

Melting Pot Cities and Suburbs: Racial and Ethnic Change in Metro America in the 2000s

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FINDINGS

An analysis of data from the 1990, 2000, and 2010 decennial censuses reveals that:

- **Hispanics now outnumber blacks and represent the largest minority group in major American cities.** The Hispanic share of population rose in all primary cities of the largest 100 metropolitan areas from 2000 to 2010. Across all cities in 2010, 41 percent of residents were white, 26 percent were Hispanic, and 22 percent were black.
- **Well over half of America's cities are now majority non-white.** Primary cities in 58 metropolitan areas were "majority minority" in 2010, up from 43 in 2000. Cities lost only about half as many whites in the 2000s as in the 1990s, but "black flight" from cities such as Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, and Detroit accelerated in the 2000s.
- **Minorities represent 35 percent of suburban residents, similar to their share of overall U.S. population.** Among the 100 largest metro areas, 36 feature "melting pot" suburbs where at least 35 percent of residents are non-white. The suburbs of Houston, Las Vegas, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. became majority minority in the 2000s.
- **More than half of all minority groups in large metro areas, including blacks, now reside in the suburbs.** The share of blacks in large metro areas living in suburbs rose from 37 percent in 1990, to 44 percent in 2000, to 51 percent in 2010. Higher shares of whites (78 percent), Asians (62 percent), and Hispanics (59 percent) in large metro areas live in suburbs.
- **Fast-growing exurban areas remain mostly white and depended overwhelmingly on whites for growth in the 2000s.** Whites accounted for 73 percent of population growth in outlying exurban counties in the 2000s, well more than their 8 percent contribution to national population growth over the same period.

Substantial racial and ethnic changes in the populations of both cities and suburbs in metropolitan America challenge leaders at all levels to understand and keep pace with the continuing social, economic, and political transformation of these places.

"The historically sharp racial and ethnic divisions between cities and suburbs in metropolitan America are more blurred than ever."

INTRODUCTION

Old images of race and place in America are changing rapidly. Nowhere are these shifts more apparent than in major U.S. cities and their suburbs. The once widely held stereotype of “chocolate city and vanilla suburbs” has been obsolete for some time.¹ Indeed, Census 2000 pointed to growing racial and ethnic diversity in the “melting pot suburbs” of many large U.S. metropolitan areas.²

Initial results from the 2010 Census reveal even more pervasive changes in the racial profiles of cities and suburbs nationwide. Three related factors are driving these changes:³

- Continued growth and dispersal of minority populations, especially Hispanics, now contrasts vividly with the minimal growth of the aging white population. Minorities are fueling overall population growth in a wider array of places, including suburbs in all parts of the country
- America’s child population, in particular, is becoming more much diverse, making family-friendly suburbs even more alluring to racial and ethnic minorities⁴
- A breakthrough “black flight” from cities with large African American populations is taking hold, further fueling minority suburbanization in both northern and southern cities, and shifting the racial dynamics of cities where blacks had long been the dominant minority presence

These dynamics combined in the 2000s to produce more diverse “melting pot suburbs” and increasingly multi-hued cities, stark changes from the binary race/place images of the past. This report examines these trends through the lens of the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas, based on results from the 2010 Census. After discussing data and measures, it examines in turn the increasing influence of Hispanics on city and suburban demographic change; racial/ethnic shifts in cities and suburbs; suburban gains among specific minority groups, with an emphasis on blacks and Hispanics; and the largely white gains that propel growth in the exurbs of metropolitan areas. The report concludes with brief thoughts on the implications of these shifts for race relations, public policies, and politics in cities and suburbs.

METHODOLOGY

Data sources

Data for this study draw from U.S. decennial censuses of 1990, 2000, and 2010.⁵

Racial and ethnic classifications

The decennial census asks two separate questions regarding race and ethnicity. The first asks the respondent whether he/she is of Hispanic or Latino origin. People who identify as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. The second asks the respondent to identify his/her race; options on the 2010 decennial form include (among others) white, black/African American, American Indian, Asian (with several sub-categories), and some other race. Starting in 2000, respondents could self-identify with more than one race.⁶ In this report, race terms such as “white” and “black” refer to non-Hispanic members of those groups.

Geography

The geographic units employed for most of this analysis are primary cities and suburbs within the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget in 2008 and based on population totals from the 2010 Census.

Primary cities within a metropolitan area combine the populations of up to three individual cities that are named in the official metropolitan area name. They include the first named city, the largest by population in the metro area, and up to two additional cities with

populations of at least 100,000. For example, in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-MD-VA-WV metropolitan area, the primary cities include Washington D.C., Arlington, VA and Alexandria, VA.⁷ Because primary cities can be multiples of individual cities, the primary cities comprise 139 individual cities of the 100 largest metropolitan areas. **Suburbs** of metropolitan areas pertain to the portion of the metropolitan area's population that lies outside the boundaries of the primary cities.

