

Rural Policy as Though Rural People and Places Mattered: A Bridging Model Across the Rural Policy / Practice Chasm

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Five Considerations

- The New Rural Policy Framework: An Emergent Global Consensus
- The Current U.S. Rural Context
- Addressing the Policy / Practice Dialectic
- Leader+: Celebrating the Way Forward!
- Final Concerns and Considerations

The New Rural Policy Framework: An Emergent Global Consensus

- Realigning, and better integrating, agriculture and rural economic development
- Moving from sectoral, through multi-sectoral, to regional considerations
- Addressing the asymmetry between top-down and bottom-up “workings”
- Building local evaluative frameworks which actually influence central government action
- Valuing participatory process concerns as well as cost effectiveness considerations

Policies and budgets are ultimately about visions and values.

So several questions should frame our approach to this issue:

- What are the principal policy goals of rural initiatives and programs?
- Who are the constituencies of each, and how are they benefited by public investments?
- Why have these programs historically been undervalued and underresourced?

“If you do the same things,

over

and

over,

you’ll probably get the same
outcomes!”

The Current U.S. Rural Context

“The social and economic institutions of the open country are not keeping pace with the development of the nation as a whole”

- President Teddy Roosevelt's
Country Life Commission

Critical Components in the Current U.S. Rural Policy Context

- Federalism and Regional / State / Local Policy Dynamics
- Rural / Urban Constituency Convergence
- New Governance, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Systems
- Landscape, Culture, Heritage and Arts as Asset-Based Development Drivers
- Defining and Driving a New Rural Vision
- Global Rural Futures

Defining Rural America

- The metro/nonmetro definitions used in most policy targeting are not the same as urban/rural definitions.
- Metropolitan areas contain rural places and nonmetropolitan areas contain urban places.
- In fact, 51% of all rural residents (30 million people) live in metropolitan counties!
- These people are excluded from almost all rural policy/program eligibility
 - Rural programs usually target only nonmetropolitan counties
 - Urban programs usually target only cities

48.8 million people live in nonmetropolitan counties +
 30 million people live in rural portions of metro counties.
 Actually, the U.S. rural population is 78.8 million.

