

Where Immigrants Matter Most: Assessing New Migration Dynamics in America

By William H. Frey

New migration data reveal the distinct contributions of immigration and domestic migration to population change across the nation. Large numbers of immigrants continue to concentrate in major “immigrant magnet” areas, at the same time that domestic migrants are gravitating to a wider range of areas, and local destinations within them.

Introduction

Newly released census data reveal a new migration dynamic that will have important impacts on demographic change in different parts of the country. Studies conducted after the 1990 census point out a divergence between large metropolitan areas that grew mostly from immigration, and those that grew primarily from migration within the United States. It was speculated that the continuation of these divergent migration sources of growth would create different demographic profiles for these “immigrant magnets” and “domestic migrant magnets” (Frey 1996; Frey and Lutz 1998). The former metropolitan areas would become more closely linked to the nation’s culturally diverse populations but also with “tiered” economies emerging within them. The latter metro areas, reflecting domestic migrant gains, would become more “suburban” in character — with more diverse, more middle-aged, middle class populations. These distinct migration-driven differences, which have been argued, will shape each area’s distinct public service needs, business patterns, political cultures, and the like.

With immigration rising to even higher levels in the 1990s (Martin and Miodini 2003), the new census migration data provide an opportunity to reassess these immigrant and domestic migration-driven growth patterns. This analysis reveals a continuing divergence between these two different kinds of metropolitan “magnet” areas. The census migration data allow us to identify a new set of “domestic migrant magnet” metro areas, which attract and domesticate sizeable flows of migrants from abroad but the new immigration waves spill out to new parts of the country.

Finally, this dichotomy in migration roles is also occurring within metropolitan areas. Central cores and inner counties of large metropolitan areas are becoming

ing more dependent on migration from abroad to counter declines due to domestic out-migration to their suburbs or other parts of the country. In contrast, it is domestic migration that represents a primary demographic engine for the fast growing peripheral counties in major metropolitan areas. Hence the new role of immigration toward stemming population decline in some places but not in others, finds many of these and metropolitan leaders in the latter areas seeking new ways to attract more of the nation’s growing immigrant populations.

This analysis focuses on the nation’s 81 largest metropolitan areas with 2000 populations greater than 500,000. (Comparable data for states appears in Table D.) The migration data in this study draw from the 2000 census question “Where did you live five years ago?” which permits migration information to be obtained over the 1995–2000 period. Net domestic migration is defined as the difference between the numbers of immigrants to that area from elsewhere in the United States minus the number of out-migrants from that area to other parts of the country for moves taking place over the five year period. Migration from abroad (or immigration) is defined as migration to that area for persons who resided outside of the United States at the beginning of the five-year period.

The Greatest Metropolitan Area “Magnets” for Migrants from Abroad Experience the Greatest Losses of Domestic Migrants

During the 1995–2000 period, four metropolitan areas—New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago—exhibited a distinct profile of immigration and domestic migration patterns (see Table A). These four beat all others in the number of migrants they attracted from abroad and, at the same time, they led all others in the number of domestic migrants they lost to other parts of the United States. New York and Los Angeles had especially large gains and losses in both respects. New York metropolitan region

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gained almost 1 million migrants from abroad and domestic migration losses is not a new one for at the same time, lost 874,000 domestic migrants to other areas. It has been evident for New York. The Los Angeles metropolitan region gained Chicago, two longstanding immigrant ports of entry for 700,000 migrants from abroad, but lost 550,000, since at least the late 1960s. During this period, domestic migrants.

