
CaRDI Reports

ISSUE NUMBER 4/JANUARY 2008

New York Communities 2007: A Year of CaRDI Publications



A Multidisciplinary Social Sciences Institute of Cornell University

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Preface

The following is the 2007 collection of two Cornell Community and Rural Development Institute publications: the *Rural New York Minute* and the *Research & Policy Brief Series*. Both publications are released monthly, and are available on our website at www.cardi.cornell.edu. In addition to the publications featured here, more in-depth *CaRDI Reports* can be found at the CaRDI website.

The CaRDI publications are an important vehicle for connecting the community and economic development work of Cornell University researchers with stakeholders across New York State and beyond. The publications may be reprinted in community newspapers, published in organizations' newsletters, forwarded via listservs, and used as teaching tools in schools and elsewhere. It is our hope that these publications provide evidence-based research to inform decision-making at the local, regional, and state level. We strive to foster a productive dialogue around these and other issues and to strengthen our relationships with stakeholders across the state.

If you have any questions or comments about these publications, please contact Robin Blakely at rmb18@cornell.edu or 607-254-6795.

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ISSUE NUMBER 1/JANUARY 2007

What is Rural? And why does it matter?

By Robin Blakely Community & Rural Development Institute, Cornell University

For many Americans, the word rural suggests open farmland, untouched forests, rolling hills, and a sparsely populated, rustic environment. Most of us aren't concerned with what is "officially" rural; rather, we simply "know it when we see it." However, because of their different perspectives, a "definitional barrier" often exists between rural residents,

For those who care about rural issues, understanding the various ways in which "rural" is defined is a critical step to speaking the same language.

policymakers focused on improving conditions in rural areas through legislation, and researchers who study rural development issues. While agreement on one single definition may not be ultimately necessary, it is important to have a clear understanding of how working definitions of rurality can vary and the resulting consequences.

Many rural residents associate living in a rural area with a slower pace of life, a sense of community, a connection to nature and tradition. Many rural people live in non-metropolitan counties, with a significant proportion of the land area still in agriculture or protected natural resource areas. Other rural residents live in rural places in metropolitan counties and are significantly impacted by the urban-suburban-rural continuum that exists (e.g., urban and suburban sprawl). Although each type of rural resident considers themselves "rural", their actual daily life experiences may be quite different.

Rural residents' self-definition is usually associated with a way of life, rather than with living in a particular geographical, political, or economic unit.

Policymakers may define "rural" more broadly in order to cast a wider net for legislative support.

Policymakers also face challenges when creating legislation to address "rural issues", such as funding for broadband access. With increasing demands on expensive urban services, rural areas have not always received adequate funding. Tipping the balance further, due to larger population size, urban areas have greater political representation than do rural areas. However, there is growing recognition that urban and rural areas co-exist in a larger regional context, and that more regionally focused programs and policies that acknowledge the particular rural-urban mix within a given region are a more effective approach to improving social and economic conditions.

Understanding how a researcher defines "rural" is an important step in understanding research findings.

Researchers who study rural areas are often torn between more visceral definitions of rural ("I see cows, therefore it must be rural") versus more officially established definitions, generally based on population size and density. However, interpreting research results becomes challenging when researchers do *not* adhere to official definitions, particularly on a policy sensitive topic. For example, two analyses of rural poverty using two different methods of defining rurality could result in quite different conclusions about poverty trends, causes, impacts, etc. Research results are, therefore, only as good as the data and methods used in the analyses, and can have significant public policy implications. ♦





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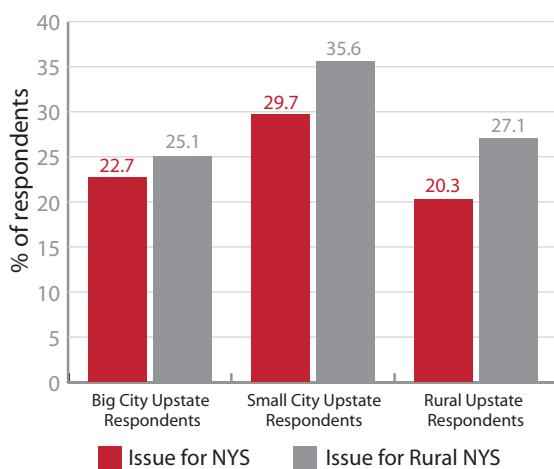
ISSUE NUMBER 2/FEBRUARY 2007

What Issues Are Important to Upstate New Yorkers?

By Robin Blakely Community & Rural Development Institute, Cornell University

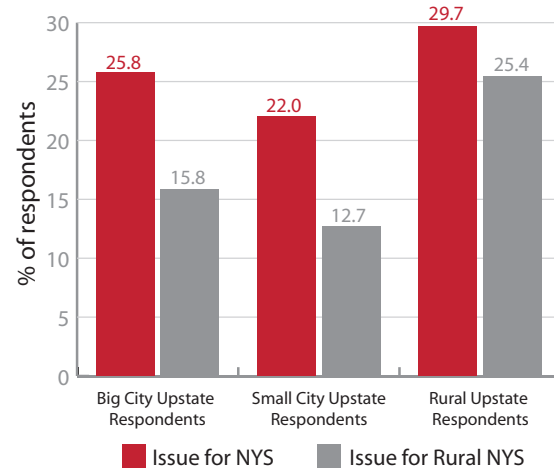
Upstate New Yorkers are frequently compared to their downstate counterparts, often revealing dramatic differences between the two. But upstate residents are certainly not all alike, socio-demographically and in their opinions and perceptions of important public policy issues. It is important to understand these differences because public policy needs to reflect and respond to geographical differences. Public support for policy depends not only on information and data regarding the social and economic situation, but also on general opinions and perceptions of issues.

Employment: Identified as Important Issue



Source: 2006 Empire State Poll

State Taxes: Identified as Important Issue



Source: 2006 Empire State Poll

Employment and state taxes were the two most important issues identified by respondents to Cornell University's annual Empire State Poll in February 2006. Interestingly, more respondents felt that employment was a bigger issue for rural NYS than for the state overall. For example, while about 30% of small city residents identified employment as the most important issue for the state as a whole, almost 36% felt it was the most important issue for rural areas in the state. This is true for all respondents, regardless of where they lived. State taxes, in contrast, were seen as a more important issue for the state as a whole than from rural areas. Even rural residents were more likely to identify state taxes as an important issue for the state (~30%), than for their own areas (25%). ♦



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The Rural New York Minute is a publication of Cornell University's Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI).

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This issue is available on-line at <http://rny.cornell.edu>.

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ISSUE NUMBER 3/MARCH 2007

What are the Plans of Owners of Idle Agricultural Land in NYS?

By **David Kay & Nelson Bills**, Cornell University

For many years, farm and forest land in NYS has been moving out of the hands of owners who primarily view their land as a productive resource and into the hands of owners more concerned with amenity and natural resource attributes.

In a recent survey conducted by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM)*, rural landowners reported the following:

- 90% of the state's undeveloped rural land can be classified as active agriculture (41%), forest land (41%) or idle farm land (8%).
- The primary reason for holding rural land is agriculture, followed closely by use for a primary residence.
- Owners of 35% of all agricultural parcels plan to keep their land open, with occasional mowing; 28% say they have no organized plans for their land; owners of 14% of these parcels plan to return them to active agriculture; and a small but important minority (12%) of the parcels are expected to be sold in the near term (see Figure 1).
- Financial considerations, including annual property tax levies and the desire to generate income, are the most important reasons land owners give for selling undeveloped land (see Figure 2).

Understanding land owners' views and motivations toward the use of their farm and forest land is a critical first step in addressing farmland preservation, active management of forestland, and the loss of open space. ♦

Figure 1: Do you have any near-term plans for your idle agricultural land? (448 owners of idle land)

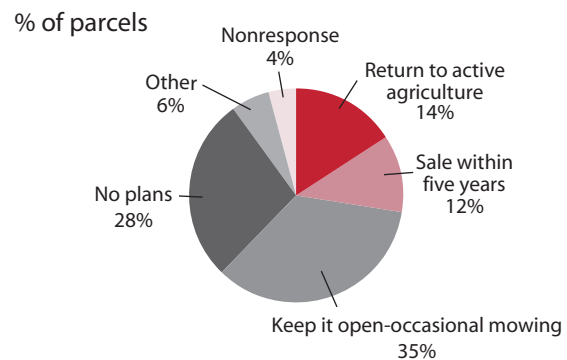
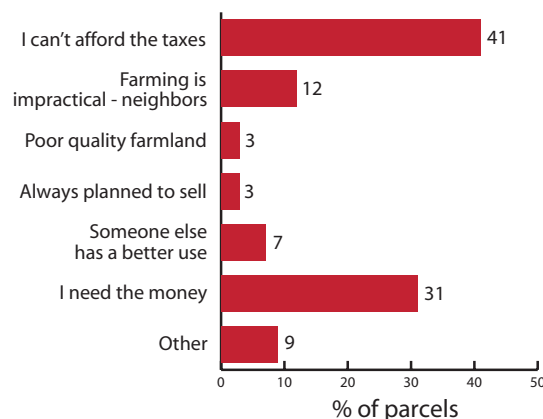


Figure 2: Which of the following is the most important reason you want to sell your idle agricultural land?



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*For a copy of this publication, as well as more information on the issue of idle farm and forest land, please visit <http://rny.cornell.edu> for CaRDI Reports, Issue #1, "Owners of Idle Agricultural & Forest Land in NYS: Results from a Mail Survey."



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ISSUE NUMBER 4/APRIL 2007

New York State Consumers Express Strong Interest in Local Food

By **Duncan Hilchey** & **Joe Francis**, Cornell University

The March 2, 2007 cover of TIME magazine boldly proclaimed “Forget Organic. Buy Local,” suggesting that after weighing the issues of freshness, taste, pesticides used, and the distance produce travels, the balance may tip for some consumers in favor of seasonally-available *local* fruits and vegetables (both organic and conventional) over organics produced on an industrial scale in far away places.

All this attention to local food is music to the ears of farmers in New York State and beyond who hope to tap this new wave of enthusiasm for local, fresh farm products. In addition, this may prove to be a significant local economic development opportunity.

Are New Yorkers’ interested in buying local food? Yes, according to over three quarters of the respondents of the 2004 Empire State Poll, an annual opinion survey of NYS residents. Researchers at Cornell University, working with the New York State Farmers’ Direct Marketing Association, included questions on local food buying habits and preferences on the poll. They found that over three-quarters of respondents expressed a preference for local food, with a little over a third reporting that they will go out of their way to buy local food. Only about a fifth of respondents stated that local food was not important to them (see Figure 1).

When respondents were asked what factors would increase their purchases of local food, more than one in four responded

Table 1: What Would Encourage Your Purchase of Locally Produced Food?

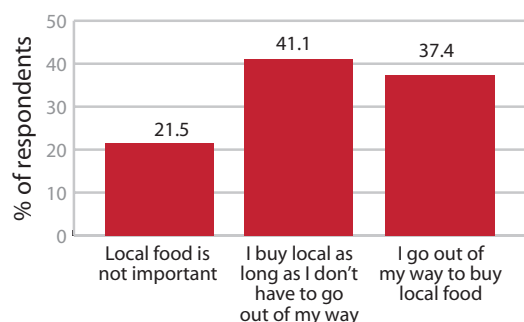
Response	#	%
Greater Convenience/Availability/Accessibility	214	28%
Competitive Pricing/Affordable	124	16%
Combination of Factors	103	13%
Good Quality/Freshness/Taste	82	11%
Knowing I’m Helping Economy/Community/Farmer	71	9%
Unknown/Don’t Know/Nothing/ Doesn’t Matter	49	6%
Knowing It Is Organic	42	5%
Marketing/Labeling	30	4%
Health-related Factors	23	3%
Motivated Already	20	3%
Selection	12	2%
Total	770	100%

Source: Hilchey & Francis, Empire State Poll, Cornell University, 2004.

that greater convenience, availability, and accessibility were key factors. Less important, but still influential, were price, quality, and contributing to the local economy/supporting a local producer (see Table 1).

Based on these findings, New Yorkers *are* interested in local food and would buy more if it were available in places they already shop. Several supermarket chains in New York State have been promoting “homegrown” fruits and vegetables in the produce section for a number of years. If consumer interest in local foods continues to grow, these supermarkets could be further encouraged to increase wholesale purchases from larger scaled farmers (producer-shippers) in NYS. Paradoxically, this might negatively affect smaller local roadside stands, pick-your-own operators and farmers’ market vendors who find themselves in the trade area of a large supermarket offering “homegrown” produce. However, the 37.4% of New Yorkers who go out of their way for local food are likely to continue to buy directly from farmers (including organic and conventionally produced fruits and vegetables, dairy products, meats, wines and cheeses). Farmers’ markets continue to grow and thrive around NYS. The larger, middle group of consumers — who like local food but want it to be more convenient to purchase — will benefit from local products offered through major retailers. ♦

Figure 1: NY Residents’ Propensity to Buy Local Food



Source: Hilchey & Francis, Empire State Poll, Cornell University, 2004.



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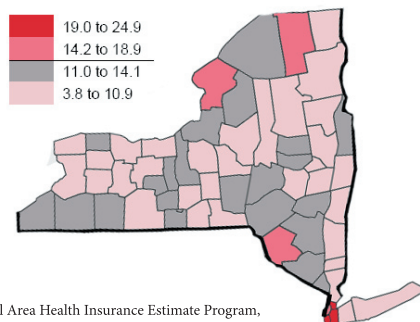
ISSUE NUMBER 5/MAY 2007

Health Care Access in Rural NY: It's not just about having health insurance

By **Robin M. Blakely** & **Kosali I. Simon**, Cornell University

Having affordable and accessible health care is an issue that most people consider critical in influencing their overall well-being and quality of life.¹ In 2000, about 14% of New York State residents had no health insurance coverage.² At the county level, this ranges from a low of 6.9% in Saratoga County, to a high of 22.4% in Bronx County (see Figure 1). Since 2000, the percent uninsured has remained fairly stable at the state-level, and is estimated to be 13.5% by the latest data available for 2005.³

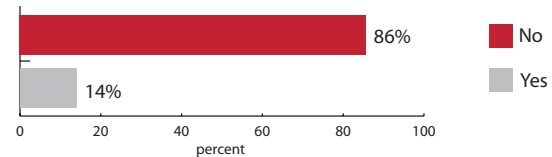
Figure 1: Percent without health insurance coverage by county (NYS average = 14%)



However, in rural areas of New York State, even those individuals with health insurance coverage may face limited options for accessing health care services due to the lack of specialists, adequate clinics and hospitals, or doctors who accept Medicare or Medicaid.

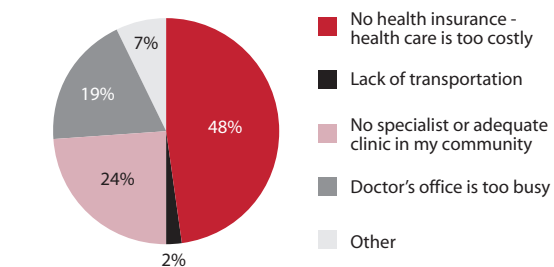
In the 2007 Empire State Poll, an annual survey conducted by Cornell University, rural New Yorkers over the age of 18 were asked about their health care coverage and access. While having some type of health insurance usually allows most people to seek physician care when they need to at fairly low co-pays, 14% of those surveyed indicated that in the past 12 months there had been at least one occasion when they had needed to see a doctor but couldn't.

Figure 2: In the past 12 months, was there an occasion when you needed to see a doctor but could not?



While 48% of respondents reported that lack of health insurance kept them from seeing a doctor when they needed to, other factors were also important. Other reasons, such as the lack of a local specialist or adequate clinic or hospital and local doctor's offices being overwhelmed with patients, accounted for 43% of respondents not able to see a doctor when they needed to.

