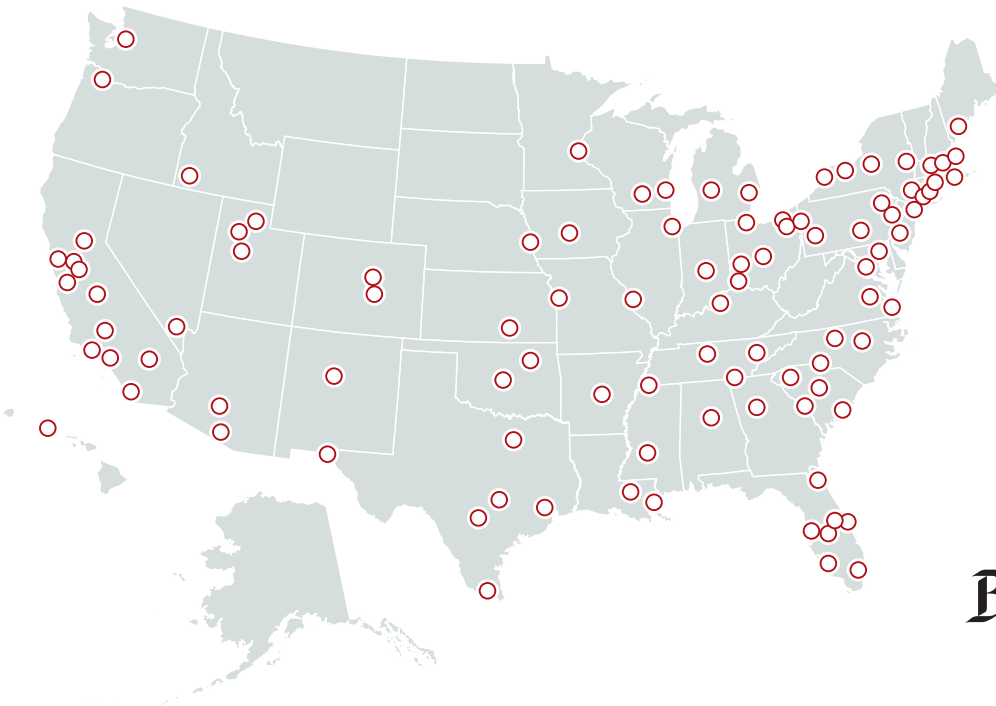


State of Metropolitan America

ON THE FRONT
LINES OF
DEMOGRAPHIC
TRANSFORMATION



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PREFACE

Obscured by the current economic moment and the nation's rightful preoccupation with recovery, the United States stands poised at a moment of significant societal change.

Over the last decade, America has passed a number of major demographic milestones. The *State of Metropolitan America* shows how these “new realities” are redefining who we are, where and with whom we live, and how we provide for our own welfare, as well as that of our families and communities. And these new realities, most pronounced in the leading edge of the nation's metropolitan areas, are fundamental: the continued growth and outward expansion of our population; its ongoing racial and ethnic diversification; the rapid aging on the horizon; our increasing but selective higher educational attainment; and the intensified income polarization experienced by our workers and families.

These underlying realities are too large to ignore any longer. Specific policy responses designed to make the most of America's potential in the face of the nation's relentless pace of change must be priorities for national, metropolitan, and local actors alike in the coming decade. Failure to recognize and address these challenges will only further thwart the timeless American struggle to form a more perfect union.

By understanding the context and landscape of America's metropolitan areas, we can begin to develop smarter policies to increase more equitable opportunities for our nation.

The Rockefeller Foundation is proud to support this seminal report and the ongoing *State of Metropolitan America* series at Brookings, which will continue to chronicle the demographic shifts transforming America, from the ground up. Support for this and other urban initiatives in the United States and around the world affirms the foundation's commitment to building more resilient cities and metropolitan regions.

We hope you find this report a useful lens on America's future.

Judith Rodin

President

The Rockefeller Foundation

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First and foremost, we thank the Rockefeller Foundation for its generous financial and intellectual support of this project. The Foundation has provided longstanding support for the Metropolitan Policy Program's most important and influential research and policy work over the past decade, including the Blueprint for American Prosperity and the Metropolitan Infrastructure Initiative, for which we are enormously grateful.

Jill Wilson at Brookings provided day-to-day management of all technical aspects of this report and the accompanying *State of Metropolitan America* website. She developed the report's geographic approach, orchestrated the analysis of data from the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) internal files at the U.S. Census Bureau, managed design and data for the website, and performed research assistance for several of the chapters, especially *Immigration*. This project would not have been possible without her tireless efforts.

Cathy Sun of the University of Michigan played a critical role in programming and preparing tabulations for this report from the 2008 ACS internal files at the U.S. Census Bureau. Cathy also provided programming and research assistance for several chapters of the report authored by William Frey.

David Raglin of the American Community Survey Office at the U.S. Census Bureau provided critical support in developing a Joint Project Agreement between Brookings and the Census Bureau, which enabled our analysis of internal ACS data. David also supplied much-needed, timely assistance to Brookings in navigating the data.

A 2009 roundtable with experts on metropolitan demographics greatly informed the methodology and scope of this report. Participants included D'Vera Cohn (Pew Research Center), John Cromartie (USDA Economic Research Service), and Marc Perry, David Johnson, Robert Kominski, and Michael Ratcliffe (U.S. Census Bureau).

Several individuals at Brookings contributed data analysis for the *State of Metropolitan America* website and individual chapters, including Jennifer Hinojosa, Kelsey Merrick, Benjamin Orr, and Chad Shearer. In addition to co-authoring the *Income and Poverty* chapter, Emily Garr provided data assistance for the *Race and Ethnicity* and *Households and Families* chapters. Dana Thomson, a consultant to Brookings, performed numerical checking and statistical significance calculations for the website data.

Partial support for William Frey's *Race and Ethnicity* and *Age* chapters came from a National

Institutes of Health, NICHD grant at the University of Michigan.

David Jackson at Brookings managed the difficult task of editing the entire report with patience and skill. Maria Paul of Sese-Paul Design artfully executed the layout and design of the report.

Bruce Katz, Vice President and Director of the Metropolitan Policy Program, provided invaluable guidance and vision for this project. Other Brookings staff members, including Jennifer Bradley, Amy Liu, Mark Muro, and Julie Wagner made thoughtful and insightful contributions along the way. Ellen Ochs provided first-rate project management in the home stretch.

Finally, this was truly a team effort of the Metropolitan Policy Program, led by the program's research director, Alan Berube. The report's main research team—Alan Berube, William Frey, Audrey Singer, and Jill Wilson—wishes to thank all the authors and the supportive Brookings staff that contributed in many ways to this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The 2000s were a tumultuous decade for Americans. The oscillating state of the economy, which careened from a mild recession to booming house prices and, finally, to the worst downturn since the Great Depression, complicates the task of summarizing what the decade meant for the future of American society. Nonetheless, the boom-bust economics of the 2000s did not repeal the structural forces that continue to transform our population.

This report shows that our nation now faces five “new realities” that are redefining who we are, where and with whom we live, and how we provide for our own welfare, as well as that of our families and communities. In each of these five areas, the nation reached critical milestones in the 2000s that make those underlying realities too large to ignore any longer. And large metropolitan areas—the collections of cities, suburbs, and rural areas that house two-thirds of America’s population—lay squarely on the front lines of those trends.

THE FIVE NEW REALITIES

Growth and Outward Expansion

The nation’s population passed 300 million, and over the course of the decade, the nation will have added roughly 28 million people. Our nation’s large metro areas remain at the cutting edge of the nation’s continued growth. Between 2000 and 2009, they grew by a combined 10.5 percent, versus 5.8 percent growth in the rest of the country. But they continued to spread out, too, as their less developed, outer

areas grew at more than three times the rate of their cities and inner suburbs.

Population Diversification

The United States population is today one-third non-white, and those groups accounted for 83 percent of national population growth from 2000 to 2008. Immigration continues to fuel our growth, too, and now nearly one-quarter of U.S. children have at least one immigrant parent. This coming-of-age generation, a little over 30 years from now, will stand on the precipice of our transition to a majority non-white nation. Large metropolitan areas will get there first, as their under-18 population had already reached majority non-white status by 2008.

Aging of the Population

Together, U.S. baby boomers and seniors now number more than 100 million. Large metro areas are in some ways aging faster than the rest of the nation, experiencing a 45 percent increase in their 55-to-64 year-old population from 2000 to 2008. As a result, their single-person households are growing more rapidly as well, especially in suburban communities that were not designed with these populations in mind.

Uneven Higher Educational Attainment

More than one-third of U.S. adults held a post-secondary degree in 2008, up from one-quarter in 1990, helping to propel our economic growth. But younger adults, especially in large metro areas, are not registering the same high levels of degree attainment as their predecessors. Moreover, the African American and Hispanic groups projected to make up a growing share of our future workforce now lag their white and Asian counterparts in large metro areas on bachelor's degree attainment by more than 20 percentage points.

Income Polarization

The typical American household saw its inflation-adjusted income decline by more than \$2,000 between 1999 and 2008—and probably even further by 2009 when the economy hit bottom. Low-wage and middle-wage workers lost considerable ground, but high-wage workers saw earnings rise. The number of people living below the poverty line increased as well. Large metro areas stood at the vanguard of these troubling trends. By 2008 high-wage workers in large metro areas out-earned their low-wage counterparts by a ratio of more than five to one, and the number of their residents living in poverty had risen 15 percent since 2000.

THE VARIABLE METRO MAP

Large metropolitan areas as a group are “ahead of the curve” on the five new demographic and social realities that America confronts. However, in some ways, large metropolitan areas actually became more different from one another in the 2000s, making it even more important to understand American society from the individualized perspectives of these

places. No longer easily grouped along traditional regional lines, such as Sun Belt versus Snow Belt, or East versus West, this “pulling apart” reinforces a new seven-category typology of metropolitan America:

- **Next Frontier** metro areas exceed national averages on population growth, diversity, and educational attainment. Of these nine metro areas, eight lie west of the Mississippi River (Washington, D.C. is the exception)
- **New Heartland** metro areas are also fast growing, highly educated locales, but have lower shares of Hispanic and Asian populations than the national average. These 19 metro areas include many in the “New South” where blacks are the dominant minority group, such as Atlanta and Charlotte, as well as largely white metro areas throughout the Midwest and West, such as Indianapolis and Portland (OR)
- **Diverse Giant** metro areas feature some of the largest in the country, including the three most populous (New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago), as well as coastal anchors such as Miami and San Francisco. These nine regions post above-average educational attainment and diversity, but below-average population growth, owing in part to their large sizes
- **Border Growth** metro areas are mostly located in southern border states, and as such are marked by a significant and growing presence of Mexican and other Latin American immigrants. Only Orlando lies outside the main orbit of this group of 11 metro areas, which stretches from east Texas, through Arizona and Nevada, and up California's Central Valley
- **Mid-Sized Magnet** metro areas have experienced high growth, but exhibit lower shares of Hispanic and Asian minorities, and lower levels of educational attainment. Like many Border Growth

centers, many of these 15 mid-sized, mostly Southeastern locations got caught in the growth spiral of the 2000s that ended abruptly with the housing crash

- **Skilled Anchors** are slow-growing, less diverse metro areas that boast higher-than-average levels of educational attainment. Of the 19 nationwide, 17 lie in the Northeast and Midwest, including large regions such as Boston and Philadelphia, and smaller regions such as Akron and Worcester. Many boast significant medical and educational institutions
- **Industrial Cores** are in some ways the most demographically disadvantaged of the metropolitan types. These 18 metro areas are largely older industrial centers of the Northeast, Midwest, and Southeast. Their populations are slower-growing, less diverse, and less educated than national averages, and significantly older than the large metropolitan average. These metro areas lost population in the aggregate in the 2000s

Viewing metropolitan America through this lens offers a more nuanced view of the country and its variable challenges than conventional regional generalizations. Yet, even as large metro areas “pulled apart” demographically from one another in some ways in the 2000s, they also “came together” at the individual metropolitan scale so that suburbs and cities grew more alike in many ways. Cities gained population at suburbs’ expense in the wake of the housing crash; a majority of members all major racial/ethnic groups now live in suburbs; and the suburban poor population grew at roughly five times the rate of the city poor population over the decade.

A NEW DECADE OF RECKONING, FROM THE MACRO TO THE METRO

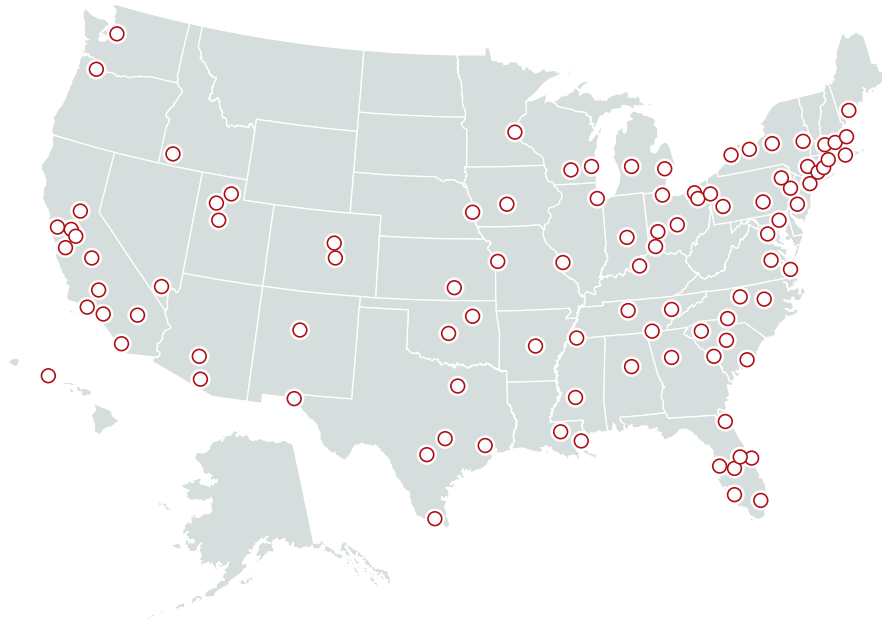
Some commentators have begun to refer to the 2000s as “the lost decade,” largely on the basis of the lack of job and economic growth nationally during that time. But the decade was lost in another sense, too; the nation lost time and opportunity to respond to the challenges and prospects of its new demographic realities.

We now stand on the precipice of a “decade of reckoning.” Questions around how to support communities with rapidly aging populations, how to meet family and labor market needs through immigration, and how to help lower-paid workers support themselves and their families simply cannot go unaddressed for another decade without risking our collective standard of living and the quality of our democracy. Tackling these and other challenges will require coherent, purposeful leadership in the coming years.

National conversations tend to overlook the fact that these new realities affect not only “macro” conditions such as the federal budget and the U.S. labor market. They are also experienced in places—mostly in our nation’s largest metropolitan areas. Therefore, a federal policy agenda must confront aspects of particular concern for the metropolitan communities on the front lines of these trends, including:

- **Accommodating more efficient growth**, by putting a price on carbon to account for the external costs of fossil fuel combustion, encouraging greater coordination between housing and transportation planning, and reducing the deductibility of mortgage interest to discourage over-consumption of housing

National policy makers have the unique obligation to address aspects of the five new realities that affect all metropolitan areas, or are simply beyond metropolitan areas' own capacity to tackle.



- **Integrating and incorporating diverse populations**, through comprehensive immigration reform that protects our borders and provides a fair pathway to legal status, federal support for programs and practices that facilitate immigrant incorporation, and a national Office of New Americans to elevate and coordinate makeshift local integration efforts
- **Enhancing community affordability and vitality for seniors**, including meeting rising demands for affordable housing integrated with services, protecting seniors' home equity through enhanced oversight of mortgage products, and requiring the expenditure of federal transportation and housing funds to take into account the specific needs of older populations
- **Accelerating higher educational attainment**, by continuing to focus on enhancing teacher quality for students in need and promoting effective interventions in low-performing schools, and rewarding and supporting institutions and students not just for enrollment in higher education, but also persistence toward and completion of degrees

- **Reducing income inequality**, by restoring and growing the productive capacity of the nation's auto communities, pursuing enhanced labor standards enforcement, and renewing/expanding tax credits that support lower-income working families like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit

National policy makers have the unique obligation to address aspects of the five new realities that affect all metropolitan areas, or are simply beyond metropolitan areas' own capacity to tackle. As this report demonstrates, however, different challenges assume varying levels of prominence in different types of metropolitan areas. Leaders at the state, regional, and local levels must now more than ever understand and respond purposefully to the demographic, social, and economic changes most affecting their places.

- **Border Growth** and **Mid-Sized Magnet** metro areas must seek greater economic balance in the wake of the housing crash. Smart infrastructure investments in these metro areas could promote growth of alternative energy production and

distribution, international travel and tourism, and linkages with larger nearby centers of global commerce. Their leaders must also be fierce champions for the continued viability of 2- and 4-year higher education institutions, which offer the best hope for ensuring that their large and growing young, minority populations can share in the fruits of future economic growth

- **Diverse Giant** and **Next Frontier** metro areas should adopt the most innovative practices for accelerating the civic and labor market integration of their larger immigrant and “second generation” populations. They should also set out “roadmaps” for addressing future local and regional population needs in an environmentally sustainable, fiscally efficient manner that create and preserve affordable options for low- and middle-income families
- **New Heartland** metro areas, with migration rates likely to remain somewhat lower in the near term, should focus on growing a more educated pipeline of workers from within their own borders. Attracting younger middle-class families back to urban and inner-suburban public school systems, and forging closer partnerships between regional economic development and university officials, could help build the next middle class in these regions
- **Skilled Anchor** and **Industrial Core** metro areas, while economically distinct, share certain demographic attributes and associated challenges. Slowing the tide of decentralization by building outward from anchor institutions and overhauling urban land use, keeping older skilled workers connected to labor market opportunities, and integrating housing and social services for urban and suburban senior populations should be priorities for their leaders

Finally, new demographic realities must be met with new governance arrangements. Especially in light of the deep fiscal crisis facing states and local governments, the lines between cities and suburbs—and the long, fruitless history of battles and mistrust between them—must be transcended, in all types of metropolitan areas. Local leaders must forge regional solutions to newly shared regional challenges, such as linking the supply and demand sides of the labor market to benefit disadvantaged workers. They must undertake greater collaboration in the delivery of services, or outright combine outdated, inefficient local government units such as school districts. And they must act like metropolitan areas in dealing with their states, consolidating their influence on common issues that affect the well-being of their populations.

CONCLUSION

The pace of change and complexity of U.S. society only seems to multiply with each passing decade. Now, as the nation and its major metropolitan areas reach a series of critical demographic junctures, forging a constructive path forward to the “next society” is as much about helping communities manage the velocity of that transformation as it is about responding to its specific character. Failure to maximize shared responses to the inevitable challenges of change, and common ownership of the solutions, will only serve to sow the seeds of intergenerational, interracial, and inter-ethnic conflict. Understanding—from the ground up—who Americans are, and who they are becoming, is a critical step toward building constructive bridges before they become impassable divides. ■



ABOUT THE STATE OF METROPOLITAN AMERICA

The *State of Metropolitan America* is a signature effort of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program that portrays the demographic and social trends shaping the nation's essential economic and societal units—its large metropolitan areas—and discusses what they imply for public policies to secure prosperity for these places and their populations.

This report marks the inaugural edition of a regular summary report in Brookings' *State of Metropolitan America* series. It focuses on the major demographic forces transforming the nation and large metropolitan areas in the 2000s. In this sense, it previews what we will learn from the results of the 2010 Census, as well as supplements those results in important ways. Future editions of the annual report will examine those results, probe more deeply specific types of populations and geographies profiled in this report, and update the analysis herein as the country emerges from its deepest economic recession in decades. Brookings' ongoing *State of Metropolitan America* series will also feature regular reports on key demographic topics, and their relevance to the changing populations of our metropolitan areas, cities, and suburbs.

THE TOPICS

This report is arranged topically, with nine chapters that correspond to nine of the most important subjects tracked by the Census Bureau in its annual American Community Survey (ACS; see below):

■ **Population and Migration** follows the population growth and decline of U.S. places over the

decade, and how the movement of people—from next-door communities, from other parts of the country, and from abroad—contributed to these trends

■ **Race and Ethnicity** analyzes the changing racial (e.g., white, black, Asian) and ethnic (e.g., Hispanic) composition of our population, including the patterns of growth and decline in these groups in different corners of the nation¹

■ **Immigration** focuses on America's foreign-born population, both citizens and non-citizens: their growth, where they live, their characteristics, and the growing demographic influence of their children

■ **Age** looks at the shifting balance between older and younger Americans across the country, especially as the baby boom generation—America's largest—approaches seniorhood

■ **Households and Families** examines who makes up the fundamental units of our society, how their structures are changing over time, and how they relate to the different racial/ethnic and age profiles of America's communities

■ **Educational Attainment** profiles the educational status of adults (how much schooling they have completed, their enrollment in higher education), identifies differences by age and

race/ethnicity, and relates these to the underlying economic features of regions

- **Work** analyzes two sets of indicators on the status of America's labor force: the wages earned by differently compensated workers; and rates of unemployment, which reflect the varying degrees of economic pain experienced by different parts of the country
- **Income and Poverty** portrays trends in the economic well-being of typical households, the size of the "middle class," and the location and characteristics of America's sizeable and growing poor population
- **Commuting** details how we get to work, how those patterns have changed over time, and the factors contributing to the sizeable differences among communities in how workers undertake those daily trips

Each chapter is authored by one or more Brookings experts, each of whom has written widely on the topic at hand (see "About the Authors"). The chapters include the authors' own analysis of the most important and compelling trends over the 2000s at multiple levels of American geography (described further below), accompanied by their thoughts on what these trends mean for the future of people, places, and public policy.²

THE DATA

The data on which the bulk of this and many other reports in the *State of Metropolitan America* series are based come from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) data. The ACS is a nationwide survey that provides an ongoing demographic, social, and economic portrait of the country and its communities, and the largest survey that the

Census Bureau administers other than the decennial census. About 3 million households each year receive and respond to the ACS, allowing the Census Bureau to construct a detailed profile of states, metropolitan areas, and larger cities on an annual basis.³ The latest ACS from which data are publicly available is from 2008 (see inset "The State of Metropolitan America and the Great Recession").

Previously, many of the data now collected through the ACS were collected via the decennial census' "long form." The long form asked a sample of census respondents more detailed questions than the more common "short form," on topics such as their marital status, where they were born, their level of education, and how much money they earned. The 2010 Census only features the short form, which asks 10 basic questions regarding population, age, race and ethnicity, relationships among members of households, and homeownership. In essence, the ACS has replaced the long form, and in doing so has created a valuable opportunity to understand the in-depth population dynamics affecting our country's communities more than once every 10 years. A further implication of this shift is that the 2010 Census, while providing essential information for research and policymaking, will not offer the same sort of treasure trove of socio-economic data as its predecessors.

