

BY WILLIAM H. FREY

In the 1950s, when Ozzie and Harriet were cultural icons, the so-called family lifestyle could be found in cities as well as in the rapidly expanding suburbs. Cities also served as way stations for the young during their dating and maturing years. Indeed, big-city populations were a microcosm of America.

Two things have happened to change this picture. First, childbearing is no longer the national preoccupation – less than one in four households fit the married with children mold. Second, cities have declined as the preferred residence. More than half of the population lives in the suburbs, and another fifth live outside of metropolitan areas altogether.

With the increasing diversity of household choices, large cities are assuming lifestyle niches. Some are family-friendly, some are havens for adult singles, and still others are home to unattached seniors.

FAMILY CITIES

Immigrant minorities – especially Hispanics – tend to form traditional families. Hence “Ozzie and Harriet” cities today are no longer heartland places, but California and Texas cities like Santa Ana and El Paso.

CITIES WHERE SINGLES RULE

San Francisco is home to more pet dogs than children. The City by the Bay is, in fact, a prototype for the adult boutique

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city, where married-with-children families represent only one out of every eight households, compared with one out of every three in Anaheim. Seattle, Minneapolis, Washington, Boston, Atlanta and Austin also rank high on the measure with four in 10 households headed by a single person under age 65.

A major reason why these cities are relatively unattractive to the typical middle class family is their high cost of living. Many singles in these areas are not new migrants but rather aging boomers, who moved there as yuppies and watched their housing stakes soar in value.

These same cities generally have high shares of unmarried partners of persons of the same or opposite sex. Portland, Oregon tops the list on this dimension. More surprising, perhaps, Phoenix is also on this list for reasons suggested just below.

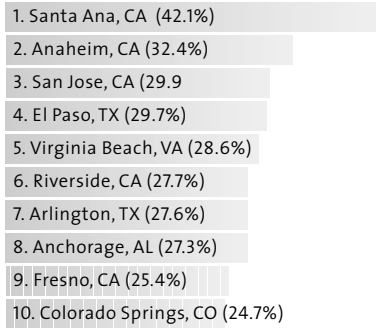
THE SENIOR SET

A growing number of senior citizens are living by themselves or with non-relative housemates, mostly in northern cities where the young have exited. Pittsburgh and St. Louis lead this list today. But as America continues to age,





OZZIE AND HARRIET CITIES CIRCA 2000
Cities with pop. over 250,000 ranked by percent married couples with children



SINGLES MINGLES

Cities with pop. over 250,000 ranked by percent of households classed as “nonfamilies” under age 65

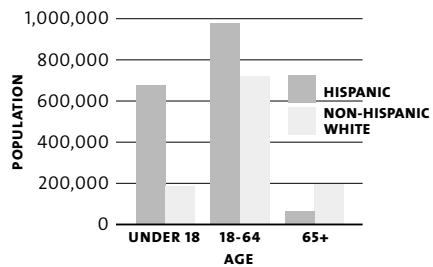


the trend will be evident in cities of all sizes in the heartland.

CLASH OF GENERATIONS

By contrast, other cities are following the pattern of Los Angeles, which is a magnet for immigrant families. Here, the young revitalize city neighborhoods, schools and consumer