Figure 3: Why could you not see a doctor?



Health insurance coverage, or lack thereof, continues to be a pressing matter for a large percentage of New York State residents. In rural areas of the state, however, the *availability* of adequate, quality care clearly continues to present another set of challenges. Initiatives such as the expansion of rural health networks, developing statewide health care coverage, increasing high-speed internet access, addressing service reimbursement issues for rural providers, etc., are among several of the identified priorities that emerged from the Rural Health section of the Rural Vision Project, a collaborative effort between Cornell University and the NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources (NYS LCRR). (For more information on the Rural Vision Project, see <http://hosts.cce.cornell.edu/rnyi/>.) ♦

¹ In a CBS News/New York Times poll, February 23-February 27, 2007

² Small Area Health Insurance Estimates Program, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

³ DeNavas-Walt C, Proctor BD, and Lee CH. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-231, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2005, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2006.





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ISSUE NUMBER 6/JUNE 2007

What does “Community” mean to New Yorkers?

By **Robin M. Blakely** & **David L. Brown**, Cornell University

How we define our community may not just affect the way we view it and our place in society, but our definition can also influence the actions we take personally, politically, and otherwise to shape our community. “Community” has many connotations, most of them positive. A “sense” of community, a bond we share with others, the place we live, a place we identify with in some important way, and a place that may in turn identify us.

Where do New Yorkers consider their “community” to be? We thought we would start with the idea that community often (but not always) has something to do with place and/or geography. We examine data collected on the 2007 Empire State Poll, a telephone survey of 400 downstate (Rockland County and below), 400 upstate, and 300 rural New Yorkers (“rural” is defined here as areas with population densities of less than 500 persons per square mile).

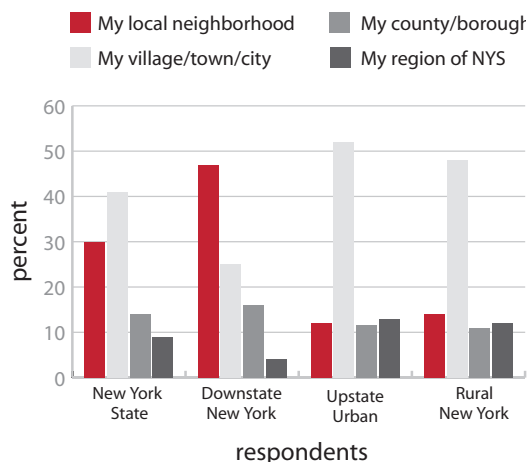
When asked what level of geography best described their definition of community, 42% of all NYS respondents said their

village/city/town best fit their idea of community, followed by 30% identifying their local neighborhood. However, when we analyze and compare the responses by downstate, upstate urban, and rural NY respondents, we see dramatically different stories. Almost half (48%) of downstate New Yorkers, the vast majority of them urban dwellers, identify their local neighborhood as their “community”. Only 25% of them identify their town/village/city, and only 16% identify their county or borough. Only a handful (4%) of downstaters define their community by their region of the state. When these results are compared with Upstate urban residents (which includes places like Syracuse, Buffalo, Albany and the suburbs which have at least 500 persons per square mile), the contrast is rather striking. While almost half of downstate residents identified their neighborhood as their community, only 13% of upstate urban dwellers did so. The majority (53%) of urban upstaters identified their village/town/city. Only 12% and 14% defined their communities as their county or region of NYS, respectively.

The profile of responses from rural New Yorkers, the vast majority of whom live in upstate New York, was remarkably similar to that of the upstate urban respondents. Slightly more rural New Yorkers (58%) named their village or town as best describing their community, with their local neighborhood, county, or region of the state receiving roughly equal responses (a range of 12-14%).

Perhaps in very dense urban areas such as downstate NYS, the town or city as a whole is seen as too big, socially and geographically distant from the individual, and therefore somewhat removed from these urban dwellers’ sense of community. Perhaps in these cases people tend to identify with what is physically close, such as the neighborhood. Conversely, in rural areas, the idea of a “neighborhood” often covers miles and miles of open space, making the connection to rural residents’ village or town more meaningful and important, a centralized place where geographically isolated people can come together for meetings and civic functions, to build “community” around shared experiences. The interesting finding here is that upstate urban New Yorkers are much more similar to their rural counterparts than to their downstate urban ones. These findings are important because the place where local community action occurs may also differ between upstate and downstate, and this may suggest different targets for community based public policy.

Figure 1: When you refer to your community, what geographic area best describes what you mean?



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ISSUE NUMBER 7/JULY 2007

Community Issues in New York State: What's Important?

 By **Robin M. Blakely**, Cornell University

Community issues may shape the way we vote, our choice of where to live and work, and the way we live our daily lives. What issues are most important in the communities we live in? Using data from the 2007 Empire State Poll and the special rural survey (Survey Research Institute & the Community & Rural Development Institute at Cornell University), we provide a picture of New Yorkers' opinions about community issues that varies dramatically depending on where people live.

Among respondents who answered the question "In your opinion, what do you think is the SINGLE most important issue facing your community as a whole?", taxes, crime, education, and employment were cited most frequently. The answer to this question may partly depend on how we *define* our community (as we discussed in last month's issue (Issue 6/June 2007), and that can depend on where we live.

Upstate and downstate urbanites contrast significantly in the top community issue they identify. For example, 32% of upstate urban respondents identify taxes as the single most important issue facing their community (upstate urban dwellers are more likely to identify their village/town/city as their community), whereas only 9% of downstate urban residents do so (who are more likely to identify their local neighborhood as their community). Crime is cited most frequently among downstate urban respondents (22%), whereas 9% identify land development and 8.5% identify education as the top issue. While 8% of downstate urbanites identify housing as the most important issue in their communities, their upstate counterparts barely mention it. Upstate urban respondents are likely to identify employment (12%), crime (9%), economic growth (9%), and local

government (7%) as the most important issue for their communities.

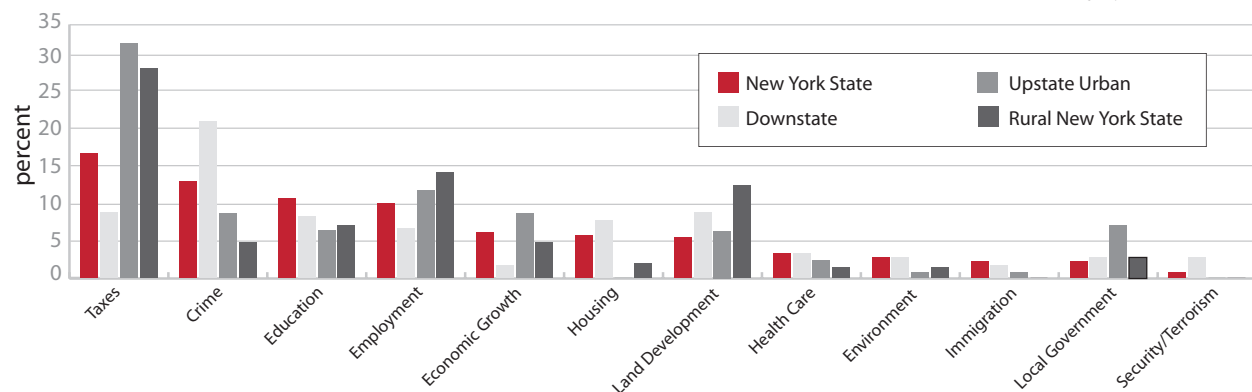
Rural New Yorkers are more like their upstate urban counterparts in the way that they describe their community (their village/town/city), and they identify top community issues similarly, to a point. As in upstate urban areas, taxes are viewed as important in rural communities, with 29% of rural respondents ranking this issue as the most critical. Likewise, employment is identified by the second largest group of rural respondents (15%). However, some interesting differences in attitudes between upstate urban and rural respondents exist. Land development is mentioned twice as often by rural residents as it is by upstate urban respondents (13% vs. 6.5%) as being the most important issue in their communities, while crime is cited only about half as much (5% vs. 9%).

What might be surprising to some is that issues such as health care, the environment, and immigration are cited so infrequently by respondents. This may be because the survey question asks respondents to identify the *single* most important issue, rather than asking for a ranking of *all* the issues listed here. It is important not to interpret these results as meaning, for example, that health care is ranked 8th in importance overall for New Yorkers. This is simply a reporting of the frequency at which issues were identified as the *most* important issue.

It is also important to keep in mind that the community issues New Yorkers identify as most important may actually be regional, national, and even global in nature. Local policies may have limited success in addressing these larger issues even though the impacts may be experienced most significantly at the local level. ♦

Figure 1: What is the most important issue facing your community?

* Figures do not add to 100% due to an "other" category not shown here.



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll and Rural Survey (Survey Research Institute and the Community & Rural Development Institute, Cornell University)





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ISSUE NUMBER 8/AUGUST 2007

New Yorkers are more optimistic about their personal finances than the State's economic future

By **Robin M. Blakely**, Cornell University

While almost one in three New Yorkers expect the state's economy to worsen over the next year, far fewer expect that their personal financial situation will deteriorate during this time. People's perceptions vary, however, depending on where one lives in the state.

We asked 1,100 respondents to Cornell University's 2007 Empire State Poll and CaRDI's Rural Survey whether they expected the NYS economy as a whole to improve, stay the same, or worsen over the next 12 months. As might be expected, downstate urban respondents were the most optimistic about the state's economy, with 38% believing it would improve. Downstate New York as a whole has been largely buffered from Upstate New York's economic woes in the last decade or more. Although poverty and economic hardship still plague parts of New York City, the metropolitan area has had impressive economic gains in financial services bringing significant rewards to the region.

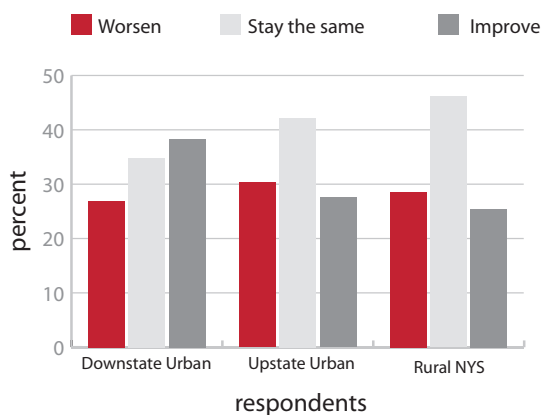
In contrast to NYC, more upstate urban New Yorkers were pessimistic about the state's economic future, with 30% fearing that the state's economy would worsen over the next year, and only 28% ex-

pecting it to improve (compared to 38% for their downstate counterparts). Rural New Yorkers were slightly less pessimistic than their urban counterparts, but a large majority expects the state's economic fortunes to worsen or stay the same.

When asked about respondents' personal financial situations, responses again vary by geographic location. Over 44% of downstate urban respondents expect their personal finances to improve and only 11% felt they would be financially worse off in a year. By contrast, only 31% of rural New Yorkers believed they would experience an improvement in their personal financial situation, while 15% felt they would be worse off a year from now. Upstate urban respondents were somewhere in the middle, with about 36% expecting their personal financial situation to improve and about 13% expecting it to worsen.

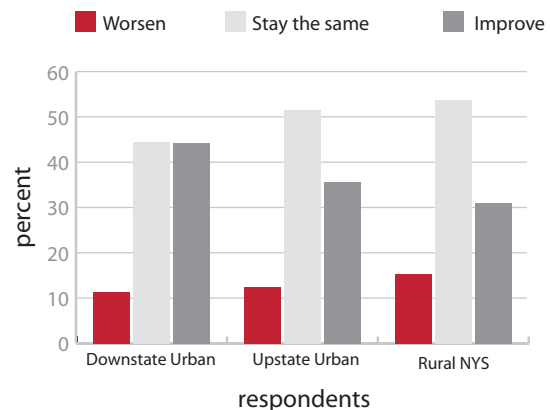
Regardless of where New Yorkers live in the state, respondents to our survey believe that their personal financial situation will fare better than the state economy as a whole over the next year. A challenge will be to channel this sense of personal optimism into greater economic growth and development across the state. ♦

Figure 1: Do you expect the NYS economy as a whole to worsen, stay the same, or improve over the next year?



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll and Rural Survey, Cornell University.

Figure 2: Do you expect your own personal financial situation to be worsen, stay about the same, or improve over the next year?



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll and Rural Survey, Cornell University.



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ISSUE NUMBER 9/SEPTEMBER 2007

Home Grown Power: Community Energy Initiatives in Upstate NY

By Shawn Lindabury, Todd M. Schmit, Tania Schusler, and Rod Howe, Cornell University

Energy use, production, and the need to develop renewable energy sources are becoming prominent issues at the federal, state, and local levels. Several municipalities in upstate New York are addressing energy issues at the community level by pursuing initiatives to implement community energy plans, develop local renewable sources of energy, and encourage energy conservation and increased efficiency among residents, businesses, and municipal governments. Here, we highlight the considerations and challenges faced by several rural New York communities that are currently working on renewable energy and energy conservation initiatives. This information may serve as a useful guide for other communities to follow in developing their own energy initiatives.



Energy initiatives → Economic development opportunities

Local production keeps energy money inside the community rather than exporting it to outside entities. This money can create new business opportunities that can lead to lower taxes and increased jobs. Farmers and other landowners can benefit from revenue generated from renewable energy production on their land. Local energy production can provide a source of low cost energy with stable long-term prices that decrease costs for businesses, residents, and government. Energy conservation and increased energy efficiency throughout the community are also important tools for decreasing energy costs.

Renewable energy use and energy conservation have environmental benefits

The burning of fossil fuels emits large amounts of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants. As the issue of global climate change becomes more prominent, citizens are demanding action from their local governments. Because local governments interact directly with community members, they can be influential in changing energy usage patterns and encouraging local energy development.

What should communities consider when pursuing energy initiatives of their own?

- *Broad-based community involvement is essential to the success of any renewable energy project.*
- *Energy committees that establish good working relationships with local municipal government are more effective.*
- *Taking advantage of local resources contributes to successful project implementation.* Communities have partnered with their local Cooperative Extension offices and planning departments and benefited from student involvement through educational institutions.
- *Other communities can provide models, but every community is different. The process that worked for one community may not work for another.*
- *Group dynamics are very important in community energy planning and development.*
- *Renewable energy, energy conservation, and increased energy efficiency are closely linked.*

What are some of the challenges communities face?

- *Technical feasibility studies and energy conservation efforts require time and money.*
- *Getting diverse representation from all segments of the community is difficult because of the time commitment to participate in meetings and other activities*
- *Progress can be slow because energy committees are commonly made up entirely of volunteers.*
- *Facilitating clear communication among participants is an ongoing challenge.*
- *Renewable energy and energy conservation is a new concept for many people so public education is important.*

Please visit our website for an upcoming CaRDI Report on Community Energy Initiatives in NYS that includes detailed information and evaluations of three New York communities who have undertaken their own local energy initiatives. The experiences in these communities can serve as a resource to communities who are considering pursuing energy initiatives of their own. Understanding the commitments needed up front and the potential pitfalls to avoid will improve the efficiency of municipal planning efforts in addressing energy initiatives. With the proper preparation and commitment, communities can successfully address many energy issues locally. ♦





Department of Development Sociology
Cornell University

rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 10/OCTOBER 2007

Driver's Licenses for Undocumented Immigrants: Policy Considerations for New York State

By **Mary Jo Dudley*** and **Robin Blakely**, Cornell University

What is the issue?