A couple of further distinctions between the ACS and the decennial census long form are worth noting, in light of the fact that this report makes many comparisons between ACS data from 2008 and decennial census data from 2000. First, the sample of American households that receive the ACS on an annual basis is considerably smaller than the sample that received the Census 2000 long form. As a result, there is a greater degree of uncertainty that the results from the ACS represent the true

characteristics of the underlying population than is the case with Census 2000 results. The smaller the population of the geography in question (see below), the greater that degree of uncertainty, or “sampling error.” Where this report makes comparisons between results from Census 2000 and the 2008 ACS, we only report the value of the change over time if the margin of error for the reported ACS estimate indicates that the change is statistically significant.⁴

Second, the ACS surveys households on a monthly basis, while Census 2000 collected information as of April 1 that year. One implication is that the “reference period” for certain questions differs from that in the decennial census. In particular, 2008 ACS respondents reported income they received in the previous 12 months, and the Census Bureau adjusted those data for inflation to reflect an estimate for their income in calendar year 2008. Nevertheless, those data capture the economic condition of households stretching from January of 2007 (12 months prior to responses from January 2008 respondents) to December of 2008 (the final month of data collection for the 2008 ACS).⁵ In Census 2000, by contrast, all long-form respondents reported their income for calendar year 1999.

Most of the ACS data, and all of the decennial census data, analyzed in this report and presented at the *State of Metropolitan America* website (see below) come from the tables and data files hosted on the Census Bureau’s website, particularly its American Factfinder tool.⁸ For certain more complicated topics and indicators, however, the *State of Metropolitan America* benefited from special access to the full 2008 ACS data file hosted at the Census Bureau (stripped of individual identifiers). These subjects, such as detailed educational attainment of the population for different age groups, characteristics

THE STATE OF METROPOLITAN AMERICA AND THE GREAT RECESSION

The bulk of analysis in this report covers population characteristics in 2008, as well as trends during the “2000s,” used to refer to the period from 2000 to 2008.⁶ The 2008 American Community Survey (ACS), like the ACS in other years, represents an aggregation of responses to the survey from a sample of households in each month of the year. The Census Bureau tabulates and reports the results to reflect the average profile of community populations across the entire calendar year.

This is particularly relevant in the case of 2008, which marked the first year of the “Great Recession,” by several measures the most severe that the United States experienced in the postwar period. The impact of the recession was significant but relatively mild in the first half of the year, but grew especially severe in the second half of the year, particularly in September through December.⁷ The data presented here thus reflect national and metropolitan conditions that span a portion of the Great Recession, but do not capture its full impact, which was felt most severely in 2009.

It seems likely that the more cyclical indicators examined in this report through 2008, such as income and poverty, wages, and even migration and commuting patterns, may look somewhat different in 2009. However, most topics examined here, such as race and ethnicity, age, household structure, and educational attainment are more structural in nature, and will not look significantly different during or after the Great Recession than they did at its onset.

Most topics examined here are more structural than cyclical and will not look significantly different due to the Great Recession.

of the population in poverty, and commuting mode for workers of different incomes, could only be examined for the places profiled in this report via this special access.⁹

This report uses data from a couple of sources in addition to the ACS and decennial census. The most important of these is the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program.¹⁰ Using data from the last decennial census, more recent national surveys, and administrative records at all levels of government, the program produces annual estimates of population, and its "components of change" (natural increase, domestic migration, and immigration), for all incorporated municipalities, counties, and states nationwide. The program also estimates state and county populations by age and race/ethnicity annually.¹¹ These data provide the basis for much of our analysis in the Population and Migration, Race and Ethnicity, and Age chapters.

THE GEOGRAPHY

Metropolitan Areas

As its name indicates, this report focuses primarily on metropolitan areas, the geographic building blocks of America's economy and society. Why metropolitan areas? Unlike individual cities and towns, or large political units like states, these are the places within which most people—both here and abroad—live their daily lives. Most Americans (84 percent) live in metropolitan areas.¹² Most of their workers (58 percent) commute to jobs within their metropolitan area, but in a city or town different from the one in which they live.¹³ Most metropolitan residents who move (79 percent) choose another location in the same metro area.¹⁴ We do our shopping in different

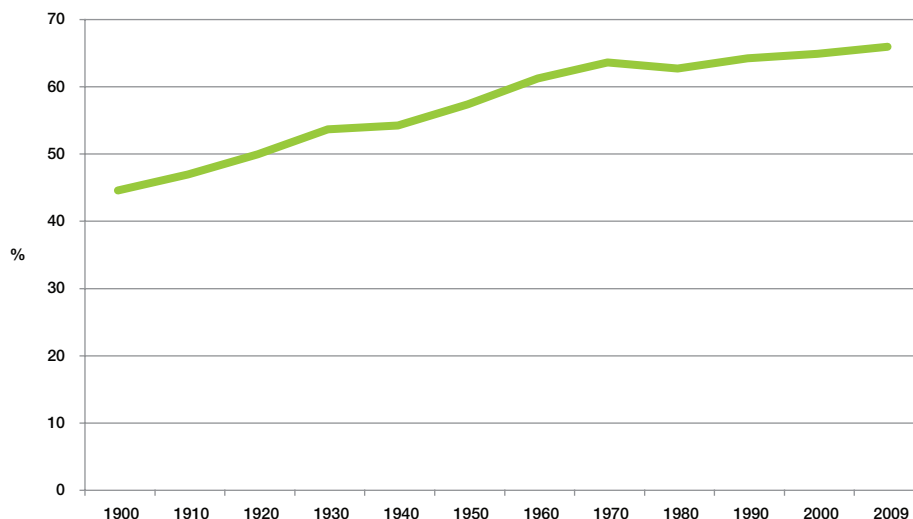
parts of metropolitan areas, get our media from metro-wide newspapers and television stations, and root for sports teams and visit cultural institutions that service whole regions. We share natural resources and infrastructure—air, water, roads, airports—at the metropolitan scale. Related businesses cluster and share innovations and labor force expertise within metro areas.¹⁵ In short, metropolitan areas represent the critical geographic lens through which to understand a changing American society.

Metropolitan areas as a statistical concept join cities and their suburbs together to represent local and regional markets. In the United States, Metropolitan Statistical Areas are defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) based on data gathered by the Census Bureau. OMB locates these areas around a densely populated core, typically a city, of at least 50,000 people. Counties that have strong commuting ties to the core are then included in the definition of the metropolitan area. OMB currently identifies 366 metropolitan areas nationwide, with populations ranging from 55,000 (Carson City, NV) to 19 million (New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA).¹⁶

Within this group of metropolitan areas, the *State of Metropolitan America* series concentrates the bulk of its attention on the 100 largest, which in 2008 coincided almost exactly with those metro areas having populations of at least 500,000.¹⁷ While there is nothing especially magical about the half million-person threshold, these metropolitan areas are fairly recognizable places to most Americans. Moreover, nearly all of their largest cities have populations of at least 100,000. Even more remarkably, these large metro areas continue to slowly but steadily increase their share of the nation's population. At the turn of the 20th century, 44 percent of Americans lived in the counties that today make up the 100 largest

The Share of U.S. Population Living in the 100 Largest Metro Areas Continues to Grow

Share of U.S. Residents Living in 100 Largest Metro Areas, 1900-2009



Note: Geographical definition of 100 largest metro areas held constant to 2007 boundaries over time

Source: Brookings analysis of "Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990" (U.S. Census Bureau) and Population Estimates Program data

metro areas.¹⁸ By 2000 that share had risen to 65 percent, and by 2009 reached 66 percent.

Primary Cities and Suburbs

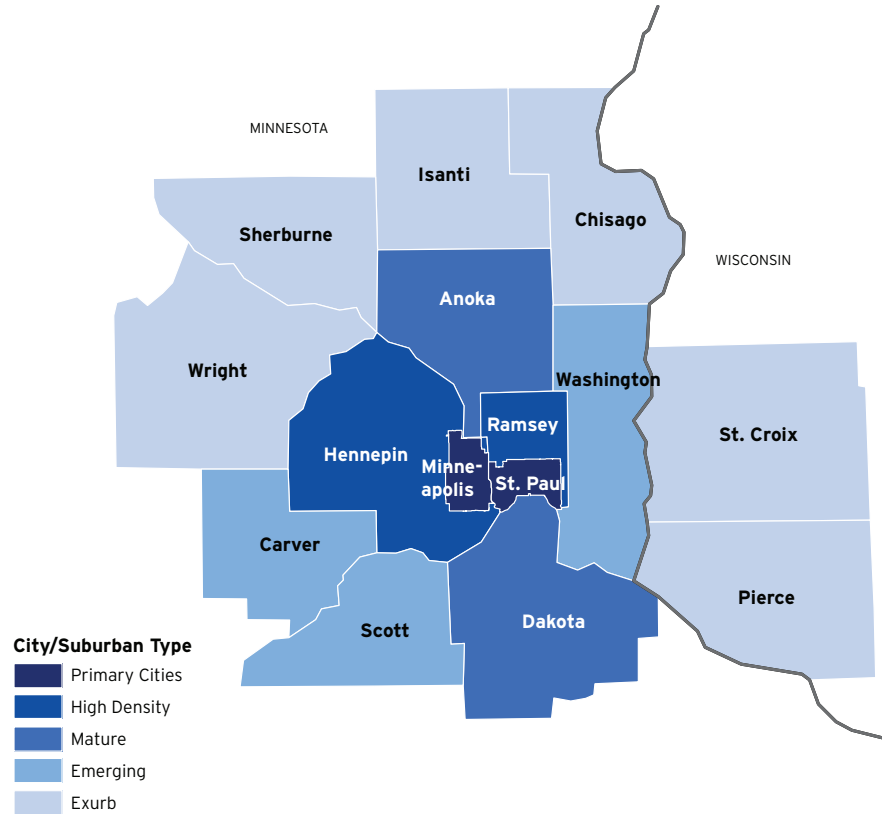
In addition to tracking trends for large metropolitan areas—individually and in the aggregate—the State of Metropolitan America also looks inside these places to differentiate their large cities and suburban areas. OMB defines “principal cities” for metropolitan areas, which include the largest city in each, plus additional cities that meet specific population size and employment requirements.¹⁹ Many principal cities, while important destinations or residences for local populations, do not accord with what most Americans would regard to be a “city.” For instance, the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA metro

area—which is composed of Los Angeles and Orange counties—contains 25 OMB-designated principal cities.

The cities examined in this report—termed “primary cities” to distinguish them from OMB’s concept—include the first named city in each metropolitan area (the largest), plus other incorporated places in the metro area name with populations of at least 100,000. Because metro area names may feature a maximum of three principal cities, no more than 3 primary cities are designated for each metro area. Across the 100 largest metro areas, then, a total of 137 primary cities are identified.²⁰ In referencing some metro areas in tables and figures, the report modifies OMB’s official titles to reflect only those cities designated primary cities. For example,

The Twin Cities Area Contains a Range of Older and Newer Communities

Metropolitan County Types in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area



Source: Brookings analysis of Census 2000 and Population Estimates data

the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH metro area is referred to as the Boston-Cambridge, MA-NH metro area, as Quincy has too small a population to be classified a primary city.²¹

For each metro area, “suburbs” or “suburban areas” are designated as the remainder of the metro

area outside of primary cities. This is an admittedly crude approach, though one consistent with Brookings’ longstanding demographic research methodology. In several chapters, however, the *State of Metropolitan America* goes a step further to analyze data for different types of suburbs. Counties are

classified based on their degree of “urbanization”—that is, what share of its people live in more densely populated areas—net of any primary cities they might contain. Beyond the cities themselves, metropolitan counties are classified into four types of suburbs: high-density, mature, emerging, and exurban.

How does this look in a typical metropolitan area? In the Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI metro area, Minneapolis (population 383,000) and St. Paul (population 280,000) are designated primary cities, while Bloomington (population 81,000) is not. The remainder of the counties in which the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul sit—Hennepin and Ramsey—are labeled “high-density” suburbs, owing to the large shares of their populations (over 95 percent in 2000) that live in densely populated communities. High-density suburbs tend to be among the first settled suburban areas outside of cities, and elsewhere are often termed “older” or “inner” suburbs. Two more Minnesota counties, Anoka and Dakota, are labeled “mature suburbs,” with between 75 and 95 percent of their populations in urbanized areas. Many such suburbs were developed largely in the 1960s and 1970s. Three more Minnesota counties—Carver, Scott, and Washington—are termed “emerging suburbs,” with between 25 percent and 75 percent of their populations in urbanized areas. These tend to be among the fastest-growing communities in metropolitan areas, with significant development in the 1980s and thereafter. Finally, six more sparsely settled counties (four in Minnesota, two in Wisconsin) are labeled “exurbs,” areas that tend to lie at the rural fringe of metropolitan areas.²²



www.brookings.edu/metroamerica

THE WEBSITE

The State of Metropolitan America also introduces a dynamic, interactive website that allows users to display, map, and download data for the nation’s 50 states (plus the District of Columbia), 100 largest metropolitan areas, and their cities and suburbs over 300 social, demographic, and economic indicators. The website goes beyond the report by providing more data, for more geographies, and for more years (2000, 2006, 2007, and 2008, as well as change since 2000), allowing users to make comparisons not presented in the report.

The website’s geographic profiles also provide a detailed “snapshot” of key indicators from across all nine of the report’s major subject areas, for each of the 100 largest metro areas (including their cities and suburbs) and the 50 states (plus the District of Columbia), which users can view dynamically or download. In addition, subject profiles provide summaries of each major subject area (e.g., population

and migration, race and ethnicity, etc.) that users can display or download.

This interactive website, accessible at **www.brookings.edu/metroamerica**, facilitates readers' continued exploration of the nation's metropolitan areas and the particular trends highlighted in the report. ■

ENDNOTES

1. Many chapters include analysis for different race and ethnic groups. In general, the terms "white," "black" or "African American," "Asian," and "other race" are used to refer to non-Hispanic members of these groups, while "Hispanics" or "Latinos" (used interchangeably) can be of any race. The term "non-white" refers to groups other than non-Hispanic whites. Exceptions to this approach are noted in the text.
2. The most notable ACS topic not addressed in this edition of the *State of Metropolitan America* is housing. The ACS collects information from households on subjects such as the age and layout of their homes, ownership status, housing costs, and home values. Given the dramatic state of flux in the housing market in 2008 and thereafter, results from the survey on many of these topics may significantly lag current realities, especially in parts of the nation most affected by foreclosures and declines in house prices. Although this report does not include analysis on these housing subjects, Brookings does intend to return to the topic in a future edition of the annual report, as well as examine selected housing indicators as part of other forthcoming reports in the *State of Metropolitan America* series.
3. The results of the annual ACS are tabulated as "one-year estimates" and provide a statistically valid sample for Census-recognized geographies with populations of at least 65,000. The Census Bureau also combines multiple years of ACS results to yield statistically valid samples for smaller geographies. The Obama administration's FY 2011 budget contains a \$44 million request to increase the ACS sample to 2.5 percent of the population, or 3.5 million households. *FY 2011 Budget of the U.S. Government Appendix*, Department of Commerce.
4. Unless otherwise noted, comparisons between Census 2000 and 2008 ACS results are tested for statistical significance at the 90 percent confidence level.
5. This methodology has implications for the interpretation of income data as reflecting the onset of the Great Recession in late 2007 and early 2008. See inset "The State of Metropolitan America and the Great Recession" for further details.
6. The Population and Migration chapter includes some data from 2009 on metropolitan populations and components of change, and the Work chapter includes unemployment rate data from 2009.
7. Nationwide, payroll employment declined 666,000 (0.5 percent) in the first 6 months of 2008, then fell by 2,957,000 (2.2 percent) in the last 6 months of the year.
8. <http://factfinder.census.gov>
9. Brookings and the U.S. Census Bureau entered into a Joint Project Agreement in 2009 (Agreement number 75-2009-JPA-01) that permitted Brookings to analyze data from the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS). A Brookings consultant with Census Bureau Special Sworn Status analyzed microdata housed on site at the Census Bureau in Suitland, MD, producing special tabulations for topics and geographies that could not be constructed using publicly-available data. The Bureau's ACS Office provided Brookings with access to the files and support in using them, and the Bureau's Disclosure Review Board provided review and approval of the tabulations that Brookings produced.
10. In addition, the Work chapter uses data on metropolitan unemployment rates from the Bureau of Labor

- Statistics' Local Area Unemployment Survey.
11. Although many of these same topics are tracked in the ACS, the Census Bureau actually uses the Population Estimates Program data to establish the sampling frame for the ACS, so that they represent a more primary source of information about population and its characteristics (and in the case of population counts, more recent) than the ACS. That noted, data on race and ethnicity and age for sub-county geographies (i.e., cities and suburbs) in this report come from the ACS, as they are not available from the Estimates Program.
 12. Brookings analysis of Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data for 2009.
 13. Brookings analysis of American Community Survey data for 2008. Reflects people living in places (e.g., cities and towns).
 14. U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey, 2008 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.
 15. Karen G. Mills, Elisabeth B. Reynolds, and Andrew Reamer, "Clusters and Competitiveness: A New Federal Role for Stimulating Regional Economies" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2008).
 16. Some of this description originally appeared in Alan Berube, *MetroNation: How U.S. Metropolitan Areas Fuel American Prosperity* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2007).
 17. In 2008, 101 metro areas had populations exceeding 500,000 (Lancaster, PA had 504,000 residents).
 18. All data for metropolitan areas in this report refer to the metro areas as they were defined by OMB in 2007; that is, we hold the county boundaries of metro areas consistent across time.
 19. For more on OMB/Census methodologies for defining metro areas and principal cities, see William H. Frey and others, "Tracking Metropolitan America Into the 21st Century: A Field Guide to the New Metropolitan and Micropolitan Definitions" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2004).
 20. Five primary cities—Bradenton, FL; Greenville, SC; Harrisburg, PA; Portland, ME; and Poughkeepsie, NY—are the largest cities in their respective metro areas but have populations under 65,000. As a result, the Census Bureau does not report results from the ACS for these cities in its one-year estimates due to insufficient sample size. Topics for which this report uses the 2008 ACS to analyze results for cities and suburbs typically exclude these five metro areas because of this data limitation.
 21. The New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA metro area is re-named "New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA" to recognize Newark's role as a primary city in northern New Jersey. Metro areas listed by their full names, with Brookings-designated primary cities identified, can be found on the website www.brookings.edu/metroamerica.
 22. While the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area has suburbs of all different types based on this classification system, many metropolitan areas have fewer, especially those with a smaller number of large counties (such as in New England and the West). Therefore, indicators and trends by suburban type in this report are presented for all large metro areas in the aggregate, rather than for individual metro areas. For further description of a similar typology, see Robert E. Lang, Thomas W. Sanchez, and Alan Berube, "The New Suburban Politics: A County-Based Analysis of Metropolitan Voting Trends Since 2000." In Ruy Teixeira, ed., *Red, Blue, and Purple America: The Future of Election Demographics* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

OVERVIEW



The 2000s were a tumultuous decade for Americans. The oscillating state of the economy, which careened from a mild recession, to a historic boom in house prices, to the worst downturn since the Great Depression, complicates the task of summarizing what the decade meant for the future of American society. The 2000s were less a coherent era than a series of dramatically different economic epochs. Moreover, it is difficult to know whether, or how long, several of the recession-induced trends we identify in this report—slowed migration, increased enrollment in higher education, declining median wages and incomes, rising levels of poverty—might persist into the coming decade.

But even as the economy spun through a remarkable series of astronomical highs and abysmal lows, demographic and social trends that continue to transform our population proceeded apace. If anything, the decade accelerated America's longer-term approach toward a number of critical demographic and social junctures. This report shows that our nation now faces a series of "new realities" about who we are, where and with whom we live, and how we provide for our own welfare, as well as that of our families and communities. These new realities relate to: the continued growth and outward expansion of our population; its ongoing racial and ethnic diversification; the "rapid" aging we are about to undergo; our increasing but selective higher educational attainment; and the intensified income polarization experienced by our workers and families. In each of these five areas, the nation reached important milestones in the 2000s that make those underlying realities too large to ignore any longer.

If these trends position the United States as a whole at a demographic crossroads, then our large metropolitan areas have already forged ahead.¹

Because of their size, and their historical and contemporary role in America's economy and society, our major cities and suburbs stand on the very front lines of these dynamics. They are thus the places where the nation is feeling the challenges that accompany these new realities first, and where the responses that will shape our next society must ultimately be co-produced.

THE FIVE NEW REALITIES

Growth and Outward Expansion

Unlike many of its peers in the industrialized world, the United States retained a robust rate of population growth in the 2000s. The nation's population passed 300 million, and over the course of the decade, the nation will have added roughly 28 million people, about a 10 percent growth rate. The healthy levels of fertility and immigration present in the United States confirm that, despite economic tumult, our population—and those around the globe—remains

hopeful about the opportunities our society provides. Indeed, our growth will ultimately provide a demographic cushion that may help us cope better with another new reality—supporting an increasingly aging population (see below).

Our nation's large metro areas remain at the cutting edge of the nation's continued growth. As **Population and Migration** shows, between 2000 and 2009, the 100 largest metropolitan areas grew by a combined 10.5 percent, versus 5.8 percent growth in the rest of the country, and by the end of the decade housed two-thirds of all Americans. While, on net, people move from large metro areas to other parts of the country in the aggregate, these places gain from births to their relatively younger populations, and from the migrants they attract from abroad in large numbers.

Yet the 2000s, particularly the go-go years of the housing bubble, fueled growth patterns in which the outermost reaches of metropolitan areas expanded at several times the rate of cities and core urban communities. In the 100 largest metro areas, cities and high-density suburban counties grew by a little under 5 percent from 2000 to 2008, while less developed, generally smaller counties grew at more

than three times that rate. By 2008, 40 percent of the metropolitan population lived in these spread-out areas.² This pattern of growth poses stark challenges for efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Homes and cars account for a significant portion of U.S. carbon emissions, and lower-density development is associated with higher energy and vehicle

usage.³ Indeed, while **Commuting** confirms that the share of Americans getting to work via public transit grew marginally for the first time in decades, it did so against the backdrop of a society in which three out of four commutes occurred alone, in a car.

The bursting of the housing bubble ushered in at least a temporary retreat from the longer-run march toward outer suburbia and lower-density metropolitan areas in general, a pattern also chronicled in **Population and Migration**. Whether a move toward more environmentally sustainable modes of living and transportation, in both cities and suburbs, will persist into the 2010s will depend on a range of factors. If recent history is any guide, public policy tools—both national and local in scope—will be needed to ensure that future development reflects the full range of its economic and environmental impacts on communities and society.

Population Diversification

In a country that recently elected its first African American president, it can be easy to forget that not so long ago, we were a considerably more racially and ethnically homogeneous society than we are today. In 1970, non-Hispanic whites accounted for roughly five in six Americans, a share that has dropped to less than four in six today. Immigrants that year were less than 5 percent of U.S. population; their share topped 12 percent in 2008. Today, our nation's population is one-third non-white (including Hispanics), and those groups are projected to reach majority status by 2042.

Immigration helps explain this transition toward a more racially and ethnically diverse society. In the 2000s, immigration accounted for roughly one-third of U.S. population growth. The majority of the remainder came from a natural increase of native-born racial and ethnic minorities. Nearly a quarter of

Growth and Outward Expansion

309 million
U.S. population

40%

Share of large metropolitan population living in lower-density counties

all U.S. children in 2008 were the sons and daughters of at least one immigrant parent. This coming-of-age generation, a little over 30 years from now, is projected to stand on the precipice of our transition to a non-white majority nation.

