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RACE-ETHNIC NEIGHBORHOOD SEGREGATION IN THE SOUTHWEST MEGAPOLITAN TRIANGLE

Demography Fact Sheet No. 12 | August 2020

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PURPOSE:

This Fact Sheet analyzes race-ethnic neighborhood segregation in the Southwest Megapolitan Triangle,¹ which consists of the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV; Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA; and Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs). Drawing from an original report² by Brookings senior fellow, William Frey, this fact sheet illustrates the degree of residential segregation over time in the three MSAs.

ABOUT THE DATA:

As a nation, the United States is growing increasingly diverse. It is anticipated that the 2020 census will show that American society is the most diverse it ever has been, with nearly two-fifths of all residents identifying as nonwhite. Yet this nationwide diversity is not reflected at the residential level. Even the nation's most diverse metropolitan areas exhibit high levels of residential segregation.

Focusing on trends observed in residential neighborhoods across the United States, the first part of this fact sheet is based on 2005-2009 and 2014-2018 data from the American Community Survey. The second part of this fact sheet compares 2000 Census data and 2014-2018 American Community Survey data.

In order to measure the degree of residential segregation, researchers calculated the dissimilarity index, which is a value between 0 and 100 that describes the level of segregation in neighborhoods for each metropolitan area. An area with a dissimilarity index of 0 is completely integrated, while a dissimilarity index of 100 denotes complete segregation; the higher an area's number, the more segregated it is. This number represents the percent of residents of one racial-ethnic group that would need to relocate in order to be fully integrated with another group.³

KEY FINDINGS:

1. The Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV metro has the highest percentage of Black residents of the three metros in the Southwest megapolitan triangle and is the most integrated. It has the lowest Black-White segregation index of all major metropolitan areas in the US. However, Las Vegas has grown modestly more segregated between Black and white residents, as its Black-White segregation index value increased from 39 to 41 between the years 2000 and 2014-2018.
2. All three Southwest metros saw an increase in the share of Hispanic or Latino residents and a decrease in their share of white residents between the years 2000 and 2014-2018.
3. From 2000 to 2014-2018, the Las Vegas, Los Angeles and Phoenix metro areas each saw a slight decrease in their Latino or Hispanic-White segregation.

¹ Robert E. Lang, Jaewon Lim & Karen A. Danielsen (2020) The origin, evolution, and application of the megapolitan area concept, *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, 24:1, 1-12, DOI: 10.1080/12265934.2019.1696220

² Frey, William H. "Even as metropolitan areas diversify, white Americans still live in mostly white neighborhoods." Brookings Institution, March 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/even-as-metropolitan-areas-diversify-white-americans-still-live-in-mostly-white-neighborhoods/>

³ Ibid.

Table 1 shows the residential segregation between Black and white residents in the Southwest Megapolitan Triangle, as well as the percentage of Black residents in each metropolitan area. Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA has the highest level of Black-White segregation of all three metros, as indicated by the calculated segregation index. Its most recent segregation index value is 66, indicating that 66% of the Black population would have to relocate to another neighborhood in order to achieve complete integration. Both Phoenix and Las Vegas show segregation values that are considerably lower, both with levels below 50, and are among the least segregated major metropolitan areas in the US.

Table 1: Black-White Neighborhood Segregation Levels for 2005-2009 and 2014-2018

Metropolitan Area	% Black	Segregation Index 2005 - 2009	Segregation Index 2014 - 2018	Difference
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	6%	70	66	-4
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	5%	48	48	0
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	11%	39	41	2

*Adapted from original data source: Frey, William H. The Brookings Institution. “Even as metropolitan areas diversify, white Americans still live in mostly white neighborhoods.”

Table 2 shows the residential segregation between Latino or Hispanic residents and white residents, as well as the percentage of Latino or Hispanic residents within each metropolitan area. The Los Angeles metro has the highest percentage of Latino or Hispanic residents. It also shows the highest level of Latino or Hispanic-White segregation of these three, as well as of all major metropolitan areas in the US. According to the most recent data, this metro’s segregation index is 61, indicating that 61% of Latino or Hispanic residents would have to move to another neighborhood in order to achieve complete integration. Overall, Latino or Hispanic-White segregation appears to be decreasing modestly in the Southwest Megapolitan Triangle.

