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Micro Melting Pots

THE COUNTRY IS BECOMING MORE DIVERSE, BUT GROWTH OF ETHNIC POPULATIONS IS ONLY CONCENTRATED IN CERTAIN REGIONS. **BY WILLIAM H. FREY**

In the wake of Census 2000, newspaper headlines have bombarded us with messages about the growing and pervasive racial and ethnic diversity across the United States. And nationwide, statistics not only confirm that minorities grew at 12 times the rate of whites, but that

fewer than 7 in 10 Americans consider themselves to be white—or “non-Hispanic white only” in census terminology.*

Still, a careful examination of the torrent of statistics flowing from the U.S. Census Bureau reveals that the nation’s minority groups, especially Hispanics and Asians, are heavily clustered in selected regions and markets. Rather than witnessing the formation of a homogeneous national melting pot, we are seeing the creation of numerous mini-melting pots—in contrast to the rest of America, which is much less diverse. Through intermarriage and the blending of cultures, each of these melting-pot metros will develop its own politics, tastes for consumer items, and demographic personalities. Commentators, marketers, and political analysts should understand and take into account these multiple melting pots and the new ethnic frontiers presaged by their spillover as predictors of America’s changing racial/ethnic landscape.

Regional Differences

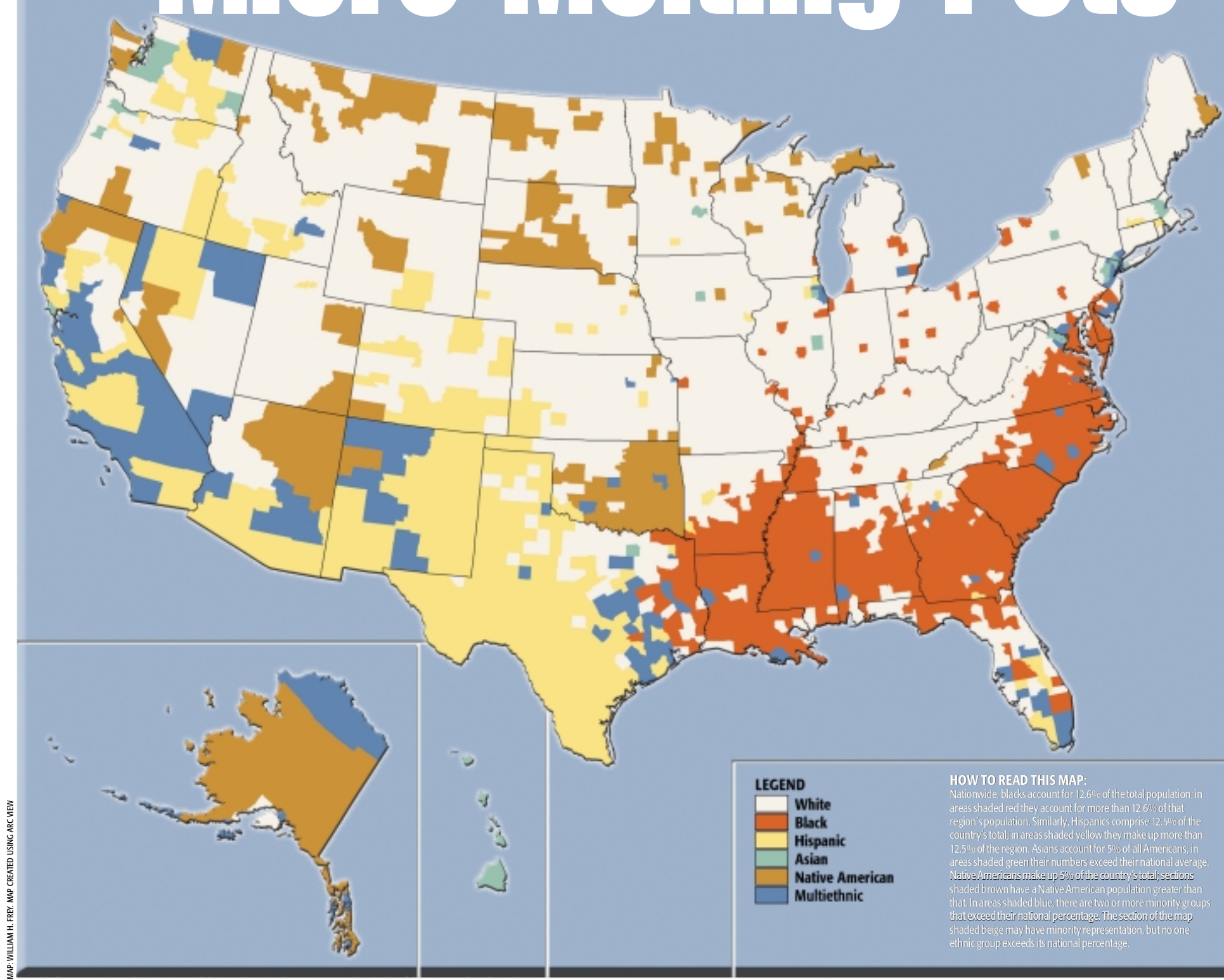
In a broad swath of the country the minority presence is still quite limited. As the map at left makes clear, America’s racial and ethnic patterns have taken on distinctly regional dimensions. Hispanics dominate large portions of counties in a span of states stretching from California to Texas. Blacks are strongly represented