Because of interest in trends affecting individual large cities (versus primary cities, which can be aggregations of up to three cities), this report also presents data for the 50 largest cities nationwide (listed in Appendix C).⁸

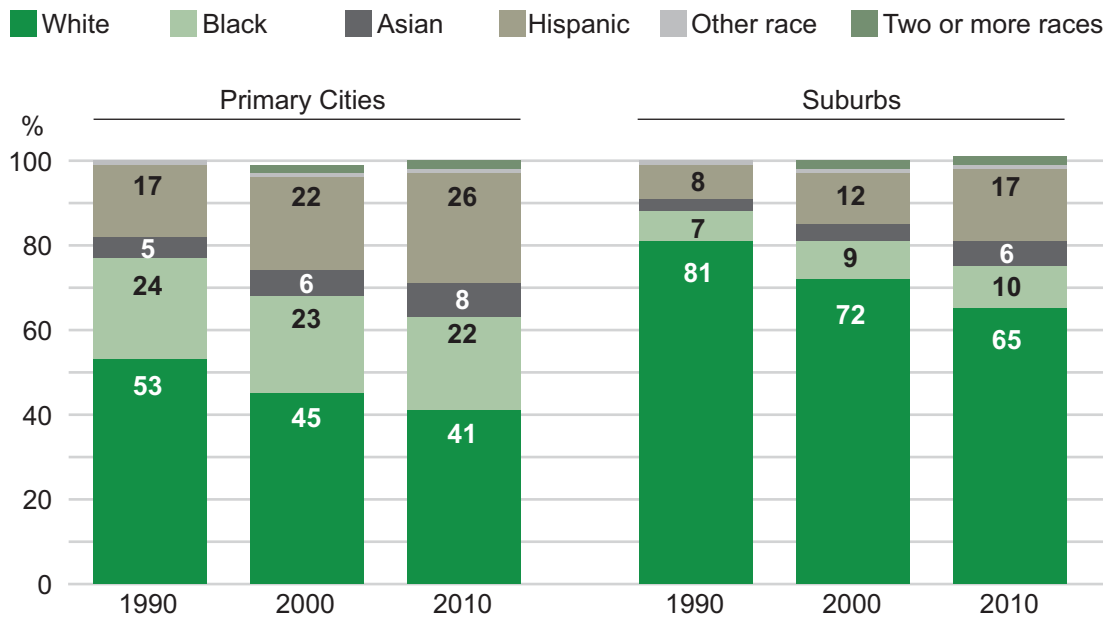
A later section of this report focuses entirely on suburban counties designated as **exurbs**.⁹ These counties lie within the 100 largest metropolitan areas, but have less than 25 percent of their population living in what the Census Bureau defines as urbanized areas. They are low-density counties that tend to lie on the geographic periphery of metropolitan areas.

FINDINGS

A. Hispanics now outnumber blacks and represent the largest minority group in major American cities.

The 2010 Census marked a milestone for city populations in America's large metropolitan areas. For the first time, Hispanics rather than blacks comprise the largest minority group in big cities. In 2010, Hispanics made up 26 percent of primary city populations compared with 22 percent for Blacks (Figure 1A). Blacks held a slight edge over Hispanics in 2000 (23 versus 22 percent) and a far larger margin in 1990 (24 versus 17 percent).

Figure 1a. Share of Population by Race/Ethnicity, Primary Cities and Suburbs, 1990-2010