On September 21, Governor Spitzer announced that New York State will become the eighth state to provide access to driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants. This issue has generated a significant amount of controversy. The Spitzer administration cited public safety (the DMV estimates that tens of thousands of unlicensed and uninsured drivers are currently on New York's roads), and lower auto insurance rates for all drivers as two key reasons for this measure. Those opposed to the Governor's actions cite concerns about national security – a state driver's license provides undocumented individuals an official form of identification, as well as granting privileges to persons who have entered the country illegally.

How do immigrant farmworkers feel about this issue?

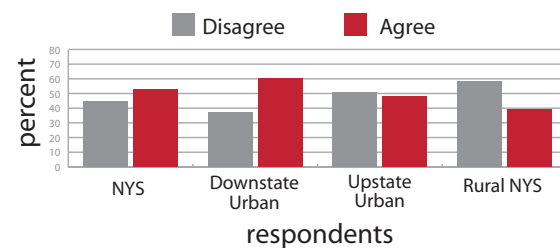
The driver's license issue is particularly important to immigrant farmworkers in NYS who live in rural areas and often lack access to transportation. It is estimated that there are between 50,000 and 80,000 farmworkers in NYS, many of whom are undocumented immigrants. As part of a larger research project, the Cornell Farmworker Program conducted a series of interviews with immigrant farmworkers about access to driver's licenses in NYS. Immigrant farmworkers felt that having a driver's license would allow individuals to more fully participate in community life, access needed goods and services, and avoid the negative effects of social isolation. Unlicensed workers must often rely heavily on employers or friends for transportation, arrangements which are often inconsistent and unreliable.

How do New Yorkers feel about this issue?

To gain a deeper understanding of how New Yorkers feel about this issue, the Cornell Farmworker Program added a question on the 2007 Empire State Poll where respondents were read the following statement and question: "Currently, undocumented immigrants are not allowed to apply for a driver's license in New York State. As an alternative, some states offer an "immigrant driving document" for undocumented immigrants which requires them to pass a written and road test. Do you think that undocumented immigrants in NYS should be allowed to apply for a similar immigrant driving document?" New Yorkers differ significantly in how they feel about this issue, depending on what part of the state they live in (see Figure 1).

A slight majority of New Yorkers (53%) were in favor of allowing undocumented immigrants the opportunity to apply for a document similar to a driver's license, while 44% were opposed. Downstate urban respondents were the most supportive, while rural New Yorkers were the least supportive (60% to 38%, respectively). Upstate urban respondents fell in the middle, with approximately 48% agreeing with the idea. It is interesting to note that while access to transportation is a significant issue in rural areas across the state, rural New Yorkers were much more likely to oppose granting undocumented immigrants access to licenses. This finding may reflect the difference

Figure 1: Should undocumented immigrants in NYS be allowed to apply for a document similar to a driver's license?



Source: February 2007 Empire State Poll & Rural Survey, Survey Research Institute, Cornell Farmworker Program, & CaRDI, Cornell University.

*numbers do not add to 100% because of a "do not know" response not shown here.

in rural New Yorker's views about immigrants and immigration in general, rather than simply the issue of driver's licenses. Rural New Yorkers may also see immigration as an exclusively urban issue, not realizing that undocumented immigrants also settle in rural areas.

What are some of the policy implications?

Those who support providing undocumented immigrants access to licenses suggest that such measures increase public safety. Most immigrants who have received licenses through immigrant licensing programs in other states have purchased and maintained auto insurance policies, and have passed a road test and an eye examination. Licenses would ensure that immigrants who drive would do so legally and safely—a benefit to all New York State residents. Those in opposition to such measures point to concerns about domestic security issues, as well as their unease in granting privileges (versus rights) to individuals who have entered the country illegally.

Starting in December 2007, the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles will accept a current foreign passport as proof of identity. The administration argued that this change will increase public safety, lower insurance rates for all drivers, increase security, and strengthen the "one driver/one license" rule. The Governor has delayed a decision regarding New York's compliance with the Real ID Act of 2005, federal legislation which mandates a federal drivers license. Critics of this act suggest that it will create a two-tier system which would identify immigrants. However, rejecting the Real ID Act may potentially cause New York licenses to no longer be valid forms of federal identification. The dialogue around providing access to driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants at both the state and federal level will likely continue in the public policy arena for some time. ♦

*Director, Cornell Farmworker Program (CFP) - For more information on the CFP, please visit <http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cfp/index.cfm>



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The Rural New York Minute is a publication of Cornell University's Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI). For more information on CaRDI and its program areas, and for a copy of this publication, please visit www.cardi.cornell.edu.

rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 11/NOVEMBER 2007

Do residential preferences foster sprawl in upstate New York?

By David Kay, Joseph Laquatra, Jordan Suter, Rolf Pendall, and Nelson Bills, Cornell University

Sprawl, or scattered residential development in less value laden language, is indisputably widespread in America. This kind of development has certain benefits and characterizes neighborhoods chosen freely by many Americans. However, public frustration with sprawl's negative side is supported by the work of researchers who have shown how sprawl contributes to a wide range of urban and environmental problems.

As development spreads into rural areas, conflicts typically increase between suburbanites and farmers, historic cities and villages often lose their vitality, and New York loses scenic and environmental values associated with its open lands. These issues spark countless disputes over planning and development, even in slow growth states like New York. In ongoing research on residential preferences in several regions of Upstate New York, Cornell researchers are investigating the factors that drive residential location decisions, property values, and sprawl.

When people decide where to live, many critical factors that influence this decision are out of their direct control – job locations, the natural environment, the cost of housing, local government zoning and infrastructure policies, and the mix of taxes and public services provided, to name just a few. Nevertheless, residential preferences—individual choices about what kind of homes and communities to live in—comprise a major force driving sprawl.

To examine how home buyer preferences might be a driver of sprawl in Upstate New York, we analyzed data from 63,196 single family home sales that occurred between 1998 and 2005 in an upstate housing market commute shed. A price index was constructed to quantify preferences for select physical, neighborhood, and locational characteristics of housing. The extent of preference is measured by the estimated value that each characteristic adds, on average, to the sales price of a single family home.

Results from this analysis* indicate that households place significant value on, among other attributes, more living space, greater lot acreage, and close proximity to open space. These preferences are driving forces for residential sprawl in the Upstate New York area as in many other parts of the coun-

try. Further results confirm that both local property tax rates and school quality are also reflected in the value of homes and help drive residential location choices.

Upstate communities face growing issues related to loss of open space, higher costs of public services, and threats to what is increasingly perceived as their major economic asset: high quality of life. Sprawl often means longer travel distances, more frequent trips, and less access to public transportation, all of which contribute to higher energy use. Per capita costs of such services as schools, police stations, and fire departments usually increase as population densities fall. Sometimes, facilities in developed areas are abandoned while public money is spent on new construction in newly sprawling areas.

The public can control the outward expansion of public services and encourage growth in areas with existing services. Containing sprawl can save taxpayers money by, for example, enacting policies that encourage growth in areas with existing infrastructure. Fundamental economic forces including the preferences of participants in the homebuyer market are important in driving sprawl, but public policies can translate these forces into patterns of development with fewer negative impacts on communities and the environment.

Town, village, city and school boards control much of the context within which consumers make their residential choices. Comprehensive and well integrated planning, site clustering, smart growth zoning strategies, open space preservation, site plan reviews, and sensitive application of basic neighborhood design standards are among the many existing tools that local governments can use to create communities that are more convenient, attractive, walkable, and liveable. As a total package, such communities can be both higher density and highly desirable to home buyers and developers seeking profits. It is encouraging that an increasing number of New York communities, developers, and homeowners are recognizing the need for a wider array of housing choices, including alternatives to sprawl that can meet the test of the marketplace. ♦

* For the full paper, see Laquatra et al. 2007. "The Changing Nature of Housing Markets in Upstate New York", in *Housing and Society*, 34(1).





Department of Development Sociology
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rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 12/DECEMBER 2007

Are towns outside of NYC feeling the effects of rural gentrification?

By **Claiborne Walthall**, Cornell University*

As the dust settled from September 11, 2001, many New York City residents considered leaving. Census estimates reveal a post 9-11 net population *loss* for NYC and its immediately adjacent counties, when foreign immigration is excluded. In contrast, counties more distant from NYC experienced net population *gains*, in some cases increasing demand for housing and affecting the social fabric of some of the more rural communities, changes often associated with “rural gentrification.”

Rural population growth is primarily driven by urban expansion, retirement migration, and people seeking specific amenities. All three of these processes involve some degree of *gentrification*. “Gentrification is the process by which higher-income households displace lower-income residents of a community, changing the essential character and flavor of that community.”** Sonya Salamon’s *Newcomers to Old Towns* describes the main features of rural gentrification. She notes that while there is a general lack of the immediate *physical* displacement of existing residents so often seen in the urban context, more apparent is a subtle *social* displacement, as existing local institutions change or wither, social mores become more sub-urban and less “small town,” and conflicts over land use priorities and decisions arise.

To explore rural gentrification further, we examined U.S. Census Bureau data and conducted interviews with several key informants (including town supervisors, tax assessors, realtors, planners, and librarians) in rural towns in Ulster County, a metropolitan county some 100 miles up the Hudson River from NYC.

Still about 50% rural in 2000, Ulster County reversed its trend of population loss from the 1990s to begin slow annual growth from 2000 to the present. Even though the rate of population growth has been less than 1% per year, local governments and planning boards have expressed concern about a housing crunch as well as what they perceive as changes to the character of their more rural communities. Interviewees were asked questions about a range of topics, such as the change in year-round in-migrants, demographic shifts and housing availability and affordability, land use conflicts, and their perceptions of changes in levels of civic engagement and lifestyles among residents.

Interviews with the town supervisors of both Marletown and Lloyd gave a broader picture of the changing landscape. Local governments face challenges from population growth and rising housing costs. Rising land values and property taxes seem to be re-shaping these towns, findings echoed in a 2005 housing affordability study. There is significant concern that the children of current residents would be unable to afford housing in the area or even pay the rising taxes on inherited land – a defining char-

acteristic of gentrification in urban areas. With a significant rise (65% in one case) in property taxes over the last five years, towns are already seeing major changes in the ownership of large parcels, particularly farmland, according to our interviews. Another interviewee talked about the “Hamptonization” of one of the villages in his town. Others mentioned the “lagging” villages, dwindling in number, with affordably-priced housing.

Rural gentrification has also affected the local politics of some land use decisions, with many of the major land transactions in Ulster County now involving national development companies bidding against national open space advocates. Both jockey for position in the national land arena through a series of local contests. Local governments feel pressure to act preemptively on land use issues, and several towns have recently revised their comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to keep pace with what some perceive as new challenges and others view as new opportunities.

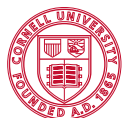
A social and political shift has occurred as well. In one rural town, the supervisor reported being the first Democratic supervisor elected “maybe, ever.” In the past decade the town board has gone from having one Democrat to having five. The profile of the town’s residents has changed from mostly year-round farmers and small-business owners to greater diversity, including weekenders, second-home owners, and a substantial gay community. These newer residents are beginning to vote, and overall are more likely to vote Democratic, according to the town supervisor.

In an interview, Dr. Japonica Brown-Saracino, a gentrification expert from Loyola University, emphasized that public libraries often serve as institutions where newcomers establish footholds in a new community, often as volunteers or in leadership roles. The director of the library in Stone Ridge, NY (Town of Marletown) confirmed this idea. The demand for new databases and wireless internet access has been an accelerating challenge in her library and all the systems in the mid-Hudson area since the year 2000, attributable in part to new residents from NYC. Many of the “newcomers” are actually longer term second-home owners now settling in the area full-time, especially as they approach retirement. Typically, as they spend more time in town, their demands for services grow.

Overall, our research suggests that the social and economic life of some rural towns in Ulster County are changing – driven largely by changes in population *composition*, rather than sheer population *growth*. Shifting land values, changing local institutions, and the rising cost of living are all changes that may be described as consistent with “rural gentrification.” Given the nature of these changes, cooperation between in-movers and longer term residents is needed to enhance the quality of life for everyone. ♦

* Claiborne served as a summer 2007 intern with CaRDI with funding by the EDA University Center at Cornell.

** (Housing Assistance Council 2005).



Cornell University

The Rural New York Minute is a publication of Cornell University’s Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI). For more information on CaRDI and its program areas, and for a copy of this publication, please visit www.cardi.cornell.edu.

Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 1/JANUARY 2007

Terrorism & Residential Location Preferences in New York State

By David Kay, Chuck Geisler, & Nelson Bills, Cornell University

What is the Issue?

Does the threat of terrorism influence where people want to live and buy homes in New York State? Our research suggests that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 have indeed strengthened the preferences of many New Yorkers for life in smaller towns and rural areas. However, the strength of this effect has most likely faded over time and seems unlikely, in any event, to have driven a large scale or region-wide change in settlement patterns.

Official estimates of population change since 9/11 show that average annual population growth rates in the NYC metropolitan area are lower in the new millennium than they were in the 1990s. However, counties within a two and a half hour drive of New York City are among the state's fastest growing. Considering only resettlement of people already in the United States (i.e. excluding international migration), communities within this area but more distant from New York City are gaining new people faster than current residents are moving away. In contrast, net losses mark the City and its immediately adjacent communities. Is this merely part of a continuing national trend of population dispersion or a set of demographic events also influenced by 9/11?

How was the Research Conducted?

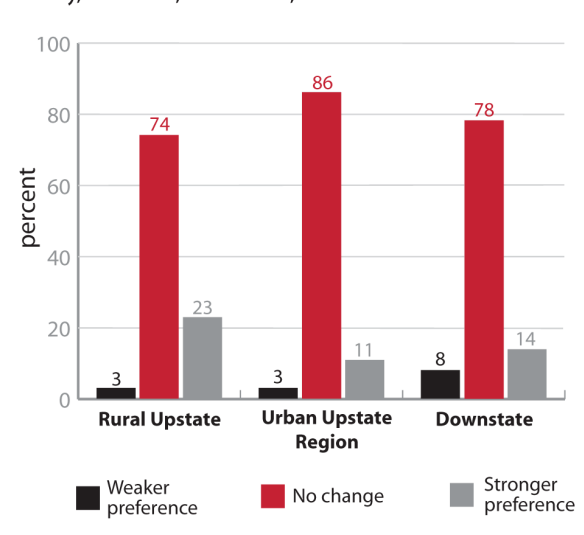
To gain insight into this issue, participants in a 2004 Cornell University survey of New York State residents (the annual Empire State Poll, or ESP) were asked about their perceptions of terrorism and its implications for their own residential location preferences. Responses to a number of survey questions were analyzed so that other variables possibly influencing decisions to relocate (such as gender, political affiliation, level of education, family size, presence in the household of younger and older children, race, and religious identification) could be con-

trolled. The modeling effort tried to predict who would "expect to be living in their community five years from now". Models were constructed separately for four geographies (NYC, all of downstate, urban upstate, and rural upstate) and then compared.

What were the General Findings?

- Terrorism was not an abiding concern among most state residents 3 years after the 9/11 attack. Though approximately 3 of 4 state residents feared new attacks on the U.S., only a minority—up to 1 in 3 downstate residents—felt it likely their own community was at risk.
- A large majority of the state's residents (three quarters or more, depending on the degree of urbanization of their

Figure 1: Has the ongoing threat of terrorist attacks, strengthened, weakened or left unchanged your preferences for city, suburban, small town, or rural locations?



county) asserted that their residential preferences for rural versus urban locations were not affected by the attacks.

- Security concerns can influence preferences. People who perceived greater baseline community security (of all kinds) were less likely to expect to move.
- If there is any effect of perceived terrorism risks on the propensity to move, the threat is not strongly in-

9/11 fortified upstate residents' tendencies to stay put, especially in rural areas, more than it "pushed" downstate residents to move away.

fluent; none of those expecting to move mentioned security motivations when questioned.