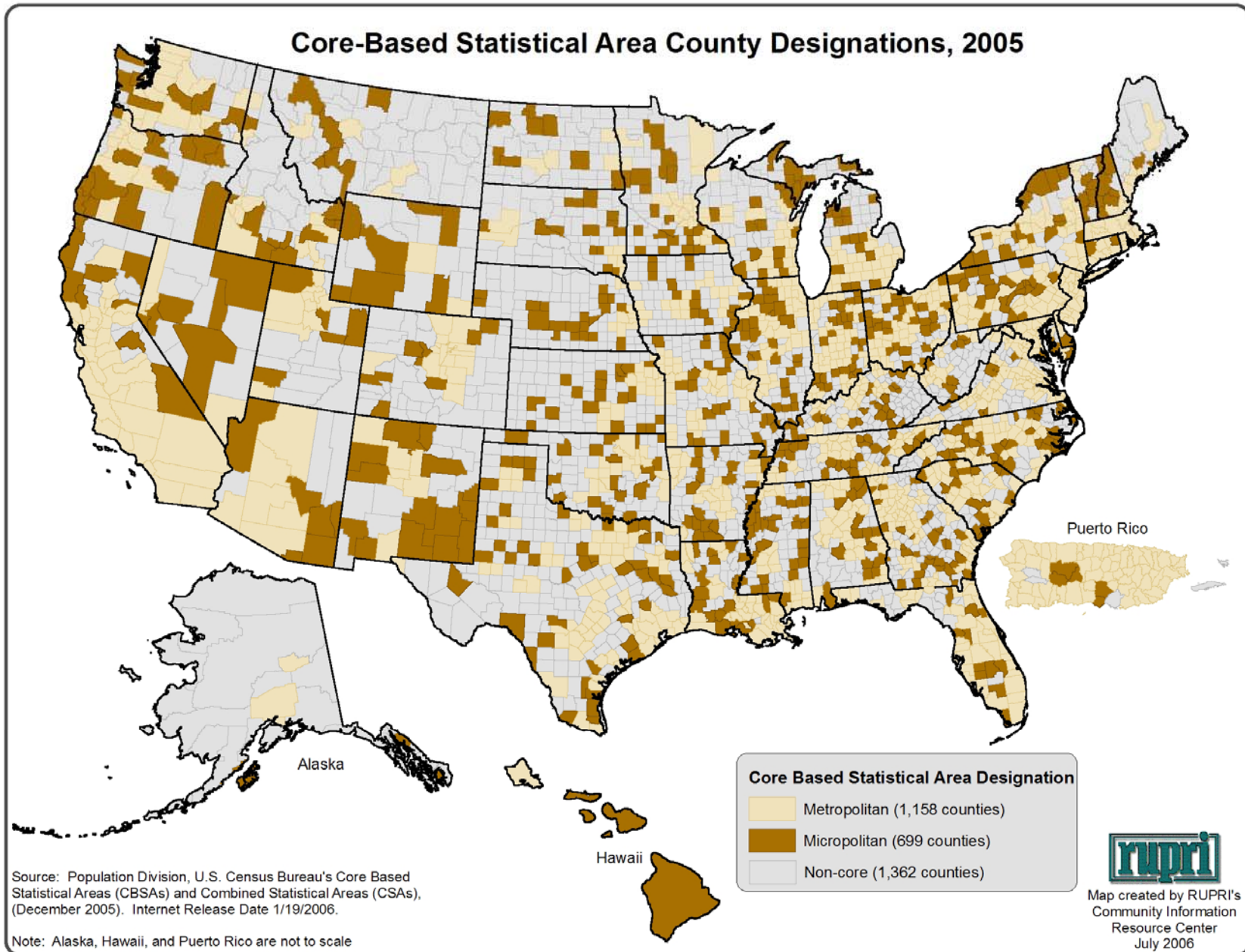
Distribution of Population

	Urban	Rural	Total
Metropolitan	202,403,216	30,176,724	232,579,940
Micropolitan	15,231,742	14,299,972	29,531,714
Noncore	4,723,351	14,586,901	19,310,252
Total	222,358,309	59,063,597	281,421,906