in counties of the South as well as selected urban areas in the Northeast and Midwest. The Asian presence is relatively small and highly concentrated in a few scattered counties, largely in the West. And Native Americans are concentrated in select pockets in Oklahoma, the Southeast, upper Midwest, and the West. Multiethnic counties are most prominent in California and the Southwestern U.S., with mixes of Asians and Hispanics, or Hispanics and Native Americans.

The most notable aspect of this map is the broad stretch of counties from the upper West and Rocky Mountains to the Midwest and Northeast that are mostly white, and where none of the minority groups come close to approximating their national averages. Of the 3,141 counties in the U.S., over three-quarters (2,419) of them have white shares greater than the nation as a whole, and well over half of all counties (1,822) are at least 85 percent white.

In contrast, only 381 counties have a greater than national representation of Hispanics, as do 117 counties for Asians, and 697 counties for blacks. It can certainly be argued that there has been a greater diffusion of minorities, especially Hispanics, across the counties. The vast majority of U.S. counties (2,990) have shown some increase in their Hispanic populations during the 1990s, and in about a quarter of all counties, that

* This story treats racial groups, whites, blacks, Asians (including Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders), and Native Americans (including Native Alaskans) as non-Hispanic members of those races, and treats all Hispanics as a separate single category. Further, because the 2000 census allowed respondents to select one or more races, the 2000 data presented here treats whites as those who selected only the white race, and treats blacks, Asians, and Native Americans as those who selected one or more race. As a result, a small number of persons in the latter three groups are included more than once in the 2000 tallies.



LEGEND

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American
- Multiethnic

HOW TO READ THIS MAP:

Nationwide, blacks account for 12.6% of the total population; in areas shaded red they account for more than 12.6% of that region's population. Similarly, Hispanics comprise 12.5% of the country's total; in areas shaded yellow they make up more than 12.5% of the region. Asians account for 5% of all Americans; in areas shaded green their numbers exceed their national average. Native Americans make up 5% of the country's total; sections shaded brown have a Native American population greater than that. In areas shaded blue, there are two or more minority groups that exceed their national percentage. The section of the map shaded beige may have minority representation, but no one ethnic group exceeds its national percentage.

UP AND COMING

Metropolitan areas with a Hispanic or Asian population of at least 50,000 in 2000, and a percent increase in the Hispanic or Asian population greater than 100 percent between 1990 and 2000.

HISPANIC POPULATION GROWTH METROPOLITAN AREA*	1990-2000 HISPANIC PERCENT INCREASE	2000 HISPANIC POPULATION
1. Greensboro—Winston-Salem—High Point, NC	694%	62,210
2. Charlotte—Gastonia—Rock Hill, NC-SC	622%	77,092
3. Raleigh—Durham—Chapel Hill, NC	569%	72,580
4. Atlanta, GA	362%	268,851
5. Las Vegas, NV-AZ	262%	322,038
6. Portland—Salem, OR-WA	175%	196,638
7. Orlando, FL	170%	271,627
8. Minneapolis—St. Paul, MN-WI	162%	99,121
9. Reno, NV	145%	56,301
10. Grand Rapids—Muskegon—Holland, MI	136%	68,916
11. Salt Lake City—Ogden, UT	133%	144,600
12. Phoenix—Mesa, AZ	115%	817,012
13. Oklahoma City, OK	114%	72,998
14. Dallas—Ft. Worth, TX	113%	1,120,350
15. West Palm Beach—Boca Raton, FL	111%	140,675
16. Seattle—Tacoma—Bremerton, WA	108%	184,297
17. Kansas City, MO-KS	105%	92,910
18. Providence—Warwick—Pawtucket, RI	101%	88,411