- The effects of the 9/11 attacks on New York residents' expectations of moving are weak. However, more than providing a strong "push" for downstate residents to move away, our analysis suggests 9/11 fortified upstate residents' tendencies to stay put, especially in rural areas.

Do Downstate & Upstate Perceptions Vary?

- When asked to identify the "most important issue facing New York State", 7% of downstate respondents designated security/terrorism as their most important issue. This proportion fell to only 1 or 2% of upstate respondents.
- Downstate residents were more wary of future attacks than were upstate residents. Just over one in ten downstate residents thought an attack in their community was very likely, nearly twice the proportion of upstate residents.
- Respondents were asked to compare across the "full range of possible risks" the overall security of their community against that of other U.S. communities. The sense of security is highest upstate. Still, only 7% of residents in downstate counties say their community is among the nation's "least secure".
- Compared to urban upstate residents, a larger fraction of downstate residents asserted their residential preferences were affected by the attacks.
- Expectations of moving are more prevalent downstate: Respondents expecting to move within 5 years ranged from 17/18% in upstate rural/urban counties to 29% in downstate counties.

- Residents in downstate counties who thought an attack probable were more likely than other downstaters to expect to move within five years (35% v.s. 29%). In upstate counties the likelihood of an attack had a weaker association with moving.

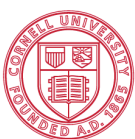
Do Urban & Rural Perceptions Differ?

- The terrorist attacks affected the residential preferences of a higher proportion of rural than urban upstate residents. Rural residents tended to have their preferences for rural life reinforced.
- The sense of community security is highest in upstate NY, but does not vary significantly between rural and urban upstate counties.
- A relatively high percent of urban residents who thought an attack was very or somewhat likely also said they expected to move within five years (35% downstate, 21% urban upstate). In rural counties only 15% felt this way.

Most New Yorkers did not feel at risk due to terrorist threats when queried about their residential preferences in 2004. Among those who did, proximity to a major city was an evident factor.

What are the Policy Implications?

This analysis lends some weight to arguments for the resilience of New York City as a residential location. By 2004, it appears that the 9/11 shock had, to some degree, receded and New Yorkers could respond to the survey questions with perspective and an absence of panic. Though some residents clearly left the city in its aftermath, the 9/11 tragedy was fading as a motive for changing residence and was increasingly overwhelmed by more traditional influences. In the unfortunate event of additional urban terrorist attacks, urban residents' preferences for rural and small town living could once again be reinforced. In addition to the families and individuals directly concerned, the effects of terrorism on residential choice could still have major implications for planners, service providers, employers, builders, demographers, taxpayers and public officials. ♦



Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 2/FEBRUARY 2007

Childhood Obesity: Do New Yorkers Support Policies to Reduce it?*

By **John Cawley** and **Rachel Dunifon**, Department of Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University.

What is The Issue?

The issue of youth obesity has received a great deal of media and policy attention in recent years. Since 1970, the percentage of U.S. children who are overweight has more than tripled, and the percentage of U.S. teenagers who are overweight has more than doubled. This trend represents a significant public health issue with critical social and economic consequences. In this brief, we report perceptions of childhood obesity, support for specific anti-obesity policies, and willingness to pay higher taxes to reduce childhood obesity. The data for this study come from the 2006 Empire State Poll, a survey of 800 New York State residents conducted annually by Cornell University's Survey Research Institute.

Do New Yorkers think childhood obesity is an important problem?

81% of New Yorkers think that youth obesity in the U.S. is a "major problem"

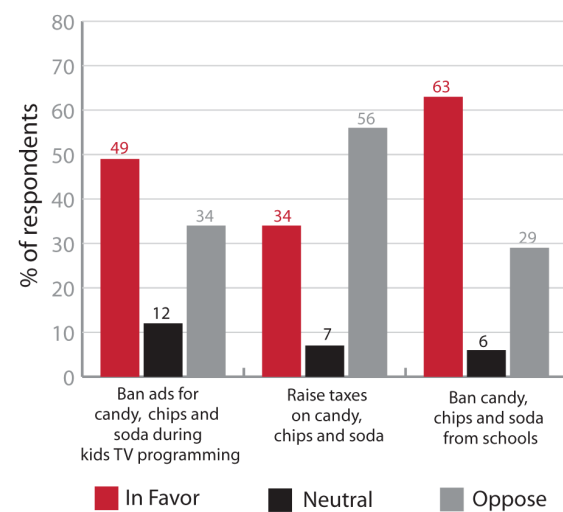
- 81% of respondents think that youth obesity in the U.S. is a "major problem" and an additional 12.9% think that it is a "minor problem." Only 3.4% of New Yorkers said youth obesity was "not a problem at all."
- When asked how youth obesity ranks among a series of problems facing youth (specifically, risky sex, drug use, smoking, and underage drinking) the majority of respondents (53%) ranked obesity as somewhere in the middle in terms of its importance. The remainder was equally split between ranking it among the most important and among the least important.

- Respondents were also asked how the public health budget should be divided between those same problems confronting American youth. 39.9% said obesity should receive a larger budget share than the other problems, 22.5% said it should receive an equal share, and 37.6% said it should receive a smaller budget share than the other problems.

Do New Yorkers support targeting of candy, chips and soda in order to reduce childhood obesity?

- Roughly half of respondents (48.9%) think the government should ban the advertisement of candy, chips and

Figure 1: New Yorkers' relative support for targeting candy, chips and soda.



Source: Empire State Poll, 2006

RESEARCH & POLICY BRIEF/ISSUE NUMBER 2/FEBRUARY 2007

soda during children's television programming. A third (33.7%) was opposed to such a ban and 12% were neutral.

- More than half of respondents (56%) were opposed to the government raising taxes on candy, chips and soda pop. A third (33.9%) were in favor of such a tax hike, and 7% were neutral.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents (63.4%) think the government should ban candy, chips and soda from schools. 28.8% were opposed to such a ban, and 5.8% were neutral.

Are New Yorkers willing to pay higher taxes to reduce childhood obesity?

Respondents were asked a series of questions to determine their willingness to pay higher taxes for policies to reduce youth obesity. They were asked: "Suppose there is a new voter referendum in your town. The referendum will enact policies that will reduce youth obesity in your town by 50%...If the referendum passes, you and everyone else will have to pay \$50 more in taxes every year. Given your current budget, would you vote for or against this referendum?" Respondents who indicated they were willing to pay \$50 were then asked about their willingness to pay a higher amount, and respondents not willing to pay \$50 were asked about their willingness to pay a lower amount.

- There is considerable variation in New Yorkers' willingness to pay for reductions in childhood obesity. More than a third (36.3%) refuse to pay even \$10 a year in taxes to cut childhood obesity in half, while one-sixth

The average New York State resident is willing to pay \$47.25 in higher taxes each year to reduce youth obesity.

(15.9%) are willing to pay more than \$200 a year for such a reduction.

- Those with more children, who have higher incomes, who describe themselves as liberal or a Democrat, or who believe that obesity is a major problem are willing to pay more.

- Those who are unhappy with the current tax situation, who think that obesity is due to individual choices or genetics rather than the environment, or who self-identify as a Republican, report lower willingness to pay.

All together, this translates into a total willingness to pay of adult New York State residents of \$692.3 million per year. Interestingly, this is far more than what New York State would save in lower health care costs by halving youth obesity, which implies that New Yorkers value a reduction in childhood obesity on its own merit.

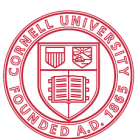
Summary

This study provides some new, important information for policymakers and practitioners in New York State. While many New Yorkers consider childhood obesity to be a major problem, people differ in terms of the types of policies they would like to see implemented to address the issue, as well as the amount of money they are willing to spend on it. The most popular policy solution was banning candy, ships and soda from schools, while the least popular was raising taxes on these same items. While the average New Yorker is willing to pay considerable sums to address childhood obesity, this willingness varies depending on characteristics of the respondent.

What are the Policy Implications?

Results from this study suggest that policies aimed at addressing food sold in schools could receive the most support from the public. Additionally, many New Yorkers are prepared to pay higher taxes, if confident that the money would be effective in reducing youth obesity. However, the 2005 Institute of Medicine report on preventing childhood obesity noted that there is little evidence regarding which anti-obesity policies are effective. Cost effectiveness studies of various anti-obesity interventions are needed in order to ensure that any tax revenues collected to prevent childhood obesity are used to maximum effectiveness. ♦

* This article was originally published as a 2006 Cornell Cooperative Extension bulletin. This material is based upon work supported by Smith Lever funds from the Cooperative State Research, education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Agreement No.324-6602/7602, 4110003200 Lever 9/30/08. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 3/MARCH 2007

New Yorkers' Perceptions of Immigrants and Immigration

By Max J. Pfeffer & Pilar A. Parra

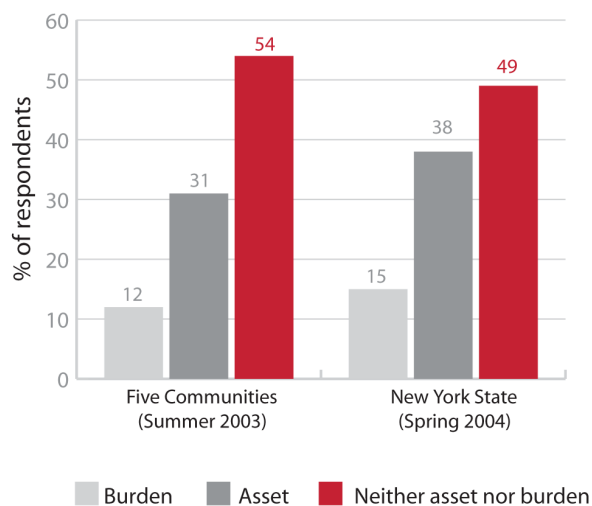
The Consequences of Immigration are Experienced Most Intensely at the Local Level

At the same time that the issue of immigration and its impacts on American society is being hotly debated in the national political arena, the populations of many rural New York State communities are becoming more ethnically diverse. This trend has been most notable since the 1990s with the upsurge in Mexican migration. While there are certainly national, regional, and state-level impacts from increased immigration, the impacts and consequences of immigration are often experienced most intensely at the local community level. These diversifying communities are faced with a range of opportunities and challenges associated with this population change. In general, how do New Yorkers view these immigrants and immigration?

How was the Study Conducted?

We asked community residents for their opinion about the presence of immigrants in their own communities. To do this, we focused on five upstate communities with a strong presence of Mexican immigrants, many of whom first came to the area to work as farmworkers. Two communities we studied are on the northern fringes of the New York City metropolitan area, and three are in more rural areas of northwestern New York. We convened seven focus groups with community residents who had no involvement in farmwork, and interviewed key informants and 1,250 randomly selected individuals living in these communities. We also added questions to Cornell University's annual Empire State Poll to assess how closely opinions in our five communities matched those of a statistically representative sample of New York State residents.

Figure 1: Perception of immigrants as an asset or burden, five New York communities and New York State



Source: Pfeffer & Parra, Department of Development Sociology, Cornell University

New Yorkers' General Attitudes Towards Immigration and Immigrants

- A small proportion of community members considered immigrants a burden, and about one-third thought of them as an asset, but most people were ambivalent about immigrants. The Empire State Poll, a statewide survey of New Yorkers, explored the same question with similar results; about half of New Yorkers considered immigrants neither an asset nor a burden (see Figure 1).
- Contrasting opinions are reflected in the following comments by community residents:

Communities react differently to the new immigrants; some are more welcoming and some are bad. This community has been more tolerant, but the welcomingness is not genuine—they make very clear where the line is in terms of how much you fit in.

The communities are just going to [have to] accept that it's going to be more diverse.

In this area there are persons very supportive of immigrant workers, and [they] try to help to get papers for the immigrant families working with them, and community members that perceive immigrants as the cause of community problems.

- The most important concern regarding new immigrants in the five communities and in New York State as a whole is economic growth and job creation.
- Community members who have more education and are employed in managerial and professional occupations are more likely to consider immigrants an asset to their communities, often noting that immigrants take jobs that others in the community are unwilling to do:

Immigrants bring cultural differences, which are good, bring in talent, and a lot of them are service people in jobs that others won't do, which is good.

The biggest challenge is for residents to understand why the immigrants are here, and that they are doing really good work that Americans, especially young Americans, are not willing to do.

- On the other hand, some community residents view immigrants as competitors for their jobs, and noted the lack of adequate employment opportunities in the community:

Immigrants' working for low wages makes it hard for Americans to get a job because immigrants would be hired first.

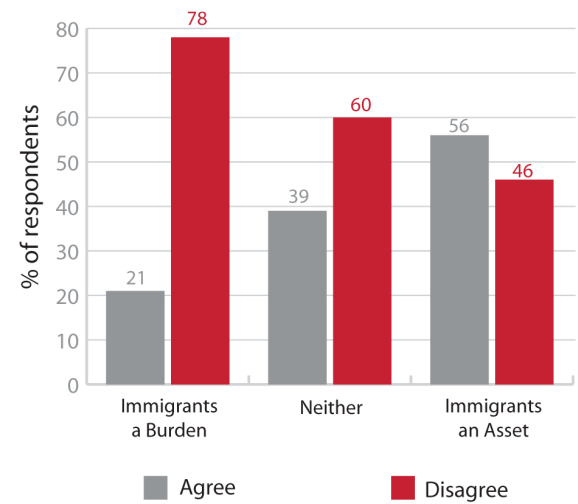
There aren't enough jobs to go around right now, it keeps the salaries down because there is always someone there to take a job.

- Overall, community residents are skeptical that immigrants bring businesses and jobs into their communities, but opinions about the economic impacts of immigration on the community are sometimes sharply divided. This varies depending on whether respondents view immigrants as a burden or an asset (see Figure 2).

Conclusions and Policy Implications

Most people have little regular interaction with immigrants and are not aware of their needs or capabilities. Consequently, they do not have a clear opinion about the likely impacts of immigrants on their communities, nor do they have clear ideas about the potential role of immigrants in community development. Immigrants need more opportunities to develop social ties to other community residents, and civic organizations offer means of promoting such linkages. In particular, communities need to do more to encourage forms of civic engagement that include immigrants. Com-

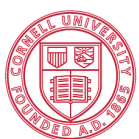
Figure 2: Belief that immigrants bring new businesses and jobs by perception of immigrants as an asset or burden, five New York communities, 2003



Source: Pfeffer & Parra, Department of Development Sociology, Cornell University

munity efforts to promote language training and certain types of technical training could play an important part in furthering the social and economic integration of immigrants into the community and provide employers with a more qualified workforce.

Will these new community residents be an asset or a burden to a community? This question will be answered by the types of actions communities take. Lack of active efforts to integrate immigrants into the social and economic life of the community will likely result in the development of a group that is poor and marginal to the community's mainstream. People who are not well integrated into community life typically have a low standard of living and do not contribute to the overall development of the community to the fullest extent possible. The integration of immigrants into community life can be part of a larger community development strategy that attracts employers who need workers with particular skills. The diversity introduced by immigrants can also be a community asset that helps to draw other workers who value more varied community life. The diversification of New York communities offers a new resource in community development that deserves careful attention.



Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 4/APRIL 2007

Converging Worlds: The State of Farm-Neighbor Relations in NYS

By **David Kay** and **Suzanne Motheral**, Cornell University

Nearly four years after a second-generation New York farmer located a new 300-cow facility a few miles from his home dairy farm, several neighbors upset about strong odors brought their complaints to the town supervisor. The farmer had been completely unaware of any of his neighbors' concerns, and at a meeting called by the supervisor to address the issue was stunned by the intensity of the pent-up anger directed at him.

What is the issue?

Many close observers of agricultural and country life believe that long-term economic, social and land use trends make increasing tensions between farmers and their neighbors practically inevitable. How prevalent is this conflict in New York State and what are expectations about the future?