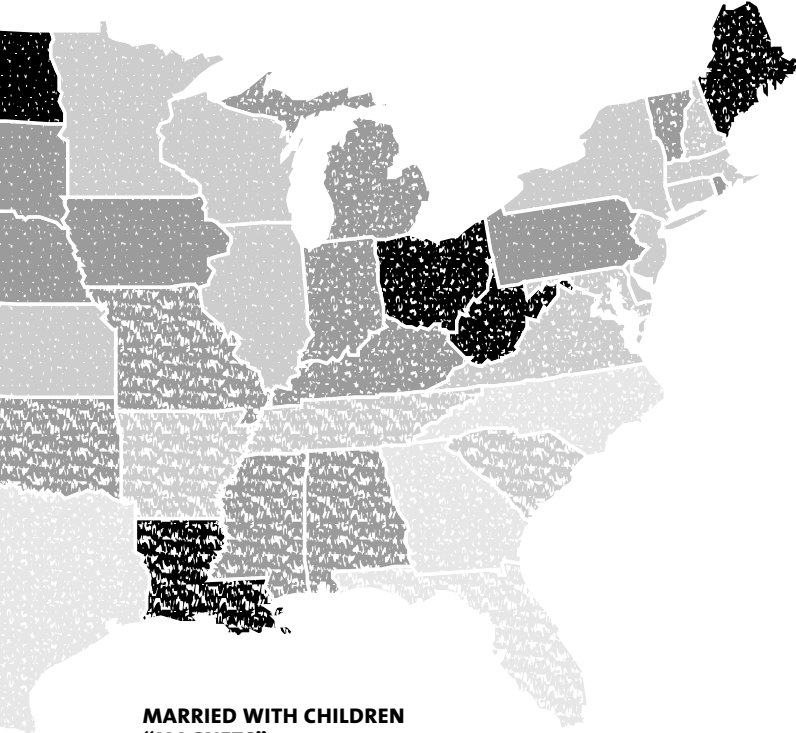
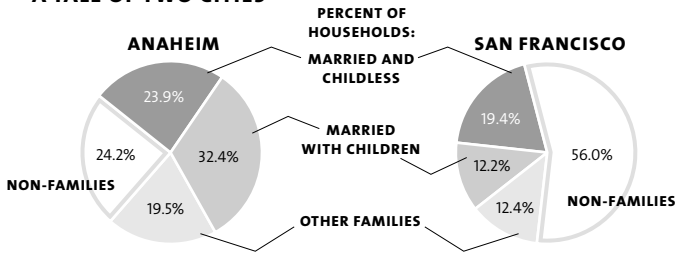
**RACIAL GENERATION GAP:
 LOS ANGELES, 2000**



markets – but also help to create a “racial generation gap” between the aging, largely white population, and the growing, youthful immigrant minority population. The gap will play out in each group’s competing demands for public goods – e.g., schools vs. libraries.

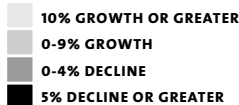
In the 1950s, suburban rings full of families surrounded almost every city. Now, new

A TALE OF TWO CITIES



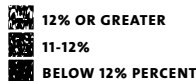
MARRIED WITH CHILDREN "MAGNETS"

States classed by percent growth in Married With Children households, 1990-2000



SPLIT-UP STATES

States classed by the percent of persons 15 and older who are either divorced or separated



household migration patterns seem to be designating broad stretches of the nation's territory as family-oriented *regions*.

Eighteen states registered a decline in the number of traditional nuclear families in the 1990s, while 12 others proved to be family magnets. In California and Texas, the growth in families was tied to influxes of Hispanic

immigrants. Elsewhere, the driving force seems to be the high cost of living in congested suburbs of the Northeast and Midwest.

A state's growth in families, it should be noted, is not correlated with marital bliss. Nevada, the top family magnet state, also leads the nation in the percent of adults who are divorced or separated. **M**

LIVING IN SIN

Cities with pop. over 250,000 ranked by percent of households with unmarried partners

1. Portland, OR (8.1%)
2. Seattle, WA (7.8%)
3. Minneapolis, MN (7.8%)
4. Long Beach, CA (7.6%)
5. Oakland, CA (7.5%)
6. Phoenix, AZ (7.5%)
7. Newark, NJ (7.5%)
8. San Francisco, CA (7.5%)
9. Fresno, CA (7.4%)
10. Anchorage, AL (7.3%)

SENIOR SINGLES

Cities with pop. over 250,000 ranked by percent of households classed as "nonfamilies" aged 65 and above

1. Pittsburgh, PA (13.7%)
2. St. Louis, MO (12.9%)
3. Miami, FL (12.5%)
4. Louisville, KY (12.4%)
5. Buffalo, NY (12.1%)
6. Philadelphia, PA (11.9%)
7. Baltimore, MD (11.3%)
8. Cincinnati, OH (11.1%)
9. Cleveland, OH (11.1%)
10. Toledo, OH (11.0%)