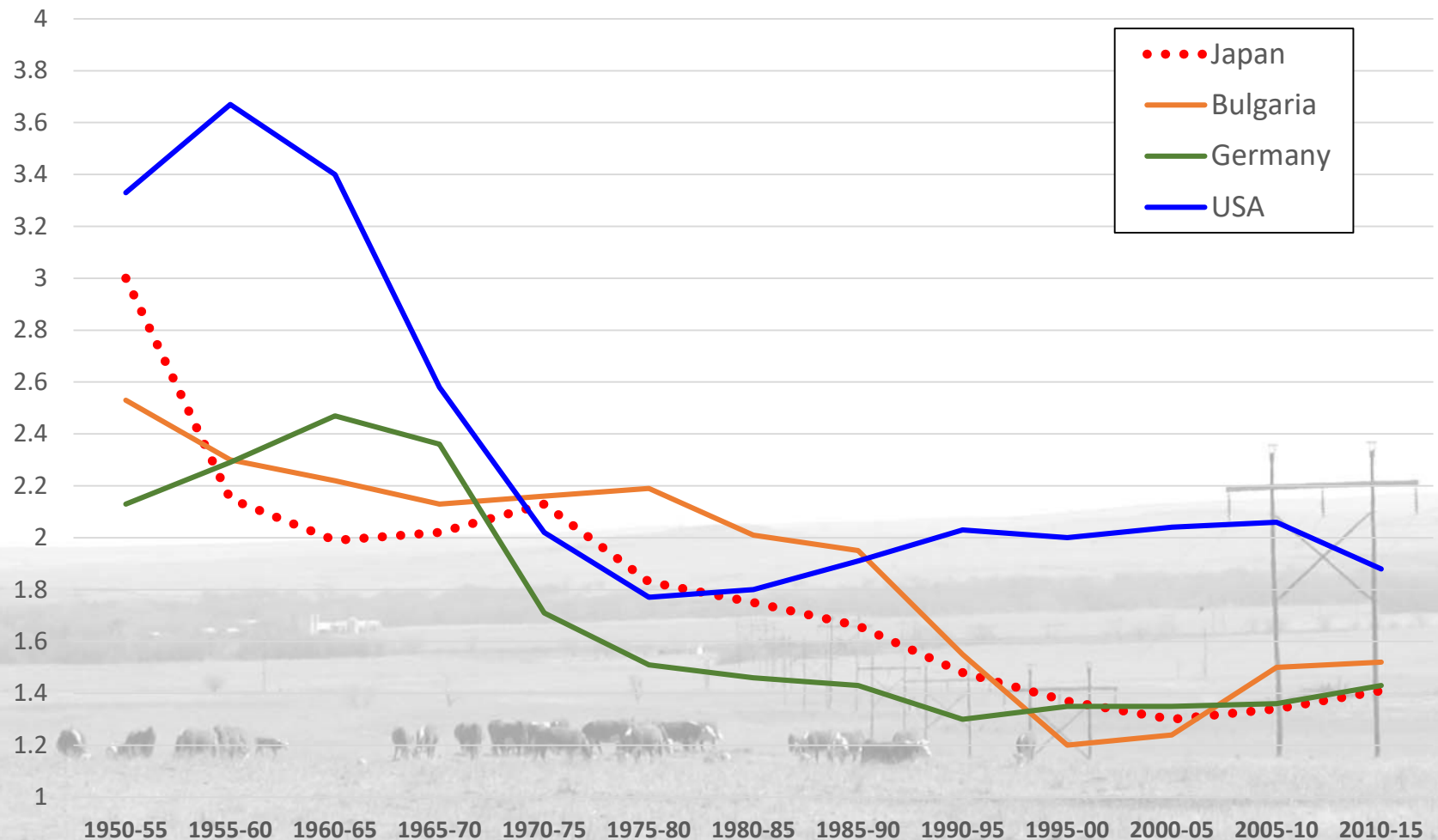


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census and Census 2000.

