RESEARCH REPORT

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The New Landscape of Imprisonment: Mapping America's Prison Expansion

Sarah Lawrence
Jeremy Travis

URBAN INSTITUTE
Justice Policy Center

URBAN INSTITUTE
Justice Policy Center

2100 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20037
(202) 833-7200
www.urban.org

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About the Authors

Sarah Lawrence is an independent consultant and former research associate at the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center. Ms. Lawrence's professional experiences focus on linking criminal justice research with policymakers and practitioners. Her primary areas of interest include prisoner reentry, corrections reform, and community supervision. She is co-author of several publications, including "Beyond the Prison Gates: The State of Parole in America" and "Prison Programming: What It Can Do and Why It Is Needed." She is currently serving as a consultant to the Governor's Commission on Corrections Reform in the State of Massachusetts. Ms. Lawrence holds a Masters in Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley and a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from Cornell University.

Jeremy Travis is a senior fellow at the Urban Institute, affiliated with the Justice Policy Center. He is developing research and policy agendas on understanding crime within the context of the community, new concepts of the agencies of justice, sentencing and prisoner reentry, and international crime. Mr. Travis is co chair of the Reentry Roundtable, a group of prominent academics, practitioners, service providers, and community leaders working to advance policies and innovations on prisoner reentry that reflect solid research. Before joining the Urban Institute, he directed the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the research arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, from 1994 to 2000. Prior to his service at NIJ, he was deputy commissioner for legal matters of the New York City Police Department, chair of the New York City Chancellor's Advisory Panel on School Safety, chief counsel to the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice of the House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary, and special advisor to the mayor of New York City. Mr. Travis earned his JD, cum laude, from the New York University School of Law and also holds an MPA from the New York University Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and a BA in American Studies, cum laude, from Yale College.

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Executive Summary

In recent decades, growth in the number of people in U.S. prisons has been the largest in history—the prison population increased by more than one million between 1980 and 2000. To accommodate this growth, corrections officials have pursued a variety of strategies, including greatly expanding the network of prisons. The number of state prison facilities increased from about 600 prisons in the mid-1970s to over 1,000 prisons by the year 2000. Because the Census Bureau counts prisoners where they are incarcerated in the decennial census, the locations of prisons may have significant implications for state and federal funding allocations, as well as political representation.

Despite this tremendous growth, the prison construction boom has received relatively little attention. It is remarkable that a public undertaking as far-reaching as the American prison expansion, which affects millions of incarcerated individuals, influences millions more family and community members, and consumes billions of public dollars, would receive so little empirical analysis and public scrutiny. This report contributes to the limited knowledge base by developing an empirical understanding of the geographic locations of prison facilities—and therefore prisoners—following this record-level expansion over the past two decades. Prison expansion is examined from national, state, and county-level perspectives, and in terms of the extent to which prisons were located in “metro” counties or “non-metro” counties. This report focuses on 10 states that experienced the largest growth in the number of prisons during the 1980s and 1990s.

Several themes emerge from the analyses presented in this report. First is the pervasiveness of prison growth. The prison construction boom of the last two decades was not concentrated in a few states or in certain regions of the country, but occurred in states across the country. Prison systems also expanded within states, as new prisons were more geographically dispersed. The share of counties in the 10 study states that were home to at least one prison increased from 13 percent of counties in 1979 to 31 percent of counties in 2000. In addition, the number of prisons increased significantly in both metro and non-metro counties, challenging the notion that prison expansion has primarily taken place in non-metro counties.

A second theme to emerge is that in a select number of smaller communities, prison expansion has significantly impacted the total population. In each of the 10 study states there were several counties where a notable share of the total population was incarcerated. Thirteen counties in the 10 study states had 20 percent or more of the resident population imprisoned in 2000. All 10 states had least five counties where 5 percent or more of the population was imprisoned. Not surprisingly, most of these counties, but not all, were non-metro counties. Analyses presented in this report show that the share of prisoners who resides in non-metro counties is greater than the share of the general population who resides in non-metro counties, and that this has been the case for at least the last two decades.

A third theme of this report is the mismatch between the places prisoners consider home and the places prisoners serve their time. A series of maps illustrates large disparities between the sentencing counties and the counties of imprisonment.

Issues related to prison expansion of the 1980s and 1990s are numerous and complex. We hope that this report 1) provides a better understanding of this expansion in terms of spatial distribution, 2) challenges some commonly held ideas about prison growth, and 3) highlights issues that deserve additional attention. Our primary goal, however, is to use empirical analyses to ground the debate surrounding prison expansion and to lay the foundation for future studies.

1 Introduction

Highlights: Growth in the number of prison facilities during the 1980s and 1990s was historically high. Research on where prisons were located is lacking, and therefore, the extent to which issues related to prison expansion can be debated is limited. This report aims to shed light on the prison expansion phenomenon by addressing the following question: What did the prison expansion of the 1980s and 1990s look like in terms of the locations of new prisons?

The growth in the number of U.S. prisoners in recent decades is the largest in history. The incarceration rate has seen a four-fold increase over the last 25 years. Over 1.3 million people were in state or federal prisons in 2000, up from 218,000 in 1974 (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 2000, table 6.27). To accommodate this growth, corrections officials have pursued a variety of strategies, including filling prisons beyond capacity, converting buildings to prisons, and constructing new facilities. As a consequence, the number of "confinement facilities" operated by departments of corrections increased. Over the last 25 years, the number of state facilities increased from just fewer than 600 to over 1,000 in the year 2000, an increase of about 70 percent. In other words, more than 40 percent of state prisons in operation today opened in the last 25 years.

This report examines one fundamental dimension of prison expansion: the locations of new prisons. The location of a prison has significant consequences for prisoners and their families. Prisons built in communities far away from prisoners' homes make visitation more difficult. Prison location can also affect the distribution of political power, the allocation of government resources, and the local economies of the communities in which new institutions are built and the communities from which prisoners are drawn.

Increases in the number of prisoners have received considerable attention by policymakers, researchers, and advocates. The expansion of prison facilities, however, has received very little attention. It is remarkable that a public undertaking as far-reaching as the American prison expansion—which involves 50 state governments and the federal government, affects millions of incarcerated individuals, influences millions more family and community members, and consumes billions of public dollars—would receive so little empirical analysis and public scrutiny.

Journalistic accounts and single-state studies have recently commented on possible ramifications of the locations of prisons in America. For example:

- One *New York Times* article states, "As communities become more and more familiar with the benefits that prisons bring, they are also becoming increasingly adept at maximizing their windfall through collecting taxes and healthy public service fees" (Kilborn 2001).

- From *The Washington Post:* "Call it salvation through incarceration—a prison-based development strategy that small towns all over America are pursuing, and changing economically and culturally because of it" (Duke 2000).

- According to a report by the Prison Policy Initiative, "These prisoners [from New York City] then swell the size of the rural prison communities at the expense of the communities from whence they came" (Wagner 2002b).

In smaller communities, and particularly those with higher than average rates of poverty and unemployment, opening a new prison is believed to be an economically beneficial endeavor. Indeed, local "campaigns" have played a role in determining where a prison is located. However, the few studies on the local economic impacts of prisons to date have not found significant positive impacts. For example, a study by the Sentencing Project challenges the notion that a new prison brings economic benefits to smaller communities. Using 25 years of data from New York State rural counties, the authors looked at employment rates and per capita income and found "no significant difference or discernible pattern of economic trends" between counties that were home to a prison and counties that were not home to a prison (King, Mauer, and Huling 2003). According to a recent study by Iowa State University, many towns that made sizeable investments in prisons did not reap the economic gains that were predicted (Besser 2003). Another analysis in Texas found no impacts as measured by consumer spending in nearly three-fourths of the areas examined (Chuang 1998).

The economic benefits of new prisons may come from the flow of additional state and federal dollars. In the decennial census, prisoners are counted where they are incarcerated, and many federal and state funding streams are tied to census population counts. According to the U.S. General Accounting Office (2003), the federal government distributes over $140 billion in grant money to state and local governments through formula-based grants. Formula grant money is in part based on census data and covers programs such as Medicaid, Foster Care, Adoption Assistance, and Social Services Block Grant (U.S. General Accounting Office 2003). Within a state, funding for community health services, road construction and repair, public housing, local law enforcement, and public libraries are all driven by population counts from the census.

Every dollar transferred to a "prison community" is a dollar that is not given to the home community of a prisoner, which is often among the country's most disadvantaged urban areas. According to one account, Cook County Illinois will lose nearly $88 million in federal benefits over the next decade because residents were counted in the 2000 Census in their county of incarceration rather than their county of origin (Duggan 2000). Losing funds from the "relocation" of prisoners is also an issue for New York City, as two-thirds of state prisoners are from the city, while 91 percent of prisoners are incarcerated in upstate counties (Wagner 2002a).

The effect of prisoner location on population counts may also influence the allocation of political representation and, therefore, political influence (Haberman 2000). In Wisconsin, the number of state prisoners who were housed in other states (known as interstate transfers) caused concern because these prisoners would be counted in the decennial census in the states where they were incarcerated. In 1999, U.S. Representative Mark Green introduced a bill (unsuccessfully) that proposed changes to the census policy so Wisconsin prisoners held in other states would be counted as Wisconsin residents.

In order for these issues to be adequately addressed, we first need to develop an empirical understanding of the locations of prisons—and therefore prisoners—following a record-level expansion over the past two decades. This report uses quantitative data analysis and mapping to document the expansion of prison systems during the 1980s and 1990s. The report looks at

prison expansion from national, state, and county-level perspectives and analyzes the expansion along an important dimension, namely whether the prison is located in a county classified as "metro" or "non-metro."

Section 1 of the report presents the primary research question, data sources, and policy context for this analysis. Section 2 uses national-level data, as well as data from 10 states, to assess the magnitude of prison growth. Section 3 creates a framework for these prison-related changes by describing shifts in the general resident population. In section 4, the geographic dispersion of prison facilities, the mix of *prisons* by type of county (i.e., metro or non-metro), and the mix of *prisoners* by type of county are discussed. Section 5 uses maps to show prison system changes at the county level, and section 6 compares prisoner populations with total populations at the county level. Sentencing counties are compared with counties of incarceration in section 7.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND DATA SOURCES

In an attempt to ground debate on prison expansion in empirical analysis, this report addresses the following question:

> **What did the prison expansion of the 1980s and 1990s look like in terms of the locations of new prisons?**

Focusing on this question will allow us to address other questions such as: Where were facilities located in terms of metro versus non-metro areas? Are there communities in which the prison population makes up a notable share of the total population? To what extent are prisoners' "home communities" the same as the communities where they are incarcerated?

The primary data sources for this analysis are the decennial census, which is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Census of State and Federal Correctional Facilities, which is conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).[1] (See figure 1 for more details.) Numerous publications on demographic shifts and housing patterns are produced by the U.S. Census Bureau after each decennial census. BJS publishes summary reports after each census of state and federal correctional facilities. To our knowledge, these data sources have not been used to examine the geographic dispersion of state and federal prisons and prisoners. For much of this report, the analyses focus on a set of 10 states that experienced significant growth.

[1] The software programs SPSS, Excel, ArcView GIS, and Adobe Illustrator were used to compile and analyze the data used in this report.

Figure 1. Primary data sources

Census of State and Federal Correctional Facilities, Bureau of Justice Statistics
The Census of State and Federal Correctional Facilities is a complete enumeration of state and federal adult correctional facilities. The census of correctional facilities was conducted by the Census Bureau for the BJS in 1974, 1979, 1984, 1990, 1995, and 2000.[2] Data from the 1979 and 2000 censuses were used in this analysis.

Decennial Census, U.S. Census Bureau
Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau undertakes an enumeration of every person in the country. County-level data from the 1980 and 2000 censuses were used in this analysis. Census 2000 is the first year in which state and federal prisoners are itemized and can be distinguished from other types of correctional populations.

Data from Individual States
Reports, quantitative data, and online information published by the 10 study states were used where appropriate. Annual reports, online facility profiles, and prior research reports contributed to the development of state profiles and were often used as cross-checks with other data sources.

For our purposes, an important characteristic of prisons is the type of area in which they are situated. Specifically, to what degree are prisons located in more populous, metropolitan areas compared with less populous, non-metropolitan areas? Although some data are presented at the national and state levels, counties are our primary unit of analysis. After each decennial census, the U.S. Census Bureau publishes a list of counties that are classified as "metropolitan" according to a standard definition determined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (figure 2). Two sets of "metro" counties were used in this analysis; counties that were classified as metro based on the 1980 decennial census were paired with the 1979 correctional facility data, and counties that were classified as metro based on Census 2000 data (published June 6, 2003) were paired with 2000 correctional facility data. All counties not classified as "metro" counties in the two years of interest (1979 and 2000) are referred to as "non-metro" counties.

Figure 2. Defining a ''metro'' county

Every 10 years the Census Bureau publishes an updated list of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), which is comprised of counties and based on the most recent decennial census data. The lists are typically published three years after a census is conducted. For example, MSAs from the 1980 Census were published in 1983.

The Office of Management and Budget determines the standards for MSAs and its component counties. For Census 2000, OMB defined an MSA as "a large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities, having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core" (U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2000).

For the purpose of this report, the set of metro counties based on 1980 Census data and published in 1983 are applied to the 1979 data on correctional facilities. The updated list of metro counties based on Census 2000 data, which was published on June 6, 2003, was used in this report. All counties not classified as "metro" counties are referred to as "non-metro" counties.

[2] Facility-level data are not publicly available for the 1974 count. While aggregate data for 2000 are available, facility-level, electronic data for this year are not yet publicly available. Facility-level data for the ten states of interest in 2000 are based on previous counts of correctional facilities and state-specific research by Urban Institute researchers.

TYPES OF CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Because we are interested in the locations where prisoners are incarcerated, our primary interest is in confinement facilities and, therefore, not all types of correctional facilities are appropriate for this analysis.[3] Only facilities that meet the following criteria are included: 1) facilities that are operated by a state government, the federal government, or by a private company that is a contractor for a state or federal government; 2) facilities that house adult offenders sentenced to one year or more; and 3) facilities that are classified by BJS as "confinement," meaning less than 50 percent of the prisoners are "regularly permitted to depart unaccompanied." The third criterion generally excludes facilities that allow residents to spend significant amounts of time outside of the facility, such as halfway houses and work release programs.[4]

Because standard definitions for correctional housing do not exist, each correctional system has its own system and vocabulary for classifying facilities. For example, Missouri's system includes correctional centers, diagnostic centers, treatment centers, and community release centers. Local jails, juvenile facilities, community corrections centers, and work release centers are some examples of types of facilities that have been excluded. Throughout this paper, we use the terms "prisons" and "confinement facilities" to refer to facilities that meet the above-listed criteria. The types of facilities in the 10 study states (see below) and in the federal system and that are included in this analysis are listed in appendix A.

