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V. HOUSEHOLDS & FAMILIES

BY THE NUMBERS

**21% /
28%**

Share of households that are married couples with children / people living alone, United States, 2008

**+30% /
-25%**

Change in married couple with children households, Las Vegas / Youngstown metro areas, 2000 to 2008

50%

Share of households containing a married couple, Bakersfield city, 2008

53%

Share of households *not* containing a married couple, Springfield suburbs, 2008



OVERVIEW

- **For the first time in several decades, U.S. population is growing at a faster rate than U.S. households.** With baby boomers well past their peak household-formation years, and new immigrants fueling growth, places that are losing population have less of a household “buffer” to sustain housing demand and tax base.
- **Married couples with children accounted for just over one in five U.S. households in 2008, about half their share in 1970.** These households declined in number during the 2000s, as non-family households—mostly people living alone—grew at a rapid clip to account for more than one in three households in 2008.
- **Many metro areas with already-high shares of married couples with children experienced strong growth in these households in the 2000s.** In contrast to these “married with children” magnets like Raleigh, Boise, and Austin, Northern industrial metro areas like Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown saw their married couples with children decline by at least one-sixth over the eight-year period.
- **Many fast-growing cities in the South and West added larger families in the 2000s, even as declining cities in the Midwest shed them.** Cities such as Charlotte, Bakersfield, and Lakeland added households of all types, including married couples with children. Cities such as Cleveland, Detroit, and Pittsburgh lost all types of households, but losses were more modest among their aging non-family households.
- **People living alone and non-married-couple families are the fastest-growing household types in suburbs.** A majority of married-couple families of all races and ethnicities live in the suburbs today. But as their share of households declined to one-quarter or less in all types of suburbs, non-families became the most prominent suburban household type by 2008.

NATIONAL TRENDS

Households and families are critical organizing units of our society. Major life events—birth, leaving home for college or a job, marriage, divorce, death—all register as changes to the number or composition of our households and families. The members of households make most major spending decisions—for housing, food, transportation, and education—collectively. They are the units from which most government revenues are collected, and to which most government services are rendered. Indeed, households are the sampling unit for the American Community Survey,

on which most of this report is based.

The shape of America’s households and families also reflects a number of large, long-run demographic forces transforming our society. Delays in marriage, increases in life expectancy, and rising immigration from shifting source nations have all contributed to growth and decline of different types of households in the United States, with greater impacts in some parts of the country than others.

Along those lines, the United States passed an important milestone in the 2000s. In a break from the past several decades, the national household

The shape of America’s households and families reflects a number of large, long-run demographic forces transforming our society.



growth rate sank slightly below that for total population. Beginning in the 1970s, the large baby boom cohorts started to enter adulthood and the traditional ages at which new households are formed. Not only were they more numerous than previous generations at those ages, but also they waited longer to “double up” as couples to start families, and eventually they had fewer children per household than their parents did.

With boomers dominating the American demographic landscape, the number of households in the 1970s grew at more than twice the rate of the U.S. population (Figure 1). This growth differential narrowed somewhat during the 1980s, but the rate of household growth generated by the second half of the boomers (born between 1956 and 1965) during that decade still exceeded the population growth rate by more than half.

After the household-population growth gap further narrowed in the 1990s, the relationship flipped

CLASSIFYING HOUSEHOLDS

This chapter classifies households at the national, metropolitan, and city/suburban levels into five basic types:

Married with children: The traditional “nuclear family” household type, married couples with children under 18 years old

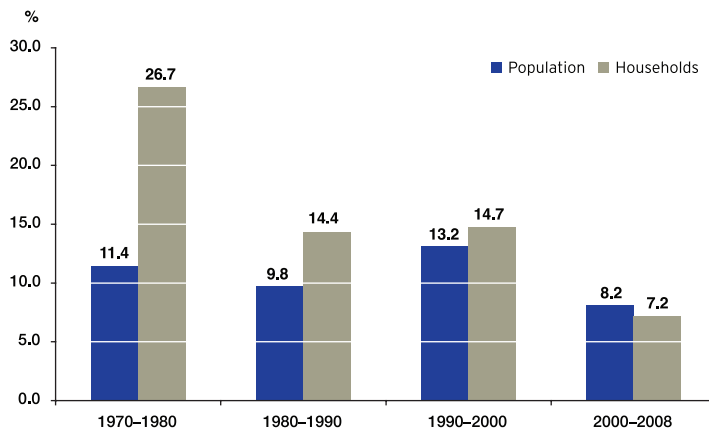
Married without children: Young, often two-earner couples who have not yet had children, older “empty nester” couples whose children may recently have left home, and elderly couples who may have grandchildren of their own

Other families with children: Usually single-parent family households; and four of five are headed by females. While disadvantaged single mothers who gave birth at a young age make up a significant portion of these households, the category also includes most divorced and separated parents with children, never-married mothers who had children at a later age, and unmarried partners with children

