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Standard of Living Comparison: El Paso and Other Selected Metropolitan Statistical Areas

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Introduction

Standard of living is a measure that compares the necessities, comforts, and luxuries available to a certain socioeconomic class, within a certain geographic area. This measure can be used to compare social and economic performance across different locations. It provides valuable decision-making information to individuals deciding whether or not to take a job opportunity in another geographic area, as well as to stakeholders and decision makers, such as politicians, planners, business owners, and entrepreneurs, who can use it as a performance framework.

This report is a comparative analysis of selected standard of living factors in El Paso, Texas, and nine other metropolitan statistical areas[1] (MSAs) located in the U.S.-Mexico Border States[2] with populations ranging between 200 thousand and 4.5 million (Table 1). The geographic location of these ten selected MSAs is illustrated in the map below (Figure 1).

The standard of living factors examined for the ten selected MSAs in this report include cost of living variables, economic performance indicators, and crime rates.

Table 1. Selected Metropolitan Statistical Areas

No.	MSA	State	Population 2015*
1	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	AZ	4,574,531
2	San Diego-Carlsbad	CA	3,299,521
3	San Antonio-New Braunfels	TX	2,384,075
4	Tucson	AZ	1,010,025
5	Albuquerque	NM	907,301
6	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	TX	842,304
7	**El Paso**	**TX**	**838,972**
8	Corpus Christi	TX	452,422
9	Brownsville-Harlingen	TX	422,156
10	Yuma	AZ	204,275

*Note: *Population Estimate (as of July 1) 2015*
Source: *U.S. Census Bureau.*

Figure 1. Selected Metropolitan Statistical Areas

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[1] The U.S. Census Bureau defines a metropolitan statistical area as a core urban area with a population of 50,000 or more.

[2] This analysis chose as objects of comparison ten MSAs located near the U.S.-Mexico border, with a relatively high percentage of Latino residents (thirty percent or more).

San Diego appears as the most expensive MSA from the list. Although San Diego's wages are relatively high with respect to the rest MSAs, its high cost of living makes it less affordable. Conversely, San Antonio's low cost of living and favorable economic performance make it the most attractive place to live out of the MSAs analyzed. El Paso also shows favorable results with a cost of living index that tends to be below the nation's average. The results show El Paso to be a safe, relatively low-cost place to live, with a healthy and promising economy. Some figures in this report yielded unexpected results. Although a detailed analysis of such figures is beyond the scope of this analysis, it includes a brief discussion of potential explanations for these results.

I.   Cost of Living

Cost of living differences among urban areas are typically measured by indexes.[3] This report employs the *Cost of Living Index* (COLI) developed by the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER)[4], which uses nationwide data from 260 metropolitan and nonmetropolitan participating areas.[5] It includes an overall index and six disaggregated categories: *Grocery Items, Housing, Utilities, Health Care, Transportation,* and *Miscellaneous Goods and Services.* The COLI uses the average of all participant areas for the six categories to create a base number that equals 100. The resulting number for each MSA can be then compared with the national average.[6] A number above 100 represents a cost of living higher than the national average, whereas a number below 100 represents a cost of living lower than the national average (C2ER, 2016). The cost of living figures amongst MSAs, however, should not be compared directly. To find the cost difference between two cities, a simple calculation is necessary (Box 1).

Box 1. Comparing Metro Areas

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How to use the Cost of Living Index

In order to compare the COLI for two MSAs, (using El Paso and San Diego as an example) the following calculation is needed:

$$\left(\frac{\text{San Diego } (146.9) - \text{El Paso } (89.9)}{\text{El Paso } (89.9)}\right) * 100 = 63.40$$

This indicates that San Diego is 63.40 percent more expensive than El Paso. Thus, individuals who decide to move from El Paso to San Diego would need an increase of 63.40 percent in their after-tax income to maintain their current lifestyle.

Conversely, people considering a move from San Diego to El Paso would need the following calculation:

$$\left(\frac{\text{El Paso } (89.9) - \text{San Diego } (146.9)}{\text{San Diego } (146.9)}\right) * 100 = -38.80$$

This implies that individuals moving from San Diego to El Paso could sustain a 38.80 percent cut in their after-taxes income to maintain their current lifestyle.