Table 2: Latino Or Hispanic-White Neighborhood Segregation Levels for 2005-2009 and 2014-2018

Metropolitan Area	% Latino or Hispanic	Segregation Index 2005-2009	Segregation Index 2014-2018	Difference
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	45%	63	61	-2
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	31%	51	48	-3
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	31%	43	42	-1

*Adapted from original data source: Frey, William H. The Brookings Institution. “Even as metropolitan areas diversify, white Americans still live in mostly white neighborhoods.”

Figure 1 illustrates the levels of Latino or Hispanic-White segregation as compared to Black-White segregation in the Southwest Megapolitan Triangle. According to Frey, “Latino or Hispanic segregation with whites is, on the whole, lower than Black segregation with whites,”¹ as can be seen in the Los Angeles metro. However, the Phoenix metro has equal levels of Latino or Hispanic-White segregation and Black-White segregation (segregation indexes of 48), while the Las Vegas metro has slightly lower levels of Black-White segregation. This is because both of these areas have relatively low levels of Black-White segregation compared with other parts of the United States.

¹ Ibid.

All three metros have segregation index values above 40. This is noteworthy because all three metros have diverse populations, a fact not reflected at the neighborhood level. The Los Angeles metro region holds the highest segregation indexes in the Southwest Megapolitan Triangle, where 66% of Black residents and 61% of Latino or Hispanic residents would need to relocate to achieve racial integration.

Figure 1: Comparison of Latino or Hispanic-White Segregation and Black-White Segregation Indexes in the Southwest Megapolitan Triangle (2014-2018)



*Adapted from original data source: Frey, William H. The Brookings Institution. “Even as metropolitan areas diversify, white Americans still live in mostly white neighborhoods.”

Figure 2 illustrates the Los Angeles metro’s race-ethnic composition for the year 2000 and for 2014-2018. During this time period the metro saw a significant decrease in its white share of the population, with an increase in its share of residents that identify as Hispanic or Latino or “Other.” Figure 2 also shows the race-ethnic neighborhood composition for the average white, Black, and Hispanic or Latino resident for the time period. While the metro as a whole saw increased diversity, its neighborhoods remain segregated.

For example, the Los Angeles metro’s white population was 37% of the total population in the year 2000 and dropped to 30% according to 2014-2018 data.⁵ However, the average white resident of the Los Angeles metro lives in a neighborhood that is majority (53%) white. Furthermore, gains in diversity of the average white-resident neighborhood in the Los Angeles metro can be largely attributed to the influx of residents who identify as Latino or Hispanic, or “other.”