COUNTING PRISONERS IN THE DECENNIAL CENSUS

The U.S. Census Bureau counts prisoners as residents of the county where they are incarcerated, not as residents of the county where they lived prior to incarceration. From the first U.S. decennial census in 1790 through Census 2000, the guiding principle for determining the location in which people are enumerated has been to count individuals in their place of "usual residence." Usual residence is defined as the place where a person lives and sleeps most of the time, and it can differ from a person's legal or voting residence (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). When this policy is applied to state and federal prisoners, they are counted where they are incarcerated. In Census 2000, 1.3 million individuals were counted in the locations of their confinement. As the prison population increased dramatically over the last 25 years, this Census policy has applied to larger correctional populations. As shown in figure 3, the number of prisoners increased from approximately 316,000 to over 1.3 million during the 1980s and 1990s—an increase of 318 percent. Stated differently, the policy of "usual residence" applied to approximately 1 million more state and federal prisoners in 2000 than it did in 1980.

On an *interstate* level, this growth, in and of itself, does not raise concerns in terms of census enumeration. Very few prisoners are transferred to other states.[5] Yet, when census-based

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[3] The measure of incarceration used here does not include individuals in local jails, military correctional facilities, and halfway houses. The total number of individuals that are truly "incarcerated" would be higher than the figures used in this report.

[4] Only 3 percent of state and federal prisoners are housed in nonconfinement facilities according to BJS.

[5] According to BJS, in the ten states of interest less than one-half of 1 percent of state prisoners are held out of state. The national average for prisoners held out of state is 0.9 percent (U.S. Department of Justice 2001, table 4).

resources are distributed *within* a state, the movements of large numbers of prisoners between counties may have significant consequences. Specifically, if prison populations rose at the same time that the *location* of prisoners within a state changed, then *intrastate* distributions of financial resources may be affected.

Figure 3. Growth of state and federal prison populations, 1980, 1990, 2000

	1980	1990	2000	1980 – 2000
Prison population	315,974	739,980	1,321,137	+ 1,005,163
Percent change from last decade	—	+134%	+79%	+318%

Source: Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 2000.

2 Overall Growth in the Number of Prisons

Highlights: This analysis focuses on the 10 states that experienced the largest growth in the number of prisons. These states account for 63 percent of the total increase in the number of prisons since 1979. The number of prisons in each of the 10 states more than doubled between 1979 and 2000.

Over the past two decades, the number of prisons increased in all jurisdictions; fifty states are operating more prison facilities today than they were 20 years ago, even after controlling for general population growth. The rise in the number of prisons has been extraordinary, as shown in figure 4. During the last quarter of the 20th century, state prison systems grew from 592 prisons to 1,023 prisons—an increase of 73 percent.

Figure 4. Number of state prisons, 1923–2000

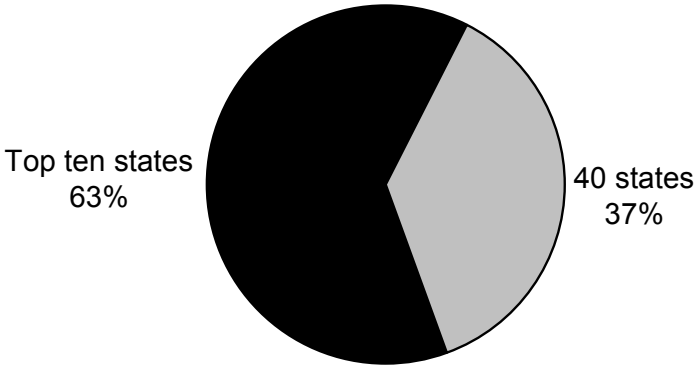
Sources: U.S. Department of Justice 1974; U.S. Department of Justice 1986; U.S. Department of Justice 2003.

Note: Because data for the federal system were not available for this time period, this figure only includes state facilities.

In this report we focus on prison expansion for the 21-year period between 1979 and 2000, two years in which BJS surveyed correctional facilities. In order to conduct more in-depth analyses at the state and county levels, we focus on a set of 10 states. The 10 states were included because they are home to the largest increases in the number of adult confinement facilities.[6] Figure 5 shows the share of the national-level prison growth accounted for by these top 10 states. Sixty-three percent of the total growth in the number of prisons occurred in the 10 selected states (referred to in this report as "the top 10 states").

[6] Another plausible measure is the *percentage* increase in the number of facilities. This yields misleading results, as smaller states that grew from, for example, one prison to four prisons would be ranked the highest.

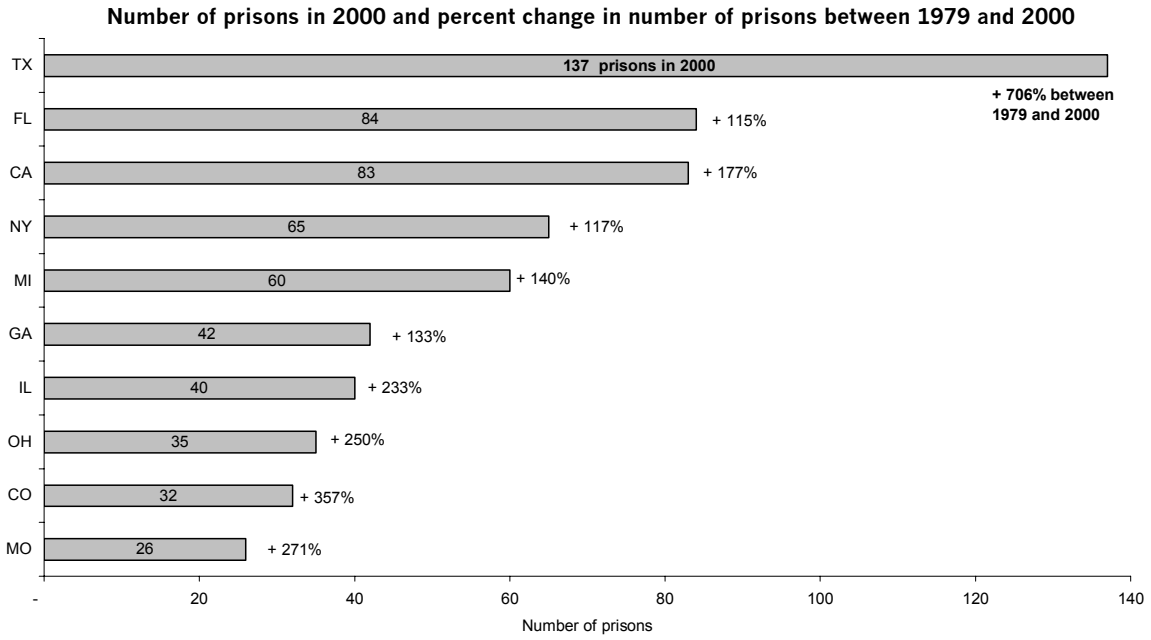
Figure 5. Percent of growth in number of prisons nationwide, 1979–2000



Sources: Census of Correctional Facilities, 1979 data from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research; U.S. Department of Justice, 2001.

Figure 6 lists the top 10 states ranked from the highest growth to the lowest growth. They are Texas, Florida, California, New York, Michigan, Georgia, Illinois, Ohio, Colorado, and Missouri. The magnitude of prison growth in these 10 states is remarkable. Between 1979 and 2000, the number of additional prisons ranged from 19 prisons in Missouri to 120 prisons in Texas. The growth in Texas equates to an extraordinary average annual increase of 5.7 additional prisons per year over the 21-year period. As a group, the 10 states were operating more than three times as many prisons in 2000 as in 1979—increasing from 195 facilities to 604 facilities. Figure 6 shows the relative growth in each state in addition to the absolute growth. In all 10 states, the number of prisons increased by more than 100 percent over the two decades. States with the lowest relative growth are Florida, which grew by 115 percent, and New York, which grew by 117 percent. Texas is again the clear leader growing by 706 percent over the 21-year period. Indeed, Texas is in a league of its own, as it added the most prisons (120), currently has the largest number of prisons in operation (137), and experienced the largest percentage increase (706 percent).

Figure 6. States with highest growth in number of prisons



Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics 1997; U.S. Department of Justice 2001; and state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

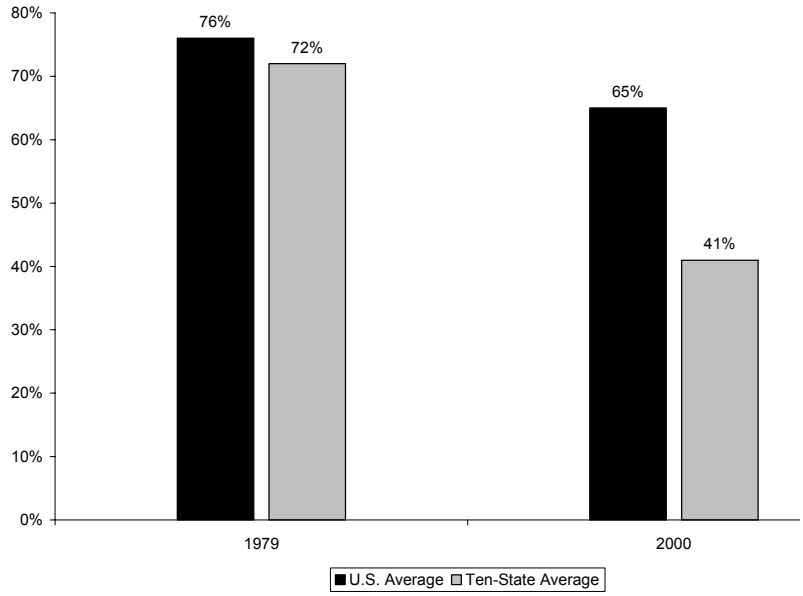
3 Changes in the General Population

Highlights: The share of counties in the top 10 states classified as non-metro decreased from 72 to 41 percent between 1979 and 2000. The share of residents in the top 10 states living in non-metro counties decreased from 16 to 5 percent during this same period.

Before examining the extent to which prisons were sited in non-metro versus metro counties, it is useful to understand changes in the nation's general population over the same period of time. As previously described, the Census Bureau periodically updates its list of counties defined as "metro" counties, reflecting decennial census data. As the overall U.S. population rose over the past 20 years, the number of non-metro counties decreased. In 1980, more than three-fourths of U.S. counties (76 percent) were classified as non-metro; this represents 2,400 of the nation's 3,141 counties. In 2000, by contrast, the share of non-metro counties decreased to about two-thirds of all counties (65 percent or 2,052 counties). Among the top 10 states analyzed in this report, the decline was even more pronounced. In 1979, 72 percent of counties were classified as non-metro, and that figure declined to 41 percent in 2000.

The shares of counties that are non-metro for the 50 states and for the top 10 states are shown in figure 7. This chart illustrates two important points. First, it reflects the decline in non-metro counties. Between 1979 and 2000 the share of non-metro counties declined for both the 50-state average (76 to 65 percent) and the 10-state average (72 to 41 percent). Second, the figure suggests that the 10 states have experienced a greater level of "urbanization," as the decline in non-metro counties was higher than for the entire country (a decrease of 31 percentage points for the 10 states compared with a decrease of 11 percentage points for the 50 states). These trends are important when we consider the degree to which prison facilities are located in non-metro counties versus metro counties. If no prisons had been added to correctional systems between 1979 and 2000, the number and share of prisons in non-metro counties still would have declined, simply as a result of fewer counties being classified as non-metro.

Figure 7. Percent of counties that are non-metro counties



Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; U.S. Census Bureau 1983a, 1983b.

Just as the mix of metro and non-metro counties changed over the past two decades, so did the share of *residents* living in metro and non-metro counties. In the top 10 states examined in this report, the share of the resident population who lived in non-metro counties decreased. In 1979, 16 percent of residents in the top 10 states lived in non-metro counties; by 2000, only 5 percent of residents lived in non-metro counties. (Appendix B provides the share of residents and the share of prisoners who lived in non-metro counties by state in 1979 and 2000.) Translating percents into absolutes, the number of people living in non-metro counties in the top 10 states declined from just under 17 million people in 1979 to approximately 7 million people in 2000.

The top 10 states varied in terms of the mix of metro versus non-metro counties. The share of counties that were non-metro ranged from a low of 18 percent in New York State to a high of 61 percent in Colorado in 2000. In terms of the share of residents, several states had less than 3 percent of residents in non-metro counties: California (2.8 percent), Florida (2.3 percent), and New York (2.3 percent). Among the top 10 states, the highest share of residents living in non-metro counties in 2000 was Missouri at 14 percent.

4 Prison Growth by State

Highlights: Prison facilities spread out geographically during the 1980s and 1990s. By the year 2000, 31 percent of all counties in the top 10 states were home to at least one prison. Significant numbers of prisoners were added to both non-metro and metro counties. A prison was more likely to be situated in a metro county in 2000 than in 1979—50 percent of all prisons were located in metro counties in 1979 compared with 74 percent in 2000. Prisoners disproportionately resided (i.e., were incarcerated) in non-metro counties for at least the last two decades; the share of prisoners who resided in non-metro counties was greater than the share of the general population who resided in non-metro counties.

PRISON DISTRIBUTION WITHIN A STATE

Now that we have identified states with the largest growth in the number of prisons and understand metro/non-metro county classification, we will look at prisons within each of these states. To what extent are prisons spread out across a state?