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Source *C2ER; Cost of Living Index, (Q2, 2016).*

El Paso is a relatively low-cost place to live with a cost of living being 13 percent below the national average. El Paso is the fourth least expensive MSA on the list (Table 2). McAllen and San Antonio arose as the most economical places on the list, with a COLI of 24.1 and 14.8 percent less than the national average, respectively. San Diego appears as the MSA with the highest COLI, 43.2 percent above the national average.

Table 2. Overall Cost of Living

No.	MSA	Index
1	San Diego-Carlsbad	143.2
2	Yuma	101.1
-	**Average (260 urban areas)**	**100.0**
3	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	95.9
4	Albuquerque	95.2
5	Corpus Christi	94.5
6	Tucson	91.2
7	**El Paso**	**87.6**
8	Brownsville-Harlingen	87.0
9	San Antonio-New Braunfels	85.2
10	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	75.9

Source *C2ER; Cost of Living Index, (Q2, 2016).*

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[3] Indexes incorporate scaled variables such that the value for one of the observations, which usually equals 100.

[4] The Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER) is a membership organization that promotes economic research by working to improve data availability, enhance data quality, and foster learning about regional economic analytic methods. C2ER publishes information annually and quarterly. The data used in this exercise pertain to the second quarter of 2016.

[5] Weights assigned to relative costs are based on government survey data on expenditure patterns for professional and executive households in the top income quintile (C2ER, 2016).

[6] Although figures from the 260 urban areas included in the C2ER survey are not equal to the total number of urban areas in the country, for simplicity, it is referred as *the national average* in this analysis.

Grocery Items

Prices of *Grocery Items* in El Paso are among the highest in the analyzed group, 7.7 percent above the national average (Table 3). In fact, only San Diego and Yuma exceed El Paso's index; San Diego is 4.5 percent more expensive than El Paso and Yuma less than one percent. San Antonio and McAllen are the least expensive MSAs of the group, approximately 20 and 18 percent cheaper than the national average, respectively.

The factors that determine retail prices of grocery items are numerous and complex. These factors include fresh produce prices, labor costs, distribution, and operation costs, as well as competition and customer preferences (USDA, 2016). It is difficult to identify which combination of factors affects the retail prices of grocery items in El Paso the most. Yet, with less than one million inhabitants and relatively distant from large markets and distribution centers, such as Phoenix or the Texas Triangle,[7] it is possible that food transportation costs, economies of scale, and local customer preferences increase local retail grocery items' prices.

Table 3. Grocery Items

No.	MSA	Index
1	San Diego-Carlsbad	112.6
2	Yuma	108.1
3	**El Paso**	**107.7**
4	Tucson	100.9
-	**Average (260 urban areas)**	**100.0**
5	Albuquerque	95.2
6	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	95.0
7	Brownsville-Harlingen	90.5
8	Corpus Christi	84.7
9	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	81.7
10	San Antonio-New Braunfels	80.0

Source *C2ER; Cost of Living Index, (Q2, 2016).*

A. Housing

Housing prices in San Diego are the highest from the list; about 129 percent above the national average (Table 4). *Housing* prices for the rest of the MSAs on the list appear below the national average. El Paso is among the most affordable areas in this regard, with an estimated *Housing* index of 76.3. McAllen has the lowest *Housing* prices of the list with an index of 65.0.

The difference in housing prices between San Diego and the rest of the MSAs is substantial. San Diego's high Housing index denotes affordability difficulties for both, renting or buying a residence. According to the National Association of Realtors (2015), El Paso is located at a considerable higher position than San Diego in the housing affordability index produced by this organization. This position indicates that buying a single-family home is more accessible in El Paso than it is in San Diego. San Diego ranks fifth most difficult MSAs to afford a single-family home in the continental U.S.