Percent population change in rural America

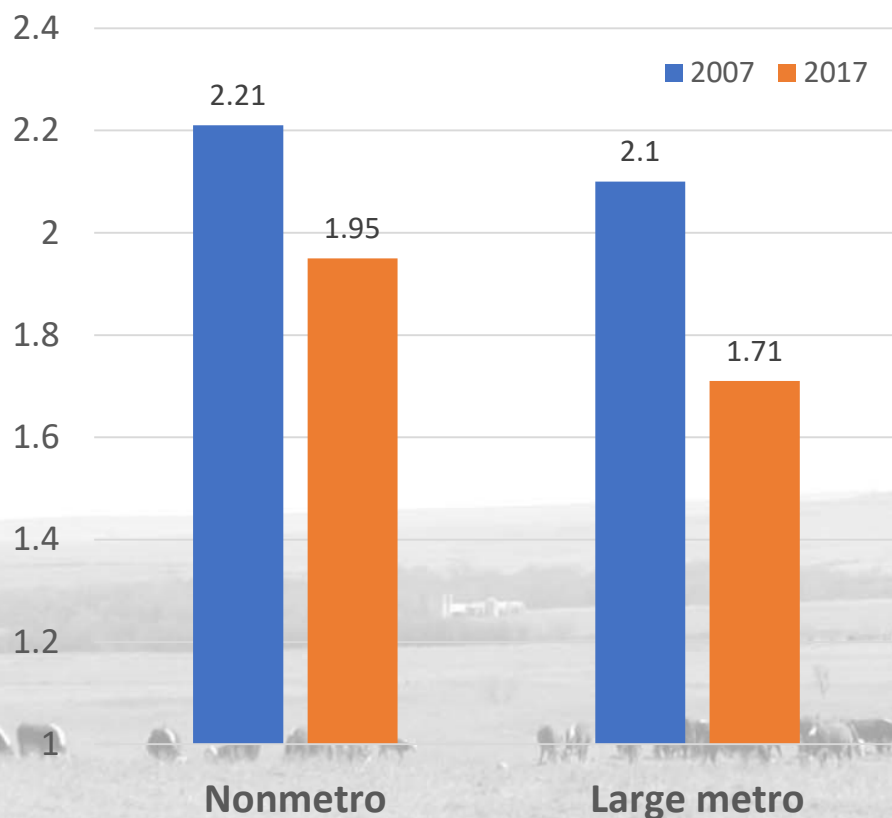


Total fertility rates, 1950-2015

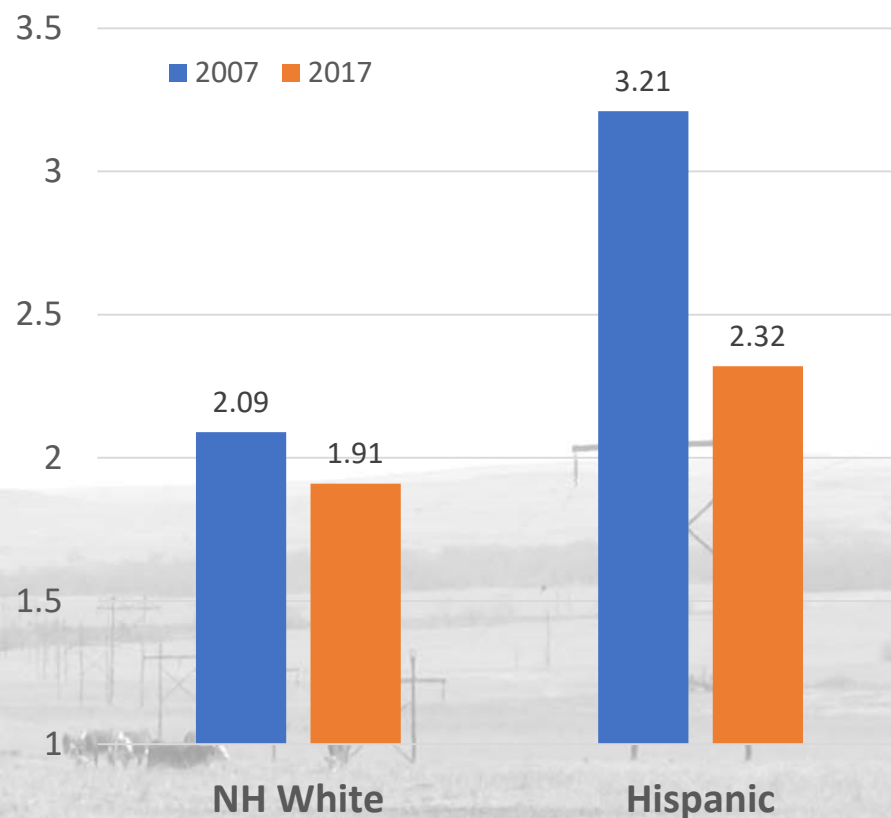


Fertility decline, 2007-2017

Total fertility rates by place



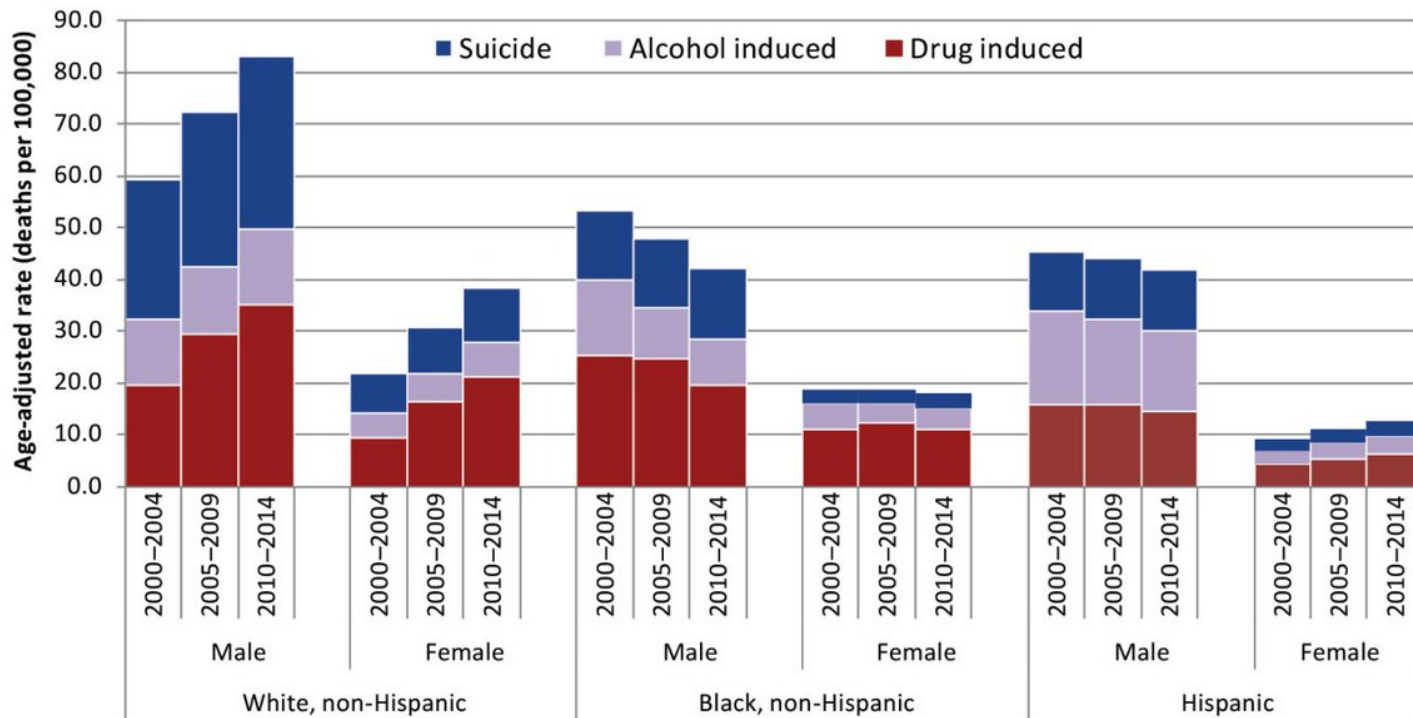
Total fertility rates by race, rural only



Mortality

