Metropolitan Policy Program
at BROOKINGS

The Uneven Aging and 'Younging' of America: State and Metropolitan Trends in the 2010 Census

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"The demographic future of the nation relies heavily on its youth and the areas where they reside, and the challenge in the decades ahead will be to balance their needs with the needs of baby boomers and seniors who are aging-in-place everywhere."

FINDINGS

An analysis of data from the 1990, 2000, and 2010 decennial censuses reveals that:

■ **Due to baby boomers "aging in place," the population age 45 and over grew 18 times as fast as the population under age 45 between 2000 and 2010.** All states and metropolitan areas are showing noticeable growth in their older and "advanced middle age" populations which, for the first time, comprise a majority of the nation's voting-age population.

■ **Although all parts of the nation are aging, there is a growing divide between areas that are experiencing gains or losses in their younger populations.** In 28 of the 50 states, and 36 of the 100 largest metro areas, the population below age 45 declined from 2000 to 2010. Yet in 29 metro areas, including Las Vegas, Orlando, Houston, and Atlanta, the under-45 population grew by at least 10 percent over the decade.

■ **Areas experiencing the fastest senior (age 65+) growth are located in the Sun Belt, while areas with the highest concentrations of seniors are located primarily in Florida, the Northeast, and the Midwest.** Yet baby boom generation "pre-seniors," now just turning 65, are growing rapidly in all areas of the country due to aging in place. College towns such as Austin, Raleigh, Provo, and Madison are among those where pre-seniors are growing fastest.

■ **Suburbs are aging more rapidly than cities with higher growth rates for their age-45-and-above populations and larger shares of seniors.** People age 45 and older represent 40 percent of suburban residents, compared to 35 percent of city residents.

■ **Metropolitan suburbs differ sharply in the degree to which they are attracting young adults and children.** The suburbs of 34 metropolitan areas, mostly in the Northeast and Midwest, registered declines in their child and under-45 populations in the 2000s, leaving high concentrations of "advanced middle aged" and older residents. An even larger number of cities experienced losses in these younger populations.

America is beginning to show its age as the baby boom "pig in the python" advances toward full-fledged senior-hood. But the pace of this aging will vary widely across the national landscape due to noticeable geographic shifts in the younger population, with implications for health care, transportation, and housing, and possible impacts upon our ability to forge societal consensus.

INTRODUCTION

When the Beatles song "When I'm Sixty-Four" was released in 1967, many baby boomers adhered to the mantra, "Don't trust anyone over 30." Now the boomers are fully ensconced in advanced middle age, and the oldest of them are beginning to cross into full-fledged senior-hood, as the first boomer turned age 65 last January.

Some 80 million strong and more than one quarter of the U.S. population, baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1965) are a still a force to be reckoned with, even as they have all crossed the age-45 marker.[1] Along with their elders, the large and growing older American population presents significant future challenges for federal government programs such as Social Security and Medicare. State and local social services and infrastructure needs will also change in communities across the nation as the population ages.

This pervasive expansion of our older population is juxtaposed against a younger population that is growing much more slowly and unevenly. Some parts of the country, are "younging," in the sense that their child and young adult populations are growing at a marked pace. In contrast, large stretches of the nation are sustaining only meager growth, or even declines, in their youth population.

Because baby boomers and their elders are a growing share of communities almost everywhere, the distinctive shifts in the younger population pose different kinds of dilemmas. In some areas, the aging of boomers and their parents will be mitigated by youthful gains due to movement from other parts of the country, immigration, or higher fertility. While the tax bases may increase in such areas, so will some of the public service needs of children and young families. In other areas, the loss or slow growth of the youth population will be associated with "brain drain," reduced tax revenue, and a shortage of service workers, such as those involved with health services and assisted living for rapidly aging populations.

This brief examines 2010 census data to evaluate these uneven aging and "younging" patterns. After discussing data and measures, it examines national patterns of age-related growth and decline; state and metropolitan variations in older and younger population shifts; the geography of senior (age 65+) and soon-to-be senior populations; and city-suburban shifts with an emphasis on the wide variation in aging and "younging" patterns within the suburbs. The report concludes with some thoughts on the implications of these shifts for age-related public policies and politics in different parts of the country.

METHODOLOGY

Data sources
Data for this study draw from U.S. decennial censuses of 1990, 2000, and 2010.[2] This report includes Appendices A, B, C, and D, which show selected 2000-2010 age-related statistics for states, metropolitan areas, primary cities of metropolitan areas, and suburbs of metropolitan areas (the 100 largest metropolitan areas, and primary cities and suburbs, are defined below).

Age Classification
The age of a person is determined from the decennial census question that asks the respondent to indicate his or her age and date of birth.[3] This report uses the terms "older population" (age 45 and above); "younger population" (under age 45); "senior population" (age 65 and above) and "pre-senior population" (age 55-64). The baby boom population was roughly age 45-64 years old in 2010.

Geography
The geographic units employed for most of this analysis are primary cities and suburbs within the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget in 2008 and based on population totals from the 2010 Census.

Primary cities within a metropolitan area (referred to as "cities") combine the populations of up

to three individual cities that are named in the official metropolitan area name. They include the first named city, the largest by population in the metro area, and up to two additional cities with populations of at least 100,000. For example, in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-MD-VA-WV metropolitan area, the primary cities include Washington D.C., Arlington, VA and Alexandria, VA.[4] Because primary cities can be multiples of individual cities, the primary cities comprise 139 individual cities of the 100 largest metropolitan areas. Suburbs of metropolitan areas pertain to the portion of the metropolitan area's population that lies outside the boundaries of the primary cities.

FINDINGS

A. Due to baby boomers "aging in place," the population age 45 and over grew 18 times as fast as the population under age 45 between 2000 and 2010.

The aging of the U.S. population is most apparent when viewed from the perspective of age group growth patterns (Figure 1A). Each one of the broad age groups over age 45 show higher 10-year growth rates than each of those under age 45. As a consequence, the age-45-and-above population increased by more than one-quarter while the under-45 population increased by a mere 1.4 percent.

Figure 1A: U.S. Population Change by Age, 2000-2010
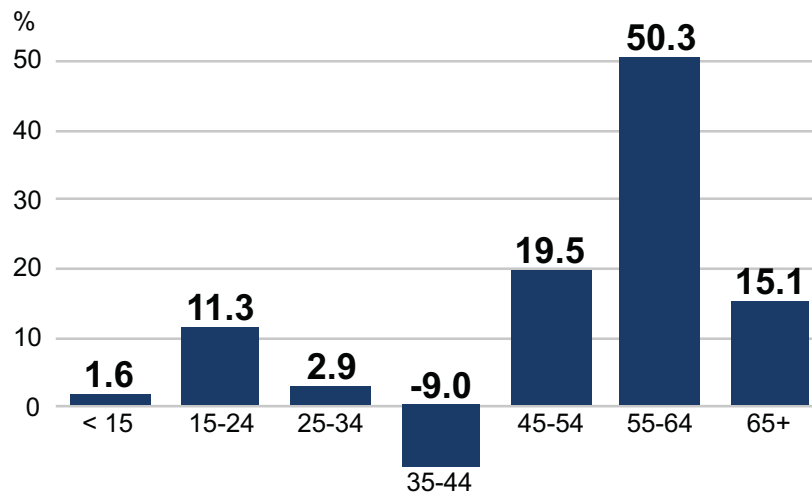
Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census data

The older population has grown more than 18 times as fast as the younger population—a shift that has much to do with the large baby boom generation advancing beyond age 45 (encompassing ages 45-64 in 2010). This growth in the older population reflects the "aging in place" of existing populations rather than immigration from abroad.[5]

Most notable is the 50 percent growth of those aged 55-64—heralding the ascension of the early baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1955) into older life stages. At every point of their life course, the sheer size of the baby-boom generation has overwhelmed the nation—as they transitioned from K-12 schools to colleges and then into labor markets and housing markets. It is this leading edge of baby boomers that has borne both the brunt and benefits of these shifts.[6] Their movement into a stage where retirement is either occurring, or being planned, represents another milestone for this generation.