In fact, the top six immigrant-gaining metropolitan areas were losing both jobs and residents to newer urban areas each lost domestic migrants over the last decade. In contrast, the newest statistics for the 1990s, although the domestic migration losses show increasingly sharper net domestic out-migration from Washington DC and Miami metropolitan regions are from the two large California immigrant magnets much smaller than those of the other four metros (see Figure A).

sequence, the latter two metropolitan areas show that New York and Chicago have long experienced greater overall migration gains, each exceeding a demographic displacement of domestic migrants by 200,000 new residents over the 1995–2000 period. In contrast, going to other parts of the country in exchange for new immigrants, the pattern has just begun to

This pattern of large immigrant gains and significant losses in Los Angeles and San Francisco. The

Table A: Migration Magnets: Migrants from Abroad and Domestic Migrants

Metropolitan areas (a)	1995–2000 change from:	
	Migrants from abroad	Net domestic migration
I. MAGNETS FOR MIGRANTS FROM ABROAD (b)		
1. New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	983,659	-874,028
2. Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA CMSA	699,573	-549,951
3. San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA CMSA	373,869	-206,670
4. Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI CMSA	323,019	-318,649
5. Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV CMSA	300,266	-58,849
6. Miami-Fort Lauderdale, FL CMSA	299,905	-93,774
7. Dallas-Fort Worth, TX CMSA	231,494	148,644
8. Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX CMSA	214,268	-14,377
9. Boston-Worcester-Lawrence, MA-NH-ME-CT CMSA	196,042	-44,581
10. Atlanta, GA MSA	162,972	233,303
II. MAGNETS FOR DOMESTIC MIGRANTS (c)		
1. Phoenix-Mesa, AZ MSA	135,017	245,159
2. Atlanta, GA MSA	162,972	233,303
3. Las Vegas, NV-AZ MSA	62,255	225,266
4. Dallas-Fort Worth, TX CMSA	231,494	148,644
5. Austin-San Marcos, TX MSA	51,795	104,340
6. Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA	67,664	103,375
7. Orlando, FL MSA	78,939	101,226
8. Denver-Boulder-Greeley, CO CMSA	93,970	93,586
9. Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	41,485	93,505
10. Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC MSA	47,710	91,272
III. GREATEST DOMESTIC MIGRATION LOSSES (d)		
1. New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	983,659	-874,028
2. Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA CMSA	699,573	-549,951
3. Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI CMSA	323,019	-318,649
4. San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA CMSA	373,869	-206,670
5. Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint, MI CMSA	108,975	-123,009
6. Miami-Fort Lauderdale, FL CMSA	299,905	-93,774
7. Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, PA-NJ-DE-MD CMSA	127,921	-83,539
8. Honolulu, HI MSA	38,619	-69,866
9. Cleveland-Akron, OH CMSA	36,257	-65,914
10. Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV CMSA	300,266	-58,849

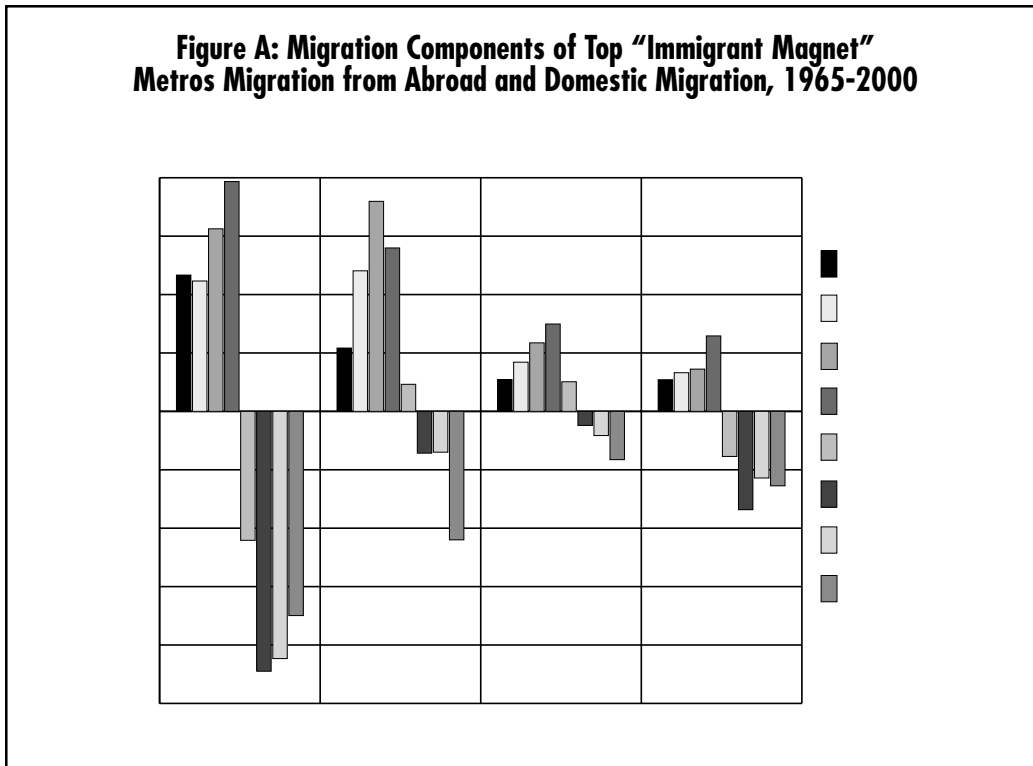
Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2000 U.S. Census.