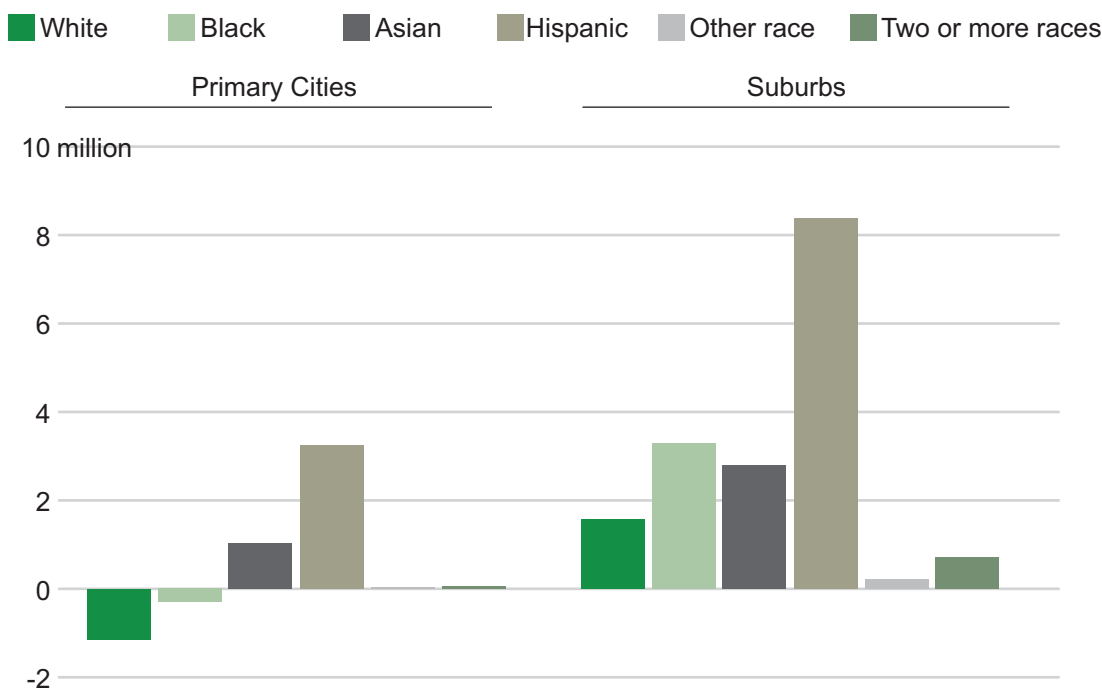


Source: Author's analysis of 1990, 2000, and 2010 decennial census data

This landmark development resulted from widespread changes across U.S. cities. The Hispanic share of population rose from 2000 to 2010 in all primary cities of the nation's 100 largest metro areas, and in 49 that share increased by at least 4 percentage points. By contrast, only eight experienced similarly large increases in their black population shares, and in 47, that share declined from 2000 to 2010. In 1990 blacks were the largest minority group in 68 of the 100 largest primary cities. This dropped to 59 in 2000 and 54 in 2010. Today, Hispanics are the largest minority group in 41 cities, and Asians in five cities. In Bradenton-Sarasota-Venice, FL, Oklahoma City, OK, and Scranton–Wilkes-Barre, PA, Hispanics overtook blacks as the largest minority group in cities between 2000 and 2010.

The decline in black representation in cities in the 2000s stemmed from an actual aggregate population loss among this group. Across all primary cities in the 2000s, black population declined by more than 300,000 (Figure 1B). This was a break from the prior decade, when blacks accounted for 16 percent of city growth (other minority groups accounted for the other 84 percent). From 2000 to 2010, Hispanics, Asians, and other minorities accounted for all of the combined population gain of primary cities. Among the 100 primary cities, 33 experienced declines in black population, and 68 showed either first-time losses, larger losses, or smaller gains in black population than in the 1990s.

Figure 1b. Change in Population by Race/Ethnicity, Primary Cities and Suburbs, 2000-2010



Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 decennial census data

Hispanics are also dramatically altering the demographic nature of suburban growth in large metro areas. Nearly half (49 percent) of growth in suburbs in the 2000s was attributable to Hispanics, compared to just 9 percent for whites. This contrasts with the 1990s, when Hispanics accounted for 38 percent of suburban growth, compared to 26 percent for whites and 36 percent for other groups.

Moreover, Hispanics contributed more to growth than any other racial and ethnic group in 49 of the 100 largest metropolitan areas. Whites contributed most to suburban growth

in 36 metro areas (including Nashville, Phoenix, Portland, OR, and Raleigh); blacks contributed most in 14 (including Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, and Memphis); and Asians in one (San Jose). And the Hispanic share of population rose in all 100 suburban areas of the largest metro areas during the 2000s.

B. Well over half of America’s cities are now majority non-white.

Big cities continue to lead the nation’s long-run transition to “majority minority” status. By 2010, in more than half (58) of primary cities in the 100 largest metro areas, non-whites made up a majority of the population, up significantly from 43 primary cities in 2000 (Table 1). While the combined population of these cities was already majority-minority in 2000 (Figure 1A), this reflected the disproportionate contribution of several large and diverse cities such as New York and Los Angeles.

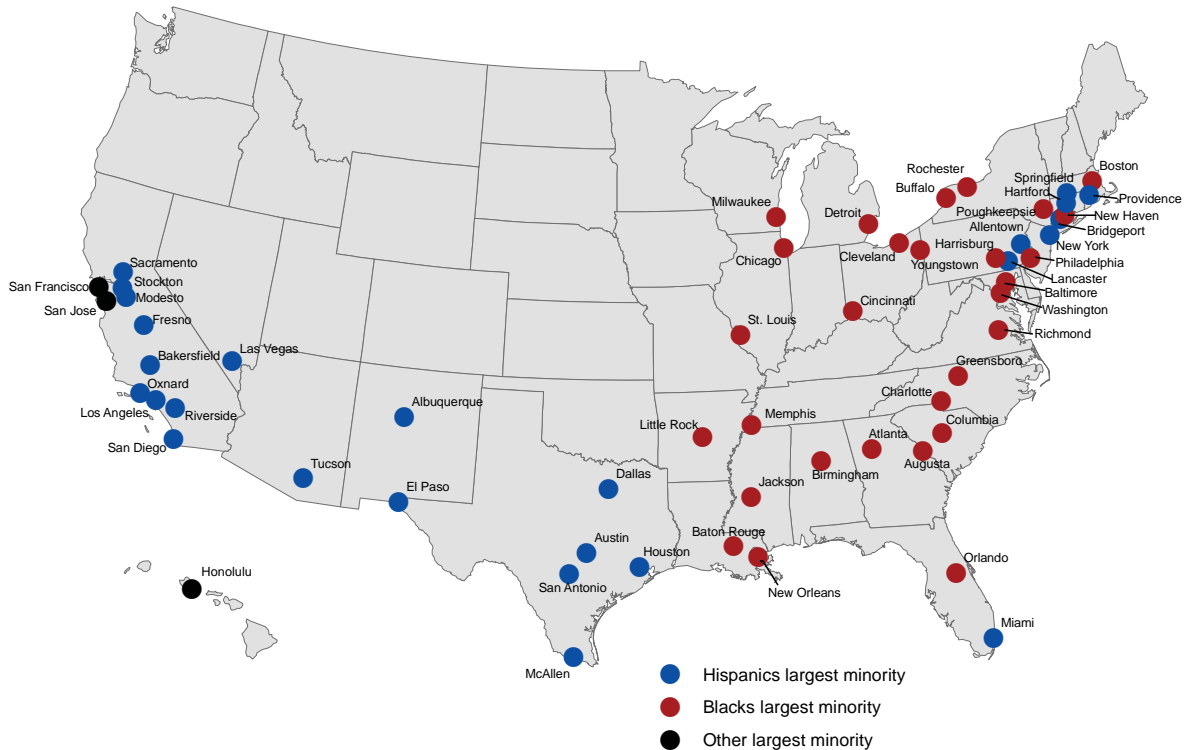
Table 1. Racial and Ethnic Characteristics, Primary Cities and Suburbs of 100 Largest Metro Areas, and 50 Largest Cities, 1990–2010

