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## Nebraska Rural Poll and Metro Poll Research Brief: Well-Being Among Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Nebraskans

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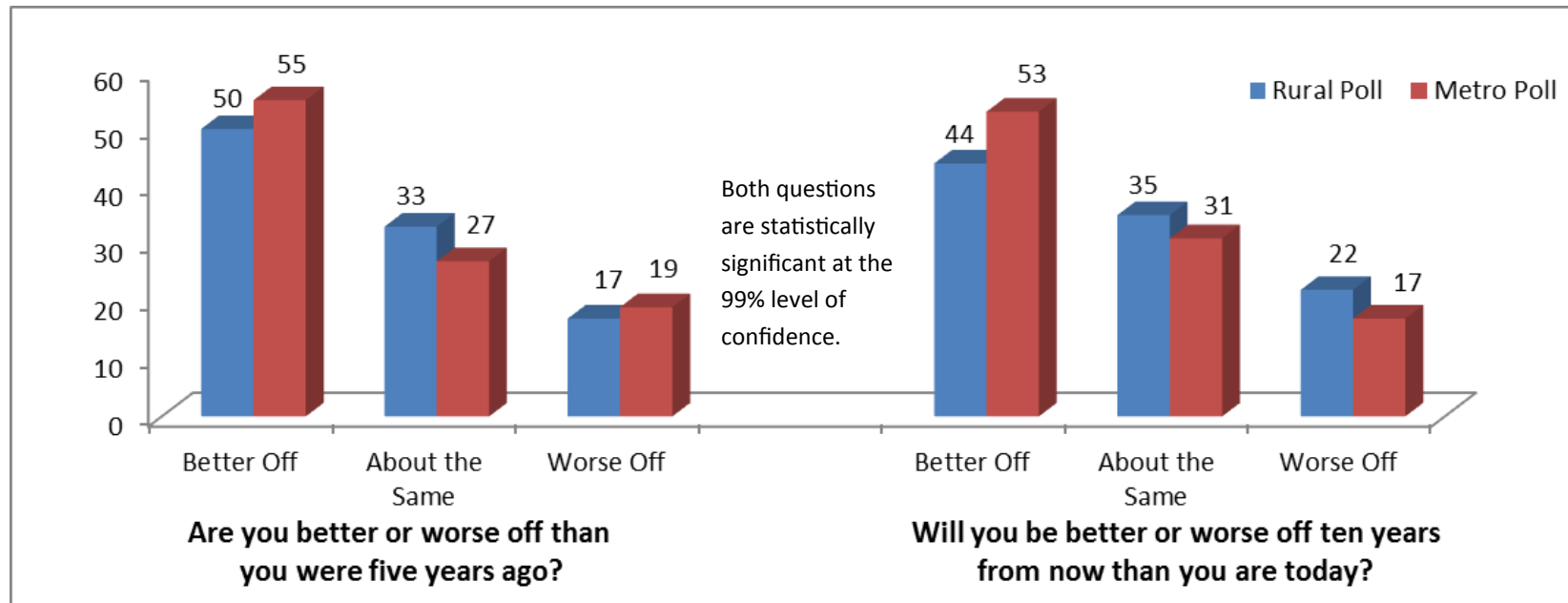
# Nebraska Rural Poll and Metro Poll Research Brief

## Well-Being Among Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Nebraskans

### Better or Worse Off Compared to Five Years Ago and Ten Years From Now

Both the Nebraska Metro and Rural Polls asked residents if they are better or worse off than they were five years ago and if they expect to be better or worse off ten years from now.

- Residents of metropolitan counties tend to have higher levels of optimism compared to residents of nonmetropolitan counties. Residents of metropolitan counties are more likely than residents of nonmetropolitan counties to say they are better off than they were five years ago and will be better off ten years from now. Fifty-five percent of metropolitan residents believe they are better off compared to five years ago. In comparison, 50% of nonmetropolitan residents believe they are better off than they were five years ago. Similarly, 53% of metropolitan residents believe they will be better off ten years from now, compared to 44% of nonmetropolitan residents.
- In both surveys, differences were detected by household income, age, and education level. Persons with higher household incomes are more likely than persons with lower incomes to believe they are better off compared to five years ago and will be better off ten years from now. Younger persons are more likely than older persons to believe they are better off compared to five years ago and will be better off ten years from now. And, persons with higher education levels are more likely than persons with less education to report being better off compared to five years ago and expect to be better off ten years from now.



### Perceptions of People's Power to Control Their Own Life

Both polls asked residents to what extent they agree or disagree with the following statement: "Life has changed so much in our modern world that most people are powerless to control their own lives."

- Nonmetropolitan residents are more likely than metropolitan residents to believe that people are powerless. One-third (33%) of nonmetropolitan residents agree with that statement, compared to 26% of metropolitan residents.
- In both surveys, perceived powerlessness increased with age; however, it decreased with household income and education level.

