



Local Government in Texas: Cities Part III

It is a source of much astonishment and of considerable severe comment upon the religious character of our city, that while we have a theater, a courthouse, a jail and even a capital in Houston, we have not a single church.

The Morning Star, a Houston newspaper, June 18, 1839

Public Policies in Texas Cities: Tax Incentives to Promote Economic Growth



• tax increment financing

- a program in which a local government promises to earmark increased property tax revenues generated by development in a designated area called a **tax increment financing district** to fund improvements in the area such as roads, parks, sidewalks, street lighting, etc

• tax abatement

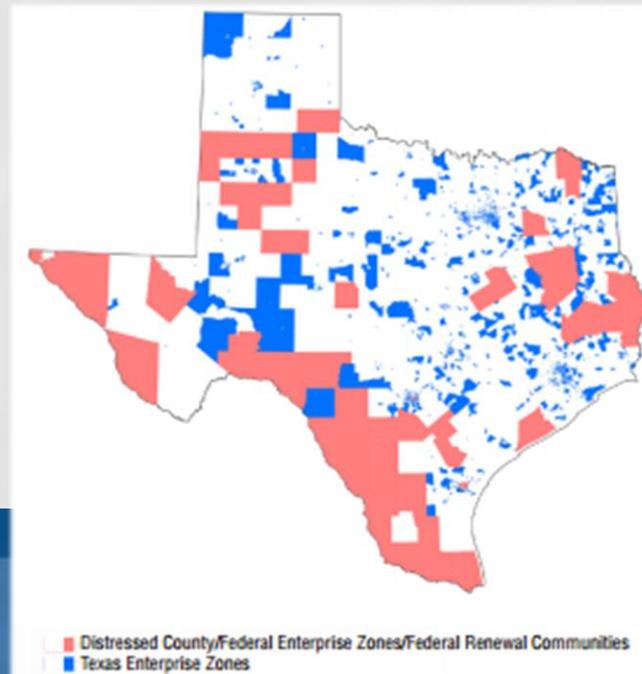
- a program that exempts property owners from local property taxes on new construction and improvements in a designated tax abatement district for a set period of time

Public Policies in Texas Cities: Tax Incentives to Promote Economic Growth



- enterprise zone

- a state program that allows local government to designate certain areas in which private investors can receive property tax abatements, local sales tax rebates (refunds), and government-backed low-interest loans



Public Policies in Texas Cities: Tax Incentives to Promote Economic Growth



- Professional sports franchises are considered important to the economic development of a city or a region. They ask for and frequently receive various benefits from local governments.
- Professional sports franchises are not the only businesses asking for and receiving tax breaks and other benefits from local governments.
- City governments around the state offer a variety of concessions to attract and keep business and industries in their communities.



Public Policies in Texas Cities: Fiscal Problems



- Cities, like the state, have had to adapt to **changing economic conditions** and **shrinking sources of income** coupled with **burgeoning population growth** and **heightened demand for services**.
- Cities face limited options on how to pay for these increased demands.
- causes of fiscal stress in Texas cities
 - **public aversion to rising property taxes**
 - **changes in national priorities and responsibilities**



Public Policies in Texas Cities: Fiscal Problems



- causes of fiscal stress in Texas cities
 - **shifting of service burdens to the cities** by both the national and state governments
 - **changes in federal fiscal policy**
 - **increasing reliance on the sales tax**
 - **competition over revenue sources**



Public Policies in Texas Cities: Fiscal Solutions



- Cities have responded to revenue problems in several ways.
 - Greater emphasis has been placed on **public-private cooperation**.
 - Some services have been turned over to the private sector, that is, **privatization**.
 - Cities have solicited **volunteers** to perform some tasks.
 - **Productivity enhancement techniques** have been employed to stretch financial resources.

Public Policies in Texas Cities: Fiscal Solutions



- Cities have responded to revenue problems in several ways.
 - Cities have sought **new revenue sources** including user fees and special fees.
 - Cities have simply **terminated certain services**.
- While all these strategies have worked in part, the problem remains of how to respond to crises when cities are barely holding their own.