Table 4. Housing

No.	MSA	Index
1	San Diego-Carlsbad	229.9
-	**Average (260 urban areas)**	100.0
2	Albuquerque	97.0
3	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	96.0
4	Corpus Christi	88.3
5	Yuma	83.8
6	Brownsville-Harlingen	79.1
7	**El Paso**	**76.3**
8	Tucson	76.0
9	San Antonio-New Braunfels	75.9
10	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	65.0

Source *C2ER; Cost of Living Index, (Q2, 2016).*

B. Utilities

Yuma, followed by Corpus Christi and San Diego, resulted more expensive than the national average in the *Utilities* category. El Paso ranks seventh on the list, about 10 percent below the national figure (Table 5). While El Paso is among the least expensive areas, the MSA with the lowest prices on the list is Albuquerque, with an index of 84.6. The calculated cost difference between Albuquerque and El Paso is approximately 6 percent.

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[7] The Texas Triangle, comprising Dallas/Fort Worth-San Antonio-Houston-Austin, is an interconnected megaregion that facilitates maintaining efficient freight movements, offering multimodal solutions between metropolitan economies (Seedah and Harrison 2011).

This *Utilities* category in the COLI is largely driven by local electricity prices. Regional electricity prices are influenced by a wide number of factors, such as local regulations, market conditions, global factors, and other cost considerations. The only electricity provider in El Paso, *El Paso Electric*, is a publicly owned corporation with local regulations. State and local agencies determine electricity prices based on local market conditions, as well as generation and transportation costs.[8]

Table 5. Utilities

No.	MSA	Index
1	Yuma	123.5
2	Corpus Christi	118.8
3	San Diego-Carlsbad	110.5
-	**Average (260 urban areas)**	100.0
4	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	95.1
5	Brownsville-Harlingen	93.5
6	Tucson	92.6
7	**El Paso**	**89.8**
8	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	89.3
9	San Antonio-New Braunfels	87.3
10	Albuquerque	84.6

Source *C2ER; Cost of Living Index, (Q2, 2016).*

C. Transportation

The COLI *Transportation* category is mostly determined by gasoline prices. While San Diego exceeds the national average by 28 percent, McAllen's index is about 17 percent below it (Table 6). El Paso ranks sixth, 3.8 percentage points below the national average. This index can vary considerably depending upon regional supply and demand of gasoline, operating costs, taxes, or international conditions such as armed conflicts, and global fluctuations in the price of oil.

D. Health Care

San Diego resulted the most expensive MSA on the list for the *Health Care* category. El Paso ranks sixth, 5.5 percent below the national average (Table 7). Brownsville and McAllen are the least expensive MSAs

on the list, 14.3 and 23.6 percent below the national average, respectively.

Table 6. Transportation

No.	MSA	Index
1	San Diego-Carlsbad	128.5
2	Yuma	107.4
3	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	100.5
-	**Average (260 urban areas)**	100.0
4	Brownsville-Harlingen	97.7
5	Corpus Christi	97.0
6	**El Paso**	**96.2**
7	Albuquerque	96.0
8	Tucson	93.9
9	San Antonio-New Braunfels	87.6
10	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	82.9

Source *C2ER; Cost of Living Index, (Q2, 2016).*

Although there can be substantial quality differences in healthcare services across the nation, the Congressional Budget Office asserts that these differences do not entirely explain the existent price variations in the country (Congressional Budget Office, 2008). Factors such as demand for healthcare and constraints in the supply of healthcare providers typically play a relevant role; El Paso is not an exception.

Table 7. Health Care

No.	MSA	Index
1	San Diego-Carlsbad	106.2
2	Yuma	100.6
-	**Average (260 urban areas)**	100.0
3	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	99.6
4	Tucson	99.4
5	Albuquerque	98.6
6	**El Paso**	**94.5**
7	Corpus Christi	92.6
8	San Antonio-New Braunfels	90.8
9	Brownsville-Harlingen	85.7
10	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	76.4

Source *C2ER; Cost of Living Index, (Q2, 2016).*

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[8] For more detail on energy prices and regulatory frameworks, the Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness developed a Paso del Norte Region report: "Energy Sector Review".