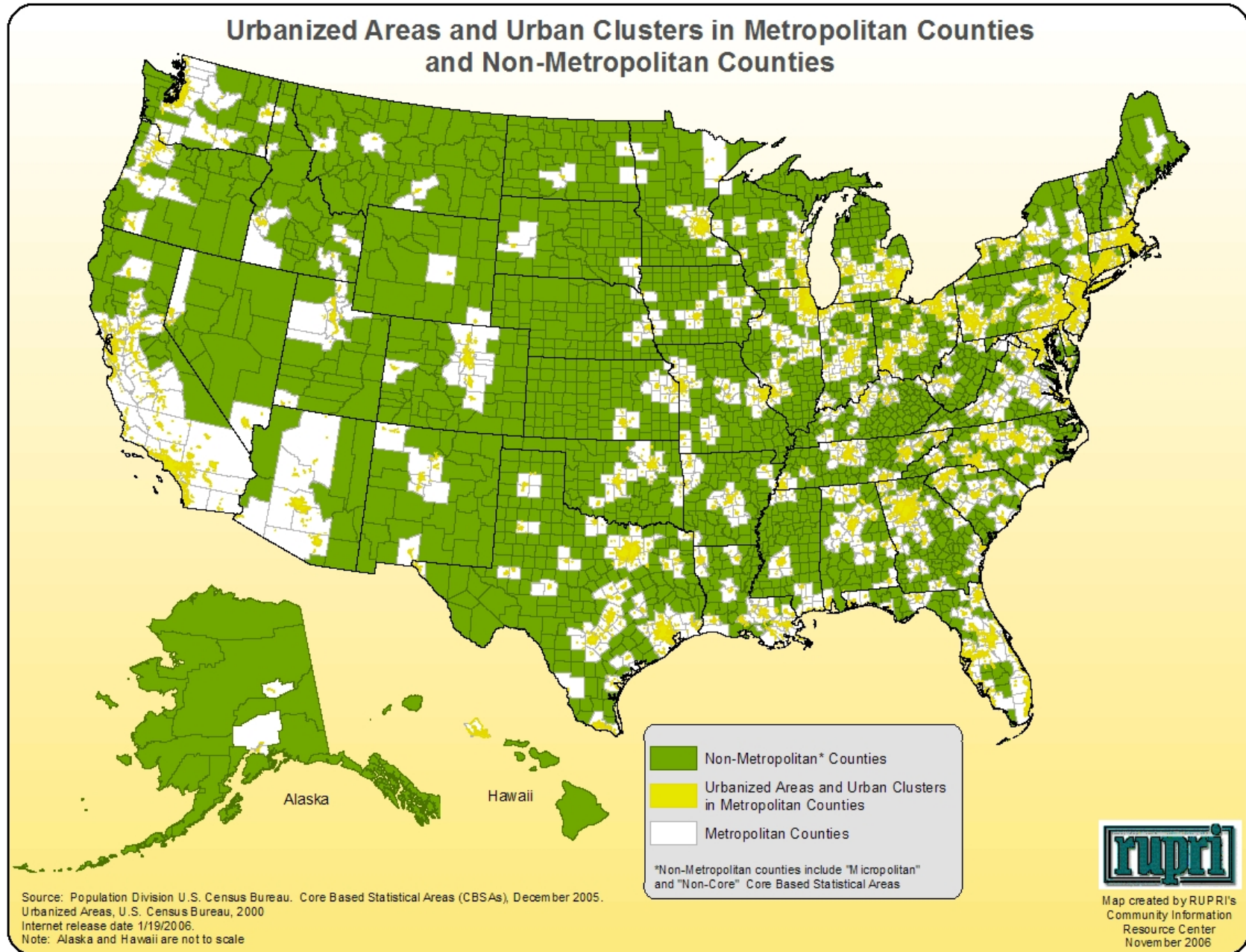
*note: Urban and Rural Population figures from Census 2000;
 CBSA status for the December 2005 Classifications*



County level designations are a good place to start...



But we can't ignore the 30 million rural people living in metro counties!



Rural / Urban Constituency Convergence

- Definitions Matter!
- As an Example, Regional and Local Food Systems
 - *The Omnivores Dilemma*
- Poverty / Community Capacity (CDBG/CSBG-Micropolitan Areas)
- Difficult Dialogue Support

New Governance, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Systems

- Overcoming the Rural Community Capacity Disadvantage
- Leadership Development / Public Entrepreneurship
- Cross-Sectoral Integration Approaches
- LEADER+ Model

Landscape, Culture, Heritage and Arts as Asset-Based Development Drivers

- Core of Rural, Place-Based Investments
- Immigration qua Asset
- Exemplifies Rural Diversity, and the Necessity of Flexible, Locally Controlled Policy Programs
- Sustainable Landscapes

Global Rural Impacts

- WTO / Trade Dynamics in Domestic Policy
- Globalization: Knowledge-Based Global Market Competition

Defining and Driving a New Rural Vision

- Creating a “Public Presence” for this National Dialogue

A U.S. Rural Policy Renaissance

- Increase Current Level of Federal Rural Investment
- Create a New Rural Policy Framework: Regional Rural Innovation
- Support Key Operational Principles
- Develop and Sustain a National Dialogue on Rural America

