

Metropolitan America *in the New Century*

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The early 2000s has brought shifts in U.S. population growth. The big growth winners thus far are California's interior metropolitan areas.

FOR MUCH OF THE LAST CENTURY, large metropolitan areas have served as primary destinations for moves within the United States. Movement from the countryside to big cities, and then from these cities to their surrounding suburbs, formed important trends in the nation's history. The largest metropolitan areas, those surrounding our biggest cities, have always occupied center stage as hubs of commerce, industry, and politics. Historically, migrants within the United States used smaller areas as stepping stones on their way to larger areas. Migrants from abroad, meanwhile, tended to move directly to large gateway areas like New York, Chicago, Boston, and San Francisco.

Yet starting in the 1970s, the U.S. population began to disperse. Large industrial-based metropolitan areas began to lose jobs and residents to smaller-sized metropolitan areas and nonmetropolitan territory. Indeed, population declined in many large cities and metropolitan areas during the 1970s. A selective metropolitan revival occurred in the 1980s, rewarding those areas in which economic mix and recreation attracted new workers and residents. Other metropolitan areas, especially those located in the Rustbelts of the Northeast and Midwest, experienced only modest gains.

Since that period, growth in individual large metropolitan areas has depended more on how each of these areas fares in the

broader economy. From an economic standpoint, the 1990s provided a "boom period" for most large metropolitan areas and their central cities. This was particularly true in metropolitan areas with diversified industries, and high-tech or knowledge-based industries (e.g., New York's strong financial services base). As a consequence, large metropolitan areas as a whole grew more rapidly during the 1990s than during any decade since the 1960s, and their central cities experienced a similar—though uneven—revival.

A mild economic U-turn accompanied the nation's transition into the 21st century. The high-tech and dot.com booms of the late 1990s ended in busts during the early part of this decade (referred to here as "the 2000s"). Metropolitan areas strongly tied to these industries were particularly vulnerable. Concurrently, several factors have combined to push housing prices higher in some of these same coastal metropolitan areas, perhaps making them less attractive to potential domestic migrants.

On the immigration front, despite the economic slump and increased security measures associated with the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, people from abroad continued to flow into the United States at the heightened pace of the 1980s and 1990s, particularly to large metropolitan areas that historically have attracted immigrants. Meanwhile, other metropolitan areas, especially those with declining populations, increasingly view immigrants as a possible source from which to gain population and a labor force that would compensate for "brain drains" of domestic migrants.

Recent Findings

▷ **The fastest- and slowest-growing metropolitan areas in the 2000s reflect shifts in regional employment and housing dynamics since the late 1990s.** To date, most demo-

graphic analyses of cities and metropolitan areas have focused on trends through 2000, when the last decennial census was conducted. Two economic factors distinguish the first four years of the 2000s from April 2000, the apogee of the nation's impressive economic growth in the 1990s. First, the economic recession occurring in 2001 and 2002 involved significant job losses in high-tech "knowledge economy" sectors such as telecommunications and computer systems design, as well as in goods-producing industries like manufacturing. Second, sharp disparities persist among metropolitan areas in their housing costs, with prices continuing to rise apace in some coastal regions. These factors, along with continued immigration to traditional ports of entry, form the backdrop for changing growth dynamics in metropolitan areas.

The metropolitan areas experiencing the fastest population growth and decline in the 2000s are not identical to those in the 1990s. Figure 1 (on page 101) illustrates that a great deal of metropolitan growth "mobility" occurred between the two time periods. In particular, the 2000s have displaced five of the 15 fastest-growing metropolitan areas from the 1990s. Las Vegas, in the interior West, continues to lead all other metropolitan areas in population growth. Yet, four of the five areas dropping out of the top 15 are also located in the interior West—Colorado Springs, Denver, Tucson, and Salt Lake City.

The slowdown in the interior West's metropolitan population growth reflects the region's migration relationship with California. In the early 1990s, a protracted economic slowdown and defense cutbacks prompted many Californians to move to nearby western states. While out-migration from California continues, the pace has slowed, and the destination areas for its migrants may have changed. Elsewhere

on the top-15 list for the 1990s, Austin and Atlanta, two metropolitan areas with substantial “new economy” sectors that were perched high on this list, slipped several notches during the post-2000 period.

Turning to the 15 fastest-growing metropolitan areas for the 2000s, we see that the interior part of California now looms much larger. The Riverside and Stockton metropolitan areas rank second and fourth, respectively, and four of the top 15 lie in California’s interior, including Sacramento and Bakersfield (Fresno ranks close behind at 17). Accelerating population growth in these inland Golden State metropolitan areas can probably be attributed to their relative affordability compared with coastal California, and to the technology-related employment declines in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Riverside/San Bernardino/Ontario metropolitan area, located in southern California’s Inland Empire, has emerged as a strong economic force in the state, measured by its residential and job growth.

