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DEMOGRAPHIC AND POPULATION CHANGE IN MOUNTAIN WEST CITIES AND SUBURBS, 2020 CENSUS

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PURPOSE:

This fact sheet examines the five metro areas with populations exceeding one million in the Mountain West, drawing from the Brookings Institution report, “Today’s Suburbs are Symbolic of America’s Rising Diversity: A 2020 Census Portrait” by William Frey.¹ Demographic data are included for both primary city and suburban portions for the major metros in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah.

ABOUT THE DATA:

The original report examines 2020 U.S. Census Bureau data on primary cities and suburbs in the nation’s 56 metro areas with populations exceeding one million. Primary cities can include up to three cities with large populations in the metro area. Suburbs are defined as the territory located outside of primary cities for major metro areas.

Demographic data are also included. Race-ethnic groups with a single asterisk (*) indicates that the groups are comprised of non-Hispanic members. Asian American includes Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders. Race-ethnic groups with a double asterisk (**) indicates non-Hispanic members of the following race-ethnic groups: American Indians and Alaska Natives, some other races, and persons who identify with two or more races.

This factsheet includes data for five metros in the Mountain West with populations exceeding one million: Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ; Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO; Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV; Salt Lake City, UT; and Tucson, AZ. New Mexico does not have a metro exceeding a population of one million, and therefore is not represented in this analysis.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Suburbs of the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV MSA had the largest share of people of color among all Mountain West metros with populations over one million in 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020.
2. In all five major metros in the Mountain West, the under 18 populations are majority people of color. In three of five suburbs in the Mountain West – Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV, Tucson, AZ, and Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler – the under 18 population is majority people of color.
3. Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV (-44,421) and Tucson, AZ (-8,486) were the only Mountain West metros that experienced a decline in the white population of primary cities from 2010 to 2020.
4. Salt Lake City, UT was the only Mountain West metro to see a decline (-133) of Latino or Hispanic individuals in suburbs from 2010 to 2020.
5. The Latino or Hispanic population is the largest individual demographic group in all Mountain West metros’ primary cities except in Salt Lake City, UT.

¹ “Today’s suburbs are symbolic of America’s rising diversity: A 2020 Census portrait.” *Brookings Institution*. www.brookings.edu/research/todays-suburbs-are-symbolic-of-americas-rising-diversity-a-2020-census-portrait/

Table 1 shows the 2020 Census populations of each of the five Mountain West MSAs with populations greater than one million. Arizona contains two of these five metropolitan areas. The Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ metro is the largest in the Mountain West with a population of 4,845,832. The smallest metropolitan area over one million in the Mountain West is Tucson, AZ (1,043,433).

Table 1: Mountain West Metro Area Population, 2020

Metropolitan Statistical Area	2020 Population
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ	4,845,832
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	2,963,821
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	2,265,461
Salt Lake City, UT	1,257,936
Tucson, AZ	1,043,433

* Adapted from “Today’s suburbs are symbolic of America’s rising diversity: A 2020 Census portrait.” *Brookings Institution*. www.brookings.edu/research/todays-suburbs-are-symbolic-of-americas-rising-diversity-a-2020-census-portrait/

Table 2 details the changes in populations of people of color in the years 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2020. The Mountain West metros with populations above one million that were first to experience a majority people of color population occurred in 2010, when the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV suburbs (57.6%), and Tucson, AZ primary cities (52.8%) exceeded 50%.

In 2020, Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ primary cities (53.1%) reported a majority of people of color, joining Tucson, AZ as Arizona metropolitan area primary cities with a majority of people of color. The Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV MSA is the only one of the five metropolitan areas to experience a total population of majority people of color for both suburbs and primary cities.

Table 2: Share of People of Color in Mountain West Primary Cities and Suburbs, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020

Metropolitan Statistical Area	1990		2000		2010		2020	
	Primary Cities	Suburbs	Primary Cities	Suburbs	Primary Cities	Suburbs	Primary Cities	Suburbs
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ	25.1	21.7	39.4	26.9	48.1	34.4	53.1	39.8
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	30.1	12.8	42	18.5	46.8	25.1	48.1	31.9
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	23.5	26.3	37.4	43.5	47.4	57.6	55.2	66.2
Salt Lake City, UT	17.4	8.5	29.4	16.4	34.4	23.6	36.6	30.8
Tucson, AZ	36.6	24.3	45.8	28.6	52.8	35.6	56.4	40.1

* Adapted from “Today’s suburbs are symbolic of America’s rising diversity: A 2020 Census portrait.” *Brookings Institution*. www.brookings.edu/research/todays-suburbs-are-symbolic-of-americas-rising-diversity-a-2020-census-portrait/

Table 3 shows the percentage share of race and ethnicity profiles in both primary cities and suburbs of the five Mountain West metropolitan areas above one million in total population in the year 2020. Three of the five primary cities (highlighted in grey) have a white minority population, with Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO (51.9%) and Salt Lake City, UT (63.4%) reporting white majority populations. Only one of the five metropolitan areas, Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV, has a minority white population in its suburbs (33.8%).