- The national mortality stagnation and persistent rural mortality / morbidity disadvantage are exacerbated by the recent “deaths of despair”

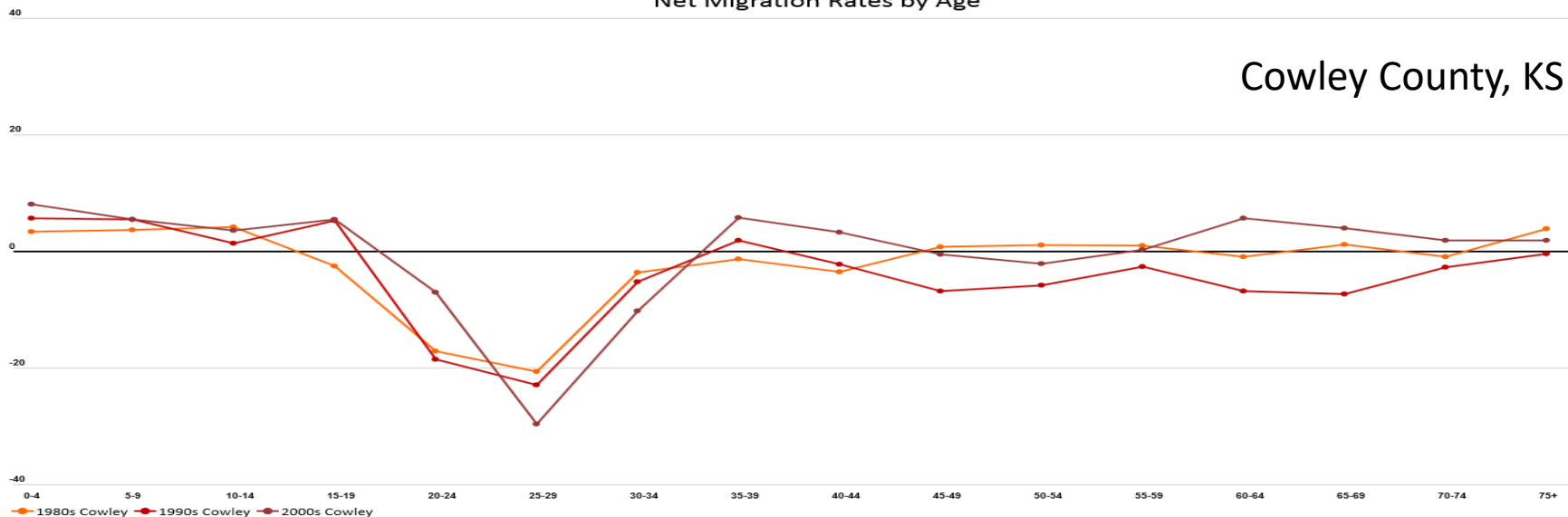
FIGURE 1. MORTALITY FROM DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND SUICIDE VARIES SIGNIFICANTLY BY RACE AND SEX (AGES 25–54)



