

POPULATION BRIEF

Trends in the Western U.S.

The State of Utah

By Don E. Albrecht

Overview

Rural development is the process by which the lives of individuals and families living in rural areas are improved. Effective rural development necessarily involves several components that include 1) good jobs that provide individuals and families the opportunity to earn and maintain a livable income; 2) a chance to complete an education and have lifelong opportunities to learn and improve one's circumstances; 3) and the opportunity to live a reasonably long and healthy life. Communities that effectively meet these conditions are likely to retain existing residents and attract new residents and thus experience population growth.

Additionally, effective rural development means that opportunities to obtain high-quality employment, complete an education, and live a long and healthy life must be available to all residents of the community, rather than only to certain segments of the population.

The first step in advancing an effective rural development program is to carefully assess baseline conditions. In response, the Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is providing a set of population briefs that provide some of this baseline information. Each population brief will assess one of the components of rural development listed above. This brief examines population changes in Utah. Each brief will explore overall conditions, and then examine the extent to which opportunities are available to all segments of the population by making comparisons on race/ethnicity, gender, family structure or geography. The geographic component will provide comparisons between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas and will compare

the west with the remainder of the United States. Further, population briefs for each of the 13 states comprising the western region are developed that provide more detailed information on rural development issues. Data for these population briefs are obtained from the United States Census.

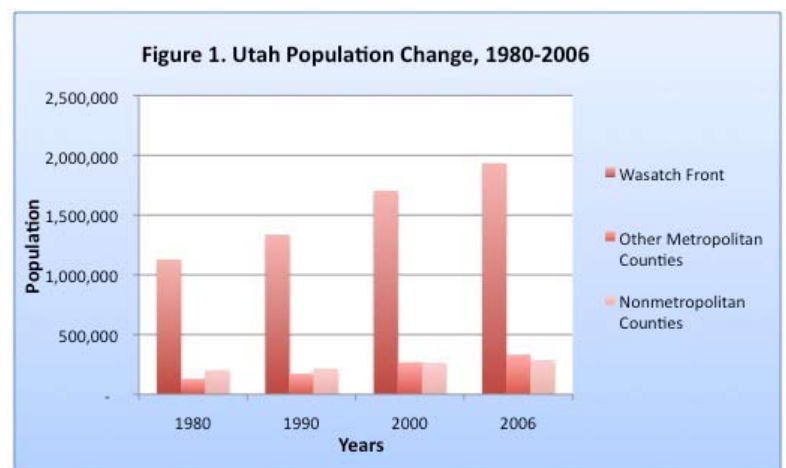
Rapid Growth in Utah

The population of the State of Utah has grown rapidly in recent years, increasing from less than 1.5 million in 1980 to over 2.5 million in 2006, a 74.5 percent boost. Only three states (Nevada, Arizona and Florida) had higher growth rates during this period. The distribution of Utah's population varies widely from one part of the state to another. Similarly, there was extensive variation in the rate of population change. The Utah population has long been concentrated along the Wasatch Front, with remaining residents living in smaller communities scattered throughout the state. As shown in Figure 1, this trend continues as about three-fourths of Utah residents live in the four counties (Weber, Davis, Salt Lake and Utah) that comprise the Wasatch Front. The proportion of the State's population living along the Wasatch Front has remained relatively consistent throughout this 26-year time frame. The population in these four counties increased from about 1.1 million in 1980 to over 1.9 million in 2006.

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Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan

All of the state's five metropolitan areas experienced significant growth (Table 1). The six metropolitan counties not a part of the Wasatch Front (Cache, Morgan, Summit, Tooele, Juab, and Washington) had extremely rapid population growth between 1980 and 2006, expanding from 129,919 residents to 331,549, an increase of 155 percent. The 19 nonmetropolitan counties also experienced population growth, but at a substantially lower rate. The nonmetropolitan counties grew from 202,790 persons in 1980 to 285,547 residents in 2006, an increase of 40.8 percent. In six Utah counties (Summit, Tooele, Utah, Washington, Iron and Wasatch) the population more than doubled between



1980 and 2006. Population growth was especially rapid in Washington County (St. George) where the number of residents increased from 26,065 in 1980 to 126,312 in 2006, an incredible increase of 384.6 percent. In contrast, during this same time period three counties (Carbon, Emery and Rich) experienced population declines.

Figure 2 presents a map of the state showing population by county. The clustering of the population along the Wasatch Front is apparent, as is the low population density in many other parts of the state. Figure 3 shows that rapid population growth was the norm, but was certainly not universal.

