



“An overhaul of the widely-recognized metropolitan classification system by the federal government will refashion the way research is conducted and federal dollars are spent.”

METROPOLITAN POLICY PROGRAM

Tracking Metropolitan America into the 21st Century: A Field Guide to the New Metropolitan and Micropolitan Definitions

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Findings

An overhaul of the widely-recognized metropolitan classification system by the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will refashion the way research is conducted and federal dollars are spent. The new system, designed to capture 21st-century settlement patterns, alters the names, types, and boundaries for metropolitan areas and creates new “micropolitan” areas. A comparison of this new system with its older counterpart, reveals that:

- **The new classification system positions the *Metropolitan Statistical Area* as the standard tool for analysis across metropolitan geographies.** The old system, by contrast, required users to combine a mix of three categories of metropolitan areas (MSAs and CMSAs or PMSAs) to get complete coverage of metropolitan America. At the same time, the new system provides researchers with more choices for analyzing trends within metropolitan areas.
- **New *micropolitan areas*, together with their metropolitan area counterparts, increase the reach of OMB’s statistical areas to encompass 93 percent of U.S. population and 46 percent of its land area.** States with the most micropolitan areas are not necessarily the largest: Texas, Ohio, and North Carolina lead all others; South Dakota has more than California; and New Jersey has none.
- **Under the new system, 81 of the nation’s 102 largest metropolitan areas have undergone changes in territory and population.** The most common changes involved the addition of new counties to an existing metropolitan area, and the combination of two or more metro areas to form a new, larger metropolis.
- **Both metropolitan and micropolitan areas contain *principal cities*, which replace central cities in the new names given to these areas.** Roughly 40 percent of the combined metropolitan population lived in principal cities in 2000, compared to 35 percent in central cities.
- **The new definitions alter the social and economic attributes of many metropolitan areas, as well as their national rankings on these attributes.** For instance, New York has replaced Los Angeles as the nation’s most populous metropolitan area. San Francisco drops from fourth to fourteenth in metropolitan rankings of college degree attainment.

Not simply statistical arcana, OMB-defined metropolitan and micropolitan areas have real-world implications for public- and private-sector research, for federal programs—think Medicare, Section 8 housing assistance—and for how big-city and small-town residents view the places that they live. This survey provides both casual and expert users with a “field guide” to the new system and its potential impacts in each of these areas.

Introduction

The term “metropolitan area” is one of the few statistical terms that is also familiar in common conversation. A metropolitan area is not a political jurisdiction with a mayor or police department, but rather an economically and socially linked collection of large and small communities. Residing in a metropolitan area provides identification with a well understood broader community, often eliciting civic pride promoted by local chambers of commerce and economic development commissions. Regional newspapers, sports teams and cultural institutions all serve to reify the existence of the metropolitan area. Moreover, the metropolitan designation of an area confers on it something of an urbane or cosmopolitan status, placing it in a league with other areas as a recognized economic region.

Such commonly-held perceptions of metropolitan areas are reflected in rigorous statistical definitions of the metropolitan concept, developed by the federal government’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Federal agencies such as the U.S. Census Bureau use these standards to collect and disseminate area-based statistics in publications such as the *United States Statistical Abstract*. They are incorporated into federal and state policies to allocate public resources to local areas. They are also used widely in the private sector and the research community to identify consumer markets, labor markets, and housing markets. And OMB-defined metropolitan areas are often ranked in the popular press and publications such as the *Places Rated Almanac*.

The federal government defined metropolitan statistical areas as early as the late 1940s,¹ and has updated them several times, primarily to take into account shifts in demographic trends and modest changes in nomenclature.² However, in the early 1990s

Figure 1. Old versus New Terminology	
OLD	
	Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA)
	Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA)
	Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)
	Central City
	New England County Metropolitan Area (NECMA)
NEW	
	Metropolitan Statistical Area (MetroSA)
	Micropolitan Statistical Area (MicroSA)
	Combined Statistical Area (CSA)
	Metropolitan Division
	Principal City
	New England City and Town Area (NECTA)
Source: OMB	

OMB initiated a decade-long effort to reassess the metropolitan classification system, in light of the many changes in U.S. settlement patterns that had taken place over the previous 50 years.³

The original metropolitan statistical area concept was predicated on the model of a large central city of over 50,000 residents that served as a hub of social and economic activity for surrounding counties. Together, the city and counties formed a stand-alone metropolitan area. Over the past five decades, however, the decentralization of both employment and population in many urban areas have served to disperse the “core” well beyond the largest city into smaller clusters of previously “suburban” communities. As metropolitan populations expanded, it became evident that hierarchies were forming within metropolitan areas. Large metropolitan areas developed somewhat self-contained sub-areas (e.g., Newark or Long Island within the greater New York region); and existing, neighboring metropolitan areas became, for some purposes, part of a larger super-region (e.g., Washington, D.C. and Baltimore). It also became apparent that many communi-

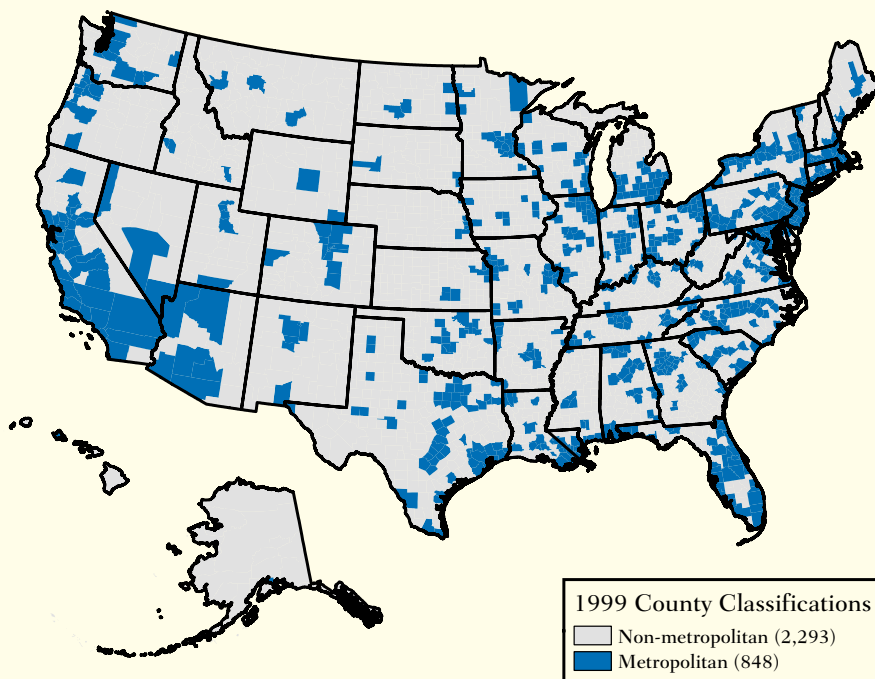
ties, considered too small to be part of a metropolitan area, should nonetheless be recognized as part of the settlement system, rather than be omitted completely.

After a series of commissioned studies, convenings with user communities, and interagency meetings, OMB’s wide-ranging effort in the 1990s resulted in the adoption of the new standards for metropolitan and micropolitan areas. OMB has urged all federal agencies that collect and publish data for these areas to use the most recent definitions.

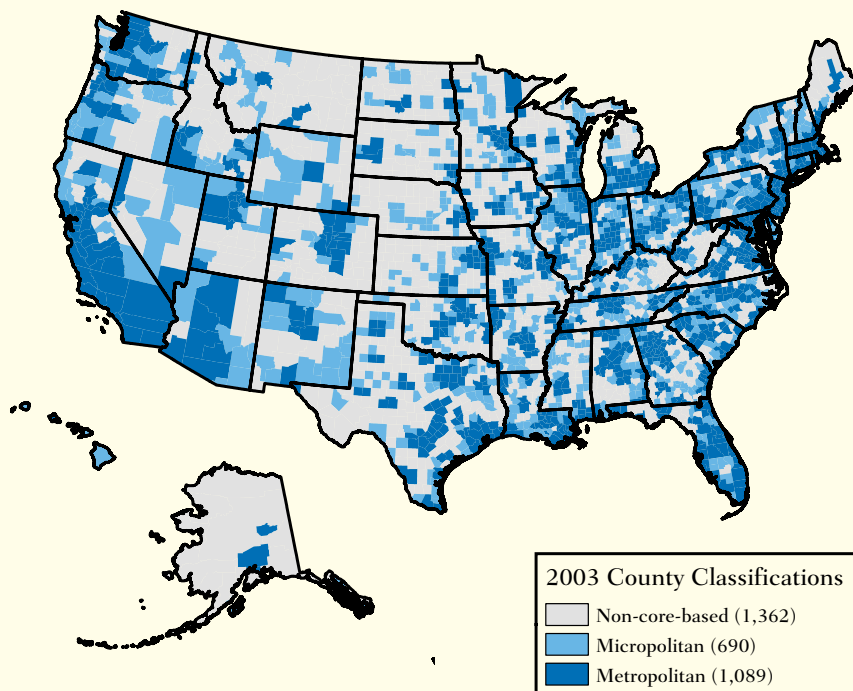
The changes are quite significant, not only in terminology, but also in the geographic sweep of classified areas, (Figure 1). Figure 2 displays the metropolitan or nonmetropolitan status of U.S. counties according to the old and new standards. Under the old system, only 20 percent of the country’s territory was defined. The new standards double the coverage, classifying 46 percent of U.S. land area. Micropolitan areas—a new classification—account for most of the increased coverage and fill in a noticeable portion of the “empty” space across the country.

Given these significant changes,

Figure 2. County Classifications, Old and New Standards



Source: OMB



Source: OMB

many researchers and policy makers will have to alter the way they think about and use metropolitan area data. This survey provides a “field guide” to help the average consumer of these statistics understand how the new metropolitan and micropolitan areas differ from those used previously, and what they imply for planning, research and policy.⁴ First, we compare the classification of metropolitan statistical areas under the old and new standards, describing the terminology, criteria, and options for defining a metropolitan area. Second, we introduce OMB’s new concept—the micropolitan statistical area—and describe its geographical and demographic scope. Third, we discuss how the transition in standards changes the composition of metropolitan areas, illustrating four main types of change. Fourth, we discuss the new principal cities and how these affect micropolitan area titles. Fifth, we analyze how the change in standards alters the socioeconomic attributes and rankings of metropolitan areas. Finally, we discuss the implications of the new system for research and policy.

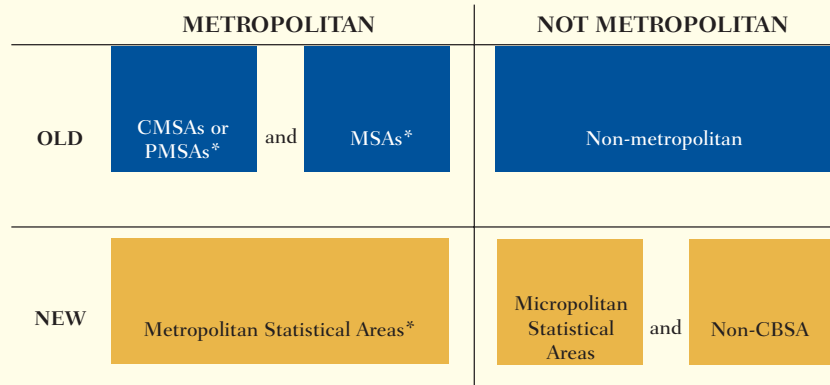
Methodology

To elucidate important features of the new metropolitan and micropolitan areas, much of this report contrasts the areas defined according to the “new standards” (released in June 2003, with updates in December 2003) with comparable areas defined under the previous standards (“old standards” in this survey—published in 1999).⁵ We draw comparative statistics from the 2000 U.S. Census for areas located in the 50 states.⁶ Practically all Census 2000 publications and data products to date have utilized the old standards for metropolitan areas as we employ them here. This also holds for metropolitan statistics distributed by most other federal agencies.

The reader should note that metropolitan areas, under both old and new standards, are not, strictly speaking, urban areas; similarly, the metropolitan/non-metropolitan dichotomy is not the same as the urban/rural dichotomy. OMB defines metropolitan areas for use by all federal agencies, to represent functional areas. They comprise large statistically linked sub-areas (counties) that form socially and economically integrated regions. OMB determines the composition of metro areas by analyzing commuting patterns within a given region, along with population and employment levels. In contrast, the Census Bureau defines urban areas, which reflect a physical (rather than functional) distinction, mostly at a smaller scale, where urban or urbanized areas are required to pass population size and density thresholds.⁷ Most metropolitan areas, then, contain both urban and rural territory, as do most parts of the country that are located outside of metropolitan areas. In 2000, approximately 12 percent of the nation's metropolitan population was rural; and approximately 41 percent of its nonmetropolitan population was urban.