Florida also strengthened its hand among the fastest-growing metropolitan areas. Sarasota joined Orlando in the top 15 growers from 2000 to 2004, while Jacksonville and Tampa climbed into the top 20 (at numbers 16 and 19, respectively), reflecting Florida’s growing base of service and hospitality jobs. Two other southeastern U.S. metropolitan areas, Raleigh/Cary and Charlotte, also exhibit consistently high growth rates, as do three Texas metropolitan areas that remain among the top 15 (McAllen, Dallas, and Houston).

Among the slowest-growing and declining U.S. metropolitan areas, several Rustbelt staples continue to top the list: Youngstown, Scranton, Buffalo, and Pittsburgh exhibited the highest rates of metropolitan population loss in both the 1990s and the early 2000s. The Ohio metropolitan areas of Cleveland, Dayton, and Toledo also registered declines during the early part of this decade, and the upstate New York areas of Rochester and Syracuse barely grew. Detroit, meanwhile, moved slightly up the list to join the 15 slowest-growing areas between 2000 and 2004.

The sharp decline of technology-related industries elevated some conspicuous newcomers to the slowest-growing list. San Jose, San Francisco/Oakland, and Boston rank among the

slowest growers this decade. This represents a dramatic departure for the Bay Area metropolitan areas, especially for those among the 88 largest metropolitan areas in the 1990s that experienced roughly median growth. The greater New York area, as well, experienced slower growth in the 2000s (1.9 percent, ranking the 19th slowest), which likely can be attributed to a combination of job losses in its manufacturing and financial services sectors and of the impact of September 11, 2001.

On a more positive note, the post-2000 period heralded the exits of several northeastern metropolitan areas from the slowest-growing list. These include Albany, Hartford, New Haven, and Springfield (Massachusetts). Providence, too, increased its rate of growth, moving from the 20th slowest-growing metropolitan area in the 1990s to 28th in the 2000s. The enhanced growth in these areas likely emanates from their receptivity to immigrants and domestic migrants seeking affordable housing close to larger, more expensive metropolitan areas like New York and Boston.

The United States as a whole grew more slowly in recent years than during the 1990s. But population trends vary far more at the metropolitan level. The sharpest declines seem to have occurred in those metropolitan areas with significant new economy sectors, such as Boston, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Atlanta, Dallas, and San Francisco. The drop was especially sharp in the San Francisco area between 2001 and 2002, although the region seems to have stemmed the loss since. Population trends in Phoenix reflected an inversion of those in the coastal California metropolitan areas of Los Angeles and San Francisco during the early 1990s, when the economic slump in California prompted inflows into many metropolitan areas in the interior West, among them, Phoenix. The relationship appears less strong in the 2000s, as central California areas may be attracting more coastal out-migrants.

Large metropolitan areas as a group did not grow as much in the first years of this decade as they did over the 1990s, reflecting the negative impacts of the economic slowdown on selected regions. Indeed, many of the “highest fliers” from the late 1990s experienced population losses in the 2000s, likely

as a result of employment declines coupled with continued elevated housing prices.

▷ **Several Sunbelt metropolitan areas arrived on the metropolitan map in the last four decades, led by Las Vegas’s 1,200 percent growth from 1960 to 2004.**

The growth of many southern and western metropolitan areas in the last 15 years reflects, to a large degree, the relative newness of their development. Not many of these areas are yet built out to the same degree as are their northern and coastal counterparts.

At the national level, large metropolitan areas grew unevenly over this period. Growth slowed dramatically in the 1970s due to extensive deindustrialization and a widespread “shakeout” of manufacturing jobs in several prominent metropolitan areas. Yet, this pattern did not hold within every region. The 1970s slowdown was much more muted for metropolitan areas in the South and West. In fact, over the period from 1960 to 2004, the only metropolitan areas that lost population in any decade were located in the Northeast and Midwest, with the exception of New Orleans in the 1980s. Only two areas (Pittsburgh and Scranton) registered declines in the 1960s, but 11 did so in the 1970s, including New York, Philadelphia, and Detroit among others. The number of declining areas fell to nine in the 1980s and five in the 1990s, but rose to seven in the first four years of the 2000s.

Alongside the slow gains and declines of many older northeastern and midwestern metropolitan areas, several newer areas in the South and West experienced continued fast growth. In the 1960s, Las Vegas grew by 115 percent, San Jose by 65 percent, and Phoenix by 43 percent. The 1970s metropolitan doldrums did not affect Tucson, Orlando, Tampa, Houston, and Miami, all of which experienced at least 40 percent growth that decade. These areas continued to grow, in a low-cost/high-development mode, even as older metropolitan areas withstood significant employment losses. This fast growth spread to other areas in the 1980s and 1990s, including Atlanta, Riverside, and Raleigh/Cary, while large metropolitan areas in the Northeast and Midwest generally grew by single-digit percentages in each decade.