Public Policies in Texas Cities: Annexation and Suburban Development



- **annexation**: the power of a city to increase its geographic size by extending its boundaries to take in adjacent unincorporated areas ... State law permits cities to annex as much as 10% of land each year, and if less is annexed it can be carried over to the next year.
- reasons for annexation
 - protect the **tax bases** of cities
 - prevent **encirclement** by other incorporated municipalities
 - reap the **political benefits** of a larger population
- Between 1950 and 1980, Texas cities annexed aggressively, but the pace has slowed down since the early 1980s.

Public Policies in Texas Cities: Annexation and Suburban Development



- Annexations of the 1970s produced a **political backlash** from newly annexed residents who were determined to do their best to vote incumbent mayors and city council members out of office.
- City government typically annexes an entire **utility district**: a special district that provides utilities such as water and sewer service to those living in unincorporated urban areas.



Public Policies in Texas Cities: Annexation and Suburban Development



- Cities and utility district can negotiate **Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPAs)**.
 - SPAs are negotiated to provide for limited purpose annexation in which the utility district gives the city permission to collect sales taxes at retail businesses within the district but not property taxes.
- In 1999, the legislature and the governor signed a measure overhauling annexation to require cities to adopt an annexation plan that specifically identifies areas to be annexed and details how the city will provide those areas with services. (Cities can no longer annex areas for taxation but delay providing services.)

Public Policies in Texas Cities: Annexation and Suburban Development



- During the 2017 special session, lawmakers passed Senate Bill 6 — the **Texas Annexation Right to Vote Act** — that effectively ended forced annexation.
- SB 6 now requires cities in large counties to hold an election asking voters to decide on the question of municipal annexation. For communities not included in the bill, a petition process has been created to allow for counties of any size to opt-in if voters decide.



Public Policies in Texas Cities: Annexation and Suburban Development



- In addition, the legislature and the governor have revised state laws dealing with **extraterritorial jurisdiction** (ETJ): a buffer area that extends beyond a city's limits.
 - 1/2 mile to 5 mile zone depending on population
 - The city has authority to require conformity with city ordinances and regulations affecting streets, parks, utility easements, sanitary sewers and the like in a ring of land extending from 1/2 mile to 5 miles beyond the city-limit line.



Public Policies in Texas Cities: Annexation and Suburban Development



- ETJ and annexation are legal tools that have become increasingly important in helping Texas cities deal with urban problems.
- ETJ gives cities limited control over unincorporated land contiguous to their boundaries thereby allowing cities to require individuals and businesses to conform to city regulations just beyond city limits.
- Annexation, which involves bringing adjacent unincorporated areas into the municipal boundaries, helps Texas cities to protect their tax base, preserve a pathway for future growth and prevent white flight.

Public Policies in Texas Cities: Land Use Regulation



- **building and housing codes:** designed to promote the health, safety and welfare of the community
- **building codes:** municipal ordinances that set minimum standards for the types of materials used in construction, building design and construction methods employed in all buildings within the city
- **housing codes:** local ordinances requiring all dwelling places in a city to meet certain standards of upkeep and structural integrity