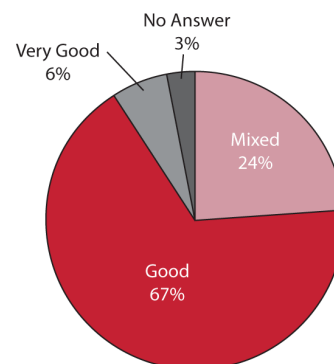
How was the research conducted?

Little research on the extent and nature of farm-neighbor conflict has been conducted in New York State, despite its potential importance for the viability of agriculture. We interviewed more than 150 individuals in 2004 and 2005 across NYS as part of a multiyear project intended to build community institutional capacity to respond to conflict more constructively. Nearly all individuals contacted were professionals in county-based positions who were likely to be aware of significant farm-neighbor and other agricultural disputes in their areas.

What were the general findings?

A majority of respondents (67%) consider current farm-neighbor relations to be good, while about a quarter of

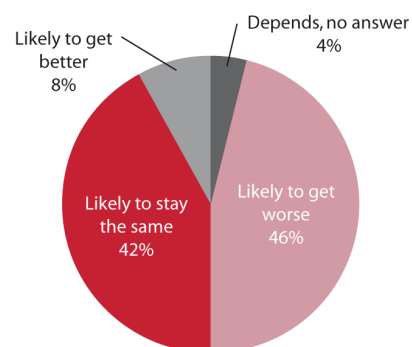
Figure 1: Current Farm-Neighbor Relations



respondents (24%) view these relations as “mixed” (see Figure 1).

However, when asked about their expectations for farm-neighbor relations in the future, almost half of the respondents (46%) expect relations to deteriorate (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Expectations of Future Farm-Neighbor Relations



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The reasons these local experts give to explain their expectations of increased conflict are consistently summarized as due to:

- the growing number of nonfarm neighbors (“sprawl”, “more development pressure”, “people moving in”, etc.);
- changes in nature of farming (more consolidation, bigger farms, etc.).

What are the issues and concerns in farm-neighbor conflicts?

Issues reportedly of greatest concern for farm neighbors are:

- odor and manure, including the effect of manure on water quality;
- mud on roads, chemical use, animal welfare, farm vehicles blocking traffic, and various quality of life issues.

Issues reportedly of greatest concern for farmers are:

- a “lack of understanding” of the practices of farm businesses;
- trespassing, with specific examples of various kinds of trespass, such as ATV use and unauthorized hunting.

What are the positive and negative impacts of farm neighbor conflict?

The majority of respondents reported that farm-related conflicts had important impacts on farmers, neighbors and the community as a whole. Among the negative impacts mentioned are:

- *“I’ve seen people go out of business because of the expense of fighting the conflicts — loss of revenue, work time, increased expenditures on equipment/facility upgrades, etc.”*
- *“Farmers have been hurt by policies that curtail farming. Neighbors get angry over some practices. The burden of dealing with these situations falls on the whole community.”*
- *“There is a loss of productive time for all parties, creating larger barriers to future relations. Conflicts can result in loss of the farm or giving up farming.”*

Surprisingly, perhaps, roughly equal numbers of respondents saw good as well as bad resulting from tensions with the farm community:

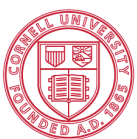
- *“Everyone had a chance to speak their minds. Some misconceptions were cleared up.”*
- *“There was improvement of community understanding of farming and farming practices. Also, the conflict helped farmers to adapt operations early before more severe conflicts arise.”*
- *“The conflict is a wake-up call — there are some producers who are making a stronger effort to reach out to let their neighbors know what they are doing and when, building bridges, which has been well received.”*
- *“Enlightening for those involved. Each walked away with new knowledge about the other, including reasons for why things were done on the farm. And the farmer gained a better appreciation for what the neighbors were complaining about.”*

Conclusions

Conflict is natural, normal and here to stay. What resources are available to farmers and neighbors to resolve conflict in a productive way? Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Soil and Water Conservation district staff often help people involved in farm-neighbor conflicts. Others, led by elected public officials and state agency officials, were reported as involved only “occasionally.” However, recent growth in the scope and structure of New York State’s USDA-funded Agricultural Mediation Program offers new options for improved conflict resolution services to the farm community and its neighbors (see http://www.nysdra.org/adr/adr_nysamp.html).

As farm practices and residential patterns change, the worlds of farmers and neighbors will continue to collide. Cornell’s research documents concern for the future among local experts who are the closest observers of farm conflicts. There is a need to build new capacity today so that New York communities can more constructively handle the widely expected future burdens of increased farm-neighbor conflict.

*For additional information, see “Farms, Communities, and Collaboration: A Guide to Resolving Farm-Neighbor Conflict” by David Kay, Maralyn Edid, Judith Saul, and Lee Telega. USDA publication, 2003.



Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 5/MAY 2007

Farm-to-School Initiatives Gaining Ground in New York State

By Jennifer Wilkins, Duncan Hilchey, and Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman, Cornell University.

Farm-to-School Initiatives

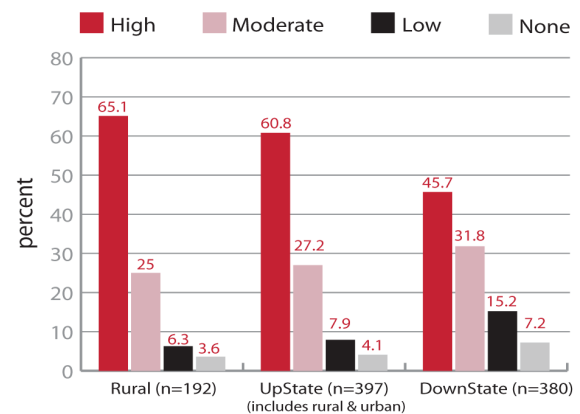
Farm-to-school initiatives are part of a growing trend in national, state and local policies designed to encourage public institutions to purchase fresh and processed foods from farmers in their home state. Farm-to-school programs across the U.S. (including NYS) have grown considerably since 2000, motivated, in part, by the desire to improve diets and address obesity rates among children by providing schools with fresh, healthy food, and to create new local markets for growers.

The National Farm to School Program (NFTS) maintains a network of over 30 organizations nationwide (including the Cornell Farm to School Program <http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu/>). More than fifteen school districts in NYS have initiated farm-to-school programs (www.farmtoschool.org), which, according to the NFTS website, “feature farm fresh foods such as fruits and vegetables, eggs, honey, meat, and beans on their menus; incorporate nutrition-based curriculum; and provide students experiential learning opportunities through farm visits, gardening and recycling programs. Farmers have access to a new market through schools and connect to their community through participation in programs designed to educate kids about local food and sustainable agriculture.”

Are New Yorkers Interested in Having Local Food in Public School Cafeterias?

According to data from the 2005 Empire State Poll, an annual opinion survey conducted by Cornell University, NYS residents express strong interest in having local foods served in school cafeterias (see Figure 1). Even though rural and upstate (includes both rural and urban) NY

Figure 1: New York State Residents' Level of Interest in Having Local Foods in School Cafeterias, by Region.



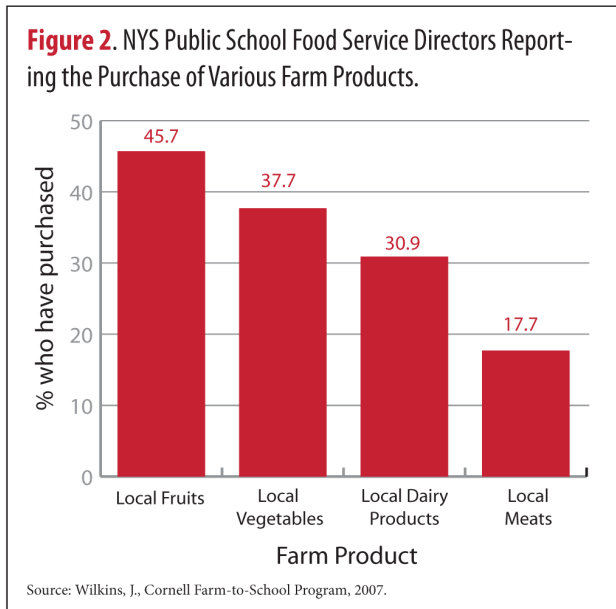
Source: Hilchey & Francis, Empire State Poll 2005.

residents indicate more interest in having local foods in school cafeterias than do downstate residents, the School FoodPlus Initiative is making farm to school connections in the New York City school system, the largest school district in the country. (<http://www.foodchange.org/nutrition/schoolfood.html>)

Do Public School Food Service Directors Buy Local Foods?

In collaboration with the New York School Nutrition Association, the Cornell Farm to School Program recently conducted an on-line survey of K-12 public school food service directors to assess their experience or interest in purchasing local foods. Fifty-five percent of respondents reported purchasing local foods (see Figure 2). Fruits were the most common products purchased from farmers, and

apples were twice as likely to be purchased as any other fruit or vegetable. Among vegetables, tomatoes, potatoes and squashes (both summer and winter) were the most likely to be purchased from local farmers.



Among respondents who had not purchased local food, the top reasons reported included “unreliable supply” (for fruits and vegetables), “local meat is too expensive,” and “local dairy products are too much effort.” A smaller percentage of directors reported not having the equipment or trained food service workers to handle raw farm products from local sources.

What are the Public Policy Responses?

There are many challenges public schools face when adapting their procurement programs to utilize farm fresh products. These include: seasonal variability of supply, infrastructure at the school level, food costs, additional administration, food preparation, variable quality, reliability of delivery, and federal and state reimbursement. In order to remove some of the barriers to buying local food, NYS enacted a law in 1986 to allow schools to purchase food directly from farmers or associations of farmers without bidding requirements. The law’s goals are to provide fresh, nutritious local foods to children and to help support farming in NYS. New provisions were added in 2004 to strengthen and clarify the original law, including, among

other things, clarification on farmer eligibility, the maximum amount schools can spend on direct purchases, public local procurement notification, purchasing criteria, and paperwork reduction.

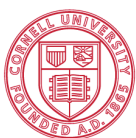
Another statute, the New York State Farm to School Law, passed in 2002, encourages cooperation, coordination and communication between the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the NYS Department of Education in ways that will lead to increased public institutional procurement of NYS farm products. This legislation also directs the Departments of Agriculture and Markets and Education to work with school food service, health and nutrition, farm, and educational organizations to establish a New York Harvest for New York Kids week. Held annually in the fall, the event promotes New York agricultural products to children through school meal programs, classroom instruction, and visits to farms and farmers’ markets.

New legislation has been proposed to bolster these current laws. The new Act would establish a fresh fruits and vegetable program under the Department of Education aimed at providing “schools with payments for the purchase of fresh or minimally processed fruits and vegetables.” (New York State Assembly Website: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?bn=A01943>)

Conclusion

Farm-to-school initiatives can have a positive impact at the local level, both for the physical health of school children consuming local foods, and for the economic health of local farmers who sell their products directly to the school. While many public school food service directors already purchase some local food, particularly fruits and vegetables, research suggests that significant barriers still exist. Recent farm-to-school legislation in NYS is a step in the right direction to removing several of these barriers. Incentives like those proposed above are needed to encourage public schools to more fully take advantage of local food supplies, to help develop and expand local options, and to ensure profitability of the farmers they do business with. ♦

For information on the Cornell Farm-to-School Program, the Farm to School Policy Tools and other resources, please visit the CaRDI website (cardi.cornell.edu) and click on the Agriculture, Food & Community Development Section.



Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 6/JUNE 2007

Losing and Gaining Metropolitan Status: So What?

By David L. Brown and K. Whitney Mauer, Cornell University.

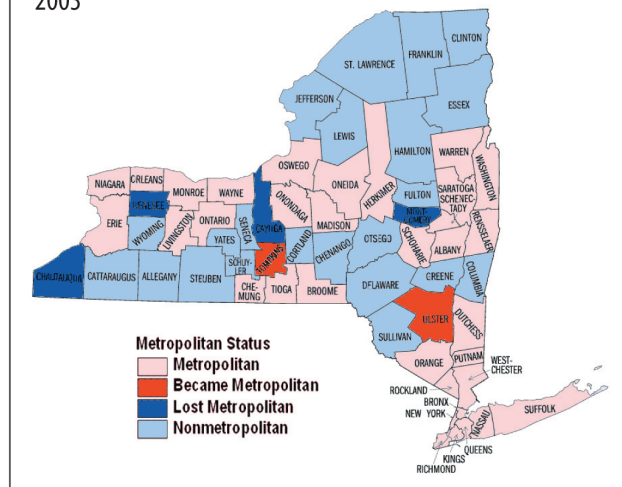
What happens when NYS counties gain or lose metropolitan status? Why should we care?

Answering this last question first, simply put, there are dollars at stake. A county's metropolitan or non-metropolitan status is sometimes used to determine whether it is eligible for various federal government programs. Gaining or losing metropolitan status potentially affects an area's eligibility for various federal programs, development decision-making, and community identity. Private sector economic decisions may also be informed by an area's official metropolitan status which is often seen as an indicator of overall development, effective demand, and/or as evidence that producer services and other complementary inputs are present.

What is "metropolitan status" and how did NYS counties fare between 1990 and 2000?

Because the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) new core-based classification system uses different criteria than in 1990 for determining which areas are statistically classified as metropolitan, some counties were shifted from one status to another, regardless of their demographic experience during the decade of the 1990s. As of 2000, metropolitan statistical areas must have a core county (or counties) with an urbanized area of at least 50,000 persons. An outlying county qualifies as metropolitan if at least 25 percent of the county's employed workers commute to jobs in the central county and/or vice versa. Only 6 of New York State's 62 counties changed metropolitan status between 1990 and 2000. Four of the counties lost metropolitan status — one was previously a central county, the other three were suburban areas. The two counties that gained metropolitan status were both new central counties (see Figure 1 and OMB, 2000).

Figure 1: Metropolitan Status of Counties in New York; 2003



Are NYS County officials concerned about their changed metro status?

In May 2005, we conducted face to face interviews with elected and appointed officials in the six New York counties that had gained or lost metropolitan status since the 1990 census. We spoke with county executives and administrators, as well as with planners and other county staff. A number of themes emerged in the interviews regardless of whether the particular county had gained or lost metro status. Specific concerns, of course, varied between communities. As might be expected, officials in the new metro counties were generally more positive about their changed status than were those who lost metropolitan status.

	Gained Metro Status		Lost Metro Status	
	Concerns	Possible Opportunity	Concerns	Possible Opportunity
Program Eligibility	Some concerns about losing USDA Rural Development Eligibility	Possibly new sources of funds.	Concerns about CDBG entitlement.	
Funding Levels	More claims on constant pool of funds.	Confidence that RD funds will not be affected.	Concerns about declines in finding levels.	New eligibility for funding from USDA Rural Development.
Community Image		Higher Status. Affirmation of community identity as metropolitan.	Viewed as a downgrade.	Reflects unique community character and independent status. Seen as high performing micropolitan area rather than low performing metropolitan area.
Economic Development		Greater purchasing power to attract new business/industries and residents.	Diminished competitiveness with metro counties. Negative effects on the citing of business/industries. Reduced advertising rates	Market to particular niche
Date Availability		Yearly data from ACS. Community-specific data.	Less frequent data. Effects of data for labor negotiations	Community-specific data.