The next highest growth rate occurs in the 45-54 age group, as the latter half of the baby boom generation (born between 1956 and 1965) advances. This is followed by the relatively high growth of the pre-boomer population into the age 65 and older age group. The new generation entering this age group in the first decade of the 21st century might be roughly termed the "World War II Generation." Born between 1936 and 1945, this wartime generation benefitted from 1950s and early 1960s post-war prosperity, which in part set the stage for the high fertility that brought about the baby boom.

The more tepid growth of the younger "under-45" population, especially those aged 35-44, reflects the sharply lower fertility during the late 1960s and beyond associated with a host of societal changes, particularly the broader participation of women in the labor force and more equal opportunities for higher education and job advancement. The general aging of the population is echoed by declining fertility. One exception is the slightly higher growth of the 15–24 age group, which reflects the "echo boom" that resulted when baby boom women entered their child-bearing years. Recent child and young adult growth is also bolstered by the larger immigration waves of the last 25 years.

These trends have combined today to yield an older nation. Median U.S. age is 37.2—up from 32.6 in 1990.   Now nearly four in ten Americans (39 percent) are over age 45, up from 34 percent in 2000 and 31 percent in 1990. This advanced "middle aging" of our society may have important impacts on our politics, as this is the first census when persons age 45 and over represent a majority (53 percent) of the voting-age (18 and over) population (See Figure 1B). The political clout of older Americans will be even more magnified if the traditional higher turnout of this group continues, and as the competition for resources between the old and the young becomes more intense.[7]

Figure 1B: Share of U.S. Population by Age, 1990-2010
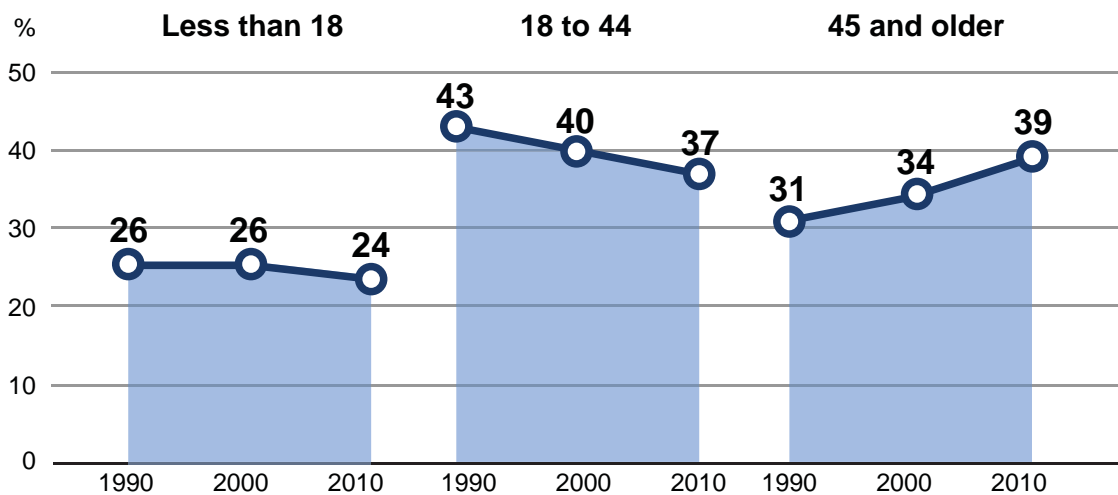
Source: Author's analysis of 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census data

B. Although all parts of the nation are aging, there is a growing divide between areas that are experiencing gains or losses in their younger populations.

The aging of America shows up in national statistics but is also pervasive at smaller geographies. Each of the 50 states increased its median age between 2000 and 2010, as did the vast majority of the country's 3,143 counties. Yet the pace of aging across the states and localities varies widely.

"Pulling Apart" by Age

Since 1990, the Northeast region increased its median age by more than five years to 39.2 while over the same period, the West increased by less than four years to 35.6. Both the Northeast and Midwest increased their median ages more than the South and West, sharpening the divide between the Snow Belt and the Sun Belt (Table 1).

Table 1: Median Ages, U.S. Regions and Selected States, 1990-2010

	Median Age			Change
	2010	**2000**	**1990**	**1990-2010**
U.S. Total	**37.2**	**35.3**	**32.6**	**4.6**
Regions				
Northeast	39.2	36.8	34.0	5.2
Midwest	37.7	35.6	32.9	4.8
South	37.0	35.3	32.7	4.3
West	35.6	33.8	31.7	3.9
States with Highest 2010 Median Age				
Maine	42.7	38.6	33.8	8.9
Vermont	41.5	37.7	32.9	8.6
West Virginia	41.3	38.9	35.3	6.0
New Hampshire	41.1	37.1	32.7	8.4
Florida	40.7	38.7	36.2	4.5
Pennsylvania	40.1	38.0	34.9	5.2
Connecticut	40.0	37.4	34.3	5.7
States with Lowest 2010 Median Age				
Utah	29.2	27.1	26.2	3.0
Texas	33.6	32.3	30.6	3.0
Alaska	33.8	32.4	29.3	4.5
Idaho	34.6	33.2	31.5	3.1
California	35.2	33.3	31.3	3.9
Georgia	35.3	33.4	31.4	3.9

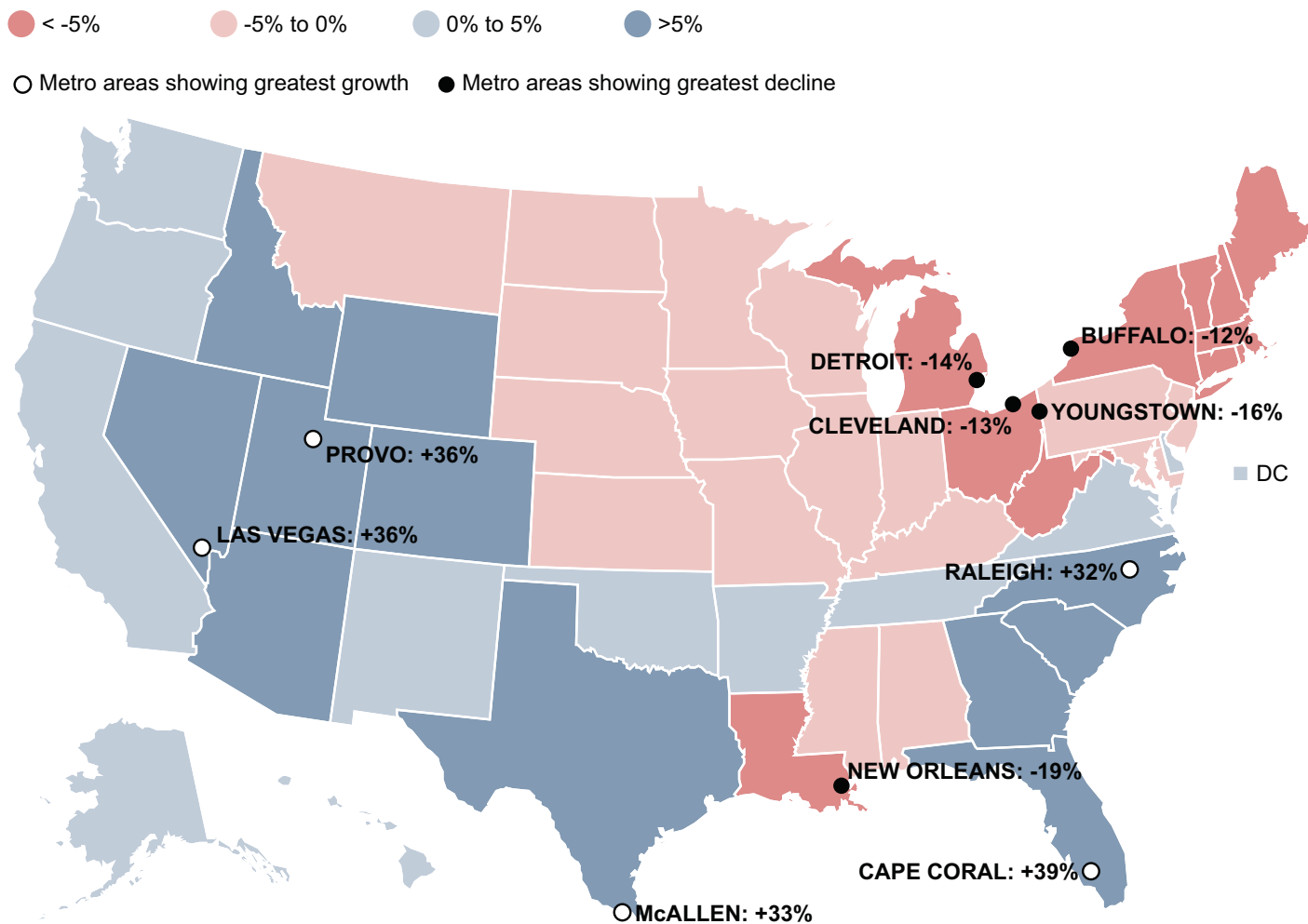*Source: Author's analysis of 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census data*

The divide is even more extreme among states. Seven states, including Maine, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut have median ages of 40 and above, and each (except Florida) showed increases of more than five years since 1990. In contrast, six states, including Utah, Texas, California, and Georgia have median ages below 35.5, and in all but one (Alaska) the increase since 1990 was less than four years.

This regional "pulling apart" by age mirrors the gains and losses of the younger population. While all states are showing gains in their 45-and-over population, the most rapid aging tends to occur in areas where the younger population is declining.[8]

Gainers and Losers among the Young

Map 1 shows the divide between states gaining and losing their younger populations. Twenty-two

Map 1: Percent Change in Under-45 Population, 2000-2010

● < -5%   ● -5% to 0%   ● 0% to 5%   ● >5%

○ Metro areas showing greatest growth   ● Metro areas showing greatest decline

BUFFALO: -12%

DETROIT: -14%

CLEVELAND: -13%   YOUNGSTOWN: -16%

PROVO: +36%

DC

LAS VEGAS: +36%

RALEIGH: +32%○

NEW ORLEANS: -19%

CAPE CORAL: +39%○

○McALLEN: +33%

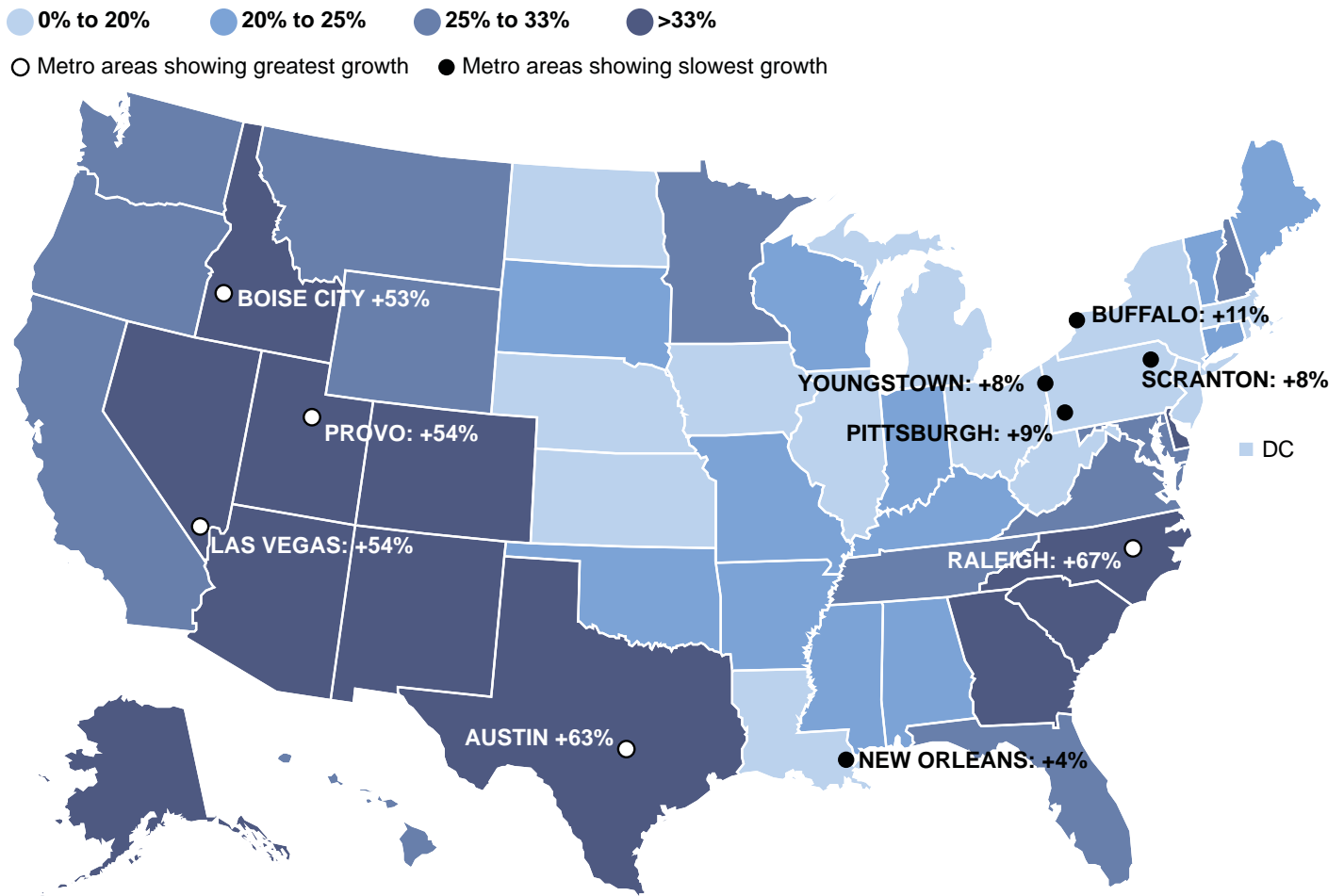*Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census data*

states and the District of Columbia showed gains in their under-45 populations, led by Nevada, Utah, Texas, Arizona and Idaho with 10-year gains of over 10 percent each. Close behind are southern youth gainers, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia.

These gains reflect a combination of immigration, domestic migration, and natural increase. Migration, both domestic and from abroad, occurs disproportionately among the young-adult population and also increases the population of child-bearing-age women. States in the Southeast, Texas and Mountain West, in particular, have attracted large numbers of migrants in the past decade.

The same applies to the 100 largest metro areas. Of these, 64 showed gains in their under-45 populations and most were located in the South and West. Twenty-nine of these metros, including Las Vegas, Orlando, Houston, and Atlanta, showed younger population growth rates exceeding 10 percent over the 2000–2010 decade (See Appendix B for a complete list).

In contrast to areas that are gaining young people, a fairly wide swath of the country showed declines in its under-45 population. This includes 28 states, with Michigan, Maine, Ohio, and Massachusetts losing more than 5 percent of their younger population. Most of these 28 states are located in the Northeast, Midwest or interior parts of the country, and have experienced little in-

Map 2: Percent Change in Over-45 Population, 2000-2010

● 0% to 20%　　● 20% to 25%　　● 25% to 33%　　● >33%

○ Metro areas showing greatest growth　　● Metro areas showing slowest growth

BOISE CITY +53%

BUFFALO: +11%

YOUNGSTOWN: +8%

SCRANTON: +8%

PROVO: +54%

PITTSBURGH: +9%

DC

LAS VEGAS: +54%

RALEIGH: +67%

AUSTIN +63%

NEW ORLEANS: +4%

Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census data

migration, or even net out-migration. This is also the case for most of the 36 large metro areas that showed younger population declines.

A notable exception in terms of geographic location is New Orleans, which led all other metro areas in the decline of its under-45 population due to out-migration in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Many other substantial decliners are located in the industrial Midwest, including Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, and Youngstown.

Older Gains Everywhere

These clear growth-and-decline patterns for the under-45 population can be juxtaposed with the pervasive growth of the age 45-and-older and above population in all states and metro areas (Map 2). As noted above, this older population grew by more than one quarter nationally over the 2000–2010 decade, but with variations across areas.

In fact, the states and metro areas that show the highest gains in their older population are similar to those that registered gains in their younger populations—for example, Nevada and Raleigh. Those that showed the smallest gains in their 45-and-over populations tended to show declines in their under-45 populations—for example, West Virginia and Youngstown. This is not because

these older people have recently migrated to the former areas. Rather, it reflects the fact that many of them moved there in their younger adult years and are now "aging in place" where they settled. This explains the range of older-population growth from 14.5 percent in West Virginia to 49.9 percent for Nevada.

Yet even with their slow older-population growth, many Snow Belt states and metros are aging rapidly due to declines in their younger populations. Maine, Vermont, and West Virginia lead the nation with the highest shares of the population age 45-and-over (greater than 45 percent). This is the opposite of the situation in places that are attracting young people. Despite gaining large numbers of seniors, Utah, Texas, and Georgia have low older-population shares (below 37 percent) thanks to substantial gains in their younger populations.

C. Areas experiencing the fastest senior (age 65+) growth are located in the Sun Belt, while areas with the highest concentration of seniors are located primarily in Florida, the Northeast, and the Midwest.

The 2000–2010 decade was one that saw the World War II generation (born between 1936 and 1945) graduate into seniorhood (age 65 and over). This generation is larger than the next older generation, often called the Depression generation (born roughly between 1926 and 1935), and its "aging in place" is the primary growth engine of the senior population in most parts of the country.[9]

As indicated earlier, the World War II generation received the benefits of coming of age during the prosperous 1950s and 1960s, when jobs, government subsidies for housing, and defined pension plans were prevalent. As such, it has often been dubbed the "lucky generation".[10] It bested the Depression generation in both size and economic status, and represents something of a bridge to the baby boom generation, whose members will begin becoming seniors this decade.

Areas that show growth in these seniors, due both to "aging in place" and migration, are likely to benefit from their above-average economic attributes. Since they are in their relatively younger elderly years, issues of disability or hospitalization are less an issue than for those in older ages. Such issues are more prominent in parts of the country with slow-growing elderly populations that are made up disproportionately of those "left behind" from earlier migration waves.[11]

Top Gainers for Seniors

The states with the fastest-growing senior populations are located in the West and to a lesser extent in the Southeast (Appendix A). A solid wall of western states that include Alaska, Nevada, Idaho, Colorado, Arizona, and Utah increased their senior populations by at least 30 percent from 2000 to 2010. Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia were among the southern senior-growth leaders. Senior populations are spreading well beyond what are usually thought of as "retirement magnet" states like Florida.

At the other extreme, seniors grew by less than 10 percent in 15 states, including Rhode Island, where the senior population declined. The slowest-growing states were Pennsylvania, North Dakota, Iowa, and Massachusetts, at rates less than 5 percent. Due to earlier out-migration, their "aging in place" populations have been depleted. This contrasts sharply with states like Nevada and Arizona where past migration gains increased their "aging in place" populations.

Fastest senior growth in metro areas is also found in the Sun Belt. Two North Carolina metros (Raleigh and Charlotte), and three Texas metros (Austin, Houston, and Dallas) were among the top ten senior gainers, which also included Atlanta and four metro areas in the West (Table 2). Thirty-two metro areas, mostly in the South and West, increased their senior populations by more than 25 percent. By contrast, 41 metro areas, mostly in the Northeast and Midwest, showed slower senior growth than the national rate (15 percent), including five that registered declines: Scranton, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, Buffalo, and Youngstown.

Table 2. Metro Areas with Fastest and Slowest Growing Senior and "Pre-Senior" Populations, 2000-2010

	Seniors (age 65+)			"Pre-Seniors" (age 55-64)	
Rank	Fastest Growing Senior Populations	Percent Change	Rank	Fastest Growing "Pre-Senior" Populations	Percent Change
1	Raleigh-Cary, NC	60%	1	Austin-Round Rock, TX	110%
2	Austin-Round Rock, TX	53%	2	Raleigh-Cary, NC	97%
3	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	50%	3	Boise City-Nampa, ID	92%
4	Boise City-Nampa, ID	46%	4	Colorado Springs, CO	81%
5	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	44%	5	Provo-Orem, UT	80%
6	Provo-Orem, UT	42%	6	Madison, WI	79%
7	Colorado Springs, CO	40%	7	Albuquerque, NM	77%
8	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	39%	8	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	77%
9	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	38%	9	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	77%
10	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	36%	10	Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	77%

Rank	Slowest Growing/Declining Senior Populations	Percent Change	Rank	Slowest Growing/Declining "Pre-Senior" Populations	Percent Change
1	Scranton--Wilkes-Barre, PA	-7%	1	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	31%
2	Pittsburgh, PA	-5%	2	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	31%
3	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	-5%	3	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	33%
4	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	-3%	4	Dayton, OH	36%
5	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	-2%	5	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	36%
6	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	1%	6	Scranton--Wilkes-Barre, PA	37%
7	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	1%	7	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	37%
8	Springfield, MA	2%	8	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	38%
9	Toledo, OH	3%	9	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	40%
10	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	4%	10	Pittsburgh, PA	40%

Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census data
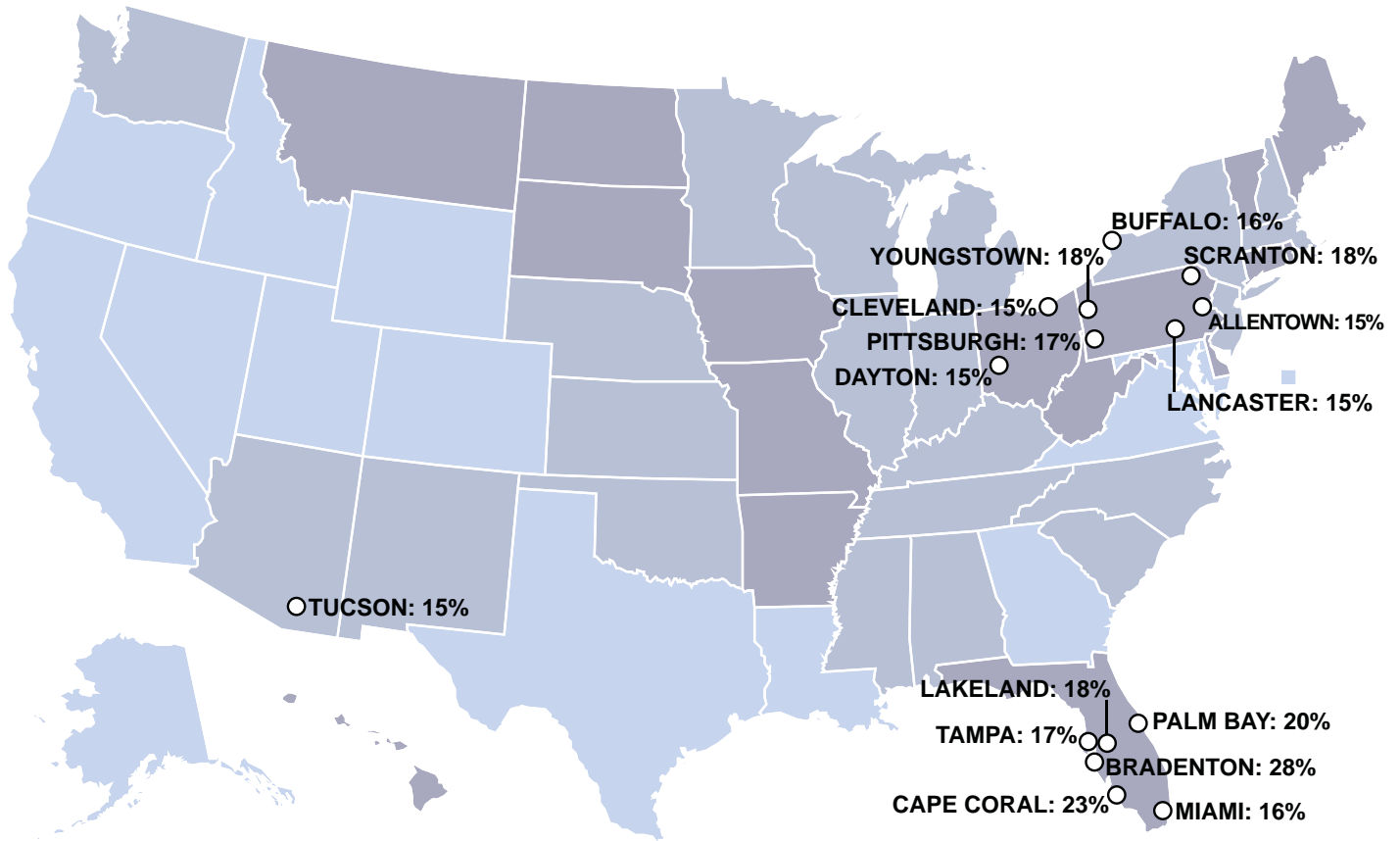
Senior Concentrations

Another way to look at senior populations focuses on where they represent higher shares or "concentrations" of total populations. These places have often seen out-migrations of younger populations, leaving senior populations overrepresented. Some are among the relatively few "retirement magnet" areas, which have shown a long history of attracting migrants during their senior years.

Florida and several of its metropolitan areas fall into this latter category. However, the former "youth decline and seniors left behind" situation is most common, and represents large swaths of states in the Northeast and Midwest (Map 3). Thus, while Florida's population has the highest concentration of seniors of any state (18 percent), the eight next most-concentrated states include West Virginia, Maine, Pennsylvania, and Iowa. Seventeen of the 25 states with highest senior concentrations are in the "Snowbelt."

Northeast and Midwest metro areas with high senior concentrations include industrial areas like Youngstown, Scranton, Pittsburgh, and Buffalo. Areas like this could face increasing fiscal strain in coming years because they are more likely to house "older" seniors with less financial resources. They may also have slow-growing or declining labor forces to provide tax revenues or engage in services, both voluntary and paid, to support increasingly aging populations.

Map 3: Percent Aged 65 and Above, 2010

⬤ Less than 12.5%   ⬤ 12.5% to 14%   ⬤ 14% and above

○ Metro areas with highest percentages

BUFFALO: 16%

YOUNGSTOWN: 18%   SCRANTON: 18%

CLEVELAND: 15%○   ○ALLENTOWN: 15%
PITTSBURGH: 17%○
DAYTON: 15%○

LANCASTER: 15%

○TUCSON: 15%

LAKELAND: 18%

TAMPA: 17%○   ○ PALM BAY: 20%
                           ○BRADENTON: 28%
CAPE CORAL: 23%○   ○MIAMI: 16%

Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census data

A Senior Explosion in Waiting

In some ways, current senior growth is just the lull before the storm. The next wave of senior growth will literally explode as the leading edge of baby boomers, who increased the age 55–64 population by 50 percent last decade, begin turning age 65 this decade.

Because aging in place is the primary component of senior growth, we can assume that those areas where age 55-64 "pre-senior" growth was greatest in 2000–2010, will likely show large senior growth in the decade ahead (Table 2).

Not unexpectedly, Sun Belt areas are among the fastest gainers of pre-seniors. Led by Austin's pre-senior growth rate of 110 percent, metro areas in Texas, the Southeast, and the West exhibit the fastest pre-senior growth. Many of these areas are also college towns, including Austin, Raleigh, Provo, Colorado Springs, and Madison. These and other gainers further down the list such as Atlanta, Charlotte, Phoenix, and Dallas possess knowledge-based and diversified economies that attracted many baby-boom migrants in the past few decades who are now poised to age in place (Appendix B).

D. Suburbs are aging more rapidly than cities with higher growth rates for their age-45-and-above populations and larger shares of seniors.

Ever since 1950s TV shows like "Ozzie and Harriet" and "Leave it to Beaver" popularized the post-war suburban lifestyle of young families with children, the suburban stereotype has been one of youth. Yet the children who resided in many of the suburbs in today's more established metro areas are the baby boomers now "aging in place" in these same communities.

Thus, it should not be too surprising that the boomers, who might be termed the "first suburban generation," are now leading the charge toward making the suburbs older.

In fact, among the nation's largest metro areas, suburbs are now outpacing cities in having greater growth and concentration of populations age 45 and above.

The suburban legacy of the age-45-and-over metropolitan population is revealed in Figure 2A, which shows that older populations are more highly represented in the suburbs than younger age groups.[12] Younger immigrant minorities are more likely to reside in cities than older whites, as are young adults who tend to desire city locations, at least before having children. Less than two-thirds of the population under age 35 resides in the suburbs compared with 72 percent of those aged 45 and above.

While suburban and city residents show gains in their boomer-driven older populations, the gains are greater in the suburbs for each post-45 age group (Figure 2B). This city-suburb growth differential is most pronounced among seniors aged 65 and above. This reflects the cumulative moves to the suburbs over the lifetimes of seniors who aged in place over the past 10 years.

The younger part of the population shows more modest gains for both cities and suburbs, with declines in the 35–44 year old group for both parts of the metropolitan area. Cities also registered declines in their under-15 population.

The "advanced middle aging" of the suburbs is made especially clear by Figure 2C, which shows the shift in suburban age distributions between 2000 and 2010. For the first time, the 45-64 age group is larger than younger adults, ages 25-44. When seniors are added, fully 40 percent of the suburban population is age 45 and older (up from 34 percent in 2000). Further, both the advanced middle aged and senior populations make up markedly larger shares of suburban than city populations, emphasizing the long-term impact that suburban baby boomers and their parents have made.

E. Metropolitan suburbs differ sharply in the degree to which they are attracting young adults and children.

While all suburbs are showing gains in their older populations, changes in their overall age structure reflect whether they are also gaining younger adults and children. Suburbs that are losing these younger segments of the population face stark challenges in how their institutions, infrastructure, and social services can adapt in communities that were built to accommodate youth. In some parts of the country, suburbs continue to attract these youthful populations, mitigating rapid aging to some extent. These areas, often fueled by the growth of new immigrant minority groups or new suburbanites, bear a closer resemblance to the stereotypical suburbs of the post-war era.

Losses and Gains among the Suburban Young

Just as with their wider metropolitan areas, there is an increasing divergence between suburbs that are gaining younger people and those that are not. Due to the minimal growth or out-migration of younger people from many Snow Belt metro areas, the suburbs of these areas are also losing young adults and children. Among the suburbs of nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas, 38 showed absolute declines in their under-45 populations from 2000 to 2010, and the top ten decliners included Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, and Providence (Table 3).

Over one-third (34) of the 100 suburbs showed declines in child populations under age 15. Map 4 shows these suburbs heavily concentrated in New England, the Eastern Seaboard, and the industrial Midwest, including the suburbs of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh,

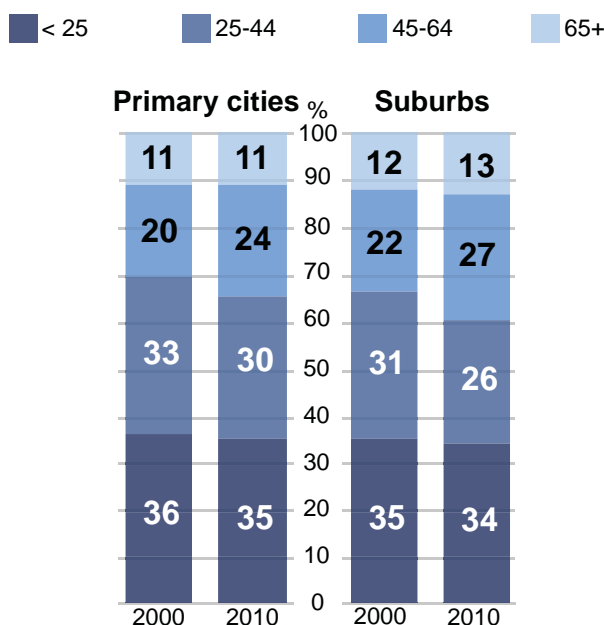## Figure 2A: Percent of Metro Area Residents Residing in Suburbs, 2010
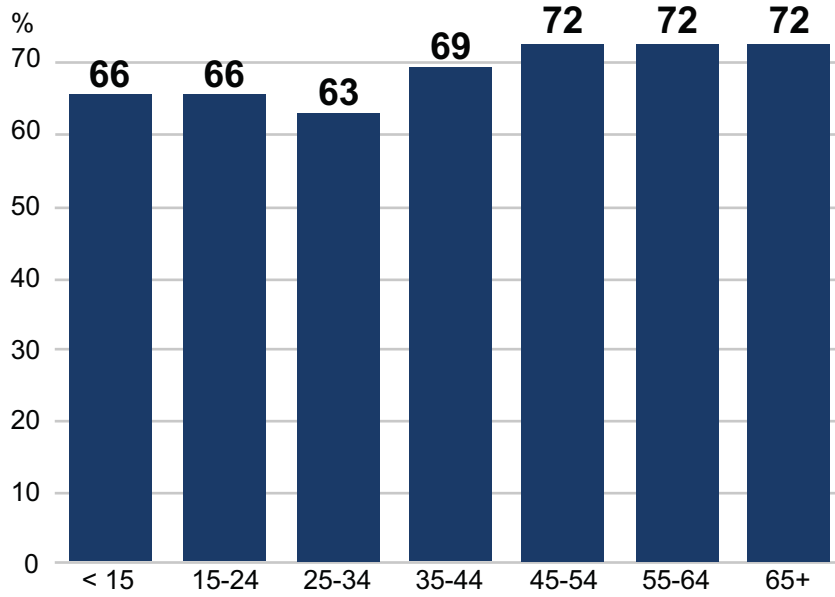
Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census data

Figure 2B: Primary City Growth and Suburb Growth, 2000-2010
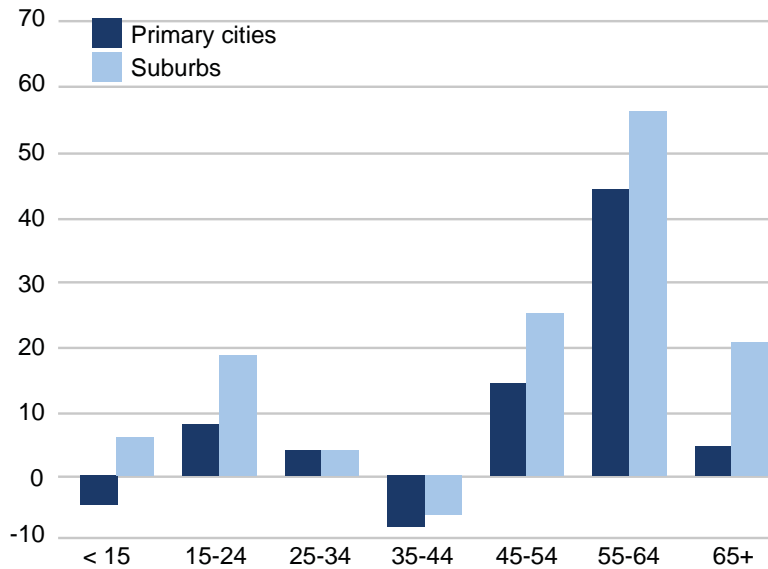
Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census data

Figure 2C: Age Structure of City and Suburb Populations, 2000-2010

Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census data

Cleveland, Detroit, and Milwaukee. Child losses also occurred in suburban San Francisco and Southern California. The suburbs of Los Angeles were the largest numeric losers of children, and suburban San Francisco registered a modest child decline.

The 62 metros where suburbs showed gains in their under-45 population are heavily concentrated in the South and West. While the under-45 population for the nation grew at only 1.4 percent, 18 of these areas showed younger-population growth rates exceeding 20 percent, led by Phoenix, Provo, Las Vegas and Austin. The highest suburban youth population growth occured in metros located in Texas, the interior West, and the Southeast—areas that experienced metropolitan-wide domestic migration or immigration gains, and where overall suburban growth is high (Appendix D).

Youth-gaining and youth-losing suburbs differ on another important dimension: the share of their total populations that is older (age 45 and older). While 40 percent of all suburbanites are aged 45 and above, Table 3 shows that those areas that have gained the most young people have older-population shares that are well below 40 percent (with the exception of retirement magnet Cape Coral). At the same time, suburban areas losing the most young people all have older-population shares above 40 percent.

The loss of child and young-adult populations is accentuating the aging of more established suburbs in slow-growing metropolitan areas, while suburbs of fast-growing metro areas, that are gaining youthful migrants, are finding a demographic counterweight to their older populations.

City Youth Losses and Gains

Unlike the suburbs, cities have undergone decades of out-migration, especially among young adult families and children. So given the relatively low national growth rates of the under-age-45 population, it follows that even more cities than suburbs lost young people in the 2000s. Among the 100 primary cities studied here, 46 showed declines in their under-45 populations and 59 showed declines in their under-15 child populations (Appendix Table C).

Table 3. Suburbs with Greatest Growth and Decline in Population Under Age 45, 2000-2010

Rank	Suburbs of Metro Area*	Under Age 45: Percent Change 2000-2010	2010 Share of Population Age 45+
	Greatest Growth: Under Age 45		
1	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	52%	37.1
2	Provo-Orem, UT	50%	22.5
3	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	46%	35.6
4	Austin-Round Rock, TX	45%	33.6
5	Boise City-Nampa, ID	39%	34.1
6	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	36%	26.5
7	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	36%	52.2
8	San Antonio, TX	35%	38.2
9	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	30%	33.6
10	Raleigh-Cary, NC	27%	36.2
	Greatest Decline: Under Age 45		
1	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	-14%	47.9
2	Pittsburgh, PA	-12%	48.2
3	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	-11%	40.8
4	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	-11%	46.6
5	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	-10%	45.3
6	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	-9%	44.0
7	Syracuse, NY	-9%	44.2
8	Rochester, NY	-9%	45.0
9	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	-9%	42.4
10	Springfield, MA	-8%	44.2

Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census data

New Orleans, Detroit, and Cleveland experienced the largest losses of under-45 residents, while New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco also lost younger population (Table 4). Each city also showed declines in its child populations.