Public Policies in Texas Cities: Land Use Regulation

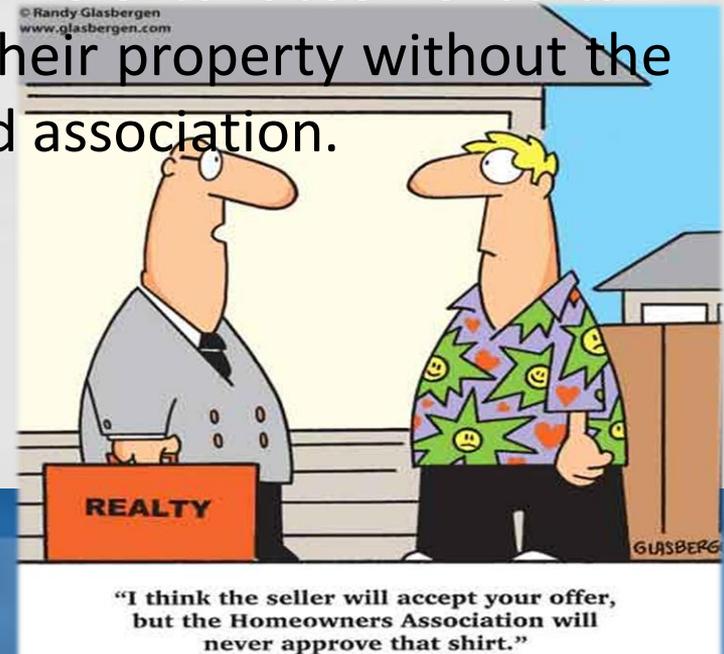


- **zoning and planning**: governmental designation of tracts of land for industrial, commercial or residential use ... known as **zoning**
- Proponents of zoning and other types of land use regulation believe that they **help to create an orderly city**. Zoning enables city government to separate districts for residential, commercial and industrial uses, thus preventing nuisances from developing in residential areas.
- Opponents of zoning believe that city planning is **inefficient and potentially corrupt** because it substitutes the judgments of bureaucrats for free-enterprise development.

Public Policies in Texas Cities: Land Use Regulation



- **deed restrictions:** private contractual agreements that limit what residential property owners can do with their houses and land
 - Deed restrictions typically allow owners to use their property only for specified purposes.
 - Deed restrictions force property owners to observe certain standards and refrain from altering their property without the written approval of the neighborhood association.



City Politics in Texas: Elite Theory

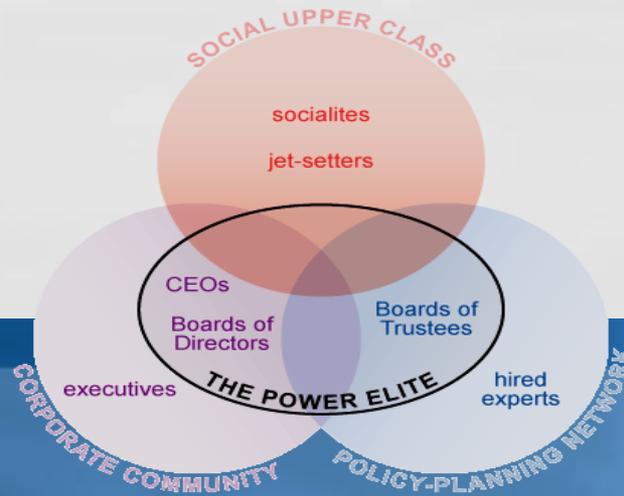


- ...the view that political power is held by a small group of people who dominate politics by controlling economic resources
 - Local power structures are **land-based growth coalitions**. They seek to intensify land use. They are opposed by the neighborhoods they invade or pollute, and by environmentalists.
- Before the mid-1970s, the politics of big cities in Texas, in which growth-oriented business leaders dominated the local policymaking process, fit the model of elite theory.
- Candidates supported by business groups elected to city council were nearly all non-Hispanic white.

City Politics in Texas: Elite Theory



- The **policies of economic growth and development pursued by business groups came with social costs** as Texas cities developed serious air and water pollution problems.
- The costs of growth mobilized opposition to the growth-oriented business groups that had long dominated city politics.
- By the mid-1970s, the rules of the political game changed sufficiently to allow new forces to have an impact on the policy process.



City Politics in Texas: Pluralist Theory



- A new model of city politics emerged to describe urban politics in Texas based on new groups gaining a real share of political power.
- **pluralist theory**: the view that diverse groups of elites with differing interests compete with one another to control policy in various issue areas
- Contemporary urban politics can best be described as pluralist.
- **Different groups are active on different issues, but no one group is able to dominate policymaking across issue areas.**

City Politics in Texas: Deracialization



- Today, the term deracialization is used to describe contemporary urban politics.
- Deracialization refers to the **attempt of political candidates to deemphasize racially divisive themes in order to garner crossover support** from voters of other races/ethnicities while also receiving the overwhelming majority of support from voters of the candidate's own racial/ethnic group.
- Segregated Cities