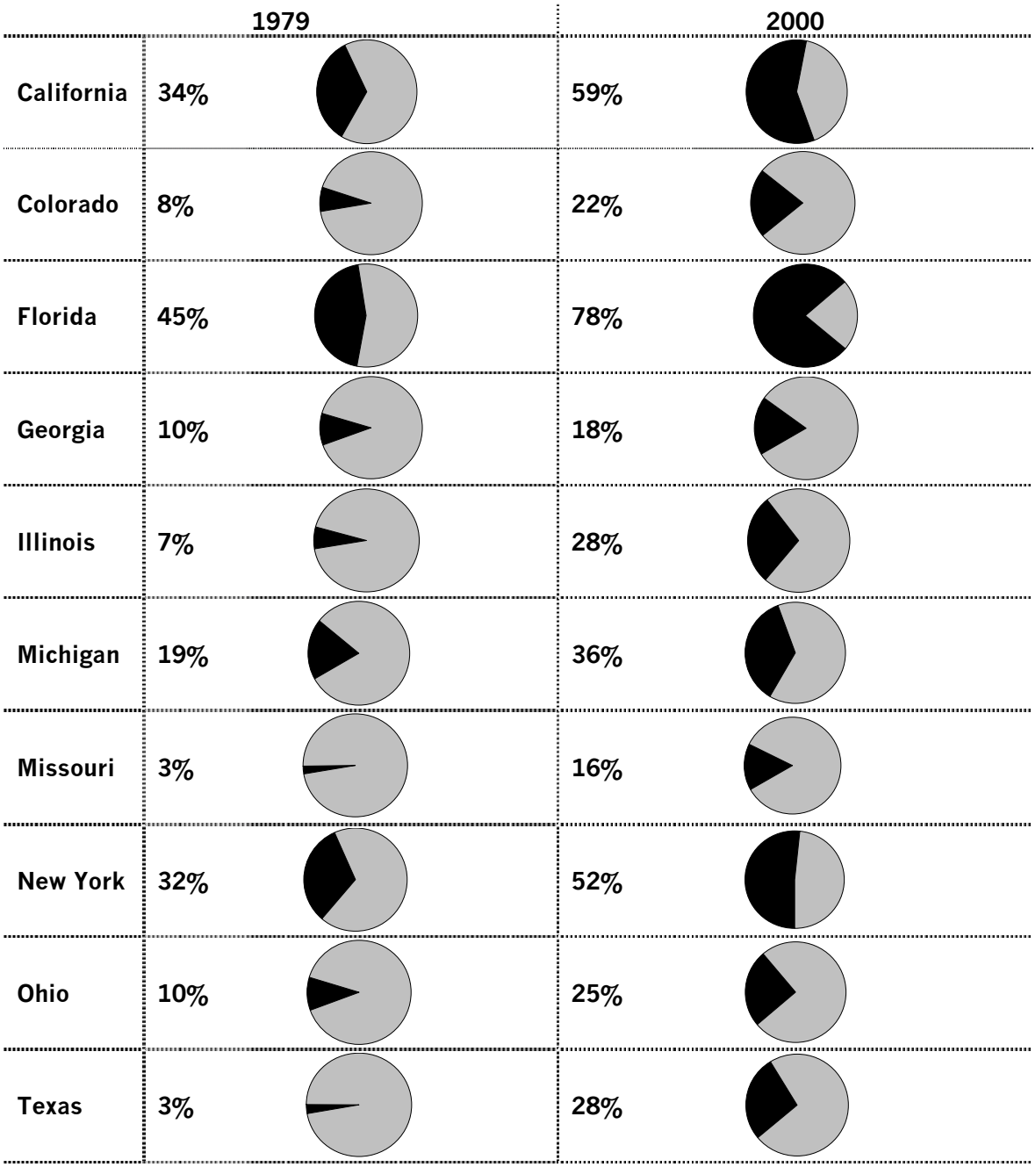
One measure of geographic distribution of prisons is the percent of counties that is home to *at least one* prison. Because all of the top 10 states have experienced prison growth over the last two decades, we would expect more counties to have prisons today than 20 years ago. In 2000, almost one-third of all counties (31 percent) across the 10 states had a state or federal prison within its boundaries compared with 13 percent of all counties in 1979. Stated another way, in these states 197 more counties were home to prisons in 2000 than in 1979.

Figure 8 documents the spread of prisons across counties at the state level by showing that the share of counties with a prison increased in each of the top 10 states between 1979 and 2000. The first column in figure 8 shows the percentage of counties in 1979 with at least one prison; the second column shows the same measure for the year 2000. For example, in California 34 percent of counties were home to one or more state or federal prison facilities in 1979, and this grew to 59 percent by 2000. During the 1980s and 1990s, the locations of prisons spread out in all 10 states, as the percentage of counties with prisons increased in all 10 states. The state of Texas is, again, the leader in growth. Seven of the 254 Texas counties (3 percent) had a prison located within its borders in 1979. By 2000, that number had increased ten-fold to a total of 70 Texas counties—or 28 percent of all counties. Figure 8 also shows that states varied in the level of geographic dispersion of prisons. In 2000, prisons were located in only 16 percent of Missouri's counties and 18 percent of Georgia's counties. At the same time, more than half of California's counties (59 percent) and New York's counties (52 percent), and more than three-fourths of Florida's counties (78 percent) were home to at least one prison. In these three states, more counties had at least one prison than counties that had no prisons.

All of the top 10 states had many more prisons in 2000 than in 1979, as absolute growth was the criterion for selection. Figure 8 shows that, in addition, the 10 states grew in terms of the spatial distribution of prisons. Prison facilities were opened for the first time in numerous counties across the states. In 2000, 330 counties had prisons, up from 133 counties in 1979. This suggests that communities have become more willing to host a new prison facility than in the past. This

has been described as the "Yes, in my backyard" phenomenon by Tracy Huling,[7] and is a direct contrast to the long-standing opposition to prisons, described as "Not in my backyard" (or NIMBY).

Figure 8. Percent of counties with at least one prison by state



Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics 1997, 1998a; and state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

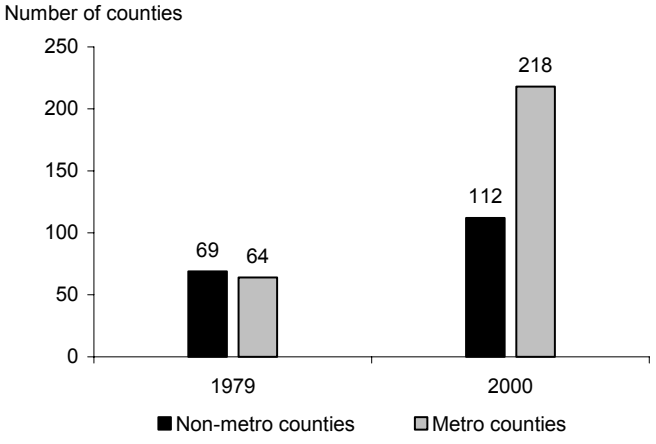
[7] Tracy Huling and Galloping Girls Productions, Inc. produced a documentary titled, "Yes, In My Backyard" in 1998. Ms. Huling has also written several pieces on the issue. (See Huling 1999 and 2000.)

PRISON LOCATION BY COUNTY CLASSIFICATION

Now that we know that in the last two decades prisons spread out, we will look at the extent to which expansion occurred in non-metro counties versus metro counties. The same measurement—counties with at least one prison—is used to compare growth in non-metro and metro counties.

Prisons were added to large numbers of both non-metro and metro counties in the top 10 states. Between 1979 and 2000, 197 counties in the top 10 states gained at least one prison. Figure 9 compares prison growth in non-metro and metro counties for this period.[8] The number of non-metro counties with at least one prison increased from 69 counties in 1979 to 112 counties in 2000, an increase of 43 counties. During that same period, the number of metro counties with at least one prison grew from 64 counties to 218 counties, an increase of 154 metro counties. The increase in non-metro counties is particularly notable because the *total* number of non-metro counties decreased during this 21-year period from 757 counties to 431 counties. In other words, non-metro counties with prisons increased despite a decrease in the total number of non-metro counties. Similarly, some of the growth in metro counties with a prison can be attributed to the fact that there were more metro counties in 2000 than there were in 1979. If the number of prisons had not changed during the 21-year period, the number of metro counties with at least one prison still would have increased as a result of county reclassification based on decennial census data. Figure 9 also shows that the percent increase in counties with prisons was significantly higher for metro counties (241 percent, 64 to 218 counties) than for non-metro counties (62 percent, 69 to 112 counties).

Figure 9. Number of counties with at least one prison, 10-state total



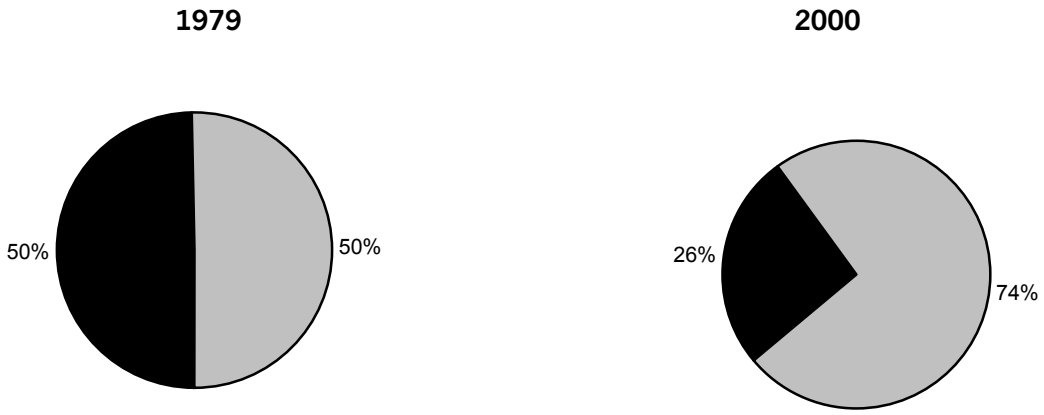
Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; U.S. Census Bureau 1983a, 1983b; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1997, 1998a; and state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

[8] Again, this is based on the June 6, 2003 classification of metro counties.

As another comparison of prison expansion by county type we use *prison facilities* rather than counties as the unit of analysis. What percentage of all prison facilities are located in non-metro counties versus metro counties? Prisons are not new to non-metro counties. One half of all prisons in the top 10 states were located in non-metro counties in 1979 (figure 10). Of the 195 prisons in the top 10 states in 1979, 97 were situated in non-metro counties and 98 in metro counties. This is notable because it challenges the conventional wisdom that, in the past, the majority of prisons had been operating in or near metro areas and that locating prisons in non-metro areas is a relatively new phenomenon. Figure 10 demonstrates that a significant share of prisons have been operating in non-metro areas for several decades.

Figure 10 also shows that over the last two decades, the percentage of prisons located in metro counties has increased. In 2000, approximately three out of four prisons (74 percent) were in metro counties, up from 50 percent in 1979, and one out of four prisons (26 percent) were in non-metro counties. This finding also challenges the notion that the prison-building boom took place primarily in non-metro areas.

Figure 10. Percent of prisons by type of county, 10-state total



Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; U.S. Census Bureau 1983a, 1983b; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1997, 1998a; and state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

PRISONER LOCATION BY COUNTY CLASSIFICATION

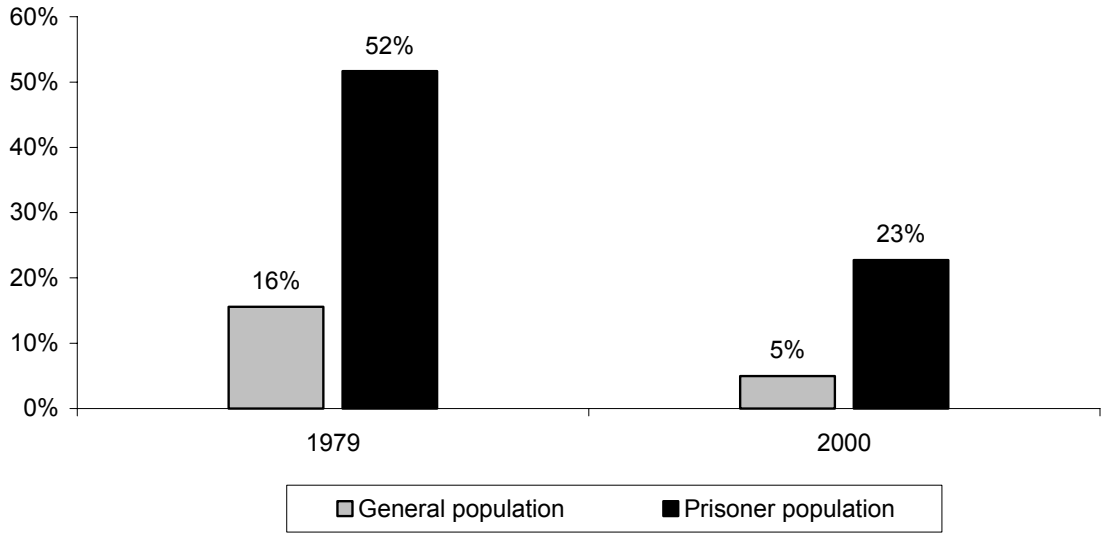
In addition to changes in the locations of prison facilities, changes in the locations of *prisoners* are also of interest. This is especially true in light of the potential financial and political implications of the Census policy of counting prisoners where they are incarcerated. In this section, the degree to which prisoners are incarcerated in non-metro versus metro counties is examined and compared with the general population.

A disproportionate share of prisoners are imprisoned in non-metro counties relative to the general population. In the top 10 states in 2000, 23 percent of state and federal prisoners lived

(i.e., were incarcerated) in non-metro counties, while only 5 percent of the general population in the top 10 states lived in non-metro counties (see figure 11). Put another way, 1 out of every 20 people in the general population resided in non-metro counties, while 1 out of every 5 prisoners was incarcerated in non-metro counties. Data from 1979 indicate that this imbalance has existed for some time. In 1979, 52 percent of the prisoner population and 16 percent of the general population in the top 10 states lived in non-metro counties. Even before the prison construction boom of the 1980s and 1990s, prisoners were more likely to reside in non-metro counties than the general population.

Another observation from figure 11 is that a *smaller* share of prisoners in the top 10 states is located in non-metro counties today compared with 21 years ago. More than half of prisoners (52 percent) were located in non-metro counties in 1979, and that fraction declined to less than one-quarter of prisoners (23 percent) in 2000. Although a decline in non-metro residence is expected as the number of non-metro counties decreased, the decline in prisoners and residents in non-metro counties is not entirely attributable to the reclassification of counties.[9]

Figure 11. Percent of population in non-metro counties, 10-state total



Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; U.S. Census Bureau 1983a, 1983b; decennial census data 1980 and 2000; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1997.

The growth in the prison population during the 1980s and 1990s was enormous, increasing by over 1 million prisoners nationwide. This has resulted in a larger *number* of prisoners being incarcerated in non-metro counties today compared with the number incarcerated in 1979, despite the fact that there are fewer non-metro counties. The number of prisoners in non-metro counties in the 10 states more than doubled between 1979 and 2000. As shown in figure 12, non-

[9] This assumes that there have been no significant changes in the average population of a prison facility.

metro prisoners increased from approximately 72,000 to approximately 156,000 during this time period.

The growth of prisoners in non-metro counties, however, pales in comparison to the growth of prisoners in metro counties. Prisoners living in metro counties increased from 67,637 to 531,652 prisoners (+464,015) between 1979 and 2000. This increase of 686 percent is far greater than the doubling of the prisoners in non-metro counties. The larger number of prisoners in metro counties has been fueled by two factors: the increase in the number of metro counties and the increase in the total prison population.

Figure 12. Number and percentage of prisoners by county type, 10-state total

	1979	2000	1979 to 2000
# prisoners in non-metro counties	72,256	156,302	+ 84,046
# prisoners in metro counties	67,637	531,652	+ 464,015
Percentage of prisoners in non-metro counties	52	23	- 29 percentage points
Percentage of prisoners in metro counties	48	77	+ 29 percentage points

Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; U.S. Census Bureau 1983a, 1983b; U.S. Census Bureau 2000; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1997, 2003.

The expansion of prisons and the growth in prisoners in the top 10 states were presented in section 4. In addition, the extent to which expansion occurred in non-metro versus metro counties was examined. Prisons spread out geographically during the 1980s and 1990s. Many more counties are home to a prison today than was the case 20 years ago. This expansion affected both non-metro and metro counties in the top 10 states, as significant numbers of prisoners were introduced in both non-metro and metro counties. Analyses in this section also showed that, in 2000, prisoners were disproportionately housed (incarcerated) in non-metro counties relative to the general population, and this had been the case for at least the last two decades.