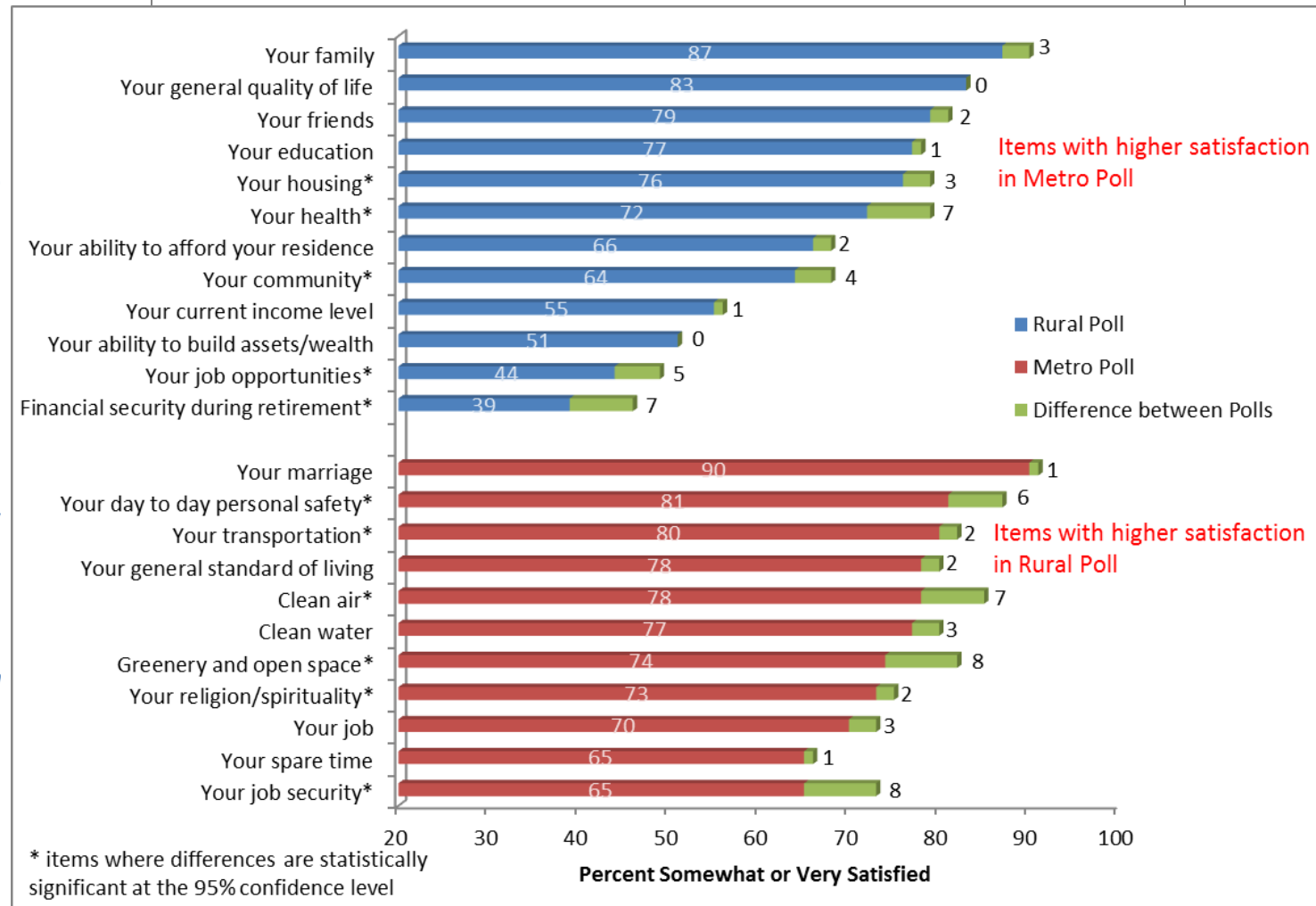
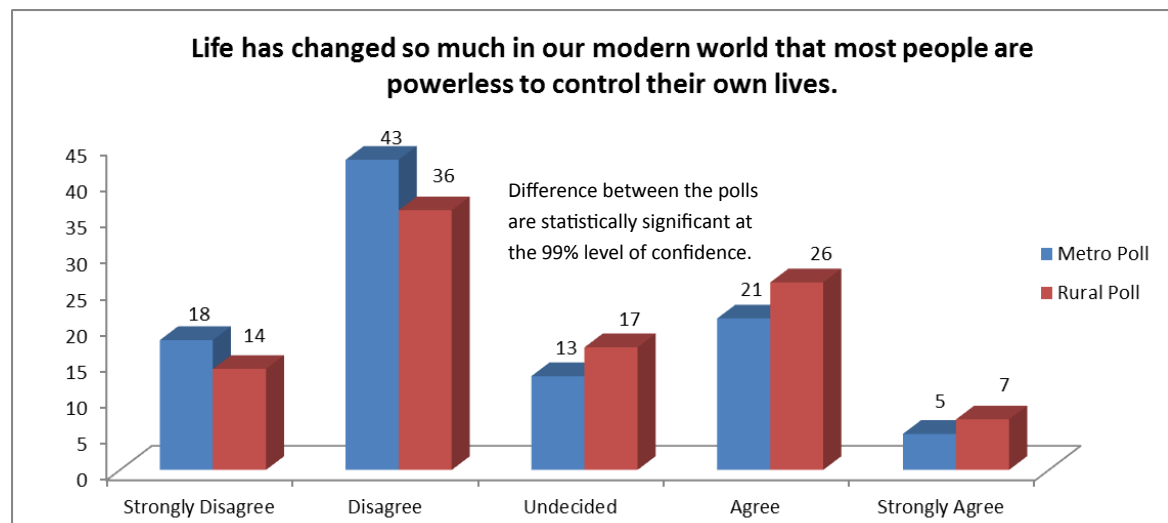
## Satisfaction with Aspects of Life