	100 Largest Metro Areas		50 Largest Cities
	Primary Cities*	Suburbs	
<i>Number with Majority Minority Population</i>			
2010	58	16	32
2000	43	8	26
1990	25	4	19
<i>Number with at Least 35 Percent Minority Population</i>			
2010	87	36	45
2000	74	22	39
1990	58	10	30
<i>Number Losing Population, 2000–2010</i>			
Total	23	4	9
White	73	32	35
Black	33	4	21
Hispanic	0	0	0
<i>Number Losing Population, 1990–2000</i>			
Total	26	2	6
White	72	25	31
Black	21	3	13
Hispanic	2	0	0

*One to three large cities included in the name of the metropolitan area (see text discussion)
 Source: Author’s analysis of 1990, 2000 and 2010 decennial census data

A broad array of large metro areas now have majority-minority city populations (Map 1). New among the 58 are primary cities of smaller metros like Allentown, PA and Lancaster PA, and rapidly diversifying metro areas like Las Vegas. Cities with largely black minority populations are found mostly in the North and Southeast, while those with largely Hispanic populations dominate the Southwest and West. And more cities have significant minority populations, reflected in the fact that non-whites represent at least 35 percent of residents in 87 primary cities, up from 74 in 2000, and 58 in 1990.

Map 1: Primary Cities with Majority Minority Populations, Large Metro Areas, 2010



Source: Brookings analysis of 2010 decennial census data

Among the individual 50 largest cities, fully 32 are majority minority, including six that tipped this decade: Austin, Arlington, TX, Charlotte, Las Vegas, and Phoenix (Table 2). In each of these cities, Hispanic growth drove the transition to majority non-white status. In fact, the white share of population increased in only six of the 50 largest cities: Atlanta, Oakland, and Washington, D.C., alongside tiny increases in Chicago, Denver, and Miami.¹⁰

Even as more cities became majority minority, the pace of “white flight” from cities slowed somewhat in the 2000s. As noted above, the white share of population in major cities continued to decline over the past decade, to 41 percent by 2010. However, the number of whites in primary cities decreased by only about half the amount in the 2000s (1.14 million) as during the 1990s (2.23 million). To be sure, white population loss in cities is still widespread; 73 of the 100 primary cities lost whites in the last decade, similar to 72 in the 1990s (Table 1). Among those 73 cities, however, 50 lost fewer whites this decade than in the 1990s. Included among these are the primary cities of the New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, and St. Louis metropolitan areas. And among the 27 primary cities that gained whites in the 2000s, 14 gained more this decade than in the 1990s.

An important counterpoint to slowing white flight is the emergence of “black flight” from major cities with established black populations. Sixteen of the 25 cities with the largest black populations (including nine of the 10 largest) registered declines in their black populations over the 2000s, compared with just eight in the 1990s. Moreover, recent losses were substantially larger (Table 3). The three cities with the largest black population declines—Detroit, Chicago, and New York—were among the primary destinations for African Americans during the Great Migration out of the South in the first half of the 20th century. However, black city losses were not confined to northern cities.

Table 2. Key Racial/Ethnic Shifts, Individual Cities and Metropolitan Suburbs, 2000–2010

	Share of Population, 2010 (%)				Difference from 2000 (% pts.)			
	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
<i>Individual Cities that Turned Majority Minority*</i>								
Austin, TX	49	8	6	35	-4	-2	2	5
Tucson, AZ	47	4	3	42	-7	0	0	6
Charlotte, NC	45	34	5	13	-10	2	2	6
Phoenix, AZ	47	6	3	41	-9	1	1	7
Las Vegas, NV	48	11	6	31	-10	1	1	8
Arlington, TX	45	18	7	27	-15	5	1	9
<i>Individual Cities with Increased White Share of Population*</i>								
Washington, D.C.	35	50	3	9	7	-9	1	1
Atlanta, GA	36	53	3	5	5	-8	1	1
Oakland, CA	26	27	17	25	2	-8	2	3
Chicago, IL	32	32	5	29	0**	-4	1	3
Denver, CO	52	10	3	32	0**	-1	1	0
Miami, FL	12	16	1	70	0**	-4	0	4
<i>Metropolitan Suburbs that Turned Majority Minority</i>								
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	39	7	6	45	-11	0	2	10
Modesto, CA	45	2	4	46	-11	0	1	10
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	45	2	26	23	-10	0	7	3
Stockton, CA	45	4	9	38	-13	1	4	9
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	46	6	19	23	-9	0	4	5
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	47	13	7	31	-13	3	2	8
Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	48	10	10	28	-13	2	4	7
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	50***	23	10	14	-10	1	3	6

*Among 50 largest U.S. cities

** Chicago, Denver, and Miami have values of 0.4%, 0.2%, and 0.1% respectively

***Rounded from value of 49.5%

Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 decennial census data

Southern and Western cities such as Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, and Los Angeles were also among those losing blacks in the past decade. As explored below, much of that population appears to have shifted to the suburbs of these metropolitan areas.