5 Mapping County-Level Changes in the Top 10 States

Highlights: Ten state-level maps showing the number of additional prisons over the 21-year period are presented. They suggest that in some states, such as California, Florida, and New York, prison expansion has been geographically clustered, while in other states, such as Missouri and Ohio, prisons have opened throughout the state. The maps add further support to the notion that growth has been larger in metro counties than in non-metro counties over the last two decades.

Thus far we have looked at prison expansion from a national perspective and in terms of totals for the top 10 states. This section goes one step further and looks at changes within states at the county level, which allows us to address the following questions: Do certain counties within a state account for a disproportionate share of the prison expansion? How many prisons have been added to each county? What are the similarities and differences across these states in terms of prison expansion?

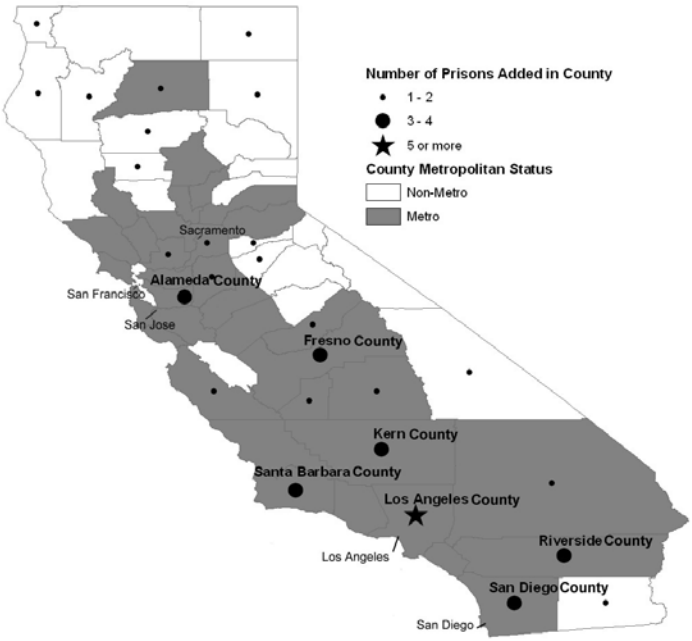
A series of maps is used to address these and other questions. One map for each of the top 10 states is included (figures 13 through 22) and reflects the 2000 county classifications; non-metro counties are mapped as white, and metro counties are shaded. The circles and stars shown on the maps represent the number of *additional* prisons in a county for the 1979 to 2000 period. A smaller circle represents the addition of one or two prisons, a larger circle represents three or four prisons, and a star represents the addition of five or more prisons to a single county. For example, in figure 13, the larger-sized circle shown in San Diego County means that the county had three or four prison facilities in 2000 than it did in 1979. Note that these maps have been designed to show only the county-level *changes* in prisons. Therefore, if a county operated two prisons in 1979 and two prisons in 2000, then that county would not contain circles or stars on the map.

PRISON EXPANSION IN CALIFORNIA

California is very much a "metro state" with 36 of 58 counties being classified as metro in 2000 and 97 percent of its residents living in metro counties. Metro counties are generally located along the coast and include the cities of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. The less populous parts of the state are north of the San Francisco Bay area and inland in central California, commonly referred to as the "Valley." As shown in figure 13, prison expansion was widespread in California; all areas of the state were recipients of additional prison facilities between 1979 and 2000 (e.g., north/south, coastal/inland, non-metro/metro).

The majority of new facilities are located in metro areas—of the 53 prisons added between 1979 and 2000, 42 were in 16 metro counties and 11 were in 11 non-metro counties.[10] All of the counties with the largest growth are metro counties. Seven counties are home to three or more new prisons and all of them are metro counties.[11] Los Angeles County has experienced the largest increase in the number of prisons, increasing from zero prisons in 1979 to eight prisons in 2000.

Figure 13. Prison expansion in California by county, 1979–2000



Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1998a; state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

[10] This includes conservation camps as well as institutions. See Appendix A for more details.

[11] They are Los Angeles County, Kern County, Riverside County, San Diego County, Fresno County, Alameda County (which includes the City of Oakland), and Santa Barbara County.

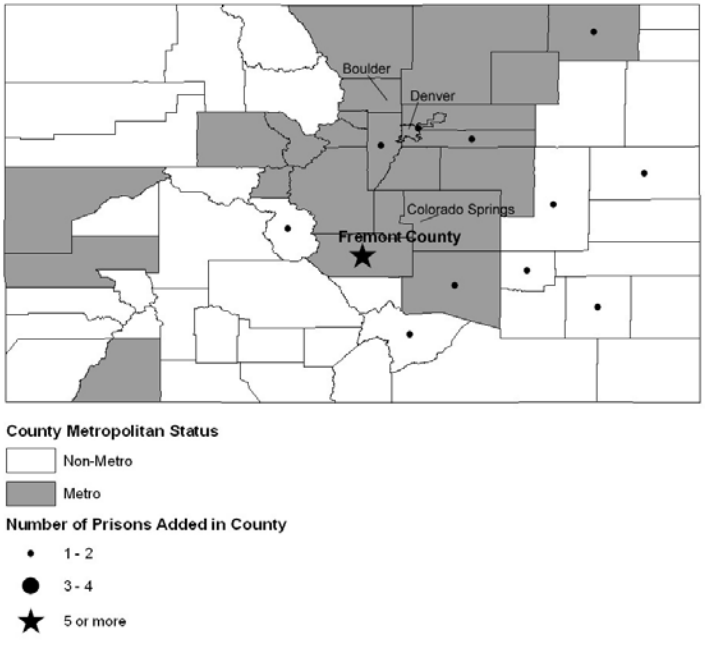
PRISON EXPANSION IN COLORADO

Colorado is the smallest of the top 10 states. It has the smallest general population (about 4.3 million residents in 2000) and the smallest prisoner population (just over 16,000 prisoners). Compared with most of the other top 10 states, Colorado is "less metro." Only 39 percent of Colorado's counties (25 of 64 counties based on Census 2000 data) are classified as metro counties compared with the 10-state average of 60 percent of counties.

Colorado experienced some of the largest relative growth in terms of prisons during the 1980s and 1990s. In 1979, only seven state or federal prisons were operating in the state. By the year 2000, the number of prisons had grown to 32—a 357 percent increase. Comparatively, the average growth in the number of prisons in the top 10 states was 210 percent.

Colorado differs dramatically from the other states in that its prison expansion was concentrated in a single county: 10 of the 25 additional prisons are located in Fremont County (see figure 14). With a resident population of approximately 46,000, prisoners who are housed in Fremont County account for a significant share of the total population—18 percent. (Prisoners as a share of all residents are discussed further in section 6). Fremont County aside, the remaining prison expansion in Colorado was almost equally split between non-metro and metro counties.

Figure 14. Prison expansion in Colorado by county, 1979–2000



Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1998a; state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

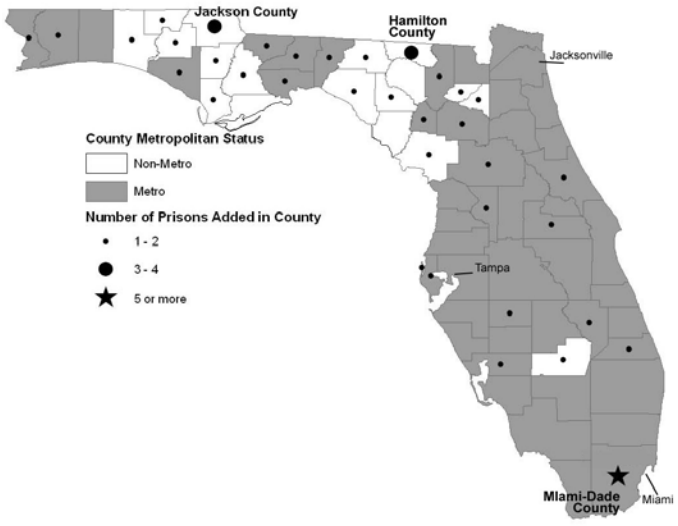
PRISON EXPANSION IN FLORIDA

Florida has the highest level of prison dispersion relative to the other nine states. Of Florida's 67 counties, 52 (or 78 percent) had at least one prison in 2000. In other words, only one in four counties did not have a prison situated within its boundaries in 2000. California is a distant second in terms of geographic dispersion, with 59 percent of counties having at least one prison. Almost all of the non-metro counties in Florida have at least one prison. In fact, only two non-metro counties in Florida had no prisons within their boundaries.[12] Prisons were introduced for the first time to many counties during the 1980s and 1990s. Twenty-four counties in Florida received their first prison during this period.

Figure 15 shows that non-metro and metro counties in Florida are geographically segregated. Non-metro counties are primarily located in the northern part of the state, or the "pan handle." Figure 15 also shows that prisons added during the last two decades are likely to be in the northern counties, regardless of the non-metro/metro classification. This suggests that Florida's prison expansion is more a function of geography than a function of population density.

Miami-Dade County is notable in a few respects. First, it experienced the largest growth in Florida in the number of prisons, increasing by five prisons between 1979 and 2000. Second, Miami-Dade County is the only county in the southernmost part of the state to experience a net gain in prisons. None of the six counties surrounding Miami-Dade County have added a prison since 1979.

Figure 15. Prison expansion in Florida by county, 1979–2000



Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1998a; state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

[12] They are Franklin County and Suwannee County.

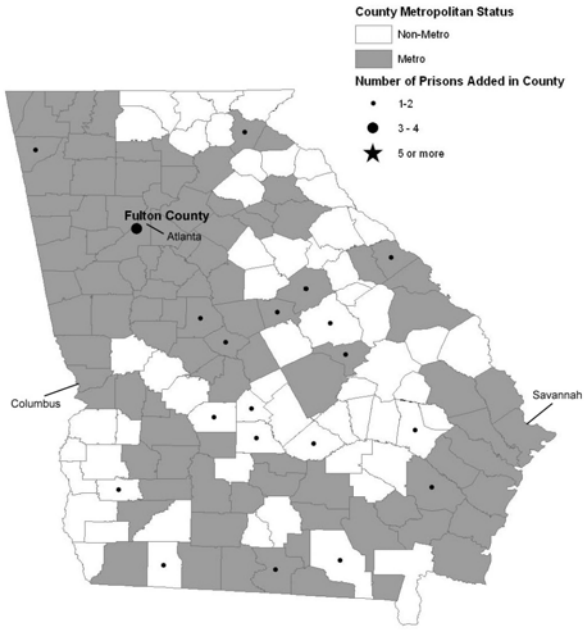
PRISON EXPANSION IN GEORGIA

Georgia experienced significant population growth during the 1980s and 1990s. The number of residents rose from about 5.4 million in 1979 to approximately 8.2 million in 2000. This population growth is reflected in the classification of counties, because many of Georgia's counties were reclassified from non-metro to metro. In 1979, more than three-fourths of Georgia's counties (76 percent or 121 of 159 counties) were non-metro. Based on Census 2000 data, only 38 percent of Georgia's counties (61 counties) are classified as non-metro. Stated differently, 60 counties changed from non-metro to metro status between 1979 and 2000.

The number of prisons in Georgia more than doubled between 1979 and 2000, increasing from 18 to 42 prisons. Prison expansion in Georgia has occurred throughout most of the state. As figure 16 shows, there is no discernable pattern in terms of where new prisons have been located. The additional 24 prisons were located in both non-metro and metro counties—9 non-metro counties and 11 metro counties gained at least one prison. Fulton County saw the largest addition of prisons, with three prisons opening between 1979 and 2000.

Prisoners are more likely to reside in non-metro areas than the general resident population in all of the top 10 states (see section 4.3), but the imbalance is more pronounced in Georgia. In the year 2000, approximately 1 in 10 residents lived in non-metro counties, compare to 4 in 10 prisoners.

Figure 16. Prison expansion in Georgia by county, 1979–2000



Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1998a; state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

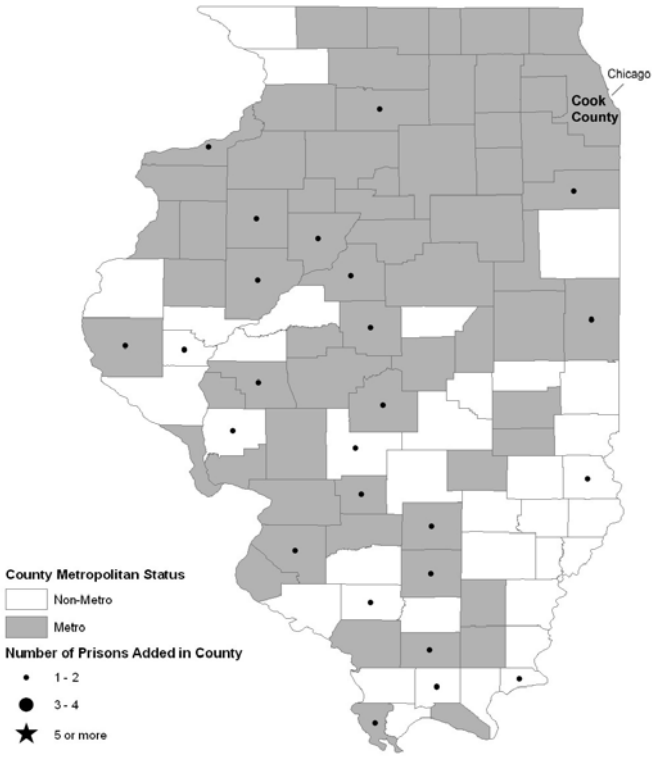
PRISON EXPANSION IN ILLINOIS

Population growth in Illinois was smaller than most of the other top-10 states, increasing by 9 percent between 1979 and 2000. However, the number of prisoners increased four-fold during this period. To accommodate the increase in prisoners, the number of prisons in Illinois rose from 12 to 40 during the 21-year period.

The expansion of prisons in Illinois occurred in many counties across the state. No single county in Illinois gained more than two prisons, as shown by the presence of only smaller-sized circles in figure 17. Of the 102 counties in Illinois, 25 gained at least one prison during the 1980s and 1990s. Eighteen of the 25 counties (72 percent) that gained prisons are metro counties, compared with two-thirds of all counties in Illinois (64 percent) being classified as metro counties.

Figure 17 shows that very few prison facilities were added to the northern part of the state. This is worth noting because Cook County, a northern county and home to the City of Chicago, is a significant source of prisoners in Illinois: 60 percent of prisoners come from Cook County according to the Illinois Department of Corrections (2000).