Nonetheless, practitioners and even federal agencies have commonly applied the term “urban” to metropolitan areas and “rural” to all nonmetropolitan territory.⁸ It is likely that this practice will continue under the new standards, although the new micropolitan areas (designated in this publication as *MicroSAs*) may blur the line between urban and rural. In like manner the term “suburban” is often applied to portions of metropolitan areas that lie outside of major cities despite the fact that neither the old nor new OMB standards makes reference to the terms “suburban” or “suburb.”⁹ Researchers are also likely to use the new standards—with new “principal cities” defining major cities—to distinguish suburban populations.

Figure 3. Metro Area Choices Under the Old and New Standards



* The old standards also included the New England Metropolitan Statistical Areas (NECMAs), which could be used in place of CMSAs, PMSAs, and MSAs in the six New England states. The new standards created New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs) which can be used in place of Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Micropolitan Statistical Areas in New England.
Note: See Appendix A for definitions of all terms.

Findings

A. The new classification system positions the Metropolitan Statistical Area as a standard tool for analysis across metropolitan geographies.

This section discusses how metropolitan areas, the basic components of OMB's classification system, differ between the new standards and the old standards, leaving to the next section a description of the new micropolitan areas.

Metro Area Choices under the Old Standards

In the old system, metropolitan America consisted of individual Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) and another set of areas that could be defined either as Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (CMSAs) or their component parts, Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSAs). CMSAs could only be defined for areas with more than one million people, and where additional criteria allowed for subdivision of those large metro areas into component PMSAs (Appendix A and B have further details on the old and new definition criteria).

For example, the Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV CMSA was subdivided into the Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV PMSA, the Baltimore, MD PMSA, and the Hagerstown, MD PMSA. Nationally, the combined population of all CMSAs equaled the combined population of all PMSAs, and when either was added to the combined MSA population, the result equaled the total U.S. metropolitan population.

Consumers of these statistics who wished to compare among metropolitan areas on some measure had a choice between analyzing: (a) all MSAs and CMSAs; or (b) all MSAs and PMSAs. In other words, PMSAs and CMSAs could not be used together in the same analysis (Figure 3). However, consumers of statistics for a local CMSA region could choose which level of geography—CMSA or PMSA—best represented their “metropolitan area” (e.g., Washington, D.C. analysts could decide between using the Washington-Baltimore CMSA or the Washington, D.C. PMSA, depending on their purposes).

National rankings of metropolitan areas could legitimately employ either

the MSA/CMSA combined list (276 areas, including 258 MSAs and 18 CMSAs), which was favored by OMB and the Census Bureau, or the MSA/PMSA combined list (331 areas, including 258 MSAs and 73 PMSAs), which common practice tended to favor. Statistical rankings including metropolitan growth rates, crime statistics, employment patterns and quality of life indicators in publications such as the popular *The Places Rated Almanac* used the MSA/PMSA system, as have most publications in Brookings' Living Cities Census Series. For the remainder of this report, we will also use MSAs and PMSAs as benchmarks for comparison with the new system.

An additional choice faced analysts of metropolitan areas in the six New England states. OMB defined MSAs, PMSAs, and CMSAs for these states, as well as an alternative set of areas known as New England County Metropolitan Areas (NECMAs). New England MSAs, CMSAs, and PMSAs were based on city and town components rather than counties, but many analysts were unable to obtain relevant information at the town level. Hence, NECMAs were developed as county-based counterparts to New England's conventional metro areas. Many national analyses, therefore, used MSAs, CMSAs, and PMSAs, outside of New England, along with NECMAs inside the region.

Finally, the previous standards did not define any settlements outside of the metropolitan areas. All of the residual counties in the United States (or towns in New England) were labeled "non-metropolitan." Some analysts chose to use individual counties as a means of distinguishing areas within nonmetropolitan territory.¹⁰ Researchers at the Department of Agriculture created Rural-Urban Continuum Codes ("Beale Codes") to distinguish among non-metropolitan counties based on their urban population and adjacency to metropolitan areas.¹¹

Metro Area Choices under the New Standards

For those interested in comparing metropolitan areas across the country, there is now really only one choice: the **Metropolitan Statistical Area** (designated in this paper as MetroSA). Although the new system allows for some hierarchical choices for analyses of individual areas (discussed below), inter-metropolitan analyses are best conducted using the MetroSA, which now is based exclusively on county-level components in both New England and non-New England states. MetroSAs are defined using somewhat different criteria than the old MSAs, CMSAs, and PMSAs. As a consequence, both the size and number of metropolitan areas have changed.

According to the new standards, metropolitan area central counties, which form the basis for determining outlying counties via commuting patterns, are now determined exclusively by their overlap with urban areas of all sizes so that the more restrictive "urbanized areas or cities of 50,000 or more" criterion is no longer part of their definition.¹² The extent of urban areas has also changed, due to population growth and new definitional criteria. Together, these changes have increased the number of central counties, thus enlarging the potential commuting fields of many large metropolitan areas.¹³

At the same time, new commuting criteria for adding outlying counties to a region's central counties are more restrictive than those used previously. Thus, 41 counties which previously served as outlying counties of metropolitan areas do not qualify as such under the new rules, but have now become part of new micropolitan areas.

One result of the change in criteria for defining metropolitan areas is that the larger MetroSAs are more comparable in size and area to the former CMSAs than to the former PMSAs.¹⁴ As a consequence, users who are

accustomed to employing the PMSA/MSA definitions under the old system will find that the number of metropolitan areas with populations exceeding one million drops from 61 to 49 in the new system. At the same time, the number of metropolitan areas with populations less than 250,000 rises from 149 to 195. Yet, the 49 large MetroSAs comprise about the same share of the U.S. population—53 percent—as the 61 large MSAs/PMSAs (Figure 4). At the other end of the size spectrum, the 195 small Metro SAs comprise only a slightly larger share of U.S. population than the 149 small MSAs/PMSAs (10 percent versus 8 percent).

Altogether, the new standards describe 361 MetroSAs, compared to 331 MSAs/PMSAs under the old system.

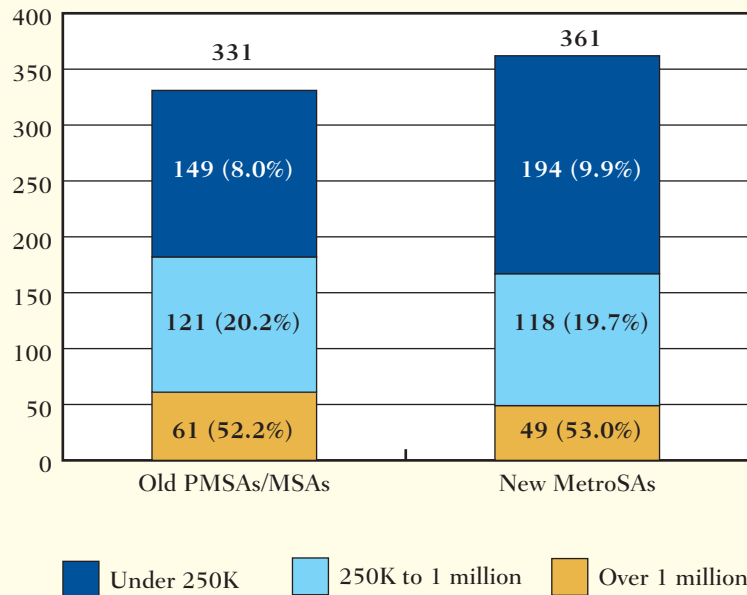
As with the previous standards, OMB defines an alternative set of areas in the six New England states. Unlike the old standards, however, these alternative areas are defined at the city and town level and are called **New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs)**. MetroSAs in New England are comprised of counties, making counties the basic "building blocks" of metropolitan areas both inside and outside the New England states.

Finally, the most recognizable change with the new standards is the identification of smaller "metropolitan-like" communities. These new areas, called micropolitan areas, define meaningful "core-based" areas with cores too small to qualify as MetroSAs. They are discussed in finding B.

The New Hierarchy Options for Local Areas

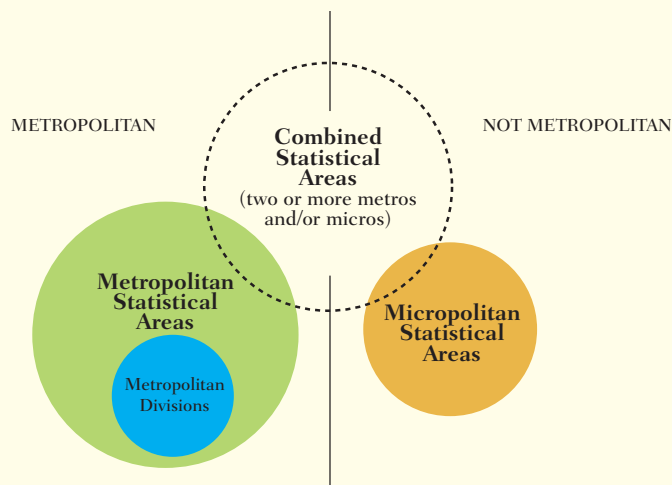
While the new standards provide a single unit, the MetroSA, for comparing metropolitan areas across the country, they provide additional choices when the focus turns to local areas (Figure 5). **Combined Statistical Areas (CSAs)** represent two or more adjoin-

Figure 4. Number of Metro Areas by Population Size, 2000, (and Share of Population by Metro Size)



Source: Authors' calculations of Census 2000 data and OMB

Figure 5. New Hierarchy Options for Local Areas



Note: These options are not available for all 361 metropolitan areas and 573 micropolitan areas. There are 120 combined statistical areas that encompass 163 metropolitan and 153 micropolitan areas. Twenty-nine metropolitan divisions exist within 11 metropolitan areas.

Source: OMB

ing MetroSAs or MicroSAs. They range in size from the two-county Clovis-Portales, NM CSA (population 63,000), which consists of the Clovis MicroSA and the Portales MicroSA, to the 30-county New York-Newark-Bridgeport, NY-NJ-CT-PA Combined Statistical Area (population 21,361,797), made up of six MetroSAs and one MicroSA. OMB designates CSAs where certain cross-area commuting levels are met, and in specified circumstances where local input favors the designation. There are currently 123 CSAs (those associated with the greater Atlanta area, Dallas-Ft. Worth area, and New York area are illustrated below). Just over half (198) of all MetroSAs are located in a CSA.

These areas are primarily useful for local analyses, as they give users a more expansive way to define their particular region. CSAs are ill-suited for cross-metropolitan analyses, since they are very different analytic units than MetroSAs.

The other metropolitan innovation in the new standards that may assist local area analyses is the **Metropolitan Division**. OMB designated Metropolitan Divisions within each of 11 MetroSAs with populations of over 2,500,000, and they reflect single or multi-county areas with close commuting ties. Examples include the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Division and Bethesda-Frederick-Gaithersburg, MD Metropolitan Division within the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area, and the Dallas-Plano-Irving, TX Metropolitan Division within the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX Metropolitan Statistical Area.

These Metropolitan Divisions, as components of MetroSAs, somewhat resemble PMSAs under the old system. However, because only a few very large MetroSAs contain Metropolitan Divisions, while PMSAs were much

Table 1. Geographic and Demographic Coverage, Old and New Standards

OLD STANDARDS	Number of Counties	Share of National Land Area	Population in 2000	Share of National Population
Metropolitan	848	20%	226,207,070	80.4%
Non-metropolitan	2293	80%	55,214,836	19.6%
NEW STANDARDS				
Metropolitan	1089	25.3%	232,579,940	82.6%
Micropolitan	690	20.3%	29,412,298	10.5%
Non-core-based	1362	54.4%	19,429,668	6.9%

Source: Census 2000 and OMB

more common, Metropolitan Divisions are less practical geographic units for nationwide analyses. The higher metro-wide population threshold to establish Metropolitan Divisions (at least 2.5 million) versus that to establish PMSAs (at least 1 million) means that the new system contains 29 Metropolitan Divisions within 11 MetroSAs, compared to 73 PMSAs within 18 CMSAs under the old system. Still, Metropolitan Divisions provide increased flexibility for local analyses. In some metropolitan areas, then, users are able to choose among a metropolitan hierarchy that includes all three types of areas: CSAs, MetroSAs, and Metropolitan Divisions.