ASIAN POPULATION GROWTH METROPOLITAN AREA*	1990-2000 ASIAN PERCENT INCREASE	2000 ASIAN POPULATION
1. Las Vegas, NV-AZ	286%	96,942
2. Atlanta, GA	200%	152,702
3. Austin—San Marcos, TX	175%	50,221
4. Orlando, FL	171%	54,314
5. Tampa—St. Petersburg—Clearwater, FL	149%	55,174
6. Phoenix—Mesa, AZ	149%	85,577
7. Dallas—Ft. Worth, TX	133%	219,891
8. Portland—Salem, OR-WA	119%	121,984
9. Minneapolis—St. Paul, MN-WI	118%	139,671
10. Denver—Boulder—Greeley, CO	115%	89,750
11. Miami—Ft. Lauderdale, FL	113%	86,106
12. Detroit—Ann Arbor—Flint, MI	111%	150,098
13. Seattle—Tacoma—Bremerton, WA	105%	358,255
14. Salt Lake City—Ogden, UT	103%	50,467

* Metropolitan Area refers to CMSAs, MSAs, and (in New England) NECMAs, defined by the Office of Management and Budget. Source: William H. Frey analysis of 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses

increase exceeded 1,000 persons over the past decade. Yet their overall gains are heavily concentrated in the core counties of immigrant metro areas, and in the West and Southwestern U.S. Just 100 of these core counties accounted for more than 70 percent of all the nation's Hispanic gains during the decade. The diffusion of Hispanics outward from these core areas, in terms of total numbers, is far less rapid than recent press accounts imply.

While there was some dispersal of immigrant Asian and Hispanic groups during the 1990s, the greater tendency

was a continued concentration in established ports of entry. The eight metros with the largest Hispanic gains account for 46 percent of all Hispanic growth in the U.S. over the decade, now home to 51 percent of the total Hispanic population. These gains were due to immigration and domestic migration, as well as the relatively young age and natural increase of the Hispanic population.

Indeed, a mere 30 of the nation's 276 metros accounted for fully 70 percent of all Hispanic growth. New to this list is Phoenix, which more than doubled its Hispanic population over the 1990s—

thanks to direct immigration and a spillover from California. Las Vegas and Atlanta are also relative newcomers, which more than doubled and tripled their Hispanic populations respectively.

The concentrated gains among Asians in areas with existing Asian populations are even more apparent than with Hispanics (see chart at top right of next page). The three Asian population juggernauts—New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco—account for 37 percent of all Asian gains in the U.S. in the '90s. The top six areas account for almost half. Metros with fast-growing but smaller Asian populations include Dallas, which doubled its population, and Atlanta, where it tripled.

The New Ethnic Frontiers

There is some directed diffusion of Hispanics and Asians outward from these immigrant ports of entry. With rising employment opportunities in states such as Georgia, North Carolina, Nevada, Utah, and parts of the Midwest, new immigrant minorities have made pioneering moves to these areas, establishing new minority frontiers. At the forefront are metros that house a minimum of 50,000 members of the minority, and have more than doubled that group's population over the 1990s. (see chart at left).

Hispanics have begun to make inroads into large and medium-sized metros in the Southeast and interior West—areas where growth is dominated largely by domestic migration, whites, and blacks. Atlanta, Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham, Greensboro, Orlando, and West Palm Beach are Southern metros with high rates of Hispanic gain. In the West, new Hispanic frontiers include Phoenix, Las Vegas, Portland, Salt Lake City, and Seattle. Several Midwest areas, including Minneapolis-St. Paul and Kansas City, are also on the list. Of course, the Hispanic shares of total population in most of these metros are quite small (with the exception of Phoenix and Las Vegas).

New frontier metros for Asians include many of the same metro areas. Additional areas for Asians include the high-tech university town of Austin, along with Tampa, Miami, and Detroit. Again, the fast growth and accumulation of sizeable Asian populations in these frontier metros do not

translate into substantial Asian shares of the total population, but do portend a continued regional Asian growth.

Mini-Melting Pots

Only a handful of metros are racially diverse enough to be considered true melting pots. To qualify as such, a metro's white population must be less than the national average of 69 percent, and at least two minority groups must have a greater share of the population than their respective national averages. In metro Miami, for example, whites constitute only 36 percent of the population, while blacks and Hispanics account for 21 percent and 40 percent, respectively. These areas represent dominant primary or secondary destinations for two or more immigrant or minority groups. The list includes the country's largest immigrant gateway metros, Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Washington D.C., as well as 17 smaller metros located in California, Texas, and other Southwest states.

