

Rural vs. Urban (The Simple Life)?

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Rural Culture

Agriculture

Non farm
communities

Farm dependent
communities

What are the drivers of change in
Iowa rural communities?

Changes in Rural Communities

Communities
in
Transition

- Population mix
- Industrial base
- Occupational shifts
- Lifestyle choices
- Linkage to urban places

Changes in Production Agriculture

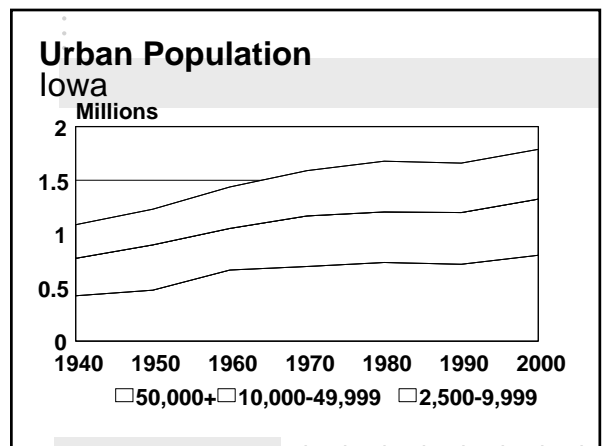
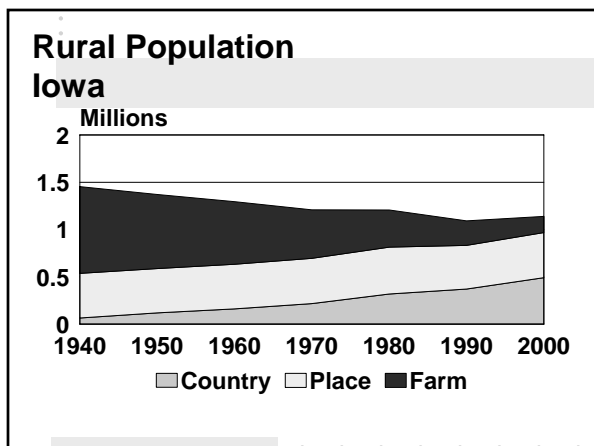
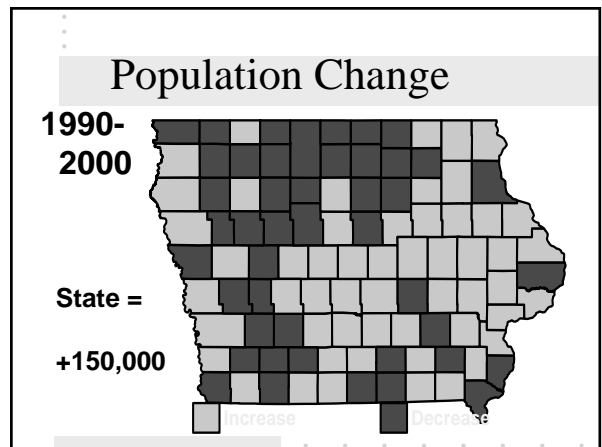
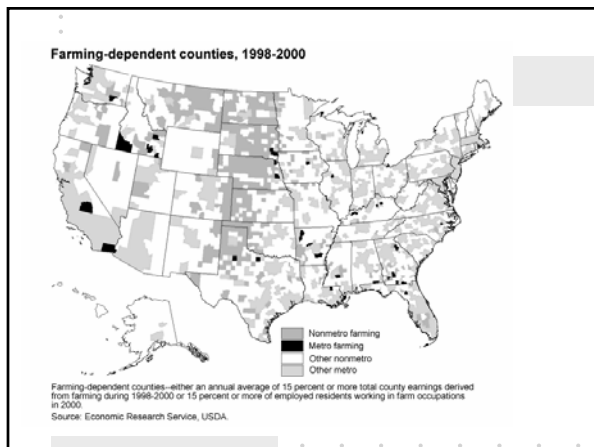
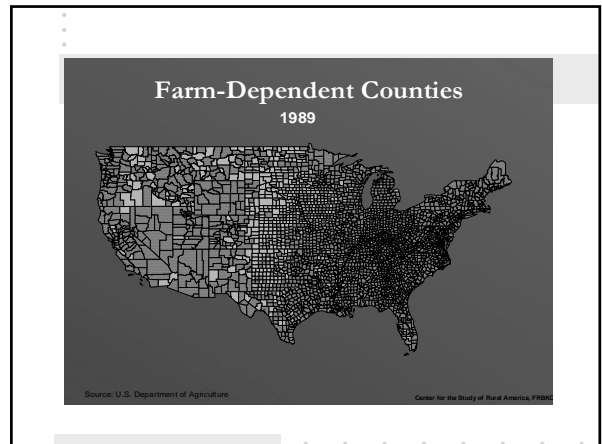
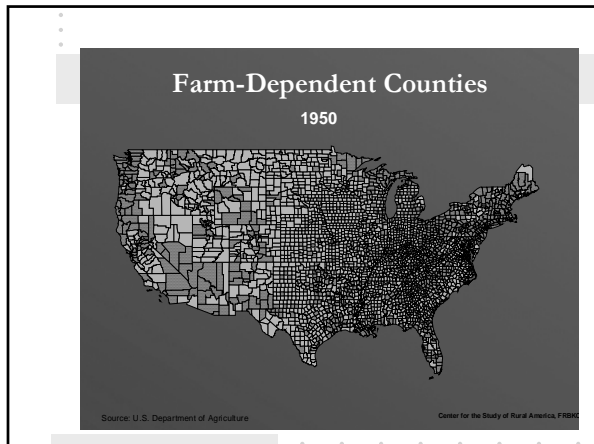
- Decline in farm numbers
- Increased farm size
- Vertical integration
- Value added processing
- Dual agriculture