Our interviews confirmed that county officials were apprehensive about how the new OMB standards would affect their eligibility for and amount of funds and services received from government agencies. Interestingly, these apprehensions were somewhat less pronounced among professional county staff than among county executives, administrators, and other elected officials. Perhaps the symbolic value of gaining or losing status is more salient to the latter, especially those who must stand for election or promote the area to outside interests. Communities that lost metropolitan status were particularly concerned about the effect on HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlements. Counties that lost metropolitan status were also concerned if their new designation would communicate a lowering of status and affect competitiveness for other programs or grants from states, the federal government, or private investments. Officials in new metropolitan counties voiced some concern about losing eligibility and allocations from USDA's Rural Development (RD) programs, but all of these officials believed that the rural areas within their counties would continue to receive RD funds. In the counties that lost metropolitan status there was hope that the change would benefit their RD eligibility and funding. Officials of all the counties expressed concern that the new OMB standards might affect Medicaid reimbursement, since the local match in New York comes directly from counties. In fact, Medicaid reimbursement was at the top of the agenda in all six counties we visited regardless of their metropolitan status.

Other concerns

County officials speculated that the new metropolitan standards could have economic impacts if used by corporate or private interests to justify industrial or business

location decisions. In counties that lost metropolitan status, there were concerns that a loss of metropolitan status might negatively affect advertising rates if the change is assumed to reflect declines in newspaper readership. In contrast, in Ulster County, a new metropolitan area in the Hudson Valley, the impact was thought to be potentially in their favor. Another important concern mentioned by almost every county was the impact that the new classification system would have on how data are collected by the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Officials in counties that lost metropolitan status wondered if this change would affect the quality and timeliness of data available to them for planning and decision making.

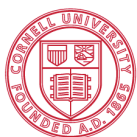
Conclusions

In the six New York counties where we conducted interviews, there is an awareness of both the changed criteria for metropolitan classification and its potential for impacts within their respective counties. Nevertheless, the metro reclassification issue did not seem to be an extremely high priority. According to the county officials, the pace and direction of growth or decline had been occurring before the new OMB standards became effective and would continue regardless of their metropolitan status or change therein.

Reference

Office of Management and Budget. 2000. "Standards for Defining Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas; Notice. Federal Register. 65(249):82228-82238.

*Please visit the CaRDI website for an upcoming *CaRDI Report* by the same authors that examines the issue of changing metropolitan status across the U.S.



Research & Policy Brief Series

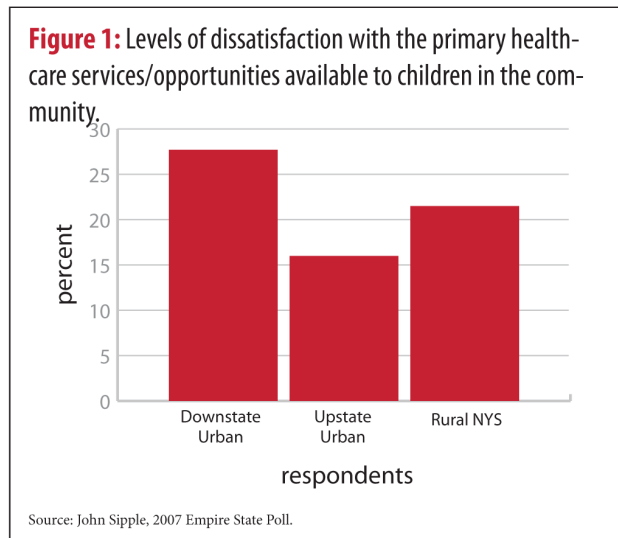
ISSUE NUMBER 7/JULY 2007

School-Based Health Centers in NYS

By **John W. Sipple** and **Hope Casto**, Cornell University.

What is the Issue?

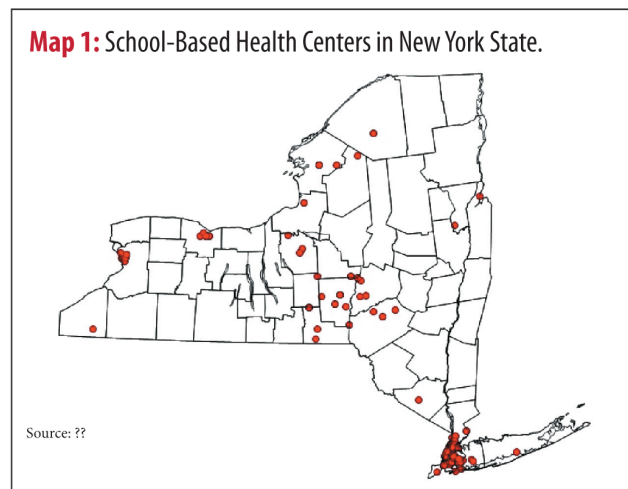
A significant number of New Yorkers are dissatisfied with the health care available to children in their communities. According to the 2007 Empire State Poll, an annual opinion survey of New York State residents conducted by Cornell University, this opinion is felt most strongly among respondents living in downstate urban areas (28%), followed by respondents in rural areas (22%), and upstate urban areas (16%) (See Figure 1). Although this is not a majority opinion, it does represent a sizeable population who perceive that children's health-care needs are not being adequately met in New York State.



Nationally, issues of poverty and inadequate health insurance plague many rural children. According to the 2005 American Community Survey, 23% of rural children live in poverty. Furthermore, a recent study by

the Carsey Institute (UNH) found that 1.3 million rural children are uninsured, with the highest percentage of uninsured in the most rural areas. School-base health centers are well situated to serve poor and uninsured children in rural areas. SBHCs may also be a more efficient way to serve rural children regardless of their poverty status.

What are SBHCs and how do they work in schools?



Currently in New York State, there are 197 approved, operating SBHCs, the most of any state in the U.S. as of the 2004-2005 school year. The majority of these are in urban areas (New York City and upstate urban areas), while 27 are located in rural areas (see Map 1).

School-based health centers (SBHC), by definition and regulation, differ from state to state across the Unit-

ed States. In NYS, SBHCs are defined by the NYS Department of Health as “a licensed school-based health, dental, or mental health clinic [that] is located in a school facility of a school district or BOCES and [that] is operated by an entity other than the district or BOCES, and will provide health, dental, and mental health services during school hours and/or non-school hours to school-age and pre-school children.” SBHCs in NYS offer services to children enrolled in the school, including age appropriate reproductive health care, and offer not only on-site access during the school day but also 24 hour on-call coverage.

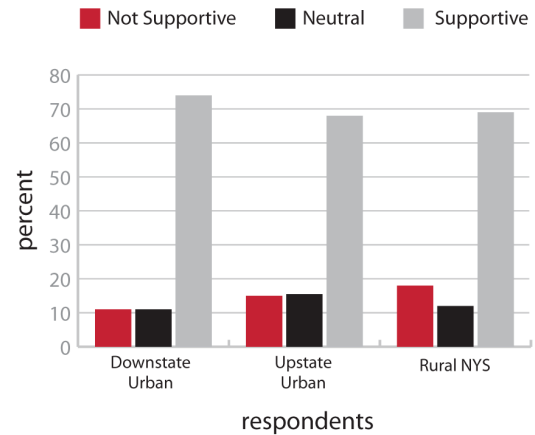
In order to house a SBHC, schools must collaborate with a sponsoring health care agency. The sponsoring agency bears the financial and legal liability, and hence motivates the efficient enrollment of all eligible children in health care benefit programs (i.e., Child Health Plus). The gains in efficiency may also be realized by not requiring students to leave the school building for routine health care, which in turn reduces time out of the classroom for students and travel obligations for parents. The existence of a SBHC may have added significance in rural settings where many communities do not have health clinics or physicians.

Do New Yorkers support SBHCs? Do they have concerns?

Respondents to the 2007 Empire State Poll were asked to indicate their level of support for school-based health clinics for the children in their community. Strong levels of support were shown across the state (downstate urban areas with 76% support, upstate urban areas with 68% support, and 69% of respondents in rural areas indicating support for SBHCs) (see Figure 2). In fact, what is striking about these numbers is the almost complete lack of variation in levels of support among respondents living in different areas of the state.

When rural survey respondents were asked about their primary concerns about school-based health centers, some respondents cited such issues as additional costs (even though, per NYS regulation, the cost of the centers is born by the sponsoring health care provider), privacy, and whether it was the job of the school to house a SBHC. However, a third of the rural population surveyed responded that they had no concerns, regardless of whether or not they support clinics.

Figure 2: If primary health-care services were available in a clinic inside your local public school, would you support the use of it for children in your community?



Source: John Sipple, 2007 Empire State Poll.

What is the future of school-based health centers in NYS?

The number of SBHCs in New York State continues to increase. Bassett Hospital opened three additional SBHCs in 2006/7, operating a total of nine centers in the state. Providing further support to SBHCs is the introduction in the U.S. Congress of the *School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act of 2007*. This Act would authorize \$50 million to create new SBHCs and fund existing centers across the country in 2008. Congress is now requesting an increase of \$10 billion over the next five years to expand the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (e.g. Child Health Plus in NYS). Such an increase would allow greater numbers of children of the working poor access to health insurance. This would lower costs for sponsoring health care agencies operating SBHCs by reducing the numbers of uninsured children being served. SBHCs offer yet another piece of the health care puzzle, a solution that can potentially serve more school-age children efficiently in their home communities.

Key Resources

NYS Department of Health:

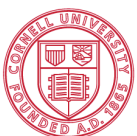
www.nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/school/index.htm

National Assembly of School-Based Health Centers:

www.NASBHC.org

The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools:

www.HealthInSchools.org



Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 8/AUGUST 2007

Heats and Animosities: What Rural New Yorkers Think about Local Taxes and Services

By **David L. Kay**, Cornell University.

“Taxes, after all, are dues that we pay for the privileges of membership in an organized society.” Franklin D. Roosevelt
“Collecting more taxes than is absolutely necessary is legalized robbery.” Calvin Coolidge

What is the Issue?

Local taxes have been of great interest to New Yorkers since at least 1683. In that year the Colonial Assembly passed an innovative “Act for the Defraying of the publique & necessary Charge of each respective Citty, Towne, and County throughout this Province & for maintaining the poore & preventing vagabonds”. By 1697, this legislation had been partially repealed because, “the Act hath been by Experience found to be very inconvenient and burthensome to the Inhabitants of this Province, and hath occasioned many heats, animosities, Strifes and Debates...”

In 2007, the “heat” goes on. According to CaRDI’s Rural Survey of the Empire State Poll (ESP), an annual survey of NYS residents conducted by Cornell University, one quarter of rural New Yorkers identified taxation as the most important issue facing their communities. Of these, almost half directed their concern at “local”, and more specifically “property”, taxes. Scathing editorials about high local taxes are routine. It is widely acknowledged that in NYS, property taxes are, by some measures, the highest in the nation.

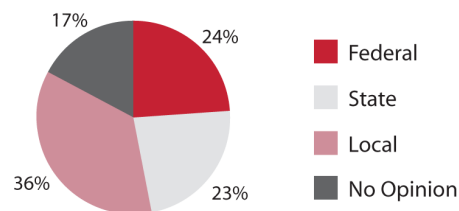
As noted on an IRS website, “When it comes to taxes, everyone has an opinion.” However, the all too common focus on taxes alone ignores the public services for which taxes pay. What does the public actually feel about the *balance* of costs and benefits? Using the ESP, we explore the opinions held by rural New Yorkers about their taxes weighed against the public services the taxes enable. We focus in particular on the increasing, and increasingly controversial, burden of *local* taxes. The public’s mix of opinion is more nuanced than politicians and newspaper editors often presume.*

Which level of government provides the most value?

We asked residents in rural New York State “from which level of government do you feel you get the most for your money: federal, state, or local?” Although the unpopular

local property tax is considered by more than half of New Yorkers to be the “least fair” of all major government taxes, it is also true that a plurality of people feel they get the “most for their money” from local rather than state or federal government (see Figure 1). In rural New York, more than a third of respondents (36%) cited local government in this context. This contrasts with the roughly one quarter of respondents who picked the federal (24%) or state (23%) governments, and the 17% who expressed no opinion on the issue.

Figure 1: From which level of local government do you get the most for your money?



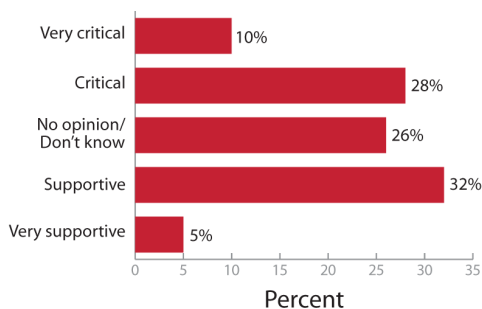
Source: 2007 Empire State Poll, Rural Survey (CaRDI, Cornell University)

The distaste for the property tax and the comparatively good marks accorded local government are not necessarily contradictory. Two obvious reasons are that 1) local governments have increasingly turned to alternative revenue sources like the sales tax, and 2) many taxpayers know that the greatest part of the property tax burden they carry is levied by school districts rather than towns, villages, counties or even cities.

How critical are rural New Yorkers of their local government?

We also asked respondents “how would you describe your own opinion regarding your local government’s mix of taxes and services?” According to 2007 ESP results, rural New Yorkers are evenly divided in their opinions of the efforts of their local government to balance taxes and services. As shown in Figure 2, while 38% are critical or very critical, 37% are supportive or very supportive. Just 15% express strong opinions one way or another (very supportive or very critical).

Figure 2: How would you describe your own opinion regarding your local government’s mix of taxes and services?



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll, Rural Survey (CaRDI, Cornell University)

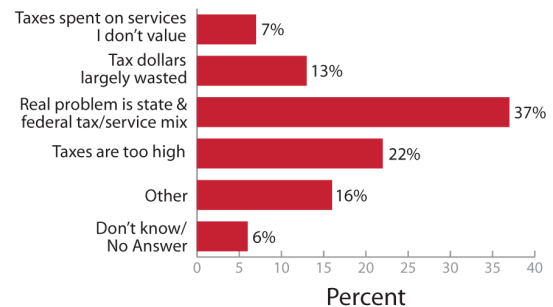
What are the criticisms of local government’s mix of taxes and services?

Why might some rural respondents be disaffected with their local government’s mix of taxes and services? Just about one fifth (22%) gave the common headline answer: “My local government taxes are too high, regardless of the services provided”, while another 13% focused on “waste” in spending (see Figure 3). Even when prompted for reasons the respondent might be “at all critical” about local government taxes and services, the largest group, however, was the 37% who agreed that, “Local taxes and services are not the problem, it’s really the mix of federal and state taxes and services.” Moreover, within the 16% who fell into the “other” category, the largest subgroup stated that they were simply “not critical.” Taken together, these results underscore the reluctance of a surprisingly large segment of rural New Yorkers to focus criticism on local government taxes and services.

What are the Policy Implications?

Politicians continue to debate the extent to which varied factors, including state and federal government policies,

Figure 3: Why are you critical of your local government’s mix of taxes and services?



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll, Rural Survey (CaRDI, Cornell University)

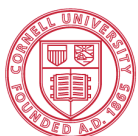
are to be blamed for high local taxes. However, a consensus has developed about the need for tax relief. The State offers a variety of tax reductions for property owners.** The STAR property tax relief program, while disparaged by many analysts, is nonetheless politically popular. A Spitzer Administration commission has been recently created to address taxpayer burdens associated with “duplicative services”, though it views the problem primarily through the lens of only one theory of the reason for high taxes: “The sheer number of taxing jurisdictions has led to a significant degree of overlap in public services, which has had a devastating affect on local tax burdens.”***

Our survey results underscore the complexity of rural public opinion about this tangle of issues. Local government is more widely seen as providing the “most for your money” compared to state or federal government, but the bedrock of local funding, property taxes, are seen by many to be too high and unfair. Rural residents are divided over the extent to which they are supportive of, indifferent to, or critical of their own local government’s mix of services and taxes. While a substantial number of rural residents feel that local taxes are too high, wasted or misspent, an even greater number sees no problem or directs their criticisms at higher levels of government. Efficiency gains aside, in the larger picture, services or political values cherished by important and perhaps even majority constituencies will probably have to be compromised if local taxes are to be significantly reduced. The question that has not been well addressed by researchers, politicians, or indeed the public is in some sense simple: what are we collectively willing to give up? ♦

*Please check our website for an upcoming *CaRDI Report* where these findings are paired with related pieces about a) statewide and national trends in opinion about which specific kinds of taxes are considered least fair, and b) policy options for property tax reform in New York state.