Regional Rural Innovation

- Federal Departmental Collaboration / Funding Alignment
- Federal / State / Regional / Local Cooperation (Programs / Funding)
- Incent Public / Private / Philanthropic Investment Cooperation
- Regional Framework
- Innovation / Entrepreneurship Focus
- Attention to Diversity, Gender, Poverty and Immigration Concerns

Support Key Operational Principles

- Asset-Based Development
- Flexibility / Local Input
- Research / TA: Public Decision Support Tool
- Investment in New Intermediaries: Community Colleges, Faith-Based Organizations, etc.
- Attention to the Importance of Working Landscapes
 - Natural Resources
 - Arts / Heritage / Culture
 - Renewable Energy and Entrepreneurial Agriculture

Develop and Sustain a National Dialogue on Rural America

- Rediscovering the Social Contract with Rural America
- A New Declaration of Interdependence (Urban / Rural)
- Crafting Constituency Engagement
- Building Gravitas and Scale

“The Campaign for Rural America”

- Starts in the states.
- Engages urban and suburban interests.
- Defines not where we are, but where we want to be.
- Is vision specific.
- Should be embraced by our Ag Committees, and emerge from their new bill.
- Helps solve our international trade agreement challenge
- Needs to begin now!

Addressing the Policy / Practice Dialectic

Contemporary Conceptions of Governance:

- Interdependence of governmental and non-governmental organizations (central government's role reducing over time)
 - Now more coordination; facilitation; negotiation through multiple policy networks:
 - Diverse, overlapping, integrated
 - Comprised of government, private sector, nonprofit and associational actors
- All Actors Bring Unique:
 - Power bases
 - Roles, responsibilities
 - Values, skills, organizational resources

Three Critical Questions

- Will public sector champion(s) step forward?
- Will institutional innovator(s) accept the challenge of building new intermediary structures?
- Will new constituencies to support these innovative leaders and institutions?

The Critical Role of Intermediaries

“Intermediaries are people and institutions that add value to the world indirectly, by connecting and supporting – i.e., by enabling *others* to be more effective. Intermediaries may act as facilitators, educators, capacity builders, social investors, performance managers, coalition builders, and organizers of new groups.”

Xavier de Souza Briggs

The Art and Science of Community Problem-Solving Project
Kennedy School, Harvard University, June, 2003.



Five Types of Intermediaries Promoting Public Interest:

1. Government as intermediaries
2. Civic intermediaries
3. Funder intermediaries
4. Issue-focused intermediaries
5. Capacity building intermediaries

Xavier de Souza Briggs

The Art and Science of Community Problem-Solving Project

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Five Strategic Challenges for Public Intermediaries

1. The most useful specific functions of an intermediary will often be ambiguous and will likely change over time.
2. Intermediaries may have to develop the market for what they wish to provide.
3. A given community may be home to multiple intermediaries with diverse and overlapping functions.
4. Broad community change – social, economic, political – shifts the “market” for what intermediaries should contribute, how, and with what support.
5. Showing value added – credibly demonstrating the intermediary’s contribution – is an ongoing challenge.

Xavier de Souza Briggs

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Leader+: Celebrating the Way Forward!

- Lessons learned, given this new rural policy paradigm
- Challenging the naysayers
- Process as destiny
- Keeping on, keeping on!

The Critical Challenges

- Rethinking core missions
- Redefining roles and responsibilities
- Created a renaissanced leadership cadre
- Engaging and supporting the “border crossers!”
- Redefining “we” and “they,” with special attention to diversity

Final Concerns and Considerations

- Assuring community, culture and landscape considerations remain central to new regional frameworks
- Defining our “being, purpose and knowledge framework”
- Avoiding devastating defaults:
 - Homogenization
 - Commoditization
 - Urbanization
 - Colonialization

What lies behind us and what lies
before us are tiny matters
compared to what lies within us.

Ralph Waldo Emerson



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The Rural Policy Research Institute provides objective analysis and facilitates public dialogue concerning the impacts of public policy on rural people and places.