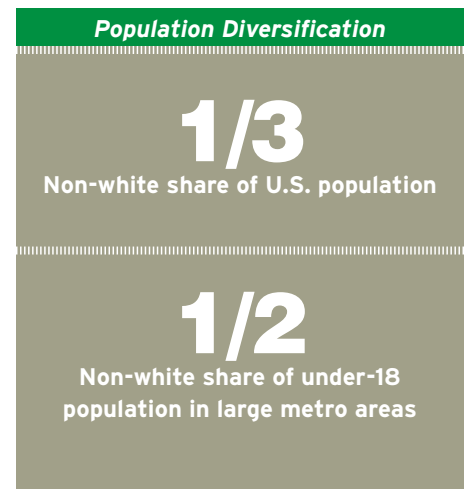
Large metropolitan areas will get there first. As **Race and Ethnicity** reveals, in 2008 these areas contained 68 percent of the nation's multi-racial population, 74 percent of its blacks, 80 percent of its Hispanics, and 88 percent of its Asians. Roughly one in six of their residents was foreign-born, a share exceeding that of the United States as a whole during the last great wave of immigration at the turn of the twentieth century. Notably, the under-18 population across the 100 largest metropolitan areas reached majority non-white status by 2008.

America's largely successful history at integrating immigrants into its social fabric remains one of its greatest economic and societal strengths. That strength is being tested anew, however, both by the large volume of immigration the country has recently experienced, and by the socioeconomic challenges that many of those immigrants and their children face. This is especially pronounced in the metropolitan communities that most of these new Americans call home. **Immigration** shows that some of these communities, especially suburbs, experienced rapid immigrant growth over both the 1990s and 2000s. Meanwhile, the nation's track record with respect to helping African Americans climb the socioeconomic ladder is mixed at best. Yet that group will remain a large and growing part of an increasingly diverse workforce as well. It shares some challenges with other minority groups, as well as disadvantaged portions of the white population, that metro areas on the front lines of this transition will be unable to fully address on their own.

Aging of the Population

Given the baby boomers' outsized influence on (among other things) our economy, our popular culture, and our politics, the move of the first members of this cohort into seniorhood—scheduled to begin in 2011—has not gone unnoticed. The demographic impact will be monumental, a veritable “age tsunami” compared to the smaller World War II generation immediately preceding them. Foreshadowing this, the number of 55-to-64 year-olds nationwide grew by nearly 50 percent from 2000 to 2010, as detailed in **Age**, with an even larger number of younger boomers (44 to 54 years old) looming in their wake. Together, U.S. boomers and seniors now number more than 100 million. Their impending retirements have provoked much analysis on the future of health care, our entitlement systems, the labor market, and the stock market.

Attracting somewhat less attention have been the questions of how and where aging will transform America's communities. Once again, large metro areas find themselves at the forefront of the trend. They are in one sense aging faster than the nation as a whole, experiencing a 45 percent increase in their 55-to-64 year-old population from 2000 to 2008, versus 40 percent nationally. More than one-third of their populations are now over the age of 45. And **Households and Families** reveals that metro areas' single-person households are growing more rapidly than the national average as well. As noted below, these increases are registering largely in the suburban communities that much of this



generation has always called home, but which were not designed with the boomers of 2020 in mind.

Moreover, because they are the locus of both America's diversifying and aging populations, large metro areas register a larger "cultural generation gap." Although more than 50 percent of their combined child population is non-white, their over-65 population remains 75 percent white. Metropolitan communities thus face particular challenges not only in how to preserve a high quality of life for the growing cadre of elderly who will age in place there, but also in how to reconcile the distinct needs of that population with very different next generations of workers, homeowners, and voters.

Uneven Higher Educational Attainment

The 2000s continued a trend that has made the United States one of the most highly educated nations in the world. More than one-third of U.S. adults held a post-secondary degree in 2008, up from one-quarter in 1990. These higher levels of education have helped propel our economic growth, and the quality of our higher educational institutions has

attracted talented individuals from all over the globe.

Yet as **Educational Attainment** demonstrates, the trend that has recently propelled growth in U.S. educational attainment—each generation "out-attaining" the one before it—may be faltering. Enrollments are rising, but rates of completion appear to be stalling among young adults. Moreover, the African American and Hispanic groups projected to

make up a growing share of our future workforce lag their white and Asian counterparts dramatically on post-secondary attainment.

Large metro areas at once lead the nation in this regard, while exemplifying even more strongly the disparities that lie beneath. Their residents earn four-year degrees at a much higher rate (31 percent) than those living elsewhere (21 percent). But 35-to-44 year-olds in large metro areas post higher degree attainment rates than their 25-to-34 year-old counterparts. And the attainment disparities between whites and Asians on the one hand, and blacks and Hispanics on the other are more pronounced in large metro areas. By 2008, that racial/ethnic gap in bachelor's degree attainment had passed 20 percentage points.

The issues that lay behind these trends are numerous, and extend well beyond the purview of the higher education sector alone. But with decent-paying jobs in the U.S. labor market poised to demand ever-greater levels of education and skills from their workers, the economic and social future of metropolitan areas may hinge on the ability of their economic and social institutions to propel a younger, more diverse population toward post-secondary success.

Income Polarization

The economically tumultuous 2000s were not kind to the typical American household, which saw its inflation-adjusted income decline by more than \$2,000 between 1999 and 2008—and probably even further by 2009 when the economy hit bottom. This will likely mark the first census decade in recent U.S. history in which real median household income declined. Nor was the decade a good one for Americans living at the economic margins; the number of people living below the poverty line rose

Aging of the Population

117 million

Population of U.S. boomers and seniors (age 45 and over)

38%

Share of large metropolitan population age 45 and over

15 percent, and the U.S. poverty rate increased from 12.4 percent to 13.2 percent.

One could chalk these trends up to purely cyclical forces, but this would overlook what appear to be longer-run, structural changes that led to continued polarization of wages and incomes over the decade. **Work** details how low-wage workers lost considerable ground in the 2000s, with hourly earnings declining by 8 percent. Middle-wage workers suffered a wage decline of more than 4 percent. At the top of the distribution, however, high-wage workers saw hourly earnings rise by more than 3 percent. Not surprisingly, these wage trends accompanied a further relative decline in the size of the middle class, building on a trend from past decades.⁴

Large metro areas stood at the vanguard of this troubling trend, too. Their low-wage workers suffered greater losses, and their high-wage workers made greater gains, than the national average during the 2000s. By 2008 high-wage workers in large metro areas out-earned their low-wage counterparts by a ratio of more than five to one, reflecting an especially stark divide between the haves and have-nots in metropolitan America. This holds by race/ethnicity, too, with non-Hispanic whites in large metro areas out-earning their black and Hispanic counterparts by larger margins than in smaller communities. And as explored below and in **Income and Poverty**, large metro areas demonstrated household income polarization of a different, equally important kind in the 2000s—a regional “pulling apart” that pummeled some corners of the nation even as it left others relatively unscathed.

These trends called into question the sufficiency of overall macroeconomic growth—and metropolitan economic growth, too—for improving living standards for most Americans. Broadly shared prosperity is important at both levels for the future of our society

and our democracy, and much more purposeful public policies may be needed in the decade ahead to ensure that the next round of economic growth delivers on that goal.

NEW REALITIES VARY IN THEIR INTENSITY ACROSS METROPOLITAN AMERICA

Large metropolitan areas as a group are noteworthy for exhibiting a forward-leaning position across the five new demographic and social realities that America confronts. Like any group with 100 distinct members, however, variation abounds. In some ways, large metropolitan areas actually became *more* different from one another in the 2000s. Still, much can be gleaned about the present and future of large metro areas from a basic demographic typology of these areas, the results of which confound simple regional ways of viewing the country and its population.

Metropolitan Distinctiveness

The 100 largest metro areas span a wide range of social, demographic, and economic experience. Across the nine subject areas of this report, enormous differences separate the metropolitan areas with the highest and lowest rankings in 2008. The New York metro area, for instance, has nearly 40 times the population of the Modesto metro area. The non-white

Uneven Higher Educational Attainment

35%

Share of U.S. population age 25 and over with a post-secondary degree

21%

Difference in bachelor's degree attainment rate, whites/Asians versus blacks/Hispanics in large metro areas

share of population in McAllen is roughly 16 times that in Portland (ME), and immigrants make up nearly 20 times the share of population in Miami as in Youngstown. Boomers and seniors are a majority of the population in Bradenton, but just one-fifth in Provo. And adults in the Washington, D.C. area are more than three times as likely to hold a college degree as those in the Bakersfield area.

Over the past decade, these major metropolitan areas diverged on many aspects of the emerging realities defining and challenging our society:

- On **growth and outward expansion**, the 2000s brought hyper-growth in some parts of the Sun Belt, along with population decline in struggling parts of the Great Lakes region. Provo, Raleigh, Las Vegas, and Cape Coral each had at least one-third more people in 2008 than in 2000. Meanwhile, something of a “lake effect” produced population losses in Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Youngstown, Cleveland, and Toledo, along with the nearby metro areas of Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Scranton. Even as many declined in population, Midwestern metro areas sprawled outwards, experiencing more than half of

their population gains in low-density counties. By comparison, only 20 percent of population gains in Northeastern metro areas, and 16 percent in Western metro areas, occurred in these farther-flung locations

- On **population diversification**, while America’s racial and ethnic minorities and immigrants continued to disperse in the 2000s, reaching significant thresholds of population in a growing number

of metro areas, they remained highly concentrated in a handful of very large places. A majority of Asians, and a near-majority of Hispanics, lived in just 10 metropolitan areas in 2008 (versus 25 percent of total U.S. population), producing wide variation across metro areas in the share of children who are “second generation” Americans (from 4 percent in Jackson to 60 percent in Los Angeles). Meanwhile, the number of blacks shrank in Midwestern and coastal California metro areas, and nearly one-fifth of black population gains in the 100 largest metro areas occurred in the Atlanta region

- On **aging**, already youthful metro areas such as Austin and Boise augmented that profile in the 2000s by adding large numbers of younger families with children, both white and minority, and now have relatively low shares of their populations aged 45 and over. At the same time, rapidly aging metro areas in the Northeast and Midwest such as Youngstown and Pittsburgh saw their numbers of married-with-children households drop at alarming rates, and now the boomer/senior share of their populations approaches half

- On **higher educational attainment**, the metro areas with the most highly educated populations essentially pulled farther away from the pack in the 2000s. Boston, New York, and San Francisco ranked among the top gainers of college graduates over the decade, while progress largely stalled in lower-attaining metro areas such as Chattanooga, El Paso, and Modesto. The degree attainment difference between Washington, D.C. and Bakersfield (#1 and #100, respectively) grew from 26 percentage points in 1990 to 34 in 2008. This clustering of the highly educated generally added to racial gaps in attainment within metro areas; the white/black college degree gap, for instance, grew considerably in “talent magnet” locations such as San Jose, Seattle, and Minneapolis

Income Polarization

-\$2,241

Change in U.S. real median household income, 1999 to 2008

5.25

Ratio of high-wage worker to low-wage worker hourly earnings, large metro areas

The Seven Types of Large Metropolitan Areas Are Distinct Along Several Demographic Dimensions

Metro Type	Number of Metro Areas	Total Population (millions)	% Growth in Core Areas, 2000 to 2008*	% Population Age 45 and Over	% Population Foreign-Born	Educational inequality Ratio**	Wage inequality Ratio***	% Commuters Driving Alone
Diverse Giant	9	58	50	38	28	2.8	5.7	65
Skilled Anchor	19	31	n/a	41	9	2.1	4.6	77
Next Frontier	9	29	41	35	18	2.6	5.4	74
New Heartland	19	28	44	36	9	2.0	4.7	79
Industrial Core	18	22	n/a	40	6	2.1	4.5	82
Border Growth	11	19	30	33	19	2.7	4.9	77
Mid-Sized Magnet	15	13	29	41	8	2.0	4.5	81
100-metro average	100	199	33	38	16	2.4	5.2	74

Low

Medium

High

Note: all metro type averages weighted by 2008 population; statistics are for 2008 unless otherwise noted

* Share of metropolitan growth in primary cities and high-density suburbs ("n/a" indicates population loss in these areas)

** Ratio of college degree attainment rate, whites/Asians versus blacks/Hispanics

*** Ratio of hourly earnings, high-wage (90th percentile) workers versus low-wage (10th percentile) workers

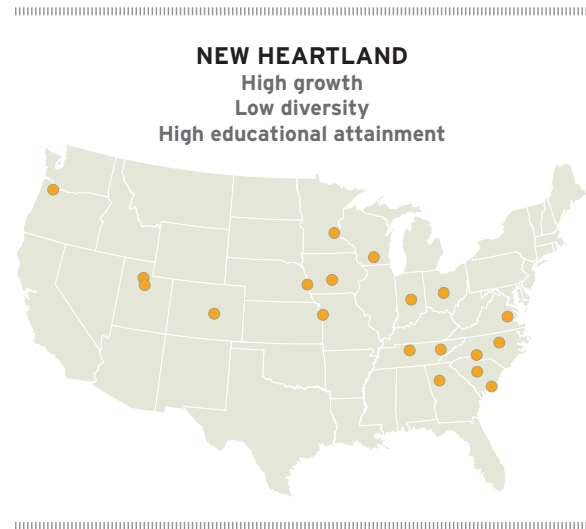
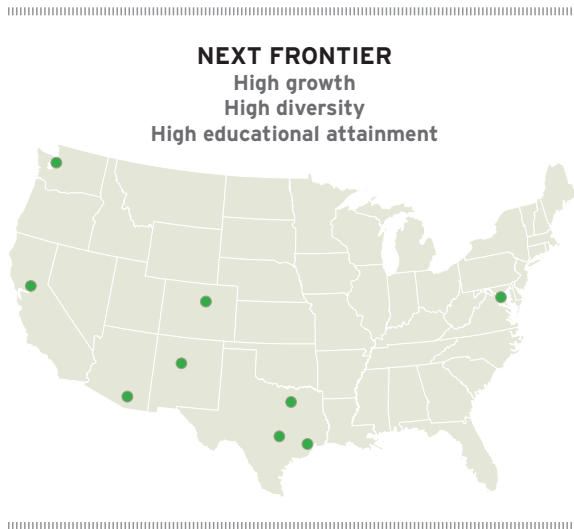
• On **income polarization**, the recession that began in 2001 never really ended throughout much of the Midwest as its manufacturing base shed jobs throughout the decade. All 19 of the region's large metro areas experienced an inflation-adjusted decline in median household income in the 2000s, averaging more than 8 percent across those households. By contrast, incomes held steady in Northeastern metro areas, even rising modestly in areas such as Albany, Allentown, and Worcester. Meanwhile, metropolitan areas with among the lowest wages and incomes at the beginning of the decade, such as Bakersfield, El Paso, and Scranton, suffered losses in the 2000s

The Great Recession that took hold during the last two years of the decade may have, at least temporarily, moderated some aspects of this growing regional inequality. This is because migration fell significantly

due to crippled housing and labor markets. Growth in much of the Sun Belt and the outer suburbs cooled off, immigration slowed, and Americans everywhere went back to college in higher numbers. Yet these shifts neither reversed the full extent of the "pulling apart" that occurred across the 2000s, nor did they necessarily "lock in" new patterns of regional growth and change that will persist once economic growth resumes.

A Demographic Typology of Metropolitan America

While each metropolitan area possesses a unique social, demographic, and economic profile, the distinctions among these places on many of the "new realities" are also apparent among different groups of metro areas. These groups do not break neatly along traditional regional lines, such as Sun Belt



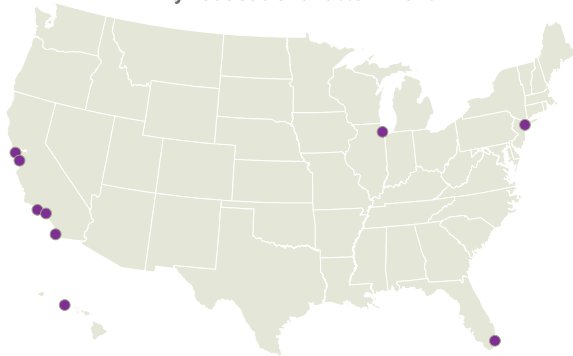
versus Snow Belt, east and west of the Mississippi, or even the four Census regions (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West). What differentiates them are simple metrics of population growth, population diversity, and educational attainment, as compared to national averages.⁵ Grouped into seven categories, the particular issues facing the nation's 100 largest metro areas become clearer, as do the places to which individual metro areas might look for common solutions.

- **Next Frontier** metro areas exceed national averages on population growth, diversity, and educational attainment.⁶ Of these nine metro areas, eight lie west of the Mississippi River (Washington, D.C. is the exception). They attracted immigrants, families, and educated workers during the 2000s thanks to their diversified economies (including government employment in several) and relatively mild climates. In some ways the demographic success stories of the 2000s, Next Frontier areas are generally younger, growing more densely, and more transit-oriented than other metro areas. One price of their success is their higher levels of both educational and wage inequality

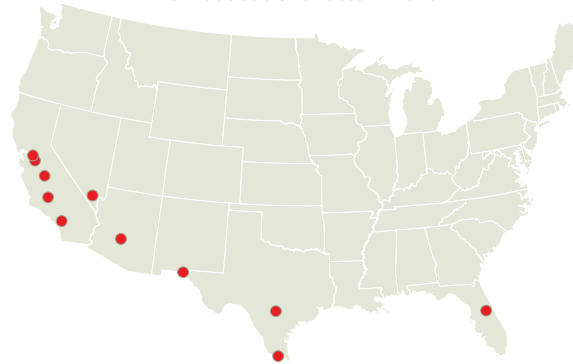
- **New Heartland** metro areas are also fast growing, highly educated locales, but have lower shares of Hispanic and Asian populations than the national average.⁷ These 19 metro areas include many in the "New South" where blacks are the dominant minority group, such as Atlanta, Charlotte, and Richmond, as well as largely white metro areas throughout the Midwest and West, such as Indianapolis, Kansas City, and Portland (OR). The service-based economies of these metro areas attracted many middle-class migrants, both white and black, during the 2000s. That diverse in-migration has given the New Heartland areas a more racially equitable educational profile than other metropolitan types

- **Diverse Giants** feature some of the largest metro areas in the country, including the three largest (New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago), as well as coastal anchors such as Miami, San Francisco, and San Diego.⁸ These nine regions post above-average educational attainment and diversity, but below-average population growth, owing in part to their large sizes. Like the New Frontier areas, they are growing more densely, but exhibit wide educational

DIVERSE GIANT
 Low growth
 High diversity
 High educational attainment



BORDER GROWTH
 High growth
 High diversity
 Low educational attainment



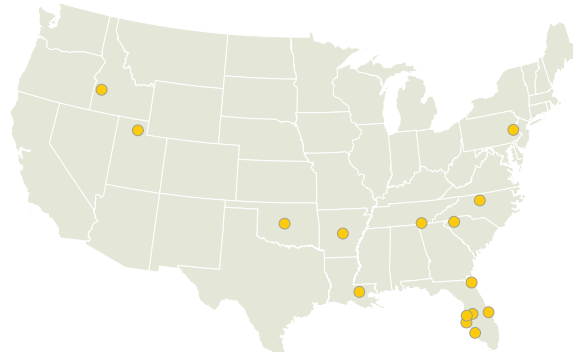
These new demographic realities do not break neatly along traditional regional lines, such as Sun Belt versus Snow Belt.

and wage disparities. With more than one-quarter of their residents born abroad, these areas are home to sizeable populations of “second-generation” children of immigrant parents⁹

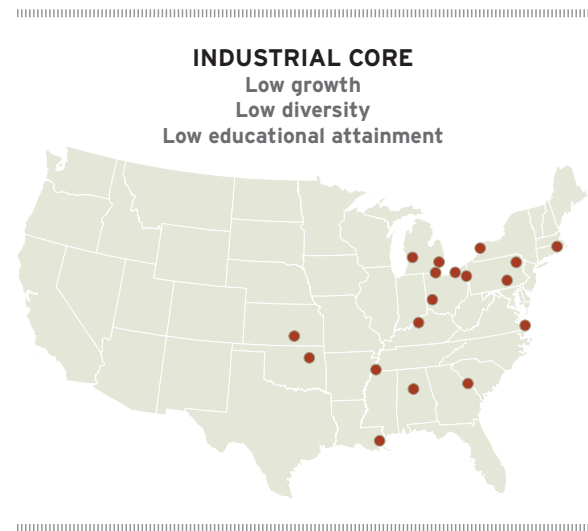
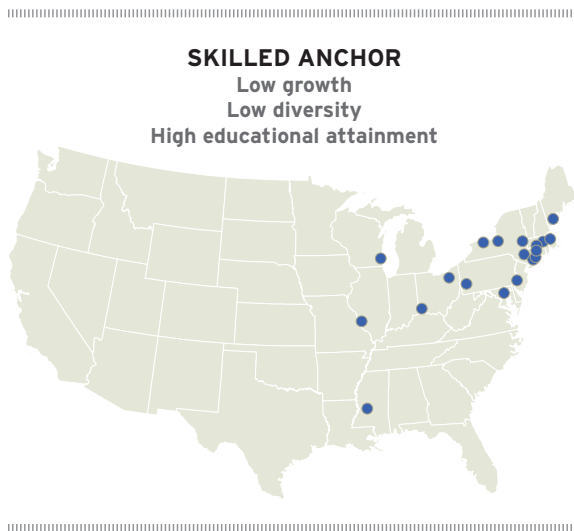
- **Border Growth** metro areas are mostly located in southwestern border states, and as such are marked by a significant and growing presence of Mexican and other Latin American immigrants.¹⁰ Only Orlando lies outside the main orbit of this group of 11, which stretches from central Texas, through Arizona and Nevada, and up California’s Central Valley. Many of these metro areas are suffering “migration whiplash,” as they built large swaths of single-family housing for tens of thousands of newcomers through mid-decade, only to see growth largely halt with the bursting of the housing bubble. For those workers and families that stayed, especially less-skilled Hispanics, the challenge now before these areas is to diversify the local economy in ways that provide sustainable growth opportunities well beyond the housing sector

- **Mid-Sized Magnet** metro areas are similar in their recent growth and educational profile to

MID-SIZED MAGNET
 High growth
 Low diversity
 Low educational attainment



Border Growth centers, but are distinguished by lower shares of Hispanic and Asian minorities.¹¹ These 15 mostly mid-sized locations, largely in the Southeast but with a couple of Western representatives, lack some of the high-value industries that characterize the New Heartland. Similar to the Border Growth centers, some got caught in the growth spiral of the 2000s that ended abruptly with



the housing crash—particularly Boise and the six Florida metro areas. Having attracted many boomers and seniors over time, Mid-Sized Magnets contain the oldest populations among the metropolitan types, but have grown in a distended fashion that has left them among the most car-dependent of the seven groups

- **Skilled Anchors** are slow-growing, less diverse metro areas that boast higher-than-average levels of educational attainment.¹² Seventeen (17) of the 19 lie in the Northeast and Midwest, and include large regions such as Boston and Philadelphia, as well as smaller regions such as Akron and Worcester. Many are former manufacturing and port centers that some time ago made the difficult transition to service-based economies, with significant representation of medical and higher educational institutions. Others like Pittsburgh and St. Louis still specialize in non-auto-related manufacturing sectors that remained relatively steady over the 2000s. These characteristics have kept Skilled Anchors demographically more vibrant than other parts of the North (see below), even as they post lower levels

of inequality than faster-growing locales. Still, all of the modest recent growth across these areas has occurred in lower-density suburbs

- **Industrial Cores** are in some ways the most demographically disadvantaged of the metropolitan types.¹³ These 18 metro areas are largely older industrial centers of the Northeast, Midwest, and Southeast. Their populations are slower-growing, less diverse, and less educated than national averages, and significantly older than the large metropolitan average. A remaining industrial base combined with lack of diverse in-migration to these metro areas has kept educational and wage inequalities in check. But these metropolitan areas lost population in the aggregate during the 2000s, yet still saw growth in their outer suburbs, even as their cities and high-density suburbs declined in size.