B. New micropolitan areas, together with their metropolitan area counterparts, increase the reach of OMB's statistical areas to encompass 93 percent of U.S. population and 46 percent of its land area.

The micropolitan statistical area (designated in this paper as MicroSA) is perhaps the most innovative concept created with the new standards. OMB developed MicroSAs in response to arguments that smaller communities located outside of metro areas deserved recognition as self-contained settlements. They are defined in a parallel manner to MetroSAs in that they are core-based, meaning they consist of one or more counties centered on a

contiguous urban area. MicroSAs and MetroSAs differ primarily in the population of their core areas: between 10,000 and 50,000 for MicroSAs, and at least 50,000 for MetroSAs. Some MicroSAs have larger populations than the smallest MetroSAs, but are classified as the former because their core urban areas have less than 50,000 people. MicroSAs range in size from about 13,000 (Andrews, TX) to over 180,000 (Torrington, CT), and MetroSAs range in size from just over 50,000 (Carson City, NV) to 18.3 million (New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA).

The new standards define 573 MicroSAs in addition to the 361 MetroSAs. The 573 MicroSAs incorporate 690 counties, indicating that the majority of these areas include just one county. Because of the way they were defined, OMB refers to both types of areas as **core-based statistical areas (CBSAs)**. Together, these core-based areas cover a much larger share of the nation's population and landmass than metropolitan areas alone under the old standards. The combined MetroSAs and MicroSAs now comprise 93 percent of U.S. population and 46 percent of its land area. In comparison, the old metropolitan areas comprised 80 percent of the nation's population and just 20 percent of its land area (Table 1).

For analysts used to distinguishing

between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan populations, MicroSAs belong to the latter category. However, they represent only part of the nation's nonmetropolitan territory. The remaining portion of nonmetropolitan land assumes the somewhat cumbersome term, "non-core-based areas." Because MicroSAs comprise 60 percent of the total non-metropolitan population, it is now less appropriate to think of the nonmetropolitan population as wholly "rural."

Researchers from the Census Bureau and other federal agencies will incorporate the new micropolitan area concept into a range of national statistics, opening up a whole new field of study for demographers, planners, and policy makers. The location and profile of MicroSAs is quite varied. Table 2 shows that states housing the largest number of MicroSAs are not the nation's largest states, but are heavily concentrated in the Midwest and South, and comprise a larger share of overall population there. Texas, Ohio, North Carolina, Indiana, and Georgia lead all other states in the number of micropolitan areas, whereas the highly urbanized states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Jersey do not have any. Small states with numerous counties like Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota each have more MicroSAs than California.

Recent analyses by Lang (2004) and

Table 2. Number of MicroSAs by State

Rank	State	Micros
1	Texas	41
2	Ohio	29
3	North Carolina	26
4	Indiana	25
5	Georgia	24
6	Illinois	23
7	Pennsylvania	21
8	Missouri	20
9	Mississippi	20
10	Tennessee	20
11	Michigan	18
12	Minnesota	18
13	Kentucky	17
14	Louisiana	17
15	Oklahoma	17
16	Kansas	15
17	New York	15
18	Iowa	15
19	Arkansas	14
20	New Mexico	14
21	Oregon	13
22	South Carolina	13
23	Wisconsin	13
24	Alabama	13
25	Florida	11
26	Nebraska	10
27	South Dakota	9
28	Washington	9
29	California	9
30	Idaho	8
31	Colorado	7
32	Wyoming	7
33	West Virginia	6
34	New Hampshire	6
35	Arizona	5
36	Montana	5
37	North Dakota	5
38	Vermont	5
39	Utah	5
40	Maryland	4
41	Nevada	4
42	Alaska	3
43	Hawaii	3
44	Virginia	3
45	Connecticut	2
46	Maine	2
47	Delaware	1
48	District of Columbia	0
49	Massachusetts	0
50	New Jersey	0
51	Rhode Island	0

Source: OMB

Note: Micropolitan areas that cross state boundaries are counted once in each state.

Frey (2004a) highlight the variations in micropolitan area demographic profiles. They find that the fastest-growing MicroSAs are located nearby large growing MetroSAs, while the more remote MicroSAs are generally smaller and slow-growing. Overall, MicroSA populations tend to be older, poorer, more conservative, less educated, and less racially diverse than their metropolitan counterparts.¹⁵

C. Under the new system, 81 of the nation's 102 largest metropolitan areas have undergone changes in territory and population.

Analysts and even casual observers first encountering the new metropolitan areas will likely ask: How different are the new standards from the old ones? The simple answer is: quite a bit. The changes are especially pronounced in the nation's larger metropolitan areas, which form the focus of many Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program analyses. This section first describes the changes from the old to new systems at the county level, then explores how those county transitions re-shaped the nation's largest metropolitan areas.

County Shifts

Because both the old and new systems are county-based, it is possible to view the extent of change between the two systems from the county level. Between the systems, counties could make six possible transitions, shown in Table 3. Of the 3,141 counties that make up the United States, a plurality (43 percent) remained “undefined”—that is, they were non-metropolitan under the old system and are non-core-based under the new system. They include the vast number of small, rural counties found mostly in the interior states. The next largest proportion of counties (26 percent) remained metropolitan between the old and new systems, and of these the vast majority (92 percent) remained within the same metropolitan area. So roughly 70 percent of

counties retained a comparable classification in the transition to the new standards.

Other counties changed classification due to the introduction of the micropolitan concept, new rules for defining metropolitan areas, changes in commuting patterns, or simple population growth and decentralization. Counties that changed from non-metropolitan to micropolitan were fairly common, accounting for 21 percent of all counties and nearly 10 percent of U.S. population. Nine percent of U.S. counties jumped from non-metropolitan to metropolitan status. Far smaller proportions moved down the hierarchy from metropolitan to micropolitan (1 percent) and from metropolitan to non-core-based status (just 5 counties).

As a result of these transitions, a greater share of the nation's population is now considered metropolitan (83 percent, up from 80 percent). On net, 242 counties moved from non-metropolitan to metropolitan standing (46 from metropolitan to non-metropolitan and 288 from non-metropolitan to metropolitan). Some became part of the 44 new metropolitan areas announced under the new system, while others were added onto the fringe of existing metropolitan areas. Of the 46 counties that changed status from metropolitan to non-metropolitan, only five did not become part of a MicroSA. The 41 previously metropolitan counties that became micropolitan did not necessarily shrink in size, but generally failed to meet the new more stringent commuting threshold for inclusion in metropolitan areas.

Metropolitan Shifts

Despite the fact that a majority of the nation's counties have effectively the same designations under the new system, the county composition of most of the nation's largest metropolitan areas changed in some way. In fact, 81 of the 102 metropolitan areas with popula-

Table 3. County Transitions

Old Classification	New Classification	Number	Percent of Counties	Population in 2000	Percent of Population
Metropolitan	Metropolitan	801	25.5	223,113,722	79.3
Metropolitan	Micropolitan	41	1.3	2,856,237	1.0
Metropolitan	Non-core-based	5	0.2	105,216	0.0
Non-metropolitan	Metropolitan	288	9.2	9,466,218	3.4
Non-metropolitan	Micropolitan	649	20.7	26,556,061	9.4
Non-metropolitan	Non-core-based	1357	43.2	19,324,452	6.9

Source: Authors' calculations of OMB and Census 2000 data

Table 4. Metropolitan Transitions, Metros with 500,000 or Greater Population, 2000

Transition Type	Number of Metros	Percent of Top 102
Geographical Changes:		
Added counties (net)	29	28.4
Removed counties (net)	13	12.7
Split into two or more metros	9	8.8
Combined into one metro	23	22.5
Changed in more than one way	7	6.9
Stayed the same	21	20.6
Total	102	100.0
Population Changes:*		
Gained Population	56	54.9
Lost Population	25	24.5
Same Population	21	20.6
Total	102	100.0

*As measured by comparing total metro population in 2000 according to the old and new definitions.

Source: Authors' calculations of OMB data

tions of at least 500,000 under the old system are defined somewhat differently under the new system. As a result, two-thirds (56) of the 81 metros gained population, while the rest (25) lost population. Here, we provide illustrative examples of the several different ways in which metropolitan areas have been redefined by the new standards. Table 4 shows the extent of each of these types of changes among the 102 metro areas when we compare the old MSAs/PMSAs to the new MetroSAs.

Adding Counties to Metro Areas—Atlanta

Twenty-nine of the 102 largest metropolitan areas experienced a net addition of counties in the transition to the new system. Most of these metro areas are located in the middle and southern regions of the country, where population is growing and spreading out quickly.¹⁶

Atlanta offers the most dramatic example of a metropolitan area with additional counties in its definition.

Metropolitan Atlanta is undergoing rapid population growth, mostly in its suburbs, which grew by 44 percent in the 1990s. The new definition of metro Atlanta reflects this sprawling suburban pattern and offers more than one choice for delineating the area. Under the old standards, Atlanta was a single MSA made up of 20 counties. The new system creates the 28-county Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA MetroSA (the original 20 counties plus eight additional ones). It also gives the option of using the 33-county Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Gainesville Combined Statistical Area (CSA), which includes the Gainesville MetroSA (one county), and four MicroSAs (one county each) (Figure 6).

Removing Counties from Metro Areas—Knoxville, Las Vegas, and Washington, D.C.

Most of the 13 metropolitan areas that experienced a net loss of counties are located in the eastern half of the United States. In the West, only Las Vegas, NV lost counties from its metropolitan definition.

As noted earlier, the vast majority of counties removed from metropolitan areas became part of micropolitan areas, so they do not necessarily represent areas that are losing population. In almost all cases in which micropolitan areas are created on the outskirts of metropolitan areas, Com-

bined Statistical Areas are also defined, often matching the former metropolitan definition.

Knoxville, Tennessee is a typical example. Under the old system the Knoxville, TN MSA consisted of six counties. Under the new standards, OMB removed outlying Sevier County from the metropolitan area and named it the Sevierville, TN MicroSA. Together, the metro area and micro area form the newly defined Knoxville-Sevierville-La Follette, TN Combined Statistical Area (Figure 7).

Not all counties that transitioned from metropolitan to micropolitan status became part of a Combined Statistical Area. For instance, the Las Vegas, NV-AZ MSA consisted of three counties under the old standards (Mohave County in Arizona and Clark and Nye counties in Nevada). Under the new standards, only Clark County remains in the Las Vegas-Paradise, NV MetroSA. Nye County becomes the Pahrump, NV MicroSA, and together with the Las Vegas metro makes up the Las Vegas-Paradise-Pahrump, NV CSA. Mohave County, Arizona is now the Lake Havasu City-Kingman MicroSA, outside of any CSA.