Other families without children: Single adults with parents living in their home, single parents with children over 18 living in their home, and adult relatives (such as brothers and sisters) living in the same household

Non-families: More than 80 percent of non-family households are single persons living alone; of these, more than one-third are 65 years and older. Other non-family households consist of nonrelatives living together, including unmarried partners with no children

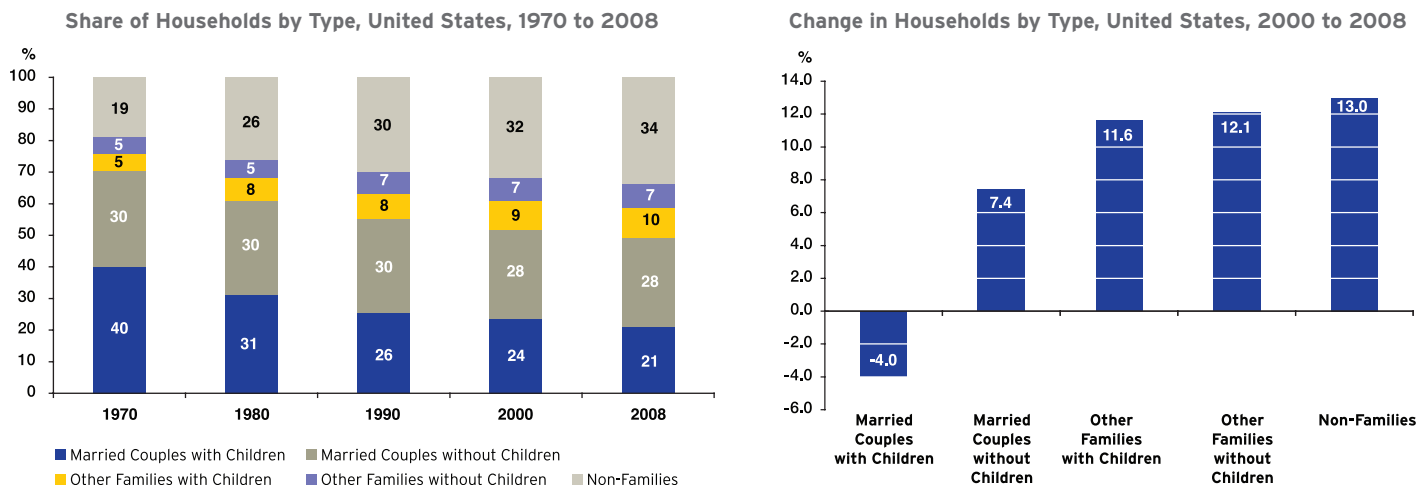
Figure 1. For the First Time in Decades, Population Growth Outpaced Household Growth
Change in Population and Households by Decade, United States, 1970 to 2008



Source: Brookings analysis of decennial censuses and 2008 American Community Survey



Figure 2. Married Couples with Children Today Account for Barely Half the Share of U.S. Households as in 1970, and Their Numbers Fell in the 2000s



Source: Brookings analysis of decennial censuses and 2008 American Community Survey data

in the 2000s, so that population growth exceeded household growth. In the past, places that sustained population declines could nevertheless count on continued demand for housing due to a robust household growth rate. But now that population growth has overtaken household growth, these places may only be able to enjoy sustained housing demand and growing tax bases if their populations are also increasing.

Declines in household growth have been attributed to the smaller post-boomer generations who entered their household formation years beginning in the 1990s. On the other hand, increases in population growth can be attributed in large part to immigrant waves who have younger age structures than the native-born U.S. population, and often higher birth rates. The households these newcomers form are different from those formed in the 1970s by “coming-of-age” baby boomers. Immigrants and

children of immigrants are more likely to marry earlier and form larger households with children.

As these trends imply, the structure of U.S. households has also shifted markedly over time.

Although the “Ozzie and Harriet” married couple with children persists as the archetypal American household, the seeming explosion of such families in the immediate post-World War II decades, thanks to the baby boom, represented an aberration of long-term U.S. household trends.¹ The share of U.S. households that are married couples with children under 18 years old began a steady slide as the boomers came of age in the 1970s, and today stands at just 21 percent—roughly half its level from 40 years ago (Figure 2).

A number of societal shifts ushered in by the baby boom generation—among them delayed marriage, reduced childbearing within marriage, higher divorce rates, and increased life expectancy—have driven



these dramatic changes in household composition over the last 40 years.² Over this period, there has also been an increased tendency for women to bear children outside of wedlock, increasingly in the context of cohabiting couples. The larger shifts away from the so-called “traditional family” occurred during the 1970s and 1980s.

All family types except married couples with children have grown since 2000 (Figure 2). Yet a mini-rebirth in married-with-children families in some parts of the country, associated with the growth of the Hispanic and Asian populations, suggests that the movement away from “traditional families” might have bottomed out among the post-boomer generations.³ The next decades will, of course, also see gains in households associated with aging boomers, such as childless couple “empty nesters” and non-families, including people living alone.