Net Migration Rates by Age

Cowley County, KS

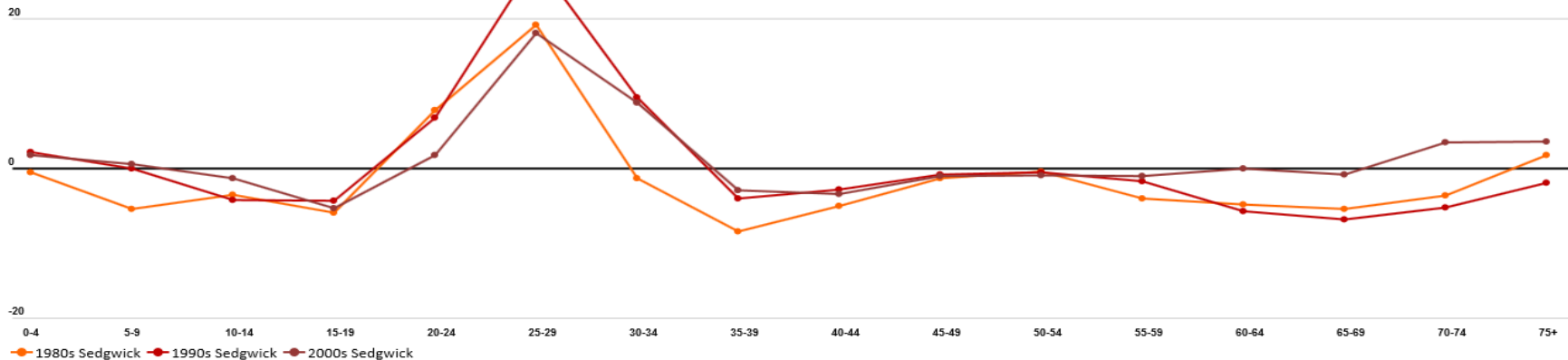
Net Migrants per 100 Individuals



Winkler, Richelle, Ken Johnson, Cheng Cheng, Jim Beaudoin, Paul Voss, and Katherine Curtis. Age-Specific Net Migration Estimates for US Counties, 1950-2010. Applied Population Laboratory, University of Wisconsin- Madison, 2013. Web.

