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RACIAL SEGREGATION IN U.S. AREAS

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PURPOSE:

This Fact Sheet highlights racial segregation in some of the Mountain West’s largest metros: Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV; Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA; and Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ, otherwise known as the Southwest Megapolitan Triangle.¹ The Tables that follow illustrate residential segregation in these three major metropolitan areas.

ABOUT THE DATA:

The *Governing* report, “Residential Segregation Data for U.S. Metro Areas,” focuses on trends in residential segregation. It uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2013-2017 American Community Survey to examine the division of different demographic groups across major U.S. metropolitan areas.²

In order to measure the degree of residential segregation in U.S. areas, *Governing* researchers calculated each area’s dissimilarity index. The dissimilarity index is a value between 0 and 1 which “represent[s] the percentage of residents of one demographic group who would need to relocate to another neighborhood to be fully integrated with another group.”³

In the U.S., non-Hispanic whites and blacks tend to be the most segregated demographic groups. Researchers explain that “[n]ationally, the median black-white dissimilarity index – which ranges from 0 (fully integrated) to 1 (fully segregated) – was 0.526.”⁴

Table 1 shows the residential segregation among blacks and non-Hispanic whites in the Southwest Megapolitan Triangle. The black-white dissimilarity index in the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV metropolitan area is 0.395, meaning that 39.5% of the white or black population in the metro “would need to relocate to another neighborhood to be fully integrated.”⁵ In comparison, the black-white dissimilarity index in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA metropolitan area is 0.668, meaning that 66.8% of the white or black population would need to relocate to achieve full integration; it is significantly more segregated than either of its peers. By this measure, the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV metro is the least segregated metropolitan area in the Southwest Megapolitan Triangle.

Table 1: BLACK-WHITE DISSIMILARITY INDEX FOR SOUTHWEST MEGAPOLITAN TRIANGLE, 2017

METRO AREA	BLACK-WHITE DISSIMILARITY INDEX	WHITE POPULATION	BLACK POPULATION
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	0.395	931,891	228,127
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	0.668	3,983,380	849,139
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ	0.492	2,573,055	228,477

*Adapted from original data source: Governing. “Residential Segregation Data for U.S. Metro Areas.” 2019 <https://www.governing.com/gov-data/education-data/residential-racial-segregation-metro-areas.html>

¹ Nelson, Arthur, and Robert Lang. *Megapolitan America*. Routledge, 2018.

² Governing. “Residential Segregation Data for U.S. Metro Areas.” <https://www.governing.com/gov-data/education-data/residential-racial-segregation-metro-areas.html>

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

Table 2 shows the residential segregation among different demographic groups in each metropolitan area of the Southwest Megapolitan Triangle. While there tends to be less segregation among the following groups than among non-Hispanic whites and blacks, the residential segregation among demographic groups⁶ is still significant. The Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV metro has the least amount of residential segregation in all five racial indexes when compared to Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA and Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ.

**Table 2: SOUTHWEST MEGAPOLITAN TRIANGLE
RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION, 2017**

METRO AREA	HISPANIC-NON HISPANIC	ASIAN-WHITE (NON HISPANIC)	HISPANIC-NON HISPANIC WHITE	HISPANIC WHITE-NON HISPANIC BLACK	HISPANIC - NON HISPANIC BLACK
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	0.367	0.329	0.423	0.302	0.316
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	0.507	0.482	0.612	0.563	0.536
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ	0.446	0.392	0.489	0.362	0.351

*Adapted from original data source: Governing. "Residential Segregation Data for U.S. Metro Areas." 2019 <https://www.governing.com/gov-data/education-data/residential-racial-segregation-metro-areas.html>

⁶ These categories are taken from the original data source.