E. Miscellaneous Goods and Services

The last category considered in the COLI is *Miscellaneous Goods and Services* [9] (Table 8). Yuma presents the highest prices for this category, 3.8 percent above the national average. McAllen and El Paso resulted the least expensive MSAs on the list, 23.8 and 15.4 percentage below the national average, respectively. Given that this category encompasses a wide variety of products and services, determining the explanations for the rankings and price discrepancies is complicated.

Table 8. Miscellaneous Goods & Services

No.	MSA	Index
1	Yuma	103.8
2	San Diego-Carlsbad	101.7
-	**Average (260 urban areas)**	100.0
3	Tucson	97.9
4	Albuquerque	96.3
5	Corpus Christi	95.5
6	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	94.3
7	San Antonio-New Braunfels	93.1
8	Brownsville-Harlingen	86.9
9	**El Paso**	**84.6**
10	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	76.2

Source *C2ER; Cost of Living Index, (Q2, 2016).*

II.   Economic Performance

There is a large number of variables that serve as indicators to measure the economic performance of a location. Typically, these variables are divided into three categories: employment, income, and output. This analysis uses *unemployment rates, annual mean wages, and per capita real gross domestic product (RGDP)* to measure the aforementioned categories.

A.   Unemployment Rates

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) publishes monthly and annual *unemployment rates*, for the nation at different levels, including MSAs. For consistency and comparison purposes, this analysis presents annual averages for all MSAs on the list as well as for the nation (Table 9). The MSA with the lowest unemployment rate on the list is San Antonio with 3.8 percent, a relatively

low unemployment rate compared to the national average of 5.3 percent. Yuma is a clear outlier with an unemployment rate of 21.8 percent, substantially higher than any of the other MSA on the list. Although Yuma's unemployment rate appears among the highest in the nation, local experts claim that this rate does not reflect the city's economic and labor conditions. They argue that high unemployment rates can be, to some extent, attributable to being a border economy reliant on sectors considered seasonal sectors such as tourism and agriculture (Taracena, 2014).

El Paso, San Diego, and Corpus Christi share the second position on the list with an unemployment rate of 5.2 percent. El Paso's unemployment rate is low with respect to its historical average of 8.8 percent (BLS, 2016). A consistently low unemployment rate frequently leads to higher wages or a positive net domestic migration.[10]

Table 9. Unemployment Rate, 2015

No.	MSA	UR (%)
1	San Antonio-New Braunfels	3.8
2	San Diego-Carlsbad	5.2
3	Corpus Christi	5.2
4	**El Paso**	**5.2**
5	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	5.3
-	**National Average**	5.3
6	Tucson	5.6
7	Albuquerque	6.2
8	Brownsville-Harlingen	7.1
9	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	7.9
10	Yuma	21.8

Note: Annual Average Rankings
Source: *Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).*

B.   Annual Mean Wages

The BLS also collects data on *annual mean wages*. This analysis gathers annual mean wages for the selected MSAs and the national average (Table 10). San Diego resulted the MSA with the highest wages on the list with an annual mean of $54,210. Brownsville ranks last with $33,710, while El Paso appears eighth with $36,980. Although mean wages are often used to compare

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[9] Miscellaneous Goods and Services category includes a broad number of items such as food services (hamburgers, pizza, and chicken), apparel articles (shirts, jeans, and khakis), entertainment (bowling, cinema), dry cleaning, haircuts, beer and wine, among others (C2ER, 2016).

[10] Net Domestic Migration - The difference between domestic in-migration to an area and domestic out-migration from the same area during a specified time period (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

MSAs' economic performance, such comparisons sometimes overlook factors that determine these wages. Some type of adjustment is required to reach a more realistic comparison. A wage adjustment using a cost of living index is a recurrent practice in both academic (Kaplow, 1996) and business reports (Governing, 2014) that helps reaching a more accurate comparison. This analysis uses MSAs' COLI figures from Table 2 to adjust the BLS annual mean wages. The resulting number (hereafter, a*djusted mean wages*[11]) takes into account cost of living expenditures for the different locations on the list. A higher the number (upper level in the table), indicates that products and services within the MSA are more affordable to consumers.

After the wage adjustment, San Diego falls from number one to nine on the list. While wages for this MSA are relatively high, they are not high enough to compensate for the high cost of living in the area. San Antonio is the MSA with the highest *adjusted mean wages,* climbing three positions from the unadjusted wages list (left hand side of Table 10). Based on the adjusted figure, San Antonio appears as the most affordable MSA from the list. McAllen is the MSA with the larger upward change, climbing four positions from the unadjusted figure. McAllen has relatively low wages, but its low cost of living makes it an affordable place to reside. El Paso ranks seventh on the adjusted list, with a mild upward change of one position. Even after the cost of living adjustment, El Paso local wages are low compared to other MSAs in the study, as well as the nation as a whole.

C. Per Capita Real Gross Domestic Product

The gross domestic product (GDP) is a measure of production at a local economy, frequently used to assess its economic performance. The GDP divided by annual prices (inflation) and population results in the *per capita real gross domestic product (RGDP)* [12], which is used to compare economies across time periods and locations. The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) publishes this figure on an annual basis for the MSAs in the nation (Table 11).

Table 10. Annual Mean Wage and Adjusted Mean Wage

No.	MSA	Annual Mean Wage ($)	MSA	Adjusted Mean Wage ($)
1	San Diego-Carlsbad	54,210	San Antonio-New Braunfels	51,338
-	**National Average**	48,320	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	48,697
2	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	46,700	National Average	48,320
3	Albuquerque	44,440	Tucson	47,050
4	San Antonio-New Braunfels	43,740	Albuquerque	46,681
5	Tucson	42,910	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	44,545
6	Corpus Christi	41,970	Corpus Christi	44,413
7	Yuma	37,130	**El Paso**	42,215
8	**El Paso**	36,980	Brownsville-Harlingen	38,747
9	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	33,810	San Diego-Carlsbad	37,856
10	Brownsville-Harlingen	33,710	Yuma	36,726

Source:
Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), 2015.
C2ER. "Cost of Living Index" (Q2, 2016).

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[11] A simple calculation was made to derive the adjusted mean wage: (Annual mean wage / Cost of Living Index) x 100

[12] The RGDP Per Capita is the total output of goods and services in a location, divided by its population and adjusted to base-year prices. This variable is typically used to measure the economic progress or economic performance broadly of an economy, namely a city, a county, an MSA, a country, etc. (BEA, 2016).

For a broader perspective, this exercise compares two time periods, 2009 and 2015. While, the third column on Table 11 represents an initial point (2009), the fourth column represents the current performance of each locality (2015). Finally, the fifth column includes the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) between 2009 and 2015. The calculated CAGR serves as an additional way to assess the economic performance of the MSAs via their development during a six-year time period (Box 2).

Box 2. Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)

How to calculate the compound annual growth rate

The compound annual growth rate is the average growth rate per year between two periods and is calculated as follows:

$$\left\{ \left(\frac{\text{Per capita RGDP}_{2015}}{\text{Per capita RGDP}_{2009}} \right)^{1/n} - 1 \right\} * 100$$

Where n represents the number of years between the two studied periods (6 years); in this case the two periods are 2009 (the earlier period) and 2015 (the later period).

Source: *Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).*

San Diego is the MSA with the highest *per capita RGDP* on the list, with over $60,000 in 2015, $29,000 more

than the El Paso's. Brownsville and McAllen are the MSAs with the lowest *per capita RGDP* on the list with about $20,000 during that same year. The MSAs that experienced the largest increase during the six-year period analyzed were San Antonio and Corpus Christi, with CAGR figures of 2.4 and 1.8 percent, respectively. Yuma's economy experienced an economic contraction of 1.6 percent per year on average during the same time period. McAllen grew at about the same pace as the nation's average. Finally, El Paso's *per capita RGDP* did not change during the six-year period, which implies a mild economic growth that only resembles its population growth within such period.

III.   Crime Rates

This report includes a comparative analysis of crime rates for the ten MSAs on the list. Safety, typically measured by the number of crimes reported, is a standard of living factor of great interest for the community. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) collects and reports crime rates for the nation,[13] which are disaggregated into *violent crimes*[14] and *property crimes*.[15] Total crime was calculated as the added value of the two crime classifications (Table 12).

Table 11. Per Capita Real Gross Domestic Product and Compound Annual Growth Rate

No.	MSA	Per capita RGDP 2009 ($)	Per capita RGDP 2015 ($)	CAGR 2009-2015 (%)
1	San Diego-Carlsbad	56,923	60,175	0.9
-	**United States**	49,794	52,896	1.0
2	Corpus Christi	41,648	46,486	1.8
3	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	43,233	43,264	0.0
4	Albuquerque	43,783	42,613	-0.5
5	San Antonio-New Braunfels	36,631	42,169	2.4
6	Tucson	33,288	32,152	-0.6
7	**El Paso**	**30,861**	**30,865**	**0.0**
8	Yuma	26,784	24,384	-1.6
9	Brownsville-Harlingen	19,503	20,088	0.5
10	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	18,660	20,007	1.2

Notes: *In 2009 US dollars (chained)*
Source: *Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).*

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[13] Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Crime in the United States by MSA, 2014; Table 6.

[14] Violent crimes are defined as those offenses which involve force or threat of force and can be classified in four categories: murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

[15] Property crimes are defined as those offenses which do not involve force or threat of force against the victims and can be classified in four categories: burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Table 12. Crime Rates, 2014

No.	MSA	Violent crime	Property crime	Total Crime
1	San Diego-Carlsbad	325	1,814	2,139
2	**El Paso**	369	2,030	2,398
3	Yuma	372	2,558	2,931
-	**National Rate**	366	2,596	2,962
4	Brownsville-Harlingen	259	3,317	3,576
5	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	329	3,365	3,695
6	Phoenix**	380	3,657	4,036
7	San Antonio-New Braunfels	405	4,198	4,603
8	Corpus Christi	589	4,085	4,674
9	Albuquerque	740	4,271	5,011
10	Tucson*	434	4,849	5,283

Notes: *Rate per 100,000 inhabitants*
* Data correspond to 2013; ** Data correspond to 2011
Source: *Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).*

Tucson showed the highest property crime rate with 4,849 reported crimes per 100,000 inhabitants. The MSA with the highest violent crime rate was Albuquerque with 740, twice as much as El Paso's rate. Conversely, the MSA with the least number of violent crimes (adjusted to population) is Brownsville with 259 crimes per 100,000 inhabitants. Tucson appears to be the most dangerous MSA on the list with a total crime rate of 5,283 crimes per 100,000 inhabitants. San Diego and El Paso appear as the MSAs with the lowest total crime rates on the list, both below the national average.

Final Thoughts

A relevant additional consideration in this analysis is the border proximity. Some of the MSAs on the list are adjacent to a Mexican city. This turns into an economic benefit for local residents who cross the border to acquiring products or services at a more affordable price than at their north-bound counterpart. There is evidence that, given the low cost of labor in Mexico, some U.S. residents cross the border to buy groceries, health care, or hospitality services (Ramirez, 2015). This is particularly common for residents of Hispanic origins.

Regardless of the high cost of grocery items in El Paso, this report confirms its status as a safe, affordable place to live in, with a healthy promising economy. Despite this, El Paso needs to take action in order to raise its average wages and keep up the growing pace of localities with similar characteristics, as well as with the rest of the nation. San Diego appears as a MSA where a general basket of consumer items seems difficult to afford, even with its relative high wages. Conversely, San Antonio's results indicate a strong economy with relative high wages and low living costs, making it an attractive place to reside.

Standard of living variables vary widely across the nation. Different urban areas are exposed to a number of conditions that define them. The perfect place to live, where all desirable variables meet high standards, may not ever exist. Every community has unique characteristics that their residents treasure, characteristics that cannot be measured objectively. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to produce a mechanism of comparison that serves as a decision-making aid when the idea of migrating arises. Besides, this analysis also becomes valuable for community leaders who want to understand the position of their community vis a vis other localities, plan ahead for future development goals, and take actions to improve current conditions.∎

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