Respondents of both Polls were asked how satisfied they were with various aspects of life.

- *Nonmetropolitan residents are more likely than metropolitan residents to be satisfied with their personal safety, environmental items, their religion/spirituality, their transportation and their job security.*
- *On the other hand, metropolitan residents are more likely to express satisfaction with their housing, their health, their community, their job opportunities and their financial security during retirement.*

## Implications

- *The higher levels of pessimism about the future displayed by nonmetropolitan residents when compared to metropolitan residents is concerning. Over one in five residents of nonmetropolitan areas expect to be worse off ten years from now, compared to 17 percent of metropolitan residents. Part of this pessimism may be explained by the decreased levels of satisfaction with job opportunities and financial security during retirement when compared to metropolitan responses.*
- *The greater feelings of powerlessness expressed by nonmetropolitan residents is also of concern. Residents need to feel empowered to control their own lives so they can be more optimistic about the future and work to improve their communities and regions.*
- *Nonmetropolitan areas of the state can promote the higher levels of satisfaction with the environment, sense of safety, religious community and job security to potential new residents.*
- *Metropolitan areas can market their higher levels of satisfaction with housing and job opportunities.*



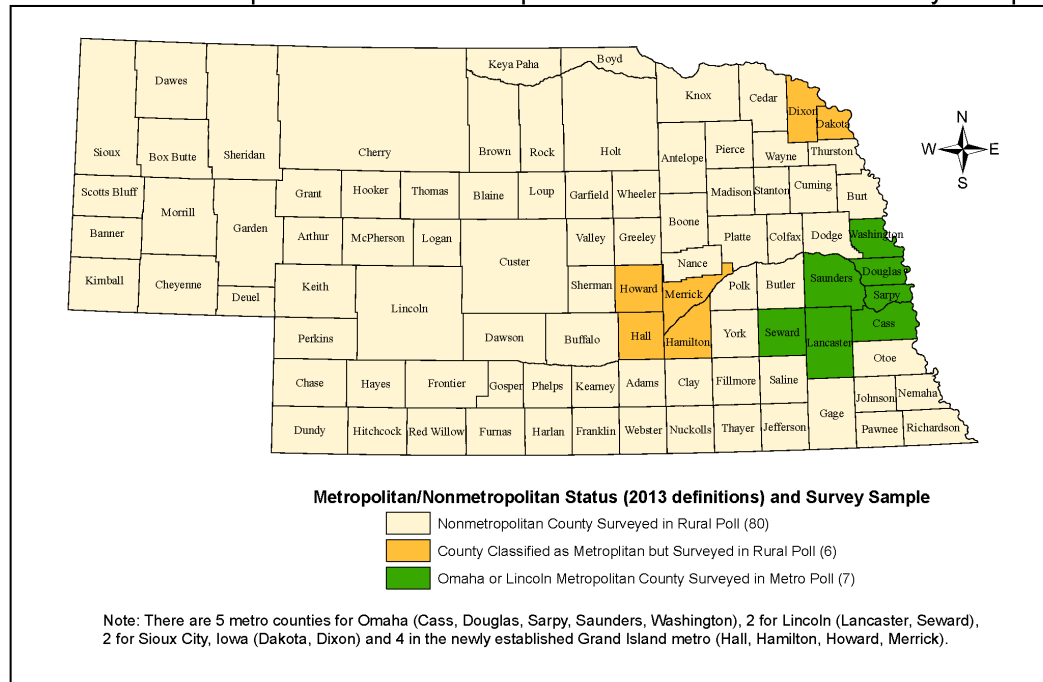
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**Methodology:**

The Nebraska Rural Poll sampled residents from non-metropolitan counties and regional trade centers in the state. The Nebraska Metro Poll sampled the seven counties that comprise the Lincoln and Omaha metropolitan areas. Both polls sent 4 mailings regarding or containing the surveys in the spring of 2014 and had an online response option.

Nebraska Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Counties and 2014 Survey Sample



Source: 2013 Metropolitan and Micropolitan Definitions, Office of Management and Budget, released 2-28-13

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