POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT CHANGES IN ILLINOIS MUNICIPALITIES

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Illinois municipalities, depending on size and location, experienced substantial population changes during the past decade. In general, small municipalities in both remote and metro areas faced the most serious declines based on several contributing factors. This article examines population changes and the possible effects of population characteristics, location, age structure, economic base, and other characteristics. The findings can help local officials better understand long-term trends and possible directions they could take in the future. An example of a small community that experienced a substantial population turnaround is described briefly.

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The 2010s brought substantial, and not completely unexpected, changes to many local governments in Illinois and many other states because of both natural demographic trends and migration. Unfortunately, Illinois, more than some other states, was adversely affected by continuing demographic and economic changes. The COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn, although less severe and shorter than expected, still adversely affected the finances of many local governments, especially those that rely heavily on tourism.

The Great Recession set the stage for the following decade, and many municipalities were responding to the significant unemployment and economic setbacks. Previous analyses (Walzer & Blanke, 2018; Walzer & Blanke, 2020) show that many Illinois municipalities, especially those in northeastern Illinois, were well into their recovery by 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic presented new setbacks.

This article reviews population and employment trends in Illinois municipalities by size and location during the past decade based on 2020 Census counts that were subsequently shown to undercount populations in some cases.[1] The intent is to illustrate patterns of demographic change as well as gain insights into factors that may have contributed to these changes and the potential implications on municipal finances since some state-shared revenues are

based on population. The 2010 decade was so unusual that it will be difficult to extrapolate the findings to future time periods. However, the comparisons will help confirm a continuation of previous trends and help readers understand likely future trends regarding population and economic changes.

Subsequent analyses begin with a description of demographic trends and then use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression techniques to identify factors that seem to be related to the changes identified. Attention is also given to a municipality that had unexpected demographic patterns — such as exceptional population growth or reversals from trends in the previous decade — to identify factors associated with these changes that other municipalities might consider in the future.

POPULATION TRENDS: 2010 TO 2020

Initially, the Census Bureau reported that Illinois lost 0.1% of its statewide population during the 2010s, but later recounts revealed a population undercount of as many as 250,000, or 2% (Ramos & Armentrout, 2022). The data further show that Illinois became substantially more ethnically and racially diverse. Most likely, some units of government will challenge the census counts, and some of the figures provided in subsequent analyses could change, but only marginally. The basic patterns of change are likely to remain the same.

Population changes can be driven by several factors, including birth rates that affect age demographics, relocations driven by employment or retirement, economic conditions that retain or attract residents (such as job availability), location in expanding economies, and past population trends. Several of these factors and other considerations are included in subsequent analyses to determine their relative association with demographic trends.

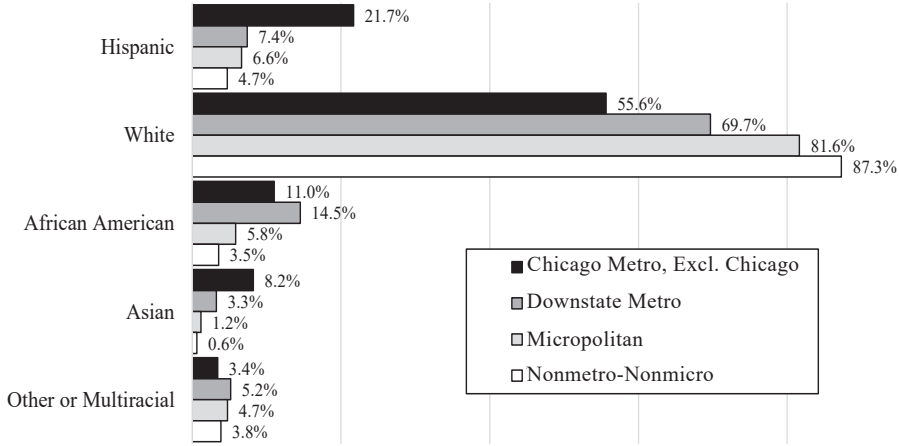
This paper compares population trends by several broad location types using core-based statistical area definitions from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The OMB defines metropolitan and micropolitan areas based on commuting patterns to regional employment centers, with metropolitan areas having a central city with a population of 50,000 and micropolitan areas having a central city with a population of 10,000 (Vought, 2020). The "Chicago metro area" refers to the OMB definition of the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin metropolitan statistical area (MSA). "Downstate metro" refers to all metropolitan areas in Illinois outside of the Chicago MSA, such as Rockford or Springfield. Micropolitan counties have employment centers with more