Viewing metropolitan America through this lens offers a more nuanced view of the country and its variable challenges than conventional regional generalizations. The South, for instance, counts at least one member in each of the seven metropolitan

categories, as very different demographic destinies confront Atlanta versus Augusta, or Miami versus Palm Bay. Similarly, the notion of a unified “Rust Belt” stretching across large portions of the Northeast and Midwest overlooks the important factors that distinguish populations in Rochester, Cleveland, Indianapolis, and Chicago from one another. As explored further in **Policy Implications**, these population distinctions dictate different priorities for metropolitan leaders seeking to forge a prosperous future for their communities.

CITIES AND SUBURBS SHARE MORE THAN EVER IN THE NEW REALITIES

Even as large metro areas “pulled apart” demographically from one another in some ways in the 2000s, they also “came together” at the individual metropolitan scale. Several trends in the 2000s further put to rest the old perceptions of cities as declining, poor, minority places set amid young, white, wealthy suburbs. As this report outlines, the decade brought many cities and suburbs still closer together along a series of social, demographic, and economic dimensions. In this way, the five new realities are, more than ever, metropolitan—rather than purely urban or suburban—in scope. Examples include:

Growth—notwithstanding the general outward expansion of metropolitan areas over the full decade, the period from 2006 to 2008 saw a retrenchment of population toward cities and high-density suburban counties as outer suburban housing markets crashed. Indeed, high-density suburbs are increasingly similar to cities in their overall growth trajectory and commuting patterns than mature and outer suburbs

Population diversification—by 2008, a majority of members of all major racial and ethnic groups in metropolitan areas lived in suburbs, as did more than half of all immigrants nationwide. At the same time, the white population grew in many older cities where it had previously declined, such as Atlanta, Boston, and Washington, D.C.

Aging—a growing share of elderly and smaller households are found in suburbia, a trend that will only accelerate as the boomers—more than 70 percent of whom live in suburbs—enter seniorhood. Meanwhile, many Sun Belt cities added younger populations during the 2000s, slightly narrowing the “married-with-children” household gap between cities and suburbs

Educational attainment—the distinction between city and suburban educational attainment remained almost negligible, given the regional nature of labor markets and the concentration of high-value jobs in denser urban areas that lure highly educated workers. Thirty-one (31) and 32 percent of city and suburban adults, respectively, held bachelor’s degrees in 2008. The most highly educated communities were in fact high-density suburbs that surround many cities, where 36 percent of adults held a college degree

Income—the income and poverty gaps between cities and suburbs, while still wide, narrowed in the 2000s. As overall metropolitan median income fell, the difference between city and suburban median incomes declined by about \$800. Meanwhile, the poverty rate in cities rose marginally, but jumped a full percentage point for suburbs, as their poor population grew five times faster. A majority of metropolitan poor now live in suburbs, and their income, labor market, and educational profiles largely mirror those of their city counterparts

The urban/suburban boundary, it should be noted, blurs more easily in some types of metropolitan

areas than others. For instance, in Next Frontier, New Heartland, Diverse Giant, and Border Growth metro areas, racial and ethnic minorities represent a 10 to 20 percent larger share of population in cities than suburbs. But that gap ranges from 20 to 40 percent in Mid-Sized Magnet, Industrial Core, and Skilled Anchor metro areas. Similarly, the city/suburban median household income difference is relatively muted in Border Growth and Mid-Sized Magnet centers (\$6,000 to \$7,000), but a substantial \$27,000 in the Skilled Anchors.

Nonetheless, most of these gaps, regardless of metropolitan type, narrowed during the 2000s. And where sizeable differences in population shares and median characteristics prevail, the locus of the new reality (e.g., immigrants, older population, the poor) continues to shift in new, mostly suburban, directions. In an era of severe fiscal restraint and increasingly shared demography, governance must begin to transcend the parochial 18th-century administrative borders that frustrate shared approaches to increasingly shared challenges.

CONCLUSION

The 2000s found large metropolitan areas on the front lines of America's demographic transformation. Together, they confront a series of new realities more intense than those buffeting the rest of the nation, on measures of growth and diversification, aging, and increasingly uneven outcomes in educational attainment and income. Those realities—and the challenges they imply—are shared more than ever across city and suburban lines. Nevertheless, the diverse economic and social histories of metropolitan areas persist in their contemporary demographic profiles. For each of seven types of large metro areas, a

distinct set of issues comes to the fore, some within metro areas' own capacities to tackle, but others fundamentally beyond their reach. Chronicling the unprecedented demographic changes afoot in America generally, and their specific metropolitan manifestations, the *State of Metropolitan America* brings these new realities into sharp focus as the nation enters a new and undoubtedly challenging decade. ■

ENDNOTES

1. See "About the State of Metropolitan America" for more on the definition and importance of metropolitan areas.
2. These areas (counties and county remainders) were defined as "lower-density" based on their having less than 95 percent of their population living in urbanized areas in 2000. It is likely that based on population growth patterns from 2000 to 2008, that some of these areas would no longer qualify as "lower-density" based on their contemporary settlement patterns. Still, their share of metropolitan population rose from 39 percent in 2000 to 42 percent in 2008. The results of the 2010 Census will reveal changes over the decade in the rate of population urbanization in U.S. counties.
3. Marilyn A. Brown, Frank Southworth, and Andrea Sarzynski, "Shrinking the Carbon Footprint of Metropolitan America" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2008).
4. Jason Booza, Jackie Cutsinger, and George Galster, "Where Did They Go? The Decline of Middle-Class Neighborhoods in Metropolitan America, 1970-2000" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2006).
5. Specifically, statistics for each metropolitan area were compared to approximate national averages on three indicators: (a) population growth from 2000 to 2008 (above or below 8 percent); (b) share of population

other than black and non-Hispanic white (above or below 22.5 percent); and (c) share of adults 25 years and over with a bachelor's degree (above or below 28 percent). This produced the seven groups of metro areas described in the text.

6. Next Frontier metro areas include: Albuquerque, NM; Austin, TX; Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX; Denver-Aurora, CO; Houston, TX; Sacramento-Roseville, CA; Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA; Tucson, AZ; and Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV.
7. New Heartland metro areas include: Atlanta, GA; Charleston, SC; Charlotte, NC-SC; Colorado Springs, CO; Columbia, SC; Columbus, OH; Des Moines, IA; Indianapolis, IN; Kansas City, MO-KS; Knoxville, TN; Madison, WI; Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI; Nashville, TN; Omaha, NE-IA; Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA; Provo, UT; Raleigh-Cary, NC; Richmond, VA; and Salt Lake City, UT.
8. Diverse Giant metro areas include: Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI; Honolulu, HI; Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA; Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL; New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA; Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA; San Diego, CA; San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA; and San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA.
9. "Second generation" is used here to refer to children of one or more foreign-born parents living in the United States, and includes both foreign-born and U.S.-born individuals under age 18. See Immigration for further details.
10. Border Growth metro areas include: Bakersfield, CA; El Paso, TX; Fresno, CA; Las Vegas, NV; McAllen, TX; Modesto, CA; Orlando, FL; Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ; Riverside-San Bernardino, CA; San Antonio, TX; and Stockton, CA.
11. Mid-Sized Magnet metro areas include: Allentown, PA-NJ; Baton Rouge, LA; Boise, ID; Bradenton, FL; Cape Coral, FL; Chattanooga, TN; Greensboro-High Point, NC; Greenville, SC; Jacksonville, FL; Lakeland, FL; Little Rock, AR; Ogden, UT; Oklahoma City, OK; Palm Bay, FL; and Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL.
12. Skilled Anchor metro areas include: Akron, OH; Albany, NY; Baltimore, MD; Boston-Cambridge, MA; Bridgeport-Stamford, CT; Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN; Hartford, CT; Jackson, MS; Milwaukee, WI; New Haven, CT; Philadelphia, PA-NJ-DE-MD; Pittsburgh, PA; Portland, ME; Poughkeepsie, NY; Rochester, NY; St. Louis, MO-IL; Springfield, MA; Syracuse, NY; and Worcester, MA.
13. Industrial Core metro areas include: Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC; Birmingham, AL; Buffalo, NY; Cleveland, OH; Dayton, OH; Detroit-Warren, MI; Grand Rapids, MI; Harrisburg, PA; Louisville, KY-IN; Memphis, TN-MS-AR; New Orleans, LA; Providence, RI; Scranton, PA; Toledo, OH; Tulsa, OK; Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC; Wichita, KS; and Youngstown, OH-PA.

I. POPULATION & MIGRATION

BY THE NUMBERS

**25
million**

Increase in population,
United States,
2000 to 2009

11.9%

Share of population chang-
ing residence, United States,
2007 to 2008 (postwar low)

**+95,000 /
-7,000**

Net domestic migration,
Riverside-San Bernardino
metro area, 2003 to 2004 /
2007 to 2008

67

Number of primary cities
(out of 100) with population
increases, 2000 to 2008



OVERVIEW

- **Population growth in the United States and its large metro areas was robust in the 2000s.** The housing crisis and ensuing deep recession, however, slowed migration considerably, so that the share of Americans changing residence in 2007-2009 was lower than at any point in postwar history.
- **The decade continued the broad shift of U.S. population toward the Sun Belt.** Metropolitan areas gaining the most population from 2000 to 2009 included several of the fastest growers from the 1990s, as well as regions that boomed during the early part of the decade due to real estate development before the housing market crashed.
- **The 2000-2006 and 2006-2009 periods represent two distinct migration epochs for metropolitan America.** Migration magnets in Florida, the Intermountain West, and inland California during the first half of the decade saw inflows plummet post-crash, while metro areas in Texas and the Southeast with more diversified economies held steady. Large metro areas that had previously “exported” large numbers of residents to other parts of the country saw out-migration slow considerably toward the end of the decade.
- **Strong immigration throughout most of the 2000s cushioned populations in large metropolitan areas experiencing domestic out-migration.** Metropolitan New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and San Francisco lost hundreds of thousands of domestic migrants across the decade, but experienced substantial counterbalancing inflows of international migrants.
- **Two-thirds of primary cities in large metropolitan areas grew from 2000 to 2008.** City growth spread and accelerated between 2006 and 2008, as many core urban areas realized a “windfall” of residents due to the impact of the housing slump on movement to the suburbs.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

Population growth remains an important barometer of economic and societal well-being in America. Though ours is an aging population—due to increasing life expectancy and the outsized baby boom generation about to reach seniorhood—healthy levels of fertility and immigration in the United States have combined to make it a fast-growing country among its industrialized peers over the last few decades.

This story remained true in the 2000s. Between 2000 and 2009, the country added roughly 25 million people, an 8.8 percent increase (Figure 1). This was not quite as high as the growth rate in Canada over the same time period (10.4 percent), though the United States added more than seven times the number of people as our northern neighbor. U.S. growth, meanwhile, far outpaced that in the European Union (3.5 percent).¹

Though ours is an aging population, healthy levels of fertility and immigration in the United States have combined to make it a fast-growing country among its industrialized peers over the last few decades.



The 2000s also saw faster growth in large U.S. metropolitan areas than elsewhere in the country. The combined population of the 100 largest metro areas rose 10.5 percent through 2009, compared to 8.7 percent in smaller metro areas, and 2.7 percent outside of metro areas. Large metro areas together accounted for over three-fourths of the nation's population increase during that period. Metro areas with populations over 1 million grew at nearly exactly the same overall rate as those with populations between 500,000 and 1 million.

Continuing the trend from past decades, U.S. population in the 2000s shifted from the Northeast and Midwest, toward the South and West. Large metro areas in the latter regions experienced much higher growth rates than those in the former regions. The particular metropolitan areas at either end of the growth spectrum are detailed further below.

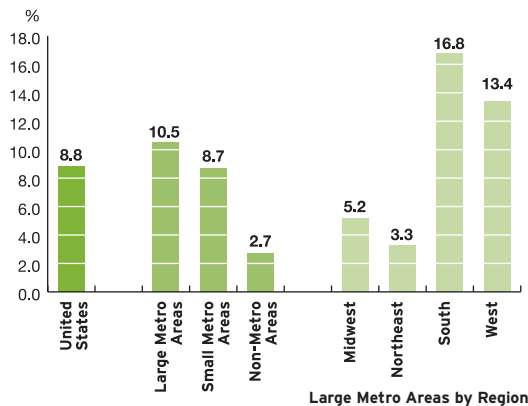
The 2000s, however, were a highly uneven decade. Beyond the population trends, the end of the decade

brought about a historic decline in migration, driven by a sequence of factors. First, the housing "bubble" that arose during the middle part of the decade popped, bringing an end to the rapid homebuilding and easy mortgage credit that propped up migration in previous years. Second, this precipitated a serious financial market crisis in September 2008 that produced sharp reductions in credit availability. As a result, potential buyers had difficulty obtaining mortgages, and potential sellers saw reductions in the values of their homes. Third, the financial crisis greatly exacerbated the national recession that had begun in December 2007, reducing job availability in most regions of the country. This triple whammy made it riskier for would-be homebuyers to find financing, would-be sellers to receive good value for their home, and potential long-distance movers to find employment in areas where jobs were previously plentiful.

These factors meant that by the end of the 2000s, America had reached a new low point in

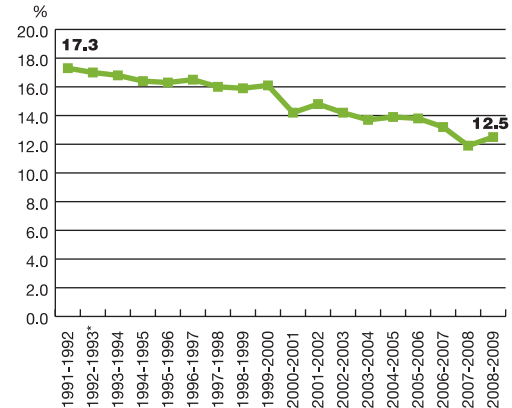
Figure 1. Growth in Large Metro Areas, Especially Those in the South and West, Outpaced the National Growth Rate in the 2000s

Population Change by Geography Type, 2000 to 2009



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data

Figure 2. The U.S. Annual Migration Rate Reached a Postwar Low in the Late 2000s
Share of Persons Changing Residence, 1991-1992 to 2008-2009



Source: Brookings analysis of Current Population Survey data



domestic migration.² In 2007-2008, only 11.9 percent of Americans changed residence, and this rose to just 12.5 percent in 2008-2009. Together, these are the lowest rates of annual mobility since the Census Bureau began collecting migration statistics in 1947-1948 (Figure 2).

Long-distance, between-state migration declined even more dramatically than within-county residential mobility. In fact, the 1.6 percent interstate migration rate in both 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 was half the value exhibited in 1999-2000, and far lower than the rate in the 1950s, when between 3 and 4 percent of the population moved across state lines annually. Although short-distance moves are more frequent, long-distance migration acts as an engine of growth in many metropolitan areas as people seek new job opportunities.

METROPOLITAN TRENDS

Population Trends Across the 2000s

Metropolitan growth patterns across the 2000-2009 period, particularly the movement toward the Sun Belt, continued patterns evident in the 1990s. During the earlier decade, the familiar postwar population shifts from large Northeastern and Midwestern metro areas like New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, to growing Southern and Western metro areas like Miami, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Dallas, and Houston began to spread to a larger number of areas in the interior West and the Southeast.³ While the 10 fastest growing metro areas in the 1990s were all located in the Sun Belt (i.e., the South and West regions), seven lay outside the traditional postwar magnet states of Florida, Texas and California. One impetus for growth during this period was a high-

tech boom that manifested itself in several of these new Sun Belt growth magnets (Raleigh, Phoenix, and Boise) as well as in some traditional magnet states (Austin).

The big gainers in the post-2000 decade do not differ sharply from those in the 1990s (Table 1, right panel). Eight make the list for both decades, and four of the top five gainers in the 2000s are located outside the traditional magnet states. Climbing the list in the 2000s, however, were metro areas, such as Cape Coral in Florida, where booming real estate development contributed more to recent growth. The Las Vegas and Phoenix metro areas in the Intermountain West continued to occupy top growth spots due to similar housing-led migration. Of course, the growth dynamics of these regions shifted sharply in the latter part of the decade (see below).

Just as there were no dramatic shifts in the list of fastest gainers between the 1990s and 2000s, the list of slowest growing and declining metro areas did not change significantly. In both periods, metro areas in the nation's manufacturing belt populate the list. Youngstown, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Syracuse, and Scranton registered population declines in both periods. An additional five metro areas showed population declines from 2000 to 2009, all of which lay in the industrial Northeast and Midwest, with the exception of New Orleans (resulting from out-migration due to Hurricane Katrina in 2005).

The division between growth in the Sun Belt and Snow Belt continued to characterize the 30 most populous metro areas during the 2000s (Map 1). The two largest metropolitan areas, New York and Los Angeles, registered growth levels below 5 percent. Among the seven additional metro areas with populations exceeding 5 million, Atlanta, Dallas, and Houston increased their populations by more than one-fifth. Among all 30 metro areas, Las Vegas and

Metropolitan growth patterns across the 2000-2009 period, particularly the movement toward the Sun Belt, continued patterns evident in the 1990s.



Table 1. The Fastest and Slowest Growing Metro Areas in the 2000s Resemble Those From the 1990s
Highest and Lowest Ranked Large Metro Areas by Population Growth, 1990 to 2000 and 2000 to 2009

1990 to 2000				2000 to 2009			
Rank	Change to 2000-2008	Metro Area	Population Change (%)	Rank	Change from 1990-2000	Metro Area	Population Change (%)
Highest Growth				Highest Growth			
1	-2	Las Vegas, NV	84.3	1	6	Provo, UT	46.2
2	-2	Austin, TX	48.6	2	2	Raleigh-Cary, NC	40.0
3	-6	McAllen, TX	48.1	3	-2	Las Vegas, NV	36.6
4	2	Raleigh-Cary, NC	46.6	4	-2	Austin, TX	34.7
5	0	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	45.8	5	0	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	33.1
6	-2	Boise City, ID	45.5	6	6	Cape Coral, FL	32.2
7	6	Provo, UT	40.3	7	6	Charlotte, NC-SC	30.2
8	-2	Atlanta, GA	38.5	8	-2	Boise City, ID	29.3
9	-3	Orlando, FL	33.5	9	-6	McAllen, TX	29.3
10	-17	Denver-Aurora, CO	32.3	10	-2	Atlanta, GA	27.9
Lowest Growth/Decline				Lowest Growth/Decline			
91	-5	Cleveland, OH	2.1	91	6	Syracuse, NY	-0.6
92	8	Albany, NY	2.0	92	-4	Rochester, NY	-0.6
93	7	Springfield, MA	0.9	93	-11	Detroit-Warren, MI	-1.2
94	7	Toledo, OH	0.7	94	1	Dayton, OH	-1.5
95	1	Dayton, OH	0.4	95	5	Scranton, PA	-1.8
96	-1	Pittsburgh, PA	-1.6	96	-5	Cleveland, OH	-2.6
97	6	Syracuse, NY	-1.8	97	-1	Pittsburgh, PA	-3.0
98	0	Buffalo, NY	-1.8	98	0	Buffalo, NY	-3.9
99	0	Youngstown, OH-PA	-1.9	99	0	Youngstown, OH-PA	-6.5
100	5	Scranton, PA	-2.9	100	-13	New Orleans, LA	-9.5

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates data

Phoenix registered the fastest growth rates, each exceeding 30 percent despite slowdowns post-2006. Meanwhile, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Detroit all lost population over the eight-year period.

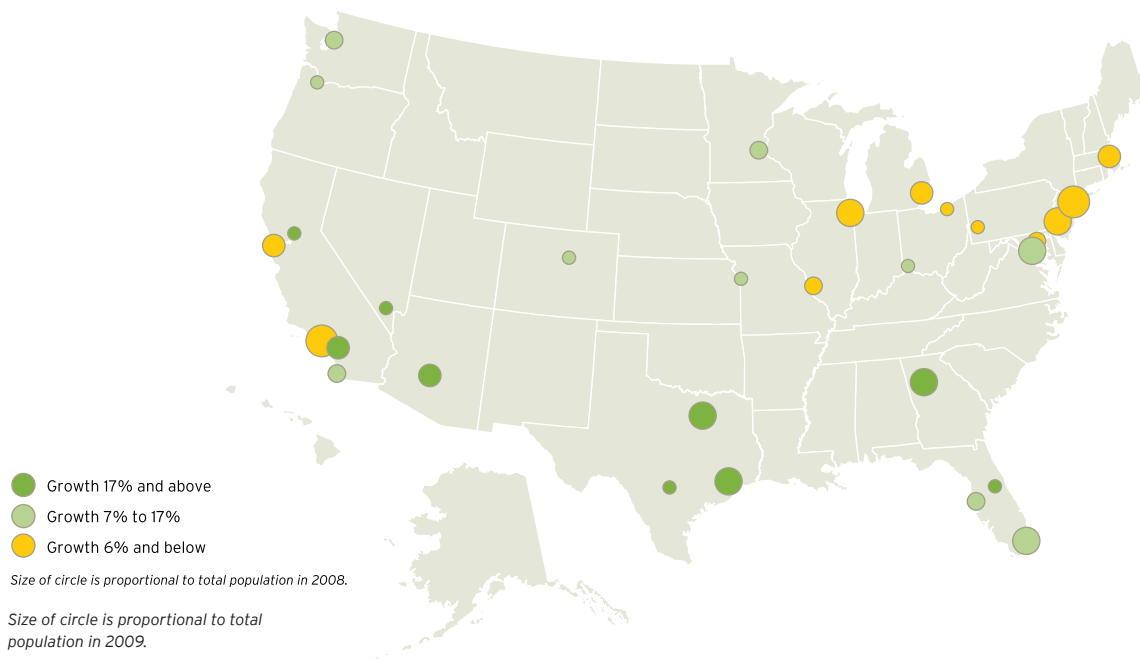
Metropolitan Population Booms and Busts

In light of the sharp downturn in migration toward the end of the 2000s, the broad patterns of

metropolitan growth from 2000 to 2009 described above clearly camouflage what will be defined as a tumultuous decade for population shifts among metro areas. To get an overview of these boom-to-bust impacts on metro areas, Table 2 contrasts the fastest growing large metros from 2000 to 2006 with those from 2006 to 2009.