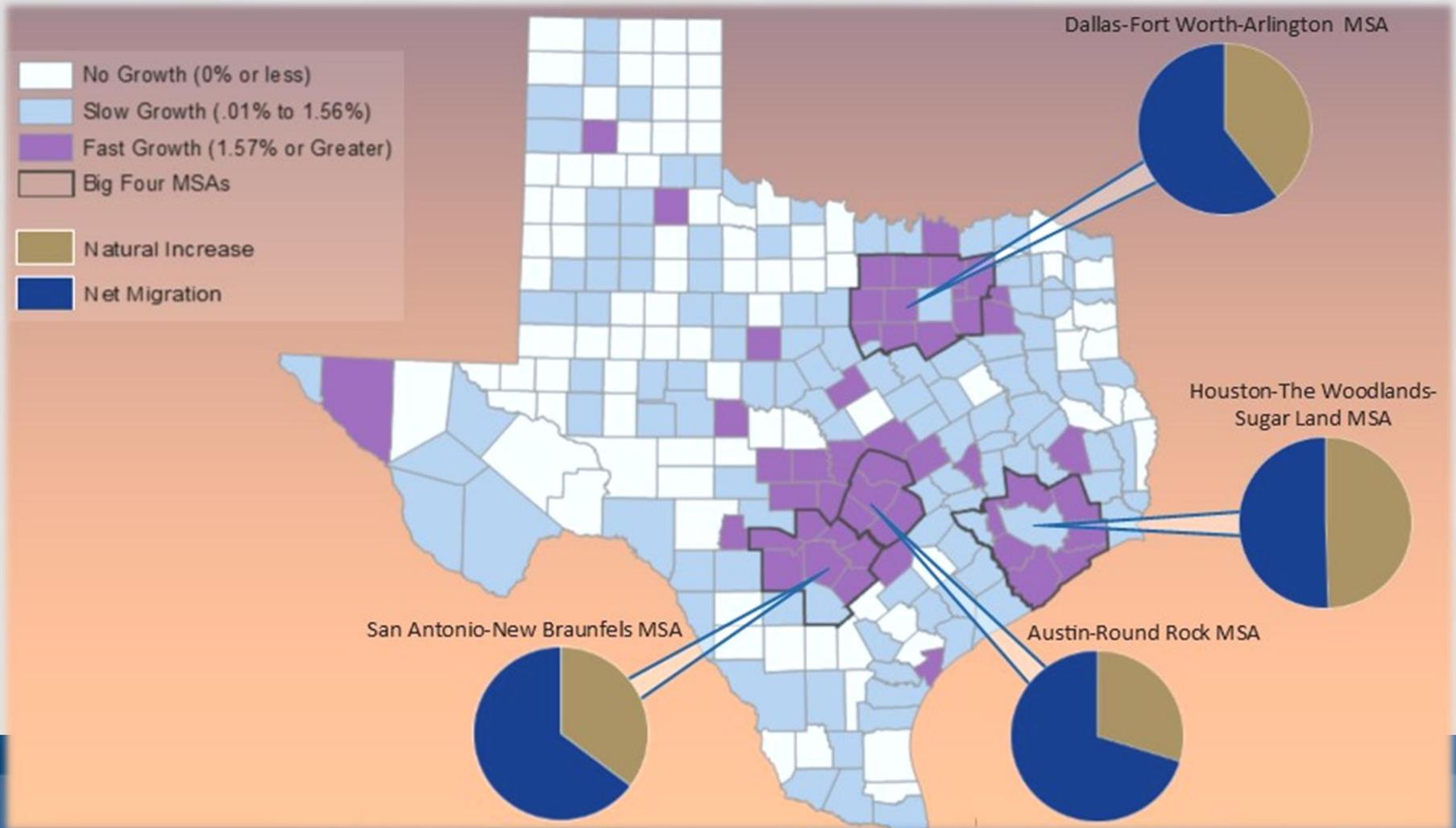
Issues, Trends and Controversies in Texas Cities