FIGURE 1. Fastest- and Slowest-Growing Large Metropolitan Areas, 2000–2004 and 1990–2000

2000–2004				1990–2000			
Rank	Rank Change	Metropolitan Area	Population Change (%)	Rank	Rank Change	Metropolitan Area	Population Change (%)
Fastest Growing				Fastest Growing			
1	0	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	18.5	1	0	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	85.5
2	13	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	15.7	2	-1	McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, TX	48.5
3	-1	McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, TX	14.7	3	-5	Austin-Round Rock, TX	47.7
4	27	Stockton, CA	14.4	4	-1	Raleigh-Cary, NC	47.3
5	-1	Raleigh-Cary, NC	13.7	5	-1	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	45.3
6	-1	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	13.3	6	-7	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	38.4
7	0	Orlando, FL	12.4	7	0	Orlando, FL	34.3
8	-5	Austin-Round Rock, TX	11.7	8	-14	Colorado Springs, CO	31.3
9	14	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	11.5	9	-18	Denver-Aurora, CO	30.7
10	9	Bakersfield, CA	10.7	10	-1	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	29.8
11	-1	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	10.1	11	-3	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	29.4
12	12	Sarasota-Bradenton-Venice, FL	10.0	12	-11	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	26.5
13	-7	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	10.0	13	-7	Tucson, AZ	26.5
14	-3	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	9.7	14	-22	Salt Lake City, UT	26.1
15	1	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	9.3	15	13	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	25.7
16	6	Jacksonville, FL	8.8	16	1	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	25.2
17	8	Fresno, CA	8.1	17	-12	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, TN	25.1
18	3	San Antonio, TX	7.8	18	-6	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, FL	23.5
19	16	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	7.6	19	9	Bakersfield, CA	21.7
20	-7	Tucson, AZ	6.9	20	-1	Albuquerque, NM	21.7
Slowest Growing/Declining				Slowest Growing/Declining			
1	1	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	-2.0	1	-1	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA	-2.5
2	-1	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA	-1.4	2	1	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	-1.7
3	0	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	-1.2	3	0	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	-1.6
4	0	Pittsburgh, PA	-1.1	4	0	Pittsburgh, PA	-1.5
5	5	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	-0.5	5	-8	Syracuse, NY	-1.5
6	0	Dayton, OH	-0.3	6	0	Dayton, OH	0.5
7	0	Toledo, OH	-0.1	7	0	Toledo, OH	0.8
8	38	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	0.1	8	-9	Springfield, MA	1.0
9	4	Rochester, NY	0.3	9	-15	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	2.0
10	4	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	0.3	10	5	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	2.2
11	28	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	0.4	11	-20	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	2.2
12	11	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	0.5	12	-15	New Haven-Milford, CT	2.5
13	-8	Syracuse, NY	0.5	13	4	Rochester, NY	3.5
14	5	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	0.8	14	4	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	4.1
15	6	Akron, OH	0.9	15	-10	St. Louis, MO-IL	4.6
16	2	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	0.9	16	-2	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	4.6
17	-9	Springfield, MA	1.1	17	-13	Honolulu, HI	4.8
18	-2	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	1.9	18	2	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	4.8
19	11	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	1.9	19	5	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	4.8
20	6	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	1.9	20	-8	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	4.8

Rank change indicates change in growth ranking between periods among 88 metropolitan areas with populations over 500,000 in 2000. Source: Author's analysis of data from decennial U.S. censuses and Census Population Estimates Program.

FIGURE 2. Highest Immigrant and Domestic Migrant Gains and Highest Domestic Migrant Losses in Large Metropolitan Areas, 2000–2004 and 1995–2000

2000–2004			1995–2000		
Rank	Metropolitan Area	Migrants	Metropolitan Area	Migrants	Migrants
HIGHEST IMMIGRATION					
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	684,913	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	892,205	
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	512,282	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	594,809	
3	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, FL	263,395	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, FL	346,611	
4	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	243,355	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	322,325	
5	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	184,395	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	248,670	
6	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	166,747	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	231,637	
7	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	157,557	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	214,820	
8	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	156,655	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	210,689	
HIGHEST DOMESTIC MIGRATION GAINS					
1	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	325,842	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	246,444	
2	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	194,392	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	245,159	
3	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	168,463	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	203,228	
4	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	145,580	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	145,478	
5	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	124,106	Austin-Round Rock, TX	104,340	
6	Orlando, FL	119,791	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	103,375	
7	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	118,699	Orlando, FL	101,226	
8	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	68,475	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	83,229	
HIGHEST DOMESTIC MIGRATION LOSSES					
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	-844,058	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	-823,766	
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	-471,118	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	-626,957	
3	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	-252,997	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	-316,509	
4	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	-243,934	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	-122,049	
5	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	-174,295	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	-103,641	
6	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	-167,404	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	-95,849	
7	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	-106,785	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	-78,571	
8	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	-59,189	Honolulu, HI	-69,866	

Source: Author's analysis of data from Census 2000 and Census Population Estimates Program.

