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<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/06/22/upshot/Census-Time-Machine-Demographics-in-America.html?smid=pl-share>

**A Census Time Machine: Sioux Falls Is the Past, Staten Island the Present, Las Vegas the Future**

A look at which counties today resemble what America will look like in decades ahead, and which ones most resemble the nation's ethnic composition as it once was.

If you find yourself traveling through Nevada’s pointed southern tip, look around: Along with the towering rust-hued rock formations and the Las Vegas Strip, you might catch a glimpse of the face of the nation’s future.

Clark County, which occupies that corner of Nevada, is the county that most looks like the United States of 2060 in terms of race, Hispanic ethnicity, age and gender, according to new data from the Census Bureau. It was followed by Contra Costa and Solano Counties in California’s Bay Area.

The bureau on Thursday published its latest detailed population estimates for each of the more than 3,000 American counties. We used that data, along with the bureau’s projections about the future, to compare each county with the nation as a whole at different points in time. We looked at population estimates for more than 200 different groups of people — for instance, “Hispanic men ages 20 to 24” would make up one such group.

While southern Nevada offers a vision of tomorrow, the past is just a day’s car ride away. Drive about eight hours north and east into Utah, stopping just short of Salt Lake City, and you’ll find Tooele County, which most closely resembles the younger, less diverse national population of 1971, the earliest year for which comparative data is available.

To better understand the America of today, fly about 2,000 miles south and east to the greater Orlando, Fla., area. There you’ll find Seminole County, a modern microcosm whose population most closely matches the nation’s current mix. Staten Island, a.k.a. Richmond County, is the second closest.

America is more than demographics, but how they change can have a profound effect on culture, politics and business. An aging population is already beginning to test the health care industry and threaten the nation’s fiscal future. The rise of minorities, led by a swelling Hispanic population, is transforming the nation’s complicated relationship with race and ethnicity

The accompanying map shows when the nation will most closely match each county today

Right now, Cook County, Ill., the second-most populous county, more closely resembles the nation in 2047 than any other year we studied. Maricopa County, Ariz., the fourth-largest county, resembles the demographics of the nation in 2020.

Counties with populations that are about 75 percent white tend to reflect the America of the 1970s and 1980s. Those where the population is half white and more diverse tend to reflect the America of the 2040s and 2050s.

The findings can be somewhat misleading: Some counties, often small ones with unusual demographics, still don’t look much like the nation even in the year to which they are best matched. The racial categories are limited, and the comparisons do not account for variables like education, income or population density. But this analysis nonetheless offers a glimpse at America’s demographic past, present and future.

Much like the possibility that your best friend may have a different best friend, the county that best matches the U.S. in a given year may not result in the same pair as the U.S. year that best matches a selected county.

Our analysis included whether someone was Hispanic or not, broad racial categories (white, black, and other), age (in five-year groups up to 85 and over) and gender.

Because of the need to maintain consistency with limited historical data, the analysis combined two small but growing parts of the population: Asian-Americans and those who say they are more than one race. Those two groups, along with several other races who account for small parts of the population, were combined into a single “other races” category for the comparison.

That “other” category accounts for about 10 percent of the population today, but it is expected to be about 17 percent by 2060. Asian-Americans are expected to account for the majority of that category, though people of more than one race are also expected to make up a sizable share of it.

Because of the limits of the “other” race category, parts of the country with sizable American Indian populations stand out as resembling the United States of the future even though that demographic is unlikely to account for a significant portion of the population in the decades to come.