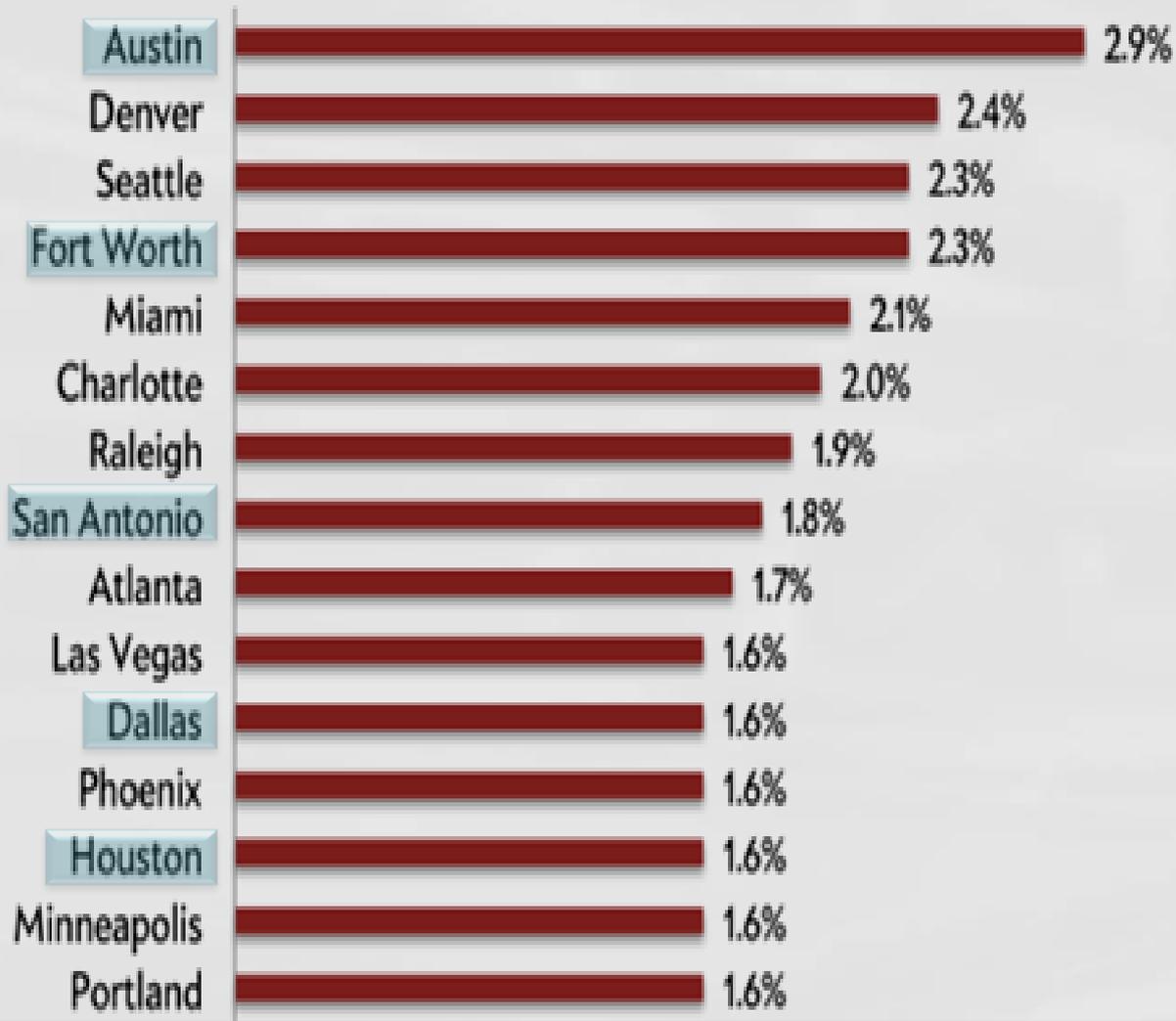
- population growth and demographic change: In contemporary Texas, the vast majority of population growth from the US and around the world occurs in metropolitan areas. With every census since 1850, the state's population share and diversity in urban areas has increased.
- economic development: Texas cities are the first and often only engine of economic development in the state. Until the controversial Texas Enterprise Fund was created, only cities routinely granted the incentives necessary to attract new business to the state.
- Federal and state government mandates have increased (particularly federal).