Key:

- (a)—Metro areas are CMSAs, MSAs and (in New England) NECMAs. Names are abbreviated.
- (b)—Metro areas with greatest migration from abroad, 1995–2000.
- (c)—Metro with largest net domestic migration.
- (d)—Large Metro area with largest negative domestic migration and not recipients of large immigration.

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Figure A: Migration Components of Top "Immigrant Magnet" Metros Migration from Abroad and Domestic Migration, 1965-2000



net domestic out-migration in each of these two metropolitan areas has grown significantly since the late 1960s. In the late 1990s, four of the top six domestic migration losing areas were economically declining rustbelt cities (Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit and Buffalo). By the late 1990s, five of the six greatest domestic out-migration metropolitan areas were those that had become the nation's greatest immigrant magnet areas. In fact, of the net domestic migration losses experienced by all large metropolitan areas in the aggregate (3.1 million), the nation's six largest immigrant magnet metros contributed 70 percent to these losses.

"Domestic Migrant Magnet" Metros are also Attracting Migrants from Abroad

The list of metropolitan areas which gained the most domestic migration in the 1995-2000 period shows little overlap with those that gained the most immigrants from abroad (Table A, middle panel). Led by Phoenix, Atlanta and Dallas, these metros are located in either the traditional Sunbelt states of Texas, Florida, or the band of "new Sunbelt" states, encompassing much of the Southeast and a portion of California's West (Frey 2000a). These metropoli-

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tan areas have experienced continued economic growth and new low density urban and suburban development that have become attractive to residents and employers in the Northeast, Midwest, and California. Some of these metropolitan areas benefited from the 1990s growth in new tech sectors such as Atlanta, Austin, Denver, Raleigh-Durham, home of the "research triangle." Others have become attractive to particular segments of the population like retirees (e.g. Phoenix). The metropolitan magnets for domestic migration are not always consistent from decade to decade and reflect changes in the geography of employment growth and the availability of amenities in metropolitan areas. For example, in the 1975-1980 period none of the top three 1995-2000 domestic migration magnets were among the top six domestic migration gainers. Phoenix climbed to number three in 1985-1990; and in 1985-1990, Atlanta and Dallas advanced into the top six areas. Likewise, in 1970, Miami ranked second in domestic migration growth, although it is now one of the largest domestic migration losers. Houston is an example of an area which moved up and down over the decades as the fate of the oil industry waxed and waned. In 1975-1980, Houston ranked first of all metros in domestic migration gains (215,000) whereas in 1975-1980 it experienced the greatest domestic out migration (-142,000) metropolitan area of the country.

