

SMALL-TOWN VIABILITY AND THE RURAL ECONOMY: SOUTHERN MANITOBA 1971-81

BY

ADISON LEE

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
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ABSTRACT

The growing concern with balanced regional development has led the politicians to pay attention to the redistribution of socio-economic wealth between the urban and rural regions. Regional development policies, on the one hand, are designed to maximize socio-economic well-being of a region regardless of rural or urban distinction. On the other hand, they are also intended to minimize the spatial differences in income, employment opportunities, living standards, and population growth between the urban and rural settlement systems.

Within the last two decades, the formulation and implementation of regional development policies in Manitoba had become even more complicated by the issue of population reversal away from metro Winnipeg to rural Manitoba small towns. Although regional planners welcome this geographic redistribution of economic and social activities, the underlying causes and consequences of such a phenomenon are not well understood.

In this thesis, attempts have been made to uncover the answers of such an unusual phenomenon in order to provide rational guidance for future small-town development. This research adopts the premises that regional planners ought to include not only economic factors but also social factors and spatial components in a comprehensive regional analysis. Equally important to the objective quality-of-life and economic activity indicators, the subjective components measuring rural residents' preferences for small-town living are also analyzed in depth.

The phenomenon of small-town population revival and levels of economic activities are reviewed in the first four chapters of this thesis and together form regional comparisons among the U.S.A., Canada, and Manitoba. The questions of small-town viability and rural economy in the Rural Southern Manitoba region are analyzed by means of statistical modelling in Chapter Five. Throughout that chapter, small towns with different population thresholds and characteristics are incorporated for formulating various regional policies. In the last Chapter, policy implications directed to population growth, manufacturing development, and tertiary employment for small-town development are identified.

The empirical findings revealed that subjective factors are positively linked to small-town population growth although they are not correlated with economic development. Based on the findings, some important policy implications are recommended, albeit couched to take into account local needs and resources.

In essence, this work provides the understanding of causes and consequences of small-town growth, future research direction in this area, and regional planning policies for the Manitoba government.

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REGIONAL RESEARCH AND THE STUDY OF SMALL-TOWN VIABILITY

Urbanization has been a major factor in the development of societies throughout the world since the turn of the century. Before 1850 no society could be described as predominately urbanized. Yet today, urbanized cities can be found from the underdeveloped countries to the very highly-industrialized nations. Associated with the urbanization process are flows and counterflows of people from small villages to large cities; from the inner cities to the suburbs; from the suburbs to the countryside; and from the suburbs back to the inner city neighbourhoods. Obviously there is a movement of population continuously searching for ideal places to live and stay. Prior to 1970, the majority of the people settled down in the metropolitan centres. While everyone at that time thought that rural to urban migration was an inevitable trend, census material released throughout the 1970s indicated that small towns across the North American continent were the growth centres. The unexpected population turnaround put most regional planners in a new dilemma. On the one hand, the old problems remained; namely, those of metropolitan areas faced with issues of declining functions of central business districts, urban sprawl, ghetto expansion, air and water pollution, traffic congestion, social disorder and shrinking city tax revenue due to the flight of industrial, commercial and retail establishments.¹ On the other hand, however, migration turnaround also

¹ Robert E. Firestine (1977), "Economic Growth and Inequality, Demographic Change, and the Public Sector Response" In D.C. Perry and A. J. Watkins eds., The Rise of Sunbelt Cities, Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage, pp. 191-210.

brought along undesirable side effects for small towns. For example, some communities worried about the destruction of agriculturally-productive lands by urban expansion.² Other people were concerned that the new migrants into nonmetropolitan areas were older and less skilled than those who had left. Moreover, Summers points out that industrial development does not necessarily bring with it increased community well-being. Some new manufacturing plants often cost the rural community more than it gains.³ Other negative consequences are also cited by a number of writers. The consequences may be manifested through competition in work institutions,⁴ in alteration of the stratification system,⁵ in the residential segregation of newcomers and oldtimers,⁶ in possible disagreements on priorities for neighbourhood services and institutions,⁷ and possible conflicts in cultural interests, taste, and life styles.⁸ Nevertheless, one may also argue that the population growth in the nonmetropolitan areas can also bring

² William Alonso (1977), "Surprises and Rethinkings of Metropolitan Growth: A Comment." International Regional Science Review, vol.2, no. 2, p. 172.

³ Gene F. Summers (1976), "Small Towns Beware: Industry Can be Costly." Planning, no.4, pp. 20-21.