than 10,000 residents but fewer than 50,000 residents and are not located in metropolitan areas. Nonmetro-nonmicro counties are the most remote as they are not located in a metropolitan or micropolitan area. The data in this paper are for municipalities, but their location types are based on the counties where they are located.

Before discussing trends in population composition by race and ethnicity, it is worth noting the differences in demographics by location within Illinois (Figure 1). In the Chicago metro area, 55.6% of residents are white and 21.7% are Hispanic. Downstate metro areas had the largest share of African Americans. Population diversity was relatively limited in remote rural municipalities — those not located in metropolitan or micropolitan areas.

FIGURE 1

SHARE OF 2020 POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census Redistricting Data, Table P2.
Note: Due to size and dominance in the totals, the City of Chicago is presented separately.

The total population in Chicago decreased 6.9% between 2000 and 2010 but increased 1.9% between 2010 and 2020. The Asian population increased 31%, and the Hispanic population increased 5.2% while the white population remained stable, increasing only 1%. However, the African American population decreased 9.7%. The 2020 Census figures for Chicago are likely to

be conservative estimates given the Census Bureau's undercounts of statewide population totals.

Perhaps most striking among downstate municipalities are the population declines across virtually all sizes and municipal types in non-Chicago MSA municipalities.[2] On average, only two downstate metro-size groups — the municipalities with a population of 10,000-24,999 (0.2%) and the municipalities with a populaiton of 50,000–99,999 municipalities (1.4%) reported increases. In both instances, the gains were small compared with the declines in other size groups (Table 1). For more context on population changes in small municipalities susceptible to large percentage changes, the numeric population changes for those municipalities with fewer than 1,000 residents are provided.

The increase in diversity in Illinois (excluding Chicago) is clear (Table 1), with increases of 20.4% in Hispanics, 28.9% in Asians, and 3.2% in African Americans contrasted with a decline of 9.8% in whites. The percentage increases are reflected across municipalities by population size and region in the state, although comparing percentages can be misleading, especially when a municipality has such a small base that even a relatively small change can be a large percentage. One such example might be the relatively large growth in the Hispanic population (64.3%) in nonmetro-nonmicro municipalities with 1,000–9,999 residents.[3]

Another somewhat striking finding is the growth in African American residents in small rural communities (23.6%) as well as the substantial increase (51.8%) reported in the small Chicago MSA municipalities (fewer than 1,000 residents). This finding may be a result of outmigration from the city (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2018), but the growth in small rural places is less clear and could be partly a statistical aberration from a small population base. The smallest municipalities in the Chicago MSA had relatively high increases of both Hispanic (60.5%) and Asian (68.2%) populations.

Several patterns are evident in terms of total population changes in other Illinois municipalities, and some show continuation of past trends. First, municipalities in the Chicago metro area fared better than downstate municipalities of similar size. At least part of these patterns likely reflects more prosperous economic employment and economic conditions. Growth in the information-based economy and losses in manufacturing employment favored larger employment centers (Albrecht, 2012), such as those in northeastern Illinois.

Second, within each location type (metro, nonmetro, etc.), the smallest municipalities lost larger proportions of residents than those with larger populations. This is true even in the Chicago metro area, where municipalities smaller than 1,000 residents are the only size group to have lost population. Explanations could be the presence of more elderly residents with higher mortality rates or that these residents are more likely to move to larger areas to be closer to family or medical facilities. This finding may be somewhat misleading, however, if the census undercount is more severe in the small and remote municipalities where they devoted fewer resources to data collection.

Third, examining municipalities by location type shows that more remote municipalities (micropolitan and nonmetro-nonmicro) fared less well than their larger counterparts (downstate metro and Chicago metro). This pattern may reflect economic conditions such as an industrial base since many areas depended on manufacturing and faced employment declines with automation and offshore competition. As regional trading or shopping centers, they may also have been adversely affected by the growth in Internet shopping (Kickert & vom Hofe, 2017).