As a result, several metropolitan areas that were barely on the map a half century ago are today some of the nation's largest, while a few others are roughly the same size (or smaller) than they were at that time. All 15 of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas from 1960 to 2004 are located in the South and West, and all 15 of the slowest-growing (and declining) metropolitan areas over that time are in the Northeast and Midwest. Las Vegas leads the top 15, having increased in population from 127,000 to 1.6 million over the 44-year period—a growth of 1,200 percent. Overall, 34 southern and western metropolitan areas more than doubled—and 17 more

than tripled—their populations over this same period. In contrast, 16 northeastern and midwestern metropolitan areas grew by less than 25 percent from 1960 to 2004, including four that lost population (Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Scranton, and Youngstown).

In short, recent growth in places like Las Vegas, Phoenix, Orlando, and Riverside reflects not only current economic dynamics, but also the population shifts that have characterized the nation's fast-growing regions for many decades. Compared with the more stagnant areas of the country, these metropolitan areas constantly replenish their populations with younger migrants. For example, the 2000

census shows that only 21 percent of the population in Nevada was born there, compared with fully 78 percent of Pennsylvania residents who are native born Keystone-staters. While all parts of the country will age gradually as the large baby boom generation advances in years, many large areas of the South and West are likely to experience the continued youth of their populations because of domestic in-migration and immigration.

▷ **Immigration continues to drive growth in many large metropolitan areas, but the fastest-growing metropolitan areas rely more heavily on domestic migration and natural increase.**

As immigration's contribution to U.S. population growth has increased, it has exerted an especially prominent impact on large metropolitan areas (See Figure 2 on opposite page.) Although immigrants are spreading more broadly across the United States, they still concentrate heavily in a handful of immigrant magnet metropolitan areas. At the same time, domestic migrants select a different set of metropolitan areas as their primary destinations.

The nation's eight largest metropolitan gateways for immigrants remained the same in the 2000-to-2004 period as they were in the late 1990s. New York and Los Angeles led all others. In fact, immigrant gains for these two metropolitan areas alone accounted for 24 percent of all immigrants coming into the United States over the four-year period. The only changes on the list are that Dallas and Houston supersede San Francisco and Washington in the more recent period. Dallas and Washington are somewhat newer destinations for international migrants, but the six others have been immigrant destinations for several decades.

Another pattern parallels that of the late 1990s: little overlap exists between the immigrant magnet metropolitan areas and those that gained the most domestic migrants. This is because immigrants tend to move to areas where they have friends and family who can provide them with social and economic support. And this movement is related, in part, to immigration laws that give strong preference to family reunification as a condition of entry. In contrast, domestic migrants tend to be more footloose in their migration patterns and more responsive to geographic shifts in employment opportunities and amenities. As a result, metropolitan areas that gain the most domestic migrants tend to exhibit the strongest economic opportunities for working-age migrants or amenities for retirees.

From 1995 to 2000, Atlanta led the list as the greatest domestic migration magnet, followed by Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Dallas. In the 2000-to-2004 period, however, the Riverside metropolitan area rose to become the greatest domestic migration magnet, Sacra-

mento joined the top eight, and Atlanta fell to number five on the list. (See Figure 3 below.) The rise of Riverside and Sacramento reflects the post-2000 California employment and housing dynamics discussed earlier. Also noteworthy is that only one of the metropolitan areas among the top domestic migrant magnets (Dallas) also ranks among the top destinations for immigrants.

The impact of immigration on metropolitan area population change varies sharply. It is an especially important component of growth among high-immigration metropolitan areas that are also losing domestic migrants. If not for immigration, metropolitan New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., would have to rely on natural increase alone to achieve population growth. Similarly, metropolitan areas in declining regions like Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Detroit that are experiencing "brain drain"—domestic out-migration of educated young people—would have to depend increasingly on immigration to recoup some of their losses.