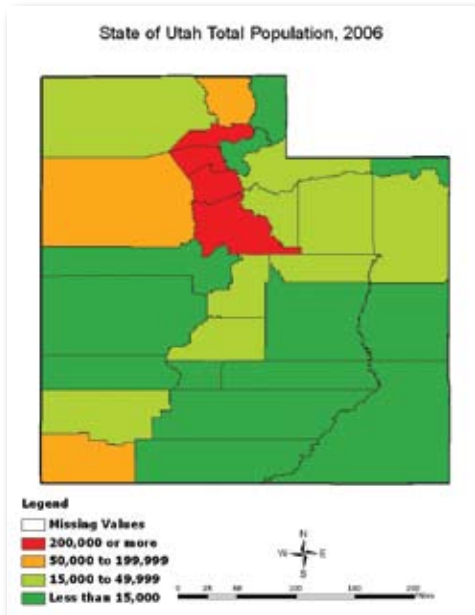


Figure 2

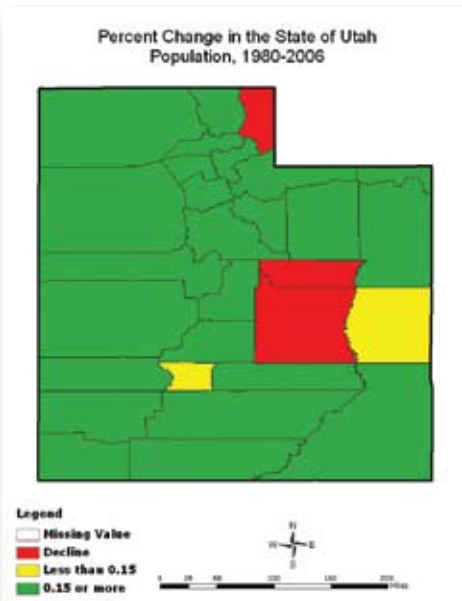


Figure 3

Minority Population Growth

Not only has the population of Utah increased significantly in recent years, but there has also been an important transition in the composition of that population. Most striking is the rapid growth of minority, and especially Hispanic populations. Figure 4 provides data on population change by race/ethnicity from 1980 to 2000. The 2006 population estimates do not provide numbers by race/ethnicity and so the 2000 Census provides the most recent data available for this comparison. In 1980, 92.6 percent of the Utah residents were White. During the ensuing two decades, the number of Hispanic residents in the state increased from 60,045 to 200,005 an increase of 233 percent. In 1980, Hispanics comprised 4.1 percent of the Utah population; by 2000, this proportion had increased to 9.1 percent. There was also a 149 percent increase in the number of Asian residents in Utah; however, their numbers were initially quite small. By 2000, while still a predominately White state, the proportion of minority residents had increased significantly.

Income, Poverty and Education

With the diversification of the State's population, it is relevant to consider how various segments of the population are doing relative to income, poverty levels and education. Overall, four western states have higher median household incomes than Utah, but only one state (Nevada) has lower poverty levels. However, as is apparent in Figures 5 through 9, some segments of the population are doing much better than others. Figure 5 shows that median household incomes are much higher in metro counties (\$46,804) than in nonmetro counties (\$35,201). Income levels for White Utah residents are also much higher than for minority residents. Likewise, Figure 6 shows that poverty levels are much higher for nonmetro and minority households than for White metro households. In 2000, 26.2 percent of nonmetro minority households were in poverty, compared to only 7.5 percent of metro White households. Poverty rate differences are even more pronounced when examining household structure, where female-headed households are much

Table 1: Population change for Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Counties in Utah, 1980 - 2006