Table 3: Primary Cities and Suburb Race-Ethnic Profiles in the Mountain West Metros, 2020

Metropolitan Statistical Area	Primary cities - % share of population						Suburbs - % share of population					
	White*	Black*	Asian American*	Latino or Hispanic	All Other**	Total	White*	Black*	Asian American*	Latino or Hispanic	All Other**	Total
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ	46.9	6.4	4.8	36.1	5.8	100	60.2	4.6	4.1	24.9	6.3	100
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	51.9	9.8	4.8	28	5.5	100	68.1	2.0	4.6	19.9	5.4	100
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	44.8	10.8	8.8	29.1	6.6	100	33.8	13.6	13.5	32.9	6.3	100
Salt Lake City, UT	63.4	2.7	7.5	20.8	5.6	100	69.2	1.6	5.4	18.9	4.8	100
Tucson, AZ	43.6	5.1	3.3	42.2	5.8	100	59.9	1.7	2.8	28.7	6.8	100

*Adapted from “Today’s suburbs are symbolic of America’s rising diversity: A 2020 Census portrait.” *Brookings Institution*. www.brookings.edu/research/todays-suburbs-are-symbolic-of-americas-rising-diversity-a-2020-census-portfolio/

Table 4 shows the change in population for race/ethnic groups in the five metropolitan areas with populations above one million in the Mountain West between 2010 and 2020. Only Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV (-44,421) and Tucson, AZ (-8,486), experienced a decrease in their primary cities’ white populations. Salt Lake City, UT is the only metro area to experience a decrease in the population of Hispanic or Latinos in its primary cities with a loss of -133 people. Latino and Hispanic populations experienced the largest growth of any demographic group in the suburbs for all five Mountain West metropolitan areas.

Table 4: Mountain West Primary City & Suburban Population Change by Race-Ethnicity, 2010-2020

Metropolitan Statistical Area	Primary Cities 2010-2020 change						Suburbs 2010-2020 change					
	White*	Black*	Asian American*	Latino or Hispanic	All Other**	Total	White*	Black*	Asian American*	Latino or Hispanic	All Other**	Total
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ	18,570	42,441	39,916	103,883	62,778	267,588	118,466	30,013	32,317	133,347	71,214	385,357
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	84,838	13,748	19,067	36,090	35,808	189,551	55,666	8,883	25,668	84,490	56,081	230,788
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	-44,421	30,671	20,812	43,073	35,964	86,099	1,268	49,510	52,442	89,699	35,174	228,093
Salt Lake City, UT	4,353	853	3,058	-133	5,152	13,283	43,701	6,565	20,059	59,067	27,388	156,780
Tucson, AZ	-8,486	4,340	2,502	12,570	11,587	22,513	3,654	839	3,351	21,416	11,397	40,657

*Adapted from “Today’s suburbs are symbolic of America’s rising diversity: A 2020 Census portrait.” *Brookings Institution*. www.brookings.edu/research/todays-suburbs-are-symbolic-of-americas-rising-diversity-a-2020-census-portfolio/

Table 5 shows the under age 18 population in both primary cities and suburbs for the five metropolitan areas above one million in total population in 2020. Some rows do not add exactly to 100 due to rounding differences in the original dataset. All five metropolitan areas have an under-age 18 white minority population in their primary cities (highlighted in grey), with Salt Lake City, UT having the highest share of whites at 46.8% of the total population. Three metros - Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV, Tucson, AZ, and Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ - have suburbs with minority white populations. The Latino or Hispanic population is the largest demographic group in all primary cities except Salt Lake City, UT. In Tucson, AZ, the Latino or Hispanic population is the highest share of total population in both suburbs and primary cities.

Table 5: Under Age 18 Population in Primary Cities & Suburbs of Mountain West Metros by Race-Ethnic Group, 2020

Metropolitan Statistical Area	Primary Cities - share of Under Age 18 population						Suburbs - share of Under Age 18 population					
	White*	Black*	Asian American*	Latino or Hispanic	All Other**	Total	White*	Black*	Asian American*	Latino or Hispanic	All Other**	Total
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ	31.9	7.0	4.4	48.8	7.8	100	44.9	5.2	3.5	36.8	9.6	100
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	34.2	12.0	4.5	41.1	8.2	100	57.2	2.2	4.6	27.9	8.1	100
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	30.9	11.7	6.2	40.8	10.3	100	21.4	15.1	9.6	44.3	9.6	100
Salt Lake City, UT	46.8	3.9	7.8	32.9	8.6	100	62.4	2.0	5.1	23.6	6.9	100
Tucson, AZ	26	5.9	2.2	57.9	7.9	100	40.5	1.8	2.7	44.5	10.6	100

* Adapted from “Today’s suburbs are symbolic of America’s rising diversity: A 2020 Census portrait.” *Brookings Institution*. www.brookings.edu/research/todays-suburbs-are-symbolic-of-americas-rising-diversity-a-2020-census-portrait/