Finally, the overall household type profile of the United States disguises significant differences in the prevalence of these types across racial and ethnic groups (Figure 3). For Asians and Hispanics, married couples with children are the most numerous of household types, reflecting their younger ages and higher fertility rates. For whites, non-families and married couples without children predominate, reflecting their older ages. And for blacks, non-families and female-headed families (with and without children) are the largest household types. These differences influence the household character of the different places across the metropolitan landscape where these groups cluster.

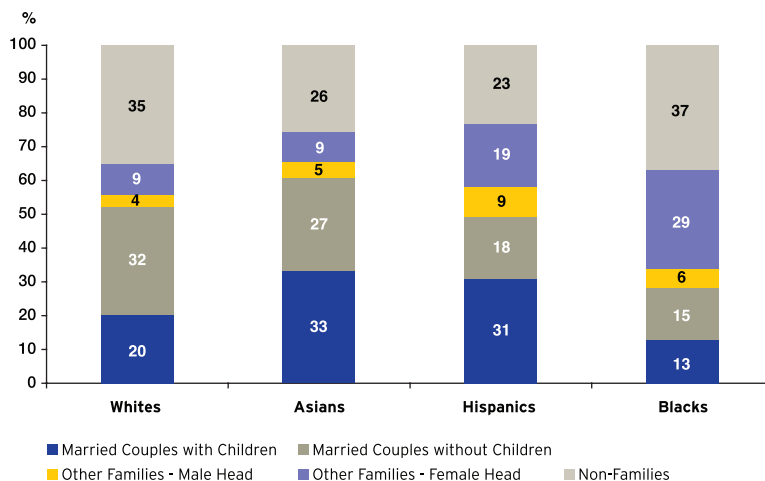
METROPOLITAN TRENDS

Household versus Population Growth

In the nation as a whole, and for large metropolitan areas in the aggregate, the large discrepancy between household growth and population growth in the 1970s and 1980s diminished sharply in the 1990s, and population growth surpassed household growth in the 2000s.⁴ Yet more of the nation’s 100 largest metro areas (92) gained households from 2000 to 2008 than gained population (89). Overall, metro areas exhibited less extreme gains or declines in households than in population, which buffered their housing markets against even wider swings in demand.

The “bunching up” of population growth is most prominent in metro areas with large numbers of immigrant minorities and recent gains of young people in their childbearing years. Among the top 10 are Southern and Intermountain West locations such as Las Vegas, Raleigh, Boise, and Austin (Table 1). Other areas with population gains exceeding

Figure 3. Major Racial and Ethnic Groups Possess Distinctive Household Type Profiles
Share of Households by Type and Racial/Ethnic Group, United States, 2008



Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data



Table 1. Population Growth Exceeded Household Growth in Many Fast-Growing Metro Areas
Large Metro Areas Ranked by Change in Households (%), 2000 to 2008

<i>Highest Household Growth</i>					<i>Lowest Household Growth/Household Decline</i>				
Rank	Metro Area	Household Change (%)*	Population Change (%)*	Difference (% pts)	Rank	Metro Area	Household Change (%)	Population Change*	Difference (% pts)
1	McAllen, TX	34.9	28.0	-6.9	91	Toledo, OH	0.4	-1.5	-2.0
2	Provo, UT	34.3	43.5	9.2	92	Rochester, NY	0.3	-0.7	-1.0
3	Las Vegas, NV	33.6	35.9	2.3	93	Dayton, OH	0.0	-1.4	-1.4
4	Raleigh-Cary, NC	31.0	37.2	6.3	94	Bridgeport-Stamford, CT	-0.1	0.7	0.8
5	Charlotte, NC-SC	29.6	28.6	-1.0	95	Pittsburgh, PA	-0.8	-3.4	-2.6
6	Boise City, ID	29.4	27.6	-1.8	96	Youngstown, OH-PA	-1.4	-6.5	-5.1
7	Cape Coral, FL	29.3	34.1	4.8	97	Providence, RI-MA	-1.7	0.6	2.3
8	Austin, TX	27.9	32.4	4.4	98	Cleveland, OH	-1.9	-2.9	-1.0
9	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	22.4	32.2	9.8	99	Detroit-Warren, MI	-2.5	-0.8	1.8
10	Ogden, UT	21.8	20.5	-1.2	100	New Orleans, LA	-23.0	-13.9	9.1

* population in households

Source: Brookings analysis of Census 2000 and 2008 American Community Survey data

household gains include Sun Belt destinations Riverside, Stockton, Dallas, and Atlanta.

About one-third of metro areas that added households in the 2000s added population more slowly. These include places which attracted smaller-sized households, both young singles and older “empty nesters,” such as Charlotte, Boise, Seattle, and Minneapolis. Other metro areas with somewhat slower population than household growth include those with older, established Hispanic populations such as Albuquerque, McAllen, and El Paso.