** see http://www.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_individual.shtml

*** see more at <http://www.nyslocalgov.org/>



Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 9/SEPTEMBER 2007

The Creative Economy Practitioner's Toolkit: Taking Advantage of Campus and Community Resources

By **Susan Christopherson** (City & Regional Planning) & **Suzanne Loker** (Fiber Science & Apparel Design), Cornell University, and **Susan Monagan** (Theatre Arts), Ithaca College

The idea that arts and culture are valuable to local, state and national economies is not new. Performing and visual arts can play an integral role in economic development where the creative economy approach links the creative process to a wide range of economy-supporting activities. We discuss how colleges and universities can foster creative economies, and present specific strategies to build creative economies in non-metropolitan settings.*

The role of colleges and universities in fostering creative economies

While small towns and cities face particular challenges in building a creative economy, local colleges and universities are a resource community leaders can draw upon, an asset that is particularly important in Upstate NY with one of the highest densities of higher educational institutions in the U.S. According to a survey of administrative officials and faculty from 33 upstate NY colleges and universities, the most important factor influencing engagement about the arts between educational institutions and local communities was support and endorsement from the College or University President. This support enabled staff and faculty to undertake projects knowing that they had institutional backing for their efforts.

Survey respondents identified key obstacles to successful collaboration: inadequate performance and exhibition space, insufficient information about whom to contact at the college, insurance concerns, and inadequate staff for collaborative projects. Suggestions for improving campus-community partnerships included: a central office to support co-sponsorship, special dedicated funds to encourage joint programming, a physical presence of the college in the community, college staff dedicated to outreach and collaboration, and college connections with local arts or cultural councils.

Strategies for Building Creative Economies

Using the survey results, we developed a set of strategies for building campus-community connections around creative economy goals. The strategies can be used to initiate con-

versation about creative economy initiatives, help navigate the challenges of bridging among participants, and provide inspiration through case studies, resources, and reports.

Strategy 1: Setting up an initial stakeholder gathering.

A stakeholder gathering can be used to gather information, generate new ideas, and challenge conventional attitudes and assumptions. Traditional leaders need to be involved, but the roles they take during the initial gathering should use their expertise while harnessing the energy of new participants. The goals of this strategy are to develop knowledge and leadership skills, to enable the group to develop goals and a plan, and to include diverse groups and interests.

• *Putting Strategies into Action*

It is important to get a commitment from community leaders who have a positive reputation and rely on them to suggest other contacts. Garner their help in developing an agenda for a broad-based stakeholder gathering. Ask them to describe past successes and obstacles to community cultural programs.

• *Challenges*

It may be challenging to provide adequate discussion time, to find a way to acknowledge individual and group contributions and develop trust within the group. Positive outcomes are not always immediate.

Strategy 2: Bridging Town and Gown with Service Learning Arts Projects

Utilizing the energy of students through service learning is an excellent strategy to promote campus/community relationships. Courses offered by landscape and architecture departments can define the town entry, design department courses can help develop signage to identify the town or co-sponsor arts events, planning departments can design long-term economic development strategies or develop a historic site to encourage tourism. Business departments can offer marketing advice to small arts-related businesses. Although these projects are a major commitment for both professor and community contacts, students' enthusiastic engagement and the creative outcomes are worth the effort.

- *Putting Strategies into Action*

Service learning is distinct from “public service”. It is a partnership between students and an organization offering a real-life learning opportunity. Finding the right people to be involved in the project, with the necessary vision, leadership skills, and energy to conduct a successful collaboration is critical. The impetus for a project can come from students, organizations, or a faculty member but its success depends on all three. Careful collaborative planning, realistic goals and timelines which mesh the limits of the academic calendar with the community collaborator’s timeline are essential.

- *Challenges*

Service learning projects require substantial administrative coordination, oversight, and extensive planning. Leaders need tolerance for change and fluctuation in the quality of students and their interests from year to year. Matching student learning and community needs sometimes leads to unexpected, but interesting outcomes. The semester-length courses can often be incompatible with organizational time lines and agendas.

Strategy 3: Capitalizing on Student-led Community Arts Projects

Entering into partnerships with students has cost, speed and flexibility advantages. Working with students can infuse “traditional operating procedure” with a strong dose of “out of the box” thinking. Students are typically energetic, may have valuable skills in research methods, writing, specialized computer software, and design, and can provide community partners with access to on-campus resources. Initial relationships with students may develop into regular internships at the collaborating organization or students’ long-term commitment as employees, volunteers or board members.

- *Putting Strategies into Action*

Campus community service and volunteer clearinghouses provide resources to identify informal opportunities for students in potential collaborating organizations. Meaningful projects for students need focus and clear expectations. Formalizing relationships as internships or temporary employees is one approach. Involve students in organizational meetings, ask for their opinions, and listen to their ideas. Help students build on their impulses to be involved and creatively engaged and think twice about the impulse to say “no” when they want to pursue a new direction.

- *Challenges*

Long-term commitment and planning may prove challenging since students typically only hold leadership positions for the academic year. Supervising faculty and community partners need to be prepared to provide supervision, mentorship, planning, and focus, with clearly defined expectations for communication and follow-through. Working with

students requires patience due to their limited experience, enthusiasm, and occasional lack of communication skills.

Strategy 4: Research Collaborations with Higher Education Partners

Creative business and arts administrators can find value in accessing the research capacity of universities. Students and faculty are often seeking “real-life” experiences to apply their skills in research, business planning, marketing, and information systems – a viable alternative to hiring expensive consultants. Students and faculty can help develop proposals to funding agencies,. Partnerships can enhance recruitment for volunteers, new board members, and paid staff.

- *Putting Strategies into Action*

Websites of local or regional colleges and universities and community organizations can be used to identify on-going research and programs of interest. The local newspaper and campus publications may identify people who have common interests and specific talents. The Cooperative Extension System has offices in almost every county of NYS, extending university research results into the community. Initiate contact rather than waiting for academic collaborators to come to you. Figure out how research collaboration can benefit the university and your organization and propose an arrangement. Look for distinctive programs that require students to complete a community service project as part of their educational experience.

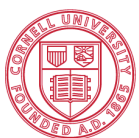
- *Challenges*

In research collaborations, we face the challenge of balancing power, objectives and outcomes. Make sure everyone gets something useful from the arrangement. Identify the person in each organization who can express and interpret needs, assets and goals for the collaboration. Be clear about the time frame for the activities and modify if necessary. An effective project design will meet specific needs and also establish or build successful, long-term relationships.

Conclusions

These strategies can help bridge the gap between interest in the creative economy as a concept and the ability to implement workable relationships between campus and community. They are particularly addressed to non-urban practitioners and college and university personnel to provide ideas to those who may feel isolated in a sparsely populated area. In our expanded CaRDI Report*, we build on these strategies, adding examples of successes and challenges to the four strategy areas. The ultimate goal is to build local and regional creative economies that reflect the centrality of people, express the quality of place, and contribute to sustainable economic development.

*Please be sure to check the CaRDI website for an upcoming CaRDI Report on this same topic, providing greater detail, case study examples of these strategies, and references.



Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 10/OCTOBER 2007

Racial Segregation in Rural & Small Town America: Does New York State fit the national pattern?

By **Daniel T. Lichter**, Cornell University, and **Domenico Parisi**, **Steven Michael Grice**, & **Michael Taquino**, Mississippi State University

What is the issue?

Are minorities still residentially segregated from whites in the U.S. today? Is it mostly an urban phenomenon? How does small town and rural NYS fare? Unfortunately, we have limited knowledge to address these questions. Most previous research has focused on racial and ethnic segregation in big-city neighborhoods rather than in rural and small town America. This is understandable since the large majority of racial minorities reside in the nation's largest cities and suburban neighborhoods. Yet, many parts of rural America (e.g., blacks in the Mississippi Delta region or Native Americans on Indian reservations) have been home historically to large concentrations of racial and ethnic minorities. The 1990s also ushered in an unprecedented demographic influx of foreign-born Hispanic immigrants, especially from Mexico and other parts of Latin America, to new rural destinations in the Midwest and South. These emerging rural settlement patterns, including changing patterns of racial and ethnic residential segregation, are poorly understood.

How was this study conducted?

We identified 4,430 places with at least a 10 percent minority population. These places included incorporated cities, towns, or villages, as well as unincorporated communities or housing developments that lack municipal governments across the U.S.. Fifty-eight percent were located in metropolitan (urban) areas and forty-two percent in non-metropolitan (rural) areas. We used block data from the 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census and the dissimilarity index to measure neighborhood racial residential segregation. This index varies from zero (no segregation) to 100 (complete segregation).

What is the national pattern of racial segregation?

Nationally, residential segregation is typically higher in rural areas than in urban areas, regardless of year or racial comparison. For example, looking at Figure 1, the average (or unweighted) black-white segregation index for nonmetropolitan places was 66.6 in 2000, compared with 58.7 for metropolitan places. This means that 66.6% of blacks, in a typical community, would have to move to other neighborhoods in order to achieve parity with whites in their distribution across all neigh-

borhoods. There are similarly large rural-urban disparities in segregation observed for the Hispanic-white and Asian-white comparison. However, these differences are largely erased when we weight these indices by minority population size. That is, the individual average experience with neighborhood racial segregation is the same whether an individual lives in a place located in a rural or urban area.

Figure 1: Average Segregation in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Places, 1990 and 2000

	Black-White		Hispanic-White		Native American-White	
	Unweighted	Weighted ^a	Unweighted	Weighted ^a	Unweighted	Weighted ^a
1990						
All	68.2	73.6	45.9	52.3	46.9	46.7
Metro	63.7	73.5	42.8	52.3	45.4	45.1
Nonmetro	73.7	74.8	53.2	53.1	47.5	47.2
2000						
All	62.3	67.8	44.0	51.7	46.6	46.5
Metro	58.7	67.8	41.6	51.8	44.6	45.8
Nonmetro	66.6	67.5	49.7	49.4	47.3	46.8
Percent Change						
All	-8.7	-8.0	-4.0	-1.1	-0.7	-0.3
Metro	-7.8	-7.7	-2.7	-0.9	-1.7	1.4
Nonmetro	-9.6	-9.8	-6.7	-7.0	-0.29	-0.9

^a Places are weighted by minority population size

Perhaps surprisingly, our results clearly suggest that *racial segregation levels in nonmetropolitan places largely mirror patterns and trends found in metropolitan areas, and rural blacks are considerably more segregated residentially than other minority groups*. Our research also shows that rural Black-white segregation is lowest in rural places outside the South and in nonmetropolitan places adjacent to metropolitan areas. Racial segregation is also lower in places with newer housing stock, a fact that reflects population growth at the peripheries of these places. Perhaps unsurprisingly, black-white segregation is lowest in places with a large military or education function, a fact that presumably reflects more spatially integrated housing conditions in university campuses and towns, and on military bases and their surrounding environs. Black-white rural community segregation also partly reflects black-white differences in socioeconomic status, such as income and education. Educational disparities between whites and Hispanics and Native Americans also contribute to minority segregation from whites.

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While the results for Hispanics and Native Americans reveal many similarities with those for African Americans, for both Hispanics and Native Americans, population size is associated with *lower* rather than higher segregation levels that characterized patterns in the black population. This contrasts with recent metropolitan-level analyses which generally show that Hispanic-white segregation is positively associated with metropolitan population size. Hispanic-white segregation is higher on average in nonmetropolitan places than in metropolitan places. One plausible explanation is that Hispanics, unlike blacks, have recently moved in disproportionate numbers into relatively small communities, including single-industry communities with labor-intensive meat or poultry processing plants. These communities often provide temporary housing in trailer parks that are physically removed from the resident population.

What is the Situation in New York State?

In NYS, blacks and whites are somewhat less residentially segregated in NYS than the U.S. as a whole (D 's = 67.8 vs. 63.0 for 2000 – see Figure 2). Moreover, in particular, non-metropolitan NYS is *significantly* less segregated (black-white) than non-metro U.S. (although non-metro segregation in NYS *increased* between 1990 and 2000, whereas it decreased in the U.S. overall). However, Hispanics and whites are *more* residentially segregated in non-metro NYS than non-metro U.S. on average (53.1 vs. 49.4). We had only one NY place that had a large enough Native American population for analysis, so we have not included corresponding segregation measures here.

In rural NYS, scores of racial residential segregation vary from place to place and from group to group. Levels of segregation of blacks from whites range from a minimum of 35 to a maximum of 72. Communities such as Altona and Dannemora (both in Clinton County) have high levels of segregation with scores of 72 and 64, respectively. Significantly, both of these communities have prisons with disproportionate minority populations. Altona Correctional Facility is a medium security institution, and Clinton Correctional Facility (in Dannemora) is a maximum security institution. In contrast,

Calcium (Jefferson County) and Monticello (Sullivan County) have low levels of segregation with scores of 35 and 37, respectively. Calcium is located near Fort Drum with a racially diverse military population. Segregation of Hispanics from whites range between 38 and 73. As an example, Woodridge, New York (Sullivan County) is a community with a relatively large Hispanic population – one in four residents are Hispanic – and a moderate segregation score (48). Segregation in the community reflects, at least in part, socioeconomic disparities between Hispanics and whites. The difference in the average value of homes owed by Hispanics (\$64,000 in 2000) and NonHispanic whites (\$95,000) is large.

Conclusions

Our results support a singularly important conclusion: National levels and changes in recent patterns of rural racial segregation are remarkably similar to patterns observed in larger metropolitan places. Non-metropolitan blacks are America's most highly segregated racial minority – roughly 30 to 40 percent higher than the indices observed for rural Hispanics and Native Americans. However, in rural New York State, the opposite is true. Blacks are much less segregated from whites than are Hispanics. Black-white residential segregation nevertheless is comparatively lower, it still exists in non-metro NYS, and now there is evidence to suggest that it has increased over the last decade, an opposite trend to that measured for non-metro places in the U.S. overall. While rural segregation between Hispanics and whites declined between 1990 and 2000 in NYS as they did for the U.S. as a whole, Hispanic-white residential segregation remains somewhat higher in non-metro NYS than in the non-metro U.S. as a whole.

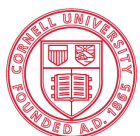
This study provides a starting point rather than the final answers regarding the causes and consequences of changing patterns of rural racial segregation. Rural racial segregation patterns have been shaped by different historical facts and circumstances (e.g., slavery and the plantation economy) and by geographically uneven economic and demographic change (e.g., the dispersal of new immigrants to rural regions and communities). Current residential segregation patterns – even in rural areas – reflect past and current patterns of racial prejudice and discrimination (e.g., in housing and labor markets), residential preferences, and income inequality. By themselves, highly aggregated census data on rural places shed only partial light on these issues but nonetheless identify new research directions that both inform our current understanding of segregation and build on our study of small places. At a minimum, our results give caution to recent studies showing declining segregation among metropolitan blacks. The majority of America's population today lives outside of central cities, and upwardly mobile minorities have clearly shared in the centrifugal drift of population to the suburbs and perhaps beyond. Given the rapid demographic and economic changes in exurban and rural areas, our study also suggests that segregation scholars and policymakers can no longer leave rural and small town America out of their analyses and policy discussions. ♦

Figure 2: Average Segregation in New York State Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Places, 1990 and 2000

	Black-White		Hispanic-White	
	Unweighted	Weighted ^a	Unweighted	Weighted ^a
1990				
All	59.5	68.7	52.4	53.9
Metro	63.1	69.7	49.2	53.6
Nonmetro	47.9	35.5	60.2	57.7
2000				
All	54.3	63.0	50.0	50.8
Metro	56.8	63.6	47.9	50.7
Nonmetro	46.3	38.8	55.2	53.1
Percent Change				
All	-8.8	-8.3	-4.5	-5.7
Metro	-10.0	-8.7	-2.6	-5.4
Nonmetro	-3.3	9.3	-8.3	-8.0

^a Places are weighted by minority population size

** for the full length article by the same authors see "National Estimates of Racial Segregation in Rural & Small Town America", *Demography* 44, no. 3 (2007): 563-81.



Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 11/NOVEMBER 2007

Attracting and Retaining a Young Skilled Workforce in Upstate New York*

By Susan Christopherson, Cornell University

What is the Issue?

Upstate New York's ability to grow its emerging high-skilled diversified economy depends on attracting and retaining:

- workers with technical skills and the ability to manage projects and people for the fast growing advanced manufacturing sectors;
- college educated workers with professional and managerial skills as well as degrees in science and engineering.

Upstate New York faces a particularly difficult challenge because the region has experienced population loss over a long period of time. This has meant not only the loss of people who can contribute to the contemporary economy, but also of the parents who produce the next generation of workers. For the next several years the shortage will be particularly acute because the age group (31-40) which followed the "baby boom" generation was small.

Because the current workforce shortage is partially explained by a lower birthrate following the baby boom era, it is not just a regional issue, but national in scope. Even popular destinations, such as Arizona, are concerned about how to attract younger skilled workers to replace those who are beginning to retire. Because of the smaller size of the 31-40 year old cohort in the population, states and cities realize that the ability to grow their economies requires strategies to replace the skilled workforce and to attract skilled workers to build knowledge economy industries.

How was this Study Conducted?

The study findings are based on:

- 1) Demographic, economic, and survey data developed by Cornell researchers (survey data from the annual Empire State Poll, among other sources) and researchers from the New York Federal Reserve Bank.
- 2) Interviews with leaders of groups representing young professionals, entrepreneurs, and small business owners in 9 upstate cities.

- 3) Interviews with foundation officers and regional economic development officials who have sponsored projects to attract and retain younger workers in regions outside New York State.
- 4) Analysis of the policy literature on workforce attraction and retention.

What Role do Investments in Higher Education Play in Meeting Skill Needs?

- NYS has benefited from its upstate investments in higher education. Many graduates of NYS colleges and universities stay in the state. Of the 150,000 new college graduates in upstate New York who left the region between 1995 and 2000 (the most recent years for which data is available), one-third moved to the Hudson Valley and New York City to find jobs.
- Time spent in Upstate New York during the college years translates into affection for the region and an openness to return at a later life stage if conditions, particularly job availability, make that possible.

Research Findings

- Research by Brown and Scardamalia (2007)* and Deitz (2007)* indicates that *while the loss of educated workers is a problem, the larger problem is an inability to attract in-migrants*. Upstate New York, in particular, is attracting young workers at a lower pace than the nation as a whole.
- *Upstate New York faces a "chicken and egg" dilemma*. Upstate firms pay lower wages for skilled work and so, young people are drawn to higher growth, higher wage regions. At the same time, a shortage of talent inhibits the growth of firms that could compete for skilled talent and raise wages.
- *There are two young skilled worker problems*: Advanced manufacturing firms in Upstate New York are facing a shortage of technically-skilled, experienced workers. Their labor force is aging and young people are not

available to replace these skilled manufacturing workers. At the same time, college-educated young workers are not attracted to the upstate region in sufficient numbers to fill knowledge economy jobs.

- Interviews with “Forty-below” groups (composed of professionals, managers, and entrepreneurs typically under 40 years of age) in upstate cities indicate that they formed in response to dissatisfaction with social and economic opportunities available to younger entrepreneurs and professionals, and to combat negative stereotypes of Upstate New York.
- “Forty-below” group members want to form their own organizations rather than integrate with cross-generational groups, such as Chambers of Commerce and The Rotary Club. The groups represent a response to perceived social isolation in a baby-boomer-dominated, aging upstate workforce.
- Access to the policy-making process, urban development, and cultural life are important to under-forty residents. They want to bring their ideas to the table and assume a position in civic leadership.
- College ties are critical to Upstate New York’s college graduates. College programs to connect with their alumni and invest in their communities are central to efforts to attract and retain a younger skilled workforce.

Suggested Policy Initiatives

Although the short fall in the young population has been misrepresented as an out-migration problem, the fact is that Upstate New York is dramatically affected by an insufficient number of educated young people to fill knowledge economy jobs. In addition to the recommendations made by the “forty-below” groups, our research suggested a number of strategies for attracting a skilled younger workforce.

- *Investment in the Urban Environment and Infrastructure*

Many interviewees noted that the poor condition of upstate central cities was a strong deterrent to attracting younger skilled workers. They advocated public and private investment in central cities and the development of infrastructure, such as wireless Internet access, as a stimulus to investment.

- *Tuition Programs Sponsored by Local Employers*

Young people who remain in the region for five years after graduation are more likely to stay. Tuition programs, offering aid to local student-employees who agree to remain with the company for a period after graduation (such as that sponsored by Wegman’s), have been suc-

cessful in retaining skilled employees for the firm and for the region.

- *Come Home Programs*

University and college connections are critical to re-attracting Upstate New York graduates back to the region. Student-designed programs, such as the *Come Home Program* at SUNY Binghamton, provide a model that could be developed across college campuses upstate.

- *An Upstate New York-Specific Marketing Effort*

The “I Love New York” campaign doesn’t effectively serve upstate. A targeted marketing effort emphasizing upstate’s unique assets, including its parks, the Fingerlakes, green industry initiatives and advanced manufacturing industries, might be more effective. Capitalizing on upstate connections with Canada, mirroring the “Cascadia” efforts in Washington State and British Columbia, may also be fruitful in defining the special characteristics of the region.

- *Recognize the Presence and Achievements of a Younger Generation of Civic and Business Leaders*

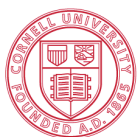
Interviewees noted the need to recognize the achievements of young people who are contributing to business and civic life in upstate cities and regions. Some metropolitan areas, including Rochester, already compile such lists with a great deal of fanfare. If implemented across Upstate New York, this kind of award program, accompanied by a conference to bring younger civic and business leaders together, would highlight their achievements and encourage them to develop networks across the upstate area.

Conclusion

Although the question of attracting and retaining younger skilled workers has received a lot of press attention, New York State will need to keep the issue in perspective as one arena in a broader set of strategies to build and maintain a skilled workforce. These strategies could include encouraging older workers to stay at work longer, and increasing access to higher education by New York residents who are more likely to stay in the state after graduating. Only a multi-pronged approach to building and maintaining a skilled workforce will enable Upstate New York to utilize its considerable assets to construct a diversified sustainable economy. ♦

* for a full-length version of this paper, including citations and references, please visit <http://www.nyecon.cornell.edu>

**I would like to thank Ronald Kelly and Karen Westmont for their research assistance and the Economic Development Administration University Economic Development Center for supporting this project. I would also like to thank Rod Howe and Warren Brown for their support and advice.



Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 12/DECEMBER 2007

Poverty in New York State: Patterns and Prospects

By **Thomas Hirschl**, Cornell University

What is the Issue?

Poverty remains a significant issue for millions of Americans, despite various programs and efforts to reduce it. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2006 13.3% of U.S. residents and 14.2% of New Yorkers lived under the established poverty threshold. For the U.S. this represents an increase of almost a full percentage point since the 2000 Census, and for NYS a slight decrease (0.4 percentage points) in the same six year period. How is “poverty” measured? Is being poor a lifelong “condition”? How does poverty vary across New York State?

How is “Poverty” Measured?

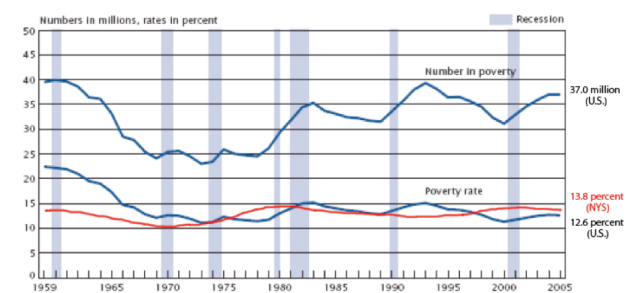
The official U.S. Census Bureau measure of poverty was designed to account for the cost of basic necessities across different sized families. Developed in 1963, the poverty measure assumes that food costs are one third of total family costs. However, this assumption has been criticized for underestimating housing costs and health care costs that have risen relative to food prices over the past 40 years (National Research Council 1995), understating the true extent that families are living without basic necessities. For a four-person family unit with two children, the 2006 poverty threshold is \$20,444. For one- or two-person family units, the poverty thresholds differ by age; the 2006 threshold for one individual under age 65 is \$10,488, whereas for an individual 65 or over it is \$9,669 (IRP - <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/faqs/faq1.htm>). Individuals under the age of 65 earning just \$12,000 a year are therefore not counted among the poor, according to this measure. Alternative measures are often used which allow for a slightly higher threshold, for example 150 percent of poverty. When 150 percent of the official poverty level is used (individuals under 65 earning approximately \$15,700 or less), 22.6% of New Yorkers were considered poor in the Census year 2000, compared to 14.6% with the standard measure. Official poverty statistics may therefore understate poverty, particularly as housing and health care costs continue to rise relative to the price of food.

Is being poor a lifelong “condition”?

An important feature of poverty is that most Americans experience one or more years in poverty sometime during their life time, although most people are poor for periods of less than 5 years (Rank and Hirschl 1999*). Thus poverty “spells”, while typically short in duration, affect many.

A second feature of poverty is its cyclical character with regard to the business cycle. Poverty tends to decline during business expansions, and then increase during business recessions (shaded areas in Figure 1). However, business expansions have not lowered the poverty rate (or the number of poor) since 1971, suggesting that the market economy alone cannot reduce poverty. Even the significant monetary expansion of anti-poverty programs in the 1970s were unable to reduce poverty to any significant degree. Since neither the market economy nor traditional anti-poverty programs have been effective in reducing poverty, new programs based in new principles will be required.

Figure 1: The Trend in Official Poverty for the United States, 1959-2005



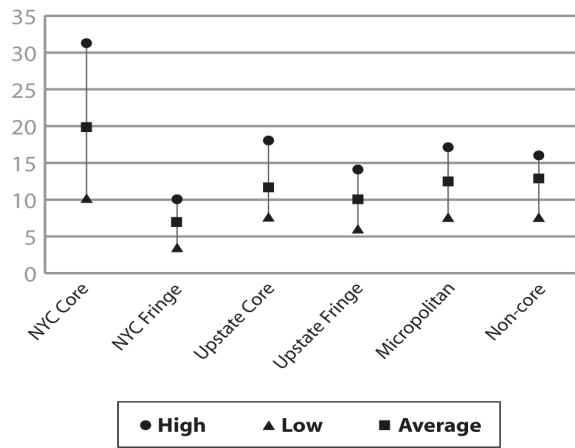
Note: The data points are placed at the midpoints of the respective years.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1960 to 2006 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.

How does poverty vary across NYS?

Another feature of poverty is its geographic distribution. Across America poverty tends to be high in central cities, low in the suburban ring, and high in rural areas (Brown and Hirschl 1995*). Thus poverty resembles an “inverted doughnut” where clusters of poverty are found in the center, and in rural areas outside the outer ring of suburbia. In New York State this general pattern is evident in the New York City region where poverty is highest in the urban core boroughs of the Bronx and Brooklyn and lowest in Staten Island (Richmond County) (see Figure 2 and Map 1 below - Appendix Table available on the CaRDI web site). The average 2000 poverty rate for the NYC Boroughs is 20%, far higher than the 6.7% average for the NYC Suburban ring which is the lowest poverty rate of all New York State regions. This is especially the case for Putnam County where less than 5% of the population was under the poverty threshold in 2000.

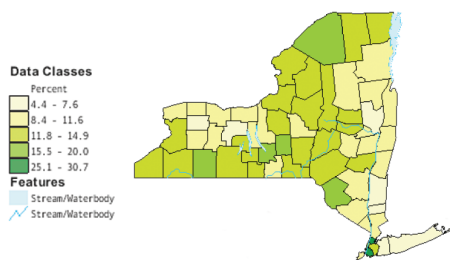
Figure 2: Poverty Across New York State Regions, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007

Severe poverty (those individuals with incomes below 50% of the poverty threshold), along with poverty in general, is highest in the Bronx and in Brooklyn. The very high level of severe poverty in the Bronx suggests that this area should be an important focus for anti-poverty efforts. Poverty is not as high in the central cities of upstate New York, and is near the state average within most nonmetropolitan counties.

Map 1: County-level poverty in NYS, 2000.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Nonmetropolitan county (includes micropolitan and non-core counties) poverty rates are not as high as rates in New York City, but higher than rates in the NYC fringe counties. The average rate for micropolitan counties that contain a small urban area is the same as the average for non-core based counties that have no urban area. Thus poverty is about as common in nonmetropolitan counties as it is throughout the rest of New York State.

Poverty in urban and rural places

When we examine poverty in New York *places* instead of *counties*, the story is rather different. “Non-metropolitan” should not be confused for “rural”. Both rural and urban places (towns, villages, cities) can co-exist in metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties. Data for *places* allows us to examine poverty

using a smaller unit of geography, and one that may have more relevance for people experiencing poverty in their daily lives in their local communities.

Urban places in NYS have far greater rates of overall poverty than do rural places (15.4% vs. 8.7% - see Figure 3). However, comparing the NYS data with data for the U.S., we see that while urban poverty tends to be higher than rural poverty across the U.S., the difference is only slight (12.7% vs. 11%). Relative to the country as a whole, poverty in New York State tends to be concentrated in urban places, and this is especially the case for child poverty.

Figure 3: Poverty rates for NYS and the U.S, by age group and rural/urban status, 2000.

New York State	% poor	% urban poor	% rural poor
All ages	14.20%	15.40%	8.70%
< 18 years old	20.0%	20.9%	10.9%
65 years+	12.1%	12.0%	6.9%
United States	% poor	% urban poor	% rural poor
All ages	12.40%	12.70%	11.00%
< 18 years old	16.1%	16.8%	13.8%
65 years+	9.9%	9.5%	11.0%

Source: 2000 Census, STF 3

Poverty among the young and old

In general, the elderly poverty rate is lower than the child poverty rate. Unlike children, the elderly have relatively greater social protection from poverty due to broad access to large, stable public entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare. American children are less protected from poverty, so that events such as unemployment and family disruption often lead to higher poverty.

In NYS, both the elderly and children have significantly *higher* poverty rates than the U.S. averages. However, while these rates for NYS are higher overall, in *rural* places of the state, they are significantly *lower* than in the averages for rural America. Going by these numbers alone, urban poverty appears to be a greater problem in NYS than for urban America on average, while rural poverty is a less significant issue for NYS than for rural America on the whole.

Conclusions

The data presented in this article indicate that poverty levels in New York State vary dramatically across towns, villages, cities, and counties. Currently, the federal government’s attempts to fight poverty at a national level appear to be ineffective. Consequently, anti-poverty efforts may need to be developed at lower levels of government such as states, counties, and localities.

Poverty can be viewed as largely a crisis of economic distribution. Developing more effective methods at the state and local level for distributing goods and services (such as food, clothing, housing, healthcare, childcare, and education) may be the more appropriate focus of anti-poverty efforts. Poverty is a critical problem in the world, and solving it at home should be a first priority.

* References and additional data available on the CaRDI website.