Although cities have a reputation for losing their youth to the suburbs, some posted large gains in their younger populations. The top gainers include several Florida cities (Cape Coral, Lakeland, and Orlando), two in interior California (Bakersfield and Sacramento), and McAllen TX, all associated with growing Hispanic populations. Other gainers include Las Vegas, Raleigh, and Charlotte.

Senior Concentrations in Suburbs and Cities

High concentrations of seniors (age 65+) as a share of the total population typically result from a modest growth or decline of the younger population, or because of exceptional gains from in-migration of seniors. Yet when the younger part of the population is growing rapidly, senior concentrations can be low.

Suburban areas typically had low senior concentrations in years when they were gaining large numbers of youth. Exceptions were those in Florida and other retirement magnet metros. However, the recent aging in place of seniors in most parts of the country, coupled with youth declines in many suburban areas, leads to greater concentrations of seniors in suburban areas outside of the retirement magnets.

Map 4: Metro Suburbs with Declining Under-15 Populations, 2000-2010
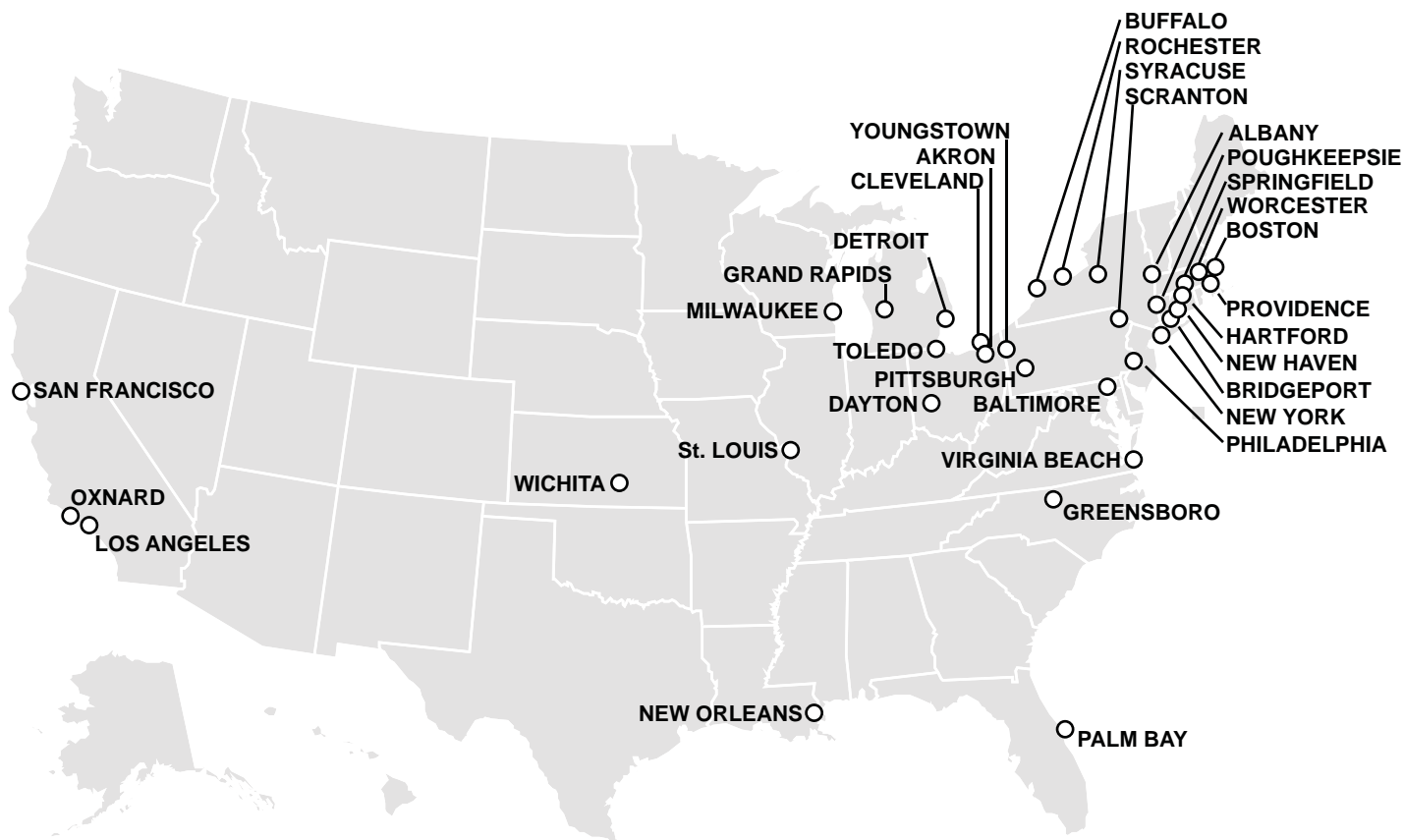
Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census data

Table 5 shows the list of the suburbs with highest senior concentrations. In addition to five retirement magnets in Florida and one in Arizona, led by Bradenton with a 28 percent senior concentration, the list also contains Youngstown, Scranton, Pittsburgh, and Buffalo. Other suburban areas with senior concentrations above 15 percent are Cleveland, Providence, Hartford, Rochester, and a trio of smaller Pennsylvania suburbs surrounding Allentown, Lancaster, and Harrisburg (Appendix D).

These suburban senior concentrations stand in contrast to suburbs displaying more traditional age structures. El Paso, Provo, Houston, Salt Lake City, and Atlanta all have senior concentrations below 9 percent due to their recent, substantial younger population growth.

Cities also show wide disparities in senior concentration. Those with concentrations over 14 percent are a mix of Florida retirement magnets such as Bradenton at 23 percent, Honolulu, and other cities with slow-growing or declining youth populations such as Scranton, Youngstown, and Chattanooga, each over 14 percent.

Many cities now have lower senior concentrations than their suburbs, a result of the suburbanization of "aging in place" populations over many decades. Thus, there are 25 cities with senior concentrations under 10 percent, led by Provo, Austin, and Riverside, each with less than 8 percent of their populations over age 65.

**Table 4. Primary Cities with Greatest Growth and Decline in Population
Under Age 45, 2000-2010**

Rank	Primary Cities of Metro Area*	Under Age 45: Percent Change 2000-2010	2010 Share of Population Age 45+
	Greatest Growth: Under Age 45		
1	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	47%	46.4
2	Raleigh-Cary, NC	37%	30.9
3	Bakersfield, CA	36%	29.8
4	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	30%	31.4
5	Orlando-Kissimmee, FL	26%	31.2
6	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	23%	44.4
7	Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville, SC	22%	35.0
8	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	17%	32.2
9	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	16%	36.5
10	Sacramento--Arden-Arcade--Roseville, CA	16%	34.8
	Greatest Decline: Under Age 45		
1	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	-34%	37.2
2	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	-30%	37.6
3	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	-25%	38.3
4	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	-24%	41.9
5	Dayton, OH	-22%	37.5
6	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	-19%	39.0
7	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	-15%	34.8
8	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	-15%	36.3
9	Akron, OH	-15%	38.6
10	Toledo, OH	-14%	36.9

Official metro names are shortened
Source: Author's analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census data

CONCLUSION

The 2010 Census provides a clear message about the nation's age structure: The older population is growing everywhere. This is because the entire baby boom generation is now past age 45. Over the 2000-2010 decade, the population aged 45 and over grew 18 times as fast as those under 45. In the 2010s, the first wave of baby boomers will begin inflating America's senior (age 65+) population to unprecedented levels.