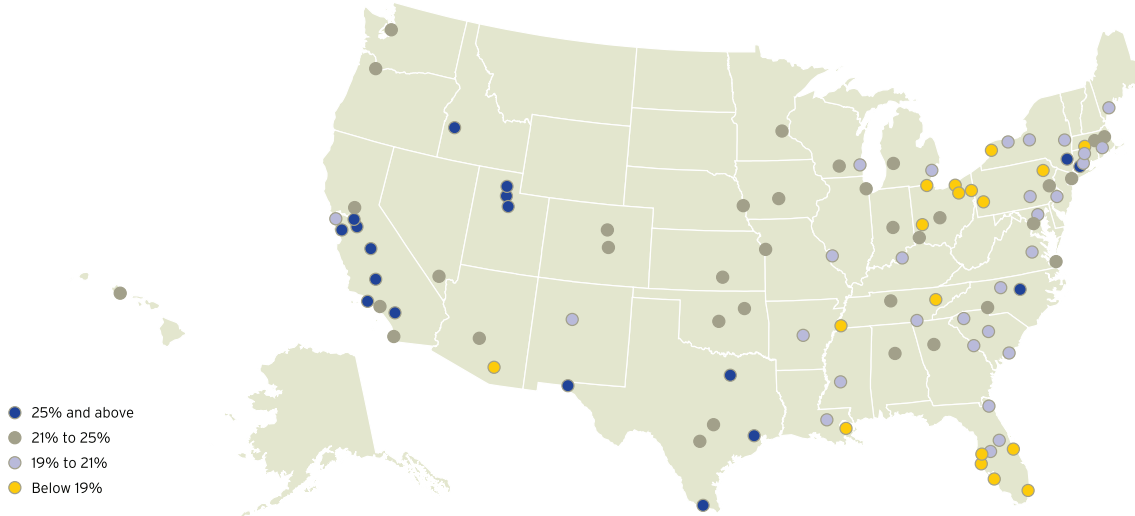
At the other end of the spectrum are metropolitan areas in which household numbers are dropping or growing very slowly. These areas, especially those located in the industrial heartland, typically show greater declines in population than households, reflecting a selective out-migration of younger, larger households. Youngstown, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Dayton, and Rochester rank among such areas.

Married-with-Children Metropolitan Magnets

Although married-with-children households now comprise only about one-fifth of all U.S. households, and declined in number from 2000 to 2008, they maintain a substantial presence in some parts of the country. The Age chapter of this report indicates that while most of the country is getting older, selected parts are “younging,” and a good part of that younger population lives in married-with-children households.

In 18 of the nation’s 100 largest metro areas, married couples with children comprise more than one-quarter of all households (Map 1). Many are located in the West and Southwest, especially in California, Utah, and Texas, although Raleigh and Bridgeport also make the list. These areas have large Hispanic populations, high fertility, or have become magnets for young families with children. Married couples

Map 1. In Only 18 Metro Areas Are Married Couples with Children More than a Quarter of Households
Share of Households that Are Married Couples with Children, 2008



Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data

with children comprise 40 percent of all households in Provo, the highest share nationally, and the same share as the United States back in 1970.

At the other end of the spectrum are 18 metropolitan areas where these “traditional families” comprise less than 18 percent of all households. They are located largely in the industrial Northeast and Midwest, Florida, Tennessee, and Arizona. Most of these areas are largely white or have large African American minority populations, and contain large senior populations. Bradenton’s married-with-children share of households, at 13.5 percent, ranks lowest nationally.

Many of the areas experiencing the largest growth in married couples with children during the 2000s also registered large shares of these households in 2008. Only 41 large metro areas gained married-with-children households from 2000 to 2008, and just 17 exhibited growth of more than 10

percent. In eight of the 10 metro areas with the fastest growth rates among this household type, married couples with children represented a larger than average share of all households in 2008. In this sense, the ever-more atypical “typical” American household is congregating in a smaller number of U.S. metro areas.

This relationship (in reverse) looms even stronger in declining markets. The familiar list of industrial Northeastern and Midwestern metro areas, along with New Orleans, recorded the largest percentage declines in married couples with children from 2000 to 2008; the Youngstown area had fully one-quarter fewer of these households in 2008 than eight years prior. In all of these metro areas, married couples with children accounted for a well below-average share of all households. With rapidly aging populations, over one-third of their households are non-families, mostly older people living alone.

Table 2 : Married Couples with Children Grew in Metro Areas with Already-Large Shares of These Households
 Metro Areas Ranked by Change in Married Couples with Children (%), 2000-2008

Rank	Metro Area	Change in Married Couples w/ Children (%)	Share of Households, 2008 (%)	
			Married Couples w/ Children	Non-Families
Highest Growth in Married Couples with Children				
1	Cape Coral, FL	35.5	16	33
2	Las Vegas, NV	29.7	21	36
3	Raleigh-Cary, NC	29.3	26	33
4	Provo, UT	24.0	39	20
5	Boise City, ID	22.7	27	31
6	Austin, TX	22.7	23	38
7	Charlotte, NC-SC	20.1	22	34
8	Lakeland, FL	19.3	20	30
9	McAllen, TX	15.0	33	18
10	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	14.5	22	34
Largest Declines in Married Couples with Children				
91	Pittsburgh, PA	-14.1	18	37
92	Providence, RI-MA	-14.2	19	36
93	Syracuse, NY	-14.3	19	38
94	Buffalo, NY	-14.5	17	39
95	Akron, OH	-15.6	18	36
96	Rochester, NY	-16.2	19	36
97	Dayton, OH	-16.7	18	35
98	Toledo, OH	-17.9	17	38
99	Youngstown, OH-PA	-24.5	16	36
100	New Orleans, LA	-36.1	17	36
All Large Metro Areas		-1.5	22	34

Source: Brookings analysis of Census 2000 and 2008 American Community Survey data

CITY AND SUBURBAN TRENDS

The faster population-than-household growth occurring in the 2000s carries special implications for cities. In past decades, many sustained greater population losses than household losses due to the “flight” of families to suburbs, but were able to retain some tax base and housing demand in the process. In the 2000s, however, 58 of 95 primary cities added

population living in households, while 61 registered increases in households. More so than for metropolitan areas, primary cities exhibited a greater “bunching up” of population growth. Among the 61 cities where households grew, only 34 had population growth exceeding household growth. Cities gaining these larger-than-average households included Cape Coral, Palm Bay, Raleigh, and Bakersfield (Table 3).



Table 3. Growing Cities Tended to Add Larger-than-Average Households, While Shrinking Cities Tended to Lose Them
Primary Cities Ranked by Change in Households (%), 2000 to 2008

<i>Highest Household Growth</i>					<i>Highest Household Decline</i>				
Rank	Primary Cities	Household Change (%)	Population Change (%)*	Difference (% pts)	Rank	Primary Cities	Household Change (%)	Population Change* (%)	Difference (% pts)
1	Cape Coral, FL	42.1	51.1	9.0	86	Albany, NY	-8.1	-5.5	2.7
2	Charlotte, NC	32.8	27.0	-5.9	87	Youngstown, OH	-9.1	-14.9	-5.8
3	Raleigh-Cary, NC	28.0	32.0	4.1	88	Birmingham, AL	-9.5	-13.1	-3.6
4	Bakersfield, CA	26.6	30.9	4.3	89	Pittsburgh, PA	-9.6	-12.3	-2.7
5	McAllen, TX	24.9	21.1	-3.8	90	Cleveland, OH	-11.5	-14.8	-3.3
6	Palm Bay, FL	22.3	28.3	6.0	91	Dayton, OH	-11.7	-14.5	-2.7
7	Lakeland, FL	20.9	22.6	1.6	92	Rochester, NY	-13.3	-13.5	-0.2
8	Charleston, SC	19.4	19.1	-0.4	93	Cincinnati, OH	-14.8	-11.7	3.2
9	Las Vegas, NV	18.8	20.8	2.0	94	Detroit-Warren, MI	-19.1	-16.2	2.9
10	Sacramento-Roseville, CA	18.4	18.4	0.0	95	New Orleans, LA	-53.7	-36.4	17.3

* population in households

Source: Brookings analysis of Census 2000 and 2008 American Community Survey data

And among the 34 primary cities that registered household declines, populations declined even faster in 16 of them. Dayton, Cleveland, Youngstown, Rochester, and Pittsburgh fit this profile. New Orleans exhibits a greater household decline than population decline, reflecting its post-Katrina loss of single-person and larger households.

City Household Types

Trends in the types of households growing and declining in cities in the 2000s follow distinct regional patterns. Cities in the South and West, as was the case in the 1990s, added all types of households, most notably married couples, including those with children. Slow-growing cities of the Northeast and Midwest, on the other hand, showed declines in almost all types of households, but especially married couples with children.

Fast-growing cities are characterized by the

considerable presence of married couples, including those with children, among their residents and new arrivals. In each of the 10 fastest growing primary cities, married couple households [with and without children] account for more than 40 percent of all city households, and more than half in Cape Coral, Bakersfield, McAllen, and Palm Bay (Table 4). In six of these cities, married-with-children household shares equal or exceed the national average of 21 percent. The growth of younger, racial and ethnic minority populations in these cities has boosted these “traditional” family types. That noted, most of these cities experienced significant growth in other types of households as well; in fact, their growth rates for other families and non-families generally exceeded those for married-couple families.