Figure 17. Prison expansion in Illinois by county, 1979–2000



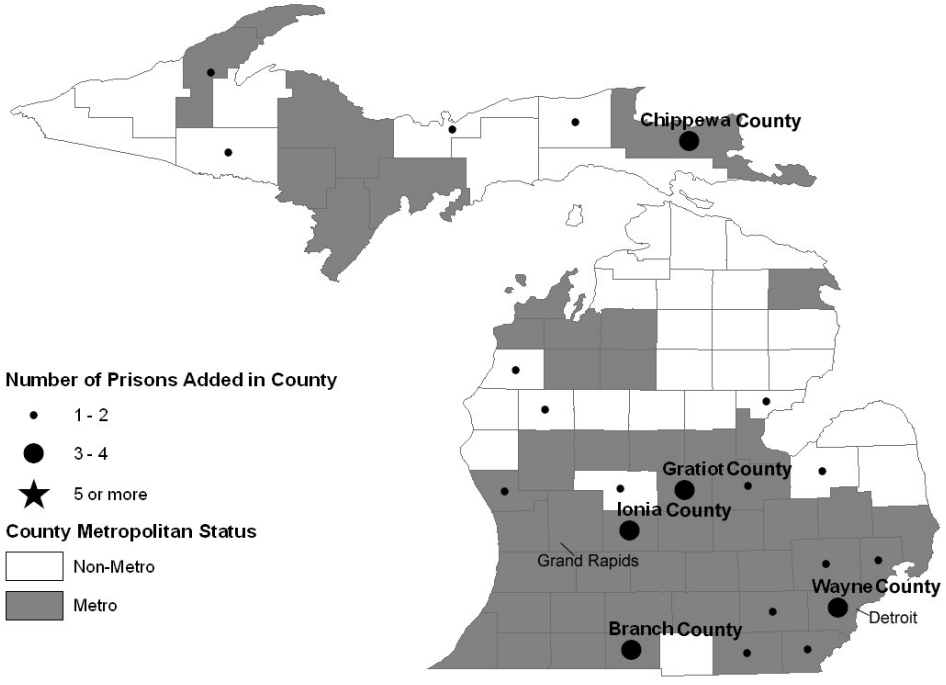
Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1998a; state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

PRISON EXPANSION IN MICHIGAN

During the 1980s and 1990s, the number of prisons in Michigan grew from 25 to 60, and by the year 2000, 36 percent of Michigan counties were home to at least one prison, up from 19 percent in 1979. Prison expansion occurred in both non-metro and metro counties as shown in figure 18, but the majority of prisons were opened in metro counties—25 of 35 additional prisons in Michigan were in metro counties. Despite the fact that much of the prison expansion occurred in metro counties, prisoners were still disproportionately located in non-metro counties. In 2000, 14 percent of the prisoner population was imprisoned in non-metro counties compared with 8 percent of the general population.

Figure 18 also shows that with a few exceptions, such as Chippewa County, new prisons in Michigan were located in counties in the southern half of the state. All of the Michigan counties that gained three or more prisons over the last two decades were metro counties. Chippewa County and Wayne County, which includes the City of Detroit, increased by four prisons between 1979 and 2000. Branch County, Gratiot County, and Iona County increased by three prisons.

Figure 18. Prison expansion in Michigan by county, 1979–2000



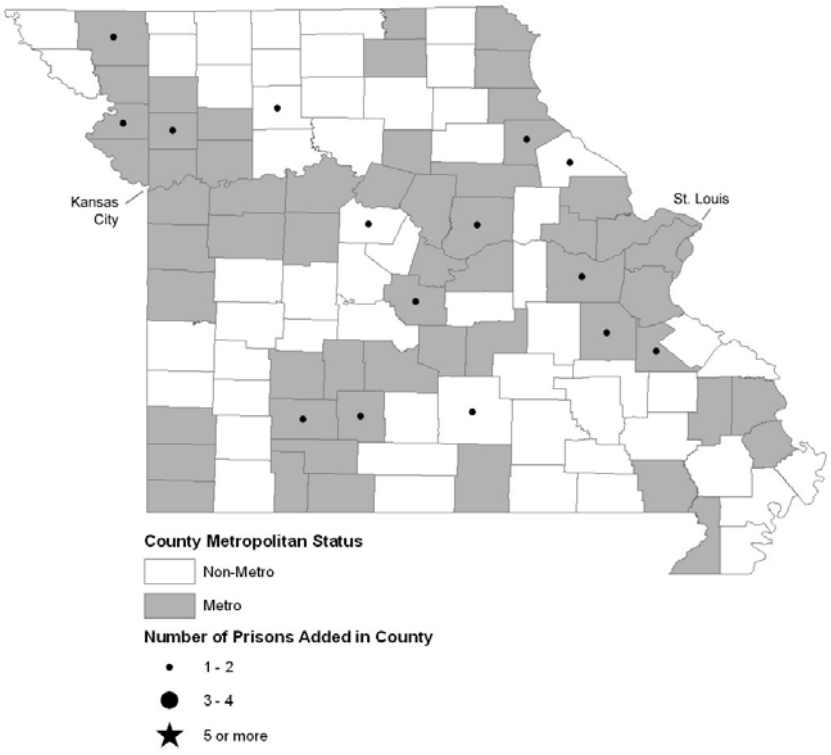
Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1998a; state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

PRISON EXPANSION IN MISSOURI

Missouri is a relatively small state with a total population of about 5.6 million in 2000. The prisoner population in Missouri increased from approximately 5,000 to approximately 22,000 between 1979 and 2000. To accommodate this growth, the number of prisons in Missouri rose from seven prisons in 1979 to 26 in 2000. In relative terms, prison expansion in Missouri was very high—the number of prisons increased by 271 percent compared with the 10-state average of 210 percent.

Prison expansion in Missouri has also been widespread. No single county gained more than two prisons and 15 different counties gained at least one prison. In addition, prison expansion in Missouri mostly occurred in metro counties. Twenty of 26 prisons in Missouri were in metro counties in 2000.

Figure 19. Prison expansion in Missouri by county, 1979–2000



Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1998a; state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

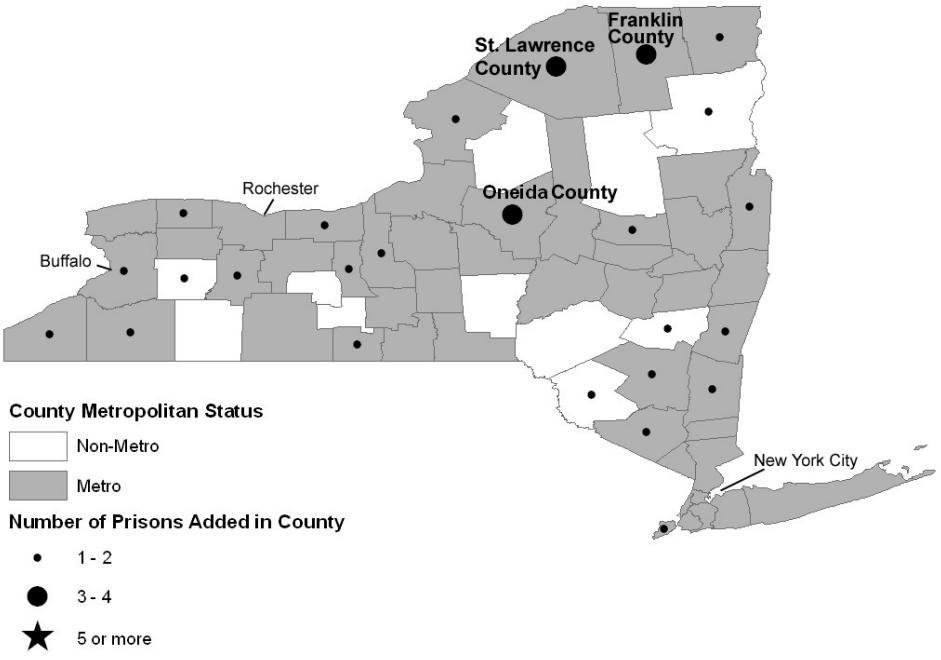
PRISON EXPANSION IN NEW YORK

Although the number of state and federal prisons in New York State more than doubled during the 1980s and 1990s (from 30 to 65 facilities), its relative growth was low compared with the other top 10 states. The number of prisons in New York State increased by 117 percent, compared with the 10-state average of 210 percent.

New York State is similar to Florida in that the growth of prisons appears to be largely a function of geography. A handful of northern counties accounts for a disproportionate share of the growth. Franklin County gained four new facilities, St. Lawrence County gained three new facilities, and Essex County and Jefferson County each gained two new facilities. The four-county total of 12 prisons in 2000 is up from one prison in 1979.

Despite this concentrated growth, prisons were added to almost all parts of the state. Figure 20 shows that counties in the western part of the state, in the central part of the state, and counties outside of the New York City metropolitan area were recipients of new prison facilities between 1979 and 2000.

Figure 20. Prison expansion in New York by county, 1979–2000



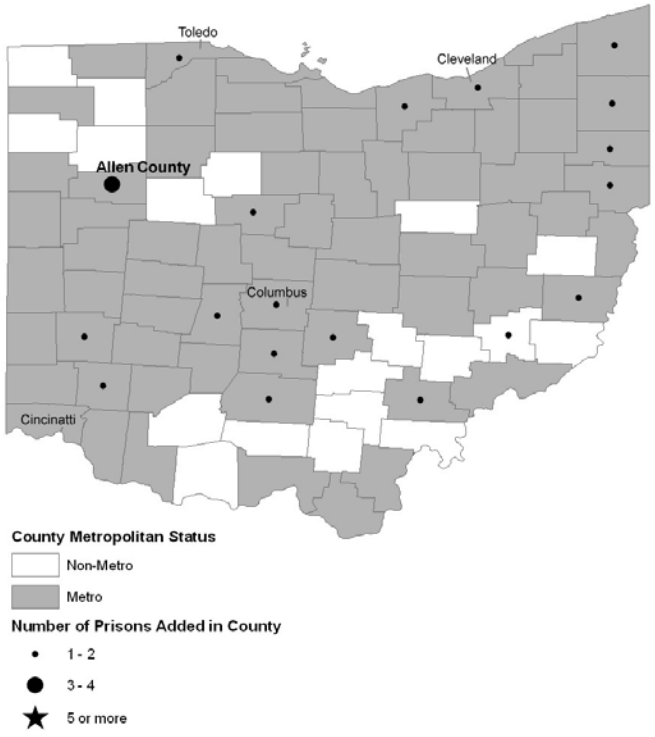
Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1998a; state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

PRISON EXPANSION IN OHIO

The number of prisons in Ohio grew significantly during the 1980s and 1990s. Prisons in Ohio more than tripled over the last two decades, increasing from 10 in 1979 to 35 in 2000. Most of the expansion took place in metro counties. Almost all of the state and federal prisons in Ohio were located in metro counties—34 of 35 prisons were in metro counties in 2000. This is, in part, due to the fact that more than three-fourths of Ohio's counties (78 percent) are classified as metro.

As shown in figure 21, prisons were added throughout the state of Ohio. Nineteen counties gained at least one prison between 1979 and 2000. Allen County saw the largest increase in prisons, with an increase of three.

Figure 21. Prison expansion in Ohio by county, 1979–2000



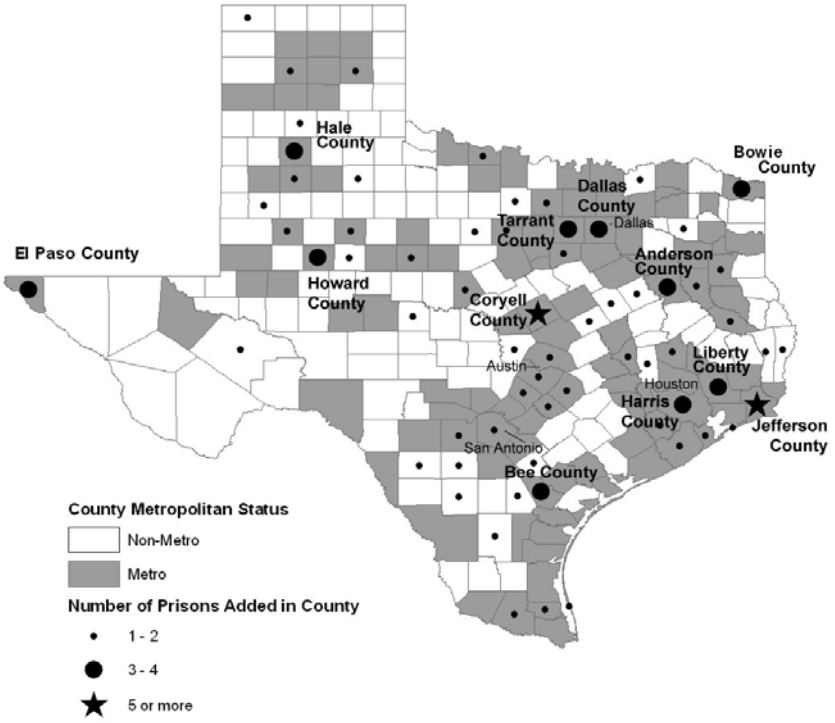
Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1998a; state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

PRISON EXPANSION IN TEXAS

Texas ranks number one among the top 10 states along several of the measures discussed thus far. It had the highest growth in prisons (120 additional prisons, up 706 percent). It had the highest growth in counties that were home to at least one prison, increasing from 3 percent of all counties to 28 percent. Texas is also a leader in terms of the number of counties that gained several prisons. In 12 Texas counties, three or more facilities opened during the 1980s and 1990s (shown as stars and larger circles in figure 22). California is a distant second with seven counties gaining three or more prisons. Coryell County and Jefferson County each had five more prisons in 1979 than in 2000. Anderson, Bowie, El Paso, and Liberty counties all had four additional prisons.

Texas is similar to other states in that prison expansion occurred both in metro and non-metro counties. Of the 120 additional facilities, 92 were in metro counties and 28 were in non-metro counties.

Figure 22. Prison expansion in Texas by county, 1979–2000



Sources: U.S. Office of Management and Budget 2003; Bureau of Justice Statistics 1998a; state-specific research by Urban Institute staff.

SUMMARY OF PRISON EXPANSION IN THE TOP 10 STATES

The 10 states included in this analysis were chosen because of the large numbers of prisons introduced during the 1980s and 1990s. As stated earlier, the number of prisons in each state more than doubled during this time period. Figures 13 to 22 use mapping to document this growth at the county level. The maps show that in most of the states prison expansion occurred in both non-metro and metro counties and that prison expansion was geographically dispersed. Prisons opened across the states in numerous counties, and this was particularly true in Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, and Ohio. A relatively small number of counties gained several prisons during the 1980s and 1990s. Only 33 counties out of a total of 1,052 counties across the 10 states grew by three or more prisons, and 12 of these 33 counties were in Texas.

There are some notable exceptions to this geographic dispersion. Colorado saw the greatest concentration, as Fremont County gained 10 prisons between 1979 and 2000. The next largest growth in Colorado was in counties that gained only two prisons. Prisons in Florida were located in the northern part of the state and relatively few prisons were opened in central and southern Florida. In New York, although prisons were located across the state, a disproportionate number of new prisons were in the northern counties that border Canada.