On the other hand, based on performance of micropolitan centers, the Heartland Institute and others suggest that some micropolitan centers could become regional growth centers for surrounding municipalities in the future with innovative development approaches and practices (Sisson, 2018). This potential could cause states to focus more attention on working with development groups in these municipalities.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Nationally, the average commuting time for workers increased from just over 25 minutes in 2009 to nearly 28 minutes in 2019 (Burd et al., 2021). This trend especially affected smaller municipalities where high proportions of residents now commute to large nearby employment centers. The connection between population changes and employment changes may be less than in the past, especially with growth in remote work and increased reported preferences for quality of life over employment even in rural areas (Winchester, 2011; Austin et al., 2022). Expansions in broadband and communications technology open opportunities for some smaller municipalities to attract and retain residents, especially those who can conduct business using the Internet or work part-time in larger nearby centers.

TABLE 1

POPULATION PERCENTAGE CHANGES BY MUNICIPAL SIZE AND LOCATION

LOCATION TYPE	TOTAL POPULATION	HISPANIC	WHITE	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN
Chicago Metro, Excl. Chicago	**1.9%**	**19.1%**	**-9.0%**	**3.0%**	**28.8%**
Under 1,000	-0.8% (-111)	60.5% (+595)	-9.5% (-1,216)	51.8% (+43)	68.2% (+122)
1,000–9,999	3.9%	30.4%	-6.5%	5.4%	40.6%
10,000–24,999	2.4%	32.5%	-7.6%	1.7%	21.7%
25,000–49,999	0.9%	18.4%	-10.3%	4.7%	25.5%
50,000–99,999	2.6%	13.6%	-8.4%	4.4%	26.4%
100,000+	0.0%	7.2%	-14.0%	-0.1%	48.1%
Downstate Metro	**-1.9%**	**29.6%**	**-10.2%**	**4.7%**	**30.5%**
Under 1,000	-6.9% (-5,841)	58.0% (+825)	-10.9% (-8,665)	-13.2% (-309)	0.0% (0)
1,000–9,999	-0.5%	30.1%	-5.4%	-1.7%	38.9%
10,000–24,999	0.2%	36.2%	-8.2%	15.6%	32.2%
25,000–49,999	-6.4%	20.0%	-15.2%	-3.9%	8.5%
50,000–99,999	1.4%	46.0%	-11.5%	16.0%	45.4%
100,000+	-2.1%	28.2%	-14.3%	6.1%	28.9%
Micropolitan	**-6.7%**	**24.3%**	**-12.2%**	**-2.2%**	**18.7%**
Under 1,000	-8.9% (-7,341)	37.1% (+596)	-12.8% (-10,168)	0.4% (+3)	36.2% (+80)
1,000–9,999	-4.7%	23.9%	-9.8%	-6.5%	23.0%
10,000–24,999	-7.6%	21.3%	-13.2%	-1.6%	18.8%
25,000–49,999	-7.3%	28.6%	-14.6%	-1.1%	14.9%
Nonmetro-Nonmicro	**-6.3%**	**31.4%**	**-10.7%**	**-6.2%**	**58.3%**
Under 1,000	-9.3% (-7,200)	64.3% (+774)	-14.0% (-10,325)	23.6% (+375)	17.4% (+27)
1,000–9,999	-5.6%	27.9%	-9.8%	-10.2%	63.4%
All Municipalities, Excl. Chicago	**-0.1%**	**20.4%**	**-9.8%**	**3.2%**	**28.9%**
City of Chicago	**1.9%**	**5.2%**	**1.0%**	**-9.7%**	**31.0%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census Redistricting Data, Table P2.
Notes: (1) Population changes included for municipalities with populations less than 1,000. (2) Population changes by race in municipalities with fewer than 1,000 residents are susceptible to large population increases.

This section examines employment changes in municipalities by size and location status between 2013 and 2019 to see how closely population changes reported in Table 1 correspond with changes in number of jobs. Unfortunately, data were unavailable at the time of writing to isolate the impacts of COVID-19.