Sedgwick County, KS

Net Migrants per 100 Individuals

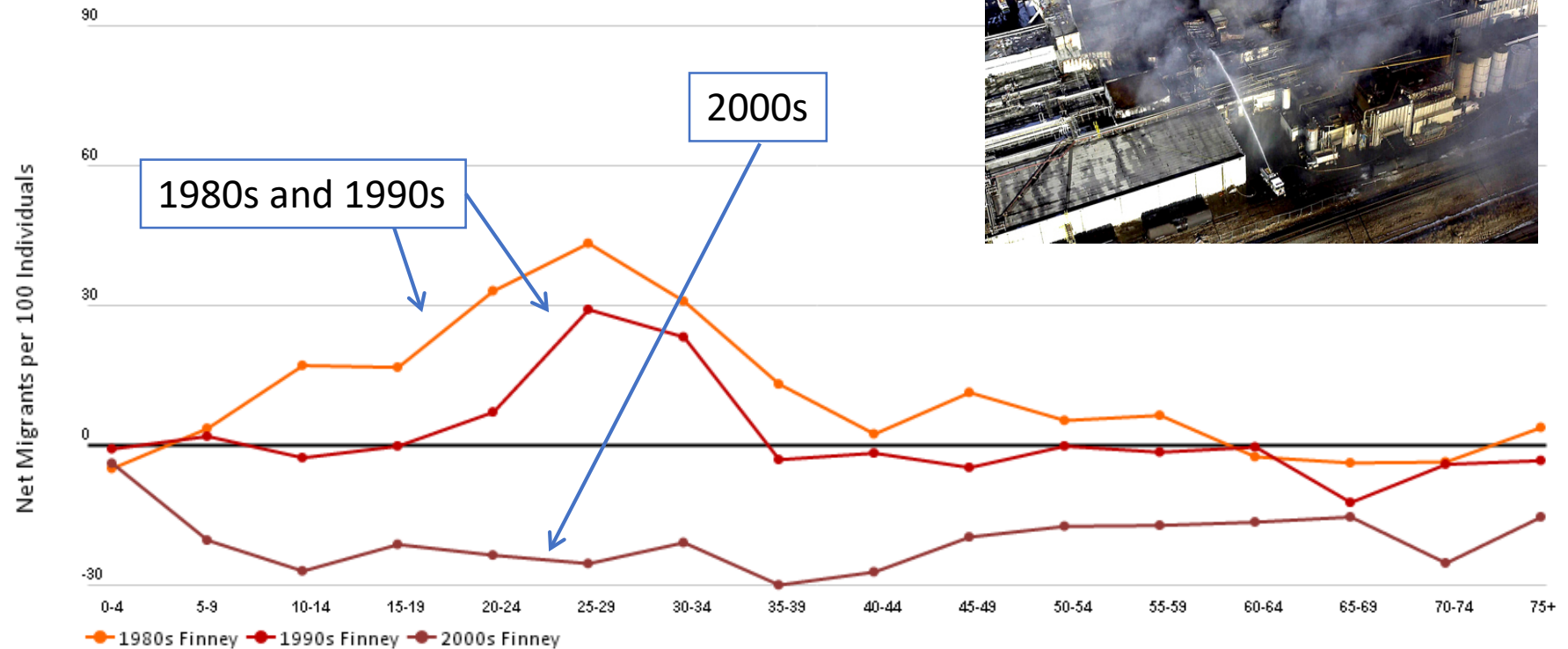


Winkler, Richelle, Ken Johnson, Cheng Cheng, Jim Beaudoin, Paul Voss, and Katherine Curtis. Age-Specific Net Migration Estimates for US Counties, 1950-2010. Applied Population Laboratory, University of Wisconsin- Madison, 2013. Web.

Net migration rates by age

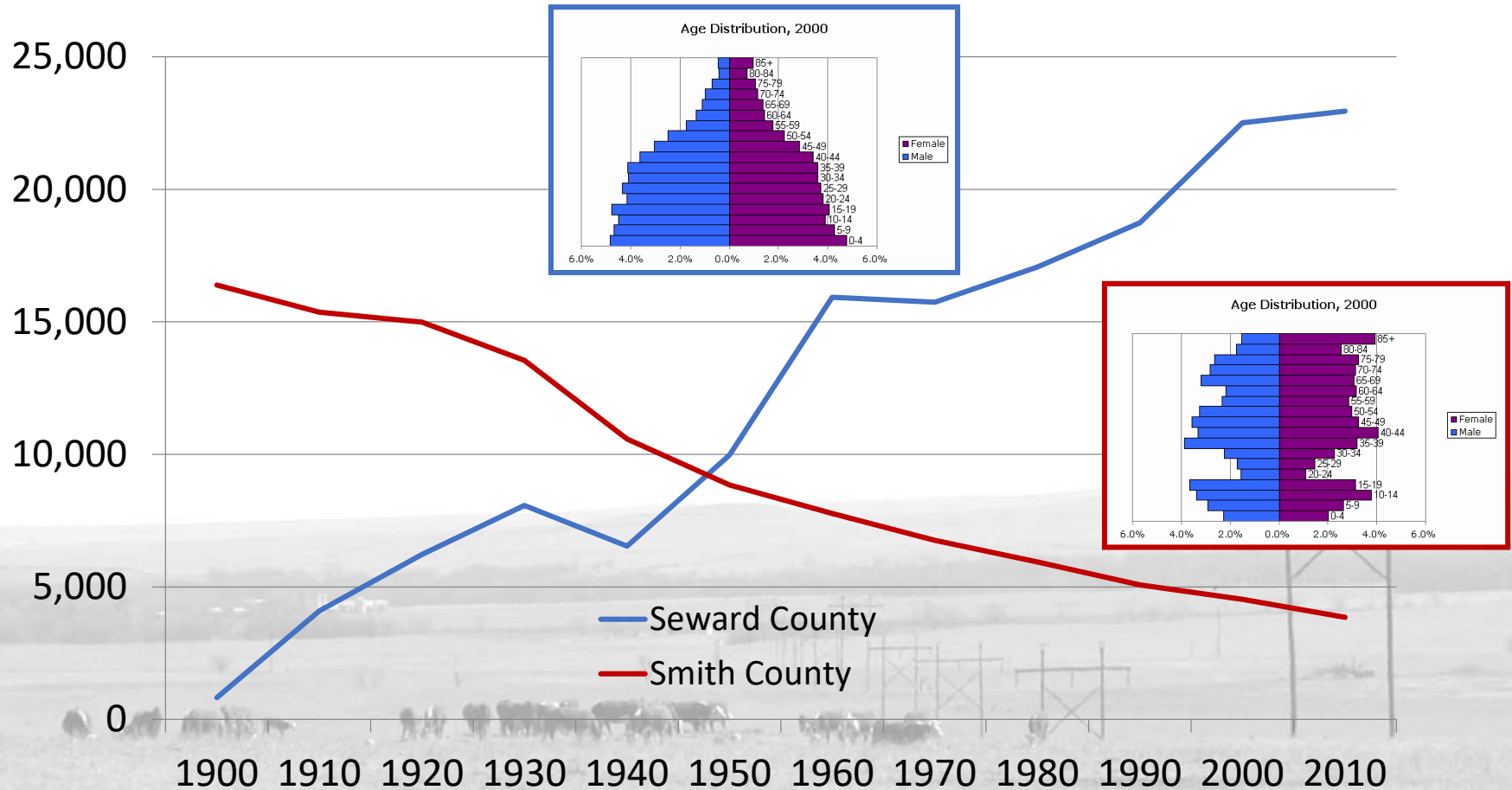
Finney County, KS

The Christmas fire, 2000

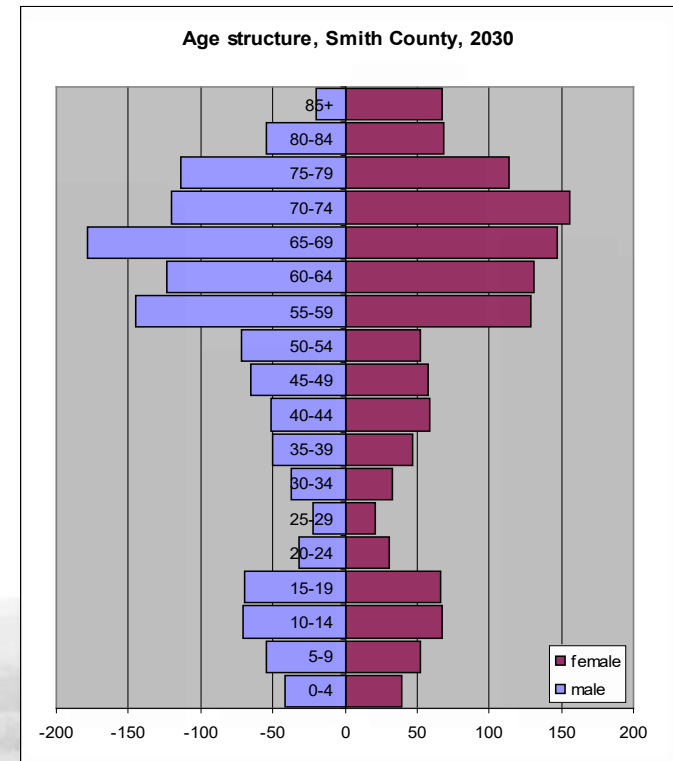
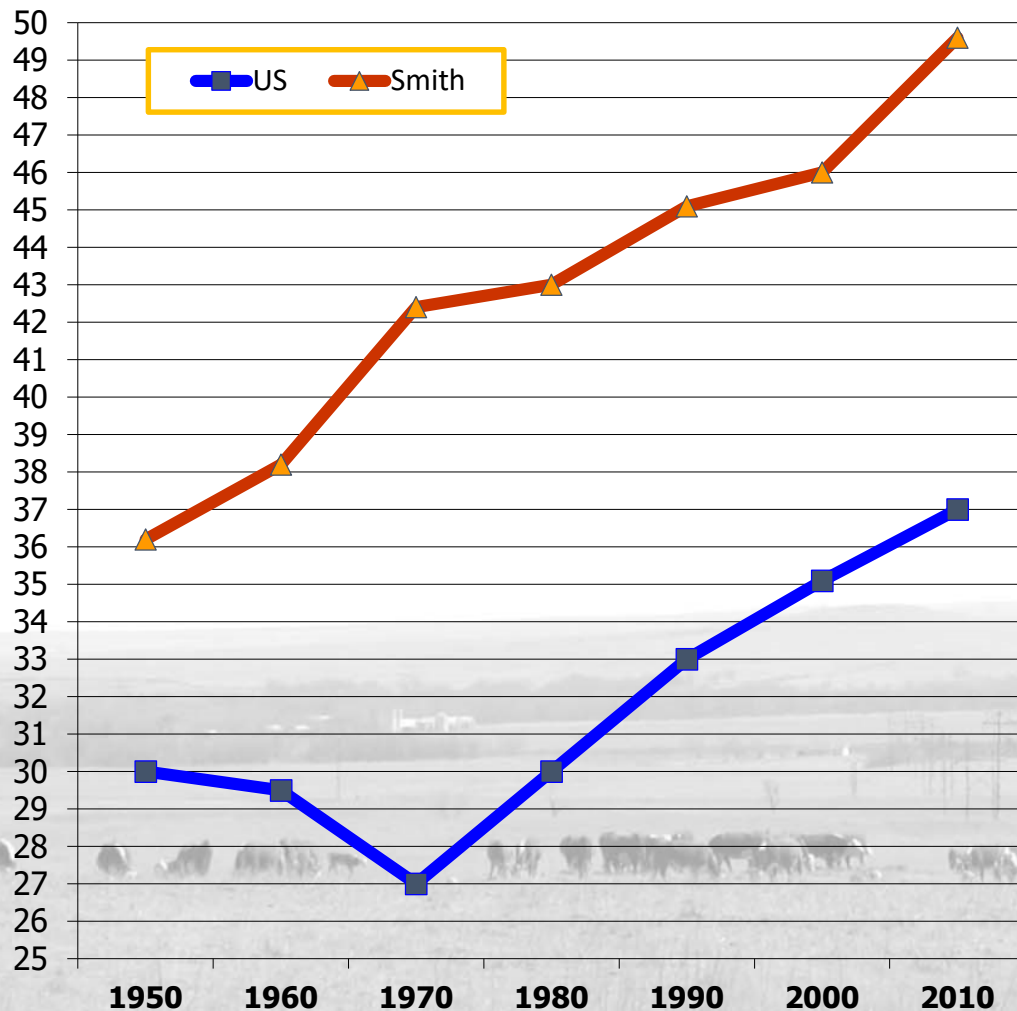