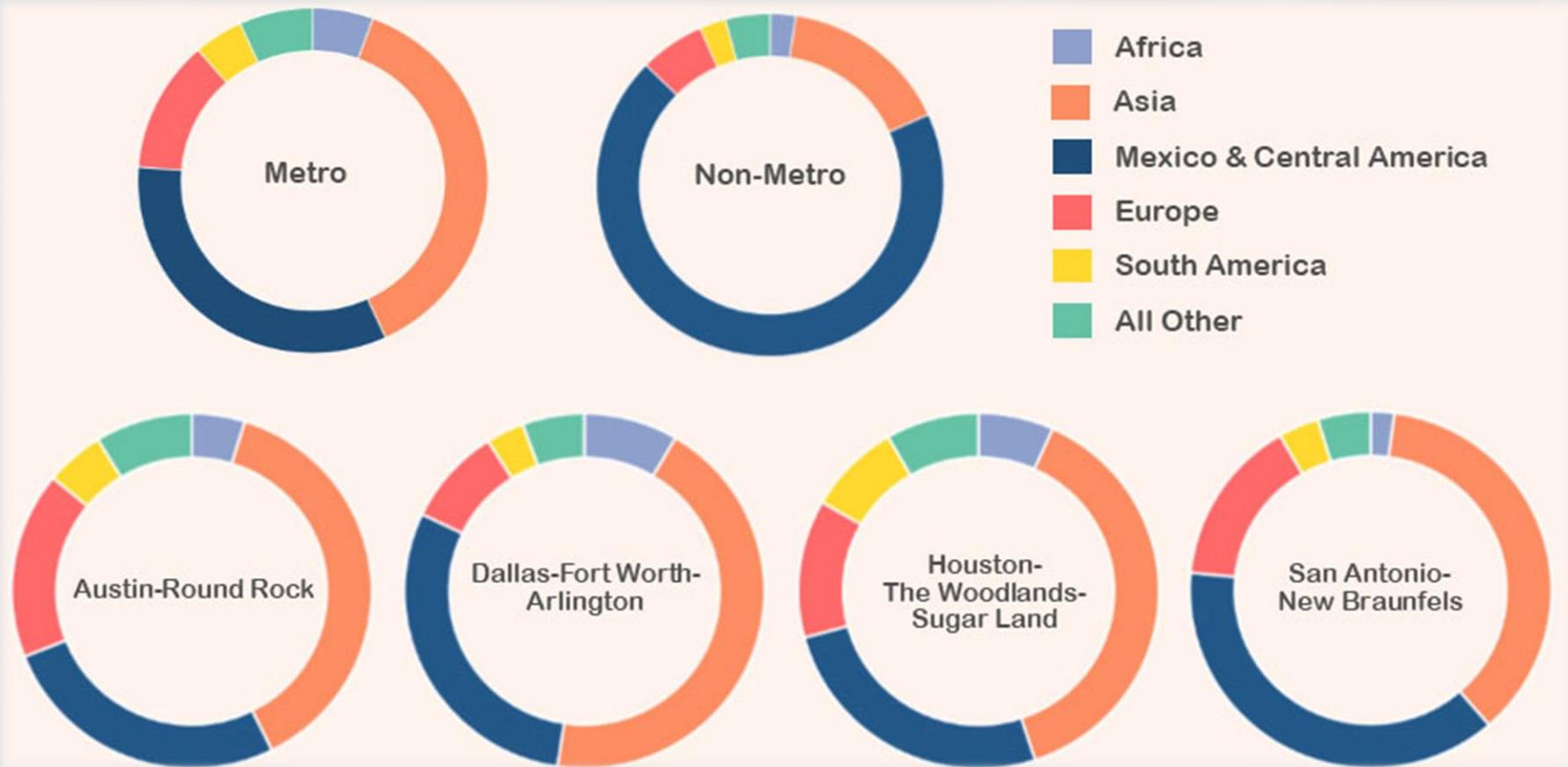
Population Growth and Components of Change in Texas Metro Areas, 2015-2016