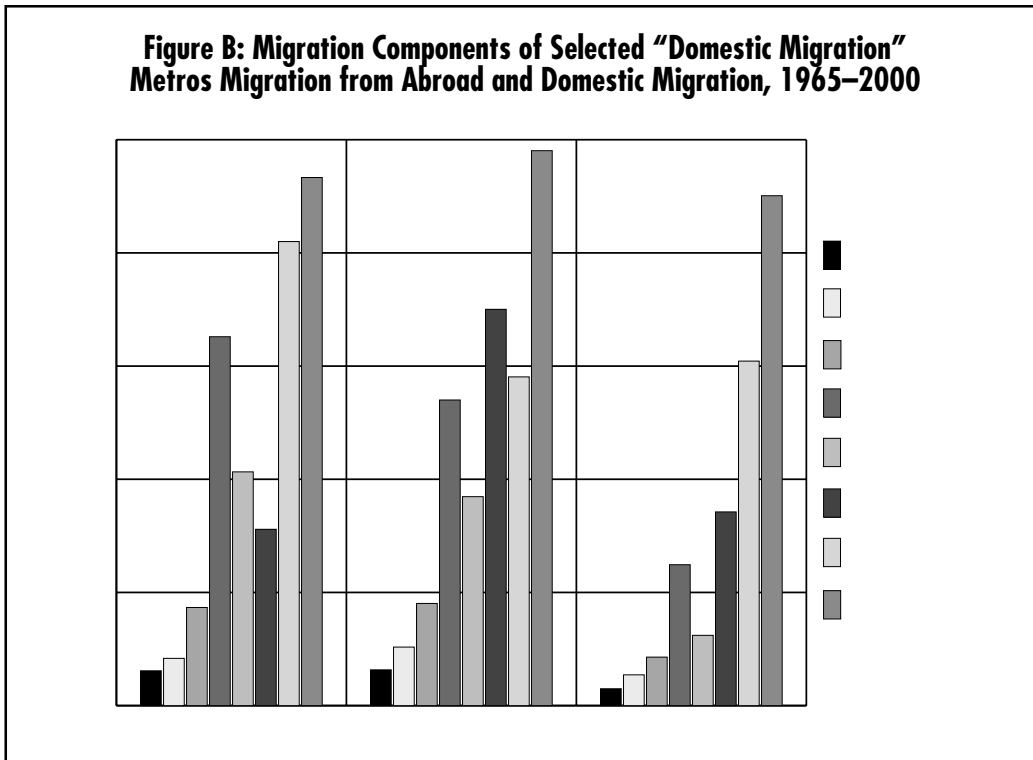
This volatility points up an important difference between areas that served as magnets for migrants from abroad, and those that attracted the most domestic migrants. The former continue to attract immigrants to the United States since these depend on their established racial and ethnic and family connections, which provide social and economic support. This is partially related to immigration laws which give strong emphasis to family reunification in the preference system (Manly and Midgley 2003). In contrast, domestic migrants are decidedly more "footloose" in their migration terms and more responsive to area geographic location in employment location and amenities. While the list of domestic migrant magnet metros changed from period between 1965-1970 through 1995-2000, the same six immigrant magnet metros occupied the positions for each of these five year periods. Of course, it is possible for a metropolitan area to attract both migrants from abroad and domestic migrants if its economy is both good and the metropolitan area serves as a port-of-entry for immigrants. This has been the case for Dallas, which during the

Metropolitan Core and Inner County Growth is Dependent on Migration from Abroad

major increase aside, the population growth in any area is dependent on the contributions of migration from abroad and domestic migration. The new census statistics indicate that the greatest domestic migration losses tend to occur in core and inner counties of major metropolitan areas. Table B lists the 30 counties with the largest domestic migration losses in 1995-2000. Nine of these lost more than 100,000 net domestic migrants over this period and migrated core counties of metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles Co., Calif., Cook Co., Ill., Kings and Queens counties in New York City and Miami-Dade Co., Fla. For the most part, these counties reflect core and inner counties that lie within high immigration metropolitan areas, core counties or those that lie within stagnating Midwest or rustbelt metropolitan areas such as St. Louis, Mo., Cuyahoga Co., Ohio (Cleveland), or Allegheny Co., Pa. (in Pittsburgh). The District of Columbia and inner county of Prince Georges in the greater Washington, D.C. area are on this list. Overall about half of the nation's counties, showed net out-migration over the 1990s; yet, only 95 of these counties declined by as many as 1,000 people and they are heavily represented by the kind of areas shown in Table B.

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Figure B: Migration Components of Selected "Domestic Migration" Metros Migration from Abroad and Domestic Migration, 1965–2000



creasingly important as a source of their demographic gains. For example Miami-Dade County, Fla., which shows the highest domestic migration loss is more than compensated by a gain of 206,000 migrants from abroad. Similar loss compensations are shown in Harris County, Texas, and in New York Co. (Manhattan), N.Y. On the other hand, many Midwestern and Rustbelt cities are unable to rely on this immigrant "cushion." For example, St. Louis lost 105,000 domestic migrants over the 1995–2000 period, but received less than 12,000 migrants from abroad. Similarly small immigrant contributions can be seen in the declining core counties of Cleveland, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Buffalo and New Orleans. This decidedly smaller contribution of migration from abroad is also apparent for Northeast and Midwest cities are looking to fast growing counties within Atlanta and in migrants as a source of potential demographic gains. (Smith, 2003).

Domestic Migration Dominates Migration from Abroad in Fast-growing, Outer Metropolitan Counties

While inner counties of major metropolitan areas are increasingly dependent on migration from abroad for their growth, the opposite is occurring in the

periphery of these areas. This is indicated in Table 1. This list is dominated by mostly suburban counties within the largest metropolitan areas. Not surprisingly, counties within domestic migrant magnet metros like Atlanta, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Austin, Dallas and Charlotte, are heavily represented. For example, in Forsyth Co., Ga., on the metropolitan area, domestic migration contributed 30 percent to population growth over the 1995–2000 period. In contrast, migration from abroad contributed to only 2.5 percent to Forsyth's population. This decidedly smaller contribution of migration from abroad is also apparent for fast growing counties within Atlanta and in large metropolitan areas. Thus, while Atlanta began to attract larger numbers of migrants from abroad during the late 1990s, its fastest growing peripheral counties gained predominantly from domestic migration. This is not the case for some inner counties within the Atlanta metropolitan area, however. The more centrally located Fulton Co. lost 30,013 domestic migrants during the 1995–2000, but it was able to compensate for