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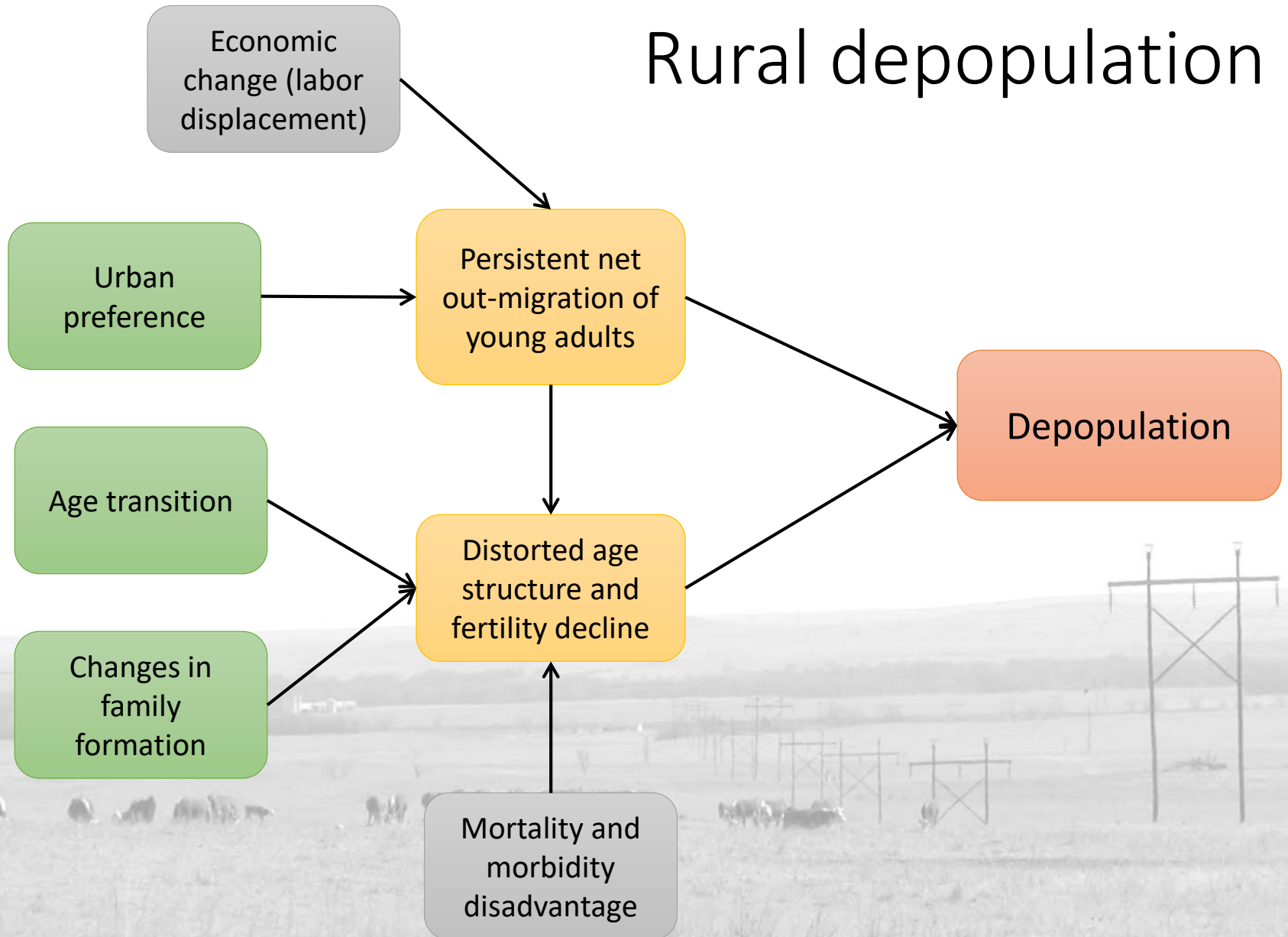
Population change, 1900-2010