The 15 Fastest Growing Cities in the US



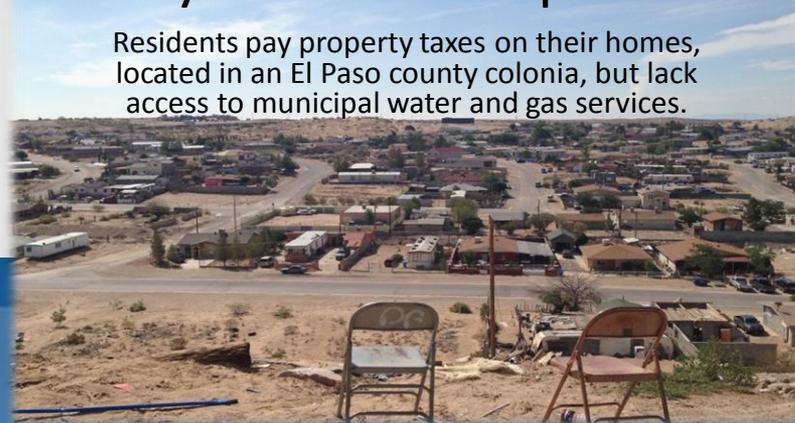
Origins of Recent Immigrants in Texas, 2010-2014



Issues, Trends and Controversies in Texas Cities



- colonias: severely impoverished unincorporated areas along the Texas-Mexico border with a multitude of problems, including substandard housing, unsanitary drinking water and lack of proper sewage disposal
- social issues
 - **HERO**: The Houston Equal Rights Ordinance banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity was forced to a city-wide vote by the Texas Supreme Court and was defeated.



Residents pay property taxes on their homes, located in an El Paso county colonia, but lack access to municipal water and gas services.

Issues, Trends and Controversies in Texas Cities



- social issues

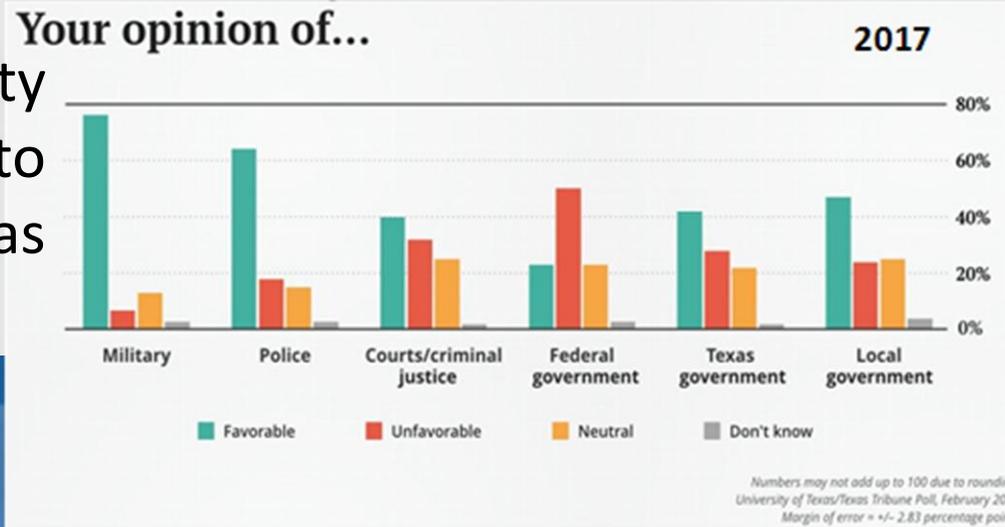
- **sanctuary cities**: ICE issues detainers to cities requesting that suspects be kept in custody until immigration authorities pick them up - when it gets around to it, if it gets around to it. Because some local governments were hit with civil rights lawsuits accusing them of holding immigrants for longer periods of time than is constitutional, they now release those for whom they have no legitimate reason to hold beyond a certain period of time. No Texas cities deny ICE detainers (which is the definition of a sanctuary city). Nonetheless, state government has capitalized on the existence of sanctuary cities in Texas.