	1980	1990	2000	2006	Change 1980 - 2006	
					Total	Percent
State						
Total	1,461,027	1,722,850	2,233,169	2,550,063	1,089,036	74.5
Metropolitan Areas						
Total	1,258,237	1,503,024	1,950,033	2,264,516	1,006,279	8.0
Logan						
Cache County	57,176	70,183	91,391	98,662	41,486	72.6
Ogden - Clearfield						
Total	296,073	351,799	442,656	497,640	201,567	68.1
Davis County	146,540	187,941	238,994	276,259	129,719	88.5
Morgan County	4,917	5,528	7,129	8,134	3,217	65.4
Weber County	144,616	158,330	196,533	213,247	68,631	47.5
Provo - Orem						
Total	223,626	269,407	376,774	474,180	250,544	112.0
Utah County	218,106	263,590	368,536	464,760	246,654	113.1
Juab County	5,530	5,817	8,238	9,420	3,890	70.3
St. George						
Washington County	26,065	48,560	90,354	126,312	100,247	384.6
Salt Lake City						
Total	655,297	768,075	968,858	1,067,722	412,425	62.9
Salt Lake County	619,066	725,956	898,387	978,701	359,635	58.1
Summit County	10,198	15,518	29,736	35,469	25,271	247.8
Tooele County	26,033	26,601	40,735	53,552	27,519	105.7
Nonmetropolitan Counties						
Total	202,790	214,826	263,136	285,547	82,757	40.8
Beaver County	4,378	4,765	6,005	6,294	1,916	43.8
Box Elder County	33,222	36,485	42,745	47,197	13,975	42.1
Carbon County	22,179	20,228	20,422	19,469	-2,710	-12.2
Daggett County	769	690	921	947	178	23.1
Duchesne County	12,565	12,645	14,371	15,701	3,136	25.0
Emery County	11,451	10,332	10,860	10,698	-753	-6.6
Garfield County	3,673	3,980	4,735	4,534	861	23.4
Grand County	8,241	6,620	8,485	8,999	758	9.2
Iron County	17,349	20,789	33,779	40,544	23,195	133.7
Kane County	4,024	5,169	6,046	6,532	2,508	62.3
Millard County	8,970	11,333	12,405	12,390	3,420	38.1
Piute County	1,329	1,277	1,435	1,347	18	1.4
Rich County	2,100	1,725	1,961	2,040	-60	-2.9
San Juan County	12,253	12,621	14,413	14,265	2,012	16.4
Sanpete County	14,620	16,259	22,763	24,196	9,576	65.5
Sevier County	14,727	15,431	18,842	19,640	4,913	33.4
Uintah County	20,506	22,211	25,224	27,955	7,449	36.3
Wasatch County	8,523	10,089	15,215	20,255	11,732	137.7
Wayne County	1,911	2,177	2,509	2,544	633	33.1

more likely to be in poverty than married-couple households. Figure 7 shows that 36.8 percent of nonmetro households headed by a single female were in poverty compared to only 4.9 percent of the married-couple households in metro areas. This comparison is relevant because the number of non married-couple households, and especially female-headed households, has increased rapidly.

Figures 8 and 9 present data on education attainment levels in Utah. Overall, 86 percent of Utah adults have a high school degree, while 20.2 percent have at least a college degree. Only one western state (Wyoming) has a higher proportion of adults who have completed high school, while five states (California, Colorado, Hawaii, Washington, and Wyoming) have

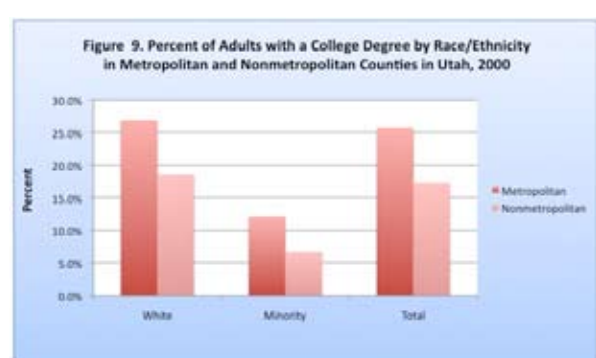
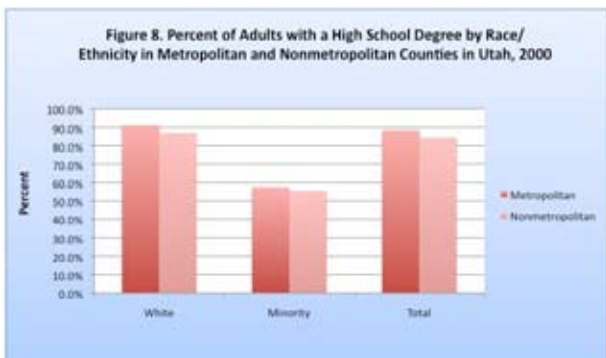
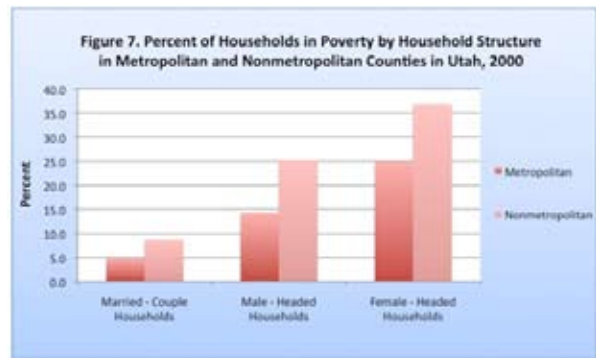
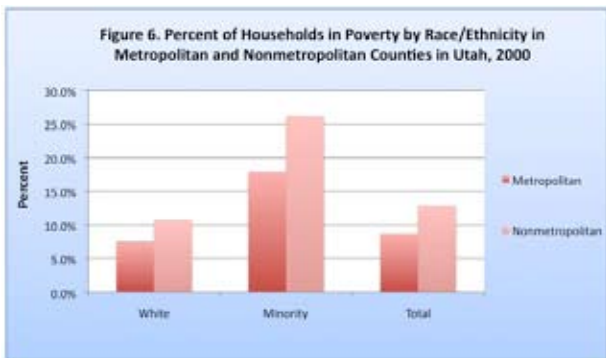
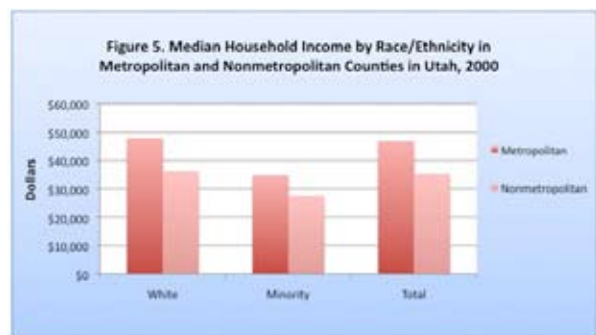
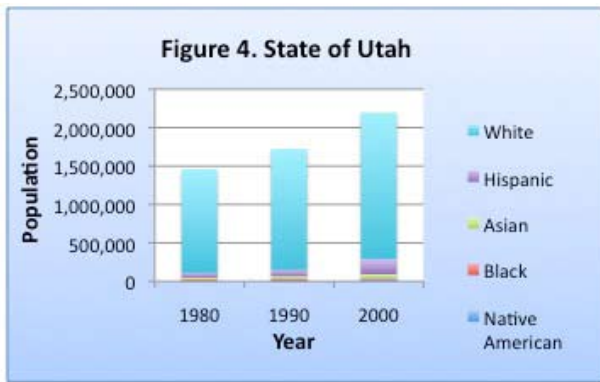
higher percentages with college degrees. Educational differences are extensive for persons with different characteristics. While nearly 90 percent of White adults have completed at least a high school degree, barely more than half (56 percent) of minority adults have a high school degree. Similarly, while more than 20 percent of White adults have a college degree, just over 8 percent of minority residents are similarly educated. It is also relevant to note that the proportion of metro residents with a college degree is significantly greater than the proportion of nonmetro residents who have completed college.

Conclusion

Utah is unique among states in many respects. Of the 50 states, Utah has the highest birth rate, the highest fertility

rate, the fewest proportion of babies born to an unmarried mother and the lowest proportion of adults who smoke.

Varying population trends, and the recognition that some population groups are doing much better than others, represent significant complications for Utah policy makers. Some communities have seen their population double, and are struggling to deal with the issues inherent in rapid growth. Other communities are facing declining or stagnating populations. Virtually all communities are facing transitions in the composition of their population. Cooperation by all involved is essential if these problems are to be overcome. ●



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The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is one of four regional centers funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Services (CSREES) to strengthen the capacity of local citizens to guide the future of their rural communities. Each of the four Centers link the research and extension capacity of regional land-grant universities with local decision-makers to address a wide range of rural development issues.

The WRDC also receives substantial support from several Utah State University units including Cooperative Extension, the Agricultural Experiment Station and the College of Natural Resources.

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About the Briefs

Published by the Western Rural Development Center
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Trish Kingsford, Senior Staff Assistant
Whitney Mortensen, P/T Staff Assistant

The Population Briefs provide information on the population trends in the western U.S. They are intended to provide both basic information and, when combined with the data tables on the WRDC website, more detailed information for further analysis and application.

The series of Population Briefs will include population trends in the western U.S. related to minorities, natural amenities, education, employment/labor, health, fuel usage, and more. Each topic will include a regional overview and then one brief focused on each of the 13 states in the WRDC's region. The briefs will also include data, where available, related to the population trends in the four western U.S. Territories.

The Population Briefs are available in PDF format on the WRDC website (<http://wrdc.usu.edu>) under 'Publications' and in paper format through the WRDC offices via email to wrdc@usu.edu.

Data

Data for this series is obtained from the U.S. Census of Population for 1980, 1990, 2000, and, where available, 2006. Data is reported for all persons for whom race/ethnicity was reported.

There is a Population Brief for each of the 13 states in the Western Region, and when available, one brief on each of the four U.S. Territories in the region.

To access the state briefs visit 'Rural Resources' on the WRDC website at <http://wrdc.usu.edu>.

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