6 Effects on Small Communities

Highlights: All 10 states had counties where a notable share of the resident population was in prison. They all had at least five counties where 5 percent or more of the resident population was incarcerated. There are 13 counties where 20 percent or more of the population was imprisoned. However, five of the 10 states had no counties with 20 percent or more of incarcerated residents.

The previous section showed that prison expansion during the 1980s and 1990s occurred in both metro and non-metro counties. In terms of population, the effects of additional prisons would be negligible in most metro counties. In other words, the addition of prisoners to a county's population is unlikely to significantly affect the total number of residents when a county is already populous. However, significant numbers of state and federal prisoners added to smaller, non-metro counties may have considerable impacts on the total population. In this section we address the question: are there counties in which the share of residents who are in prison is not negligible?

This section looks at counties in the top 10 states in terms of the percentage of the population in state or federal prisons using data from 2000. (Recall that appendix A includes the types of facilities that are included by state.) Figure 23 summarizes this analysis and presents the number of counties in each of the top 10 states that had different levels of residents incarcerated in 2000. The levels presented in figure 23 are 30 percent or more of the county's total population incarcerated, 20 percent or more, 10 percent or more, 5 percent or more, and 1 percent or more. For example, seven California counties had 5 percent or more of the population incarcerated, and eight Georgia counties had 10 percent or more in prison in 2000.

Figure 23. Number of counties by percent of population in prison, 2000

	30% or more in prison	20% or more	10% or more	5% or more	1% or more	Total # of counties
CA	--	1	3	7	14	58
CO	--	--	3	6	7	64
FL	1	1	8	18	28	67
GA	--	--	8	16	27	159
IL	--	2	2	12	26	102
MI	--	--	2	6	17	83
MO	--	1	2	6	13	115
NY	--	--	1	5	18	62
OH	--	--	2	5	15	88
TX	1	8	16	33	49	254
Ten-state total	2	13	47	114	214	1,052

Source: U.S. Census 2000.

Figure 23 shows that prison systems in the top 10 states are, for the most part, geographically spread out. Approximately one in every five counties in the top 10 states had 1 percent or more of the population imprisoned in state or federal prisons in 2000 (214 of 1,052 counties). Figure 23 also reveals several other interesting points. First, counties with a notable share of residents in state or federal prisons were found in all 10 states. All of the top 10 states had at least one county in which 10 percent or more of the county's population were imprisoned in state or federal prisons in the year 2000. Across the 10 states, 47 of 1,052 counties met the 10 percent threshold. In addition, all 10 states had at least five counties where 5 percent or more of the population were in prison. Second, counties with higher levels of imprisoned residents were disproportionately located in Texas. Thirteen counties across the 10 states had 20 percent or more of the residents in prison. More than half of these counties (8 of 13) were located in Texas. Third, only two of the 1,052 counties in the top 10 states surpassed the 30 percent threshold. The county with the largest share incarcerated was Concho County in Texas. Concho County, whose population was just under 4,000 in the year 2000, had 33 percent of its total population living in prison. The second highest percentage was Union County in Florida, where 30 percent of its 13,400 residents were imprisoned.

We noted earlier that Florida had the highest percentage of counties with a prison. Seventy-eight percent of Florida's counties were home to at least one prison. Along those same lines, Florida had the highest share of counties with at least 1 percent of the population in prison in 2000. More than 40 percent of Florida's counties passed the 1 percent threshold of incarcerated residents. In other words, in 28 of Florida's 67 counties, at least 1 percent of residents were in state or federal prison. Furthermore, more than one-quarter of Florida's counties (27 percent) have at least 5 percent of the population in prison.

Not surprisingly, most of the counties with a notable share of residents imprisoned are non-metro counties. Nine of the 13 counties that exceed the 20 percent threshold are classified as non-metro counties. However, many of the counties that exceed the 10 percent threshold are in fact metro counties. Of the 47 counties meeting the 10 percent or more threshold, 14 of them (30 percent) are metro counties. The most populous county to pass the 10 percent threshold is Kings County, California, where 13 percent of its approximately 130,000 residents were in prison in 2000.

The analyses presented thus far show that prison expansion in the top 10 states was geographically widespread and affected large numbers of non-metro and metro counties. This section shows that in light of this dispersion, expanding prison systems resulted in numerous counties having substantial shares of the total resident population incarcerated.

7 Mapping County of Sentencing versus County of Incarceration

Highlights: A set of five maps compares sentencing counties with the counties of imprisonment in five states. Generally, there is a notable contrast in the counties from which prisoners are sentenced and counties in which prisoners are housed. Georgia, Ohio, and Texas have little overlap between the counties of incarceration and sentencing. In California and Florida, overlap between the two groups is moderate.

Another issue related to prison expansion of the 1980s and 1990s is the disparity between where prisoners come from ("home counties") and where prisoners serve their sentences ("prison counties"). Many believe that the prison construction boom of the last 20 years happened in areas that were located far away from prisoners' homes. This has been an area of concern because greater distances between a prisoner's home and where he or she is incarcerated can negatively impact a prisoner and his or her family members. Being incarcerated far away from home makes it more challenging to maintain familial relationships and parent/child relationships in particular. In addition, challenges related to reintegrating into the community increase when a prisoner is housed far away from home. For example, steps that may facilitate prisoner reentry, such as finding a job and a place to live, are more difficult when a prisoner is imprisoned a long distance from the place to which he or she will return after release.

In this section, we compare where prisoners are from with where they are imprisoned in 5 of the top 10 states: California, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, and Texas.[13] These five states were selected based on availability of data on the sentencing counties of state prisoners. Sentencing county data serve as a proxy for mapping prisoners' home counties. The data do not allow us to compare home counties and prison counties at an individual level; rather, they allow us to make county-level aggregate comparisons of where prisoners come from with where they are incarcerated.

The following series of maps presents a comparison of home counties and prison counties. Figures 24 through 28 include two maps for each of the five states. The first map for each state shows the state prison population by sentencing county, and the second map shows the state prison population by the county of incarceration. For example, figure 24 shows that in California, 6.6 percent of state prisoners were sentenced and 7.5 percent of state prisoners were imprisoned in San Bernadino County in 2000. We are interested in the extent to which the population distribution in the first map matches the population distribution in the second map.

CALIFORNIA

In 2000, California's prisoners were likely to come from one of five southern counties, but were much less likely to be incarcerated in one of these five counties (figure 24). San Bernadino, Riverside, San Diego, Orange, and Los Angeles counties accounted for the majority of sentencing (59.3 percent). At the same time, only 23.2 percent of prisoners were imprisoned in these five counties. Counties of imprisonment were more spread out across the state relative to

[13] The analyses in this section include only state prisoners, and federal prisoners are excluded.

sentencing counties. For example, Lassen County in the north accounted for 5.7 percent of incarceration and 0.1 percent of sentencing, Monterey County along the coast accounted for 7.6 percent of incarceration and 0.9 percent of sentencing, and Madera County in the central valley accounted for 4.6 percent of incarceration and 0.5 percent of sentencing.

Looking at individual counties reveals that several California counties were very much out of balance in terms of sentencing locations versus imprisonment locations. Most notably, Los Angeles County accounted for a remarkable 33.8 percent of sentencing in California in 2000 and only 3.2 percent of imprisonment. San Diego was the second largest source of prisoners, representing 8.2 percent of sentencing, while only 3.2 percent of prisoners were serving their time in San Diego County. Another example is Orange County, which accounted for 5.2 percent of sentencing and 0.0 percent of imprisonment.

Despite these mismatches, figure 24 shows that, in some select counties, notable shares of prisoners are both sentenced and incarcerated. That is, prisoners' home counties overlapped with prisoners' prison counties. For example, Riverside County accounted for 5.5 percent of sentencing and 9.4 percent of incarceration and San Bernadino County accounted for 6.6 percent and 7.5 percent of sentencing and incarceration, respectively. However, the discrepancy between sentenced and incarcerated prisoners might be larger than these numbers suggest, as the prisoners sentenced in a given county may not be incarcerated in that county. For example, the 6.6 percent of prisoners sentenced in San Bernadino are not necessarily included in the 7.5 percent of prisoners incarcerated there, and many may have been sent to another county.

FLORIDA

In Florida, the disparity between where prisoners come from and where they serve their sentence was significant, as illustrated in figure 25. Florida's prisoners were more likely to come from the southern part of the state than they were to be imprisoned there. A significant share of prisoners came from three southern counties (28.5 percent from Miami-Dade County, Broward County, and Palm Beach County.) At the same time, a smaller share of prisoners were imprisoned in these three counties (11.1 percent).

Figure 25 shows that Florida's prisoners were more likely to be incarcerated in counties located in the northern part of the state. Jackson County, Union County, and Bradford County combined accounted for only 0.7 percent of sentencing in 2000, but 15.5 percent of Florida's prisoners were imprisoned in these three counties. This finding should not be surprising as figure 15 previously documented that prison expansion in Florida occurred for the most part in the northern part of the state.

In 2000, several of Florida's counties were home counties and prison counties for large numbers of prisoners. Miami-Dade County was the highest ranked county both in terms of share of sentencing (12.7 percent) and share of incarceration (6.6 percent). Other examples of counties with overlap across the two maps include Polk County (4.0 percent of sentencing and 3.9 percent of incarceration), Orange County (6.1 and 3.2 percent), and Duval County (6.6 and 2.9 percent).

GEORGIA

In Georgia, the locations of incarceration were very different from prisoners' home counties. There was almost no overlap between the highest-ranked home counties and prison counties in 2000 as shown in figure 26. No county was both a significant source of prisoners and a significant location for incarceration. The six counties in Georgia that accounted for the most sentencing were Fulton (8.4 percent), DeKalb (6.6 percent), Chatham (5.1 percent), Cobb (4.7 percent), Richmond (4.1 percent), and Clayton (4.0 percent). (The city of Atlanta is split between Fulton and DeKalb counties.) These six counties accounted for one-third of all sentencing (32.9 percent) of state prisoners in 2000, yet only 6.4 percent of prisoners were incarcerated there.

The top counties for incarceration were mutually exclusive from the top sentencing counties in 2000. Counties with 4 percent or more of all prisoners included Baldwin (13.0 percent), Tattnall (9.9 percent), Butts (4.8 percent), and Mitchell (4.0 percent), which totalled 31.8 percent of all state prisoners. At the same time, these four counties represented 2.1 percent of sentencing counties.

Figure 26 illustrates that the home counties of prisoners are concentrated in and around the city of Atlanta. Prison counties were more geographically dispersed relative to home counties. Prisoners were more likely to be imprisoned in many counties in the central and southern parts of the state.

OHIO

The majority of prisoners in Ohio came from a handful of counties (figure 27). Cuyahoga County (which includes the city of Cleveland), Franklin County (Columbus), Hamilton County (Cincinnati), Montgomery County (Dayton), Summit County (Akron), and Lucas County (Toledo) accounted for 58.7 percent of the sentencing of state prisoners in 2000, yet only 4.6 percent of prisoners were incarcerated there.

In terms of location of incarceration, 10 counties each held 4 percent or more of state prisoners: Richland, Ross, Marion, Madison, Lorain, Pickaway, Warren, Allen, Belmont, and Noble. More than three-fourths of all of Ohio's prisoners (78.3 percent) were imprisoned in these 10 counties in 2000, while only 8.3 percent of prisoners would consider these counties to be home counties.

In Ohio, both the sources of prisoners and the locations of prisoners were geographically spread out across the state. Prisoners were imprisoned throughout the state, and the southeast was the only part of the state that was not a major source of prisoners. Despite this spatial distribution, little overlap between sources of prisoners and locations of prisoners existed. None of the counties listed above was included in both maps as one of the top-ranked counties.

TEXAS

In 2000, approximately half of Texas prisoners (50.7 percent) were sentenced in four counties. These counties are, not surprisingly, the counties of some of the state's largest cities, including

Harris County (which includes the city of Houston), Dallas County (city of Dallas), Tarrant County (Fort Worth), and Bexar County (San Antonio). Prisoners were housed in counties other than their home counties, as only 3.7 percent of Texas prisoners were incarcerated in these four counties.

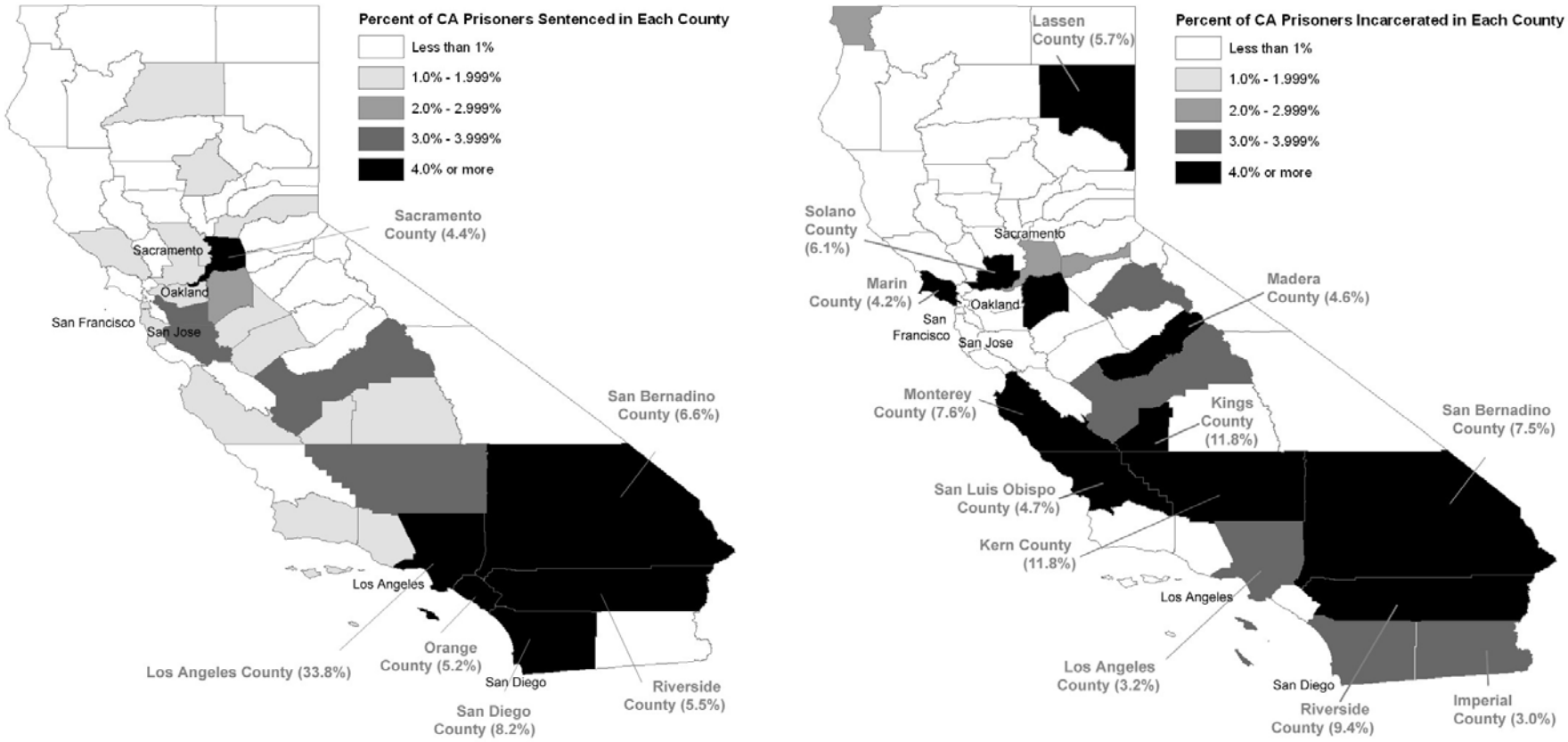
Prisoners were more widely dispersed across the state relative to where they were sentenced (figure 28). The highest shares of Texas prisoners were located in six counties: Walker, Anderson, Brazoria, Coryell, Bee, and Jefferson counties. These six counties accounted for 40.8 percent of all prisoners in 2000.