Median age and projected age structure in Smith County, KS



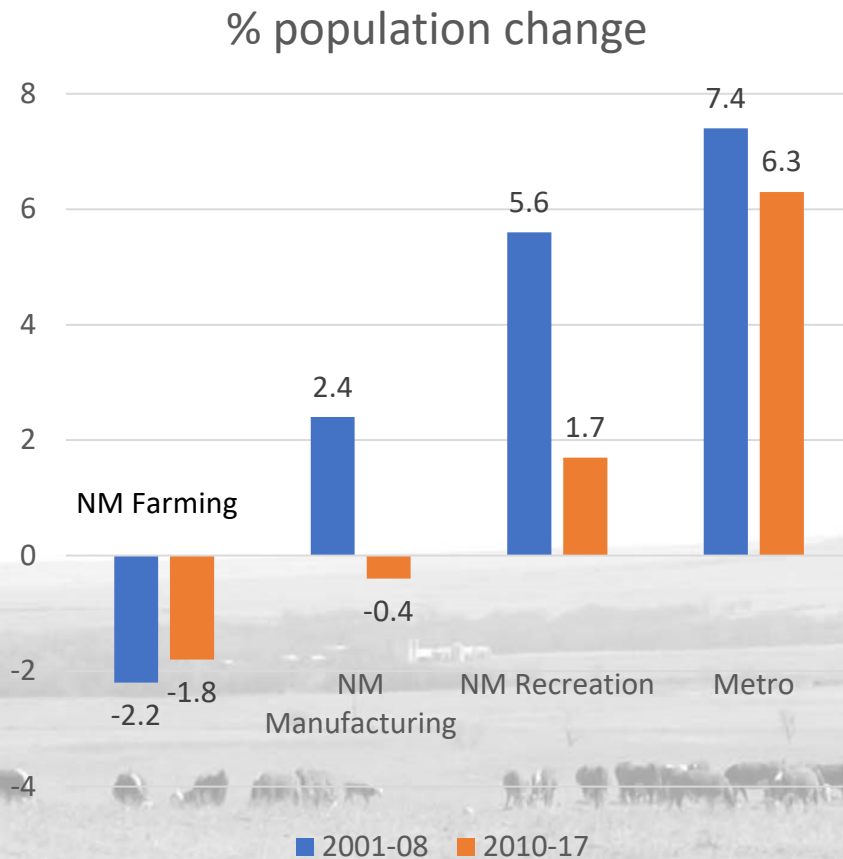
Rural depopulation



The vicious cycle

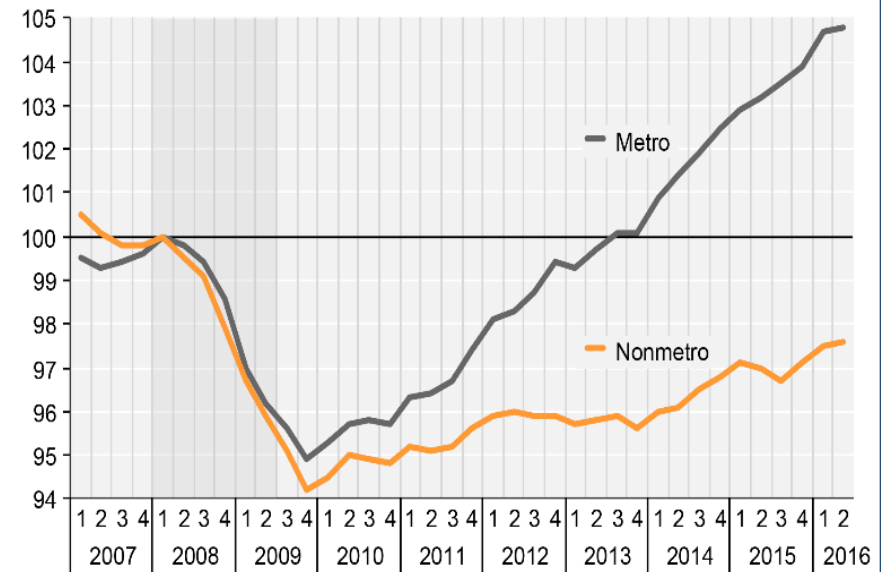


More on the Great Recession



U.S. employment, metro and nonmetro areas, 2007-2016 (quarterly)

Employment, index (2008 Q1=100)



Notes: Data are seasonally adjusted. Shaded area indicates recession period.
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS).

Conclusions I.

- Demographic trends will not change overnight
 - Demography is almost destiny, but not quite
- Rural fertility
 - Family formation norms will continue to follow the national trends
 - Aging in place will continue to remove reproductive capacity
 - Hispanic fertility will remain the key
- Mortality
 - Long-term, structural disadvantages are unlikely to change
 - New problems (opioids) disproportionately affect rural areas and populations
- Migration
 - Age-selective outmigration removes the most resourceful segment
 - Specific local conditions can create favorable environments for in-migration (natural amenities, proximity to metro, regional centers)

Conclusions II.

- Rural America has been facing more difficulties for several reasons
 - Greater concentration of vulnerable populations (morbidity challenges, aging in place)
 - Less diversified economies
 - Weaker institutions
 - Persistent revenue and service deficiencies
- Most of rural America will see more of the same, as the disadvantages are structural and (just like demography) change slowly over time
- Potential policy actions (Johnson and Lichter, 2019)
 - Economic growth centers (either regional urban or well-performing rural)
 - Boosting immigration and then integration
- No matter what, always keep the narrative in sight, as in our post-truth world, the ultimate political decisions are often based on emotions and partisan agendas instead of facts and science

Thank you.