For several metro areas in California and Florida and the Intermountain West the housing market

Map 1. The Fastest-Growing Large Metro Areas in the 2000s Lay in the Sun Belt
2000-2009 Growth Rate and 2009 Population Size, 30 Largest Metro Areas



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data

crash also precipitated a migration crash. Population growth in Cape Coral, Riverside, and Orlando, along with several other metro areas in California's Central Valley (not shown), fell dramatically between 2000-2006 and 2006-2009. Las Vegas dropped out of the top ten. Other Florida metro areas not near the top of the list also experienced a substantial growth slowdown as well between 2000-2006 and 2006-2009, including Bradenton (falling in growth rank from 19th to 59th) and Tampa (from 28th to 60th). The metro areas that either survived or moved up in growth rank as the housing bubble popped and the recession took root had less overheated housing

markets and more diversified economies. Between 2006 and 2009, metro areas in Texas (Austin, Dallas, San Antonio), the Southeast (Raleigh, Charlotte, Charleston, Greenville), and parts of the interior West (Ogden, Denver) did as well or better in the rankings than earlier in the decade.⁴

The list of metro areas experiencing the slowest growth or population decline changed less dramatically between these two periods. The fall of Detroit reflects the impact of an accelerated decline in the area's important auto manufacturing industry. Upstate New York and Ohio metro areas clearly felt the impacts of industrial decline in both periods.



Table 2. The Housing Market Collapse Shifted the Locus of U.S. Metropolitan Growth
Highest and Lowest Ranked Large Metro Areas by Population Growth, 2000 to 2006 and 2006 to 2009

2000 to 2006				2006 to 2009			
Change to 2006- Rank	2009	Metro Area	Population Change (%)	Change from 2000- Rank	2006	Metro Area	Population Change (%)
Highest Growth				Highest Growth			
1	-1	Provo, UT	29.3	1	99	New Orleans, LA	20.5
2	-9	Las Vegas, NV	27.6	2	-1	Provo, UT	13.0
3	-45	Cape Coral, FL	27.5	3	1	Raleigh-Cary, NC	12.7
4	1	Raleigh-Cary, NC	24.2	4	4	Austin, TX	11.5
5	-2	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	23.4	5	7	Charlotte, NC-SC	10.2
6	-24	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	21.1	6	5	McAllen, TX	8.4
7	-6	Boise City, ID	20.9	7	-2	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	7.8
8	4	Austin, TX	20.8	8	14	Ogden, UT	7.6
9	-32	Orlando, FL	20.7	9	7	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	7.5
10	-4	Atlanta, GA	19.6	10	14	San Antonio, TX	7.2
Lowest Growth/Decline				Lowest Growth/Decline			
91	17	Bridgeport-Stamford, CT	-0.8	91	-32	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	0.1
92	2	Syracuse, NY	-0.8	92	-2	Akron, OH	0.0
93	-5	Dayton, OH	-0.9	93	-7	Providence, RI-MA	-0.2
94	6	Rochester, NY	-1.1	94	-12	Toledo, OH	-0.2
95	-2	Cleveland, OH	-2.1	95	2	Pittsburgh, PA	-0.3
96	7	Scranton, PA	-2.1	96	2	Buffalo, NY	-0.6
97	2	Pittsburgh, PA	-2.8	97	-2	Cleveland, OH	-0.7
98	2	Buffalo, NY	-3.2	98	-5	Dayton, OH	-0.8
99	-1	Youngstown, OH-PA	-4.3	99	-10	Detroit-Warren, MI	-1.8
100	99	New Orleans, LA	-24.6	100	-1	Youngstown, OH-PA	-2.3

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates data

Reversal of Metropolitan Migration Fortunes

The broad shift of American population from the Snow Belt toward the Sun Belt was largely driven by domestic migration. The sharp migration slowdown toward the end of the 2000s began to turn this long-standing dynamic on its head.

Examining different regional groups of metro

areas puts this departure from the historical norm in sharp relief (Figure 3). Florida, an epicenter of the housing crash and ensuing foreclosure crisis, represents one side of the coin. Orlando and Tampa each added more than 50,000 residents from domestic migration as recently as 2004-2005, but saw those inflows plummet in recent years, turning negative in Orlando's case by 2008-2009. Cape Coral also



Figure 3. The Housing Market Crisis Disrupted Metropolitan Migration Across and Within Regions
Net Domestic Migration for Metro Areas by State/Region, 2000-2001 to 2008-2009



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates data



Immigration remained an important contributor to population gains in larger metropolitan gateways throughout the 2000s.

exhibited the migration gain to loss scenario. The Miami metro area, which lost residents to migration throughout the decade, suffered particularly steep declines from 2006 to 2007.

Large metro areas in Texas, including Dallas, Houston, and Austin, exhibit an entirely different pattern. They experienced far greater net in-migration in the latter years of the decade, at the same time that the migration bubble popped in Florida metro areas.⁵ Those Texas areas did not experience the same run-up in home prices and speculative mortgage lending seen throughout most of Florida.⁶

Coastal California metro areas display something of a mirror-image migration pattern to their interior West counterparts. The San Francisco Bay Area, San Diego, and especially Los Angeles saw increasing out-migration through the middle part of the decade, due in part to increasingly unaffordable home prices. That trend moderated (along with home prices) over the past few years, such that San Francisco posted small migration gains between 2007 and 2009. Los Angeles lost only about a third as many migrants in 2008-2009 as it did in 2005-2006. Its net migration pattern roughly inverts that of the Phoenix metro area, the destination for many Angelenos in the early to mid-2000s. Las Vegas and Riverside also received many of their migrants from coastal California during that earlier period but have since seen those inflows turn to small outflows.

Other areas of the country that experienced significant migration outflows during the housing bubble years also saw their trends turn less negative in the second half of the decade. The Boston and Chicago metro areas shed increasing numbers of migrants through the middle part of the decade, but began to stanch the outflow by 2006. The same held for the New York area; while net out-migration reduced its population by fully 110,000 in

2008-2009, that was well below half the annual loss it sustained in the middle of the decade.

Pittsburgh posted its first net migration gain in more than a decade, while rising outflows from Buffalo, Cleveland, and Providence moderated after peaking mid-decade. The latter two metro areas have among the weakest regional economies in the United States today, however, and their migration fortunes may slip once again as long-distance household mobility begins to rise. Yet for the present, their migration patterns are mirror images of past years, when they lost many residents to fast-growing areas of the Sun Belt.

Immigration as a Metropolitan Migration “Cushion”

The recent downturn in domestic migration left a slight imprint on international migration as well, with the most recent inflows becoming noticeably less than the average 1 million per year over the last 20 years. Nonetheless, immigration remained an important contributor to population gains in larger metropolitan gateways throughout the 2000s, providing a demographic “cushion” to bolster small gains or losses from domestic migration.

Despite the continued spread of foreign-born population across the nation, immigration remained relatively concentrated in major gateway areas during the 2000s. From 2000 to 2009, 21 percent of all net immigrant gains occurred in the two largest metropolitan magnets, New York and Los Angeles (which account for roughly 10 percent of U.S. population). Fully 46 percent of gains went to the eight largest metro areas (Table 3).

Metropolitan New York and Los Angeles each withstood considerable domestic out-migration, especially during the “bubble years” when many of their residents were drawn to growing, more



Table 3. Immigration Cushioned Many of the Largest Metropolitan Gateway Populations from Domestic Out-Migration in the 2000s

International and Domestic Migration by Metropolitan Area and Year, 2000-2001 to 2008-2009

		2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Total
New York	International	159,787	147,104	125,082	110,156	113,065	114,870	103,640	100,643	100,669	1,075,016
	Domestic	-177,171	-207,348	-236,039	-247,541	-283,328	-288,260	-220,521	-150,259	-110,278	-1,920,745
Los Angeles	International	116,487	108,487	93,158	83,517	87,057	86,426	78,155	75,265	75,062	803,614
	Domestic	-103,877	-109,081	-119,572	-140,643	-199,800	-243,722	-222,018	-118,909	-79,900	-1,337,522
Miami	International	64,635	62,654	56,216	52,514	56,673	58,160	52,639	51,384	51,548	506,423
	Domestic	-3,576	-1,499	-20,179	-3,295	-10,086	-70,414	-93,453	-53,037	-29,321	-284,860
Chicago	International	56,281	50,473	40,344	38,716	37,933	38,584	34,082	33,358	33,363	363,134
	Domestic	-55,024	-68,594	-72,392	-65,648	-77,413	-73,066	-52,317	-42,587	-40,389	-547,430
Dallas	International	44,847	42,193	36,731	33,856	35,399	35,545	32,369	31,430	31,571	323,941
	Domestic	48,668	13,847	-1,389	8,203	23,471	76,443	50,566	42,857	45,241	307,907
Washington, D.C.	International	39,465	36,262	28,210	36,343	35,552	37,697	32,573	32,216	31,904	310,222
	Domestic	15,978	1,377	-8,734	-14,785	-17,011	-51,414	-36,945	-17,430	18,189	-110,775
Houston	International	40,294	37,990	33,099	30,221	31,686	31,707	28,779	27,876	27,996	289,648
	Domestic	4,532	24,472	2,824	6,370	6,104	91,985	19,466	37,158	49,662	242,573
San Francisco	International	36,691	34,296	29,622	26,852	27,983	27,867	25,264	24,367	24,376	257,318
	Domestic	-24,885	-78,931	-74,108	-64,631	-51,031	-44,753	-19,866	6,394	7,977	-343,834

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data

affordable destinations in the South and West. During all of these years, international migration gains served to counter domestic migration declines in these areas. And as net domestic out-migration fell rapidly from its mid-decade peak by 2007-2009, immigration—while down from its own peak early in the decade—held steady.

Similar patterns defined Miami, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco during this

period, though the latter two areas exhibited recent, small domestic migration inflows to complement their immigration gains. Dallas and Houston showed steadily declining, though positive and significant, levels of migration from abroad. Unlike those other gateways, however, net domestic migration to these metro areas remained mostly positive throughout, and in recent years contributed more to these areas' population gains than international migration.



Table 4. The Fastest Growing Cities in the 2000s Were in Different Metro Areas than the Fastest Growing Suburbs
Highest and Lowest Ranked Primary Cities and Suburbs by Population Growth, 2000 to 2008

Primary Cities of Metro Area			Suburbs of Metro Area	
Rank	Metro Area	Population Change 2000-2008 (%)	Metro Area	Population Change 2000-2008 (%)
Highest Growth			Highest Growth	
1	Cape Coral, FL	51.8	Provo, UT	54.0
2	Raleigh-Cary, NC	34.7	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	49.8
3	Bakersfield, CA	31.0	Austin, TX	48.7
4	Atlanta, GA	27.9	Boise, ID	44.3
5	Palm Bay, FL	26.6	Las Vegas, NV	43.9
6	McAllen, TX	21.3	Raleigh-Cary, NC	35.9
7	Charlotte, NC-SC	20.6	Colorado Springs, CO	32.6
8	Orlando, FL	19.3	Charlotte, NC-SC	31.7
9	Sacramento-Roseville, CA	17.5	Tucson, AZ	30.9
10	Stockton, CA	17.4	Jacksonville, FL	29.7
Lowest Growth/Decline			Lowest Growth/Decline	
91	Syracuse, NY	-5.5	Rochester, NY	0.6
92	Birmingham, AL	-5.5	Syracuse, NY	0.4
93	Rochester, NY	-5.7	Detroit-Warren, MI	0.1
94	Toledo, OH	-6.4	Dayton, OH	0.0
95	Dayton, OH	-7.0	Cleveland, OH	-1.0
96	Pittsburgh, PA	-7.1	New Orleans, LA	-1.2
97	Buffalo, NY	-7.3	Scranton, PA	-1.4
98	Cleveland, OH	-9.0	Pittsburgh, PA	-2.6
99	Youngstown, OH	-10.8	Buffalo, NY	-2.7
100	New Orleans, LA	-35.5	Youngstown, OH	-5.3

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates data

CITY AND SUBURBAN TRENDS

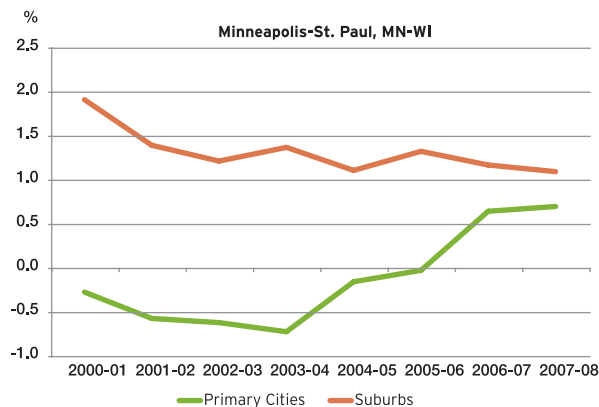
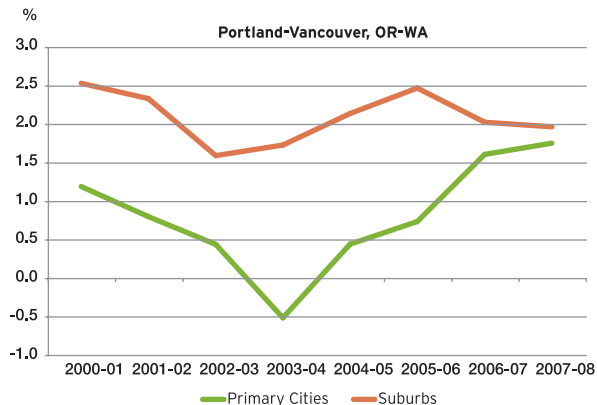
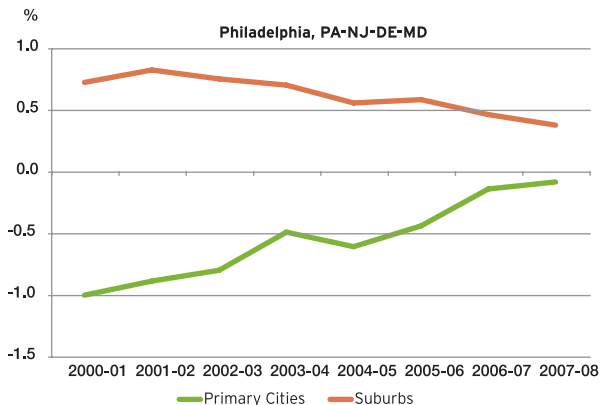
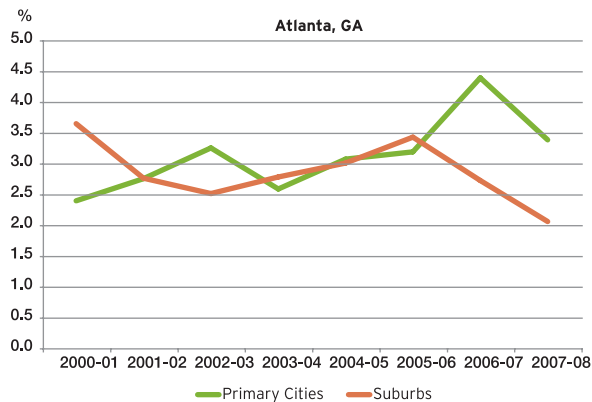
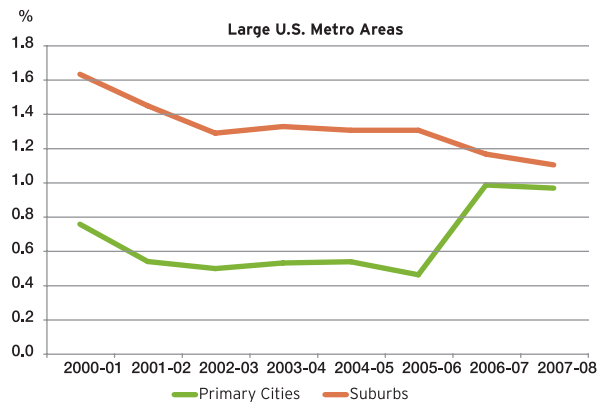
As with the 1990s, the post-2000 period was largely a good one for big city populations. Among the primary cities of the 100 large metros, 67 showed gains from 2000 to 2008.⁷ As Table 4 shows, the fastest growing primary cities tended to be located inside some of the fastest growing metropolitan areas, including many in the Southeast, Texas, interior California and the Intermountain West. Likewise,

declining primary cities were located in metro areas that experienced slow growth or decline, such as Youngstown, Cleveland, Buffalo, and Pittsburgh. These metro areas saw population losses in their suburbs as well.

Interestingly, the fastest growing suburbs in the 100 largest metro areas do not match up closely with the fastest growing primary cities; eight of the 10 are different. Not on the list are the suburbs of the fast



Figure 4. A Burst Housing Bubble Provided a Population Lift to Cities and Slowed Growth in Suburbs
 Population Change by Year, Selected Metro Areas, Primary Cities versus Suburbs, 2000-2001 to 2007-2008



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data



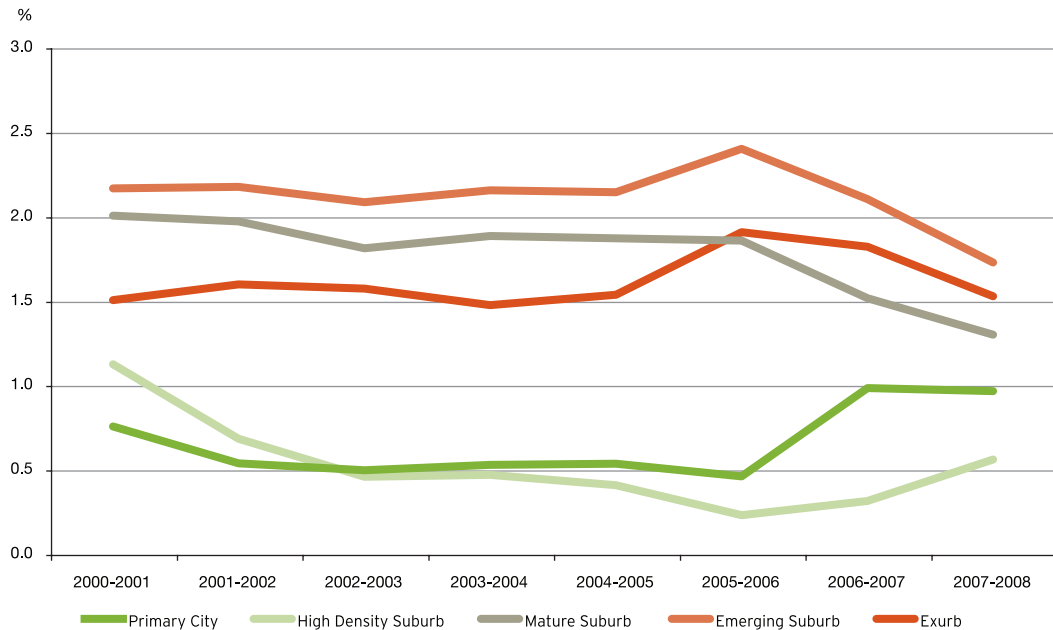
growing cities of Atlanta and Orlando. Suburbs that grew considerably faster than their cities included several in the interior West, such as Provo, Boise, Colorado Springs, and Tucson.

Notably, the city population rebound that began in the 1990s continued into the 2000s. Figure 4 shows that growth of primary city populations of the nation's 100 metropolitan areas accelerated from 2006 to 2008, at the same time that suburban population growth slowed. Some of this resurgence of big cities is due to inherent strengths, such as broad economic diversity at a time when smaller cities and one-industry towns are vulnerable to economic shocks. But much is attributable to a "windfall" of residents attracted to and retained in cities, who

might—in the absence of the housing crisis and deepening recession—have moved to the suburbs.

The effects of a burst housing bubble on big city populations were evident nationwide. Among the 100 primary cities of large metropolitan areas, 73 grew faster in 2007-2008 than in 2004-2005. On the Pacific coast, San Diego, San Jose, Oakland, Portland, and Seattle each exhibited its fastest growth rate of the decade that year. Growth rate increases also appeared in large Midwestern primary cities that are less steeped in manufacturing (particularly auto manufacturing), such as Minneapolis-St Paul. Some Southern cities that were less exposed to the mortgage meltdown, such as Raleigh, Charlotte, and Austin, showed high, though sometimes

Figure 5. Cities and Inner Suburbs Made Late-Decade Gains as Outer Suburban Growth Slowed
Annual Population Growth Rate by City/Suburban Type, 100 Largest Metro Areas, 2000-2001 to 2007-2008



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data



decreasing, growth rates. Atlanta managed to continue its recent gains, even as foreclosures wracked its outer suburbs. In this way, cities have benefited, at least in the short term, from declines in American mobility and the collapse of fast-developing suburban housing markets.

In fact, both primary cities and inner, dense suburbs achieved late decade growth upticks at the expense of outer suburbs and exurbs (Figure 5). The latter areas rode the wave of strong housing bubble related growth up through 2005-2006 only to come crashing down in the subsequent two years.

LOOKING AHEAD

The 2000s amounted to a tale of two epochs in metropolitan population and migration trends. While the first part of the decade resembled a continuation of the 1990s shift from Snow Belt to Sun Belt, and rapid growth of suburbia, the latter part upended those trends. The dramatic impact of the housing boom and bust, followed by a financial crisis and the deepest recession of the postwar era, have put the brakes on migration in general, and on growth in many Sun Belt metro areas.

As a new decade dawns, questions about future growth patterns across and within metropolitan America abound. Will the downward growth trajectories of Sun Belt metro areas continue? Will suburban and exurban growth be permanently stunted? Is the recent growth “bounce” for northern and coastal metropolitan areas and large primary cities simply a short-term demographic windfall, or the beginning of a longer-run transition to a new settlement pattern?

Reliable answers to these questions await a rebound in our economy and housing markets. Meanwhile, the late decade lull in migration provides

an opportunity to re-think metropolitan growth prospects in light of each area’s attributes and assets, such as age, racial and ethnic composition, educational attainment, and wage structure. As subsequent chapters explore, metropolitan areas exhibit great diversity on these and other dimensions, and those differences may be growing more pronounced over time. ■

While the first part of the decade resembled a continuation of the 1990s shift from Snow Belt to Sun Belt, and rapid growth of suburbia, the latter part upended those trends.

ENDNOTES

1. Statistics Canada; Eurostat
2. William H. Frey, “The Great American Migration Slowdown: Regional and Metropolitan Dimensions” (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2009).
3. William H. Frey, “Metropolitan America in the New Century: Metropolitan and Central City Demographic Shifts Since 2000” (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2005).
4. New Orleans’ number one ranking from 2006 to 2009 reflects the population rebound associated with the return of residents displaced by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.
5. Large gains in Houston, and to a lesser extent Dallas, in 2005-2006 reflect in part temporary gains from Louisianans displaced by the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.
6. Alan Berube, Howard Wial, and Alec Friedhoff, “MetroMonitor: Tracking Recession and Recovery in the Nation’s 100 Largest Metropolitan Areas” (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2009).
7. As of the publication date, the latest available population data for cities from the Census Bureau’s Population Estimates Program were for the year ending July 2008 (versus July 2009 for counties and metro areas).