C. Minorities represent 35 percent of suburban residents, similar to their share of overall U.S. population.

More than ever, major metropolitan suburbs represent a demographic microcosm of American society. About 35 percent of suburban residents in the 100 largest metro areas in 2010 were racial and ethnic minorities, similar to their share of overall U.S. population (Figure 1A). Hispanics make up a slightly larger share of suburbanites (17 percent) than U.S. residents generally (16 percent), while the opposite holds true for blacks (10 percent in suburbs versus 12 percent nationwide).

Table 3. Cities with Largest Black Population Losses, 2000–2010

City	Change in Black Population	
	2000–2010	1990–2000
1 Detroit, MI	-185,393	-2,563
2 Chicago, IL	-181,453	-20,732
3 New York, NY	-100,859	115,105
4 Los Angeles, CA	-54,606	-52,303
5 Washington, D.C.	-39,035	-55,125
6 Oakland, CA	-33,502	-19,326
7 Cleveland, OH	-33,304	7,462
8 Atlanta, GA	-29,746	-9,045
9 Baltimore, MD	-24,071	-16,696
10 San Francisco, CA	-12,010	-17,552
11 Dallas, TX	-10,665	13,942
12 San Diego, CA	-10,333	-6,022

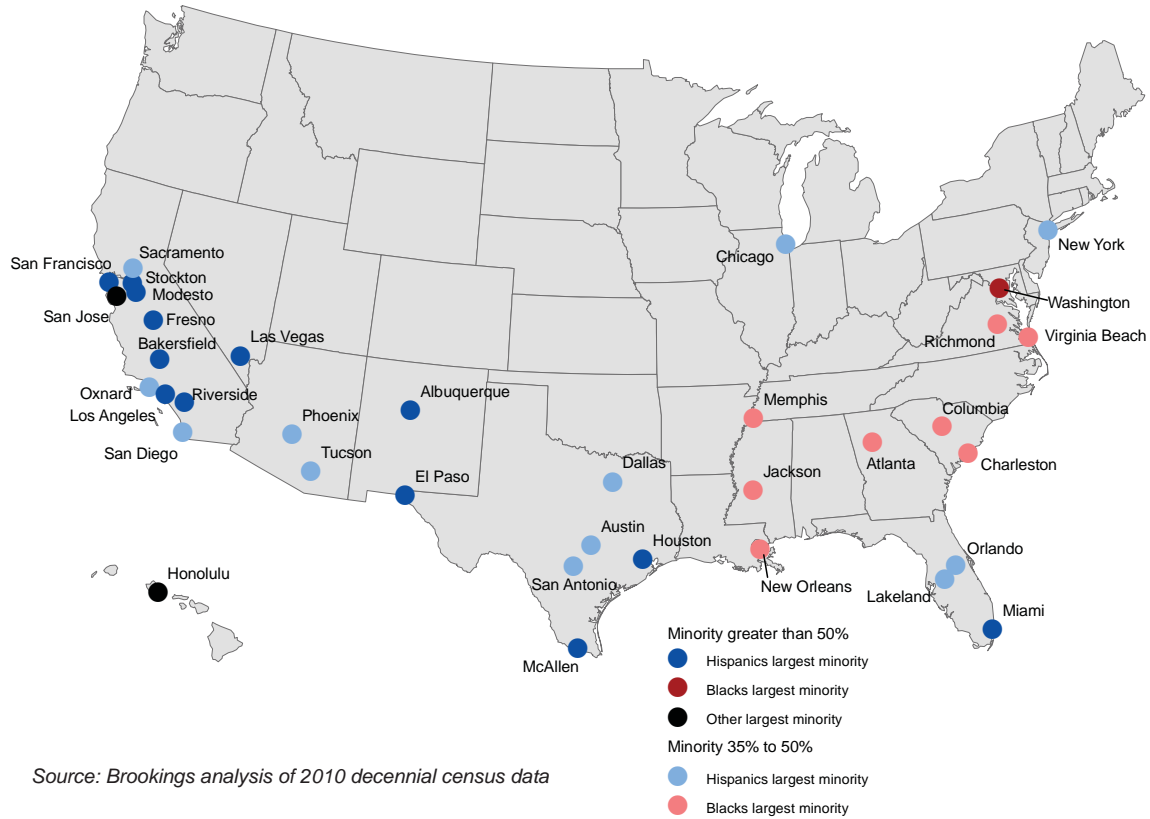
Source: Author’s analysis of 1990, 2000, and 2010 decennial census data

A growing number of suburban areas nationwide are achieving what might be termed “melting pot” status. In 36 of the 100 largest metro areas, minorities represent at least 35 percent of suburban population. Within these 36, 16 have majority minority populations, up from just eight in 2000. With a few exceptions such as suburban New York and Chicago, these melting pot suburbs are located primarily in the South and West (Map 2). Hispanics are the predominant minority group in most of these suburban areas, an edge they held already by 1990 and continue to hold today despite increasing shares of blacks in the suburbs. Among the 36 melting pot suburbs, Hispanics represent the largest minority group in 25, versus nine for blacks and two for Asians.