Agriculture
in
Transition

Non Farm
Rural
Communities

Production
Agriculture

Rural Community/Production Agriculture Interface



Change vs. Progress

- Why do people desire progress, but often reject change?
- Change often is interpreted as LOSS
- Change forces to take actions that we may not like
- Fear of change, anxiety

Common Responses to Change

- Denial
- Anger
- Blaming
- Negotiation
- Acceptance

What are the consequences of these changes on the culture of communities

- Values—"an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable" .
- Attitudes—a manner of acting or thinking, feeling or mood that shows one's disposition, opinion, etc
- Beliefs—conviction or acceptance that certain things are true or real
- Behaviors—Actions

Social and economic changes are never neutral in their impact. These changes produce gains for some and losses for others.

Emerging Traits and Characteristics

1. Turbulence

- Rapid changes
- Social and economic change is never equal in its impact; produces gains for some and losses for others
- Externally driven social changes → powerless
- As losses mount → grief → anger → reaction

2. Anxiety

- Fear of the future, because the past has produced so much change (losses)
- Are rural people more anxious?
 - Fear of additional losses
 - Fear of prosperity

3. Weaken social institutions

Social institutions brings people of dissimilar interests together (unlike special interest groups)

- Local government, schools, hospitals, libraries, etc.

4. Decline in civility

- Less tolerant
- Less respect
- Unyielding positions
- Divided communities
- Legal vs ethical decisions

5. Widening gaps between groups/sectors

- Age, income, & generational differences
- Race or ethnic background
- Local versus state versus federal regulations
- Commodity interests along regional lines
- Rural–Urban differences
- Newcomers versus long–term residents

6. Consolidation of business enterprises

- Emergence of national and international chains and franchises in
 - Retailing
 - Processing/Manufacturing
 - Marketing
 - Banking

7. Occupational changes

Moving from a nation of self–employed entrepreneurs, business persons to one of hired managers and employees

Independent businesses, storekeepers, farmers, self-employed occupations formed the basis of rural employment

8. Callousness

- Indifference, apathy, & in cases disdain
- Erosion in community and trust, tearing of the social fabric
- Blaming the victim
- Orientation to individual rather than group or collective needs, “what is good for me?” rather than “what is good for the community?”

Are these trends creating a “distrustful culture”?

- Where people no longer know each other
- Where people no longer trust each other
- Where extreme individualism is primary
- Diminished respect, communication, and cooperation

Traits of a distrustful culture

- Legal representation
- Formalized contracts
- Fear of liability
- Less personal contact
- Formal communication
- Legalism vs ethical
- Suspiciousness

Is it possible that we are creating a distrustful rural culture, where:

- Many choose not to live because:
- Fear of others, fear of being taken advantage of
- Where there are perceived limited opportunities?
- Diminished attachment to community

What factors have contributed to the drift towards distrustfulness?

- Population change
- Changing role of women, the historic carriers of civic spirit
- Multiple job holding
- Hectic Lifestyles
- Aging population
- The hassles of public leadership

Building Social Capital

- Communication
- Trust
- Cooperation



In the past community development was about building things...roads, schools, churches, industrial parks, etc.

Now it appears the future of community development is about building or strengthening social capital

Trends of the Future

- Energy Crisis
 - Low cost living in small, rural communities may become much more expensive, home-heating, commuting to jobs, distance away from services, the lack of options
 - May trigger more consolidation
 - People may move closer to their jobs
 - Working poor will be especially hard hit

Rural Policy

- Keep your eye on the 2007 Farm Bill
 - Recognition of the differences between Farm Policy and Rural Development
 - A prosperous agriculture may not necessarily lead to rural prosperity
 - Federal Budget Deficit resulting from Iraq War, and Hurricane recovery, is exerting tremendous pressure on need to cut back on all domestic program spending,

Job Creation and Population Stability

- Do people follow jobs or do jobs follow people?
 - Many young Iowans have left the state for better opportunities, especially in the 1980s
 - This 1980s generation would have been in the prime of their careers if they had stayed
 - Leadership void has resulted from this outmigration

- Do jobs follow people?
 - Adequacy of jobs, pay, benefits, career options, opportunities for advancement, etc
 - Given Iowa's aging population, and the immigration of international workers, it appears that either Iowa does not have an adequate workforce or the jobs are not viewed as desirable.

Residential Mobility

- People are more willing to move than in previous eras.
 - Motivations for moving—
 - Quality of life
 - Less attachment to place
 - Job quality
 - Education and cultural amenities
 - Opportunities for self improvement

The Role of Opportunities

- Early settlers came to Iowa because of low cost land and opportunities to “get ahead”
- Subsequent generations remained because of ties to the land or to community, or family, or business investments
- Now it appears that commitment to place has declined...Why?

- Historically, it was assumed that children would take over the farm or family business
- Now with parents living longer, many young people feel the need to relocate to places where there are better opportunities
- Less attachment to community and extended family

Consolidation

- Costs of providing services to rural areas is move expensive
- With fewer people the costs escalate
- Emphasis upon cost of services is driving consolidation throughout the private and public sectors

Making Your Community More Attractive

Quality of life considerations
Opportunities for the next generation
Jobs, housing, recreation, public services
Involving youth into community planning
Development and acceptance of a new generation of leaders
Acceptance of new comers

There are 839 rural towns

What is their future?
Who should decide?

What can Extension Offer?

1. Understanding of large scale forces
Data on trends—assess the situation
2. Catalytic leadership in bringing residents together—assess assets and opportunities
3. Connecting with outside resources and expertise
4. Development of action plan