City Government and Policymaking



- Cities operate within the constraints imposed by national and state governments and by the economic environment. They must conform to rules and regulations established by higher levels of government.
- Local officials have room to make meaningful policy decisions within the boundaries established by outside forces but for city governments **policymaking is influenced by external forces.**
- That's a problem because city government is the closest to and most trusted by Texas citizens.



Cities in Texas: Sites of Interest



- [Oddisee • Ci'iy Life \(2:20\)](#)
- [Dallas Visitors Bureau](#): what to see and do, shopping and accommodations in the Dallas area
- [Fort Worth Visitor's Bureau](#): city, visitor and convention information
- [DFW International Airport](#): complete visitor's guide to DFW Airport
- [McKinney Online! Spotlighting McKinney, Texas](#): guide to one of the fastest growing cities in North Texas
- [Pilot Point, Texas Online](#): city guide that includes numerous local recreational opportunities, business and history of this fast growing North Texas town
- [The Woodlands, Tx Electronic Village](#): schools, business and entertainment information for The Woodlands
- [The City of Austin Web Guide](#): comprehensive guide to Austin



Cities in Texas: Sites of Interest



- [CitySearch: Austin](#): site includes a complete search engine to find areas of interest in Austin
- [Images of Austin](#): interesting images from the Austin area
- [San Antonio Convention and Visitors Bureau](#)
- [The Heart of San Antonio](#): complete guide to San Antonio
- [San Antonio Current](#)
- [Guide to South Padre Island](#): lists area recreation activities, print coupons for merchants and hotels, tourist information
- [Galveston Island Online](#): extensive information about Galveston Island including current island events, lodging, entertainment, history and request travel brochures



Cities in Texas: Sites of Interest



- [Port Aransas, Mustang Island](#): includes information on lodging, restaurants and local activities
- [Fredericksburg](#), one of the most popular towns in the Texas Hill Country, was founded in 1846 by Prince Frederick of Prussia.
- [Hunt](#) is located in the center of the Texas Hill Country, a beautiful grouping of limestone hills set in central-south Texas.
- [Marfa](#), a small town of West Texas, is known for its famous 'Marfa Lights' (a nightly light display, unexplained and documented since 1883).
- The oldest town in Texas, [Nacogdoches](#), was originally a Spanish settlement and, over the years, it has blended that Spanish heritage with Southern hospitality.



Cities in Texas: Sites of Interest



- The town of [Gonzales](#) is a charming, historic small town in the southeast region of the state.
- Though [Cuero](#) is a small city, it has a diverse population in many regards. There are many old time mansions as well as small homes located on a few acres of land.
- [Canyon](#) is a small town in the Texas panhandle that eventually turns into the Palo Duro Canyon, the second-largest canyon in the US.
- [Jefferson](#) is located on and near Caddo Lake and Lake O' the Pines.
- Best known as a mecca for Texas artists, [Rockport](#) is also home to the Maritime Museum, prime saltwater fishing and excellent birding.
- [Port Isabel](#) is one of Texas' oldest coastal towns and home to the Port Isabel Lighthouse, built in 1852.

Cities in Texas: Sites of Interest



- [Houston](#) is known as one of the country's most culturally diverse cities.
- Discover [El Paso](#), part of the largest bilingual and bi-national work force in the Western Hemisphere.
- [Bryan College Station](#) is a community rich in tradition and history, set deep in the heart of Central Texas and home to the Texas Aggies.
- [Presidio](#) is thought to be the oldest continuously cultivated area in the US.
- [Eagle Pass](#), where time moves at whatever speed moves you
- [Alpine](#) is a remote, high-desert town in the hills of West Texas, not far from Big Bend.
- [Tumbleweed Tango](#) (3:03)
- [Texas Towns from A to Z](#)
- If you don't see a city you're interested in, just Google it!



The End