These employment data are by place of work and do not include jobs held by residents who commute to work elsewhere or who work remotely for employers not located in the municipality where they live. Likewise, the most recent data available for municipal boundaries are for 2019 and do not include the effects of business closures and remote work in the 2020s. Proprietary sources such as Lightcast (formerly Emsi Burning Glass) offer more recent estimates of employment by zip code, but a dedicated spatial analysis would be required to accurately allocate zip code data to municipal boundaries (Lightcast, 2022).

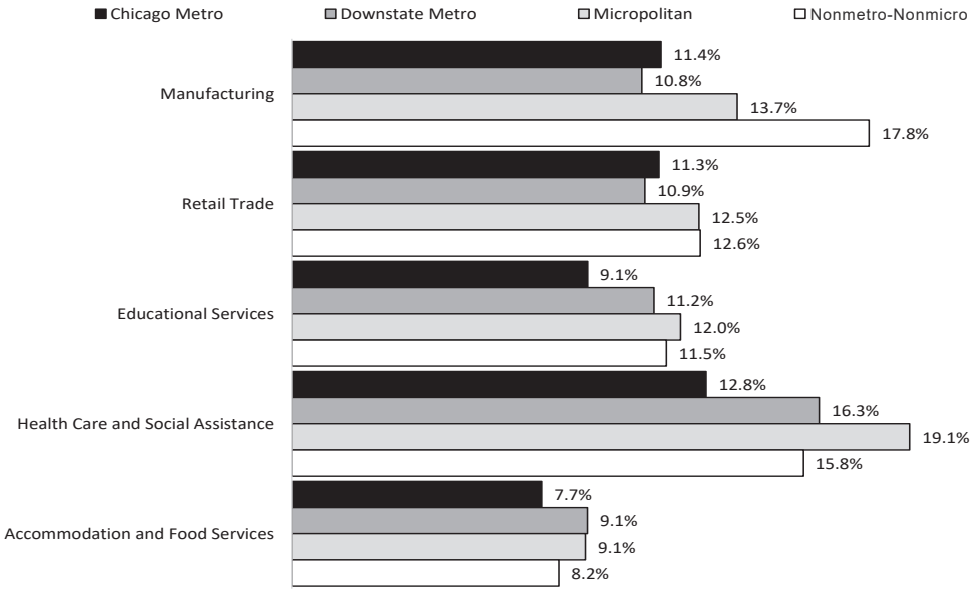
Of special interest are trends in jobs in the smallest municipalities that were shown earlier to have larger population losses. Space limitations prevent a discussion of changes in types of employment with the main focus being on primary jobs that represent the largest share of workers' earnings. These data do not offer sufficient evidence to explore potential impacts of gig employment or entrepreneurship in recent years.

Before discussing employment changes by location, we compare current industry structures to understand employment base. The top five industries in each municipal type included manufacturing, retail trade, education, health care, and accommodation and food service, but the relative importance among the top five varied by location. Manufacturing represented the largest share of employment for municipalities not in metropolitan or micropolitan areas. In metropolitan and micropolitan areas, health care was the largest employment sector, and manufacturing was the second-largest. Education was the third-largest sector in all municipal types. Chicago is briefly discussed next because it is a driving force for employment in northeast Illinois.

The total number of jobs in the City of Chicago increased 8.3% between 2013 and 2019. The five largest employment sectors were health care and social assistance, professional/scientific/technical services, education, finance and insurance, and accommodation and food services. The number of jobs in health care increased 10.6%, and the number of jobs in professional services grew 21.5%. Employment in education declined 4.2%, finance increased 5.7%, and accommodation and food services increased 15.2%.

FIGURE 2

SHARE OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT BY LOCATION, 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LODES data set, Workplace Area Characteristics for Primary Jobs, 2013 and 2019.
Note: All data are primary jobs, defined as the job that represents the largest share of a worker's earnings.

Overall, municipalities in the Chicago metro area fared best, with an overall increase of 4.7% between 2013 and 2019 (Table 2). The other municipal classifications reported job declines, although in some instances — such as the 0.4% decline reported in the micropolitan group — the change was marginal and within the realm of statistical error.