Table B: Counties with Greatest Net Domestic Migration Losses

Rank	Country and state	Inside metro area (a)	1995-2000		2000 population (in thousands) (b)	
			Net domestic migration	Migration from abroad		
1	Los Angeles County	ca06	Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA CMSA	-567,271	466,605	9,519
2	Cook County	il17	Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI CMSA	-377,902	230,922	5,377
3	Kings County	ny36	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	-233,555	160,306	2,465
4	Queens County	ny36	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	-168,505	169,784	2,229
5	Miami-Dade County	fl12	Miami-Fort Lauderdale, FL CMSA	-159,714	206,689	2,253
6	Wayne County	mi26	Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint, MI CMSA	-115,437	42,730	2,061
7	Harris County	tx48	Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX CMSA	-114,892	181,509	3,401
8	St. Louis city	mo29	St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	-105,224	11,944	348
9	Santa Clara County	ca06	San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA CMSA	-105,088	124,793	1,683
10	Philadelphia County	pa42	Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, PA-NJ-DE-MD CMSA	-94,158	46,177	1,518
11	Baltimore city	md24	Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV CMSA	-92,223	12,656	651
12	Dallas County	tx48	Dallas-Fort Worth, TX CMSA	-89,724	137,081	2,219
13	Bronx County	ny36	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	-87,430	76,736	1,333
14	Nassau County	ny36	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	-72,284	26,840	1,335
15	Honolulu County	hi15	Honolulu, HI MSA	-69,866	38,619	876
16	Cuyahoga County	oh39	Cleveland-Akron, OH CMSA	-68,198	23,096	1,394
17	Orange County	ca06	Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA CMSA	-59,686	128,204	2,846
18	San Francisco County	ca06	San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA CMSA	-58,197	49,743	777
19	New York County	ny36	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	-57,249	104,054	1,537
20	Hamilton County	oh39	Cincinnati-Hamilton, OH-KY-IN CMSA	-50,750	12,567	845
21	Essex County	nj34	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	-50,639	36,271	794
22	Milwaukee County	wi55	Milwaukee-Racine, WI CMSA	-47,965	20,561	940
23	El Paso County	tx48	El Paso, TX MSA	-47,790	31,468	680
24	Allegheny County	pa42	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	-47,757	17,230	1,282
25	Denver County	co08	Denver-Boulder-Greeley, CO CMSA	-46,872	34,194	555
26	District of Columbia	dc11	Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV CMSA	-45,331	30,399	572
27	Erie County	ny36	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY MSA	-41,115	13,901	950
28	Orleans Parish	la22	New Orleans, LA MSA	-40,825	6,372	485
29	Hudson County	nj34	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	-37,850	46,961	609
30	Fairfax County	va51	Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV CMSA	-36,638	72,648	970

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2000 U.S. Census.

Key:
 (a)—Names are abbreviated.
 (b)—2000 Population, ages 5 and over.

this loss with a gain of 39,746 migrants from abroad. This general pattern is repeated nationwide. U.S. counties (including non-metropolitan counties) which helped to propel the overall domestic migration at rates higher than 10 percent over the 1995-2000 period. Only five counties showed growth of greater than 10 percent based on migration from abroad; and these did not register as much as 2 percent from migration from abroad. These trends show the broad pattern of domestic migrant dispersal to metropolitan areas and beyond.

Conclusion

This analysis of census 2000 migration data reveals the distinct contributions of migration abroad and domestic migration to population change in the nation's largest metropolitan areas. The most "immigrant magnet" metros sustained the greatest losses of domestic migrants to other parts of the country. What was new in the late 1990s was

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Table C: Counties with Highest Domestic Migration Growth Rates
(among counties with greater than 30,000 population in 2000)

Rank	Country and state	Inside metro area (a)	1995–2000		
			Net domestic migration	Migration from abroad	
1	Douglas County	co08	Denver-Boulder-Greeley, CO CMSA	33.3	2.4
2	Sumter County	fl12		31.2	1.5
3	Forsyth County	ga13	Atlanta, GA MSA	30.5	2.5
4	Henry County	ga13	Atlanta, GA MSA	23.3	1.2
5	Flagler County	fl12	Daytona Beach, FL MSA	22.4	1.2
6	Paulding County	ga13	Atlanta, GA MSA	22.0	0.8
7	Delaware County	oh39	Columbus, OH MSA	21.4	0.7
8	Loudoun County	va51	Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV CMSA	21.4	4.2
9	Williamson County	tx48	Austin-San Marcos, TX MSA	20.8	2.0
10	Lyon County	nv32		20.3	1.1
11	Nye County	nv32	Las Vegas, NV-AZ MSA	19.9	1.2
12	Tooele County	ut49		19.8	1.3
13	Collin County	tx48	Dallas-Fort Worth, TX CMSA	18.9	4.5
14	Fremont County	co08		18.1	0.5
15	Bee County	tx48		17.5	0.5
16	Christian County	mo29	Springfield, MO MSA	17.4	0.7
17	DeSoto County	ms28	Memphis, TN-AR-MS MSA	17.1	1.0
18	Hays County	tx48	Austin-San Marcos, TX MSA	17.0	1.6
19	Pinal County	az04	Phoenix-Mesa, AZ MSA	16.9	2.3
20	Cherokee County	ga13	Atlanta, GA MSA	16.3	2.4
21	Williamson County	tn47	Nashville, TN MSA	16.2	1.5
22	Effingham County	ga13	Savannah, GA MSA	16.1	0.8
23	Union County	nc37	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	16.1	2.5
24	Clark County	nv32	Las Vegas, NV-AZ MSA	16.0	4.7
25	Denton County	tx48	Dallas-Fort Worth, TX CMSA	15.7	3.1
26	Pike County	pa42	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	15.6	0.4
27	Isabella County	mi26		15.3	1.7
28	Barrow County	ga13	Atlanta, GA MSA	15.2	1.1
29	Fannin County	tx48		15.1	1.3
30	Shelby County	al01	Birmingham, AL MSA	15.1	1.2