⁴ Edna E. Raphael and Tom Gillaspay (1974), "Population Redistribution and Industrial Change in Nonmetropolitan Labor Forces" in Wilbur Zelinsky et al. eds., Population Change and Redistribution in Nonmetropolitan Pennsylvania, 1940-1970. Report Submitted by Population Issues Research Office, Pennsylvania State University, to the Center for Population research, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Washington, D. C.

⁵ A. C. Sectorsky (1955), The Exurbanite. New York: J. B. Lippincott.

⁶ Wilbur Zelinsky, et al. eds., op. cit.

⁷ Gordon F. De Jong (1974), "Residential Preference Patterns and Population Redistribution" In Wilbur Zelinsky et al. eds., op. cit.

⁸ A. C. Sectorsky (1955), op. cit.

economic prosperity, higher living standards, greater community satisfaction, better social services as well as a balanced growth between urban and rural regions if appropriate planning policies are well administered. Unfortunately, according to the population estimates for 1980-83, urban America was growing faster than rural America again. This latest phenomenon leads one to suspect that the population turnaround in the 1970s is definitely terminated. Nevertheless, the controversial and unpredicted population phenomenon has important policy implications for both the rural economy and rural planning.

As a microcosm of the North American situation, Manitoba also had experienced the effects of population reversal in the 1970s. However, no up-to-date population census information is available to indicate that revived urban growth had happened in Manitoba in the early 1980s. Without a comprehensive study on the phenomenon of population turnaround and the causes of the latest urban growth, it is impossible to effectively plan for Manitoba small towns. Furthermore, the positive and negative effects of population turnaround which may occur in rural Manitoba are not well known. Should we encourage developments in rural areas? Should we re-allocate more resources for rural planning? Will the phenomenon of population turnaround in rural Manitoba persist in the 1980s despite the U.S. trend? What are the causes and consequences which may affect small-town viability? What are the long-term and short-term regional planning and policy implications for the Manitoba government? For the above reasons, research into Manitoba small-town population change is both timely and justified.

In this research paper, five major emphases will be presented in a systematic fashion. They are:

1. Review of literatures on recent nonmetropolitan growth. The path breaking work undertaken by U.S. researchers will provide some insights and perspectives for Canadian small-town study. Although some regional growth patterns in the U.S. may have somewhat different causes and effects as compared to Canada, nevertheless, the close socio-economic and demographic similarities between North Dakota and Manitoba as well as Michigan and Ontario may well mirror each other. Consequently, an overview of the U.S. situation is a necessary prerequisite for considering the Manitoba and Canada situations.
2. Examining the historical nonmetropolitan growth in Canada with special emphasis on Manitoba. To understand the current population movement, anticipate future migration trends, and formulate government policy for rural development, one should not ignore the importance of historical development of a region. Since population distribution is a reflection of socio-economic and demographic structures in a system, the understanding of temporal migration trends will enable us to discern the evolution of population changes in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. Unique local factors may also contribute to the development of migration patterns that are somewhat different from other regional migration trends. Therefore, the formulation of local development policy should be sensitive to its local needs. Without giving consideration to local factors and

historical background, one may not be able to formulate appropriate local policy.

3. Analyzing the model of small-town viability in the prairie provinces. Various projects have analyzed and characterized small-town viability at a national scale. However, some significant but limited work has been done on Manitoba. This section will focus on economic as well as non-economic factors that influence small-town growth or decline in Manitoba. Moreover, theoretical and explanatory work will be examined in the small-town viability model-building stage.
4. Determining a model for nonmetropolitan growth in Manitoba. Since the analysis adopts a quantitative approach, elaborations of methodology and statistical techniques are necessary. In addition, a detailed discussion on the selection of variables and observations will follow. Findings of nonmetropolitan growth will also be presented in depth. Finally, a calibrated nonmetropolitan growth model will be proffered for Manitoba.
5. Policy implications and future research. Much more work needs to be done on long-term regional planning for rural Manitoba. Future research should not only focus on economic expansion, but attention to the improvement of community satisfaction is a prime concern.

Collectively, then, this dissertation provides a comprehensive study of the causes and consequences of the recent small-town viability question in rural Manitoba.

THE NORTH AMERICAN NEXUS

DOCUMENTATION OF THE POPULATION TURNAROUND AND NONMETROPOLITAN GROWTH IN THE U.S.A.