FIGURE 3. Components of Population Change in Fastest-Growing Large Metropolitan Areas, 2000–2004

Rank	Metropolitan Area	Component Rates*				Immigration Share of Growth (%)
		Population Change	Immigration	Domestic Migration	Natural Increase	
1	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	18.5	3.0	12.1	3.5	16.2
2	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	15.7	1.9	9.9	3.9	12.1
3	McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, TX	14.7	3.7	2.1	8.9	25.0
4	Stockton, CA	14.4	2.4	8.1	3.9	16.7
5	Raleigh-Cary, NC	13.7	2.7	6.3	4.4	19.5
6	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	13.3	3.2	5.9	4.2	24.3
7	Orlando, FL	12.4	2.4	7.2	2.6	19.4
8	Austin-Round Rock, TX	11.7	3.0	3.7	5.0	25.4
9	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	11.5	2.2	6.6	2.8	19.2
10	Bakersfield, CA	10.7	2.0	4.5	4.3	18.7
11	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	10.1	2.0	4.6	3.5	19.9
12	Sarasota-Bradenton-Venice, FL	10.0	1.4	9.9	-1.3	14.1
13	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	10.0	2.7	2.9	4.4	26.8
14	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	9.7	3.5	1.3	4.9	36.6
15	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	9.3	3.5	1.0	4.8	38.0

* Components do not add exactly to total due to additional residual component introduced in the estimation. Rates are per 1,000 inhabitants.

Source: Author's analysis of data from Census Population Estimates Program.

Immigration flows to these areas are not nearly as large as they are to prime immigrant magnets. Still, immigrants serve a valuable function by supplanting some of the homegrown residents who leave and, in many cases, by bringing immigrants with higher skills.

With all the attention given to immigration, it often goes unnoticed that domestic migration and natural increase (births minus deaths) account for the lion's share of growth in the nation's fastest-growing large metropolitan areas. While immigrants and foreign-born domestic migrants are increasingly moving to these areas to fill employment opportunities created by higher-skilled, native-born domestic migration, the latter migrants and their children account for most of these areas' gains. Among the 15 fastest-growing areas from 2000 to 2004, domestic migration represented the largest component of growth for ten of them. In Las Vegas, for example, domestic migration accounted for about two-thirds of overall growth, with natural increase and immigration each constituting about half of the remainder. In only two of these metropolitan areas (Dallas and Houston) did immigration make up more than one-third of the population growth in the early 2000s.

The importance of natural increase in several fast-growing areas raises an interesting demographic question: Where are the metropolitan "baby boomers?" The rate of natural increase varies considerably among large metropolitan areas. (See Figure 4 on facing page.) Metropolitan areas with the highest natural increase rates tend to have large, younger Hispanic populations, as in McAllen, Texas, and to have attracted recent waves of domestic migrants made up of younger households of childbearing age, as in Raleigh. In metropolitan areas like Austin, Dallas, and Houston, both groups are prevalent.

Scranton's aging population, on the other hand, accounts for its excess of deaths over births in the 2000s. Metropolitan areas like Scranton with low rates of natural increase tend to have low levels of in-migration and older populations. With relatively fewer people of childbearing age, and more in their high-mortality years, areas that have not grown significantly in recent decades show low or

negative rates of natural increase. A few other areas with low levels of natural increase are Sunbelt retirement magnets that attract older migrants, such as Sarasota and Tampa. Sarasota is somewhat unique in that as one of the fastest-growing large metropolitan areas in the country, it also registers—at the same time—more deaths than births.

▷ **Central cities have shared in the rising and falling fortunes of their metropolitan areas in the 2000s.** Central cities, as defined here, are the major centers that anchor their larger metropolitan areas. Yet, the population has been decentralizing from central cities into the suburbs—especially in older metropolitan areas of the Northeast and Midwest—for decades. In many of these areas, growth disparities are at least as dramatic between older inner suburbs and outer suburbs as between central cities and suburbs. In many newer parts of the South and West, on the other hand, central cities more frequently share in metropolitan growth, though usually at substantially lower rates than the expanding suburbs.

Not surprisingly, central city and metropolitan growth remain closely related in the 2000-to-2004 period. Ten of the 15 metropolitan areas with the fastest-growing central cities also rank among the 15 fastest-growing metropolitan areas overall in the early 2000s. The cities that moved farthest up the list this decade are those associated with the rapidly growing California metropolitan areas of Stockton, Sacramento, and Riverside. At the same time, central cities within some of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the 1990s have dropped down the list along with their wider areas, including Austin, Portland, Colorado Springs, and Denver. (See Figure 5 on page 106.)

Metropolitan and central city populations have also moved in tandem in terms of the slowest-growing and declining-growth places in the 2000s. The largest jumps in the cities with declining growths occurred for those at the heart of the Boston, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and San Francisco metropolitan areas, all of which suffered from technology-led economic weakening after 2000. At the same time, several central cities dropped off the slow-growers list in line with their metropolitan areas' improved growth rankings. The central cities of four northeastern metropolitan areas—Hartford,

New Haven, Albany, and Springfield—actually shifted from declines in the 1990s to growth in the 2000s. Overall, six cities shifted from population losses in the 1990s to population gains so far in this decade. However, ten cities moved in the opposite direction.