The Washington, D.C. metropolitan area provides a unique example in that two of its counties changed from metropolitan to non-core-based. The Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV PMSA saw three counties removed in the transition: two in Virginia and one in West Virginia. While Berkeley County, WV became part of a separate metropolitan area (Hagerstown-Martinsburg, MD-WV MetroSA), Culpeper and King George counties in Virginia became non-core-based areas. These few instances demonstrate the greater simplicity of the new classification system, which eliminated from some MetroSAs far-flung counties with little economic relationship to the core.¹⁷

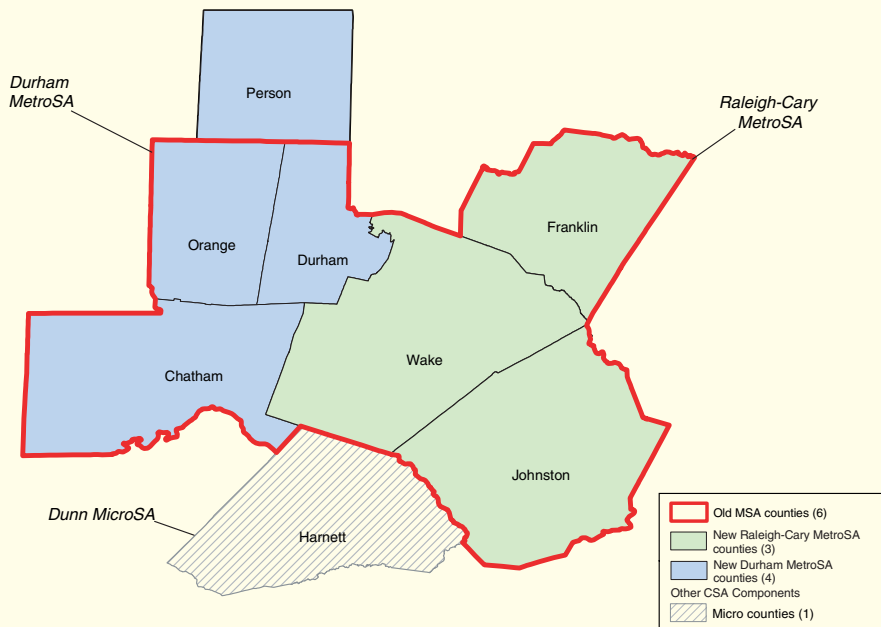
Figure 6. Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Gainesville Combined Statistical Area



Figure 7. Knoxville-Sevierville-La Follette Combined Statistical Area

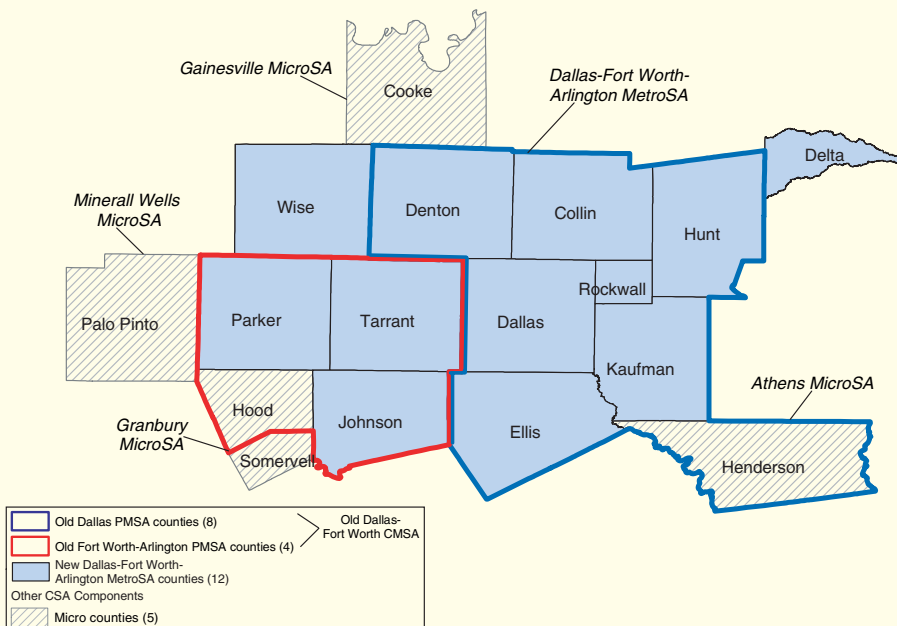


Figure 8. Raleigh-Durham-Cary Combined Statistical Area



Source: OMB

Figure 9. Dallas-Fort Worth Combined Statistical Area



Source: OMB

Separating a Metro Area into Two or More New Areas—Raleigh-Durham

Of the 102 largest MSAs/PMSAs, nine split into two or more metro areas under the new system. These metro areas are scattered around the country. Similar to those metro areas that lost counties, the cleaving of these metro areas reflects the stricter commuting thresholds under the new system, and perhaps an emerging economic independence separating formerly close-knit neighbors.

Under the old standards, the area of North Carolina known as the “research triangle”—the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC MSA—consisted of six counties. The new standards split the triangle into two metropolitan areas: the Durham, NC MetroSA and the Raleigh-Cary MetroSA. Together, the two metro areas consist of the same six counties plus one additional county in the Durham metro area. The Raleigh-Durham-Cary, NC CSA combines these two MetroSAs with the new one-county Dunn, NC MicroSA (Figure 8). Like Raleigh-Durham, the new standards also split the former Vallejo-Fairfield-Napa, CA PMSA into two MetroSAs, and the Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland, MI MSA into three MetroSAs and one MicroSA.

Combining Two or More Metro Areas into One Area—Dallas-Ft. Worth and New York

Twenty-three MSAs and PMSAs under the old system combined with neighboring areas to form new, larger MetroSAs.

In Dallas-Fort Worth, the combination produced a region with several different layers. Under the old standards, Dallas-Fort Worth, TX was a 12-county CMSA, divided into two PMSAs: Dallas (with eight counties) and Fort Worth-Arlington (with four counties) (Figure 9). The new standards create the unified Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX MetroSA, comprised of 12 counties (two of which

are different from the originals). And because the metro area contains over 5 million people, OMB further delineated two Metropolitan Divisions within the region: Dallas-Plano-Irving and Fort Worth-Arlington. These divisions resemble the old PMSAs, and recognize that each of the areas still retains some individual economic character. In addition, the new Dallas-Fort Worth, TX CSA includes the MetroSA and four surrounding micropolitan areas.

If the Dallas-Fort Worth changes are complex, the changes to the New York metro area might rank as mind-boggling. Yet the new metropolitan geography that results is arguably more satisfying than the old one.¹⁸ The old New York PMSA consisted of eight counties—the five New York City boroughs and three New York state counties north of the city. Suburbs just across the Hudson River in New Jersey, and those just a county or two away on Long Island, occupied different PMSAs altogether. In cross-metropolitan analyses, the New York metro area (PMSA) often seemed an outlier because the city so dominated the area's demographic and economic characteristics.

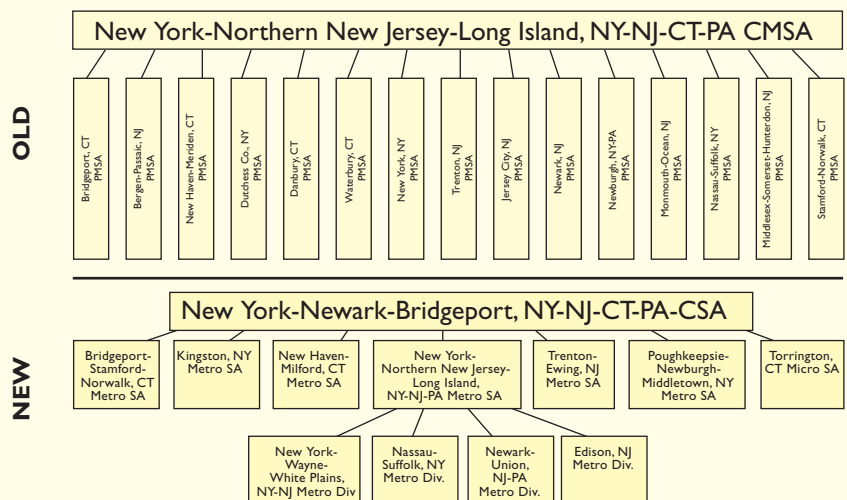
With the release of the new standards, several former PMSAs in the New York CMSA combined to form the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MetroSA, consisting of 23 counties in three states. This expansive new MetroSA incorporates four Metropolitan Divisions. Even the Division that includes New York City (the New York-Wayne-White Plains, NY-NJ Metropolitan Division) contains 11 counties in two states, and is larger than the old PMSA. At the “macro” level, the New York-Newark-Bridgeport, NY-NJ-CT-PA CSA contains 30 counties in four states (Figure 10). As in Dallas-Ft. Worth, the New York region can now be viewed at three hierarchical levels of geography (Figure 11). Instead of one CMSA made up of fifteen PMSAs, the new

Figure 10. New York-Newark-Bridgeport Combined Statistical Area



Source: OMB

Figure 11. New York's Components, Old and New Definitions



Source: OMB

CSA includes six MetroSAs, further subdivided into four Metropolitan Divisions, and one MicroSA.

National metropolitan analyses are likely to adopt the New York MetroSA, and some demographic consequences of that transition are explored below. But those focusing specifically on the New York region now benefit from a wider variety of options codified in OMB's metropolitan definitions.

Multiple Changes

The new metropolitan standards changed some metropolitan areas in more than one way. Detroit provides the most complicated example: The old Detroit PMSA gained a county, lost a county, and split into two separate MetroSAs in the new system. The Detroit, MI PMSA consisted of six counties: Lapeer, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, and Wayne. The new Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI MetroSA still consists of six counties, but one changed. Livingston County, formerly in the Ann Arbor, MI PMSA, moved into the Detroit metro area. Meanwhile, Monroe County became its own metropolitan area. Besides Detroit, six other MSAs/PMSAs have new compositions through a mixture of county additions and subtractions, or metropolitan splits and combinations.

All of these examples show that the transition to a new classification system reshuffled many pieces of the metropolitan puzzle. Yet the basic contours of most metropolitan areas remain largely intact. The streamlined rules for defining metropolitan areas have resulted in some sensible changes (a slightly smaller Washington metro area, a larger New York metro area, a combined Dallas-Forth Worth metropolis), and offer researchers a richer variety of options for analyzing some of the nation's largest regions. In a later section, we explore how the new metropolitan areas rank on basic demographic attributes compared to their previous counterparts.

D. Both metropolitan and micropolitan areas contain principal cities, which replace central cities in the new names given these areas.

Some of the examples above highlight the implications of another significant change between the old and new standards: the identification of new **principal cities** for MetroSAs and MicroSAs. These replace the old system's central cities, and designate prominent places within these areas; specifically, OMB uses principal cities and Census-designated places (CDPs) to derive the official names for all MetroSAs and MicroSAs.¹⁹

While the concept of principal cities may seem familiar to most analysts, these places are somewhat different than central cities. First, the term "principal" rather than "central" denotes that these cities are no longer as fundamental to the identification of metropolitan areas and their commuting fields. The current standards employ urban areas rather than cities or incorporated places as "cores" to define their central and outlying counties. Nonetheless, most urbanized areas contain recognizable cities which developers of the new standards determined should be identified since their names are well known as important jurisdictions within MetroSAs and MicroSAs.

Second, the rules for identifying principal cities are slightly different from those used to identify central cities (Appendix B has a comparison). The principal city(s) of an area always includes the largest incorporated place or census designated place, as well as additional cities that meet population and employment thresholds.²⁰ The new standards identify 646 principal cities among the 361 MetroSAs, up from 554 central cities under the old system. OMB also recognizes 609 principal cities among the 573 Micro SAs.

As noted earlier, some analysts have used central cities to identify suburban populations, by subtracting central city populations from metropolitan

area populations and designating the result as "suburban." This fairly crude means of defining the suburbs has figured in several Brookings analyses.²¹ Although neither the previous nor the new metropolitan standards confer "suburban" status on this residual territory, it is likely that analysts will continue to employ a similar technique with principal cities to derive the suburbs.²² As such, the introduction of a new and larger set of cities within metropolitan areas may shrink somewhat the differences between "urban" and "suburban" territories overall.²³

On this note, Figure 12 provides a comparison of the share of metropolitan populations residing in central cities and principal cities. Principal cities comprise a somewhat larger share of metropolitan population than did central cities (39.8 percent versus 35.5 percent). This owes to the identification of additional principal cities within existing metropolitan areas, and to the creation of many smaller metropolitan areas that now have their own principal cities. Figure 8 also shows the share of micropolitan population living in their principal cities. Principal cities' smaller share of MicroSA population (33.2 percent) reflects the more dispersed settlements common in these smaller areas.

While the population or demographic changes caused by the shift to principal cities may intrigue researchers, these new principal cities make even more noticeable changes to the names of MetroSAs. As with central cities, most metropolitan areas titles now incorporate the names of the three largest principal cities in descending population size.²⁴ However, because some new cities are identified in existing areas, and some metropolitan areas split or combined with others, title changes are common. Among the 102 largest MSAs and PMSAs, two-thirds (67) registered some change in their official names in the transition to MetroSAs. Examples of these changes appear in Table 5. In

most cases, the result is a longer name, sometimes incorporating places not well-known to outsiders. The New Orleans, LA MSA, for example, is now the New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA Metropolitan Statistical Area.