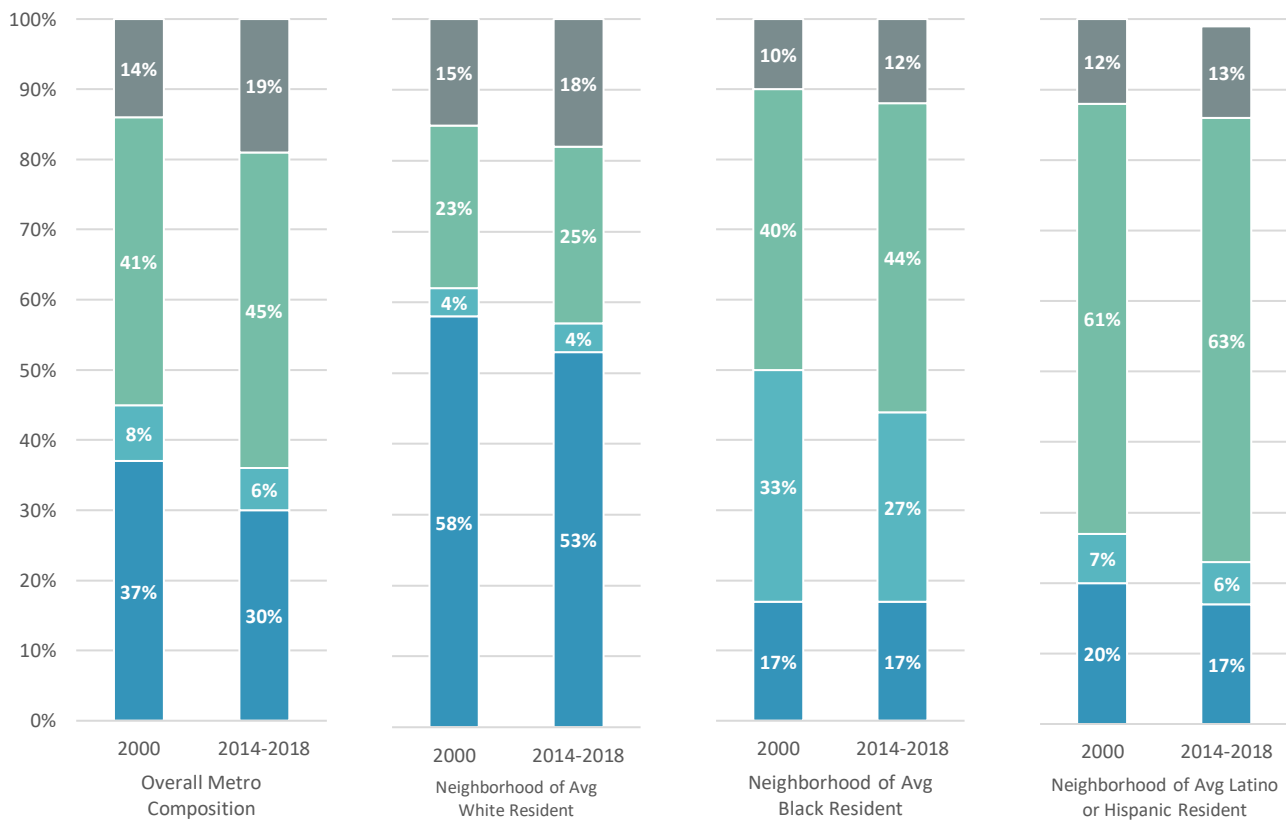
⁵ Ibid.

In 2000, just 8% of the metro population identified as Black. However, the average Black-resident neighborhood was 33% Black, a significantly higher percentage. This finding was also reflected in the 2014-2018 ACS data. Though Black residents comprised 6% of the metro’s population, the average Black resident’s neighborhood was 27% Black.

In the year 2000, the Los Angeles metro was 41% Latino or Hispanic. However, the average Latino or Hispanic-resident neighborhood was 61% Latino or Hispanic. Not much changed for the years 2014-2018, as Latino or Hispanic neighborhoods were still disproportionately so when compared to the population of the metro in its entirety.

Despite the overall diversity of the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA metro, its neighborhoods remain segregated. On average, white residents live in mostly white neighborhoods, Latino or Hispanic residents live in overwhelmingly Latino or Hispanic neighborhoods, and Black residents lived in neighborhoods that are disproportionately Black, despite the large Latino or Hispanic presence.

Figure 2: Neighborhood Race-Ethnic Composition of Average Resident in Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA

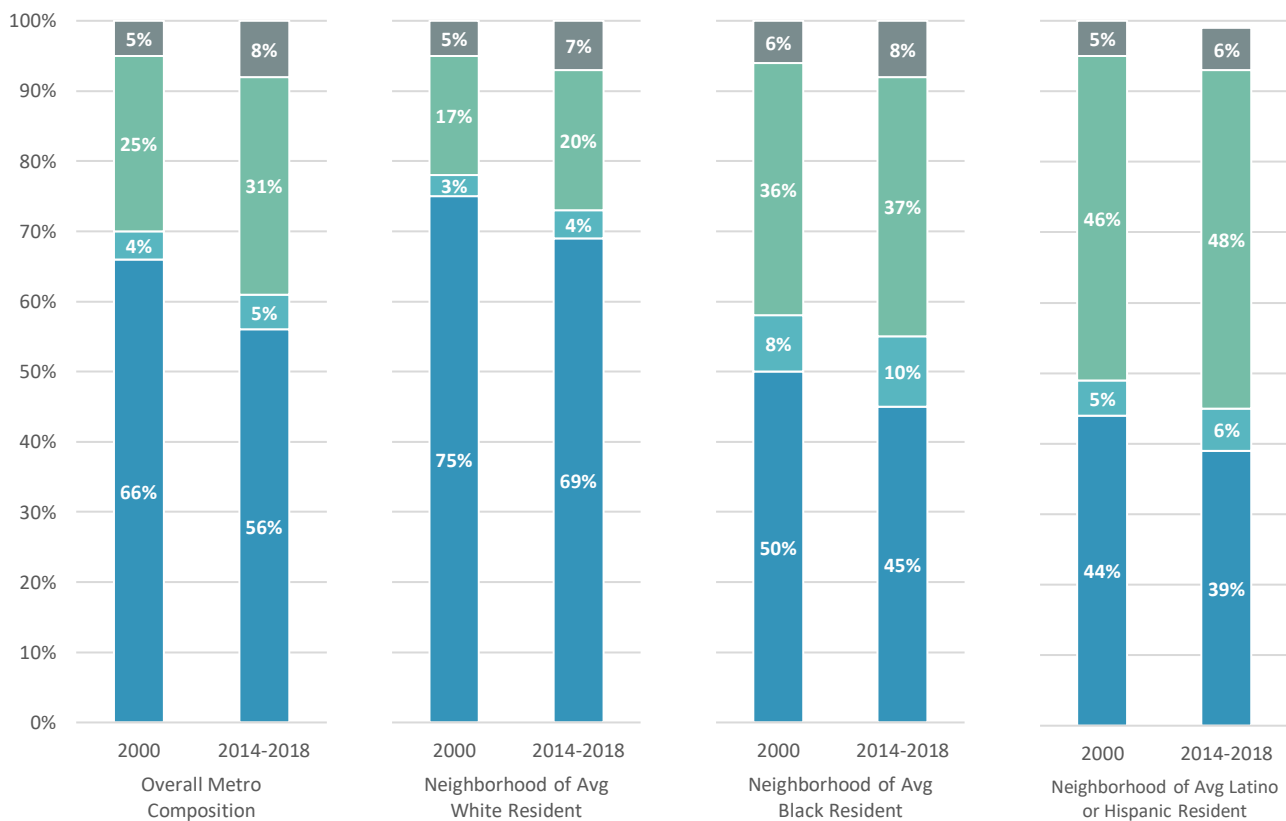


■ White ■ Black ■ Latino or Hispanic ■ Other *Adapted from original data source: Frey, William H. The Brookings Institution. “Even as metropolitan areas diversify, white Americans still live in mostly white neighborhoods.”

Figure 3 illustrates the Phoenix metro’s race-ethnic composition for the year 2000 and for 2014-2018. During this time period, the metro became significantly less white, but the change was not entirely reflected at the neighborhood level.

The data for 2014-2018 indicates that the metro’s share of Black residents rose slightly (from 4% to 5%). The average Black resident’s neighborhood was 10% Black, which is double that of the metro. This indicates that Black residents are concentrated in certain neighborhoods. For the years studied, the average Black resident’s neighborhood became less white, and saw a slight increase in the percentage of residents who identify as Latino or Hispanic, Black, and other.

Figure 3: Neighborhood Race-Ethnic Composition of Average Resident in Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ Average