For decades the urbanization of economic opportunities coupled with farm mechanization led simultaneously to an increasing concentration of population in urban areas and decreasing concentration in rural areas. With a declining need for farm labour, high rural fertility rates and economic stagnation, the employment opportunities in nonmetropolitan areas have traditionally fallen far short of rural needs. The movement off the farm and into the cities that was inherent in this process was sustainable because of the advantages to firms of location in large urban centres. There, geographic concentration allowed firms to take advantage of scale and agglomeration economies, and improved access to markets and suppliers allowed them to earn higher profits.⁹ This movement, together with natural increase in population and international migration, fed the development of the national urban economy.¹⁰

Although there was nonmetropolitan population revival occurring in the 1970s, there is recent evidence, however, of a new trend (1980-1983) in which metropolitan areas are growing more rapidly and gaining net

⁹ James A. Chalmers and Michael J. Greenwood (1977), "Thoughts on the Rural to Urban Migration Turnaround," International Regional Science Review, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 167.

¹⁰ Peter A. Morrision and Judith P. Wheeler (1978), "Rural Renaissance in America? The Revival of Population Growth in Remote Areas," Population Bulletin, vol. 33, no. 2, April, p. 3.

migrants at a higher rate than is the nonmetropolitan territory. If this trend goes on, then the past notion of nonmetropolitan population turnaround and revival of small towns can no longer serve as guides for understanding future population movement and small-town growth in the U.S.A. Therefore, these two contradictory phenomena deserve better attention and detailed investigation if appropriate regional policies need to be formulated.

Early Migration and Industrialization in the U.S.A.

Historically, population movement has followed the path of industrial development. In the pre-industrial era in North America, the population of towns was very small, and manufacturing industries were clustered around water-fronts for river or sea transportation. In the early industrial era, new factories had to locate close to the city where business activities, labour supplies, raw materials, and internal markets were available. The rapid development of the North American railroad network in the middle and late nineteenth century reinforced the advantages of central areas in most urban concentrations. As noted by Pred, the railroad was particularly influential in the evolution of manufacturing districts near the core of midwestern metropolises.¹¹ New manufacturing technology continued to increase at an exponential rate throughout the nineteenth century, resulting in an increasing scale of operation of factories that continually required more land on which to expand. Consequently, many small factories were forced to amalgamate or close down. At the same time, the larger factories could not find enough

¹¹ A. Pred (1964), "The Intrametropolitan Location of Manufacturing," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, vol. 54, pp. 165-180.

cheap space in the traditional railroad terminal or water-front locations, and thus, were forced to decentralize. The rate of decentralization was, however, limited by the general lack of low-cost urban transit facilities, which kept many manufacturers close to the traditional work and residential areas around the CBDs (Central Business Districts). The era of late industrial development (1920s to 1960s), is characterized by the decentralization of manufacturing activity within metropolitan areas. This was made possible by two major factors. First, innovations in public transportation permitted the urban areas to spread. Secondly, the provision of cheap industrial land, particularly by railroad companies, allowed firms to overcome their site limitations.¹² During this period the rate of decentralization varied quite considerably between metropolitan areas, for the many factors that encouraged the centrifugal movement of manufacturing activity were counterbalanced by an equally large number of centripetal forces that encouraged the retention of industrial activity in areas close to the centre of the city.¹³ Factors such as existing city infrastructures, transportation, and locational advantages remained as incentives for urbanization.

The so-called post industrial era, from the mid-1960s onward, has been characterized by several new features. The first is the declining overall contribution of manufacturing as a generator of employment in

¹² M. Yeates and B. Garner (1980), The North American City, San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, pp. 343-375.

¹³ For a comprehensive list of centrifugal and centripetal forces affecting the location of manufacturing activity in the Mid-1950s see Kitagawa, E. M., and D. J. Bouge, Suburbanization of Manufacturing Industry Within Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas. Oxford, OH: Scripps Foundation, 1955.

the North American economy. The second is the creation of new manufacturing employment by multinational corporations. The third is the acceleration of decentralization of manufacturing employment in metropolitan areas. Since the above factors are directly or indirectly related to population reversal and nonmetropolitan growth, they will be discussed in depth later.

Thus far, upon reviewing the courses of industrial development, one could notice a close relationship between migration pattern and economic development. For instance, in the middle industrial era, as metropolitan urbanization was developed side-by-side with industrial centralization, the dominant migration pattern was from hinterland to central city. By way of contrast, in the post-industrial era the acceleration of industrial decentralization was accompanied by metropolitan out-migration.