Metropolitan suburbs that “tipped” into majority-minority status in the 2000s demonstrate the importance of Hispanic and white population trends to this outcome (Table 2). In each of these eight suburban areas, the white share of population dropped by at least 9 percentage points. In suburban Las Vegas, the drop was even more dramatic, from 61 percent of population in 2000 to 48 percent in 2010. In seven of these eight suburban areas, the Hispanic share of population rose fastest, and in five (Modesto, San Francisco, San Jose, Stockton, and Washington, D.C.), white population declined overall.

The racial and ethnic transitions affecting these newly majority-minority suburbs were also evident in suburbs nationwide. In all 100, the white share of population declined from 2000 to 2010, and dropped by at least 5 percentage points in 63. Almost one-third (32) experienced an absolute loss of white residents. The largest numeric declines occurred in the suburbs of large coastal metropolitan areas such as New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and San Francisco. These drops could reflect either “flight” from high region-wide housing costs early in the decade, or population retrenchment back to cities during the late-decade mortgage meltdown.¹¹ Northern industrial metro areas like Detroit, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh also lost significant white population, indicating poor regional economic performance over the decade. Yet the suburbs of only four metropolitan areas lost population overall, suggesting the central role that Hispanics and other minorities played in driving overall suburban gains.

Map 2: Suburbs with Minority Populations Greater than 35 Percent, Large Metro Areas, 2010



D. More than half of all minority groups in large metro areas, including blacks, now reside in the suburbs.

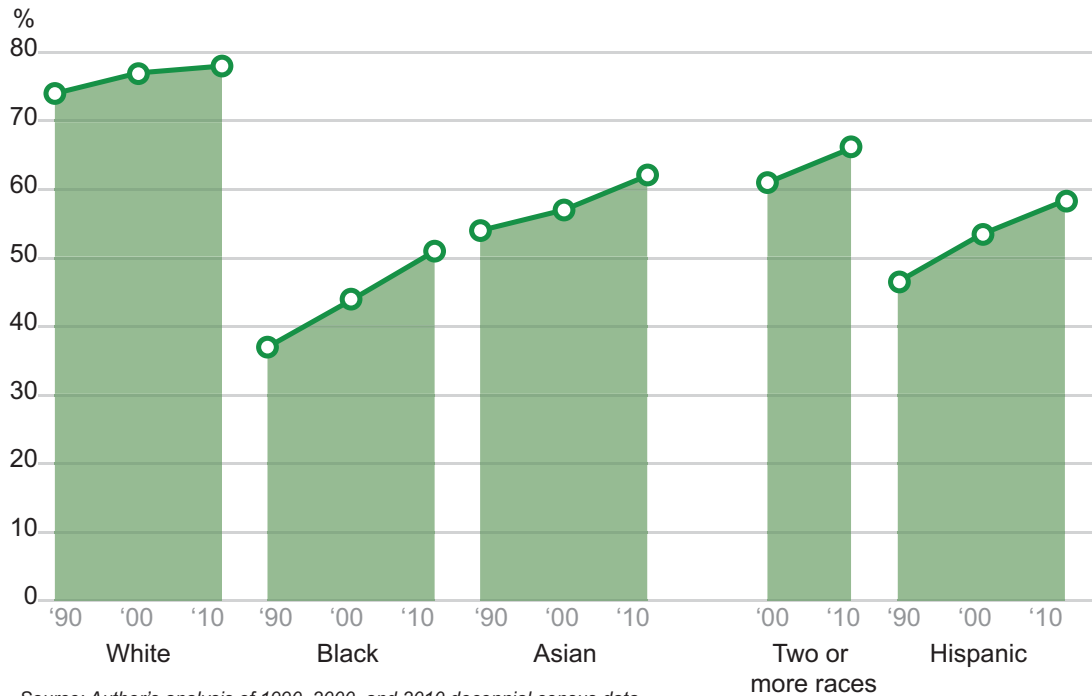
A variety of historical and contemporary factors have resulted in different rates of suburbanization among major racial and ethnic groups. The 2010 Census reveals, however, that a majority of metropolitan residents in all of these groups now call the suburbs home.

Decades of postwar suburbanization and white flight from cities mean that today, a supermajority of whites in large metro areas locate in the suburbs. Already in 1990, 74 percent of whites in these metro areas resided in the suburbs, a figure that inched up to 78 percent by 2010 (Figure 2).

Suburbanization among other groups in recent decades has been more rapid. Between 1990 and 2010 in large metro areas, the share of Hispanics in suburbs increased from 47 percent to 59 percent, and the share of Asians in suburbs rose from 54 percent to 62 percent.¹² Increased suburban development, especially in growing southern and western parts of the country, and the desire for new minorities to follow the broader white postwar trend toward suburban living, fueled these trends.

Decades of housing discrimination in suburban communities and sharp economic disparities with whites yielded much lower historical rates of suburbanization for African Americans. However, this pattern continued to shift dramatically in the last decade such that, for the first time, more than half of blacks in large metro areas now reside in the suburbs. Their 51 percent suburban share is up from 44 percent in 2000 and 37 percent in 1990.