The correspondence between population and employment changes is shown clearly in Table 2, with small municipalities in every location except downstate metro reporting the most declines in jobs. Somewhat unexpected, however, is that the 20.7% loss in the Chicago metro area is nearly the same as the 21.8% decline in rural (nonmetro-nonmicro) municipalities. At the same time, the smallest municipalities in the downstate metro counties reported stable employment, with an increase of 1.1%.

TABLE 2

PERCENT EMPLOYMENT CHANGES BY LOCATION, 2013–2019

MUNICIPAL TYPE	TOTAL JOBS	MANU-FACTURING	RETAIL TRADE	EDUCA-TIONAL SERVICES	HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	ACCOMMO-DATION AND FOOD SERVICES
Chicago Metro, Excl. Chicago	**4.7%**	**3.3%**	**-1.8%**	**2.1%**	**5.3%**	**13.7%**
1. Under 1,000	-20.7%	-12.4%	-38.3%	-3.2%	-23.3%	0.6%
2. 1,000–9,999	5.6%	7.9%	5.9%	-17.1%	-3.9%	12.4%
3. 10,000–24,999	7.3%	4.0%	0.5%	0.8%	18.6%	23.4%
4. 25,000–49,999	5.3%	2.2%	-2.5%	9.2%	4.4%	11.8%
5. 50,000–99,999	2.5%	1.4%	-2.9%	1.1%	1.9%	8.0%
6. 100,000+	5.3%	12.5%	-6.7%	7.4%	-5.7%	11.5%
Downstate Metro	**-2.2%**	**-7.8%**	**-4.6%**	**6.8%**	**-2.1%**	**1.6%**
1. Under 1,000	1.1%	19.0%	26.8%	3.1%	-0.7%	9.9%
2. 1,000–9,999	0.3%	-4.6%	-3.3%	6.4%	-4.7%	5.8%
3. 10,000–24,999	-5.1%	-36.6%	-1.5%	-3.5%	0.4%	7.6%
4. 25,000–49,999	-5.1%	0.2%	-9.2%	10.2%	-3.3%	-3.0%
5. 50,000–99,999	-4.5%	-14.3%	-9.4%	2.2%	3.3%	-6.4%
6. 100,000+	1.8%	27.9%	-2.5%	24.4%	-2.8%	4.3%
Micropolitan	**-0.4%**	**2.6%**	**-6.1%**	**-7.8%**	**2.9%**	**4.8%**
1. Under 1,000	-11.3%	23.9%	-9.4%	-14.4%	-32.7%	9.3%
2. 1,000–9,999	-2.4%	0.8%	-8.7%	1.3%	-0.7%	7.7%
3. 10,000–24,999	3.3%	5.5%	-3.9%	-9.9%	4.6%	0.8%
4. 25,000–49,999	-4.0%	-8.8%	-7.6%	-13.2%	4.1%	10.5%
Nonmetro-Nonmicro	**-4.0%**	**-8.3%**	**-3.7%**	**-1.6%**	**2.0%**	**2.5%**
1. Under 1,000	-21.8%	-35.4%	1.8%	-12.4%	-27.3%	25.4%
2. 1,000–9,999	-1.8%	-6.5%	-4.2%	-0.3%	4.0%	1.2%
All Municipalities, Excl. Chicago	**2.3%**	**0.0%**	**-2.9%**	**2.1%**	**2.8%**	**9.1%**
City of Chicago	**8.3%**	**1.3%**	**1.4%**	**-4.2%**	**10.6%**	**15.2%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LODES data set, Workplace Area Characteristics for Primary Jobs, 2013 and 2019.

Note: All data are primary jobs, defined as the job that represents the largest share of a worker's earnings.

Employment trends varied considerably by industry. The number of manufacturing jobs increased in the largest municipalities (100,000+ residents), but it decreased in most small and mid-size municipalities. Retail trade employment decreased across nearly all size and location types. Conversely, accommodation and food service employment increased in municipalities of all sizes and locations except for downstate metro municipalities with 25,000–99,999 residents. Health care and education employment grew statewide, but the steepest declines were in the smallest municipalities, and the largest growth was in mid-size municipalities.