The specter of a rapidly aging society is now a front-and-center issue for policymakers, politicians, and boomers themselves. All are concerned with the future costs of medical care, retirement programs, and a host of public and private services that must be adapted to an older population.

Yet the impacts of this collective aging will vary greatly across the American landscape. A divide is emerging between areas of the country that are gaining young people, and those in which the up-and-coming generation is shrinking. This unevenness renders some regions far more vulnerable to the costs of aging.

In the last decade, more than half of all states and over one-third of large metro areas registered declines in their under-45 population. Largely located in the Northeast and Midwest, these areas confront diminishing tax bases and slower-growing labor forces than the youth-gaining parts of the

Suburbs and Primary Cities with Highest and Lowest Percent of Population Age 65 and Above, 2010

	Suburbs			Primary Cities	
Rank	Highest Percent Age 65 and Above	Percent Age 65+	Rank	Highest Percent Age 65 and Above	Percent Age 65+
1	Bradenton-Sarasota-Venice, FL	27.9	1	Bradenton-Sarasota-Venice, FL	23.0
2	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	25.6	2	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	20.7
3	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	21.6	3	Honolulu, HI	18.3
4	Tucson, AZ	19.4	4	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	17.0
5	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	18.3	5	Scranton--Wilkes-Barre, PA	16.4
6	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	18.1	6	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	16.3
7	Scranton--Wilkes-Barre, PA	17.9	7	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	15.8
8	Pittsburgh, PA	17.8	8	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	15.3
9	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	17.5	9	Chattanooga, TN-GA	14.7
10	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	17.0	10	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	14.0
	Lowest Percent Age 65 and Above			**Lowest Percent Age 65 and Above**	
1	El Paso, TX	6.3	1	Provo-Orem, UT	5.8
2	Provo-Orem, UT	6.7	2	Austin-Round Rock, TX	7.0
3	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	8.4	3	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	7.9
4	Salt Lake City, UT	8.4	4	Raleigh-Cary, NC	8.3
5	Colorado Springs, CO	8.6	5	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	8.4
6	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	8.9	6	Bakersfield, CA	8.4
7	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	9.0	7	Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	8.5
8	Ogden-Clearfield, UT	9.0	8	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	8.5
9	Austin-Round Rock, TX	9.0	9	Columbus, OH	8.6
10	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	9.0	10	Lancaster, PA	8.6

Official metro names are shortened
Source: Author's analysis of 2010 Census data

country. Declines in young adult and child populations, reflecting out-migration and fewer births in existing households, serve to increase the concentrations of left-behind boomer and senior populations who will continue to "age in place."

In youth-gaining states and metro areas—located especially in Texas, the Southeast, and Intermountain West—younger immigrants and domestic migrants serve to moderate the effects of aging. Yet these places, too, have a challenge: their boomer and senior populations are growing more rapidly than in other parts of the country more accustomed to serving older populations.

The 2010 census also provides a new view of the suburbs that contrasts sharply with their earlier image as a bastion of children and young families. Since the baby boomers have made the suburbs their primary residence, the suburbs are aging with the first suburban generation. Boomers and seniors are more likely to live in the suburbs than younger people, and the older population is growing more rapidly in the suburbs than cities. And in one-third of all suburbs, there was an absolute decline in child populations over the 2000-2010 decade.

Not surprisingly, the youth-gaining areas have more racially and ethnically diverse younger populations than those that are not attracting youth.[13] This fact adds a cultural dimension to the inevitable competition that will arise over scarce public resources desired by age-related constituencies—for example, schools and child care versus age-care and senior services. Yet, the demographic future of the nation relies heavily on its youth and the areas where they reside, and the challenge in the decades ahead will be to balance their needs with the needs of baby boomers

and seniors who are aging in place everywhere.

The following appendices to this report are available at http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/0628_census_age_frey.aspx:

Appendix A: US States: 2000-2010 Percent Change by Age, and Changes in Percent of Population Age 45+ and Age 65+

Appendix B: 100 Largest Metro Areas: 2000-2010 Percent Change by Age, and Changes in Percent of Population Age 45+ and Age 65+

Appendix C: Primary Cities of 100 Largest Metro Areas: 2000-2010 Percent Change by Age, and Changes in Percent of Population Age 45+ and Age 65+

Appendix D: Suburbs of 100 Largest Metro Areas: 2000-2010 Percent Change by Age, and Changes in Percent of Population Age 45+ and Age 65+

ENDNOTES

1. The most widely accepted birth dates of the baby boom generation are between 1946 and 1964. However, to interpret this analysis in terms of 5 year age categories, we use the years 1946-1965 as the years that roughly comprise the baby boom generation.

2. The 2010 data are based on the U.S. Census Bureau's Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics, 2010 files, released for the nation on May 26, 2011. These are the first data to be released from the 2010 Census to show details of the nation's broad age groups.

3. Lindsay M Howden, and Julie A. Meyer, "Age and Sex Composition: 2010." 2010 Census Briefs C2010BR-03 (Washington DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

4. OMB defines "principal cities" for metropolitan areas, which include the largest city in each, plus additional cities that meet specific population size and employment requirements. William H. Frey and others, "Tracking Metropolitan America Into the 21st Century: A Field Guide to the New Metropolitan and Micropolitan Definitions" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2004). Many principal cities, while important destinations or residences for local populations, do not accord with what most Americans would regard to be a "city." For instance, the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA metro area—which is composed of Los Angeles and Orange counties—contains 25 OMB-designated principal cities. The cities examined in this report are termed "primary cities" to distinguish them from OMB's concept.

5. Immigrants to the United States between 2008–2009 accounted for only 0.3 percent of the 2009 population aged 45 and above according to the 2009 American Community Survey. This even overstates the impact of immigration because it does not subtract emigrants from the United States over the same period.

6. Landon Y. Jones, *Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boom Generation* (New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1980); Mary Elizabeth Hughes and Angela M. O'Rand " The Lives and Times of the Baby Boomers" (Washington: Population Reference Bureau and Russell Sage Foundation, 2004); William H. Frey, "Mapping the Growth of Older America: Seniors and Boomers in the Early 21st Century" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2007).

7. Thom File and Sarah Crissey, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008," Current Population Reports P20-562 (U.S. Census Bureau, May 2010).

8. One exception to this is Florida due to its historic gains in older populations; it maintains an increasingly older population while also attracting younger people.

9. The phenomenon of "aging in place" rather than senior migration explains much of the difference between areas with fast-growing and slow-growing senior populations. Aging in place for seniors pertains to the ascension of existing under-age-65 populations into the 65-and-over age category over time. In 2000-2010, people born between 1936-1945 (the "World War II" generation) were responsible for much of the senior growth in most of the country. The exceptions to this generalization are "retirement magnet" areas such as those in Florida that gain seniors from migration as well as aging in place. See pp 7-11 in William H. Frey, "Mapping the Growth of Older America: Seniors and Boomers in the Early 21st Century" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2007).

10. Elwood Carlson, *The Lucky Few: Between the Greatest Generation and the Baby Boom* (New York: Springer, 2008).

11. An analysis of areas with fast senior population growth shows that senior populations there have higher incomes, more education and more people in their "young senior" (aged 65-74) than areas with slow senior growth. This is attributed to the selective, earlier migration of this generation as young adults who are now "aging in place." See pp. 7-11 in William H. Frey, "Mapping the Growth of Older America: Seniors and Boomers in the Early 21st Century. (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2007).

12. William H. Frey, "Melting Pot Cities and Suburbs: Racial and Ethnic Change in Metro America in the 2000s" (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 2011).

13. William H. Frey, "America's Diverse Future: Initial Glimpses of the U.S. Child Population from the 2010 Census" (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 2011).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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