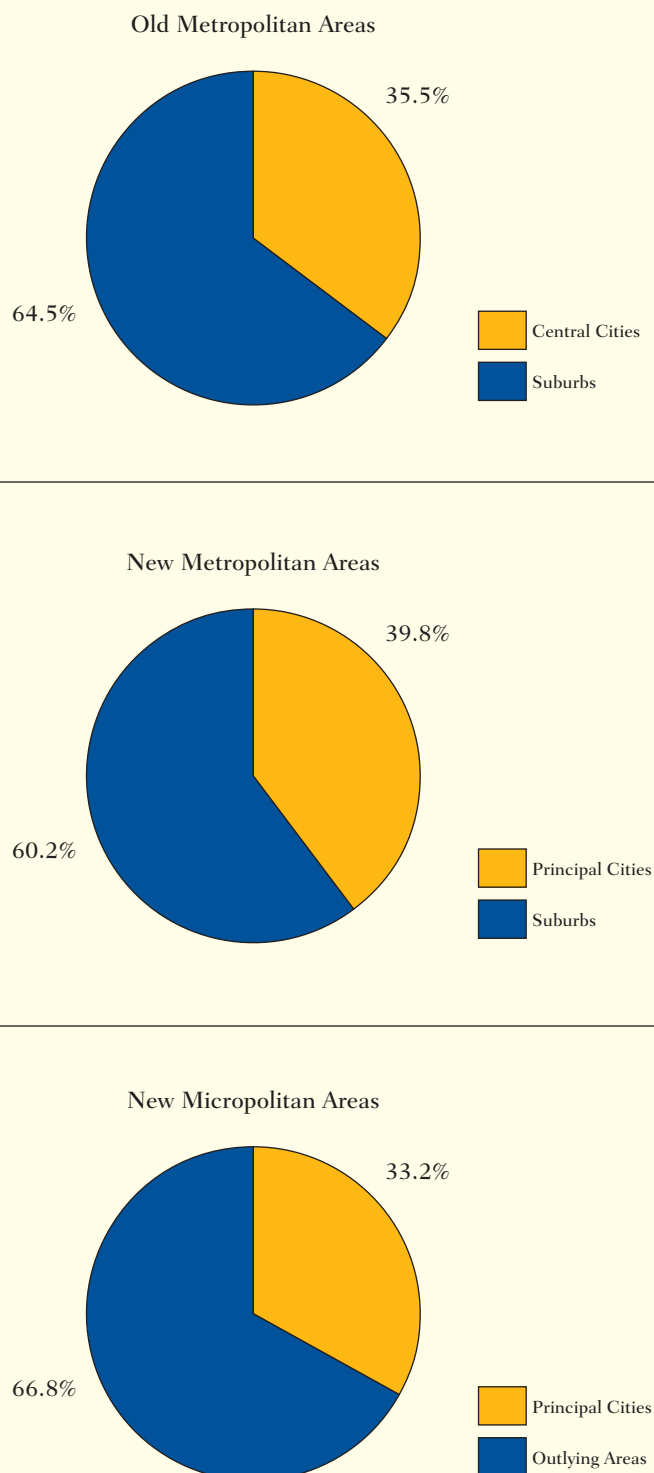
A city's inclusion in its metropolitan area's title may promote name recognition and enhance its status. Scottsdale, Arizona, for example, gained prominence by entering the title of the Phoenix-Mesa metropolitan area. While Scottsdale did not meet the old population threshold, its rank as the third largest principal city in the Phoenix area thrust it into the new metropolitan title.²⁵ Places like Naperville and Joliet, Illinois in the Chicago metro area, and Carlsbad and San Marcos, California in the San Diego metro area, realized similar benefits from the change in naming convention.

The order of city names in a metropolitan area title is also significant, since sometimes the first-named city is the only one used to refer to a metropolitan area. In the case of the Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA-NC MSA, the city of Norfolk has been eclipsed by Virginia Beach, switching the order of the two in the new MetroSA title. Without changing its geographical components, the Ventura, CA PMSA became the Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura MetroSA. And in Austin, Texas, Round Rock replaced San Marcos as the second-named city in the metropolitan area title, thanks to the more streamlined rules for defining principal cities (versus central cities).²⁶

E. The new definitions alter the social and economic attributes of many metropolitan areas, as well as their national rankings on these attributes.

The new standards provide one standard choice for analyzing or ranking metropolitan areas across the country, but several ways for local analysts to define their area. In this section, we first compare the options available for

Figure 12. Share of Core-Based Population in Central or Principal Cities, 2000



Source: OMB and Census 2000

Table 5. Title Changes for Selected Metropolitan Areas

Former Title	Current Title
Austin-San Marcos, TX MSA	Austin-Round Rock, TX MetroSA
Boulder-Longmont, CO PMSA	Boulder, CO MetroSA
Bryan-College Station, TX MSA	College Station-Bryan, TX MetroSA*
Chicago, IL PMSA	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI MetroSA
Fort Myers-Cape Coral, FL MSA	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL MetroSA*
Houston, TX PMSA	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX MetroSA
Las Vegas, NV-AZ MSA	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV MetroSA
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MetroSA
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI MSA	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MetroSA
New Orleans, LA MSA	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA MetroSA
New York, NY PMSA	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MetroSA
Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA-NC MSA	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC MetroSA*
Phoenix-Mesa, AZ MSA	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ MetroSA
San Diego, CA MSA	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MetroSA
San Francisco, CA PMSA	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA MetroSA
San Jose, CA PMSA	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA MetroSA
Ventura, CA PMSA	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA MetroSA*
Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV PMSA	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MetroSA

* Order of place names in the metropolitan area title changed.

Source: OMB

Table 6. Comparing “Old” and “New” New York

Population		Income		Race/Ethnicity				Education	
Population		Households with Annual Income	Households with Annual Income				Asian- Pacific Islander	Less than HS Education	BA or Higher Education
(millions)		Below \$25K	Above \$75K	White	Hispanic	Black			
Old Definition									
CMSA	21.1	25.5%	32.4%	56.2%	18.2%	16.1%	6.7%	20.7%	30.5%
PMSA	9.3	32.7%	25.6%	39.6%	25.1%	22.7%	9.0%	26.0%	29.2%
New Definition									
CSA	21.3	25.5%	32.3%	56.6%	18.1%	16.0%	6.7%	20.6%	30.4%
MetroSA	18.3	26.2%	32.0%	53.4%	19.5%	17.0%	7.3%	21.3%	30.3%
Division	11.3	31.0%	27.0%	42.4%	25.0%	20.3%	8.9%	25.2%	29.4%

Source: Census 2000 and OMB

analysis in one large region, New York, and compare the region's attributes under the old and new systems. We then contrast demographic rankings of metropolitan areas using the MetroSA concept to those provided by the old MSAs and PMSAs.

Local Choices and Changes—New York

As was the case under the old standards, the choice a user makes in defining a local area for study can significantly affect the results. For New York, there are now three ways to define the metro area, rather than two (Finding C). Table 6 compares population sizes and socio-economic attributes for the former New York CMSA and PMSA with the new CSA, MetroSA, and Metropolitan Division containing New York City. The former CMSA and the current CSA are similar in size, while the former PMSA is similar to the current metro division. Interestingly, the current MetroSA, the geography likely to be used most often, has no parallel in the old standards. Whereas the former PMSA comprised only 44 percent of the CMSA's population, the current MetroSA accounts for 86 percent of the CSA. Even the smaller geographical unit, the division, makes up more than half of its CSA's population.

It is not surprising then, that there are noticeable differences between the profile of the “new” New York (MetroSA) and the “old” New York (PMSA). The MetroSA is wealthier, whiter, more educated, and has a higher percentage of its population in married-couple households. These differences reflect the new area's reach into the far suburbs of northern and central New Jersey, Long Island, and even eastern Pennsylvania. By far, the greatest disparity between the two metropolitan area definitions appears in race and ethnicity attributes. The new MetroSA is majority non-Hispanic white (53 percent), while the old PMSA was only 40-percent white.

National Changes—Metropolitan Rankings

New York presents one of the more extreme examples of how the new classification system may alter our understanding of who lives in particular metropolitan areas. But significant changes are also evident in other parts of the nation, where new metro areas were created, expanded, or combined.

The demographic consequences of the new system are apparent across the nation's largest metro areas, too. Table 7 presents rankings of old and new metro areas (MSAs/PMSAs/NECMAs vs. MetroSAs) by population, income, and educational attributes using Census 2000 data. One immediately apparent change is that New York replaces Los Angeles as the most populated metropolitan area in the country, with nearly 6 million more people than its West Coast counterpart. Dallas, meanwhile, jumps from tenth to fifth, due to its combination with Fort Worth. Although Detroit's population increases slightly, its rank declines from sixth to ninth. Miami makes it into the top ten (from twenty-fourth), thanks to its new grouping with Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, while Atlanta just misses the top ten, falling to eleventh in rank.

The new system also alters rather significantly the list of wealthiest metro areas, as measured by the share of households with annual income above \$75,000. Formerly, half of the top 12 metro areas were in the greater New York region, but since four of these are now incorporated into the New York MetroSA, they leave room for other metro areas to move up the list. Hartford and Anchorage, for instance, now break into the top 15. Simultaneously, the combination of former PMSAs into the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island MetroSA moved New York up in the wealth rankings from fifty-one to twelve.

On the share of adults with at least a bachelor's degree, many college

towns are among the highest-ranked metro areas under both the old and new systems, but some ordering did change. The Ann Arbor MetroSA retained only the one county from its old PMSA that contains the University of Michigan, elevating it from nineteenth to second in the ranking. Iowa City, meanwhile, added another county outside the University of Iowa, dropping it from second to eighth. Likewise, Bloomington, IN, and Madison, WI, each added two counties to their metropolitan definitions, causing them to fall out of the top 15. And Ithaca, NY, one of the 49 new metropolitan areas and home to Cornell University, now ranks third. Perhaps the most notable change in the educational rankings is the drop San Francisco takes from fourth to fourteenth, due to its combination with Oakland.

In summary, these examples demonstrate that the rules governing metropolitan area definitions may greatly influence our understanding of which regions are biggest, richest, or brightest.

Discussion and Implications

The real-world implications of the new metropolitan classifications discussed here have yet to be realized, in large part because many individuals and organizations are still relying on the old (and in some cases, even earlier) definitions in research and practice. Brookings' own studies that use Census 2000 data still employ the older definitions that were in effect at the time of the census. The slow pace at which the new definitions are being put to use reflects in part OMB's adoption of novel concepts like micropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and combined statistical areas. Revisions during the 1990s, by contrast, merely updated existing concepts with new population data. In any case, whatever effects the new classifications have, they are likely to occur

Table 7. Rankings of Old and New Metropolitan Areas, 2000

OLD (MSAs/PMSAs/NECMAs)			NEW (MetroSAs)		
Rank	Name	Total Population (thousands)	Rank	Name	Total Population (thousands)
1	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA	9,519	1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	18,323
2	New York, NY PMSA	9,314	2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	12,366
3	Chicago, IL PMSA	8,273	3	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	9,098
4	Boston, MA-NH NECMA	6,058	4	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	5,687
5	Philadelphia, PA-NJ PMSA	5,101	5	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	5,162
6	Detroit, MI PMSA	4,442	6	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, FL	5,008
7	Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV PMSA	4,923	7	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	4,796
8	Houston, TX PMSA	4,178	8	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	4,715
9	Atlanta, GA MSA	4,112	9	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	4,453
10	Dallas, TX PMSA	3,519	10	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	4,391
11	Nassau-Suffolk, NY PMSA	2,754	11	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	4,248
12	Riverside-San Bernardino, CA PMSA	3,255	12	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	4,124
13	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI MSA	2,969	13	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	3,255
14	San Diego, CA MSA	2,814	14	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	3,252
15	St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	2,604	15	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	3,044
Rank	Name	Households with Income over \$75K (%)	Rank	Name	Households with Income over \$75K (%)
1	San Jose, CA PMSA	49.6	1	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	49.3
2	Nassau-Suffolk, NY PMSA	45.0	2	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	43.6
3	Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ PMSA	43.6	3	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	40.7
4	San Francisco, CA PMSA	42.3	4	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	39.9
5	Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV PMSA	40.1	5	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	37.8
6	Bergen-Passaic, NJ PMSA	38.9	6	Trenton-Ewing, NJ	36.1
7	Oakland, CA PMSA	38.1	7	Boulder, CO	35.3
8	Ventura, CA PMSA	37.8	8	Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA	34.6
9	Orange County, CA PMSA	37.4	9	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	34.3
10	Newark, NJ PMSA	37.0	10	Ann Arbor, MI	32.8
11	Bridgeport, CT NECMA	36.2	11	Anchorage, AK	32.1
12	Trenton, NJ PMSA	36.1	12	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	32.0
13	Boulder-Longmont, CO PMSA	35.3	13	Vallejo-Fairfield, CA	31.8
14	Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA PMSA	34.6	14	Napa, CA	31.8
15	Monmouth-Ocean, NJ PMSA	34.4	15	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	31.7
Rank	Name	Bachelor's Degree or Higher (%)	Rank	Name	Bachelor's Degree or Higher (%)
1	Boulder-Longmont, CO PMSA	52.4	1	Boulder, CO	52.4
2	Iowa City, IA MSA	47.6	2	Ann Arbor, MI	48.1
3	Corvallis, OR MSA	47.4	3	Ithaca, NY	47.5
4	San Francisco, CA PMSA	43.6	4	Corvallis, OR	47.4
5	Lawrence, KS MSA	42.7	5	Ames, IA	44.5
6	Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV PMSA	41.8	6	Lawrence, KS	42.7
7	Columbia, MO MSA	41.7	7	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	42.5
8	Madison, WI MSA	40.6	8	Iowa City, IA	42.0
9	San Jose, CA PMSA	40.5	9	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	39.9
10	Charlottesville, VA MSA	40.1	10	Columbia, MO	39.9
11	Santa Fe, NM MSA	39.9	11	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	39.8
12	Bloomington, IN MSA	39.6	12	Fort Collins-Loveland, CO	39.5
13	Fort Collins-Loveland, CO MSA	39.5	13	Durham, NC	38.8
14	Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC MSA	38.9	14	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	38.8
15	Gainesville, FL MSA	38.7	15	Charlottesville, VA	38.3

Source: Census 2000 and OMB

over time as users gradually adapt to this new system.