Figure 2. Share of Population Residing in Suburbs by Race/Ethnicity, 100 Largest Metro Areas, 1990-2010



Source: Author's analysis of 1990, 2000, and 2010 decennial census data

The sharp rise in black suburbanization can be attributed in part to the group's economic progress in recent decades, particularly younger blacks. Among blacks aged 25 to 29, 19 percent were college graduates in 2009, compared with 15 in 1999 and 13 in 1989. Similarly, four decades have now elapsed since the 1968 Fair Housing Act outlawed racial discrimination in the housing market. Black-white segregation is now falling gradually but consistently across metropolitan areas, with growing Southern and Western parts of the country registering the lowest levels of segregation.¹³

Metropolitan areas in these less segregated, growing parts of the country are registering the greatest numeric gains in suburban black population. The suburbs of Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, and Washington experienced the largest increases in black population in the 2000s, although Detroit and Chicago make the list, too, due in part to large black population losses from their cities (Table 4). Among the largest 100 metropolitan areas, 96 showed gains in their suburban black populations; of these, 76 had larger increases in the past decade than in the 1990s.

Suburbs with the highest rates of black population growth usually have smaller such populations, but nevertheless indicate where black suburbanization may be trending. In "whiter" places like suburban Indianapolis, Des Moines, Scranton, and Minneapolis, black population is suburbanizing rapidly (Table 4). Despite the fact that numerically most black population growth is occurring in the South, the top seven areas experiencing rapid black suburban growth are located in the Northeast and Midwest.

Hispanic suburbanization is making its largest impact in different parts of the country than black suburbanization. Suburbs with the largest absolute gains in Hispanic residents include those surrounding Riverside, New York, Houston, Miami, and Los Angeles, all areas with longstanding Hispanic populations (Table 4). On the other hand, those areas experiencing the fastest suburban Hispanic growth rates have fewer Hispanics overall. Many of these metro areas, in contrast to those with rapidly suburbanizing black populations, are located in the Southeast, including Knoxville, Nashville, Charleston, and Charlotte.

Table 4. Largest Black and Hispanic Population Increases, Metropolitan Suburbs, 2000–2010

Largest Numeric Gains (Suburbs of Metro Area)		Highest Growth Rates (%) (Suburbs of Metro Area)*		
<i>Blacks</i>				
1	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	503,239	1 Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	150
2	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	216,823	2 Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	146
3	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	193,524	3 Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	137
4	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	192,576	4 Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	129
5	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	183,381	5 Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	104
6	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	133,488	6 Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	90
7	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	116,622	7 Scranton--Wilkes-Barre, PA	87
8	Baltimore-Towson, MD	98,195	8 Austin-Round Rock, TX	84
<i>Hispanics</i>				
1	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	659,355	1 Scranton--Wilkes-Barre, PA	416
2	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	572,337	2 Knoxville, TN	214
3	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	557,132	3 Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro--Franklin, TN	192
4	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	549,675	4 Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	183
5	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	443,170	5 Columbia, SC	177
6	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	417,175	6 Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville, SC	177
7	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	412,255	7 Birmingham-Hoover, AL	176
8	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	331,555	8 Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	171

*Suburbs with at least 5,000 members of racial/ethnic group
 Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 decennial census data

E. Fast-growing exurban areas remain mostly white, and depended overwhelmingly on whites for growth in the 2000s.

While suburban America overall is becoming much more racially diverse, there exists great demographic diversity among suburbs within metropolitan areas. In particular, the peripheral, low-density portions of large metro areas, often termed “exurbs,” remain distinct exceptions to the melting pot image.¹⁴

Exurban counties, as defined above, represent 2.5 million people or just over 1 percent of total large metropolitan population, but many are expanding very rapidly (Table 5). The 20 fastest growing exurban counties in the 2000s are located in a broad range of U.S. regions, from metro areas in the South (Atlanta, Richmond, Raleigh), to the West (Ogden), Midwest (St. Louis) and Northeast (New York). Population growth in these counties proceeded at three to five times the U.S. average rate from 2000 to 2010.

In contrast to the overall suburban populations of their metropolitan areas, most of these exurban counties are overwhelmingly white. Sixteen of the 20 are more than 75 percent white (Wilson County, TX outside of San Antonio is the most diverse, with Hispanics representing 38 percent of residents). Whites also account for the bulk of their recent population growth, at least 80 percent in 15 of the 20. Across all exurban counties, whites account for 73 percent of recent population growth, many times that group's 8 percent contribution to overall U.S. population growth in the 2000s. In some ways, these exurban areas reflect the historic image of suburbia in terms of new housing, growth, and demographic detachment from the more urban portions of their metropolitan areas.