In addition to the "movers" on the lists of fastest-growing and declining central cities, many cities are mainstays in both periods. Las Vegas, Bakersfield, Raleigh/Cary, McAllen, Phoenix, Charleston, San Antonio, and Fresno all continue to anchor fast-growing metropolitan areas. In contrast, the declining central cities of Cincinnati, Youngstown, Detroit, Birmingham, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Dayton, Buffalo, and Scranton still lie within slow-growing metropolitan areas, and showed only modest changes in rank between the two periods.

Declining and slow-growing central cities do not, however, always locate in slow-growing metropolitan areas. Among the 30 central cities that sustained population declines from 2000 to 2004 (in the nation's 88 largest metropolitan areas), only six lie within metropolitan areas that also showed population losses, and only four have surrounding suburbs that also declined. Washington, D.C.'s metropolitan area grew by 6.6 percent in the four-year period after 2000; it was the 25th-fastest-growing in the nation, even as its central cities lost an estimated 2.4 percent of their residents. Minneapolis/St. Paul and Salt Lake City provide two additional examples of central city/metropolitan growth mismatches in recent years. Overall, however, nearly two-thirds of large metropolitan central cities are estimated to have gained population in recent years.

Just as immigration has exerted an important and selective impact on metropolitan growth, it has continued to sustain population growth and stem decline in many central cities and their surrounding counties. In particular, many of these urban places count on immigration to counterbalance domestic migration losses. All lie at the center of major metropolitan areas. Despite the fact that each displayed substantial domestic migration losses, the combined impact of strong immigration and natural increase resulted in only five registered population losses. Eight of the 15 urban counties would have registered population losses without immigration.

The fastest-growing large metropolitan counties, meanwhile, tend to locate on the periphery and often have been described as “exurban” in the popular press. Immigration contributes little to their rapid growth, while domestic migration accounts for the vast majority of their recent growth.

Notably, not all of these fast-growing counties are located in fast-growing metropolitan areas. For example, Kendall County, Illinois (outside Chicago); Delaware County, Ohio (outside Columbus); and Scott County, Minnesota (outside Minneapolis/St. Paul) lie within modestly growing regions, but incorporate the fastest-growing suburban parts of each. This is also the case for listed counties located in expanding metropolitan areas, such as Forsyth County, Georgia (outside Atlanta); and Loudon County, Virginia (outside Washington, D.C.). All, though, have grown primarily from the in-migration of individuals and families from elsewhere in the metropolitan area, or elsewhere in the United States. Although, immigrants currently are moving into many suburbs in record numbers, they are not yet driving outer suburban growth.

▷ **Smaller metropolitan and micropolitan areas varied widely in their population growth and decline in the 2000-to-2004 period.** These areas include small metropolitan areas; micropolitan areas that surround urban populations of 10,000 to 500,000; and other territory. Because micropolitan areas are located outside the boundaries of metropolitan areas, they can be considered part of the nation’s nonmetropolitan territory. Therefore, territory outside of metropolitan and micropolitan areas is referred to here as “other non-metropolitan.”

In 2004, the 88 large metropolitan areas constituted 62.6 percent of the U.S. population; the 273 small metropolitan areas made up another 20 percent; the 573 micropolitan areas accounted for 10.5 percent; and just 6.9 percent of U.S. residents lived in other non-metropolitan territory. The population relationship between large metropolitan areas and the rest of the nation has ebbed and flowed over time. Clearly, deindustrialization made the 1970s an outlier decade for large metropolitan growth. Population generally dispersed, with small metropolitan areas, micropolitan areas, and other nonmetropolitan areas all growing

at a faster pace than large metropolitan areas as a group.

As this pattern represented a fundamental break with the past, many explanations were offered. Manufacturing jobs had relocated to smaller places with lower labor costs; the oil shortage had prompted extensive extractive industry development in the nonmetropolitan Southwest, Mountain West, and Appalachia; and a large cohort of seniors had raised demands for small retirement communities. Still, many observers saw the 1970s population dispersal as the beginning of a more longstanding population deconcentration that would “loosen the constraints” and permit both residents and employers to fulfill longstanding preferences for low-density, high-amenity locations. However, the rebound of large metropolitan areas in the 1980s, and the faltering of many nonmetropolitan economies, put a temporary damper on deconcentration.