Moving to the new classification scheme is, at its root, a statistical policy change—not a programmatic one. In fact, in its guidance announcing the revised definitions, OMB cautions government agencies against employing the definitions to develop and implement “nonstatistical programs and policies without full consideration of the effects of using these definitions for such purposes.” Yet as the new system gains acceptance and wider use, policymakers, researchers, and even the man on the street may confront a new way of looking at the world—or at least their particular corners of it. Below we discuss the effects that these new metropolitan standards will have on federal policy, research, and the public at large.

Federal Policy

The federal government’s use of the metropolitan area concept for purposes other than mere statistical reporting is widespread. This should not be surprising, since the distinct economic character metro areas are designed to exhibit makes them good approximations for labor markets, commuter sheds, and air-quality regions. The U.S. Code alone—the federal government’s body of law—contains over 60 unique mentions of the phrase “metropolitan statistical area.”

Policymakers really put the concept to work, though, in the implementation of federal laws through regulation. Nearly every major federal agency—from those involved in agriculture to homeland security to education—oversees one or more programs that make use of OMB-defined metropolitan areas. Federal agencies typically use the metropolitan area concept as a basis for reporting information, to establish program eligibility, and/or to set program features; an example of each is offered here.²⁷

1. As a basis for reporting information—Home Mortgage Disclosure

Under the regulations that implement the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA), federally-insured depository institutions must collect information on applications for home mortgage loans. In addition to characteristics of the applicant, the institution must collect information about the property to which the application relates, including its location by metropolitan area, state, county, and census tract. Institutions must compile and report this information to the appropriate banking regulators (e.g., the Federal Reserve, the Comptroller of the Currency, etc.) annually. Metropolitan areas typically represent the marketplaces within which banks and thrifts operate, and thus serve as important geographic frames for evaluating lending performance under other laws related to HMDA, such as fair lending laws and the Community Reinvestment Act. As metropolitan areas change and grow in size, banks and thrifts must therefore change their information and reporting procedures to bring their data—and lending practices—into line with the new metropolitan definitions.

2. To establish program eligibility or applicability—Locality Pay Program

U.S. law requires federal pay rates to be comparable with non-federal pay rates for the same level of work within the same local area, and for any existing pay disparities between federal and non-federal employees to be eliminated. “Locality pay areas” are places where the Federal Salary Council (FSC) has determined that wage rates should be adjusted. There are a total of 32 locality pay areas, 31 of which coincide generally with metropolitan area definitions, and one that

encompasses the remainder of the United States. A review of the revised metropolitan standards by the FSC in December 2003 recommended that locality pay areas use the new metropolitan standards, and where available, the combined statistical area. Micropolitan areas will not be used unless they are part of a combined metropolitan statistical area. As a result of boundary changes to several metropolitan areas under the new standards, the number of federal employees subject to locality pay adjustments may change. Final regulations on implementing the new locality pay areas will be issued by OPM in January 2005.

3. To set program features—Medicare

Perhaps no federal program attracts more attention to OMB’s metropolitan definitions than Medicare. This is largely because many of the payments made to providers under Medicare rely on cost data specific to the geography in which a provider is located. A hospital’s location inside or outside a metropolitan area is used as an eligibility criterion for various special Medicare designations that can raise reimbursement rates.²⁸ The most notable example of metro area usage within Medicare policy derives from program reimbursement for hospitals’ operating costs based on prospectively set rates specific to each patient diagnosis. In making payments to a particular hospital, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) adjusts each diagnostic rate by a wage index applicable to the area in which the hospital is located, in order to account for geographic differences in the labor costs hospitals bear. CMS defines these areas using OMB metropolitan areas (MSAs, PMSAs, and NECMAs), and uses survey data to update the index annually for all

metropolitan areas and statewide non-metropolitan areas. Generally, the wage index is higher in urban areas and lower in rural ones, so whether a hospital is located in a metropolitan area receives a great deal of scrutiny.²⁹

Recognizing the significant impact that the new metropolitan standards will have on the calculation of the wage index, CMS has already analyzed the changes to each hospital's wage index that would result from: (a) constructing separate indexes for hospitals located in each MetroSA, metro division, MicroSA, and statewide non-CBSA; and (b) leaving hospitals in MicroSAs as part of a generalized statewide rural index.³⁰ The proposed rule opts for considering MicroSAs and statewide non-CBSAs together, in large part because moving to MicroSA-specific indexes could result in large one-time changes to many hospitals' payments, and because many MicroSAs are home to only one hospital, thus limiting the averaging effect of the index across providers. Whichever path CMS eventually adopts, OMB's metropolitan standards will continue to play a high-profile role in shaping the details of Medicare program operations.

Among these three types of usages, federal policymakers employ metro areas most often in the same manner as the "locality pay program" example—to establish whether, by virtue of its location, an individual or community is eligible for a particular program, or certain regulations apply to individuals, businesses, or governments. Programs that use metro-area characteristics in formulas, as with Medicare, are rarer.³¹ However, some agencies use the standards in more than one of these ways. In fact, the locality pay program uses metro area definitions to designate whether a metropolitan area is part of the pro-

gram and then indexes pay levels according to local wages.

Nonetheless, the decision to change metropolitan definitions can have far-reaching consequences for these types of programs, and, as a result, some agencies are cautious about adopting the new standards. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), for example, is responsible for annually publishing "Fair Market Rents" (FMRs) or payment standards for their major housing assistance program (commonly known as Section 8). When HUD announced the proposed FY2005 FMRs, which used the new metropolitan standards, they received public comments from key interest groups expressing concern that the new definitions produced drastic changes in FMRs in some communities. As a result, HUD decided not to switch immediately to the new OMB metropolitan definitions.

The impacts that the new definitions will have on federal programs are still unclear overall, and will depend not only on the particular characteristics of the metropolitan areas undergoing changes, but also on how lawmakers and rulemakers integrate the new concepts into existing systems. In this regard, OMB recently offered more explicit guidance to federal agencies that use metropolitan areas for nonstatistical purposes.³² OMB urges agencies that had used PMSAs to now consider using Metro Divisions, which it describes as the "comparable geographic units of classification." In addition, it suggests that in cases where old metro areas divided into more than one new metro area, the CSA may form a "more appropriate geographic unit for analytic and program purposes." Whether agencies will take these suggestions to heart, or will opt for more straightforward usage of MetroSAs alone, may in the end dictate the pace at which the new definitions are adopted, and the extent to which programmatic changes result.

Research

As OMB's suggestions indicate, one implication of the new metropolitan classification system is that researchers now have more choices. Under the old system, metropolitan researchers typically analyzed MSAs together with either CMSAs or PMSAs. The new system offers researchers, at the local level, the opportunity to examine MetroSAs, metro divisions, CSAs, and MicroSAs. In addition, the growth of metropolitan America has produced a greater number of MetroSAs than MSAs and PMSAs, and more metropolitan principal cities than central cities.

A potentially expansive research community, including federal and state agencies, nonprofit research organizations, and private-sector market researchers, will use the new metropolitan classifications. The federal statistical agencies themselves will influence the speed at which other researchers move towards the new system, and the choices that researchers make within that system. Some agencies like the Bureau of Economic Analysis have already begun to release data that conform to the new metropolitan and micropolitan definitions. Many, like the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Center for Health Statistics, have yet to make the transition, in part because their most recent data releases pre-date the June 2003 announcement of the new classification system.

The greater number of choices available to researchers under the new system may carry both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, researchers may now have access to data that conform more closely to their geographic areas of interest. On the other hand, as different metropolitan researchers choose to focus on different classifications, it may become more difficult to compare across their findings. Some, as OMB suggests, may choose to work with metropolitan divisions for comparability with PMSAs.³³

Others may work with MetroSAs alone, or in combination with MicroSAs. Rural experts may focus only on non-CBSAs, or on non-CBSAs together with MicroSAs. This flexibility can enrich the field of inquiry, but it will become even more important for researchers to state their methodology clearly and explain why they have chosen their particular geographic frame. As discussed above, it is advised that national rankings of metropolitan areas and micropolitan areas employ the MetroSAs and MicroSAs, rather than CSAs or metropolitan divisions.

Regardless of their views on the classification system itself, researchers should welcome the new metropolitan definitions for their basis in up-to-date census data on population, urbanization, and commuting patterns. These new areas likely exhibit a greater degree of economic and social cohesion today than do the old metropolitan definitions, which were rooted primarily in 1990 census data. The new methods for defining metropolitan areas and principal cities are also simpler than under the old system, and help resolve some of the odder outcomes apparent in the 1999 definitions (like King George County, VA appearing in the Washington, DC metro area).

What changes might the new system produce in actual research results? In this survey, we offer a look at how certain demographic and economic indicators at the metropolitan level differ when viewed through the old and new lenses. For the most part, the notable differences are limited to a few large metropolitan areas that underwent significant definitional changes, like New York, San Francisco, Dallas, and Raleigh-Durham. In many other areas like Atlanta, Portland, Wichita, and Washington, the addition, subtraction, or "relegation" to micropolitan of smaller counties at the metropolitan fringe does not do much to influence the overall empirical picture.

Popular Usage

The new system may, at least over the long run, exert as much influence on our popular understanding of metropolitan areas as on our research understanding. Popular notions of metropolitan areas are shaped not only by what geographies they contain, but also by name recognition. Both may contribute to the economic and social identity of local residents, businesses, and governments.

With respect to their geographic makeup, it is not surprising that the new metropolitan definitions are still “off the radar” in large swaths of metropolitan America, given that the policy and research communities have yet to completely embrace the changes. In part, this is because institutions like regional media and chambers of commerce mediate between what the federal government decides is a metropolitan area, and what average citizens consider to be their region. Newspaper “Metro” sections, for instance, typically report on jurisdictions in which they have a substantial subscriber base. Thus, news in *The Washington Post* covers roughly 14 counties, rather than the 18 that make up the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-MD-VA-WV Metro SA. The Mid-America Regional Council, the metropolitan planning organization for greater Kansas City, is composed of eight counties, while the new Kansas City, MO-KS Metropolitan Statistical Area contains 15 counties.

At the same time, several of the metro areas that underwent significant changes might find more local receptivity than their older versions. The old New York PMSA, consisting of the five city boroughs and three upstate NY counties, bore little relation to the average citizen’s conception of the metro area. The revised New York Metro SA, which captures suburban Long Island and much of northern New Jersey, probably comes much closer. Similarly, the Los Angeles metro area, which before included

only Los Angeles County, now takes in Orange County as well, better reflecting the economic ties between these two jurisdictions.

Names, however, seem to carry even more weight than geographic composition in the public eye. The status of suburban places like Sandy Springs, GA (Atlanta), Sugar Land, TX (Houston), Edison, NJ (New York), and Naperville, IL (Chicago) was thus immediately elevated when they each found a spot in their respective metro area’s name.³⁴ While some of those places might earn greater acceptance as a result—Sandy Springs is currently in a pitched battle to incorporate as a city—others caused confusion and dismay. Consultations with local officials resulted in OMB changing the New York-Newark-Edison, NY-NJ-PA MetroSA to the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MetroSA in December 2003. Public opinion simultaneously dislodged Cheektowaga and Tonawanda, NY, both principal cities in the Buffalo metro area, from that area’s name in favor of the fourth-largest principal city, Niagara Falls, which is both a tourist destination and source of regional identity.