In primary cities with decreasing numbers of households in the 2000s, declines in married couples with children outpaced declines in other types of

Table 4 . Cities with Fast-Growing Household Populations Added All Types of Households in the 2000s
Change in Households by Type (%), Primary Cities Ranked by Total Household Growth/Decline, 2000 to 2008

Rank	Primary Cities of Metro Area	Percent Change 2000-2008				Share of Households, 2008 (%)	
		Married Couples w/Children	Married Couples w/o Children	Other Families	Other Non-Families	Married Couples w/Children	Non-Families
Highest Household Growth							
1	Cape Coral, FL	58	17	53	61	25	29
2	Charlotte, NC	23	27	45	36	19	39
3	Raleigh-Cary, NC	12	39	34	29	20	42
4	Bakersfield, CA	28	15	28	33	29	28
5	McAllen, TX	11	13	64	25	29	21
6	Palm Bay, FL	10	17	40	28	21	30
7	Lakeland, FL	18	19	21	23	13	40
8	Charleston, SC	3	22	15	25	12	48
9	Las Vegas, NV	14	10	34	21	21	34
10	Sacramento-Roseville, CA	24	12	9	24	21	41
Highest Household Decline							
86	Pittsburgh, PA	-22	-12	-18	-2	10	52
87	Albany, NY	-25	6	-2	-11	8	53
88	Dayton, OH	-31	-9	-19	-4	10	48
89	Rochester, NY	-32	-11	-16	-8	9	50
90	Cleveland, OH	-33	-18	-14	-1	9	46
91	Cincinnati, OH	-33	-12	-17	-11	8	53
92	Detroit-Warren, MI	-36	-22	-21	-9	11	39
93	Birmingham, AL	-41	-15	-11	4	8	46
94	Youngstown, OH	-59	-23	2	6	5	45
95	New Orleans, LA	-63	-44	-66	-46	11	46
All Primary Cities		-7	1	2	8	17	42

Source: Brookings analysis of Census 2000 and 2008 American Community Survey data

households. Eight of the ten cities with the fastest overall household declines lost at least 30 percent of their married-with-children households over the eight-year period. And while these households made up at least 20 percent of all households in most of the fastest-growing cities by 2008, they represented less than half that share of households in many of the fastest-declining cities that year. A few of these

cities did manage to post gains or much more modest declines in non-families, which accounted for 45 percent or more of their households in 2008. This does not necessarily indicate that they attracted large numbers of “coming-of-age” singles; rather, the loss of spouses in elderly married-couple families may have increased the number of older people living alone.



With minimal growth in their married-with-children household populations, the suburbs of large metropolitan areas are home to growing numbers of household types traditionally associated with cities.

The selective out-migration of larger, married-couple family households characterizes many older shrinking cities. Most are located in regions of the country where neither primary cities nor suburbs are gaining residents from other parts of the country. Additionally, none of these cities is benefiting appreciably from the recent immigration waves that have fueled growth in many fast-growing cities. In earlier decades, these cities could count on boomer coming-of-age households, including married couples, to locate there prior to moving to the suburbs. For demographic and economic reasons, such growth prospects are no longer strong.

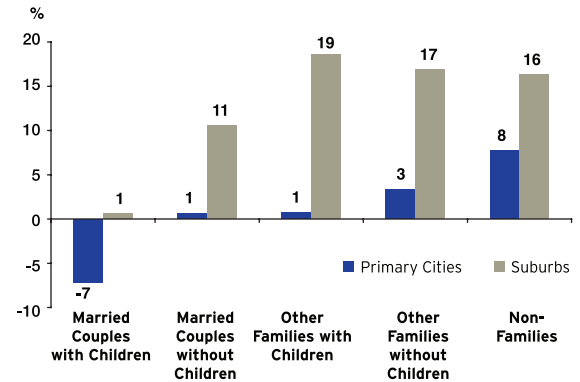
Suburban Household Types

In the 2000s, suburban growth continued to dominate the metropolitan landscape. Its household sources, however, were quite different from those associated with the iconic suburbs of the mid-20th century.

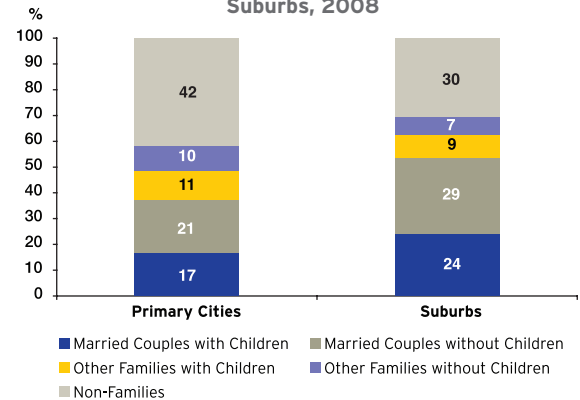
Overall, households in the suburbs grew by nearly 11 percent from 2000 to 2008, compared to just over 2 percent in primary cities. Faster suburban growth was not limited to certain types of households. Across four of the five major household types, suburban growth rates far exceeded primary city growth rates. And while married couples with children declined by more than 7 percent in cities in the 2000s, they actually grew—although minimally—in suburbs (Figure 4).