But, in the 1990s small-area gains accompanied even greater metropolitan growth. The fastest-growing, smaller-sized places were located in recreation and retirement-oriented communities, and on the periphery of metro-

FIGURE 4. Large Metropolitan Areas with Highest and Lowest Natural Increase Rates, 2000–2004

Rank	Metropolitan Area Highest Natural Increase	Rate	Rank	Metropolitan Area Lowest Natural Increase	Rate
1	McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, TX	8.9	1	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA	-1.5
2	El Paso, TX	6.0	2	Sarasota-Bradenton-Venice, FL	-1.3
3	Salt Lake City, UT	5.8	3	Pittsburgh, PA	-0.6
4	Austin-Round Rock, TX	5.0	4	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	-0.3
5	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	4.9	5	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	0.1
6	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	4.8	6	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	0.3
7	Fresno, CA	4.5	7	Springfield, MA	0.7
8	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	4.4	8	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	0.7
9	Raleigh-Cary, NC	4.4	9	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	0.8
10	Bakersfield, CA	4.3	10	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	0.8
11	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	4.3	11	Knoxville, TN	0.8
12	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	4.2	12	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	1.0
13	Colorado Springs, CO	4.2	13	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	1.0
14	Denver-Aurora, CO	4.2	14	Akron, OH	1.1
15	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	3.9	15	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	1.2

Rates are per 1,000 inhabitants.

Source: Author’s analysis of data from Census Population Estimates Program.

FIGURE 5. Fastest- and Slowest-Growing Central Cities of Large Metropolitan Areas, 2000–2004 and 1990–2000

2000–2004				1990–2000			
Rank	Rank Change	Central Cities of Metropolitan Area	Population Change (%)	Rank	Rank Change	Central Cities of Metropolitan Area	Population Change (%)
Fastest Growing				Fastest Growing			
1	1	Bakersfield, CA	16.1	1	-5	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	85.2
2	5	Raleigh-Cary, NC	14.3	2	1	Bakersfield, CA	41.3
3	19	Stockton, CA	14.0	3	-24	Austin-Round Rock, TX	41.0
4	5	McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, TX	12.8	4	-30	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	39.1
5	28	Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	11.0	5	-4	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	37.0
6	-5	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	10.6	6	-8	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	36.6
7	17	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	9.1	7	5	Raleigh-Cary, NC	32.8
8	11	Albuquerque, NM	7.6	8	-23	Colorado Springs, CO	28.4
9	-4	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	7.5	9	5	McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, TX	26.7
10	19	Orlando, FL	7.4	10	-2	San Antonio, TX	22.3
11	3	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	7.3	11	-15	Greensboro-High Point, NC	22.0
12	-2	San Antonio, TX	7.0	12	-1	Fresno, CA	20.7
13	-1	Fresno, CA	6.4	13	-22	Denver-Aurora, CO	20.5
14	-8	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	6.0	14	3	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	20.2
15	8	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	5.8	15	-6	Tucson, AZ	20.1
Slowest Growing/Declining				Slowest Growing/Declining			
1	7	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	-4.9	1	-1	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	-14.3
2	-1	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	-4.9	2	-39	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	-13.0
3	22	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	-4.4	3	-26	St. Louis, MO-IL	-12.2
4	8	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	-4.3	4	-20	Baltimore-Towson, MD	-11.5
5	5	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	-3.8	5	-5	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	-10.8
6	9	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	-3.8	6	-15	Syracuse, NY	-10.1
7	0	Pittsburgh, PA	-3.4	7	0	Pittsburgh, PA	-9.5
8	1	Dayton, OH	-3.3	8	7	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	-9.0
9	9	Rochester, NY	-3.2	9	1	Dayton, OH	-8.7
10	-5	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	-3.2	10	5	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	-8.7
11	23	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	-3.0	11	-1	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA	-6.6
12	-1	Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA	-3.0	12	8	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	-6.6
13	7	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	-2.9	13	-4	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	-6.5
14	25	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	-2.7	14	-2	Toledo, OH	-5.8
15	35	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	-2.7	15	9	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	-5.4
16	2	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	0.9	16	-2	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	4.6
17	-9	Springfield, MA	1.1	17	-13	Honolulu, HI	4.8
18	-2	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	1.9	18	2	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	4.8
19	11	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	1.9	19	5	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	4.8
20	6	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	1.9	20	-8	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	4.8

Rank change indicates change in growth ranking between periods among central cities of 88 metropolitan areas with populations over 500,000 in 2000.

Source: Author's analysis of data from decennial U.S. censuses and Census Population Estimates Program.

politan areas not far removed from the “exurbs.” At the same time, many nonmetropolitan communities began to diversify their economies. These developments, along with the prospect that some baby boomers will be selecting smaller communities for their retirement, has resurrected the notion that the deconcentration phenomenon will persist.