FACTORS AFFECTING POPULATION CHANGES

The relative importance of factors associated with percentage population changes was determined using OLS regression analysis with 2010-2020 population change as a dependent variable. The purpose here is not to predict population change; rather, the intent is to help municipal officials better understand the contribution of each variable to observed population changes and possibly guide selection of development policies. The regression sample includes 1,206 municipalities with continuous population and employment data from 2000 to 2020. Although Illinois has 1,295 municipalities, Chicago is excluded due to size, and several municipalities had insufficient data for 2000 population or industry and demographic control variables.

Many factors affect population changes, both positive and negative, with many, if not most, unique to a municipality. Attracting or losing a large employer, for instance, can entice or displace residents. Likewise, major events in neighboring municipalities can have similar effects, so it is difficult to capture all of them in an analysis, especially in densely populated regions such as metro areas where many residents work in municipalities other than where they live.

Several variables thought to be important factors affecting population changes based on previous discussions are discussed next. They include previous population trends, educational level in the municipality, income level, age distribution, effective property tax rate, tourist and shopping businesses, and commuting patterns of residents. The rationale for each variable will be discussed, followed by the statistical results.

- **Past population trends.** Population trends in the previous decade capture many aspects of the surrounding economic environment, and it is difficult for municipalities to change direction without some major stimulus. The

positive relationship with population changes in 2010-2020 means that many of those factors are continuing.

- **College-educated residents.** A highly educated population may indicate residents with more job stability or better re-employment prospects during economic downturns. These include residents employed in health care, education, government, and professional service industries. Many of these jobs also pay more. The percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is positively related to population change, i.e., greater population growth or less-severe population declines.

- **Median income.** Wealthier municipalities are likely to offer more shopping and entertainment opportunities and thus may be better able to retain or attract residents. If the income relates to business ownership, then these municipalities may also have more stable employment, as is indicated.

- **Municipal type or setting: Chicago metro area or nonmetro-nonmicro.** Previous comparisons show that municipalities in metro settings had, on average, more favorable population changes. Location is measured with two dichotomous variables — one for municipalities located in the Chicago metro area and another for municipalities not in metropolitan or micropolitan areas. The Chicago metro setting variable had a positive relationship with population changes at a 5% confidence interval, and the nonmetro-nonmicro setting variable had no significant effect.

- **Age structure.** Residents approaching traditional retirement age may decide to relocate closer to family, start a second career elsewhere, or age in place. Any of these actions can bring a population decline in the future, either because of migration or natural causes. Larger municipalities may also experience in-migration from surrounding smaller areas as is shown by the positive relationship in Table 3. We measure age structure as the population age 55 or older in 2010. This shows the share of residents that reached retirement age throughout the decade.

- **Other considerations.** Several other municipal characteristics may also affect population changes. These include costs of local public services (effective property tax rate, or median property tax payment divided by median home value), share of employment in visitor industries, and percentage of residents that commute out-of-county to work. These variables are included in the analyses, but as shown, none of them are

statistically significant. Collectively, the variables account for 28.1% of the variations in population changes, which is statistically significant (F=53.2). If all other variables are retained and the past population change variable is removed, the model would still account for 19.2% of the variations in population changes. The model remains stable in the sense that other variables retain their effect on population changes when one is excluded from the regression.

As noted previously, many unique characteristics of municipalities are important in population changes that cannot be included in this type of analysis. Especially important are actions by local development groups or agencies to promote quality of life, job opportunities, housing, or other factors to increase the attractiveness of the municipality as a place to live.

TABLE 3

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH MUNICIPAL POPULATION CHANGES
OLS ESTIMATES. N= 1,206

VARIABLE	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENT	STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENT	T-VALUE	SIGNIFICANCE OF T-VALUE
(Constant)	-16.784		-8.225	0.000
Prior Local Population Change	0.067	0.291	11.214	0.000
Bachelor's Degree	0.175	0.201	5.076	0.000
Median Income	0.000	0.146	3.436	0.001
Ages 55+	0.123	0.082	3.061	0.002
Chicago Metro Setting	2.141	0.076	2.437	0.015
Effective Property Tax Rate	0.465	0.019	0.71	0.478
Visitor Industries	0.010	0.011	0.443	0.658
Nonmetro-Nonmicro Setting	-0.713	-0.025	-0.936	0.349
Commuting	-0.027	-0.048	-1.872	0.061
R2	0.281			
F	53.185 (p<0.01)			

Notes: Municipalities in sample: 266 Chicago Metro, 377 Downstate Metro, 292 Micropolitan, 271 Nonmetro-Nonmicro. The dependent variable is 2010-2020 percent population change.