Recent Metro and Nonmetro Population Trends in the U.S.A.

It is undeniable that some metropolitan areas experienced slower growth rates than their nonmetropolitan counterparts in the 1970s. However, the population turnaround does not mean that metropolitan areas have shifted from population growth to decline, or that nonmetropolitan areas similarly have switched from decline to growth.¹⁴ Not only have

¹⁴ Glenn V. Fuguitt and Paul R. Voss (1979), Growth and Change in Rural America, Washington D. C., The Urban Land Institute. The authors commented that some individual metropolitan areas have experienced some population losses in recent years, and the number of such areas appears to be increasing. Only one of the 25 largest SMSAs declined in size between 1960 and 1970 (Pittsburgh), while nine registered population decline between 1970 and 1975: New York, Los Angeles--Long Beach, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Newark, Cleveland, Seattle--Everett, and Cincinnati (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1977: Table 3). Likewise, the shifting of net migration has resulted in a switch

both sectors witnessed continuous growth but also it is still the case that metropolitan areas annually absorb the largest increment of growth. For example, U.S. metropolitan counties captured 63.2 percent of growth between 1970 and 1975, at the height of the 'turnaround'. Since 73 percent of the population was metropolitan in 1970, however, these areas received less than their proportionate share of growth.¹⁵

The net migration pattern in the U.S.A. from 1970 to 1974 evinced the fact that nonmetropolitan counties adjacent to metropolitan areas had the highest gain in net migration (3.6 %). The nonadjacent counties accounted for a 2.3 % increase. The lowest increase applied to the remaining metropolitan counties. In terms of percentage gain in net migration, they only accounted for 0.3 %.¹⁶ Therefore, it would be misleading to assume that there was widespread abandonment of urban and suburban territory. On the contrary, it would be more accurate to say that the growth was congregated on the metropolitan fringe.

Nonmetropolitan population decline was forecast by all the U.S. official projections made during the 1960s. But the change from decline to gain showed up in the 1973 county population estimates, and by that time the change was apparent across the nation.¹⁷ Obviously, population turnaround did not happen in a short period of time. One may then ask,

from decline to growth for a large number of individual nonmetropolitan counties.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

¹⁶ Calvin L. Beale (1976), "A Further Look at Nonmetropolitan Population Growth Since 1970," American Journal of Agricultural Economics, vol. 58, no. 5, p.954.

¹⁷ John Long (1980), "Population Decentralization in the United State," U.S. Bureau of the Census Monograph, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

'how could this phenomenon have gone on without notice?'. Morrison and Wheeler suggest the possible explanation for this invisible trend:¹⁸

The onset of population decline has taken most of the residents of affected SMSAs unawares, largely because during the last decade the effects on metropolitan growth of two distinct demographic trends canceled each other out. Three years ago, William Alonso¹⁹ called attention to the fact people have been leaving SMSAs for some time; during the 1960s, nearly 40 percent of all metropolitan areas recorded net out-migration. At the same time, the birth rate was high and this net outflow was more than offset by natural increase; nearly all SMSAs continued to register population gains even though people were leaving. When birth rates dropped in the 1970s, natural increase was no longer sufficient to offset out-migration, and the previously unnoticed trend became apparent in many places...

Frisbie hypothesized that population turnaround was partially due to technological progress. With the aid of new technology, rising productivity was made possible in the nonmetropolitan economy. This productivity functioned both to attract and to retain population. Consequently, both declining nonmetropolitan out-migration and increasing nonmetropolitan in-migration were responsible for the 1970s pattern of nonmetropolitan population growth.²⁰ The remaining component of differential population is natural increase.²¹ But as the current levels of natural increase are quite low in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, variations in population growth can be largely attributed to variations in net migration.

¹⁸ Peter A. Morrison and Judith P. Wheeler (1978), op. cit., p. 8.

¹⁹ William Alonso (1973), "Urban Zero Population Growth," Daedalus, vol. 102, no. 4, pp. 191-206.

²⁰ W. Parker Frisbie (1975), "Components of Sustenance Organization and Nonmetropolitan Population Change: a Human Ecological Investigation," American Sociological Review, vol. 40, pp. 773-784.

²¹ Peter A. Morrison (1975), The Current Demographic Context of National Growth and Development. Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, p. 5514.