Based on this background, population shifts from 2000 to 2004 suggest a slight retrenchment from both the high growth of large metropolitan areas and the rebound of population in nonmetropolitan America. Yet, these trends varied significantly by region within the United States. Both micropolitan areas and other nonmetropolitan territory grew in all regions except the Midwest in the early 2000s. Their growth was fairly impressive in the West, where smaller metropolitan areas grew at the same high rate as large metropolitan areas.

Even more so than large metropolitan areas, small metropolitan and micropolitan areas spanned a wide spectrum of growth and decline in the early part of the current decade. Only 22 areas, mostly in the South and West, grew by more than 10 percent, and an additional 81 averaged at least 1 percent in annual growth over the four years. At the other extreme, 44 small areas (about one in six) registered population declines, located primarily in hard-hit areas of the Northeast, Midwest, and South.

Domestic migration trends associated with these geographic concepts lend some support to the deconcentration thesis. The combination of all large metropolitan areas registered net domestic out-migration to smaller-sized areas in the early 2000s, as each of the other types of areas gained domestic migrants. The Northeast and Midwest experienced the greatest domestic migration losses in their large metropolitan areas, while their western counterparts experienced smaller, though still significant, outflows that reflected movement from immigrant magnet metropolitan areas. However, large metropolitan areas in the South showed domestic migration gains. Indeed, all geographic categories in the South showed net domestic gains, while all categories in the Midwest showed losses.

Both immigration and domestic migration tend to affect large metropolitan areas more than smaller ones. In small metropolitan and micropolitan areas, natural increase is the main source of growth in all regions except the Northeast. Nonetheless, despite wide variation across regions, domestic migration emerges as an important driver of population growth in smaller communities, reflecting the cutting edge of the deconcentration phenomenon.

Metropolitan Surge

In the wake of the 1990s, a decade characterized by a strong economy and a resurgence of metropolitan growth at levels not seen since the 1960s, the early 2000s brought shifts in U.S. population growth.

These shifts occurred in the context of the new decade’s modest early recession, the demise of the high-tech, dot.com boom, and sharpening divisions in the cost of housing across the country. The big growth winners in the decade thus far are interior California metropolitan areas with relatively lower costs of living than their coastal counterparts. Selective economic downturns brought slower growth and population decline to some new economy metropolitan centers, as San Jose, San Francisco, and Boston climbed onto the list of slowest-growing metropolitan areas in the 2000-to-2004 period.

These recent population ebbs and flows stand in contrast to perennially fast-growing metropolitan areas like Las Vegas, which continues to lead the growth list, increasing its cumulative population growth to 1,200 percent since 1960. Las Vegas and other expansive Sunbelt metropolitan areas, including Phoenix, Orlando, Atlanta, and Raleigh, are characterized by fairly consistent, dynamic demographic change, a sharp contrast with northeastern and midwestern areas whose growth trajectories might be described as in a “steady state.” Most of the fastest-growing areas of the country are receiving economically footloose domestic migrants in large numbers.

In general, central cities appear to be following the growth trajectories of their broader metropolitan areas in the current decade, though not all declining central cities are located in slow-growing (or declining) regions. Many central cities and their surrounding

counties, however, do continue to receive immigrants in large numbers, despite recent economic downturns and post-2001 security concerns. In immigrant magnet metropolitan areas like New York and Los Angeles, immigrants often help to balance large outflows of domestic migrants. In aging Rustbelt urban centers, immigrants do not make up for these population losses or lack of natural increase, but they are increasingly viewed as important counterweights to continuing brain drains of skilled, native-born out-migrants.

Beyond large metropolitan areas, the 1990s decade brought new gains to smaller communities outside of the largest metropolitan areas, suggesting a renewal of the deconcentration trend first observed in the 1970s. The early 2000s show evidence that this trend is continuing, but at a somewhat slower pace than in the 1990s. Still, both small metropolitan areas and micropolitan areas demonstrate wide variations in growth patterns across the country. Micropolitan areas, in particular, are divided between a handful that grew by more than 10 percent from 2000 to 2004, and about 200 that lost population. Domestic migrants appear to be headed toward cutting-edge areas of growth, to outer exurban counties within metropolitan areas, and to smaller communities, especially in the West.

Overall, recent growth patterns of large metropolitan areas, central cities, and smaller communities appear to resemble the 1990s “metropolitan surge” more than the mixed metropolitan growth patterns of the 1970s and 1980s. Economically successful areas continue to be rewarded with migration-driven growth. Thus, what transpires between now and 2010 will depend heavily on the nature of the economic recovery, the future of the housing market both nationally and regionally, and the location patterns of a growing number of baby boomers who are beginning to knock on retirement’s door. **U**

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