Table 5: Growth and White Share of Population/Contribution to Growth, 20 Fastest Growing Exurban Counties, 2000–10

County	Metro Area*	Growth 2000-10		% White, 2010		White Share of Growth	
		Exurban County	All Suburbs of Metro Area	Exurban County	All Suburbs of Metro Area	Exurban County	All Suburbs of Metro Area
1 Spencer, KY	Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	45	16	95	90	93	73
2 Dawson, GA	Atlanta, GA	40	27	93	52	86	8
3 New Kent, VA	Richmond, VA	37	17	80	64	82	30
4 Lincoln, MO	St. Louis, MO-IL	35	6	94	79	89	15
5 Fayette, TN	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	33	21	68	64	87	19
6 Morgan, UT	Ogden, UT	33	27	96	86	92	71
7 Warren, MO	St. Louis, MO-IL	33	6	93	79	86	15
8 Wilson, TX	San Antonio, TX	32	44	59	52	52	36
9 Pike, GA	Atlanta, GA	31	27	87	52	99	8
10 Currituck, NC	Virginia Beach, VA-NC	29	10	89	60	86	26
11 Louisa, VA	Richmond, VA	29	17	77	64	80	30
12 St. Clair, AL	Birmingham, AL	29	13	87	75	80	19
13 Caroline, VA	Richmond, VA	29	17	64	64	69	30
14 Goochland, VA	Richmond, VA	29	17	76	64	90	30
15 Franklin, NC	Raleigh, NC	28	39	63	69	61	54
16 Pickens, GA	Atlanta, GA	28	27	94	52	92	8
17 Powhatan, VA	Richmond, VA	25	17	83	64	90	30
18 McClain, OK	Oklahoma City, OK	24	14	81	77	63	47
19 Sequatchie, TN	Chattanooga, TN-GA	24	12	95	91	82	64
20 Pike, PA	New York, NY-NJ-PA	24	4	83	62	54	**

*Metro area names abbreviated

**White population declined in suburbs of New York metro area from 2000 to 2010

Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 decennial census data

CONCLUSION

The 2010 Census reveals substantial racial and ethnic changes in the populations of both cities and suburbs in metropolitan America.

Suburbs gained Hispanics and other new minorities at a significant pace in the 2000s, and now are home to a majority of metropolitan blacks. Amid slower growing or declining white populations, and a slowdown in white flight from cities, a rising number of “melting pot suburbs” are coming into existence. Still, some suburbs within metropolitan areas remain demographically distinct, particularly the largely white exurban communities that lie mostly at the periphery of growing metro areas.

Cities, meanwhile, experienced continued gains in Hispanics even as “black flight” accelerated. As a result, many cities are becoming more multi-hued. Chicago, for example, is now about one-third white, one-third black, and one-third Hispanic and other race, a marked contrast from its earlier black-white image.

These shifts hold important implications for both policy and politics. Both suburbs and cities face increasing demands for services relevant to a wide array of new populations, particularly those with different economic circumstances and cultural/linguistic backgrounds.¹⁵ Increasing suburban diversity may cause these places to become more

“purple” swing districts in local and national elections, making them less reliable bases for either Republicans or Democrats who have depended on demographically homogeneous voting blocs.¹⁶ Similarly, the changing demographics of big cities indicate that success for urban politicians may hinge on cultivating growing Hispanic and Asian constituencies alongside traditional black city voters, as well as gentrifying whites. All the while, shifting racial demographics will contribute to post-2010 Census redistricting pressures in cities and suburbs alike.¹⁷

The historically sharp racial and ethnic divisions between cities and suburbs in metropolitan America are more blurred than ever. The shifting social, economic, and political structures of these places will challenge leaders at all levels to understand and keep pace with the myriad implications of their continued demographic evolution.

ENDNOTES

1. Farley and others, "Chocolate City, Vanilla Suburbs: Will the Trend toward Racially Separate Communities Continue?" *Social Science Research* 7(4)(1978): 319–44.
2. William H. Frey, "Melting Pot Suburbs: A Census 2000 Study of Suburban Diversity" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2001).
3. William H. Frey, "A Pivotal Decade for America's White and Minority Populations" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2011).
4. William H. Frey, "America's Diverse Future: Initial Glimpses at the U.S. Child Population from the 2010 Census" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2011).
5. The 2010 data are based on the U.S. Census Bureau's Redistricting data from PL-94-171 files. These are the first geographically detailed data to be released from the 2010 Census results.
6. Karen R. Humes, Nicholas A. Jones, and Roberto R. Ramirez, "Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).
7. 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. 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). 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 are termed "primary cities" to distinguish them from OMB's concept.
8. For Louisville, KY, data are presented for Jefferson County, KY, in order to permit trend analysis over time, given the consolidation of the city and county in 2002.
9. *The State of Metropolitan America: On the Front Lines of Demographic Transformation* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2010), p. 19.
10. White population declined in Chicago, but the share of population that is white increased due to an even more dramatic decline in black population.
11. William H. Frey, "A Demographic Lull at Census Time" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2010); William H. Frey, "Texas Gains, Suburbs Lose in 2010 Census Preview" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2010).
12. The percentage-point increase in the share of American Indians residing in suburbs, from 62 percent to 66 percent, was similar to that for whites.
13. William H. Frey, "Census Data: Blacks and Hispanics Take Different Segregation Paths" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2010); Frey, "America's Diverse Future."
14. There are no official definitions for exurbs, but earlier analyses identify them as less urbanized portions of metropolitan areas that tend to show rapid population gains. See Alan Berube and others, "Finding Exurbia: America's Fast-Growing Communities at the Metropolitan Fringe" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2006); and *State of Metropolitan America*, pp. 18–19.
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17. Aaron Blake, "As Blacks Leave Cities: GOP Eyes the Map." *The Washington Post*, April 22, 2011, p. 1.

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This analysis, along with all appendices, can be found at http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/0504_census_ethnicity_frey.aspx

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