Of course, the power of a name is even more evident in micropolitan areas, and new metropolitan areas. Hundreds of smaller counties and towns formerly part of “rural America” suddenly acquired their own identity, and increased attention from researchers and businesses.³⁵ Even counties that formerly resided at the fringe of large metropolitan areas, like Ashtabula, OH (formerly in the Cleveland metro area) and Nye, NV (formerly in the Las Vegas metro area), may gain more stature from a micropolitan label than they lost in separating from a metropolitan center.

These examples of definitional changes demonstrate that federal statistical policy can impact how we live and work. In the end, both research and policy have an important role to

play in bridging the gap between the statistical versions of metropolitan areas and the popular notions of the regions in which metropolitan residents live. To the extent that research can narrow this gap over time, metropolitan-level research will provide greater insights for government and business decisions. OMB’s new metropolitan classification system thus presents both a unique challenge and a fresh opportunity for metropolitan research to make a real-world impact.

Appendix A. Definitions of Metropolitan Concepts

Old Standards

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) contained cities or urbanized areas with at least 50,000 people. Counties were included or excluded in the MSA based on employment, commuting, and population density criteria. There were 258 MSAs in effect for Census 2000.

Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSAs) consisted of those counties or groups of counties within a large metropolitan area (at least one million people) that contained at least 100,000 people and met criteria for separate designations. There were 73 PMSAs in effect for Census 2000.

Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (CMSAs) consisted of a metropolitan area with at least 1 million people in which two or more primary metropolitan areas (PMSAs) had been identified. There were 18 CMSAs in effect for Census 2000.

New England County Metropolitan Areas (NECMAs) were defined as county-based alternatives to the standard city- and town-based metropolitan areas in the six New England states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont). There were 12 NECMAs in effect for Census 2000.

Central cities were defined for each MSA and CMSA. The largest incorporated place (or, in a few cases, Census designated place) in a metropolitan area was automatically designated a central city. Additional cities were included if they met population and employment criteria. There were 554 central cities in effect for Census 2000.

New Standards

Core-Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) contain a substantial population nucleus (the “core”) together with adjacent communities having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core. CBSAs are defined as metropolitan or micropolitan depending on the size of their core.

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MetroSAs) contain at least one urbanized area with at least 50,000 people (the “core”). Counties are included or excluded in the metro based on commuting criteria. There are 361 MetroSAs.

Metropolitan statistical areas of 2.5 million or more may be divided into metropolitan divisions. **Metropolitan divisions** consist of one or more counties that represent an employment center plus adjacent counties with strong commuting ties to the core. There are eleven MetroSAs with divisions, for a total of twenty-nine divisions.

Micropolitan Statistical Areas (MicroSAs) contain at least one urban cluster with between 10,000 and 50,000 people (the “core”). Counties are included or excluded in the micropolitan area based on commuting criteria. There are 573 micros.

New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs) are defined as conceptually similar to the county-based metropolitan and micropolitan areas, but with cities and towns as the building blocks rather than counties. There are 21 metropolitan NECTAs and 22 micropolitan NECTAs.

Metropolitan statistical areas and micropolitan statistical areas may be joined to form **combined statistical areas (CSAs)**. CSAs consist of two or more adjacent CBSAs (metropolitan or micropolitan or a combination of both) that meet employment interchange criteria. There are 120 CSAs.

Principal cities are defined for each CBSA. The largest city in a CBSA is automatically designated a principal city. Other cities may be designated if they meet certain criteria for population and employment. There are 1255 principal cities.

Appendix B. Comparing Old and New Standards*

	Old Standards	New Standards
Levels/Categories and Terminology	Metropolitan statistical areas based on total populations of at least 1,000,000 (level A), 250,000 to 999,999 (level B), 100,000 to 249,999 (level C), and less than 100,000 (level D), respectively. Metropolitan statistical areas of 1,000,000 or more population can be designated as consolidated metropolitan statistical areas if local opinion is in favor and component primary metropolitan statistical areas can be identified.	Metropolitan statistical areas based around at least one Census Bureau defined urbanized area of 50,000 or more population, and micropolitan statistical areas, based around at least one urban cluster of 10,000 to 49,999 population. A metropolitan statistical area with a single core of at least 2,500,000 population can be subdivided into component micropolitan divisions. Collectively, the metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas are termed Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs).
Building Blocks	Counties and equivalent entities throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico, except in New England, where cities and towns are used to define metropolitan areas. County based alternative provided for the New England states.	Counties and equivalent entities throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico. City and town based areas, conceptually similar to the county based areas, provided for the New England states.
Qualification of Areas	City of at least 50,000 population, or Census Bureau defined urbanized area of at least 50,000 population in a metropolitan area of at least 100,000 population.	Census Bureau defined urban area of at least 10,000 population and less than 50,000 population for micropolitan statistical area designation. Census Bureau defined urbanized area of at least 50,000 for metropolitan statistical area designation.
Qualification of Central Counties	Any county that includes a central city or at least 50% of the population of a central city that is located in a qualifier urbanized area. Also any county in which at least 50% of the population is located in a qualifier urbanized area.	Any county in which at least 50% of the population is located in urban areas of at least 10,000 population, or that has within its boundaries a population of at least 5,000 located in a single urban area of at least 10,000 population.
Qualification of Outlying Counties	Combination of commuting and measures of settlement structure:	Commuting ties:
	50% or more of employed workers commute to the central county/counties of a metropolitan statistical area and: 25 or more persons per square mile (ppsm), or at least 10% or 5,000 of the population lives in a qualifier urbanized area; OR	At least 25% of the employed residents of the county work in the central county/counties of a CBSA; or at least 25% of the employment in the county is accounted for by workers residing in the central county/counties of the CBSA.
	40% to 50% of employed workers commute to the central county/counties of a metropolitan statistical area and: 35 or more ppsm, or at least 10% or 5,000 of the population lives in a qualifier urbanized area; OR	A county that qualifies as outlying to two or more CBSAs is included in the area with which it has the strongest commuting tie.
	25% to 40% of employed workers commute to the central county/counties of a metropolitan statistical area and: 35 ppsm and one of the following: (1) 50 or more ppsm, (2) at least 35% urban population, (3) at least 10% or 5,000 of population lives in a qualifier urbanized area; OR	
	15% to 25% of employed workers commute to the central county/counties of a metropolitan statistical area and: 50 or more ppsm and two of the following: (1) 60 or more ppsm, (2) at least 35% urban population, (3) population growth rate of at least 20%, (4) at least 10% or 5,000 of population lives in a qualifier urbanized area; OR	
	15% to 25% of employed workers commute to the central county/counties of a metropolitan statistical area and less than 50 ppsm and two of the following: (1) at least 35% urban population, (2) population growth rate of at least 20%, (3) at least 10% or 5,000 of population lives in a qualifier urbanized area; OR	
	at least 2,500 of the population lives in a central city located in a qualifier urbanized area of a metropolitan statistical area.	
	If a county qualifies as outlying to two or more metropolitan areas, it is assigned to the area to which commuting is greatest; if the relevant commuting percentages are within 5 points of each other, local opinion is considered.	

*Source: Michael R. Ratcliffe, U.S. Census Bureau

Appendix B. Comparing Old and New Standards (*continued*)

	Old Standards	New Standards
Merging Statistical Areas	If a county qualifies as a central county of one metropolitan statistical area and as an outlying county on the basis of commuting to a central county of another metropolitan statistical area, both counties become central counties of a single metropolitan statistical area.	Two adjacent CBSAs are merged to form one CBSA if the central county/counties (as a group) of one CBSA qualify as outlying to the central county/counties (as a group) of the other.
Central Cities/Principal Cities	Central cities include the largest city in a metropolitan statistical area/consolidated metropolitan statistical area AND each city of at least 250,000 population or at least 100,000 workers AND each city of at least 25,000 population and at least 75 jobs per 100 workers and less than 60% out commuting AND each city of at least 15,000 population that is at least 1/3 the size of largest central city and meets employment ratio and commuting percentage above AND the largest city of 15,000 population or more that meets employment ratio and commuting percentage above and is in a secondary noncontiguous urbanized area AND each city in a secondary noncontiguous urbanized area that is at least 1/3 the size of largest central city in that urbanized area and has at least 15,000 population and meets employment ratio and commuting percentage above.	Principal cities include the largest incorporated place with a population of 10,000 or more or, if no incorporated place of at least 10,000 is present, the largest incorporated place or census designated place in the CBSA AND each place of at least 250,000 population or in which at least 100,000 persons work AND each place with a population of at least 50,000, but less than 250,000 in which employment meets or exceeds the number of employed residents AND each place with a population that is at least 10,000 and 1/3 the size of the largest place, and in which employment meets or exceeds the number of employed residents.
Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas/Metropolitan Divisions	Primary metropolitan statistical areas outside New England consist of one or more counties within metropolitan areas that have a total population of 1 million or more. Specifically, these primary metropolitan statistical areas consist of: (A) One or more counties designated as a standard metropolitan statistical area on January 1, 1980, unless local opinion does not support continued separate designation.	Metropolitan divisions consist of one or more counties within metropolitan statistical areas that have a single core of 2.5 million or more population.
	(B) One or more counties for which local opinion strongly supports separate designation, provided one county has: (1) at least 100,000 population; (2) at least 60 percent of its population urban; (3) less than 35 percent of its resident workers working outside the county; and (4) less than 2,500 population of the largest central city in the metropolitan statistical area.	A county is identified as a main county of a metropolitan division if 65 percent or more of its employed residents work within the county and the ratio of its employment to its number of employed residents is at least .75.
	(C) A set of two or more contiguous counties for which local opinion strongly supports separate designation, provided at least one county also could qualify as a primary metropolitan statistical area in section (B), and (1) each county meets requirements (B)(1), (B)(2), and (B)(4) and less than 50 percent of its resident workers work outside the county; (2) each county has a commuting interchange of at least 20 percent with the other counties in the set; and (3) less than 35 percent of the resident workers of the set of counties work outside the area.	A county is identified as a secondary county of a metropolitan division if 50 percent or more, but less than 65 percent, of its employed residents work within the county and the ratio of its employment to its number of employed residents is at least .75 .
	Each county in the metropolitan area not included within a central core under sections (A) through (C), is assigned to the contiguous primary metropolitan statistical area to whose central core commuting is greatest, provided this commuting is: (1) at least 15 percent of the county's resident workers; (2) at least 5 percentage points higher than the commuting flow to any other primary metropolitan statistical area central core that exceeds 15 percent; and	A main county automatically serves as the basis for a metropolitan division. For a secondary county to qualify as the basis for forming a metropolitan division, it must join with either a contiguous secondary county or a contiguous main county with which it has the highest employment interchange measure of 15 or more.
	(3) larger than the flow to the county containing the metropolitan area's largest central city.	After all main counties and secondary counties have been identified and grouped (if appropriate), each additional county that already has qualified for the metropolitan statistical area is included in the metro-

Appendix B. Comparing Old and New Standards (*continued*)