With minimal growth in their married-with-children household populations, the suburbs of large metropolitan areas are home to growing numbers of household types traditionally associated with cities. Non-families and families without married couples (with and without children) grew fastest in suburbs from 2000 to 2008. These household types in suburbs may look somewhat different from

Figure 4. Non-Traditional Households Grow in Suburbs at High Rates During the 2000s
Change in Households by Type, Primary Cities vs. Suburbs, 2000 to 2008



Share of Households by Type, Primary Cities vs. Suburbs, 2008



Source: Brookings analysis of Census 2000 and 2008 American Community Survey data
Data reflect 95 of 100 large metropolitan areas

those in cities. For example, compared with cities, a greater share of “other families with children” households in the suburbs may be the product of divorce, separation, or cohabitation. Accordingly, the housing they seek may be somewhat different than that demanded by the larger household types that traditionally dominated the suburbs. In 2008, less than one-quarter of suburban households were

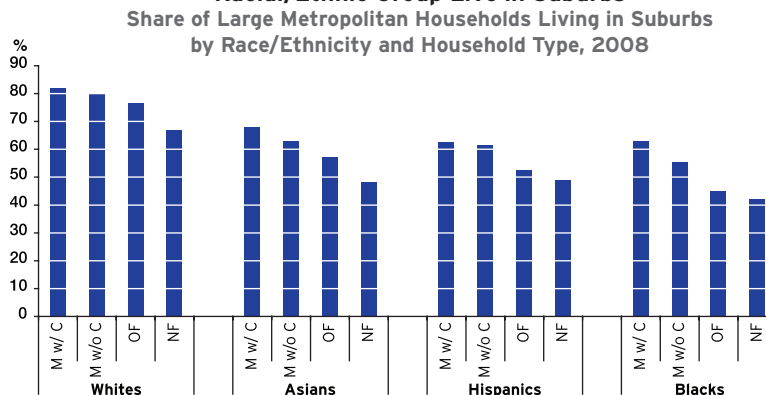
married families with children, and 30 percent were non-families (five in six of whom were people living alone).

Nonetheless, suburbs are still the dominant location of married couples (with and without children). This is true across racial and ethnic groups (Figure 5). For large metro areas, the percentage of households living in the suburbs (compared with primary cities) is highest for married couples with children, lowest for non-families, and in-between for childless married couples and other families. Thus, even as “traditional families” become a less prominent part of the metropolitan landscape, those families still choose suburban locations at a significant rate. This is especially the case among African Americans, whose metropolitan populations are dominated by unmarried households. For that group, only married-couple households are more likely to live in suburbs than in primary cities.

As with primary cities, sharp distinctions in household types separate fast-growing and slow-growing suburban areas (Table 5). In five of the 10 fastest-growing metropolitan suburbs, married couples with children account for more than 30 percent of households, led by Provo, where fully 43 percent of all suburban households are married couples with children. This contrasts sharply with the situation of the slowest growing suburbs. Six of those 10 suburbs have “traditional family” shares at less than one-fifth of all households, and, in nearly all, non-family households exceed married couples with children.

Perhaps most striking, these struggling suburbs each show declines in their married-with-children couples over the decade. Among 95 large metropolitan suburbs, in only three—New Orleans, Providence, and Youngstown—did the number of households drop between 2000 and 2008. Nonetheless, fully 51 of these metropolitan suburbs showed declines in their

Figure 5. A Majority of Married-Couple Households in Every Major Racial/Ethnic Group Live in Suburbs



Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data
M w/ C = married couple with children; M w/o C = married couple without children; OF = other family; NF = non-family
Reflects data from 95 of 100 largest metro areas

married-couple-with-children populations, suggesting that the family-raising image of the suburbs continues to fade.

Moreover, married-with-children families represent no more than one-quarter of households even in the farther-out, less developed mature and emerging suburbs and exurbs of metropolitan areas (Figure 6). They do have somewhat higher shares of married couples with no children, and somewhat lower shares of non-families, than higher-density suburbs surrounding cities. Yet these still-developing areas surprisingly seem no more or less “family-oriented” based on their household types than suburbs in general.