■ White ■ Black ■ Latino or Hispanic ■ Other

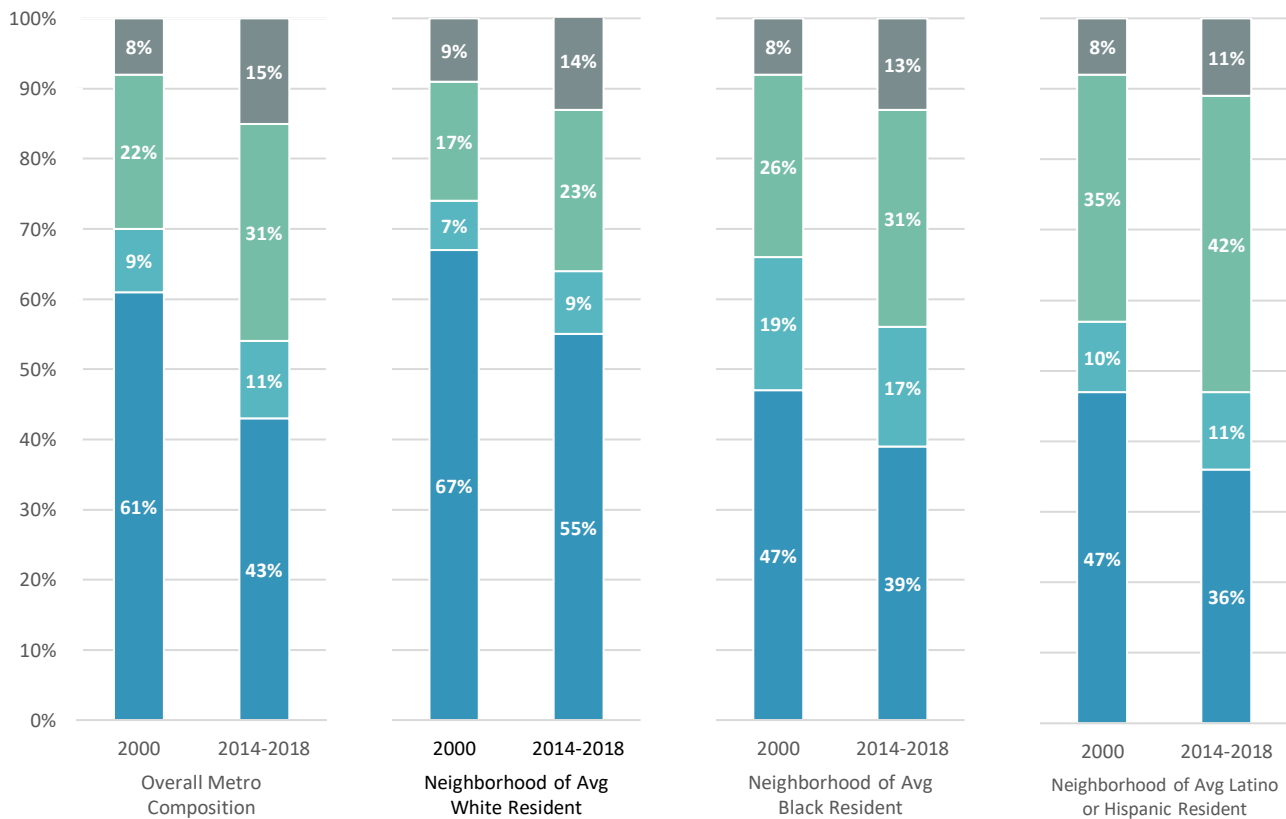
* Adapted from original data source: Frey, William H. The Brookings Institution. “Even as metropolitan areas diversify, white Americans still live in mostly white neighborhoods.”

Figure 4 illustrates the Las Vegas metro’s overall race-ethnic composition for the year 2000 and for 2014-2018. Neighborhood race-ethnic composition for the average white, Black, and Hispanic or Latino residents are also provided. During the time period, the metro saw a substantial decrease in its share of white residents, and a considerable increase in its share of Latino or Hispanic residents.

In 2000, the metro was 61% white overall, but the average white resident’s neighborhood was 67% white, slightly higher. The discrepancy between the overall metro diversity and the neighborhood diversity for white residents grew for the years examined, even though the white population share of the metro decreased. For 2014-2018, the Las Vegas metro was 43% white, but the average white resident’s neighborhood was 55% white.

During the same period, the average Black resident’s neighborhood became significantly less white, and slightly less Black. This is largely due to the significant increase in the percentage of residents who identify as Latino or Hispanic and “Other,” as shown in the figure. The data for 2014-2018 indicates that though the metro’s population share of Latino or Hispanic residents increased (31%), on average, the concentration of Latino or Hispanic residents in certain neighborhoods increased as well (42%). Similar to other metros in the Southwest Megapolitan Triangle, the diversity of the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV metro is not entirely reflected at the neighborhood level. Residents tend to congregate in neighborhoods with others of their same racial-ethnic group.

Figure 4: Neighborhood Race-Ethnic Composition of Average Resident in Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV Metro



■ White ■ Black ■ Latino or Hispanic ■ Other

*Adapted from original data source: Frey, William H. The Brookings Institution. “Even as metropolitan areas diversify, white Americans still live in mostly white neighborhoods.”