Old Standards		New Standards
Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas/Metropolitan Divisions		<p>metropolitan division associated with the main/secondary county to which the county at issue has the highest employment interchange measure.</p> <p>Counties within a metropolitan division must be contiguous.</p>
	<p>If a county has qualifying commuting ties to two or more primary metropolitan statistical area central cores and the relevant values are within 5 percentage points of each other, local opinion is considered.</p>	
Combining Statistical Areas	<p>Two adjacent metropolitan statistical areas are combined as a single metropolitan statistical area if: (A) the total population of the combination is at least one million and (1) the commuting interchange between the two metropolitan statistical areas is equal to at least 15% of the employed workers residing in the smaller metropolitan statistical area, or equal to at least 10% of the employed workers residing in the smaller metropolitan statistical area and the urbanized area of a central city of one metropolitan statistical area is contiguous with the urbanized area of a central city of the other metropolitan statistical area or a central city in one metropolitan statistical area is included in the same urbanized area as a central city in the other metropolitan statistical area; AND (2) at least 60% of the population of each metropolitan statistical area is urban. (B) the total population of the combination is less than one million and (1) their largest central cities are within 25 miles of one another, or the urbanized areas are contiguous; AND (2) there is definite evidence that the two areas are closely integrated economically and socially; AND (3) local opinion in both areas supports combination.</p>	<p>Two adjacent CBSAs are combined if the employment interchange rate between the two areas is at least 25. The employment interchange rate is the sum of the percentage of employed residents of the CBSA with the smaller total population who work in the CBSA with the larger total population and the percentage of employment in the CBSA with the smaller total population that is accounted for by workers residing in the CBSA with the larger total population. Adjacent CBSAs that have an employment interchange rate of at least 15 and less than 25 may combine if local opinion in both areas favors combination. The combining CBSAs also retain separate recognition.</p>
Titles	<p>Titles of metropolitan statistical areas include the names of up to three central cities in order of descending population size. Local opinion is considered under specified conditions.</p>	<p>Titles of CBSAs include the names of up to three principal cities in order of descending population size.</p>
	<p>Titles of primary metropolitan statistical areas include the names of up to three cities in the primary metropolitan statistical area that have qualified as central cities. If there are no central cities, the title will include the names of up to three counties in the primary metropolitan statistical area in order of descending population size.</p>	<p>Titles of metropolitan divisions include the names of up to three principal cities in the metropolitan division in order of descending population size. If there are no principal cities, the title includes the names of up to three counties in the metropolitan division in order of descending population size.</p>
	<p>Titles of consolidated metropolitan statistical areas include the names of up to three central cities or counties in the consolidated metropolitan statistical area. The first name will be the largest central city in the consolidated metropolitan statistical area; the remaining two names will be the first city or county name that appears in the title of the remaining primary metropolitan statistical area with the largest total population and the first city or county name that appears in the title of the primary metropolitan statistical area with the next largest total population. Regional designations can be substituted for the second and third names if there is strong local support.</p>	<p>Titles of combined statistical areas include the name of the largest principal city in the largest CBSA that combines, followed by the names of up to two additional principal cities in the combination in order of descending population size, or a suitable regional name, provided that combined statistical area title does not duplicate the title of a component metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area or metropolitan division. Local opinion will be considered when determining the titles of combined statistical areas.</p>

Appendix C. Metropolitan Statistical Areas with Populations of 500,000 or Greater, New Standards, 2000

Rank	Metropolitan Statistical Area	Population in 2000
1	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	18,323,002
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	12,365,627
3	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	9,098,316
4	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	5,687,147
5	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	5,161,544
6	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, FL	5,007,564
7	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	4,796,183
8	Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	4,715,407
9	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	4,452,557
10	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	4,391,344
11	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	4,247,981
12	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	4,123,740
13	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	3,254,821
14	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	3,251,876
15	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	3,043,878
16	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	2,968,806
17	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	2,813,833
18	St. Louis, MO-IL	2,698,687
19	Baltimore-Towson, MD	2,552,994
20	Pittsburgh, PA	2,431,087
21	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	2,395,997
22	Denver-Aurora, CO	2,157,756
23	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	2,148,143
24	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	2,009,632
25	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	1,927,881
26	Kansas City, MO-KS	1,836,038
27	Sacramento—Arden-Arcade—Roseville, CA	1,796,857
28	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	1,735,819
29	San Antonio, TX	1,711,703
30	Orlando, FL	1,644,561
31	Columbus, OH	1,612,694
32	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	1,582,997
33	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	1,576,370
34	Indianapolis, IN	1,525,104
35	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	1,500,741
36	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	1,375,765
37	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	1,330,448
38	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	1,316,510
39	Nashville-Davidson—Murfreesboro, TN	1,311,789
40	Austin-Round Rock, TX	1,249,763
41	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	1,205,204
42	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	1,170,111
43	Louisville, KY-IN	1,161,975
44	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	1,148,618
45	Jacksonville, FL	1,122,750
46	Richmond, VA	1,096,957
47	Oklahoma City, OK	1,095,421
48	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	1,052,238

Appendix C. Metropolitan Statistical Areas with Populations of 500,000 or Greater, New Standards, 2000 (*continued*)

Rank	Metropolitan Statistical Area	Population in 2000
49	Rochester, NY	1,037,831
50	Salt Lake City, UT	968,858
51	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	882,567
52	Honolulu, HI	876,156
53	Tulsa, OK	859,532
54	Dayton, OH	848,153
55	Tucson, AZ	843,746
56	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	825,875
57	New Haven-Milford, CT	824,008
58	Fresno, CA	799,407
59	Raleigh-Cary, NC	797,071
60	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	767,041
61	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	753,197
62	Worcester, MA	750,963
63	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	740,482
64	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	740,395
65	Albuquerque, NM	729,649
66	Baton Rouge, LA	705,973
67	Akron, OH	694,960
68	Springfield, MA	680,014
69	El Paso, TX	679,622
70	Bakersfield, CA	661,645
71	Toledo, OH	659,188
72	Syracuse, NY	650,154
73	Columbia, SC	647,158
74	Greensboro-High Point, NC	643,430
75	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY	621,517
76	Knoxville, TN	616,079
77	Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR	610,518
78	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	602,964
79	Sarasota-Bradenton-Venice, FL	589,959
80	Wichita, KS	571,166
81	McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, TX	569,463
82	Stockton, CA	563,598
83	Scranton—Wilkes-Barre, PA	560,625
84	Greenville, SC	559,940
85	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	549,033
86	Colorado Springs, CO	537,484
87	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	509,074
88	Madison, WI	501,774

Endnotes

1. In 1947, the Bureau of the Budget (predecessor of the current Office of Management and Budget), in coordination with the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other agencies coordinated efforts to define the initial Standard Metropolitan Areas (SMAs). They were formed on the basis of a large population nucleus together with adjacent components (counties, or in New England, towns). Prior to this time, metropolitan-like entities were defined variously by different agencies with names such as “metropolitan districts,” “industrial areas,” “labor market areas,” and “metropolitan counties” (Fitzsimmons and Ratcliffe, 2004).
2. Subsequent to the identification of Standard Metropolitan Areas (SMAs) in 1949, different terms and slight changes in definitions were incorporated to establish the basic areas as Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) in 1958, and Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in 1983 (Frey and Speare, 1995). Concepts associated with larger metropolitan regions (groupings of metropolitan areas) identified for use in previous censuses included: the Standard Consolidated Area, used in the 1960 Census; the Standard Consolidated Statistical Area (SCSA), identified in 1975 for use in the 1980 Census; and the Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) in 1983 (see Frey and Speare, 1995).
3. Fitzsimmons and Ratcliffe, 2004.
4. This survey does not attempt to review all of the substantive and technical decisions made during this extensive effort (see Office of Management and Budget, 2000a; Fitzsimmons and Ratcliffe, 2004; and U.S. General Accounting Office, 2004).
5. Note that we are comparing metro areas where old metropolitan standards were used to define areas with pre-2000 population and commuting data; to the new standards which were used to define areas with 2000 Census commuting data and 2000 Census and 2002 population estimate data. Thus, some changes to metro areas result solely from changes to OMB’s classification system; others reflect population and economic dynamics taking place over the course of the 1990s.
6. Metropolitan areas have also been defined for the territory of Puerto Rico, but they will be omitted from our comparisons.
7. The US Census Bureau defines as urban any densely settled area that has a population of at least 2,500. All territory not included in an urbanized area of 50,000 or more people or an urban cluster of 2,500 to 49,999 people (the two types of urban areas) is considered rural.
8. See, for example, Brown and Swanson, 2004.
9. See, for example, Frey and Berube, 2002.
10. Johnson, 1999.
11. “Measuring Rurality: Rural-Urban Continuum Codes.” USDA Economic Research Service, www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/rurality/RuralUrbCon/ (accessed August 2004).
12. While the existence of an urbanized area over 50,000 is required for each MetroSA, the central counties are defined in terms of more expansive urban populations, including both urbanized areas and smaller urban clusters. Central cities are no longer part of the new definitions.
13. The previous criteria for adding outlying counties included both density and commuting requirements. The new criteria have dropped the density requirements but made the commuting requirements more stringent. (See Appendix B for details.) A consequence of the more stringent commuting requirements was the elimination of outlying counties that would have qualified under the old system; however, in some cases new counties with low population densities now qualify as outlying counties under the new standards where they would have been omitted under the previous ones.
14. The new system does not define a PMSA counterpart for large areas with populations exceeding one million (as was the case for CMSAs in the old system). However, for 11 MetroSAs, with populations exceeding 2.5 million, the new system creates “metropolitan divisions,” which in some cases approximate the former PMSAs. These are discussed later in the text.
15. Frey, 2004a.
16. Springfield, MA and Providence, RI were the only New England metros to experience a net addition of counties.
17. For instance, the county seat of fully rural King George County, VA, is a full 70 miles from the District of Columbia. In 2000, only 3 percent of the county’s workers commuted to D.C.

18. Of the 22 metro areas under the old system that have combined in the new system, fully seven are located in the New York region.
19. This change has brought recognition to large suburban economic centers and has brought places into titles that never would have been able to qualify in the past (for instance, Paradise, NV; Sandy Springs, GA; and Towson, MD).
20. Additional principal cities within a metropolitan area include any with more than 250,000 people or 100,000 workers. Places with more than 50,000 can also be principal cities if the number of jobs located there meets or exceeds the number of employed residents. Finally, principal cities also include places with more than 10,000 people that are at least one-third the size of the largest place in the metro area, and that have at least as many jobs as employed residents.
21. See, e.g., William H. Frey, "Melting Pot Suburbs: A Census 2000 Study of Suburban Diversity" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2001); Alan Berube and William H. Frey, "A Decade of Mixed Blessings: Urban and Suburban Poverty in Census 2000" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2002); Audrey Singer, "The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2004).
22. See Frey 2004b for a critique of employing this practice to designate the suburban population.
23. At the same time, many Brookings analyses have employed a modified set of central cities in the largest metropolitan areas, recognizing only cities that appear within the metropolitan area name—and in some cases, only those that exceed certain population thresholds. See, e.g., William H. Frey and Alan Berube, "City Families, Suburban Singles: An Emerging Household Story from Census 2000" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2002); Roberto Suro and Audrey Singer, "Latino Growth in Metropolitan America: Changing Patterns, New Locations" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2002). This approach discounted small employment centers in large regions, such as Frederick, MD (Washington–Baltimore CMSA) and Port Huron, MI (Detroit CMSA); future Brookings analyses may employ a similar approach with principal cities.
24. There are some exceptions to this rule, where local opinion favored a different name. See Discussion.
25. According to the old standards, metropolitan area names included the largest central city and each additional city with at least 250,000 persons. Under the new standards, the names of the second and third largest principal cities are included in metropolitan area titles.
26. Under the old standards, Austin and San Marcos were the two central cities in the Austin, TX MSA. Round Rock was not a central city because it did not have an employment/residence ratio of at least 0.75 and at least 40 percent of its employed residents working within the city. Under the new standards, Round Rock qualifies as a principal city because its population is over 50,000 and its employment/residence ratio is at least 1.0. Because San Marcos' population is less than 50,000, and it does not have both an employment/residence ratio of at least 1.0 and a population of at least one-third that of Austin's, it did not qualify as a principal city and was thus dropped from the metropolitan area title.
27. State laws and regulations make use of OMB-defined metropolitan areas as well, but we focus on federal policy here to keep the scope reasonable, and to comment on policies potentially applicable to all metro areas.
28. Many of these special designations afford rural hospitals additional reimbursement.
29. In fact, CMS oversees a Medicare Geographic Classification Review Board to consider special circumstances under which hospitals designated as "rural" can petition to receive an "urban" designation, and vice versa.
30. *Federal Register* 69 (96) (May 18, 2004): 28249–28252.
31. This is somewhat at odds with the notion that as metro areas grow larger, they become eligible for more federal funds. See, e.g., Chris Poynter, "Louisville makes gains on federal map; Area's growth open doors for more funding, businesses." *Louisville Courier-Journal*, June 10, 2003, p. 1A.
32. Office of Management and Budget, "Update of Statistical Area Definitions and Additional Guidance on Their Uses." OMB Bulletin No. 04-03 (February 18, 2004).
33. One private-sector firm, ACCRA, has already adopted Metropolitan Divisions to analyze cost-of-living differences among U.S. metropolitan areas. ACCRA and Fargo Cass County Economic Development Corporation, 2004. "ACCRA Cost of Living Index."
34. Haya El Nasser, "Metro area's suburbs make name for themselves." *USA Today*, July 22, 2003, p. A3.
35. Laurent Belsie, "Small rural towns get new name—and new attention." *Christian Science Monitor*, June 20, 2003, p. 2.

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Acknowledgments

The authors express their gratitude to Michael Ratcliffe, Elizabeth Grieco, and Amy Liu for their comments on earlier drafts of the paper and to Cathy Sun for her technical assistance.

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