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2000 U.S. Census.
Key:
(a)—Names are abbreviated.
(b)—The rate equals the 1995–2000 migration component multiplied by 100 and divided by the 2000 population, ages 5 and over.

migrants from abroad and, among domestic migrants, they will be come socially integrated show either gains or reduced losses of college graduates and incorporated into the mainstream economies in comparison to their larger losses of less educated areas.

cated, more middle class residents.
This analysis has also identified a set of “domestic migrant magnet” metro areas that show highest gains in migrants from within the United States. They are located in much of the Southeast and *non-California* West and reflect the growth of “new economy” industries and expanding urban and suburban developments in metropolitan areas like Phoenix, Atlanta and Las Vegas. These areas attract more domestic migrants than migrants from abroad. Yet, the 1990s have shown that they are also attracting large numbers of immigrants, perhaps to lower skilled jobs in a variety of sectors, that are created by the demands of new domestic migrants (Frey, 2002b). While the new migrants from abroad will surely increase the ethnic diversity and cultural vitality to these, heretofore, largely white or (in the case of the South) white and black metropolitan areas, it remains to be seen

how quickly they will be come socially integrated show either gains or reduced losses of college graduates and incorporated into the mainstream economies in comparison to their larger losses of less educated areas.
The new census data also show that migrants from abroad and domestic migrants play different roles in contributing to growth and decline metropolitan areas. Immigrants from abroad are becoming especially valuable to declining core and inner counties in large metropolitan areas that are losing domestic migrants to the suburbs and other parts of the country. Midwest and Rustbelt core counties, which are not attracting many immigrants, are sustaining some of the nation’s greatest migration losses while inner counties in areas like New York, New York, Washington, D.C., Boston and Houston continue to become invigorating by immigrant populations.

In contrast, the migration gains for fast growing peripheral counties in the nation’s major metros accrue almost entirely from domestic migrants comprised of new suburbanites from the city as migrants from other parts of the United States. The fact that these outlying counties are not attracting

large numbers of migrants from abroad points to a divergence in growth dynamics within the same metropolitan area. As cities and inner suburbs become more dependent on immigration for growth, and as outer suburbs rely mostly on domestic migration, their respective demographic profiles and associated public service needs, tax bases and political priorities will also diverge. This distinct within-metropolitan migration is not just apparent in domestic migrant magnet metros like Atlanta and Denver; they also occur in immigrant magnet metros such as New York and Washington, D.C.

The distinct roles that migration from abroad and domestic migration play in affecting demographic change in metropolitan areas make plain that migrants from abroad and the ongoing domestic migration of U.S. residents impact metropolitan areas in sharply different ways. The large immigrant flows to the United States in the late 1990s continue to concentrate primarily in major immigrant magnet metros, at the same time that domestic migration of all race and ethnic groups are gravitating to a wide range of metropolitan areas, and local destinations within them.

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