Vining and Kontuly also documented a comparable reversal in net migration patterns in some other developed countries such as Japan, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Denmark, New Zealand, and Belgium.²² Growth of rural areas proximate to urban regions was also evident in the United Kingdom,²³ Canada,²⁴ and Australia.²⁵

RECENT NONMETROPOLITAN POPULATION TREND BY REGIONS IN THE U.S.A.

The increased return movements of people from large cities to small towns and the decreased out-migration from nonmetropolitan areas to metropolitan centres put a new complexion on U.S. population inquiries. Using data from the 1975 Current Population Survey, Tucker confirmed that in 1970-1975 there was a reversal of the traditional net migration between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. There was net in-migration of 1,600,000 persons to nonmetropolitan areas, in contrast to net out-migration of 350,000 persons from these areas. Reversal was due to a 23 % increase in the the number of out-migrants from SMSAs, but of almost equal importance was a 12 % decrease in the number of movers

²² Daniel R. Vining and Thomas Kontuly (1977), "Population Dispersal from Major Metropolitan Regions: An International Comparison." Regional Science Research Institute Discussion Paper, No. 100 (September), Philadelphia.

²³ Roy Drewett, John Goddard, and Nigel Spence (1976), "Urban Britain: Beyond Containment," pp.43-79 in Brian J. L. Berry (ed.), Urbanization and Counterurbanization, Urban Affairs Annual Reviews, vol. II, Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage Publications, Inc.

²⁴ Roderic P. Beaujot (1978), "Canada's Population: Growth and Dualism," Population Bulletin 33(2), April. Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau, Inc.

²⁵ L. S. Bourne and M. I. Logan (1976), "Changing Urbanization at the Margin: The Examples of Australia and Canada." pp. 111-143 in Brian J. L. Berry (ed.), op. cit.

from nonmetropolitan territory.²⁶

In this section, examination of population changes between 1950 and 1974 will be undertaken. In particular, the geographic basis and selected factors associated with differential growth and migration will be examined. In the 1940s and 1950s, rapid urbanization expanded to the West and South owing to the war-inspired decentralization of defence spending. On the other hand, with few exceptions, most nonmetropolitan counties experienced population decline. Examples of these exceptions were: the Pacific Coast states, where resource-based industries, expansion of new irrigated land, and rapid growth of smaller cities offset rural agriculture; Florida; and the heart of 'megalopolis', where local decentralization was already occurring. From 1950-1960, growth had shifted to suburban countries around the large metropolitan areas in the Northeast. Central county losses prevailed in many industrial states with large metropolitan areas. Traditional nonmetropolitan losses were dominant in 24 mainly peripheral states and in so-called "sunbelt" states. By the mid-sixties, suburban dominance became more common (10 states). Nonmetropolitan losses remained dominant in 22 states. In the late 1960s, central metropolitan losses had become dominant in 23 states east of the Rockies. Nonmetropolitan gain prevailed in 12 northeastern states and in 6 western and "sunbelt" states but losses prevailed in the other states.

²⁶ C. Jack Tucker (1976), "Changing Patterns of Migration between Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Areas in the United States: Recent Evidence," Demography, vol. 13, p. 435.

As intimated, however, population reversal became more apparent in the 1970s. Dramatic nonmetropolitan gains occurred in 22 states although they were not dominant in other states. Suburban growth continued to be important but was more likely to be dominant in peripheral than in northeastern states. Central metropolitan losses became dominant in 12 northeastern states and occurred in 15 other states.²⁷

To explore these state variations, Beale and Fuguitt classified nonmetropolitan counties of the U.S. into 26 regions by grouping together State Economic Areas reasonably similar in economy, history, physical setting, settlement patterns and culture.²⁸ These regions are shown in Figure 1. Figures 2 and 3 are used to show annual rates of nonmetropolitan population change and net migration between 1950 and 1974 respectively. The bars shown for each region refer to their "nonmetropolitan" areas only.

To make the map of net migration more meaningful, I will regroup the 26 regions into 3 main categories. The first category includes the regions experiencing continuous in-migration. The second category embraces those regions displaying continuous out-migration while the last category incorporates the regions which demonstrate a reversal from

²⁷ Richard L. Morrill (1980), "The Spread of Change in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan in the United States, 1940-1976," Urban Geography, pp. 118-129.

²⁸ Calvin L. Beale and G. V. Fuguitt (1975), "Population Trends in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Cities and Villages in Subregions of the United States." Centre for Demography and Ecology Working Paper 75-30.