SUMMARY OF SENTENCING LOCATIONS VERSUS INCARCERATION LOCATIONS

The maps presented in figures 24 through 28 reveal a few interesting points about prisoners in the five states. Most importantly, where state prisoners come from and where state prisoners are incarcerated are generally different locations. In three of the five states that were examined, not one county was among the highest ranked for sentencing and the highest ranked for incarceration. In Florida, only one county accounted for a significant source of prisoners as well as a significant share of imprisonment—Miami/Dade County. Using this measure, California had the most overlap between home counties and prison counties, as three counties fell into the top group in both maps. Los Angeles County, Riverside County, and San Bernadino County had 4 percent or more of sentencing and imprisonment in 2000. In short, only 4 out of a total of 626 counties in these five states appeared in the top groups of home counties *and* prison counties.

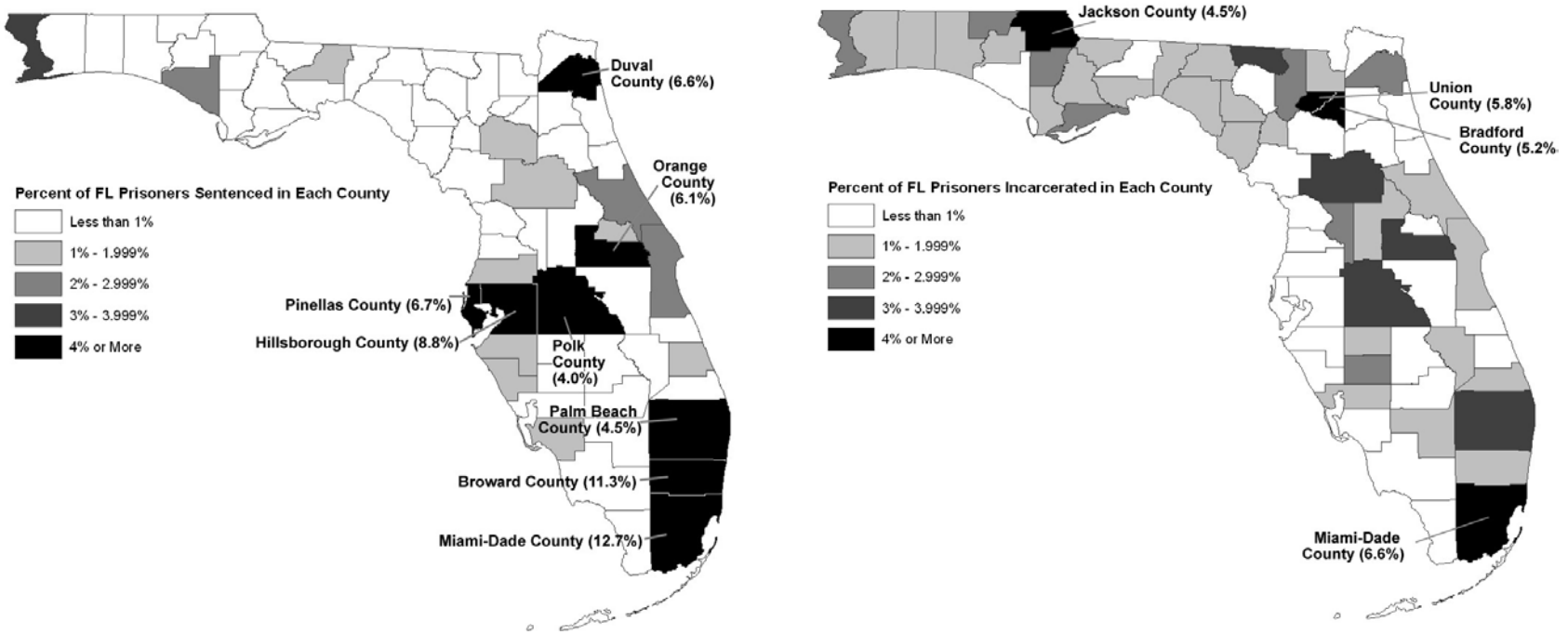
Another observation from this mapping exercise is that the locations of home counties were more concentrated compared with the locations of where prisoners were housed. The largest sources of prisoners were very much aligned with the major cities in a state, which is what we would expect. At the same time, the counties of imprisonment were more widely dispersed across the states. This may also be expected in light of the prior discussions on prison expansion in terms of geographic dispersion.

Figure 24. California prisoners by counties of sentencing and imprisonment, 2000



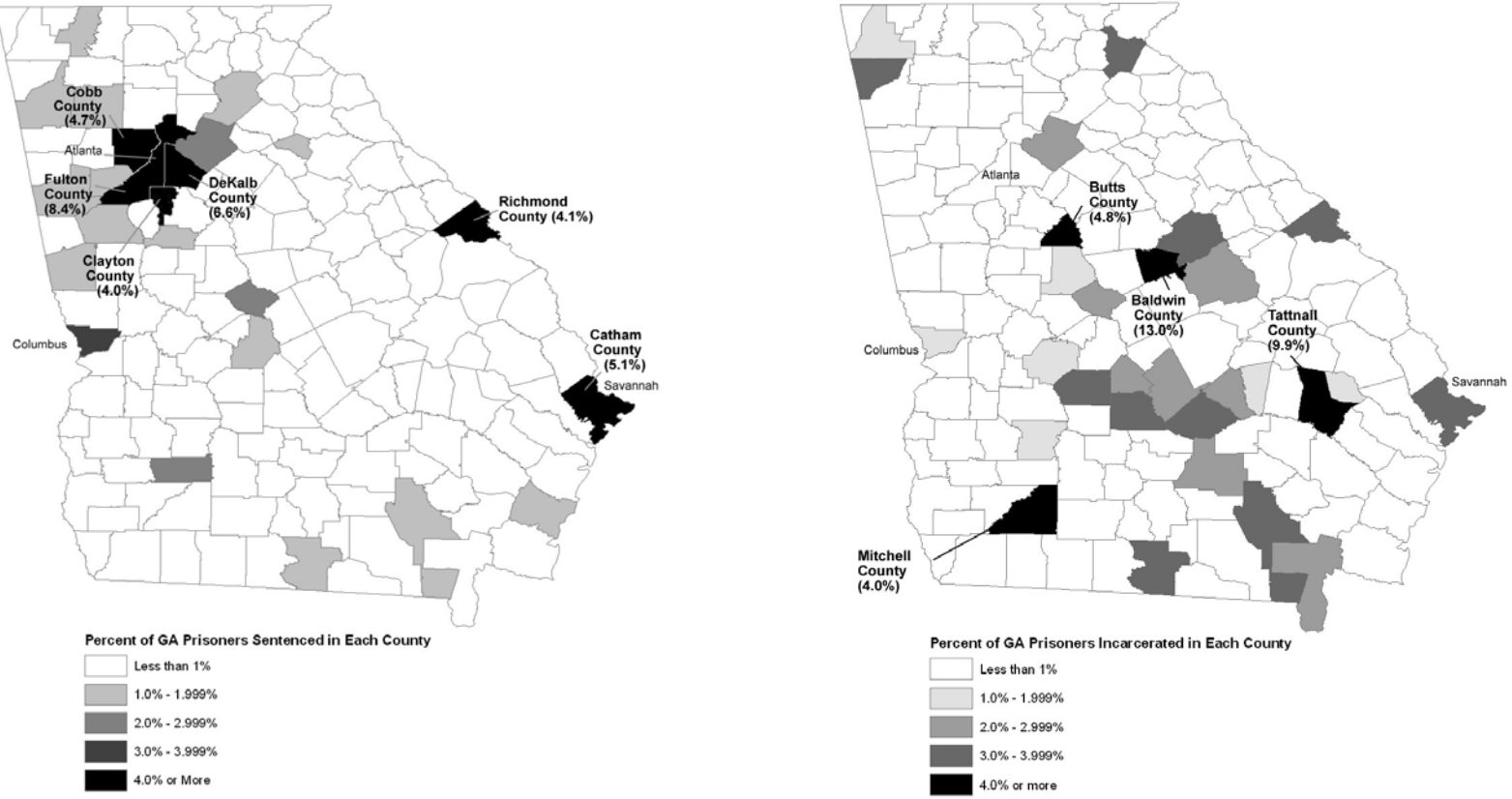
Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce 2000; California Department of Corrections 2001.

Figure 25. Florida prisoners by counties of sentencing and imprisonment, 2000



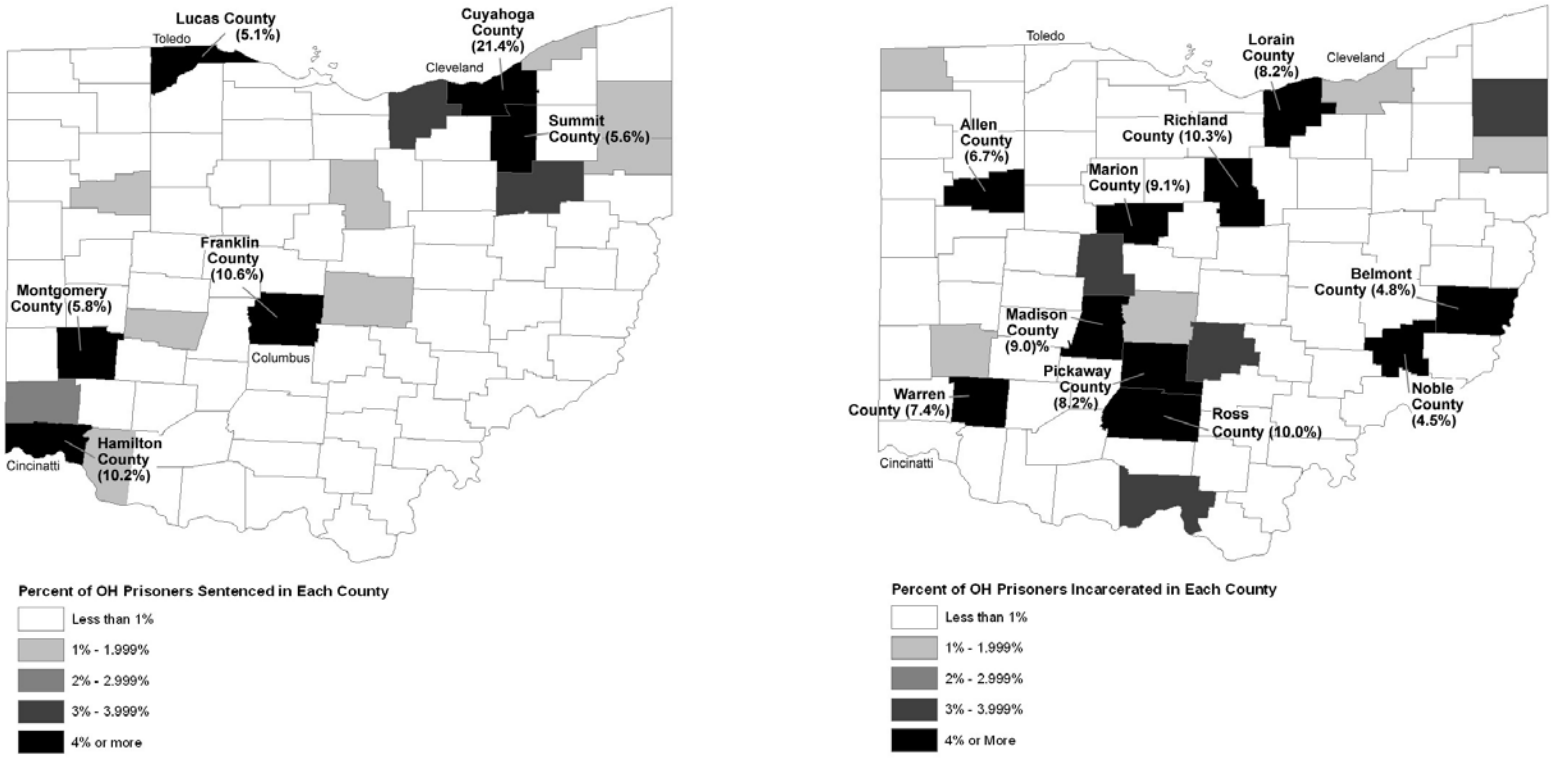
Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce 2000; Florida Department of Corrections 2000.