The effects of local initiatives to reverse negative trends in small municipalities are seen more clearly by reviewing municipalities that switched from a population decline in the 2000s to a more than 20% population increase from natural causes or annexations in the 2010s. Strasburg (population 531) is one such example where a small community reversed a population decline through a community strategic planning effort followed by an extensive development and creative marketing initiatives (Walzer et al., 2019). Lack of readily available data did not permit a regression variable for whether the 1,206 sample municipalities implemented strategies targeted at population growth or retention.

CONCLUSION

A comparison of municipal population trends, even allowing for census undercounts, can be somewhat discouraging, especially for small municipalities in remote areas. At the same time, recent investments in broadband access and implementation open opportunities for some of these municipalities to find new directions and reshape their economies to take advantage of culture changes. Delivering services over the Internet, for example, can allow producers to live in more remote locations that offer a high quality of life, good education facilities, affordable housing, and access to natural recreation. However, these trends might also lead to Illinois jobs being held by residents of other states or for residents to leave Illinois while retaining current jobs. The main point is to build on local unique assets in pursuing development options not readily available even a decade ago (Walzer & Merrett, 2023).

Nevertheless, population declines will adversely affect municipal finances when state revenues such as income tax rebates are shared based on population. Municipalities with shrinking revenues will be forced to find alternative revenues to fund the levels of public services required to attract and retain populations. In a 2021 survey of Illinois municipalities, 22.2% said they would consider increasing fees for services if fiscal year 2022 revenues were insufficient (Walzer & Blanke, 2021). In several instances, population declines may require municipalities to reexamine their home rule status. Municipalities that were granted home rule based on population size must pass a referendum to retain it if the census reveals that their population fell below 25,001 (Kachiroubas & Beyer, 2019).

The need for aggressive local economic development initiatives in the next several years is obvious. Those municipalities most likely to turnaround population declines will have to provide both a high quality of life as well as access to high-quality employment opportunities. At the same time, growing numbers of residents approaching retirement age make it more difficult to maintain an adequate workforce with up-to-date skills. This situation will force municipalities to find innovative ways to entice residents to age in place, perhaps using the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Livable Communities approaches.

There are also implications for federal and state governments approach to development. A one-size-fits-all strategy is less likely to be effective with smaller municipalities because their capacity and opportunities differ so much from larger metro areas. As these municipalities continue to shrink in size, they will be pressured to find ways to reduce the per-person costs of public services, perhaps through more collaboration and sharing of expertise among government agencies.

Clearly, the 2010 decade has raised new issues for municipalities, depending on their size and location. This will likely place even more pressure on local public officials to be innovative and resourceful in finding ways to attract and retain residents. Fortunately, they have access to resources in federal and state agencies such as the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development to help them shape development strategies, but the road is likely to be challenging during the next several years.

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for NIU, and the Local Efficiency Assessment Planning (LEAP) program funded by the Governor's Rural Affairs Council. He also manages updates for the Municipal Price Index.

ENDNOTES

[1] After each 10-year census of population, the U.S. Census Bureau conducts a post-enumeration survey to validate the full counts of the population. This survey is completed by a random sample of households nationally. The results for Illinois suggest that the statewide population count was approximately 2% lower than it should have been if not for missing responses. The Census Bureau uses this information strictly to improve data collections for the next 10-year census, and it is not used to revise published population counts for 2020.

[2] Population increases can result from natural growth, immigration, and annexations. The census figures used in these analyses make no adjustments for annexations. However, most of the municipalities reported population declines, so this should not be an issue in these discussions.

3 Micropolitan counties have at least one city of 10,000 or larger population but less than 50,000 population. Thus, the nonmetro-nonmicropolitan category approximates a rural designation.

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