LOOKING AHEAD

Focusing exclusively on population change offers only a partial picture of metropolitan growth dynamics. Change in the number and composition of



Table 5. Other Families and Non-Families Were the Fastest Growing Household Types in Growing and Shrinking Suburbs
Change in Households by Type (%), Suburbs Ranked by Total Household Growth/Decline, 2000 to 2008

Rank	Metro Area Suburbs	Percent Change 2000-2008				Share of Households, 2008 (%)	
		Married Couples w/Children	Married Couples w/o Children	Other Families	Other Non-Families	Married Couples w/Children	Non-Families
Highest Household Growth							
1	Provo, UT	31	50	78	66	43	16
2	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	40	34	58	46	23	30
3	Las Vegas, NV	38	31	42	52	21	36
4	Boise City, ID	36	31	45	59	31	26
5	Austin, TX	26	39	47	56	29	28
6	McAllen, TX	16	39	56	72	34	17
7	Raleigh-Cary, NC	41	22	35	39	32	26
8	El Paso, TX	1	69	43	69	38	13
9	Houston, TX	17	33	41	32	30	23
10	Colorado Springs, CO	8	35	46	37	29	22
Highest Household Decline							
86	Springfield, MA	-7	-1	11	7	19	37
87	New Haven, CT	-6	2	3	6	21	34
88	New York-Newark, NY-NJ-PA	-5	-1	6	7	26	29
89	Scranton, PA	-9	3	11	2	18	34
90	Cleveland, OH	-10	-3	5	11	21	35
91	Pittsburgh, PA	-13	0	8	8	19	34
92	Bridgeport-Stamford, CT	-1	-1	14	-1	29	26
93	Youngstown, OH-PA	-22	-3	9	13	17	35
94	Providence, RI-MA	-15	-2	6	5	19	35
95	New Orleans, LA	-28	0	-3	11	19	33
All Suburbs		1	11	18	16	24	30

Source: Brookings analysis of Census 2000 and 2008 American Community Survey data

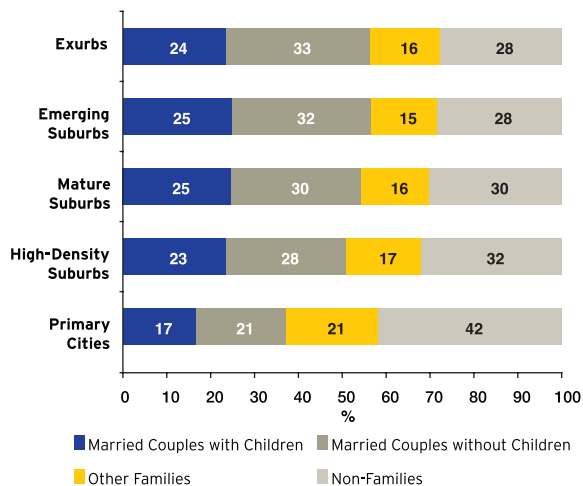
households may be a better indicator of changes in demand for housing, schools, health services, as well as the fiscal ability to meet critical local needs.

The changes in America's households reflect a complicated mix of long-run trends that together have upended traditional notions of city and suburban household profiles. Suburbs are no longer bastions of families and child-rearing, just as cities are

not solely home to young singles and older residents. Still, shifts in the household makeup of cities and suburbs continue to occur within a nationwide context of dispersing households and population. The trend of faster suburban than city growth pervades fast-growing and slow-growing metropolitan areas alike, and holds for all household types.

The growth of child-centered city populations in

Figure 6. Household Types Vary Only Minimally Among Different Types of Suburbs
Share of Households by Type and Metropolitan Community Type, 2008



Source: Brookings analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data

the country's diverse metropolitan areas, especially those in the South and West, presents several challenges. They create new needs for public and private services like childcare; they may further test the adequacy of urban school systems; and they may put new stresses on the fiscal positions of these cities. At the same time, though, household patterns in the fastest-growing cities suggest that burgeoning family populations create opportunities for vibrant neighborhoods and continued growth that may not exist in other cities.

The picture is quite different in a growing number of Northeastern and Midwestern suburbs home to increasing numbers of non-family and single-parent family households. The need for affordable, multi-family housing in these jurisdictions will only continue to increase. Elderly homeowners, both married

couples and individuals living alone, may demonstrate a greater demand over time for services like transportation and home healthcare as they "age in place" in the suburbs.

Whether these changes ultimately spur greater cooperation across city and suburban borders will undoubtedly depend on complicated local dynamics, as well as a broader realization that new realities have overtaken old perceptions of who inhabits our metropolitan communities. ■

ENDNOTES

1. Andrew J. Cherlin, *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
2. Lynne M. Casper and Suzanne M. Bianchi, *Continuity & Change in the American Family* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002).
3. William H. Frey, "Married with Children." *American Demographics*, March 2003, pp. 18-20.
4. Household growth and decline in a particular place can occur in a more dynamic, varied fashion than population change. Aside from in-migration and out-migration, changes in the number of households result from household formation and dissolution. New households form largely when "coming-of-age" late teens and young adults leave their parents' homes to form their own. Changes in other existing households can also affect household growth. For instance, two non-family single households may combine to form a married couple household; likewise, a divorce may create two households from one. Life transitions can also lead to changes in household type, as when a married couple without children household experiences the birth of a child (thus creating a married couple with children household), or the death of a spouse (thus creating a non-family household).