II. RACE & ETHNICITY

BY THE NUMBERS

83%

Non-white share of
population growth,
United States,
2000 to 2008

2

Rank of Atlanta among all
metro areas for black
population, 2008
(surpassing Chicago)

17/31

Metro areas (out of 100)
with "majority minority"
total population / under-18
population, 2008

12

Primary cities (out of 100)
with gains in share
of population that is white,
2000 to 2008





OVERVIEW

■ **Racial and ethnic minorities accounted for 83 percent of U.S. population growth from 2000 to 2008.**

The continued faster growth of Hispanic, Asian, and black populations put the country as a whole on track to reach “majority minority” status by 2042, and for children to reach that milestone by 2023. More than three-quarters of racial and ethnic minorities today live in the nation’s 100 largest metro areas.

■ **A majority of Asians, and a near-majority of Hispanics, live in just 10 metropolitan areas.** Yet during the 2000s a slow dispersal of these groups continued away from major immigrant gateway areas like Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco. Fast-growing areas of the South like Dallas, Houston, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. ranked among the largest gainers of Asian and Hispanic population from 2000 to 2008.

■ **Metro areas in the Southeast and the Interior West, and a few in the Midwest, exhibited some of the most rapid gains in Hispanic and Asian populations in the 2000s.** During the latter part of the decade, however, Hispanic and Asian growth retrenched toward major gateways like Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami, as the housing market collapse and recession slowed the movement of these groups to places like Riverside, Phoenix, and Orlando.

■ **Blacks continue to move southward, as metro Atlanta surpassed metro Chicago for total black population by 2008.** Whites moved to many of these “New South” areas in large numbers as well during the 2000s, though their population shrank in large, coastal metro areas like Los Angeles and New York that continued to attract significant minority populations.

■ **For the first time, a majority of all racial/ethnic groups in large metro areas live in the suburbs.** Deep divides by race and ethnicity still separate cities and suburbs in metro areas like Detroit, but others like Los Angeles show much greater convergence between jurisdictions. In a handful of cities including Atlanta, Boston, and Washington, D.C., the share of population that is white increased during the 2000s.

NATIONAL TRENDS

The racial and ethnic profile of the United States continued to evolve rapidly in the 2000s. Its direction built on the trend of the 1990s, with non-white minorities dominating national population growth. This reflects the combined impact of continued immigration, largely from Latin America and Asia, and higher fertility for minorities than for whites. The latter factor has become increasingly important

as these groups gain a larger presence in U.S. society; two-thirds of the decade’s Hispanic population growth was due to natural increase (more births than deaths) rather than immigration.

Whites still account for a majority of U.S. population at 66 percent (Figure 1). However, this is down from 76 percent in 1990. From 2000 to 2008, they accounted for only 17 percent of national population growth, and their total numbers increased by only

The racial and ethnic profile of the United States continued to evolve rapidly in the 2000s. Its direction built on the trend of the 1990s, with non-white minorities dominating national population growth.



2 percent. By contrast, the population of Hispanics during this period rose by 31 percent, Asians by 26 percent, and blacks by 8 percent. Additionally, people of two or more races, while still a small share of total U.S. population, represent a growing presence in U.S. society.

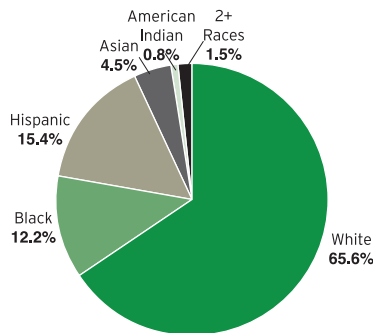
With their increasing numbers and higher growth rates, America's racial and ethnic minority representation is projected to increase substantially over time. According to the Census Bureau's most recent

estimates, the U.S. population will become minority white in the year 2042, at which time Hispanics would comprise 27 percent of the population, blacks 12 percent and Asians 7 percent.¹ Under this same scenario, the nation's under-18 population would achieve the same status in 2023.

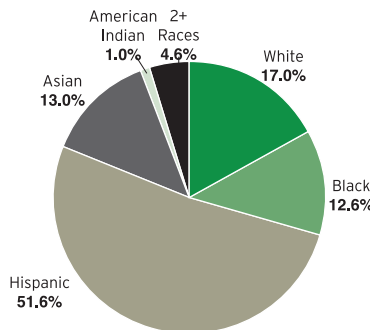
Despite these recent gains and long-term projections, the national growth of Hispanics and Asians especially tapered off toward the end of the decade, due to the Great Recession and its impacts on immigration. From 2000 to 2006, Hispanic population rose at an annual rate of 3.9 percent, which fell to 2.9 percent over the next two years. The drop-off in the Asian growth rate was even more dramatic, from 4.3 percent in the 2000-2006 period to 1.1 percent thereafter.

Minority populations in the United States concentrate even more heavily in large metropolitan areas than the overall population. In 2008, the 100 largest metro areas contained 66 percent of total U.S. population, but 77 percent of non-whites and Hispanics. This included 74 percent of blacks, 80 percent of Hispanics, and 88 percent of Asians.² As described below, a number of these large metro areas are on the cutting edge of the nation's transition to a "majority minority" society.

Figure 1. Non-Whites Accounted for the Bulk of U.S. Population Growth in the 2000s
Share of 2008 U.S. Population by Race/Ethnicity



Share of 2000-2008 Population Change by Race/Ethnicity



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data

METROPOLITAN TRENDS

Dispersal Amid Concentration of Hispanics and Asians

The historical clustering of America's immigrant minorities resulted from the initial settlement of these groups into a handful of "gateway" metropolitan areas. Friendship and family networks have drawn them to these traditional ports of entry,



Table 1. Hispanics and Asians Continued a Gradual Shift Away from Large Gateways in the 2000s
Large Metro Areas Ranked by Hispanic and Asian Population, 2008, and Change, 2000 to 2008

2008 Population				2000 to 2008 Growth		
<i>Hispanics</i>						
Rank	Change from 1990	Metro Area	Population	Rank	Metro Area	Population Change
1	0	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	5,719,249	1	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	635,298
2	0	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA	4,111,527	2	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	596,917
3	0	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	2,142,735	3	Houston, TX	574,059
4	1	Houston, TX	1,945,238	4	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	567,599
5	-1	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	1,903,748	5	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA	515,298
6	0	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	1,879,350	6	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	492,187
7	1	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	1,731,274	7	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	421,573
8	4	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	1,321,713	8	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	395,647
9	-2	San Antonio, TX	1,080,482	9	Atlanta, GA	245,299
10	0	San Diego, CA	926,926	10	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	225,638
<i>Asians</i>						
1	0	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	1,782,387	1	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA	355,698
2	0	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA	1,777,325	2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	205,292
3	0	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	960,769	3	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	130,925
4	1	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	550,527	4	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	119,481
5	1	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	504,597	5	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	108,892
6	-2	Honolulu, HI	471,090	6	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	105,979
7	0	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	460,337	7	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	96,405
8	1	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	368,449	8	Houston, TX	90,308
9	1	Houston, TX	326,301	9	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	87,905
10	-2	San Diego, CA	311,343	10	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	86,436

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates data

even during times when labor market conditions would suggest they move elsewhere. The past two decades reflect a growing but incomplete dispersal of Hispanics and Asians from these gateways to the country as a whole.³

As recently as the 1990 Census, taken 25 years after the 1965 Immigration Act liberalized the entry of more Hispanics from Latin America, the group

remained relatively geographically concentrated. At that time, the 10 metropolitan areas with the largest Hispanic populations housed fully 55 percent of all of U.S. Hispanics, with the top two—Los Angeles and New York—accounting for nearly three in 10 nationwide. Since 1990, only Phoenix—where the Hispanic population mushroomed—newly joined the top 10, taking over the eighth spot from San Francisco. Still,



The past two decades reflect a growing but incomplete dispersal of Hispanics and Asians from major gateways to the country as a whole.

the pecking order of the top three has not budged in the past two decades.

Nonetheless, the largest Hispanic settlement areas are showing signs of losing their grip. The top ten metro areas in 2008 housed nearly half (48 percent) of all Hispanics, but garnered only 40 percent of the nation's Hispanic growth from 2000 to 2008. The metropolitan areas gaining the most Hispanics during that period (Table 1, right panel) include two outside the top 10. Washington, D.C.'s and Atlanta's strong employment opportunities during most of the decade helped attract new Hispanic immigrants and longer-term residents from other parts of the United States. Riverside ranked first in total Hispanic gains from 2000 to 2008, owing in part to its attraction of Hispanics from nearby Los Angeles. The Texas metro areas of Dallas and Houston follow Riverside in registering the largest Hispanic gains.

A shift away from southern California, toward Florida, also underlies these patterns. During the 1990s, Los Angeles and New York led all metro areas in both numbers of Hispanics and total Hispanic population gains. But from 2000 to 2008, Los Angeles gained less than half as many Hispanics as it did during the 1990s (567,000 vs. 1.2 million). Meanwhile, Tampa, Orlando, and Jacksonville each gained more Hispanics in the first eight years of his decade than they did throughout the 1990s. This shift may have been temporary, however, given sharp downturns in the housing market in some of these newer destinations.

Asians concentrate even more heavily in traditional immigrant magnet areas than Hispanics. The same 10 metro areas that housed the most Asians in 1990 remain on the list for 2008 (Table 1 bottom left). Still, dispersal occurred, with the share of total U.S. Asian population those areas represent slipping from 61 percent in 1990 to 55 percent in

2008. The top three areas—Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco—still house one-third of all Asians nationwide.

As with Hispanics, the largest gateways have garnered a lower share of recent Asian gains. They drew less than half (44 percent) of Asian population gains from 2000 to 2008, compared with 53 percent in the 1990s. Dallas and Riverside, two metro areas not among those with the most Asians, ranked 7th and 10th, respectively, among those gaining the most Asians this past decade (Table 1, bottom right). The jump in Riverside's rank, from 18th biggest gainer during the 1990s to 10th from 2000 to 2008, reflects a spillover effect from Los Angeles also evident for Hispanics. A similar pattern in northern California vaulted Stockton from 43rd on Asian gains in the 1990s to 26th from 2000 to 2008.

Hispanic and Asian Growth Centers of the 2000s

The metro areas experiencing the highest recent growth rates for Hispanics and Asians diverge from those above that registered the highest numeric gains. They provide a measure of where the newest gains are taking place, often in places undergoing significant in-migration.

The Southeast, especially Florida, dominates the list for fastest Hispanic growth in the 2000s (Table 2). Cape Coral rose in rank from number 11 in the 1990s to number one from 2000 to 2008, and Lakeland moved up 7 notches to number five. The Midwestern metro areas of Indianapolis and Columbus make the top 10 as well.

A large number of metropolitan areas crossed significant thresholds for Hispanic population—either 5 percent or 10 percent—over the past two decades (Map 1). These metro areas began to spread to the Southeast, Intermountain West, and across New

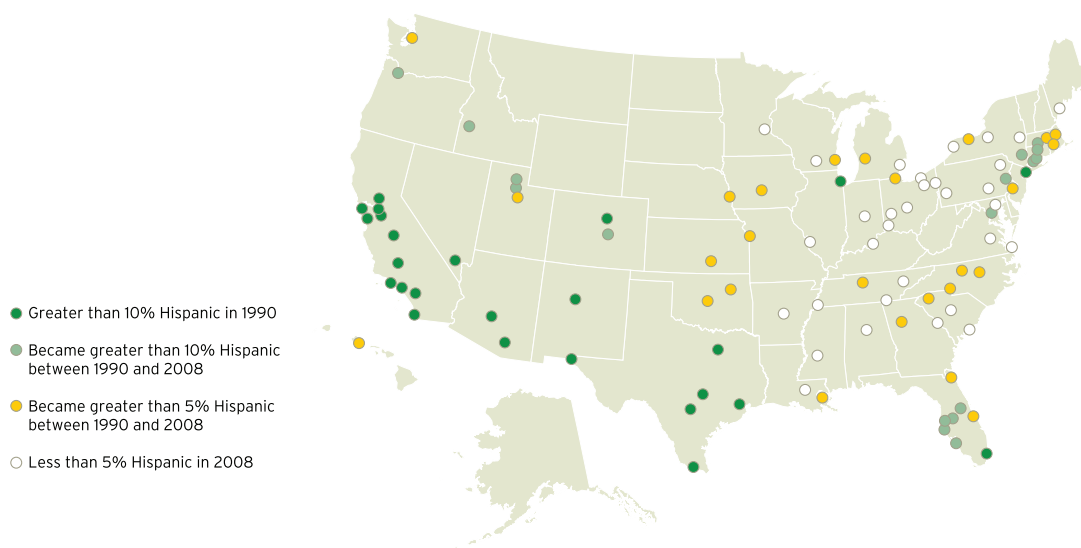


Table 2. Metro Areas in the Southeast and Interior West Had Fast-Growing Hispanic and Asian Populations in the 2000s
 Highest Ranked Large Metro Areas by Hispanic and Asian Population Growth Rate, 2000 to 2008

Hispanics				Asians			
Rank	Change from 1990s	Metro Area	Population Change (%)	Rank	Change from 1990s	Metro Area	Population Change (%)
1	10	Cape Coral, FL	142.1	1	0	Las Vegas, NV	76.2
2	-1	Charlotte, NC-SC	117.6	2	4	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	70.2
3	-1	Raleigh-Cary, NC	113.7	3	25	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	58.8
4	0	Nashville, TN	105.7	4	-2	Atlanta, GA	58.0
5	7	Lakeland, FL	102.3	5	-2	Orlando, FL	57.4
6	0	Indianapolis, IN	99.5	6	1	Indianapolis, IN	55.7
7	2	Provo, UT	94.1	7	-2	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	53.7
8	-3	Atlanta, GA	89.2	8	16	San Antonio, TX	48.3
9	8	Columbus, OH	86.0	9	3	Columbus, OH	47.6
10	-7	Greensboro-High Point, NC	80.5	10	-6	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	47.2

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates data

Map 1. Hispanics Represent a Significant Share of Population in an Increasing Number of Metro Areas
 Period in which Hispanic Population Share Crossed 5% / 10% Threshold, Large Metro Areas



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data



England and eastern Pennsylvania. In this respect, new Hispanic destinations coincide with recent growth centers for overall U.S. population, such as Atlanta, Orlando, Provo, and Charlotte.

For the Asian population, further moves into the interior West characterized growth patterns in the 2000s. Las Vegas ranked first among large metro areas for Asian growth rate from 2000 to 2008, just as it did during the 1990s. Moving up noticeably to the second and third spots were Phoenix and Riverside, the latter vaulting from 28th place in the 1990s. Several metropolitan areas in Florida and other parts of the South make the list as well, including Atlanta, Orlando, Tampa, San Antonio, and Dallas. As with Hispanics, Indianapolis and Columbus make the list of fastest Asian gainers; their Midwestern neighbors Cincinnati and St Louis climbed to 11th and

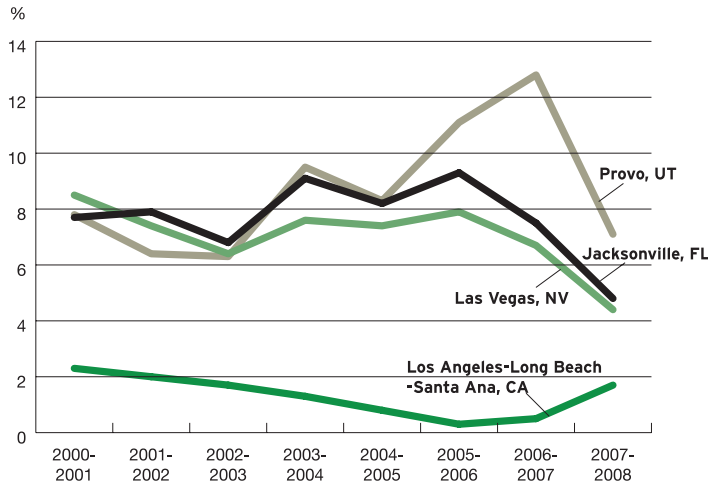
15th as well (not shown). Because Asians comprise a much smaller share of the U.S. population (4.5 percent) than Hispanics (15.4 percent), there are far fewer places with significant Asian populations. Nonetheless, there are signs of continued “spreading out,” as Asians comprised at least 5 percent of population in 22 of the nation’s 100 largest metro areas, up from nine in 1990.

Late-Decade Hispanic Retrenchment

Just as the housing market collapse and ensuing recession severely curtailed overall growth in many of the nation’s real-estate driven migration magnets, it also impacted dispersal among racial and ethnic minorities. This was especially true for Hispanics, as labor market opportunities in fast-growing metro areas in fields like construction and retail diminished rapidly with the bursting of the housing bubble.

The “retrenchment” of Hispanics toward traditional gateway areas is most vivid within California. Hispanic gains in metropolitan Los Angeles quadrupled in 2007-2008 compared with just two years earlier, at the same time that they halved in metropolitan Riverside. Other traditional Hispanic areas, including Chicago, New York, Miami, San Francisco, and San Diego, saw increased gains in 2007-2008, at the same time that Hispanic growth declined significantly in places like Phoenix, Las Vegas, Orlando, and Atlanta. About half of the nation’s 100 largest metro areas showed Hispanic growth slowdowns that year, mostly represented by non-traditional Hispanic areas. Jacksonville, Provo, and Las Vegas, compared against Los Angeles, demonstrate this trend (Figure 2). Until employment opportunities reappear in these areas in significant number, the widespread spatial assimilation of Hispanics in some new destinations may be on hold.

Figure 2. Hispanic Growth Retrenched Toward Traditional Gateway Areas After the Housing Crash
Change in Hispanic Population by Year, Selected Metro Areas, 2000-2001 to 2007-2008



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data



Table 3. Black Population Continued to Head Southward in the 2000s
 Large Metro Areas Ranked by Black Population, 2008, and Growth, 2000 to 2008

2008 Population				2000 to 2008 Growth			
2008 Rank	2000 Rank	1990 Rank	Metro Area	Population	Rank	Metro Area	Population Change
1	1	1	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA	3,162,284	1	Atlanta, GA	445,578
2	4	7	Atlanta, GA	1,669,518	2	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	159,494
3	2	2	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	1,667,376	3	Houston, TX	151,362
4	3	3	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	1,370,929	4	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	97,874
5	5	4	Philadelphia, PA-NJ-DE-MD	1,169,265	5	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	95,876
6	8	8	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	1,042,874	6	Charlotte, NC-SC	94,171
7	6	6	Detroit-Warren, MI	1,008,171	7	Orlando, FL	71,698
8	9	9	Houston, TX	942,101	8	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	62,884
9	7	5	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	898,695	9	Baltimore, MD	60,351
10	10	11	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	874,216	10	Tampa-St. Petersburg -Clearwater, FL	59,997

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates data

Continued Southward Shift of Blacks

The historic pattern of black settlement in the United States can be measured more in centuries than in decades. The most prominent shifts occurred during much of the 20th century, with the “Great Migration” out of the South, first to cities in the Northeast and Midwest, and then to the West. Still, through the 1960s, the South housed more than half of the nation’s black population. In the early 1970s, African Americans began to follow white population into the South. Since then, and especially during the 1990s, black movement to the South has become substantial.⁴ It has occurred less in historic “Old South” states such as Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, and more in “New South” growth centers such as Texas, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

This trend expanded in the 2000s. The region’s share of total U.S. black population continued to rise from 54 percent in 1990 to 57 percent in 2008. The

South accounted for fully 75 percent of the nation’s black population gains from 2000 to 2008, up from 65 percent in the 1990s. Northern destinations for blacks during the Great Migration still figure prominently among the metropolitan areas with the largest black populations in 2008, as do several areas in the South (Table 3, left panel). The biggest shift occurred in metropolitan Atlanta, which rose rapidly from seventh in 1990 to fourth in 2000, and in the 2000s surpassed Chicago to house the second-largest African American population in the United States. In the process it more than doubled its black population, overtaking the metropolitan area whose city Martin Luther King, Jr. once called the “Birmingham of the North.”

Atlanta also far surpassed other metropolitan areas in its black population gain during the 2000s (Table 3, right panel). Its large middle-class black population, along with its diversified and growing



Table 4. White Population Losses in Coastal and Midwestern Metro Areas Counterbalanced Gains in the South and West

Large Metro Areas Ranked by White Population Gains and Losses, 2000 to 2008

Gains			Losses		
Rank	Metro Area	Population Change	Rank	Metro Area	Population Change
1	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	353,665	1	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	-662,170
2	Atlanta, GA	285,981	2	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA	-490,380
3	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	214,150	3	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	-106,025
4	Austin, TX	164,567	4	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	-106,017
5	Charlotte, NC-SC	157,566	5	Philadelphia, PA-NJ-DE-MD	-100,147
6	Raleigh-Cary, NC	149,081	6	Pittsburgh, PA	-84,597
7	Houston, TX	145,071	7	San Diego, CA	-72,769
8	Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA	133,127	8	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	-72,530
9	Nashville, TN	130,293	9	Honolulu, HI	-70,912
10	Provo, UT	125,091	10	Buffalo, NY	-60,620

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates data

economy, provided a continued draw for African Americans from across the country. Nine of the top 10 metro areas for black population gains from 2000 to 2008 are located in the South, including the three “New South” areas of Charlotte, Orlando, and Tampa. These regions are attracting more highly-educated blacks, including those from northern destinations. Washington, D.C., Atlanta, and Dallas rank sixth, ninth, and 25th, respectively, on the share of black adults with a bachelor’s degree, whereas Philadelphia and Detroit rank, respectively, 59th and 79th.

White Gains and Losses

Compared to Hispanic, Asian, and black population, white population distributes much more evenly across the country. With lower fertility and minimal growth through immigration, whites’ movement among metropolitan areas effectively amounts to a

zero-sum game, reflecting domestic in- and out-migration to a greater degree than for minorities.

Consequently, metropolitan areas among the nation’s 100 largest exhibited both significant gains and losses of white population during the 2000s. Those with the largest gains included metropolitan areas in the South and West, such as Phoenix, Atlanta, Dallas, Charlotte, and Raleigh (Table 4, left panel). While many of these areas also experienced fast growth of Hispanics and Asians in the 2000s (Table 2), they contrast with traditional immigrant magnets such as Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, where gains of those groups were greatest over the decade (Table 1).

Indeed, the list of metropolitan areas sustaining the greatest white population losses over the 2000-2008 period contains many of these traditional immigrant magnets (Table 4, right panel). Out-migration in response to the high cost of housing



through most of the decade in those expensive coastal metro areas contributed to their losses. In areas like Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Hartford that also lost significant white population, economic stagnation and aging of the population were more important factors. Overall, more than one-third (35) of the 100 largest metro areas lost white population during this time.

Majority-Minority Metro Areas

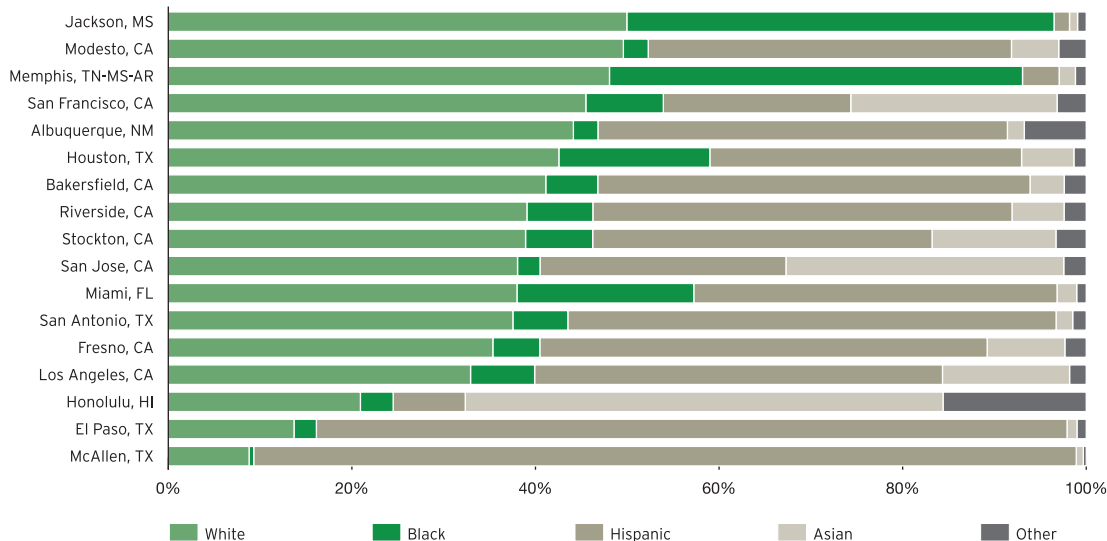
As described above, America is on its way to becoming a much more racially and ethnically diverse country, with whites expected to account for less than half the population by 2042. But the historic clustering of immigrant and African American settlement, and the continued growth of these populations, has led numerous areas to become “majority minority”

already (Figure 3). This is now the case for 17 metro areas, up from 14 in 2000 and just five in 1990. The Texas border metro areas of McAllen and El Paso, where more than four-fifths of the population is Hispanic, lead the list. Among metro areas with at least 1 million people, Los Angeles has the smallest white population share at 33 percent. Eight of the 17 are located in California, and another four are in Texas. The New York metro area, which clocked in at 50.7 percent white in 2008, will soon cross this threshold as well, perhaps by this year’s decennial census.

Because the younger part of the population is even more racially and ethnically diverse than adults (see the Age chapter), fully 31 metro areas already possess “majority minority” child populations (Map 2). They include all of the regions in Figure 3, as well

America is on its way to becoming a much more racially and ethnically diverse country, with whites expected to account for less than half the population by 2042.

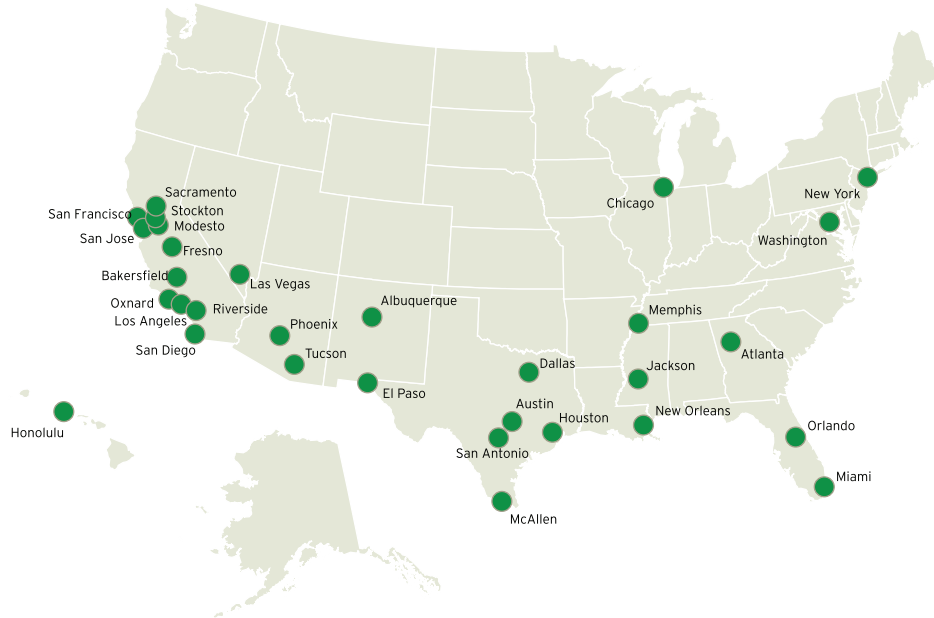
Figure 3. Seventeen Large Metro Areas Have Majority-Minority Populations
Share of Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2008



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data
Note: Metro area names are shortened



Map 2. In 31 Large Metro Areas, A Majority of Children Are From Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups
Large Metro Areas with Majority-Minority Child (Under 18) Populations, 2008



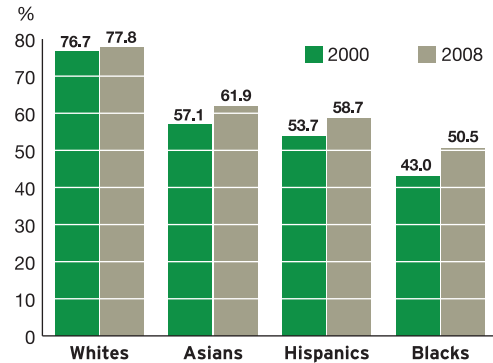
Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program data

as many that have more of a “white” image overall but a minority-dominated child population beneath the surface, such as Phoenix, Las Vegas, Washington, D.C., Orlando, Atlanta, and Chicago.

CITY AND SUBURBAN TRENDS

For much of the post-World War II period, “white flight” to the suburbs and concentrations of blacks and immigrants in urban areas combined to create a common perception of cities as having large minority presences, surrounded by largely white suburbs. These patterns changed gradually as a consequence of Civil Rights-era anti-discrimination legislation, the rise of Hispanic and Asian populations in suburbs,

Figure 4. A Majority of All Racial/Ethnic Groups in Major Metro Areas Live in the Suburbs
Share of Population in Suburbs by Race/Ethnicity, Large Metro Areas, 2000 and 2008



Includes 93 of 100 metro areas for which data are available
Source: Brookings analysis of Census 2000 and 2008 American Community Survey data



and less segregated development patterns in newer metropolitan areas.

While whites reside in the suburbs in larger numbers and shares than any minority group, the first decade of the new century brought the United States to a new benchmark. For the first time, more than half of all racial and ethnic groups residing in large metro areas live in the suburbs (Figure 4). This was the case already for Asians and Hispanics in 2000, and blacks crossed this threshold during the decade. In 2000, 43 percent of blacks in major metro areas lived in the suburbs, but that share increased rapidly to more than 50 percent by 2008.

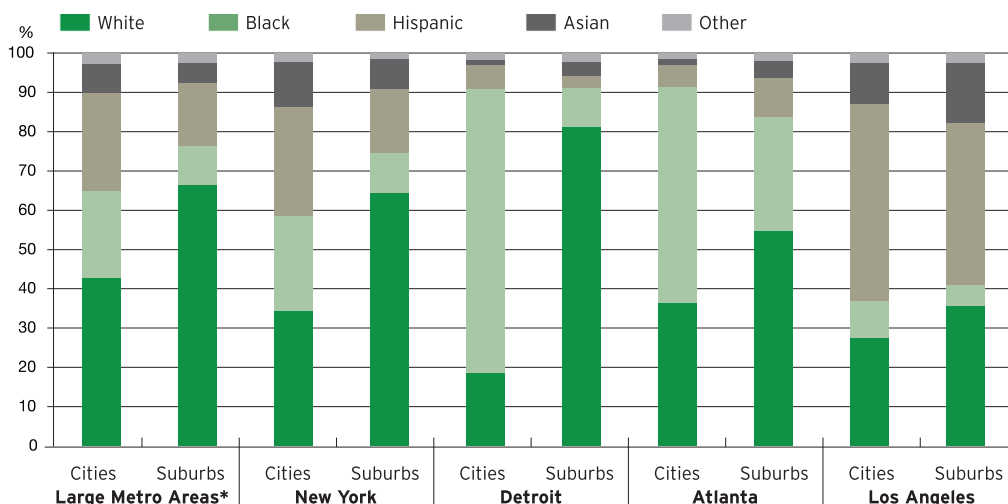
Notably, this transformation occurred as the total number of blacks living in suburbs rose from 2000 to 2008, but dropped in cities by a small amount, and by a larger margin than for whites. New Orleans alone accounted for a significant part of this

difference; the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina contributed to a significant reduction in the city's black population, and a less-severe decline in its white population.⁵

Because whites are far more likely to be suburban residents than minorities, the racial and ethnic composition of suburbs still tilts rather heavily toward whites, though this too varies across metropolitan areas. About two-thirds of all suburbanites are white, compared to 43 percent in primary cities (Figure 5). At one extreme are slow-growing, black/white metro areas like Detroit with a longstanding pattern of racial and ethnic segregation. Today, more than four-fifths of residents in Detroit's suburbs are white, compared to less than one-fifth of the city's population. At the other extreme is Los Angeles, whose prototypical "melting pot suburbs" are almost as diverse as its city population. In between are fast

For the first time, more than half of all racial and ethnic groups residing in large metro areas live in the suburbs.

Figure 5. Metro Areas Vary Considerably in the Location of their Racial/Ethnic Populations
Share of Population by Race/Ethnicity and Metropolitan Location, Selected Metro Areas, 2008



*Includes 93 of 100 metro areas for which data are available
Source: Brookings analysis of Census 2000 and 2008 American Community Survey data



growing destinations like Atlanta, whose suburbs are still “whiter” than its city, but whose black population has also increasingly suburbanized with declines in segregation and growth of the black middle class.

In fact, Atlanta and a few other cities experienced a somewhat new phenomenon in the 2000s—a gain in the share of population that is white. In Atlanta, whites increased from 32 percent of population in 2000 to 36 percent in 2008. Similar, though smaller, increases occurred in New York, Washington D.C., San Francisco, Boston, and primary cities in another seven of the nation’s 100 largest metro areas. What some have termed a “demographic inversion” in metro areas, with whites repopulating cities and minorities moving out to the suburbs, is not yet a widespread phenomenon, but bears watching in the years and decades ahead as metro areas grow even more diverse.⁶

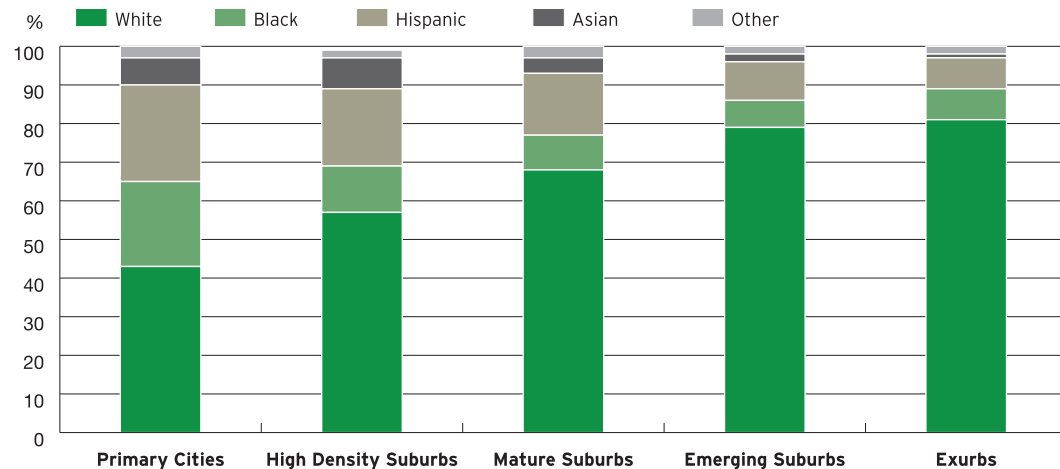
Still, there are notable gradations within suburbia.

At the national level, exurbs and emerging outer suburbs are predominantly white; mature suburbs reflect more of the national race-ethnic profile; and inner high-density suburbs are highly diverse (Figure 6).

LOOKING AHEAD

Beginning with the 1990s, and continuing into the 2000s, there has been a noticeable blurring of the regional and city-suburban racial and ethnic divide. At the regional level, much of this blurring owes to the widespread dispersal of Hispanics, both native- and foreign-born, to new parts of the country where employment opportunities lured them away from traditional settlement areas. To a lesser extent, Asians have also moved to many of the same areas. And while blacks have dispersed to some degree,

Figure 6. Racial/Ethnic Diversity Decreases Farther Away from the Urban Core in Metro Areas
Share of Population by Race/Ethnicity and Metropolitan Community Type, 2008



Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data



their major shift has been to the South, in a reversal of the Great Migration at the beginning of the 20th century. Despite these dispersals, minorities still concentrate unevenly across metropolitan America. Notwithstanding the growth of more majority-minority metro areas, more than half of the 100 largest are over 70 percent white, and whites comprise more than 80 percent of population in more than a quarter.

As the growth rates of Hispanic and Asian populations continue to dwarf those of the nation's aging white population, more metropolitan areas will undoubtedly show a reduced presence of whites, suggested by the large and growing number of metro areas with majority-minority child populations. Yet a truly nationwide integration of racial and ethnic minorities still seems a long way off. The latter part of the decade indicates that further dispersal of Hispanics into new destinations over the short run may await significant improvement in underlying labor market conditions. Over the longer run, the growth of second- and third-generation minority groups that are more assimilated into the "mainstream" labor market suggests that their movements will increasingly mirror those of the overall population. Still, the emerging "cultural generation gap" between a largely minority, multiethnic child and young adult population, and a primarily white elderly and older baby boomer population, suggests that a more gradual assimilation may take place.

Finally, within metropolitan areas, the 2000s indicate that the nation is well on its way toward achieving greater city-suburban racial and ethnic integration. This, too, is an uneven phenomenon regionally, and the demographic similarities between cities and suburbs in faster-growing metro areas of the South and West exceed those in slower-growing parts of the Northeast and Midwest. Still, 20th-

century notions of who lives in cities and suburbs are increasingly out of step with 21st century realities. Tracking the further movement of these groups into suburbia, and examining the underlying forces and resulting outcomes, will be a clear priority for both the public and private sectors for the foreseeable future. ■

Over the longer run, the growth of second- and third-generation minority groups that are more assimilated into the "mainstream" labor market suggests that their movements will increasingly mirror those of the overall population.

ENDNOTES

1. Among other assumptions, the Census Bureau's projections assume immigration rises from about 1.3 million people a year to 2 million a year over time.
2. Regarding the American Indian/Alaskan Native population, the 100 largest metro areas house 39 percent of the nation's 2.3 million members of this group. The Phoenix metro area leads all others as home to about 80,000, followed by Tulsa, Albuquerque, and Oklahoma City, each with more than 40,000. Five other large metro areas—New York, Seattle, Los Angeles, Dallas and Tucson—house more than 25,000. Tulsa leads all large metros in the share of its residents who are American Indians/Alaska Natives at 7 percent, followed by Albuquerque at 5 percent and Oklahoma City at under 4 percent.
3. William H. Frey, "Diversity Spreads Out: Metropolitan Shifts in Hispanic, Asian, and Black Populations Since 2000" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2006).
4. William H. Frey, "The New Great Migration: Black Americans' Return to the South, 1965-2000" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2004).
5. William H. Frey, Audrey Singer, and David Park, "Resettling New Orleans: The First Full Picture from the Census" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2007).
6. Alan Ehrenhalt, "Trading Places: The Demographic Inversion of the American City." *The New Republic*, August 13, 2008.

III. IMMIGRATION

BY THE NUMBERS

16%

Share of population that is foreign born, 100 largest metro areas, 2008

1.13

Ratio of immigrants with college degrees to those without high school diplomas, New York metro area, 2008

60%

Share of children with at least one immigrant parent, Los Angeles metro area, 2008

63

Metro areas (out of 95) in which majority of foreign born live in suburbs, 2008





OVERVIEW

- **About one in eight Americans in 2008 was an immigrant.** This represented a dramatic rise from 1970, when fewer than one in 20 Americans was foreign born, and reflects a tectonic shift in sources of U.S. immigration away from Europe and toward Latin American and Asia in the late 20th century.
- **Metropolitan areas in the Southeast gained immigrants at a faster rate than most other regions during the 2000s.** Many metro areas in the Great Plains, Texas, inland California and the Mountain West also had above average growth. Immigrant growth across all metropolitan areas was strong but down from the break-neck pace of the 1990s, and appeared to subside further with the onset of the recession in 2008.
- **High and low-skilled immigrants distribute unevenly across U.S. metro areas.** Immigrants with the lowest levels of English language ability and educational attainment cluster in Texas, inland California, and Sun Belt markets that experienced fast growth during the decade's housing boom. More highly-educated immigrants populate former gateways like Pittsburgh and Baltimore, and high-tech economies like the San Francisco Bay Area. Major metro areas in the Southeast, as well as established gateways like Chicago and New York, draw a mix of immigrants by skill level.
- **The "second generation" represents a large share of the child population in several established metropolitan gateways.** In the Los Angeles, Miami, and San Francisco metro areas, more than half of children have at least one foreign born parent or are themselves foreign born. The New York area has 1.8 million such children, 44 percent of all children metro-wide.
- **More than half of the foreign born live in large metropolitan suburbs, up from 44 percent in 1980.** In metropolitan areas with a more recent immigration history, such as Atlanta, Las Vegas, and Washington, D.C., immigrants account for a similar or higher share of suburban than city population. More than one in three immigrants in large metro areas lives in the high-density suburbs that surround cities, and nearly one in five lives in mature, mid-20th century suburbs.

NATIONAL TRENDS

High levels of immigration in the 2000s increased the foreign-born population from 31 million to 38 million as of 2008. Despite that increase, the pace of growth in this decade was slower than the rapid immigrant population growth of the 1990s. The steep downturn in the economy that began in late 2007 has had an impact on migration worldwide,

and immigration to the United States appeared to have slowed by 2008. While some of these changes in flows may be momentary, other changes signal longer-term trends.

This chapter highlights immigrant settlement trends, particularly in new destination areas and suburbs. It also explores social, economic, and migration characteristics of the foreign born at various

The steep downturn in the economy that began in late 2007 has had an impact on migration worldwide, and immigration to the United States appeared to have slowed by 2008.



geographic levels. Examining immigration trends in metropolitan areas, and their cities and suburbs, is helpful for understanding how places will weather the current economic downturn, and how immigrants may respond to changing labor demands once recovery is underway.

As of 2008, 38 million immigrants lived in the United States, or 12.5 percent of the population, a rising share but still lower than in the early part of the 20th century (Figure 1). Immigrant settlement trends during the early part of the century largely followed economic activity in cities and suburbs. Industrial and commercial growth in the Northeast and Midwest drew population, including immigrants, in large numbers, until the Great Depression stalled immigration.

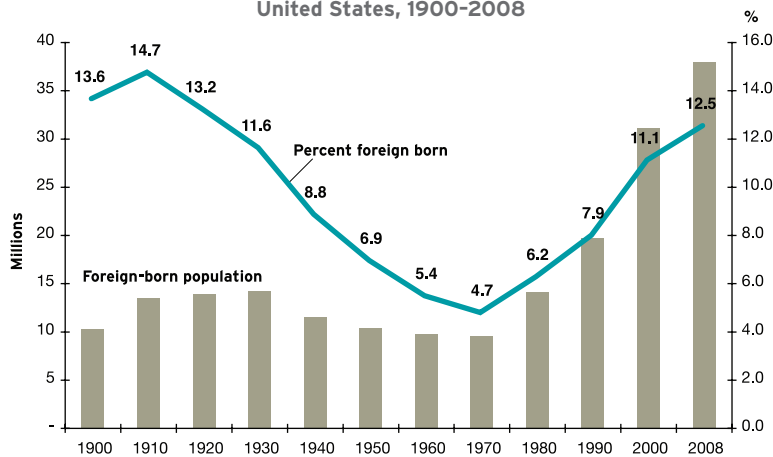
The middle of the twentieth century saw immigration to the United States wane as the supply of labor from Europe dwindled during that region's rapid recovery after World War II. The nadir in absolute

terms coincided with the baby boom, yielding a national population that was less than 5 percent foreign born in 1970. This period also marked the rapid growth of the metropolitan Sun Belt, when many Americans were lured to warmer year-round climates and open space, spreading from the Southwest to the Southeast. By the end of the century and continuing into the current decade, the South saw burgeoning growth in its metropolitan areas, and immigrant settlement has mirrored this recent trend.

U.S. immigration policy changed in 1965, with the abolition of national origin quotas, and instituted a preference system for sponsored relatives of American citizens and workers with certain skills. Coincident with these changes was the economic growth and development of many Latin American, Caribbean, and Asian nations, leading to substantial out-migration from those world regions. In addition, civil and political strife induced emigration from various countries in those same regions beginning in the 1970s. By the end of the 1990s, outflows of students, professionals, and refugees from Africa increased dramatically, and in this decade, Africans are arriving in the United States at a higher rate than immigrants from any other world region.

These economic, political, and policy dynamics induced a dramatic shift in the origin of America's immigrant population over time (Figure 2). In 1970, among the 9.6 million foreign-born U.S. residents, fully 60 percent were from Europe, largely a manifestation of earlier waves of immigration. At that point, only 8 percent of the total were from Mexico, and another 11 percent were from the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. Nine percent came from the countries of Asia, another 8 percent from other North American countries (mostly Canada), and less than 1 percent from the African continent. By 2008, the dramatic transformations in opportunities across

Figure 1. The Foreign-Born Share of U.S. Population Is Rising, but Still Below Levels from the Early 20th Century
Foreign-Born Population and Share of Population that is Foreign Born, United States, 1900-2008



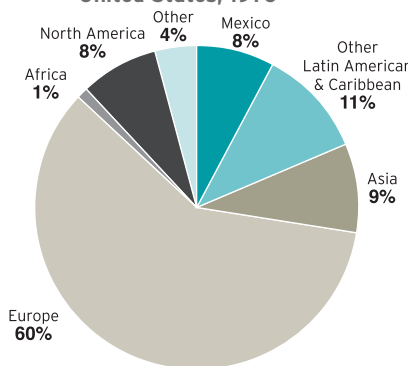
Source: Brookings analysis of decennial census and 2008 American Community Survey data



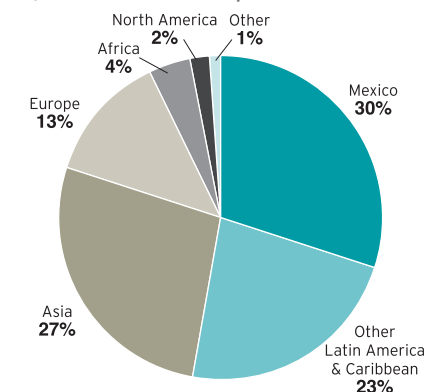
the world are apparent in the composition of the 38 million U.S. foreign born: only 13 percent are from Europe; Mexican immigrants comprise fully 30 percent of the total with another 23 percent from other Latin American and Caribbean countries; 27 percent are from Asia; Africans represent nearly 4 percent of the total; and only 2 percent are from North America.

Figure 2. The Region of Origin for U.S. Immigrants Shifted Dramatically Over Time

Share of Foreign Born by Region of Birth, United States, 1970



Share of Foreign Born by Region of Birth, United States, 2008



Source: Brookings analysis of decennial census and 2008 American Community Survey data

METROPOLITAN TRENDS

Location of the Foreign Born

The U.S. foreign-born population concentrates disproportionately in large metropolitan areas. In 2008, about 85 percent of U.S. immigrants lived in the 100 largest metro areas, compared to 66 percent of total population. This proportion was down slightly from 87 percent in 1990, reflecting a greater spread of the foreign-born population across the U.S. landscape over time. The remainder in 2008 lived in smaller metropolitan areas (10 percent) and micropolitan and other non-metropolitan areas (5 percent). The disproportionate share of immigrants living in large metro areas gave those areas a considerably higher foreign-born population share in 2008 (over 16 percent) than the nation as a whole.

New York and Los Angeles top the list of metropolitan areas with the largest number of immigrants, with 5.3 and 4.4 million, respectively, followed by other well-established destination areas including Miami and Chicago (see Table 1, upper panel). However, when metro areas are ranked by the percentage of foreign born, nine of the top 10 are in the Sun Belt states, all with long-standing immigrant populations (Table 1, lower panel). Six are in California (San Jose, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Stockton, Oxnard and San Diego); two lie along the Texas border (McAllen and El Paso); and Miami and New York round out the top 10.

Among the 100 largest metropolitan areas, the foreign born grew by 21.3 percent between 2000 and 2008. That equated to a robust annual growth rate of roughly 2.4 percent, though it was down from the swift 4.5 percent annual growth rate of the 1990s. Metropolitan areas in the Southeast gained immigrants at a faster rate than most other regions

As of 2008, 38 million immigrants lived in the United States, or 12.5 percent of the population, a rising share but still lower than in the early part of the 20th century.

Table 1. Immigrants Are Greatest in Number and Population Share in Long-Established Gateway Metro Areas

Metro Areas Ranked by Foreign-Born Population and Population Share, 2008

Largest Number of Immigrants

Rank	Metro area	Immigrants
1	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA	5,328,033
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	4,374,583
3	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	1,995,037
4	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	1,689,617
5	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	1,258,324
6	Houston, TX	1,237,719
7	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	1,121,321
8	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	1,089,950
9	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	894,527
10	Boston-Cambridge, MA-NH	731,960
	All large metro areas	32,425,888

Highest Foreign-Born Population Share

Rank	Metro Area	% Foreign Born
1	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	36.8
2	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	36.4
3	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	34.0
4	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	29.4
5	McAllen, TX	29.2
6	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA	28.0
7	El Paso, TX	27.3
8	Stockton, CA	22.8
9	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	22.3
10	San Diego, CA	22.1
	All large metro areas	16.3

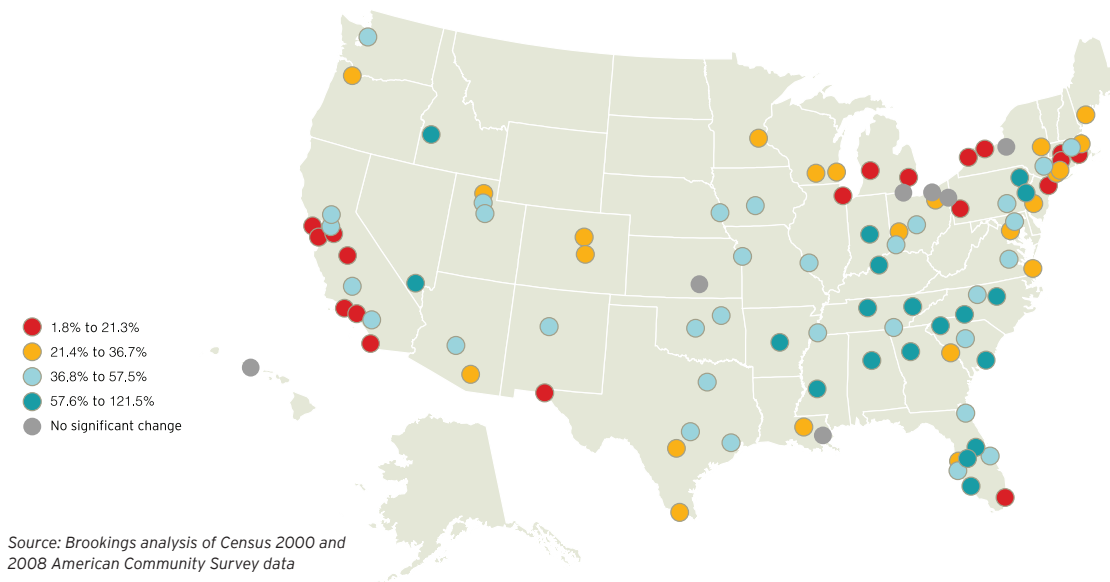
Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data

during this decade (Map 1). Many metro areas in the Great Plains, Texas, inland California, and the Mountain West also had above-average growth. Conversely, metropolitan areas in the Great Lakes and industrial Northeast, and along the West Coast saw slower-than-average growth or no significant change at all.

Further, many metropolitan areas saw immigration slow considerably toward the end of the 2000s as the economy entered recession. Among the 15 metro areas with the largest number of immigrants, only four posted significant, positive growth in their foreign-born populations between 2007 and 2008 (Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, and Seattle). The



Map 1. Metro Areas in the Southeast Had the Highest Rates of Immigrant Growth in the 2000s
Percent Change in the Foreign-Born Population, 2000-2008



remainder, mostly well-established destination areas, saw either a significant decline (Los Angeles and Phoenix) or no change (New York, Miami, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington, Riverside, Boston, San Diego, and San Jose). The deepening of the recession in late 2008 suggests that this stall in immigration may have spread further the following year.

Migration Characteristics

Immigrant tenure and whether they become naturalized citizens both have implications for immigrants themselves, their families, and the communities in which they live. In many newer destination areas, residents worry that newcomers may overwhelm schools, health care systems, and other local services. These areas often lack the developed infrastructure to assist immigrants and their families in the integration process that long-standing

destination metropolitan areas facilitate.

Metropolitan areas with high proportions of foreign-born newcomers, including even established areas, are grappling with these challenges. Several newer destinations such as Las Vegas and Washington, D.C. have seen large shares of their residents arrive in the United States since 2000, but traditional settlement areas in California, Texas, and New York also continue to draw new immigrants through networks of those already in place (Table 2).

Rates of naturalization provide another measure of the “rootedness” of immigrant populations (Table 2). The decision to become a U.S. citizen has elements of both practicality and emotion; however, the bureaucratic process intentionally takes some time. Eligibility depends on five years of legal permanent residence (three years if married to a U.S. citizen), knowledge of U.S. history and civics, and a degree of



Table 2. Both New and Established Immigrant Gateways Have Large Shares of Foreign-Born Newcomers
Metropolitan Areas Ranked by Share of Total Population Arriving in United States Since 2000, and Percent Naturalized 2008

<i>Highest Foreign-Born Newcomer Share</i>				<i>Lowest Foreign-Born Newcomer Share</i>			
Rank	Metro Area	% Population Arriving in U.S. Since 2000	% Foreign-Born Naturalized	Rank	Metro Area	% Population Arriving in U.S. Since 2000	% Foreign-Born Naturalized
1	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	10.2	49.2	91	Scranton, PA	1.3	40.3
2	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	10.2	48.4	92	Jackson, MS	1.1	33.1
3	McAllen, TX	8.3	23.4	93	Baton Rouge, LA	1.1	39.5
4	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	7.4	44.8	94	Toledo, OH	1.1	49.2
5	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	7.4	54.3	95	Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	1.1	47.5
6	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA	7.4	51.4	96	Dayton, OH	1.0	53.2
7	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	7.0	44.7	97	Chattanooga, TN-GA	1.0	38.8
8	Houston, TX	6.9	32.3	98	Pittsburgh, PA	1.0	53.3
9	Las Vegas, NV	6.7	36.9	99	Portland, ME	0.7	54.1
10	Bridgeport-Stamford, CT	6.5	41.0	100	Youngstown, OH-PA	0.4	65.6

Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data

English language ability. As a result, naturalization rates vary widely by country and region of origin (including proximity to the United States), length of time in the United States, socioeconomic characteristics, and refugee status. Nationwide in 2008, U.S. citizens accounted for 60 percent of foreign-born individuals from Europe, 58 percent from Asia, and 31 percent from Latin American and the Caribbean.

At the metropolitan level, naturalization rates vary considerably, and relate to the level and recentness of immigration. The places with the highest shares of naturalized citizens include older industrial metro areas with very low levels of recent immigration, such as Youngstown, Portland (ME), Pittsburgh, and Dayton. Continuous gateways such as San Francisco and New York also claim at least half of their foreign-born populations as U.S. citizens. On the lower end of the scale are both newer destination areas and those in which a majority of

immigrants hail from Mexico, the proximity of which to the United States has led to lower naturalization rates among that group; Houston and Las Vegas exemplify such areas.

Human Capital Characteristics

Some of the most contentious arguments around immigration concern the role of immigrants in the economy. How skilled are immigrants and where do they fit into the labor market, both nationally and locally? English language ability and educational attainment provide two important markers of immigrants' labor market prospects, and these indicators vary widely across U.S. metropolitan areas.

On English language ability, several metro areas along the Mexican border and in California's Central Valley exhibit high levels of immigrants with limited proficiency and large shares of households that are "linguistically isolated" (where no members over the



Table 3. Immigrants in Border-State Metro Areas Exhibit the Lowest Levels of English Language Ability
Metro Areas Ranked by Share of Foreign Born Who are Limited-English Proficient, and Share of Households that are Linguistically Isolated, 2008

Rank	Metro Area	% Limited English Proficient	% Linguistically Isolated Households
1	McAllen, TX	70.5	22.8
2	Bakersfield, CA	68.3	10.1
3	El Paso, TX	67.5	18.8
4	Modesto, CA	65.8	8.8
5	Fresno, CA	65.1	10.4
6	Stockton, CA	62.3	10.3
7	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	62.2	14.8
8	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	61.9	8.4
9	Houston, TX	61.0	10.9
10	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	60.0	8.0
All large metro areas		52.2	6.3

Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data

Note: Linguistically isolated households are those where no members over the age of 14 report speaking English “very well.”

age of 14 speak English very well). In these metropolitan areas, foreign-born populations are dominated by Spanish-speakers, and upwards of 60 percent of all foreign-born residents age five and over are considered to be limited English proficient (Table 3). In the border metro areas of McAllen and El Paso, approximately one in five households is linguistically isolated.

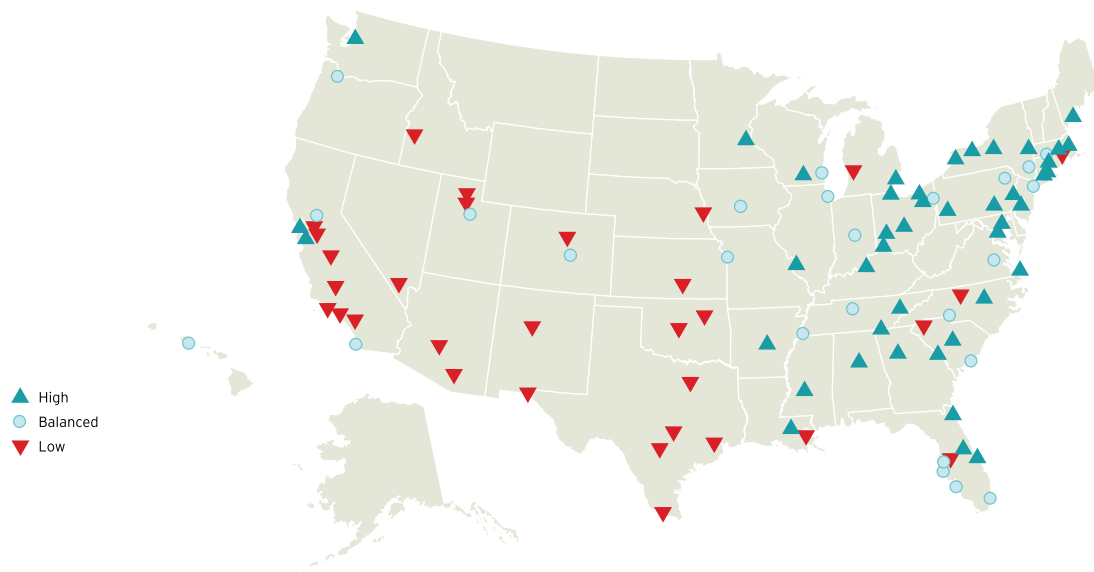
Like immigrants themselves on measures of educational attainment (see *Educational Attainment* chapter), metropolitan areas diverge in their immigrant skill profiles. Yet distinctive regional patterns are evident in how immigrants of varying educational attainment distribute across metropolitan labor markets.¹

Lower-skilled immigrants cluster in fast-growing places, reflecting the changing needs of labor markets there (Map 2). Metro areas throughout the Intermountain West, Texas, and up the I-35 corridor

in the Great Plains states have high shares of immigrants lacking a high school diploma, reflecting educational standards and expectations in their largely Latin American home countries. Many of these immigrants responded to labor market needs in (what was) the booming construction industry and burgeoning service sector in these metro areas that mushroomed before the housing market crash and resulting deep recession set in.

Immigrants with higher levels of educational attainment are overrepresented in metropolitan areas that no longer receive many immigrants, where the foreign born that remain tend to be older, long-term U.S. residents. These destinations are primarily in metropolitan areas east of the Mississippi River, including in the established immigrant gateways in the Northeast (filling niches in finance, healthcare, and technology), in new destinations

Map 2. High- and Low-Skilled Immigrants Distribute Unevenly Across U.S. Metro Areas
Skill Profile of the Foreign Born, 2008



Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data and based on analysis by Hall et al, forthcoming; see Endnote 1

Note: The immigrant skill profile reflects the ratio of bachelor's degree holders to those without high school diplomas among the foreign-born population. High connotes a ratio of 1.25 or greater; balanced connotes a ratio of 0.75 to 1.24; and low connotes a ratio below 0.75.

in the Southeast (diverse economies attracting higher-skilled, often “pioneer” immigrants), and in the former industrial metro areas in the Great Lakes region (older foreign-born cohorts that have aged in place). Western coastal “tech” metro areas such as Seattle, San Francisco and San Jose also register as high-skill.

Metropolitan areas with foreign-born populations with more “balanced” skill levels, reflecting both higher- and lower-skilled immigrants, run the gamut of U.S. regions and settlement histories. They include many newly emerging gateways in Southern states such as Nashville, Charlotte, Atlanta, and Orlando, as well as some of the largest immigrant destinations such as Chicago, New York, and Miami.

Second Generation

Of growing interest and concern is how the children of immigrants are faring in U.S. schools and the labor market, given the variation in human capital and resources of their parents. The 16 million children (under age 18) in the “second generation,” as measured here can be either born abroad or in the United States but live with at least one foreign-born parent. They make up 23 percent of all children in the United States and 29 percent across all large metropolitan areas. In several metropolitan areas, they represent more than half or nearly half of all children (Table 4). New York and Los Angeles have the largest cohorts of second-generation children, nearly two million each. Not surprisingly,



Table 4. The "Second Generation" Represents Nearly Half or More of All Children in Several Metro Areas
Metro Areas Ranked by Second Generation* Proportion of Children, 2008

Rank	Metro Area	Number of Children	Share of All Children (%)
1	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	258,910	61.0
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	1,865,272	59.6
3	McAllen, TX	144,779	57.7
4	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	619,993	54.3
5	El Paso, TX	110,638	51.5
6	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	436,136	49.6
7	Stockton, CA	82,206	45.1
8	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	492,887	44.4
9	San Diego, CA	309,571	43.9
10	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA	1,844,762	43.5
All large metro areas		13,642,110	29.0

Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data

* Children under age 18, born abroad or in the United States, living with at least one foreign-born parent

other established immigrant gateways such as San Francisco and San Diego also figure among the top 10. Of course, not all children of immigrants are in disadvantaged households. However, a large second-generation population undoubtedly has impacts on schools, and at the local level may indicate segregation by limited language proficiency, poverty, and race and ethnicity.²

CITY AND SUBURBAN TRENDS

The growth and development of metropolitan areas with extensive suburbs has led to an increasing preference among immigrants for a suburban residence.³ In 1980, 41 percent of U.S. immigrants lived in the primary cities of the top 100 metro areas. By 2008, that share had decreased to 34 percent. Now, a majority

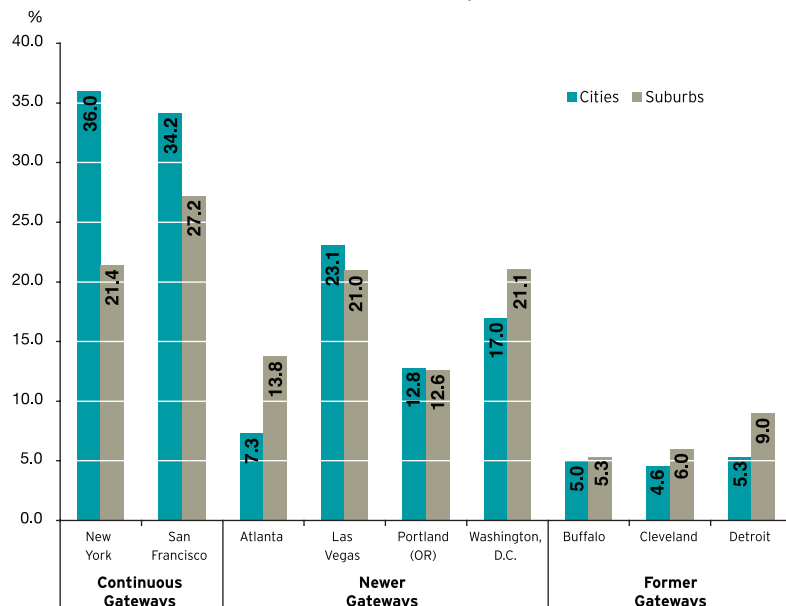
of immigrants nationwide (51 percent) live in the suburbs of large metropolitan areas, compared to just 44 percent in 1980. These suburban immigrants numbered 19.5 million in 2008.

Smaller metro areas (under 500,000 population) and non-metropolitan areas have maintained their shares of about ten percent and five percent, respectively, of the nation's immigrant population. These steady proportions, however, mask the high growth rates in these areas. In fact, between 1990 and 2008, the immigrant population grew fastest in non-metro areas (183 percent), followed by smaller metro areas (122 percent). In suburbs and cities, by contrast, the immigrant population grew by 112 percent and 57 percent, respectively, over the same period, though from a much larger base. Individually, some counties within metropolitan areas, as well as some smaller metro areas and nonmetropolitan



Figure 3. Immigrants Comprise a Similar or Larger Share of Suburban than City Populations in Many Newer Destinations

Share of Population that is Foreign Born, Primary Cities vs. Suburbs, Selected Metro Areas, 2008



Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data
* Metro area names are abbreviated

counties experienced much faster growth, prompting residents and officials to confront immigration for the first time.⁴

The degree to which immigrants live in suburbs within specific metropolitan areas follows their individual settlement histories. Immigrants still compose a larger share of overall primary city (21 percent) than suburban (14 percent) population, but they have suburbanized over time along with the larger population. In 2008, 63 of the 95 largest metro areas had a majority of their foreign born living in suburbs. Long-established gateways like New York and San Francisco have high shares of foreign-born population overall, and their cities record even higher shares than their suburbs (Figure 3). In newer gateways like Atlanta, Las Vegas, Portland (OR), and Washington, D.C., the foreign born are at least as prevalent in suburbs as in cities, with new arrivals often skipping the city altogether. A similar pattern holds in former immigrant strongholds like Buffalo, Cleveland, and Detroit, but owes more to the long-

Table 5. Immigrants Are Over-Represented in High-Density Suburbs As Well As Cities

Total and Foreign-Born Population by Metropolitan Community Type, 2008

	Total Population	Foreign-Born Population	Foreign-Born Share of Population (%)	Share of Large Metro Areas' Total Population (%)	Share of Large Metro Areas' Foreign-Born Population (%)
Primary Cities	61,828,840	12,943,625	20.9	31.0	39.9
High-Density Suburbs	54,184,145	11,507,510	21.2	27.2	35.5
Mature Suburbs	49,491,155	6,015,360	12.2	24.9	18.6
Emerging Suburbs	23,638,770	1,598,070	6.8	11.9	4.9
Exurbs	10,009,665	361,460	3.6	5.0	1.1
All large metro areas	199,152,575	32,426,025	16.3	100.0	100.0

Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data



run suburbanization of older foreign-born workers and families in those metro areas than to settlement patterns of newly arriving populations.

Immigrants distribute unevenly across different types of suburbs, too (Table 5). Across all major metro areas in 2008, 40 percent of the foreign born lived in primary cities, and 60 percent lived in suburbs. The latter included 36 percent living in high-density suburban counties, 19 percent in mature, mid-20th century suburban counties, 5 percent in emerging suburban counties, and just 1 percent in the exurbs. As in cities, immigrants represent an outsized share of population in high-density suburbs; their population share in mature suburbs now approaches the national average.

LOOKING AHEAD

Trends in immigration reveal an uneven portrait of the foreign born across America’s metropolitan areas. Overall, immigration to the United States is slowing, and some of the fastest-growing places have seen drops in their foreign-born population. The imprint of the recession also shows up in many of the fastest-growing places of the past decade, now reeling from the bursting of the housing bubble. These metro areas, such as Phoenix and Las Vegas in the Intermountain West, saw many immigrant newcomers join the once burgeoning construction sector and associated industries only to witness a significant outflow in the past year. Other Sun Belt metro areas—such as Atlanta, Dallas, and Charlotte, also relatively new destinations—saw continued growth in immigration during the past year. Because immigrants, particularly more recent ones, tend to be fairly mobile, we expect to see some destination shifting as we look ahead to an uneven economic recovery across

metropolitan areas.

In the next decade, certain trends that have taken hold are likely to persist. We will see a continuing spread of immigrants into newer destinations and suburban areas, as immigrants seek opportunities for housing, jobs, and quality of life. The skills differentials across metro areas may also continue as immigrants consolidate further in new destination areas, bringing the next wave of immigrants and highlighting the language and educational aspects of immigrant integration.

The growth of immigrants in the suburbs underscores the need for jurisdictions across metropolitan areas to work together to adequately and coherently respond to changing demographic conditions. This is especially the case for those areas that have well-established, lower-skilled immigrant populations with high shares of children. ■

Because immigrants, particularly more recent ones, tend to be fairly mobile, we expect to see some destination shifting as we look ahead to an uneven economic recovery across metropolitan areas.

ENDNOTES

1. Ratio of high- to low-skill immigrants from Matthew Hall, Deborah Roempke Graefe, and Gordon F. De Jong, “The Geography of Immigrant Skills: Educational Profiles of Metropolitan Destinations” (Washington: Brookings Institution, forthcoming).
2. Gary Orfield and Chungmei Lee, “Racial Transformation and the Changing Nature of Segregation,” (Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project, 2006).
3. See Audrey Singer, Susan W. Hardwick and Caroline B. Brettell, *Twenty-First Century Gateways: Immigrant Incorporation in Suburban America* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).
4. See, e.g., Audrey Singer, Jill H. Wilson, and Brooke DeRenzis, “Immigrants, Politics, and Local Response in Suburban Washington” (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2009).