Figure 26. Georgia prisoners by counties of sentencing and imprisonment, 2000



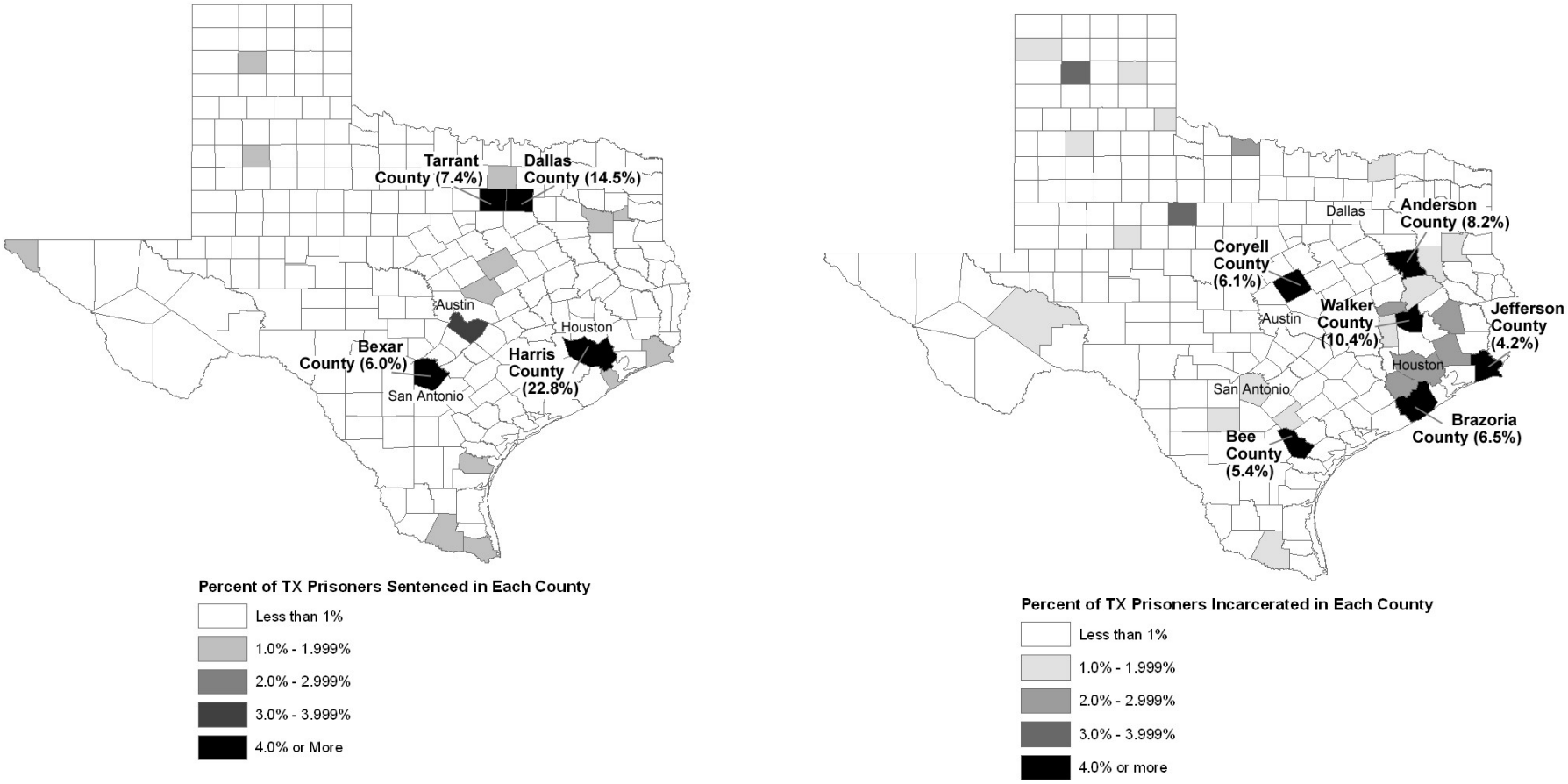
Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce 2000; Georgia Department of Corrections 2001.

Figure 27. Ohio prisoners by counties of sentencing and imprisonment, 2000



Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce 2000; Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections 2001.

Figure 28. Texas prisoners by counties of sentencing and imprisonment, 2000



Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce 2000; Texas Department of Criminal Justice 2001.

8 Conclusion

During the 1980s and 1990s, the growth in the number of prisons across the country was remarkable. In fact, it was higher than at any other time in history. However, because of limited research and analysis on the nationwide prison expansion, we know little about what the expansion looks like and about its subsequent impacts, both intended and unintended. We hope that the analyses presented in this report will help ground the debate about prison expansion with empirical data and provide the basis for the next generation of inquiry into the locations of prisons.

A number of interesting questions related to prison expansion remain. For example, how much money has been transferred out of communities that have large numbers of residents incarcerated in other places? What are the most important factors when deciding the location of a new prison? Has political power shifted as a result of the construction of new prisons? What are the economic impacts, both positive and negative, on smaller communities that have gained a prison? For these questions to be answered, it is important to understand the contours of prisons expansion. Building a foundation of knowledge on where and to what extent prisons have been located is a necessary first step.

When we look at all of the report findings together, several themes emerge. The first theme is the pervasiveness of prison growth. The prison construction boom was not concentrated in a few, key states or in certain regions of the country. Prison systems expanded significantly in states across the country. Prison systems also expanded within states. The share of counties in the top 10 states that were home to at least one prison increased from 13 to 31 percent between 1979 and 2000. State level maps (figures 13 to 22) illustrate that new prisons were geographically dispersed throughout the states. New prisons were generally not spatially concentrated, as few counties gained three or more prisons. Finally, prisons expanded into different types of counties; prisons increased significantly in both non-metro counties and metro counties.

The pervasiveness of the prison expansion challenges some commonly held beliefs. For example, prison expansion has not been a primarily non-metro phenomenon. In fact, metro counties experienced the largest increases in the numbers of prisons and prisoners. Furthermore, our analysis suggests that the removal of prisoners from metro counties to imprisonment in non-metro counties was not systemic. In some states, prison expansion was in fact accompanied by significant movement of prisoners from metro to non-metro counties. In other states, however, prisons were located primarily in metro counties and relatively few prisoners were placed in non-metro counties.

A second theme emerged from this report: prison expansion has significantly impacted a select number of communities, most of which are non-metro. There are numerous counties in which a substantial share of the population—as much as 30 percent—is in prison. The analyses presented here should prove useful to policymakers by starting to identify areas that may have experienced significant impacts as a result of a new prison. Some of the states examined here have relatively few counties where the share of incarcerated residents is cause for concern. Yet other top-10 states have numerous counties in which an alarmingly high share of residents is imprisoned.

A third theme of this report is the mismatch between the counties where prisoners come from and the counties where prisoners serve their sentences. The maps in section 7 show large differences between sentencing counties and counties of imprisonment. Prisoners serving time in places far from their homes could have a variety of consequences, but their examination is outside the scope of this report. For example, are family relationships weakened if prison visits are infrequent? What are the fiscal consequences for communities from which significant numbers of prisoners are removed? Why are prisons located in counties that are different from prisoners' home counties?

This last question is an important one, and it is also a difficult one. Another way to phrase it is to ask: what factors determine the location of a new prison? Population density is believed by some to be an important factor. We've shown that significant numbers of prisons were opened in both non-metro and metro areas. So, although density may be a factor, it may not be one of the most important, or it may be a proxy for something else. Many factors probably contribute to the determination of a prison's location, such as influence of local politicians, natural and human resources, community acceptance, and the price of land, among others. This report does not attempt to analyze the driving forces behind siting prisons in this report. What is presented are data supporting the notion that there are consistent differences between prisoners' homes and where they are incarcerated. Spatial mismatch between prisoners and their homes not only impacts the communities that host prisons, but it also impacts family members and friends of prisoners. This is an important issue whose consequences also warrant further examination.

Clearly, issues surrounding the prison expansion of the 1980s and 1990s are numerous and complex. Many of the findings presented in this report suggest that deciding the location of a prison and the subsequent impacts from that decision are not clear-cut. We hope that after reading this report the reader will have a good understanding of the geographic distribution of the network of prisons. We also hope that it prompts re-examination of some commonly held ideas about prison growth and prompts some first examinations of some of the highlighted issues. In closing, it is our hope that the analyses presented in this report will improve future debates and studies on prison expansion by providing an empirically based foundation of information.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Types of facilities in state and federal correctional systems

California:	State prisons, mother/infant programs, and conservation camps are included. Community corrections centers are not included.
Colorado:	Correctional facilities and centers, private prisons, and diagnostic units are included.
Federal:	Correctional complexes, correctional institutions, medical centers, transfer centers, and U.S. penitentiaries are included. Community corrections management centers, detention centers, transfer centers, metropolitan correctional centers, and metropolitan detention centers are not included.
Florida:	Correctional institutions, work camps, forestry camps, road prisons, confinement drug treatment facilities, and one mental health facility are included. Work release centers and community corrections centers are not included.
Georgia:	State correctional institutions are included. Transitional centers, county camps, and prison boot camps are not included.
Illinois:	Correctional centers, incarceration programs, minimal security units, and work camps are included. Community corrections centers or Adult Transition Centers (ATCs) are not included.
Michigan:	Correctional facilities, technical rule violator centers, and boot camps are included. Correctional centers and community residential programs are not included.
Missouri:	Correctional centers, diagnostic centers, therapeutic community centers, and treatment centers are included. Community release centers are not included.
New York:	Correctional facilities, shock incarceration facility, camps, and Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counseling Treatment Centers (ASACTC) are included.
Ohio:	Correctional facilities and institutions, medical centers, and prerelease centers are included.
Texas:	Prison prerelease facilities, Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facility (SAFPF) state jails, private prisons, and medical, psychiatric, and transfer facilities are included. Intermediate sanction facilities are not included.

Appendix B. Share of counties and share of residents in non-metro counties by state

	Percent of counties		Percent of residents	
	1979	2000	1979	2000
California	47	38	5	2.8
Colorado	84	61	19	9
Florida	54	27	10	2.3
Georgia	76	38	38	10
Illinois	75	36	18	5
Michigan	73	41	19	8
Missouri	85	50	34	14
New York	44	18	10	2.3
Ohio	59	22	21	4
Texas	81	52	21	7
Average	72	41	16	5

Appendix C. State-level data profiles

California	1979	2000	Change
# of prisons:	30	83	177%
In non-metro counties	12	23	92%
In metro counties	18	60	233%
% of prisons:			
In non-metro counties	40%	28%	
In metro counties	60%	72%	
% of counties w/ 1+ prisons:	34%	59%	
Non-metro counties	26%	64%	
Metro counties	42%	56%	
% of residents in non-metro	5%	3%	
% of prisoners in non-metro	34%	18%	
Total # counties:	58	58	
Non-metro counties	27	22	
Metro counties	31	36	

Colorado	1979	2000	Change
# of prisons:	7	32	357%
In non-metro counties	6	11	83%
In metro counties	1	21	2000%
% of prisons:			
In non-metro counties	86%	34%	
In metro counties	14%	66%	
% of counties w/ 1+ prisons:	8%	22%	
Non-metro counties	7%	21%	
Metro counties	10%	24%	
% of residents in non-metro	19%	9%	
% of prisoners in non-metro	97%	27%	
Total # counties:	64	64	
Non-metro counties	54	39	
Metro counties	10	25	

Florida	1979	2000	Change
# of prisons:	39	84	115%
In non-metro counties	18	28	56%
In metro counties	21	56	167%
% of prisons:			
In non-metro counties	46%	33%	
In metro counties	54%	67%	
% of counties w/ 1+ prisons:	45%	78%	
Non-metro counties	39%	89%	
Metro counties	52%	73%	
% of residents in non-metro	10%	2.3%	
% of prisoners in non-metro	50%	35%	
Total # counties:	67	67	
Non-metro counties	36	18	
Metro counties	31	49	

Georgia	1979	2000	Change
# of prisons:	18	42	133%
In non-metro counties	10	14	40%
In metro counties	8	28	250%
% of prisons:			
In non-metro counties	56%	33%	
In metro counties	44%	67%	
% of counties w/ 1+ prisons:	10%	18%	
Non-metro counties	7%	18%	
Metro counties	21%	18%	
% of residents in non-metro	38%	10%	
% of prisoners in non-metro	56%	39%	
Total # counties:	159	159	
Non-metro counties	121	61	
Metro counties	38	98	

Illinois	1979	2000	Change
# of prisons:	12	40	233%
In non-metro counties	8	12	50%
In metro counties	4	28	600%
% of prisons:			
In non-metro counties	67%	30%	
In metro counties	33%	70%	
% of counties w/ 1+ prisons:	7%	28%	
Non-metro counties	8%	24%	
Metro counties	4%	31%	
% of residents in non-metro	18%	5%	
% of prisoners in non-metro	69%	33%	
Total # counties:	102	102	
Non-metro counties	76	37	
Metro counties	26	65	

Michigan	1979	2000	Change
# of prisons:	25	60	140%
In non-metro counties	13	16	23%
In metro counties	12	44	267%
% of prisons:			
In non-metro counties	52%	27%	
In metro counties	48%	73%	
% of counties w/ 1+ prisons:	19%	36%	
Non-metro counties	16%	38%	
Metro counties	27%	35%	
% of residents in non-metro	19%	8%	
% of prisoners in non-metro	41%	14%	

Total # counties:	83	83	
Non-metro counties	61	34	
Metro counties	22	49	

Missouri	**1979**	**2000**	**Change**
# of prisons:	7	26	271%
In non-metro counties	7	6	-14%
In metro counties	0	20	
% of prisons:			
In non-metro counties	100 %	23%	
In metro counties	0%	77%	
% of counties w/ 1+ prisons:	3%	16%	
Non-metro counties	3%	9%	
Metro counties	6%	22%	
% of residents in non-metro	34%	14%	
% of prisoners in non-metro	100 %	24%	
Total # counties:	115	115	
Non-metro counties	98	57	
Metro counties	17	58	

New York	**1979**	**2000**	**Change**
# of prisons:	30	65	117%
In non-metro counties	12	11	-8%
In metro counties	18	54	200%
% of prisons:			
In non-metro counties	40%	17%	
In metro counties	60%	83%	
% of counties w/ 1+ prisons:	32%	52%	
Non-metro counties	37%	55%	
Metro counties	29%	51%	
% of residents in non-metro	10%	2.3%	
% of prisoners in non-metro	41%	15%	
Total # counties:	62	62	
Non-metro counties	27	11	
Metro counties	35	51	

Ohio	**1979**	**2000**	**Change**
# of prisons:	10	35	250%
In non-metro counties	3	1	-67%
In metro counties	7	34	386%
% of prisons:			
In non-metro counties	30%	3%	
In metro counties	70%	97%	
% of counties w/ 1+ prisons:	10%	25%	
Non-metro counties	6%	5%	
Metro counties	17%	30%	
% of residents in non-metro	21%	4%	
% of prisoners in non-metro	37%	6%	
Total # counties:	88	88	
Non-metro counties	53	19	
Metro counties	35	69	

Texas	**1979**	**2000**	**Change**
# of prisons:	17	137	706%
In non-metro counties	8	36	350%
In metro counties	9	101	1022%
% of prisons:			
In non-metro counties	47%	26%	
In metro counties	53%	74%	
% of counties w/ 1+ prisons:	3%	28%	
Non-metro counties	2%	22%	
Metro counties	6%	34%	
% of residents in non-metro	21%	7%	
% of prisoners in non-metro	67%	24%	
Total # counties:	254	254	
Non-metro counties	205	133	
Metro counties	49	121	

Ten-state totals	**1979**	**2000**	**Change**
# of prisons:	195	604	210%
In non-metro counties	97	158	63%
In metro counties	98	446	355%
% of prisons:			
In non-metro counties	50%	26%	
In metro counties	50%	74%	
% of counties w/ 1+ prisons:	13%	31%	
Non-metro counties	9%	26%	
Metro counties	22%	35%	
% of residents in non-metro	16%	5%	
% of prisoners in non-metro	52%	23%	
Total # counties:	1,052	1,052	
Non-metro counties	758	431	
Metro counties	294	621	