Two noteworthy additions to melting pot status are Las Vegas and Orlando. Las Vegas added significantly to its Hispanic and Asian populations, while Orlando saw increases for Hispanics and blacks. Despite large white gains in both areas, the white shares of their populations have declined dramatically (by 14 percent and 13 percent respectively) over the 1990s.

Some of these metros have "majori-

BIG GAINERS

Metropolitan areas that had the largest gains in Hispanic and Asian populations between 1990 and 2000.

HISPANICS METROPOLITAN AREA*	1990-2000 HISPANIC GAINS	2000 HISPANIC POPULATION
1. Los Angeles—Riverside—Orange County, CA	1,819,370	6,598,488
2. New York—Northern New Jersey—Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA	992,185	3,849,990
3. Chicago—Gary—Kenosha, IL-IN-WI	600,810	1,498,507
4. Dallas—Ft. Worth, TX	594,836	1,120,350
5. Houston—Galveston—Brazoria, TX	575,098	1,348,588
6. Miami—Ft. Lauderdale, FL	501,543	1,563,389
7. Phoenix—Mesa, AZ	437,452	817,012
8. San Francisco—Oakland—San Jose, CA	413,258	1,383,661
9. San Diego, CA	240,184	750,965
10. Las Vegas, NV-AZ	232,978	322,038

ASIANS METROPOLITAN AREA*	1990-2000 ASIAN GAINS	2000 ASIAN POPULATION
1. New York—Northern New Jersey—Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA	710,809	1,576,646
2. Los Angeles—Riverside—Orange County, CA	611,201	1,886,168
3. San Francisco—Oakland—San Jose, CA	554,326	1,446,563
4. Washington—Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV	212,350	454,702
5. Seattle—Tacoma—Bremerton, WA	183,134	358,255
6. Chicago—Gary—Kenosha, IL-IN-WI	179,537	428,819
7. Boston—Worcester—Lawrence, MA-NH-ME-CT	126,384	263,092
8. Dallas—Ft. Worth, TX	125,385	219,891
9. Houston—Galveston—Brazoria, TX	122,882	249,819
10. San Diego, CA	114,786	299,930

* Metropolitan Area refers to CMSAs, MSAs, and (in New England) NECMAs, defined by the Office of Management and Budget. Source: William H. Frey analysis of 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses

ty minority" populations where the white percentage is less than half of their total population: 22 of the nation's 276 metros have majority minorities, and 12 of these have graduated to this status since 1990 (see below). The largest is Houston, which

increased its Hispanic population by more than half a million over the decade, and its Asian and black populations by more than 100,000 each. Smaller metro areas in California and New Mexico achieved this status as a result of recent Hispanic gains.

Undoubtedly, the coming decade will see some additional "spilling-out" of the new immigrant minorities' second and third generations as their children enter the middle class and a national labor market. Clearly, the U.S. is not a single melting pot—where each minority spreads and blends evenly from coast to coast. Rather, the development of mini-melting pots, in the context of less diversity elsewhere, is creating locally unique racial demographic profiles within the nation that differ markedly from region to region. ■

William H. Frey is a demographer and Senior Fellow at the Milken Institute in Santa Monica, California and on the faculty of the Population Studies Center, University of Michigan. He can be reached at www.frey-demographer.org.

A NEW FACE

Twelve more metropolitan areas turned from majority white to majority minority between 1990 and 2000.

METROPOLITAN AREA*	2000 METRO POPULATION	PERCENT WHITE	
		1990	2000
Houston—Galveston—Brazoria, TX (W)	4,669,571	58.0%	48.0%
Fresno, CA (H)	922,516	51.8%	40.6%
Albuquerque, NM (W)	712,738	54.5%	47.7%
Bakersfield, CA (W)	661,645	62.7%	49.5%
Stockton—Lodi, CA (W)	563,598	58.8%	47.4%
Salinas, CA (H)	401,762	52.3%	40.3%
Visalia—Tulare—Porterville, CA (H)	368,021	54.6%	41.8%
Merced, CA (H)	210,554	54.2%	40.6%
Yuma, AZ (H)	160,026	54.4%	44.3%
Albany, GA (B)	120,822	52.9%	46.3%
Sumter, SC (W)	104,646	54.7%	49.4%
Pine Bluff, AR (B)	84,278	55.8%	48.0%

(W) Whites outnumber all other populations; (H) Hispanics outnumber all other populations; (B) Blacks outnumber all other populations. * Metropolitan Area refers to CMSAs, MSAs, and (in New England) NECMAs, defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses